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THE APPLICATION OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF PEACE AND NONVIOLENCE IN THE LIGHT OF GHANDI AND MARTIN LUTHER KING JR: TOWARDS A PEACEFUL COEXISSTENCE OF THE NIGERIAN CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

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Abstract

This article explores the nonviolence philosophies of Ghandi and Martin Luther king Jr and uses their tenets as veritable instruments towards the restoration of social justice, equity, unity and peace in a conflict-laden socio-political milieu like Nigeria. Nigeria is currently a breeding ground for violence, terrorisms and civil unrest. The country is just an inch away from becoming the terrorist capital in the continent as it is currently among the top ten most dangerous places to visit in Africa. The Work decries the debilitating and deteriorating security state of Nigeria as it is gradually slipping into the Hobbessian state of nature where life is brutish, nasty, solitary and short. The work could not reconcile the conflicting irony of a country blessed with human and natural resources and at the same time beleaguered with human inflicted disaster and violence. The article emphasizes the efficacy of non-violence philosophy in conflict resolution towards realizing a peaceful society where the dividends of democracy will be enjoyed by all and for all without anyone being segregated, marginalized, side-lined and maligned. The article shows with relevant instances how pragmatic, feasible and goal oriented the nonviolence philosophies of Ghandi and Martin Luther King Jr have been from inception and their groundbreaking achievements in India and USA respectively. Prominent among the achievements of nonviolence philosophy were the declaration of Indian independence spearheaded by Ghandi and the socio-economic and political liberation of the blacks in USA through the nonviolence philosophy of Martin Luther King Jr. Although the work emphasizes the nonviolence philosophies of Ghandi and Martin Luther King jr, it also acknowledges the formidable foundation laid by prominent precursors of nonviolence philosophy like Bhuda, Jesus Christ, Leo Tolstoy, Henry David Thoreau and other advocates of peace who had employed the nonviolence approach in conflict resolution and left a legacy of lasting impact through their achievements. Employing the method of comparative analysis, this work concludes that nonviolence approach to conflict which thrives on dialogue, negotiation, direct action and arbitration with strong rules of engagement is the antidote towards healing the

venomous wounds of violence, terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and inter/intra –ethnic conflict in our society today.

Keywords: Nonviolence, Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr, Dialogue, rules of Engagement, negotiation**.**

1.0 Introduction

In the history of humanity, there had never been any century with no trace of war and conflict. Twentieth-century was rocked by two world wars in the first half and a large number of small-scale, although protracted wars under the shadow of the Cold War in the second half. This is why the 20th century has been reckoned by historians to be one of the bloodiest centuries in human history. Even though the Cold War between Western and Eastern blocs did not spiral into World War III, its pacification paved way for a short period of euphoria and harmonious coexistence in the early 1990s because the absence of the geopolitical tension brought about the reign of peace and tranquillity. Peace is key in international relation. This explains why in 1981, the United Nations General Assembly set aside 21st September to celebrate World Peace Day annually.

The philosophy of peace and non-violence is rooted in the simple belief that God is harmless. Hence, to be more connected with God, one must likewise be harmless. Jesus, the founder of Christianity, taught and practiced the principle of peace and non-violence while on earth. He clearly states that justice should be based on the principle of forgiveness and reconciliation and that retaliation plays no part. He also teaches tolerance and the generosity of spirit when it comes to dealing with crimes. To the woman facing the death penalty he simply said 'go simply and sin no more' (John 8:11). Jesus also teaches; if any one hits you on the right cheek, offer him the other one as well (Matt 5: 39).

In this vein, Uduigwomen asserts that "although the world has never known peace, peace has always been one of humanity's highest good and are ready to pay any price for it. For such people, the most advantageous peace is better than the most just war" (228). Peace, being an opposite of dissension, violence and war serves as an antidote which heals the venomous wounds of hatred and hostility, sorrows and discords, tears and heart breaks among all those who cling to it whenever forgiveness and reconciliation seem eluding.

This probably must have been what motivated Ghandi to opine that, "when the power of love overcomes the love of power, the world will be at peace". A cursory look at Nigerian situation will reveal that some group of Nigerians who through their immoral acts have been termed terrorists are indeed so tragically bound to the starless midnight of religious bigotry and violence that the bright day of peace and brotherhood can never become a reality. I have the conviction that an unarmed truth and unconditional love will be a desideratum. Little wonder then that mother Theresa supposed that, "if we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other" (12). The thrust of this work therefore is to examine the Christian philosophy of peace and non-violence and its relevance to Nigeria.

1.1 Conceptual Clarification

According to Aristotle, a famous Greek philosopher, "before a discourse becomes quite intelligible, it must begin with the definition of terms (*initio disputandi ad definition et nomini)" (121).* On this vein, I deem it quite necessary to embellish this write up with a clear and distinct definition of the basic concepts, devoid of any equivocation in order to enhance a better understanding of the topic under consideration.

1.2 Non-Violence

This is the personal practice of being harmless to self and others under every condition. It comes from the belief that hurting people, animals, or environment is unnecessary to achieve an outcome and refers to a general philosophy of abstention from violence, based on moral religious and spiritual principles (Ugoji, 55).

1.3 Peace

The term peace originates most recently from the Anglo-French *pes* and the old French *pais*, meaning peace, reconciliation, agreement, treaty, peace, tranquillity and absence of hostility" (Oyedolapo et al 4). Literarily, the term peace could be defined as an occurrence of harmony characterised by the lack of violence, conflict behaviours and the freedom from the fear of violence. Commonly understood as the absence of hostility and retribution, peace also suggests sincere attempt at reconciliation, the existence of healthy or newly healed interpersonal or international relationships, prosperity in matters of social or economic welfare, the establishment of equality, and working political order that serves the interest of all (Wikipedia, retrieved 10th of May, 2020). Nonetheless, this write up shall attempt to link justice with peace in connection to the Nigerian precarious situations, cognizant of the fact that behind every peaceful society is a just nation and behind every just nation is a harmonious, nonviolent and prosperous human race.

If peace is more than security, how is peace defined broadly? Most peace researchers divide the state of peace into two categories. First, peace is perceived as the absence of war, which is called *negative peace*. Second, peace is defined as the presence of justice, which is called *positive peace*.

Peace refers to an environment that is characterised by healthy interpersonal and international relationship. Peace exists where there is no violence, rivalry, insecurity, unhealthy competition, fear, etc.

Peace is a dynamic and active process rather than a static condition.

1.4 Types of Peace

They are two Major types of peace: Positive and negative peace

Positive peace

This is more than the absence of violence, war, strife, disputes, hostility and chaos, but the presence of social justice through equal opportunities, rule of law, a fair distribution of power and resources, equal protection and impartial enforcement of laws. It is a state of complete equanimity and tranquillity free from violence and social tension.

Negative Peace

This is the absence of direct violence, hostility, and civil unrest amongst individuals, groups and governments. This type of peace also occurs when parties in conflict agree to drop their arms and stop all violent related activities but a group still feels that they have not been treated fairly.

1.5 Signs of Peace

Below are some of the signs of peace or situations that encourage peace;

- Everyone lives in safety without fear or threat of violence and no form of violence is tolerated in law and in practice.
- Everyone is able to participate in shaping political decisions and the government is accountable to the people.
- Everyone has fair share and equal access to the basic needs of their wellbeing such as food, clean water, shelter, education, health care and a decent living environment.
- Everyone is equal before the law, the systems for justice are trusted and fair, and effective laws exist to protect people's right (Anikpo M. Etal, 41).

1.6 Importance of peace

Peace is very important for many reasons. Below are some of the importance of peace:

- **Peace of Mind:** This is paramount because a peaceful atmosphere promotes good health of mind and body and as well enhances personal development.
- **Technological Advancement**: Peace is important because we can enjoy the benefit of the latest development and discovery in science and technology only when there is peace.
- **Population Growth**: Peace gives room for human population to grow. While war decreases the population, peace allows families to work together and have more children.
- **Safety from Danger:** A society at peace is saved from deaths, destruction of properties, general insecurity, fear and disruption of human life.
- **World peace:** World peace is important because without it, nations will not be able to relate with one another. People are able to establish a cordial relationship with one another and engage in international trade, sports and technological exchange when there is peace. The United Nations (UN) was formed at the end of the second world war to foster peace amongst nations across the globe.
- **Long term Development Plan:** where there is peace and the maintenance of moral order, the provision of basic infrastructure will be made readily available to people in that region. The peaceful atmosphere in that region will also go a long way to attracting development to that region (Anikpo M. etal 42).

1.7 Meaning and Origin of Conflict

The word "conflict" is derived from the Latin word *confligere*, meaning, to "strike together.

Lexically, the word conflict means fight, struggle, battle, clash, contention, confrontation, a controversy or quarrel, active opposition, strife, incompatibility, to meet in opposition or hostility, etc.

Quicy Wright (19) defines conflict as opposition among social entities directed against one another. Kriesberg (17) simply defines conflict as a frosty relationship between two or more parties who believe they have incompatible goals.

Similarly, Laue (256) tries to disabuse our minds about the dysfunctional perception of conflict by noting that Conflict is not deviant, pathological, or sick behaviour per-se. It is not the opposite of order…There is orderliness in conflict, although conflict can become disorderly. And it can be a very helpful and useful part of society.

Wallensteen defines conflict as *a social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set scarce resources (12-13)*

Simply put, conflict is a serious disagreement or altercation, typically a protracted one between two or more individuals, group or nations which often times degenerates to violence and destruction of lives and properties when not well managed.

1.8 Types of conflicts

There are two types of conflicts: Name: Violent and nonviolent conflict

Violent Conflicts: This type of conflict involves the disagreement between two or more groups with the use of force, arms and other deadly weapons in addressing their differences. This kind of conflict often results to destruction of lives and properties. An example of violent conflict is the Nigerian civil war that took place from 1967-1970. The first and second world war that took place between 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 respectively. The ongoing Russia- Ukrain war, the ongoing ambazonian war in Cameroun, the Izzi- Ukelle war, the Nko-Nkpani war, the current Ovonum- Ofatura crisis, etc.

Nonviolent Conflict: This is the disagreement between people or groups which is not expressed by the use of force or arms. This kind of conflict is often resolved by dialogue. Example of nonviolent conflict include: Industrial action, protest, etc.

Forms of Conflict

It is important that we know the forms of conflict we encounter in our day-to -day activities. There are numerous kinds of conflicts but we will limit ourselves to the following:

a. Intra-Personal Conflict: This form of conflict occurs within an individual. Examples of such are use of time, choice of partner, or career, moral questions, goals and aspirations.

b. Inter-Personal Conflict: This refers to conflict between two or more individuals over an issue that revolves around conflict of interest between the conflicting parties.

c. Intra-Group Conflict: This refers to conflict between individuals, or faction within a group.

d. **Inter-communal conflict**: This kind of conflict exists between two communities within the same ethnic group over limited

resources like land. Example is the Agueri and Amuleri intercommunity war in Anambra state, the Nko and Nkpani war in Yakurr LGA, Ujama and Benekaba land disputes, Ugaga and Igbekorikor in Yala LGA, Cross River state etc.

e. Inter-Group Conflict: This refers to conflict between groups such as club, class versus class, family versus family, cult group versus cult group, etc.

f. Interethnic conflict: This kind of conflict takes place between two different ethnic groups. Example of Ethnic clashes in Nigeria include those involving the Urhobo and Isekeri in Delta State, Ogoni and Andoni in Rivers State, The Ukelle people of Cross River State and the Izzi people of Ebonyi State.

g. Religious conflict; This kind of conflict arises between people of different religions. A religious war or a holy war is a war primarily caused by differences in religion. Example is the Boko Haram crises which started in 2009 and the recurrent Jos crisis.

h. National Conflict: This refers to conflicts within a nation, involving different groups within the nation. This could be interethnic, inter-religious, or competition for resources. An example of the National Conflict includes the Nigerian Civil war (1967-1960), the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroun, etc.

i. International Conflict: This refers to conflicts between nations. This could be for ideological reasons, territorial claims, and political competition. An example is the ongoing Russia- Ukrain War, the world war I (1914-1918) and the World War II (1939-1945).

Causes of Conflict:

The following are the causes of conflict:

- conflicts over limited resources
- conflicts over psychological needs
- conflicts involving values
- conflicts over inadequate information
- Religious Fanaticism
- Breach of Agreement

Consequences of Conflict

The aftermath of a conflict may yield either positive or negative consequences regardless of the nature of the conflict. A number of consequences can arise from a conflict such as:

1.9 Positive consequences

- Change: When the factors that result to violence are properly addressed, it brings about a positive change that will better the lot of humanity. Example the first and second world wars made necessitated the united nation Organization to bring out policies that will bring about global unity to forestall the recurrence of another war. The Universal declaration of human rights, a milestone document in the history of human rights was promulgated as part of the measures to protect and promote human rights and declared by United Nations General Assembly, on 10 December 1948, three years after the end of the second world war.
- Goal agreement: The successful resolution of conflict will lead to the harmonization of interest and goals agreement between the two opposing parties.

- New ideas: The aftermath of a successful conflict resolution leads to the generation of new ideas.
- Understanding Between two opposing parties: The opposing parties get to understand each other better and device more ways of promoting peace after the conflict.

Negative consequences

- Waste of time and resources: Money that should have been used for development to improve the lives of the people.
- Diversion of funds by government: The government officials take advantage of the ugly situation on ground to divert public funds for their own personal consumption. A perfect example of this is the prolonged Boko Haram insurgence which is politically incubated to loot the national treasuries.
- Human rights violation: Conflict leads to an abuse of human rights and subject people to an untold suffering.
- Destruction of lives and properties: As the saying goes, "peace is cheaper than war", the price one must pay for embarking on a war comes with irreparable damages. Many lives and properties are lost while embarking in war and conflict. For instance, after 55 years of the Nigerian civil war, the lives and properties that were lost during the war are still irrecoverable up to date. The last straw was the economic blockade mounted by Gowon against the Biafrans which led to the starvation and death of approximately three million people especially, children, women and the aged people.
- Widespread violence: Sexual and gender-based violence are common in all levels of conflict, including refugee camps where women are supposed to be protected. There are rampant rape cases, arson, assassination and other violent acts.
- Dissolution of friendship: Conflicts can bring to an end the friendship and diplomatic alliance that exist between individuals and countries. When it involves nations, the aggrieved country may stop giving loans and relief materials to the rival country and the economically weaker country suffer the brunt the most. A perfect example is the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war.

2.0 Mahatma Ghandi's philosophy of Nonviolence

Nanda describe Mahatma Ghandi (1869-1948) as "the supreme disciple of peace the world has seen after Buddha and Christ. His idea of peace is centered on non-violence, soul force and forgiveness".

On hearing that the news that the United States had dropped bomb on 6th and

9th August 1945 on Hiroshima, and on Nagasaki, after a long tragic silence, he remarked, "I did not move when I first heard that the bomb had wiped out Hiroshima. On the contrary, I said to me 'unless now the world adopts non-violence, it will spell suicide for mankind." When asked if it shattered his faith in non-violence, he said

that such a faith was the only thing that the bomb could not wipe out. Still on the incidence, he remarked. "I assume that Japan's greed was more unworthy. But the greater unworthiness was shown by destroying without compassion men, women and children of Japan in Hiroshima and Nagasaki".

Ahimsa is a Sanskrit terminology meaning 'to not injure'. The term is drawn from the Sanskrit root hims-to strike; himsa is injury or harm, a-himsa is the opposite term which means, 'cause no injury' or 'do no harm'. In this vein, Ahimsa entails nonviolence, and is a multifaceted concept, inspired by the premise that all living beings have the spark of the divine spiritual energy and to hurt another being is to hurt oneself. Ahimsa has also been related to the notion that every action, particularly violence is tantamount to negative karmic consequences. The concept of 'Ahimsa' underscores the ethical philosophy of Ghandi with the religious tenets of Jainism an Indian religion as its greatest influence (Aremu, 51).

Non- Violence for Ghandi is synonymous with 'love': Love towards all living creatures. This implies that non- violence practice is to be extended to all sentient creatures. A critical examination of the idea of Non-Violence in Gandhi's philosophy showcases three ultimate values:

- It propels the uprising of other moral virtues i.e. patience, understanding, tolerance, etc.
- It has a universal appeal
- It is unconstrained in its application: i.e its usage is multicontextual and multidimensional.

Gandhi stated that the Divine Spark is present within man and we must constantly endeavor to keep alive that Divine Spark. Nonviolence according to Ghandi is the cultivation of positive attitudes towards living beings. Hence, it represents the basic and essential qualities of mankind and if Non-Violence is the expression of the life-instinct within man then violence is the expression of the death-instinct. (Merton Thomas 234).

He holds tenaciously to the view that just as the hardest metal yields to adequate heat; even so must the hardest heart dissolve before the sufficiency of the heat of nonviolence. According to him, there is no limit to the capacity of non-violence to create heat. When asked by Margaret Bourke-White, the American journalist, on the 30th January, 1948, just a few hours before he was killed, he would confront the atomic bomb with nonviolence? With a smile, he replied: "I will not go underground. I will not go into a protection. I will come out in the open and let the pilot see I have not a trace of ill-will against him. The pilot will not see our faces from his great height, I know. But the desire in our hearts - that he will not come to hurt - would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened" (Nanda, 4).

He postulated that, an eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind and sees forgiveness and reconciliation as the desideratum to global peace. His faith in non-violence was absolute and he believed that peaceful means alone could lead to peaceful ends. While paying tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 75th birthday, Albert Einstein wrote: "Generations to come, it may well be, will scarcely believe that such a man as this

ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth" (Nanda, 5).

Gandhi sees Truth and Non-violence as two inseparable terminologies that mutually complement each other. In the Sanskrit term, Truth and Non-Violence are "Satya" and "Ahimsa" respectively. These two key terms are the fulcrum of Gandhi's philosophy. He buttressed that the word 'Satya' comes from the word 'Sat' that means 'to exist'. So by the term 'Satya', Gandhi also means that which is not only existent but also true (M.K Ghandi, 204). Gandhi Links truth with God. He further buttressed his point further thus:

"There is nothing besides Truth. So both Truth and God stands for the highest reality or the ultimate reality. And hence the two can be identified together. No one on earth can deny Truth. God can be denied because the atheist does not believe in God. But the atheist cannot deny the power of Truth. Hence God is identified with truth" (Arpana Ramchiary, 69)

Thus, Truth and Non-Violence are two sides of the same coin. The effectiveness of non-violence as a weapon against communal/intercommunal strife was proved by Gandhi in the struggle against the British. Ghand's nonviolent colonial resistance yielded massive result as it engendered the liberation of the Indians from the shackles and debacles of British imperialism which culminated in their independence. Thus, Ahimsa (nonviolence) is not a timid response to oppressive circumstances but rather it is the prerequisite for the morally vigilant and the active. Evil, he believes can be overcome with good and invariably a respect for the sanctity of life. Nonviolence is essentially based on love. In fact, Satyagraha appears to be as a religious pursuit. It rests on a religious belief that there is one God behind everything and being, and as such careful consideration must be taken to peaceful dealings with all and sundry (Aremu, 4).

3.0 Martin Luther King Junior's Philosophy of Non-violence

Martin Luther King, Jr was an exemplary advocate of nonviolent resistance both in principle and practice. He proved beyond reasonable doubt that the Nonviolent approach to conflict that he championed was not just an intellectual exercise but a practical life to be lived. He put this principle to practice in September 1962 at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), the main organizational force behind his civil rights activism, in Birmingham, Alabama. In this conference, he was presenting a speech on the need for nonviolent action in the face of violent white racism when a white man jumped on stage and, without a word, punched him in the face over and over again. Martin Luther first acted with his instinct of self-defense by putting up his hands to deflect the blows. But after a few punches, he let his hands fall to his side. The man who turned out to be an American Nazi Party member, continued to flounder. At first, the audience thought the whole thing was staged, a mock demonstration of King's nonviolent philosophy in action. But as King reeled, and real blood spurted from his face, it dawns on everyone from the scene that it was real. When the SCLC members rushed the stage to stop the attack, they stopped short when King shouted, "Don't touch him! Don't touch him!

We have to pray for him." That incidence left an immense impression on the convention attendees, and anyone else who heard about it in the coming days. Martin Luther King Jr was not merely a preacher of nonviolence, he lived it and bore the consequences which culminated in the ultimate prize he paid with his own life. He did not invent nonviolence as a doctrine for achieving social justice. But he adapted it for an American context, and showed how compelling yet flexible it could be ((Bill of Rights in Action, 1).

Mahatma Ghandi had great influence in Martin Luther King Junior's nonviolent philosophy. Though Gandhi was Hindu, he noticed the striking similarity between Ghandian nonviolent philosophy with the teachings of Jesus. It was there and then that he began to conceive the possibility of applying Gandhian nonviolent philosophy in an American and Christian context. After a rigorous study, he saw the possibility of applying the lessons of the New Testament in the struggle for racial justice. Luther had this to say about Ghandi "Prior to reading Gandhi, I had about concluded that the ethics of Jesus were only effective in individual relationship," he wrote. "But after reading Gandhi, I saw how utterly mistaken I was" (3).

In this vein, from the teaching of Jesus Christ, Gandhi and Thoreau, the King's philosophy of nonviolent social change came to the limelight; from Christ Sermon on the Mount, with its emphasis on humility, self - criticism, forgiveness, and the renunciation of material gain, came the initial inspiration for a non - violent approach. Thoreau's example had taught King the rightfulness of civil disobedience against unjust laws and systems, and Gandhi showed explicitly that there was a method for mass non-violent resistance to the state (Eyo& Ejesi, 410). In his struggle for liberation, he gave credence to Ghandi with these words:

"Gandhi was probably the first person in history to lift the love ethic of Jesus above mere interaction between individuals to a powerful and effective social force on a large scale. it was in this Gandhian emphasis on love and non-violence that I discovered the method for social reform that I had been seeking... I came to feel that this was the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom" (Filice, 96).

Nonviolent resistance for Martin Luther King Jr is not a method of cowardice, " neither is it a method of stagnant passivity and deadening complacency. In his words he said, "the nonviolent resister is just as opposed to the evil that he is standing against as the violent resister but he resists without violence."

Nonviolence, he argued was anything but passive. Nonviolence according to Martin king means putting oneself in the face of violence, of actively confronting it and, responding with love to the jabs and punches. Because, for him the best revenge to one's enemy is love.

Martin Luther did not only make the nonviolent philosophy a part and parcel of his life, he dedicated his life training and preparing a vanguard of experts in nonviolence who could walk in the front of marches and absorb the brunt of any assault. The most noteworthy trainee to come out of

King's workshops were John Lewis. Lewis was a young seminarian who became a leading activist in Nashville, participated in the Freedom Rides, spoke at the 1963 March on Washington and, most famously, was beaten severely in the so-called Bloody Sunday incident in Selma, Alabama, in 1965 (Bill of Rights, 3).

According to Iluebe, King "was raised to believe that quality of character, not race should be the basis on which a person is judged" (cited in Eyo& Ejesi, 410). In his speech, "Loving your Enemies, "King espoused thus:

There is a power in love that our world has not discovered yet. Jesus discovered it centuries ago. Mahatma Gandhi of India discovered it a few years ago, but most men and most women never discover it for they believe in hitting for hitting.... (Anagwonye, 55).

He had the conviction that the method of non-violent resistance is the most effective weapon available to the oppressed in their struggle for freedom and human dignity. In his speech at the Great march on Detroit, King states that;

For we've come to see the power of non-violence. We've come to see that this method is not weak. For it's the strong man that can stand up amid violence being inflicted upon him and not retaliate with violence (Alfoqahaa & Jones 227)

King holds tenaciously to the view that nonviolence is by far more than a tactic or a strategy. He insisted that it is a way of life. It is the force of active love and truth that seeks justice and peace for every human being and all creation (Eyo& Ejesi, 412).

In his Letter from the Birmingham Jail, he emphasized the interrelatedness of all human communities and states with this powerful remark: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly" (1). He further outlined the necessary steps to be taken in a nonviolent approach. In his words he espoused thus: "In any nonviolent campaign there are four basic steps: collection of the facts to determine whether injustices exist; negotiation; self-purification; and direct action (1)".

It is germane to state here that without the belief that God is always on the side of truth, King's theory on non-violence would have no substance. King proclaimed his strong and unwavering faith in the fact that unarmed truth and unconditional love will have the final world in reality. This for him, is the reason why the right temporarily defeated is stronger than evil triumphant (Anagwonye, 88).

Nonviolence finds its root in the heart where we renounce the violence within us, and then it moves out with active nonviolence to our families' local communities, cities, nations and world. King was of the view that when nonviolence is organized on the large-scale level, active non-violence can transform individuals' group's society's nations and the world in general ((Eyo& Ejesi, 413).

The following are Martin Luther King Jr's six nonviolent principles according to United

Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC):

Principle one: Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people. It is active nonviolent resistance to evil. It is aggressive spiritually, mentally and emotionally.

Principle two: Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding. The result of nonviolence is redemption and reconciliation. The purpose of nonviolence is the creation of the Beloved Community.

Principle three: Nonviolence seeks to defeat injustice, not people. Nonviolence recognises that evildoers are also victims and are not evil people. The nonviolent resister seeks to defeat evil, not people.

Principle four: Nonviolence holds that suffering can educate and transform. Nonviolence accepts suffering without retaliation. Unearned suffering is redemptive and has tremendous educational and transforming possibilities.

Principle five: Nonviolence chooses love instead of hate. Nonviolence resists violence of the spirit as well as the body. Nonviolent love is spontaneous, unmotivated, unselfish and creative.

Principle six: Nonviolence believes that the universe is on the side of justice. The nonviolent resister has deep faith that justice will eventually win. Nonviolence believes that God is a God of justice.

4.0 Examination of the philosophy of peace and nonviolence and its relevance to Nigerian situation.

We shall examine here the philosophy of peace and non-violence and its relevance towards alleviating the overwhelming and impending catastrophe of religious, political and ethnic acrimony amongst Nigerians. Peace and nonviolence are inextricably link with each other in such a way that proper dispensation of justice will be impossible without a corresponding peaceful and serene environment to accord it. This avows the inseparably interwoven relationship that exists between peace and a violent-free environment. Our hope of a new Nigerian society where we can take our rightful place in the comity of nations, and compete favourably in the advancement of science and technology can only be realised if the philosophy of peace and non-violence is appropriately applied.

The application of the philosophy of **peace** and **non-violence** is the only possible way that can liberate this turbulent nation from the shackles of ethnocentrism, religious bigotry, regionalism, egocentrism political malpractices, etc. This is the only principle that can possibly help to strengthen the bond of our union irrespective of our cultural diversity. More than a decade of an uninterrupted practice of democracy has gone by now, rather than make progress toward the realisation of our dreams, the Nigerian nation appears to be more fragmented than ever before. More than a decade into our new democratic experiment, Nigerians as a people seem to be more divided than they ever were since independence. This tense and gloomy political scenario is further compounded by the violent crimes of arm robbery and hired assassinations that have become very rampant,

consequent upon the shear neglect of the philosophy of peace and non-violence

The frosty relationship between the legislature and the executive, that reached its climax in the just concluded national conference and the APC- PDP saga, is really making Nigerian brand of democracy look like an exercise in mutual acrimony, rather than "the government of the people by the people and for the people", as a result of injustice and the lack of peace in the country. Sequel to this, it behoves all of us to put all hand on deck to see how this nation is unshackled from this anomaly through the formation of a peaceful and serene society where justice shall flourish like a Lebanon tree.

To live as befits a man, one needs not only life, but food, clothing, shelter, liberty, education, property, recreation, companionship and all that goes to make life tolerable as well as possible (Fagothny, 323). This can only be possible when justice and peace are put at the front burner of the country's policy making scheme.

This must have been what motivated Nelson Mandela to envisioned thus, "I dream of an Africa that is at peace with itself". Since things have fallen apart and the centre can no longer hold, the bond of Nigerian togetherness has been shattered and disfigured by tribalism and religious fundamentalism, ignited by a never-ending terrorism and violence.

The philosophy of peace and non-violence is a commitment of peace- building meditation, conflict prevention and resolution peace education, education for non-violence, tolerance, acceptance, mutual respect, intercultural and interfaith dialogue and reconciliation. The philosophy of peace consists of values attitudes and behaviours that reject violence and prevent conflict by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiations among individuals, groups and nations.

This commitment is at the very foundation of the United Nations established after the great and terrible to create and maintain peace through economic, social, or political agreements. UNESCO overtook that mission in conformity with its constitution which asserts that;

"since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed". In this regard, the same constitution highlights that;

"peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangement of government will not be peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere supports of the people of the world, and that peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind"

A culture of peace and non-violence in its strategy on violence prevention, mitigation and response, a culture of nonviolence respects human beings and dignity; it honours diversity, non-discrimination, inconclusiveness, mutual understanding and dialogue, willingness to serve cooperation and lasting peace.

The philosophy of peace and non-violence is a culture where individuals, institutions and societies refrain from harming other groups,

communities or themselves. There is a commitment to positive and constructive solution to problems, tensions and the source of violence is never an option.

The absence of war is not an end or final goal but a process. It is about creating an enabling environment for dialogue and discussion and finding solutions to problems and tensions without fear of violence. We look forward to experiencing a non violent humane and egalitarian society through the practical application of this life changing philosophy. We have seen nonviolence work as foundation of a number of social and religious movements. It can also be used by individuals to reach out to others to find common solutions to problems, in this regard, developing non-violent communication is the key, as an interpersonal skill for living peacefully together within families, in schools communities or organization and within a global village. The application of peace and non violence is a veritable tool toward an authentic and ideal Nigerian society that is at peace with itself. A society in which the pursuit of peace through a violent-free means is its preoccupation.

5.0 Strategies towards the implementation of the philosophy of peace and non-violence in Nigeria

"An eye for an eye only ends up making the whole world blind" says Mahatma Ghandi.

It is crystal clear beyond every reasonable doubt that peace and noviolence are not merely distant goals that we seek, but that they are means by which we arrive at that goal. By way of pursuing peaceful ends through peaceful means, below are some of the gigantic steps that should be taken to ensure a peaceful and just society.

6.0 Application of the principle of restorative justice

This principle holds that authentic justice requires that we work to heal victims, offenders and communities that have been injured by crime. This principle advocates the healing of the parties that may be injured by the crime. Healing should be both relational and emotional in addition to restitution and community service Sanction (Kekong Bisong, 60). Victims, offenders and communities should have the opportunity for active involvement as early and as fully as possible. The involvement may not be in person as desirable as this may be but through delegates. The degree of their willingness to cooperate may be deferent, together with their healing and restorativeness levels in the process (omeregbe, 58).

6.1 Victim Offender -Mediation (VOM)

The term victim offender mediation according to the Austrian doctrine does not mean compensation for damage in criminal law, which incidentally, has a long tradition in Austria. This can also be called restitution in a more comprehensive sense: a method of settling a conflict in an active way that is socially constructive and more directly related to the victim. Its goal is the restoration of public peace after an offence (L.M. KILCHLING, 58). Victim/ offender mediation defers from other forms of mediation because it involves people who have been involved or affected by crime. It provides guidance to practitioners by encouraging them to allow parties who have

been affected by crime the opportunity to communicate their views to each other. The concept emphasises the acknowledgement of the needs of victims, the importance of holding the offenders accountable for their actions and the value of involving and empowering the wider community in the process (Ugoji, 5)

6.2 VICTIM ASSISTANCE MEDIATION

This practice emphasises the importance of the community and the state taking responsibility to repair the harm or injury on the victim particularly where the offender is at large and cannot be caught. The offender can join to repair the harm if he or she is caught. Some victim assistance programmes respond by attempting to meet the victims' specific material and psychological needs (D. Vanness and K Strong, 112). Through the victim assistant programs, the victims are provided with services to facilitate their recovering from the crime. Attempts to meet victims needs have been forged on two fronts: victims' rights advocates lobby for and asserts the rights of victims to have a primary role in the administration of justice (Karmen, 55).

- **Ways of promoting peace:**

The following are some of the ways of promoting peace in our society:

- **Tolerance**: This is the ability or willingness to understand and respect another's contrary opinion or behaviour against one's believe system or principles.
- **Cross cultural understanding**: there should be forums for interethnic, inter-religion and other intergroup meetings and working together for a mutual understanding.
- **Curtailing violence**: the society should have programs to educate and orientate the people always to always choose peace instead of violence.
- **Social justice:** This is justice or fairness in terms of the distribution of wealth, opportunities and other privileges within a society.
- **Human Rights:** These are inalienable rights that are believed to belong to all human beings irrespective of our nationality, tribe, culture sex, religion, ethnicity etc.
- **Maintenance of Law and order:** Peace is promoted where there are just laws and they are properly and adequately enforced.

7.0 Conclusion

We look forward to the time when the power of love will overcome the love of power, then will our nation (Nigeria) know the blessings of peace and justice. Everyone has a right to peaceful coexistence, the basic personal freedoms, the alleviation of suffering, and the opportunity to live a productive life in a just society. Peace can only last in an environment that is violent-free, just and fair; where human rights are respected, where the people are well fed, where individuals and nations are free and where the national wealth is distributed equitably to all the citizens irrespective of their social standing. It was in line with this that St. Pope john Paul II asserts:

*"Let us not accept violence as the way of peace. Let us instead begin by respecting true freedom: the resulting peace will be able to satisfy the world's expectations, for it will be a **peace** built on **justice**, a peace founded on*

the incomparable dignity of the free human being".

Injustice and violence can shake down the pillars of the skies, and restore the reign of chaos and the darkness of hostility and acrimony in our country (Nigeria) within a twinkling of an eye, if not properly addressed.

If the deeper power of love and forgiveness is not allowed to shape human life in its various dimensions, the mere pursuit of justice without the application of non-violent means will not bring peace. A world which operates on the maxim, "if you want peace, prepare for war" (Vegetius 117-118) will be a cold world with endless tension, violence, and strife. The pillar of true peace is justice and that form of love which is forgiveness, granted that there is no peace without justice and no justice without forgiveness. Authentic forgiveness can only take place in an environment that is violent-free. There is no gainsaying the fact that true peace is the fruit of justice, but because human justice is always fragile and imperfect, it is always subject to limitations. I agree with St. Pope John Paul II that "a world of revenge where each other is punished according to his or her offence will be a cold war of constant strive, instead what we need is forgiveness".

Therefore, one can say without mincing words that it is only through the application of the philosophy of peace and non-violence that the perennial tension and sporadic violence between the Christians and the Muslims, the Yorubas and the Hausas, the Igbos and the Yorubas, and the Hausas and the Igbos, the Aguleri and the Umuleri, the Ijaw and the Ishikeri, the Modakeke and the Ife, the Tiv and the Jukun, the Ukelle and the Izzi, can be permanently overcome. I have not even an iota of doubt that our country Nigeria shall in no distant time experience an uncommon peaceful coexistence within itself, if and only if we unite ourselves to preach the message of unity and peace, based on mutual forgiveness for past hurts and wounds, and a mutual commitment by putting aright the wrongs of the past and building our society on justice and fairness.

One's authentic character formation is dependent on his moral orientation in conformity with the natural law. This assertion is concretised and affirmed by TM Britto thus, "if there is beauty in character, there will be harmony in the home, if there is harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation, if there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world"(64). Nigeria shall indeed know the blessing of civil peace and moral equanimity when all its citizens will be made to put to play the primary precept of the natural law that "good is to be done and evil avoided".

We have come a long way as a nation, it is now time for us to correct the wrongs of the past and forge ahead, and this can only be done through the application of the philosophy of peace and non-violence since according to Mahatma Ghandi, " an eye for an eye will end up making the whole world blind" (58).

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