



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

**RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS' ROLE IN CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING IN
WEST AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

BY

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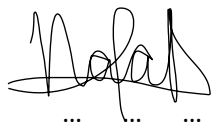
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**THIS DISSERTATION IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE
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DECLARATION

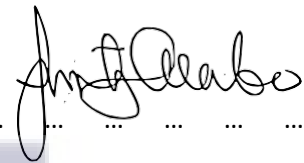
I, NAA DEI ABOSSEY, do hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of an original research I have conducted under the supervision of AMBASSADOR KODZO ALABO. All sources referred to in the study have been acknowledged and that no part has been submitted anywhere else for any other purpose.



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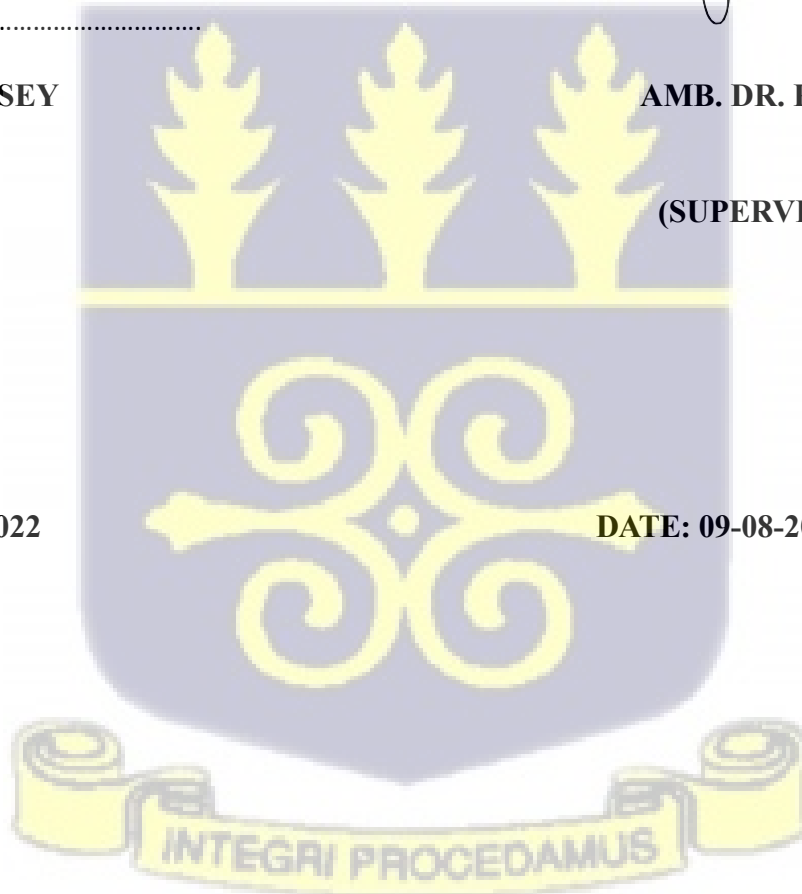
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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my late mother Mrs. Jane Abossey, who passed on a week to the start of my M.A. International Affairs course. You looked forward to this day and fought for me to get to this stage in my life's journey.



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My profound gratitude goes to the Almighty God, first and foremost for bringing me this far.

To my supervisor Amb. Dr. Kodzo Alabo, thank you for accepting to work with me on this dissertation, and for your efforts. God bless you as I always say after our conversations.

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Finally, to my family, pastors and friends who have prayed, motivated and helped me through this journey I appreciate everything you have done for me.



TABLE OF CONTENT

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DECLARATION.....	i
NAA DEI ABOSSEY (SUPERVISOR).....	AMB. DR. KODZO (STUDENT) i
DEDICATION	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vii
ABSTRACT.....	vii
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement	5
1.3 Research Questions	7
1.4 Research Objectives	7
1.5 Justification of the Study.....	8
1.6 Scope of Work.....	9
1.7 Theoretical Framework	9
1.8 Literature Review.....	12
1.9 Gaps in the Literature.....	20
1.10 Research Methodology	21
1.10.1 Research Approach	21
1.10.2 Research Design.....	21
1.10.3 Target Population	21
1.10.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique	22
1.10.5 Data Sources	22
1.10.6 Data Collection Tools.....	23
1.10.7 Data Analysis, Management and Presentation	23
1.10.8 Ethical Considerations	23
1.10.9 Chapter Organisation	23
References.....	24
CHAPTER TWO	29
AN OVERVIEW OF THE LINK BETWEEN RELIGION, CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING	

2.0 Introduction	29
2.1 Religion and Conflict	30
2.1.1 The Church and Conflict	32
2.1.2 Islam and Conflict	34
2.1.3 Religious Conflicts in Ghana	36
2.1.4 Conflict between Religious Communities in Nigeria	37
2.2 Defining Peace and Peacebuilding	39
2.3 Religion and Peace	40
2.4 Religious Approaches to Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding	42
2.4.1 Mediation	43
2.4.2 Convening Dialogues	45
2.4.3 Development Aid and Humanitarian Assistance	45
2.5 Religious NGOs at the United Nations	47
2.6 Religious Diplomacy in Africa	49
2.7 Church Diplomacy: The Case of the Catholic Church.....	51
2.8 Conclusion	52
References	53
CHAPTER THREE.....	60
ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING IN SELECTED WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES	60
3.0 Introduction.....	60
3.1 The Relationship between Religion and Conflict	61
3.1.1 Double-edged interdependent nexus	61
3.1.2 Religion promotes peace through the use of symbols, rituals, the invocation of sacred texts, and the use of its institutions	62
3.1.3 Resolving conflicts and addressing social injustices before violence breaks out	64
3.1.4 The devastation left in the wake of the conflict	65
3.1.5 Inter-faith tensions suffocate peace; act as a conduit for conflicts	67
3.1.6 The Islamic State or al-Qaeda affiliates and Boko Haram religious massacre	68
3.1.7 Theologically ideas-based conflict	70
3.2 Adoption of Conflict and Peacebuilding Mechanisms	71
3.2.1 Adoption of alternative dispute resolution	71
3.2.2 Reliance on early warning signals and mediations	73
3.2.3 Peacebuilding and reconciliation	75

3.2.4 Interfaith dialogue meeting, education and advocacy	77
3.3 The Effectiveness of Religious Organizations' Conflict Management Initiatives	79
3.3.1 Effective conflict analysis.....	79
3.3.2 Conflict handling styles' effectiveness	81
3.3.3 Effectiveness of conflict management and transformation mechanisms	82
3.3.4 Consolidating indigenous approaches to conflict resolution	85
References	86
CHAPTER FOUR.....	89
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	89
4.0 Introduction	89
4.1 Summary of Findings.....	89
4.2 Conclusion	93
4.3 Recommendations	94
BIBLIOGRAPHY	96
APPENDIX- INTERVIEW GUIDE	114



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS
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ADR	Alternative dispute resolution
AQMI	al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CJPC	Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
COPA	Coalition for Peace in Africa
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IRC SL	Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone
MUJAO	Movement for Monotheism and Jihad
NCKK	National Council of Churches of Kenya
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
OAS	Organization of African States
WANEP	West Africa Network Peacebuilding
RNGO	Religious non-governmental Organisations
SPB	Strategic Peace Building
SWVP	Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nation Development Programme

ABSTRACT

Wars, armed conflict, and instability continue to plague Africa, causing human misery and impeding progress across most of the continent. Consequently, preventing and eliminating violent conflict has become a top priority. This study therefore sought to examine religious organisations' roles in conflict and peacebuilding in West Africa using the Catholic Church as a case study. The study employed a qualitative research approach of data collection and analysis. Ten key

informants with at least ten years of experience working on religious, conflict resolution, and peace-building initiatives were purposively sampled. Interviews were conducted with the key informants where thematic analysis was performed for data triangulation and corroboration of qualitative findings. The study found that interfaith tensions suffocate peace throughout the West African Sub-Region as they serve as a conduit for ethnic disputes, mostly between Muslims and Christians. Also, the study found that the Catholic Church adopts a variety of approaches towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding through anticipatory and reconciliatory strategies, which include dialogue meetings, education, and advocacy in conjunction with civil society organisations, strategic meetings with eminent statesmen, mediation, reconciliation, the use of surveillance reports as a basis for dialogue, information dissemination via radio, and the use of Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to mediate disagreements. Furthermore, the study found that the effectiveness of religious organizations' conflict management initiatives within the Catholic Church is the result of institutional structure, resource allocation, capacity investment, reputation gained over the years, and the mainstreaming of peacebuilding and conflict resolution approaches as part of its routine programmes.



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The overall introduction to the study is presented in this chapter. It all begins with the study's background and problem statement. The study's objectives, research questions, and significance are also discussed. This is followed by the review of literature where there is a discussion of the relevant theory of the study, and finally, a presentation of the methodology used in conducting the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

For many individuals, the 9/11 tragedy represents the rise of a new type of religious revivalism and extremism at the dawn of the 21st century. It has been incredibly hard to understand how such barbarous behaviour could happen in a world that appeared to be on the road to modernization and secularisation, specifically from a Western perspective (Antoni, 2014). Nevertheless, various historians, like Toft et al. contend that the 21st century is "God's Century." Thus, the 9/11 disaster should not come as a great shock (Toft et al., 2011). The incident was just one of many catastrophes tied to the instrumentalization of religion that was linked to the re-emergence of religion in public life, as anticipated by various social science academics during the previous two decades (e.g; Berger, 1999; Butler et al., 2011; Hidalgo, 2016).

Religion has always played an important part in many societies' daily life. Some scholars have started to reconsider religion's role in public discourse over the past two decades. In contemporary society, sociologist Jose Casanova foresaw the advent of "public religions." This idea stems from four events in the 1980s: (1) Iran's Islamic Revolution; (2) Poland's Solidarity movement; (3) the

Catholic Church's role in the Sandinista Revolution and other Latin American political movements; and (4) the enormous impact of Protestant fundamentalism in US politics (Casanova, 2011).

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There remains an increasing body of studies linking religion with support for political violence, much of it undertaken following 9/11. David Rapoport (2006) claims that during the last 150 years, the globe has seen four different waves of terrorism. Anarchist, anti-colonial, new left, and religious terrorism are among them. Mark Juergensmeyer (2003, p.140) writes: "What renders religious violence especially brutal and unrelenting is that its culprits have put such theological ideas of heavenly struggle and cosmic war in the service of earthly political struggles," A slew of recent research (e.g; Pratt, 2010; Karakaya, 2015; Gleditsch & Rudolfson, 2016) has emphasised the role of religion in explaining participation in politically motivated violence, with a particular focus on Islam's extremist aspects (Hewitt & Kelley-Moore, 2009; Lincoln, 2010). Additionally, Best and Rakodi (2011, p.5) suggest that religious conflicts remain common, whether between members of various religious faiths or within a religious tradition.

Nonetheless, there is a large body of scholarly and policy-oriented work on religion and international affairs that claims religion is still a useful – if not critical – tool for establishing peace. Religious ideals, religious authorities, and religious organizations, in particular, are seen as having enormous potential for fostering peace in any culture and/or on a global scale. This view appears to be led by scholars in the United States (see: Johnston & Sampson, 1994; Smock, 2002; Johnston, 2003; Little, 2007; Shah et al., 2012). In reality, it was the United States that pioneered "faith-based" diplomacy. The US Institute of Peace has amassed considerable funds for interfaith programmes and publications, with the State Department having established a 'religious engagement' division (Mandaville & Silvestri, 2015). Nonetheless, some significant works in this

style continue to appear in Europe (e.g., Galtung & MacQueen, 2008). Also, Mwencha (2008) [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) indicates that religion could serve as source of principles for peace-building and reconciliation, as it is also indicated that religion could serve as a source of principles for peace-building and reconciliation, as well as a symbol of identification, a mobilising instrument, and a foundation for explaining violent behaviour (Mwencha, 2008).

Conflicts in Africa remain complicated and dynamic, with uneven attempts to manage and address them. A multitude of battles and civil strife have engulfed the continent, and they continue to do so (Salehyan et al., 2012). For example, the region has experienced the greatest turmoil in countries like Sudan, South Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Egypt, Somalia, Nigeria, etc. Africa's conflict has harmed the continent's progress, human rights, security, and peace in a variety of ways (Mwencha, 2008). For instance, due to violence, South Sudan and Sudan are primarily destitute. Furthermore, because of the conflict, the two nations have a high incidence of human rights abuses.

In West Africa, for example, in Nigeria, the Islamist extremist group Boko Haram, which has committed atrocities in Chad, Niger, and Cameroon, targets any religious group or sect that opposes its activities or doctrine, branding such groups as enemies. Several churches have been bombed, killing a large number of people. In January 2012, 20 explosions and gun battles in Nigeria's Kano state left 165 people dead, with Boko Haram claiming responsibility. In a retaliatory attack by Christians, 67 Muslims were killed and three mosques were destroyed during the December 2011 celebrations (Mwangi, 2012).

The African continent's major issue remains conflict. As a result, however much conflict endures, numerous techniques for resolving it have been devised. Consequently, more inclusive as well as integrated peacebuilding and conflict resolution tactics have become necessary (Tesfai, 2010). In

Africa, and for that matter West Africa, the position of religion in the public sphere has been shaped by key events during the last 30 years (Smith, 2012). The region's orientation toward democracy, the downturn of the state's social responsibility, especially following civil unrest, and attacks by a host of different armed groups, such as terrorist organisations, are among them. Non-state entities, particularly religious groups, have arisen as a result of these events, and many have taken up the job of peacebuilding (Lado Tonlieu Ludovic, 2021).

In Ghana for example, the first peacebuilders were religious actors (Azundem, 2019). The primary institution for resolving disputes prior to the creation of a national architecture for peace was the national security, which was made up of all the security services in the nation and coordinated by the interior and defence ministries as well as the courts. Nevertheless, over time, these institutions have proven to be ineffective at resolving conflicts. The success of a peace architecture launched in Ghana's northern region to find a long-term remedy to the frequently recurring inter-ethnic conflicts over power and domination, intra-ethnic conflicts over traditional leadership succession, land-disputes, and election-related high and low tensions that were a common phenomenon in the region by the Roman Catholic Church led to the government's decision to have a national architecture for peace. Rev. Fr. Philip Naameh, the current president of the Conference of Catholic Bishops, used his apostolate as Bishop of Damongo in the Northern region to launch a peace building initiative to resolve the region's conflicts. For instance, the Bishop established the Northern Ghana Peace Project, a peace architecture, in 1995 with assistance from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) (Abdul Karim, 2014). Later on, the Centre for Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies was created from this peace architecture (CECOTAPS) (Awinador-Kanyirige, 2014).

In many countries of the globe, individuals and faith-based organisations from a range of religious traditions are becoming more involved in efforts to put an end to wars and promote post-conflict reconciliation between warring parties (Bouta et al., 2005; Smock, 2006). Despite not being a new phenomenon, this one is receiving more and more attention. Religious people have long engaged in mediation in an effort to settle disputes, frequently in the capacity of representatives of faith-based organisations. Examples include the 1972 work of the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches in mediating a cessation to the Sudan conflict, the mediation conducted by the Quakers and funded by the Ford foundation in the Nigerian Civil War, 1967–70, and the more recent work of the Imam of Timbuktu in mediating various West African conflicts (Haynes, 2005c).

1.2 Problem Statement

Religion and religious actors have remained more widely associated with extremism and religious strife in the post-9/11 world than they were previously, particularly in popular consciousness (Smock, 2006). According to Karakaya (2015), religion's several other aspects and contributions, specifically those regarding peacemaking and peacebuilding efforts, remain less well-recognised, if not altogether ignored.

Religion and peacebuilding have been disregarded in international affairs studies and diplomacy. Nevertheless, the function of religion in resolving conflict and rebuilding must be considered (Rogers et al., 2008). Religious leaders and faith-based organizations, for example, may play an important role in resolving conflicts and promoting peace (Kasomo, 2010). According to Pratt (2010), religious organisations may assist by offering early conflict signs, functioning as good offices during conflict situations, and campaigning for negotiation and reunion.

Faith-based organisations (FBOs) are crucial to the country's ongoing peacekeeping efforts. In Ghana-West Africa, for instance, due to their status and the respect that Ghanaian society accords FBOs, religious leaders are required to mediate disputes in all circumstances, a duty that these religious actors have excelled at fulfilling. For example, the Catholic Bishop Conference launched the Northern Ghana Peace Project, the first-ever recognised architecture for peace (NGPP). Later, the Center for Conflict Transformation and Peace Studies was born out of this initiative (CECOTAPS). In the Northern Region of Ghana, West Africa, the CECOTAPS were successful in putting an end to the lengthy wars between the Nanumbas and Konkomba in 1994. Other religious players, like Quakers and the Interfaith Mediation Center in Nigeria, have also mediated conflicts in many regions of the world (Abu-Nimer, 2001). Sierra Leone remains another example of how the mediator's religious allegiance influenced the outcome. Religious players in Sierra Leone, like the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL), have figured prominently in supporting reconciliation and mediation efforts, as well as drafting and signing the Lome Peace Agreement. Also, following the violence in 2001, various groups in Jos, Nigeria, engaged in or sponsored peace-building and conversation workshops. The Nigerian Christian Association (CAN) hosted Christian and Muslim gatherings, took part in interfaith workshops, and built relationships with Muslim counterparts. Jamatul Nasril Islam, an Islamic group, spearheaded the Christian-Muslim dialogue and took part in all government- sponsored peace committees (Best & Rakodi, 2011).

As a result of the enormous international official and non-official engagement in African peacekeeping, it remains vital to investigate the usually disregarded role of religious organisations and how they may be leveraged to successfully participate in African conflicts (Tenaw, 2018). As a consequence, it should not be surprising that comprehending the connections between violence, religion, and peacebuilding demands a knowledge of conflict in general, including both the

roots of disagreement and the powers of resilience. Regardless of the reality that several researchers have focused on the religion-conflict link in the past few years, much of the research on this relationship has been poorly structured to reflect its function in conflict resolution (Haynes, 2009).

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This study focused on West Africa. For various reasons, an emphasis on Africa, including West Africa, is essential. First of all, scholars interested in religion and civic involvement have seldom looked at Africa, which includes West Africa. This study sought to contribute to previous research by investigating a group of nations with a strongly active and religiously diverse population.

This study intended to contribute to previous research. Again, this study enabled research to be conducted in an area of the world that has previously been overlooked by researchers (Pew Research Center, 2011). Second, Africa, including West Africa, has seen a dramatic increase in politically driven violence in the last two decades (LaFree et al., 2014).

1.3 Research Questions

1. How is religion related to conflict in selected West African countries?
2. In what ways are conflict and peacebuilding mechanisms adopted by the Catholic Church in selected West African countries?
3. How effective are the conflict management initiatives being adopted by the Catholic Church in the selected West African countries?

1.4 Research Objectives

General Objective

The general objective of the study was to examine religious organisations' roles in conflict and peacebuilding in selected West African countries using the case study of the Catholic Church.

The following specific objectives guided the study:

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Specific Objectives

1. To investigate the relationship between religion and conflict in selected West African countries.
2. To examine the adoption of conflict and peacebuilding mechanisms by the Catholic Church in selected West African countries.
3. To assess the effectiveness of the conflict management initiatives by the Catholic Church in selected West African countries.

1.5 Justification of the Study

This study's results will have policy ramifications. So as to resolve conflicts in Africa, there remains a lack of a coherent regulatory framework on the continent that aims to cooperate with and unlock the potential of religious institutions, groups, or leaders. The government, in collaboration with its agencies, is typically in charge of conflict resolution. The involvement of religious organisations in conflict resolution is frequently complementary or optional. This in itself justifies additional investigation into the matter. As a result, the outcomes of this study will assist policymakers in comprehending the difficulties at hand. This will aid in the formulation of policies which will result in a well-coordinated system that allows religion to play a vital role in conflict resolution.

With regard to academic relevance, the outcomes of this study will be a contribution to the academic papers on peacebuilding, conflict management, and reconciliation in Africa. The research will also help to close information gaps about the influence of religion on conflict resolution in Africa. The research findings are expected to be valuable to the University of

Ghana's Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy since they would add to the current [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) literature on religion and conflict resolution. The information gathered could be applied to conflict resolution on the African continent.

1.6 Scope of Work

This study sought to examine religious organisations' roles in conflict and peacebuilding in selected West African countries (with specific focus on Ghana and Nigeria), using the case study of the Catholic Church. A qualitative research approach was employed for this study. Ten (10) participants were chosen through a purposive sampling technique. They included individuals from major religious organisations, particularly the Catholic Church and other key faith-based players operating in Ghana and Nigeria. The study relied mostly on primary data through interviews with key informants.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The Neo-Liberalism Theory

Liberal institutionalism (also known as institutional liberalism or neoliberalism) represents an international relations theory that asserts that international cooperation between governments is both feasible and durable, and that this cooperation may minimise conflict and rivalry.

Neoliberalism remains a more refined form of liberalism. The basis of contemporary economics, as well as neoliberalism's philosophy, may be traced back to Adam Smith and his monumental treatise, *The Wealth of Nations*. Smith's ideas have been formalised and expanded with more analytical rigour over the last two centuries, but the underlying assumptions that support neoliberalism are those provided by Adam Smith (Smith, 1910). With his theory that free exchange remains a transaction wherein both parties must profit, Smith laid the groundwork for neoliberalism. No one would freely engage in an exchange in which they would make less money.

As Milton Friedman phrased it (Friedman, 1962, p. 55), neoliberalism is based on the "elementary [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) notion that both parties to an economic transaction gain from it, given the transaction is mutually voluntary and informed." As a result, every limitation on trade freedom reduces well-being by depriving people of the chance to improve their circumstances. Also, according to Clarke (1988), neoliberalism arose as an ideological reaction to the "Keynesian welfare state" problem. That was triggered by the broad capitalist crisis that accompanied the end of the postwar reconstruction boom and was brought to a climax by the rising cost of the US battle against Vietnam in the early 1970s (Clarke 1988, Chapters Ten and Eleven).

In the last several decades, neoliberalism has lost most of its political legitimacy and practically all of its public appeal. The Keynesian and Marxist critiques of neoliberalism are both critical of the ideology (Saad-Filho, 2008). When Marxist theory is separated from political activity, it loses a lot of its power. Clarifying the contrasts between Marxian and competing interpretations of neoliberalism can aid the former in strengthening its political relevance and broad appeal. Second, the thesis presented below argues that neoliberalism is a durable system of accumulation that will neither spontaneously collapse nor be removed by the democratic process. In the age of neoliberalism, mass action represents the most important tool for social reform. On the other hand, neoliberalism has altered the working class's reproductive mechanisms and the possibilities for autonomous working-class activity. In an attempt to contest its domination, new forms of political engagement and new organisational models must be devised.

Keynesians frequently contend that neoliberalism is fundamentally flawed because of macroeconomic instability and recurrent financial and balance of payments crises (Palley, 2005). This is valid in the same way that economic crises demonstrate that capitalism is a defective method of production in the abstract. Crises, on the other hand, play a constructive (and even constitutive) function under neoliberalism, just as they give the chance to restore equilibrium in

capitalist accumulation. They assist governments in enforcing policy discipline and they require both capitalists and workers to act in ways that promote the continuation of neoliberalism.

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Macroeconomic crises, on the other hand, demonstrate that the system works and, in the long run, assist in improving its efficiency. Second, it is widely acknowledged that most administrations that have promised to implement alternative policies have failed. Such failures demonstrate unequivocally that overcoming neoliberalism is tough and costly. At a deeper level, they demonstrate that moving away from, or beyond, neoliberalism is not merely a subjective matter of choosing the "right" industrial, financial, or fiscal policies. Transcending neoliberalism would necessitate both economic and political reforms, which can only be addressed by constructing a new accumulation system.

Neoliberalism portrays itself as a theory founded on indisputable economic facts. Notwithstanding its scientific trappings, contemporary economics is the careful formulation of a very particular social theory that has been so deeply buried in western philosophy that it has become little more than rational thinking, regardless of the reality that its essential assumptions are blatantly absurd.

Also, the neoliberal institutional theory emphasises transnational linkages and the importance of non-governmental players in global politics. Multinationals, industries, revolutionary groups, religious bodies, labour unions, scholarly networks, and international organisations are examples of transnational non-state entities. Again, the theory does not deny the state's primacy, but it acknowledges the importance of transnational non-state players within the interstate system, mainly in places of national sovereignty, foreign relations, and international organisation difficulties (Nye & Keohane, 1971). A handful of individuals nowadays believe that all religions are equally beneficial or equally evil; the majority of people believe that there exist religions which are superior or worse than others. When a contrast is established between "tolerant,"

"individual," "inclusive," and "progressive" faiths and those which are not, this is what is believed
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(Falk, 2003). Surprisingly, neoliberals believe that there is a standard outside of religion that can be used to evaluate and categorise specific manifestations of it that is not theologically contentious in and of itself (Petito, 2003). Common morality remains one norm usually invoked: "bad religion" refers to ideas and practices that are not morally defensible as per the law of nature or common morality and whose doctrines can be found by independent human reason (Douthat, 2013).

Despite its criticisms, liberalism is defined by a positive outlook on life centred on the authority vested in them by reason, law, and structures, with the possibility of conflict between governments and citizens minimised by common interests or ideals. It is not a denial of lawlessness, but rather a notion that institutional arrangements that reflect the common good, something that is in a government's self-interest, will lessen the danger of conflict that anarchy brings. Increased economic interconnectedness, collective human rights principles (such as democracy), as well as mutual security are all factors that contribute to peace. The prerequisites for preventing conflict within a democracy include institutionalised cooperation and mutual values, in addition to economic interdependence (Doyle, 1983). Thus,

The theory is relevant for achieving the objectives of the study, since according to neoliberals, societal peace and security criteria are an important parameter within liberalism for distinguishing between good and evil religions. Again, it is worth remembering that using the notion of security or peace as a benchmark for assessing religious traditions has the same issues as seeking to make morality a tradition-neutral viewpoint.

1.8 Literature Review

Religion, Conflict, and Peacebuilding

Religion may be used to foster either conflict or peace. Even when opposing groups are split by religious views, such as Protestants and Catholics in North Ireland, religion is not necessarily the basis of the conflict. Whether on its own or for political reasons, religion has always been and will always be a factor contributing to violent conflicts in sparsely populated countries such as the Middle East, Northern Ireland, the Balkans, Sudan, Indonesia, and Kashmir. Religion has been blamed by religious campaigners for the bulk of disputes between opposing groups. According to studies, religious views have also had a larger part in contributing to the most recent violent conflicts (Rasul, 2009).

Smock enquires if the war in North Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sri Lanka, and Kashmir were caused by religious differences, as many experts assume, or by other causes like land, oil, ethnicity, or historical memory. According to Smock, religion causes conflict in two ways. First, religion shapes community loyalty and identity, and then religion feeds violence by directly revealing these communal loyalties and identities, as well as political objectives that emerge as *casus belli*. In circumstances like the intra-Muslim wars in Iran and Algeria, religion is seen to define ends but not communities. Religious leaders have a role in community mobilisation and work in conjunction with political entrepreneurs in these places. According to religion, they define identities and loyalties. Religion defining political objectives is the second component, and it depicts religion's historical position in relation to political and social developments. Religion's influence in strengthening democracy is widely established in conflict literature (Smock, 2006).

Both religion and identity have participated in these conflicts, as Smock (2006) asserts, in the sense that religious equivalents and movements expecting political change have embraced war as an end outcome. Religious adherence may be given new life by translating political, economic,

cultural, and social dissatisfactions into identity-based grievances with a clear and defined target to the politico-military burdens exacerbated by large-scale wars.

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According to Smock (2006), it remains a recipe for catastrophe when religious conflicts morph into value disagreements. Political violence, inspired by religious views, produces the most atrocious, biased, and cruel effects. Value conflicts appear to be mutually conclusive or zero-sum issues because they feature solid viewpoints and right-and wrong-direction perspectives, and individuals do not want to come to an agreement and resolve their difficulties. As a result, unlike other forms of violence like resource disputes, value conflicts cannot be handled using distributive and pragmatic means (Smock, 2006).

As indicated by Haynes (2009), religion may now be regarded from two perspectives: as a tool to assist in bringing peace to an area and as a tool to help settle disputes, based on evidence that religion can help resolve conflicts and sustain peace. Religion established its function as a weapon for peace by striving to bring antagonistic groups together in Mozambique and Nigeria. Peace and social cohesiveness were finally attained, establishing the groundwork for human growth and advancement. The examples from Israel, Palestine, Sudan, Iraq, Nigeria, Macedonia, and Sudan show how religion plays a key part in the development of a peaceful world. These religious contributions to peacekeeping do not provide healing, but they do provide a useful supplement to secular peacekeeping (Haynes, 2009).

Most religious organisations and their leaders have a wide range of supporters, and they are in a position to assist and fund post-conflict reconstruction as well as give reconciliation aid based on trust and moral authority. Different religions, including Muslims, Protestants, and Catholics, have come together in West Africa to provide leadership and resources to help rebuild society and assist

refugees in areas such as Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, which were ravaged by civil wars (Haynes, 2009).
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Such religious networks are essential for building and maintaining peace across regional and national boundaries. For instance, following the post-election violence in Kenya, members of the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) were involved in a variety of peacebuilding programmes, including providing humanitarian aid to internally displaced persons by providing food and non-food items, as well as psychosocial support such as counselling and performing arts to help those socially affected by the violence. The major purpose of the NCCCK was to promote national and local peace. The council was active in peace-building initiatives on a national level, including participating in a discourse with important parties involved in the violence and attending African Union-led mediation sessions. They also urged the development of measures for transitional justice. The council partnered with various religious leaders, including those from the Muslim and Hindu faiths, to host conversation forums and peace sessions with the warring factions in an attempt to promote long-term peace on the ground.

As a result, religion can be defined as divisive, both as a factor in maintaining peace and cohesiveness and as a factor in conflict; however, when it comes to producing conflict, it is exaggerated. In the previous decade, religious conflict took the lives of tens of thousands of individuals. As a result of the violence, the public's opinion of religion has been tainted. They assert that religion is at the foundation of most international conflicts. As a consequence, the importance of religion in creating and preserving peace is often overlooked by the general population. Religious institutions and leaders might mediate between two contending groups by serving as communication connections and giving peace solutions and training in peacemaking processes. Regardless of the fact that religion is a cause of violence in Sudan (Christians battling

Muslims), Dercon and Gutiérrez-Romero (2012) argue that religion, including African traditional [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) and modern religions, may be the answer to Africa's civil wars and conflicts.

According to research, amid Kenya's post-election violence, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) stepped in with urgent, long-term humanitarian and rebuilding activities. According to Githigaro (2012), the early response to the post-election violence was NCCCK giving humanitarian help, such as food and non-food support, to individuals impacted. There was also psychological assistance, which provided mental and physical help to individuals who had lost loved ones or had been physically or emotionally harmed. Later, religious leaders and other stakeholders attended community forums to assist in discouraging adolescents from engaging in violence. In the Healing and Reconciliation programmes, the NCCCK deployed a number of interventions to promote healing and reconciliation in Kenya following the post-election violence. One of them was providing a psychological assistance programme to post-election violence victims in order to aid their recovery from the pain and suffering they had experienced (Tarimo, 2009; Githigaro, 2012).

The Power of Religion to Bring Peace

When contemplating how religion could play a role in dispute resolution, there are two perspectives to explore. One of these is the one indicated above, when it comes to the involvement of religious denominations in hostilities. The second component is deciding if and how religion may contribute to the preservation of peace. This section examines how religious ideas might assist people in becoming more sympathetic toward one another and the environment in general. It will also look at how various humanitarian organisations use these ideas as a basis, as well as how religious organisations might use religion to bring competing groups together. In addition, in this part, many scholarly theories of peacemaking and religion will be discussed.

Since the beginning of time, people have used their religious beliefs to motivate them to do good things in the pursuit of peace. This suggests that, in spite of the evidence that religion may cause conflict, it can also be used to convey people's attempts to promote peace (Tenaw, 2018).

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Martin Luther King Jr. declared in his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize that he believed a day would come when everyone would kneel before God's sacred places and be recognised for outstanding violence and murder. There would be a torrent of redeeming kindness across the nation. He quoted Mica 4:4 when he declared, "And the lion and the lamb shall lie down together, and every man shall sit beneath his vine and fig tree, and none shall be terrified."

Martin Luther King Jr. claimed that this was a significant motivating force behind his efforts. The Dalai Lama said in a lecture at the Smile Foundation in New Delhi that integrating contemporary education with old Indian wisdom will help people achieve mental serenity. He was discussing universal duty and compassion. As per the Dalai Lama, this would have an influence not just on the past, but also on the future, aiding in the formation of a more compassionate, happy, and peaceful century than the previous one. The Dalai Lama's words have two religious connotations. One is that he refers to old Indian wisdom, which is a cultural as well as a religious idea. Another distinguishing trait is that it was developed by a religious authority figure.

As a result of the underlying academic theory, the religious peace factor is a focus in conflict resolution despite its efficiency and efficacy in achieving religious peace. Religion and peacebuilding are linked because religion's teachings may promote sentiments of empathy and compassion, as well as urge warring parties to reexamine their perspectives and reconcile. Religious leaders and institutions are thought to be connected to their communities, giving them a greater knowledge of conflict and how to overcome it. Religious leaders are employed in conflict mediation because of their capacity to handle disputes from both sides. This is the case because of

their deep links to the community. Religion may assist in the resolution of a dispute by utilising [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) both its functions and contents. Positive religious teachings and an individual with the people's authority, respect, and charisma are highly regarded when employed in conflict resolution or influencing the dispute. Using religious authority and the religious dimension to resolve conflicts has a variety of drawbacks. Religious leaders may look to their followers as puppets; therefore, losing their credibility would have little bearing on the conflict's resolution (Kasomo, 2010).

Using Religion as a Tool for Conflict Resolution

Religious players have a significant role in peacebuilding since religious identity is crucial to peace operations and reconciliation. In the Christian religion, forgiveness and mercy are two main ideals that guide reconciliation efforts, but in Islam, fitrah and Suhl remain two major virtues. These ideals of forgiveness and kindness are informed by Christian texts such as Psalms 85 and Jesus Christ's teachings in the gospels. Christians are instructed to forgive one another in order to be forgiven by God, and to treat one another with kindness in the same way that God treats them.

In the Islamic religion, the values of fitrah and suhl may be found in Hadiths and Quranic writings. Fitrah signifies each person's personal obligation to sustain peace by doing good actions and supporting the growth of harmony. Suhl, which means reconciliation, is linked to fitrah, which encourages individuals to forgive wrongdoers and reconcile them back into society in order to contribute to the fitrah's purpose of establishing peaceful communities (Esposito and Yilmaz, 2010).

In a number of ways, religion may be helpful in settling problems. Religion motivates people to create humanitarian organisations and aid others by inspiring them to do the right thing. Since religion plays such a large role in disputes, some consideration of the religious dimension might help with conflict resolution. A number of successful conflict resolution approaches have been

published by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). Workshops and roundtables have been established in Kashmir to bring together civil society leaders by endeavouring to consider their traditional beliefs in terms of peace and good living concerns. People from many areas of life have attended these seminars and roundtables, and they have created significant ties with other leaders. In a number of nations, this strategy of bringing opposing groups together for dialogue has been adopted. It has been used in Iraq, where the Iraqi Institute of Peace was founded, and in Nigeria, where Pastor Weyu and Imam Mohammed Ashafa founded the Interfaith Mediation Centre. The New Sudan Council of Churches in Sudan also utilised it. On these occasions, conflicting parties were brought together, but the desired purpose of bringing peace was not realised owing to a lack of action. Peace cannot be achieved solely by bringing people together and talking; action is required as well. Forming alliances with (inter)national political and other organisations is one of these actions (Coward & Smith, 2004).

The King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) has won multiple awards for its success in settling disputes. KAICIID assisted in the coordination of interfaith projects and the establishment of Interfaith Dialogue Forums for Peace in Nigeria. This organisation has played a vital role in the development of religious leadership and civil society activities aimed at promoting peace and harmony among people of all religions. In Myanmar, they built an interfaith conversation and a peace network, as well as designing and distributing a peace study guide and analysing the needs of the people. KAICIID has a long list of achievements in the field of conflict resolution. KAICIID and USIP both employ the same approach, although KAICIID has had more success. This is due to the fact that they cooperate with the government and have a more faith-based approach. Although it may be difficult to relate these organisations to conflict resolution, they do demonstrate that religion

may play a role in conflict resolution and that the religious dimension can be used to address conflicts (Abu-Nimer, 2001).
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1.9 Gaps in the Literature

Based on the foregoing literature, it was discovered through the review that scholars have not sufficiently explored the role of religious organisations in conflict settlement in Africa. As a result, this research will fill in these gaps by looking at Africa's conflict resolution processes, the link between religion and conflict, and the role those religious organisations may play in conflict settlement.

The studied literature provides an overview of the many techniques adopted by religious networks to promote peace, as well as an overview of the numerous dimensions through which religion impacts conflict dynamics and religious organisations' efforts to settle disputes in African nations. Disagreements in accepted definitions of religion, religious institutions, and religious organizations, on the other hand, make it difficult to categorise people, events, and processes involved in conflict or peacebuilding. Notwithstanding universal agreement that conflict remains a global issue, there remain gaps in the literature due to a lack of overall clarity on what defines a religious conflict. There appears to be consensus that a conflict does not have to be waged entirely on religious issues to be classified as a "religious war." That is, whether the issues at hand are strictly religious or not, makes no difference. Because it is impossible to describe a dispute that is purely about religious concerns and excludes non-religious components, this is a crucial premise when dealing with religious conflict. Nevertheless, the extent of religious engagement needed for a dispute to be classified as religious is a point of contention. The majority of individuals think that non-religious causes play a role in religious disagreements. Non-religious issues, including corrupt and ineffective governments, income disparity, and

nationalism, are usually identified as intensifying or otherwise influencing religious domestic conflicts. However, this does not exclude the potential of other causes influencing religious conflicts.

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1.10 Research Methodology

1.10.1 Research Approach

A qualitative research approach was employed for this study. According to Frels and Onwuegbuzie (2013), qualitative research is based on the individual perceptions of survey respondents to arrive at accurate responses with respect to the investigated phenomenon. Hence, this method was ideal for adoption so as to determine the attitudes, views, understanding, and knowledge regarding conflict and peacebuilding initiatives implementation in selected West African countries.

1.10.2 Research Design

A case study research design was employed for this study. As indicated by Yin (2013), a case study is an empirical investigation undertaken to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular phenomenon. It is considered both a process of inquiry into a case and the outcome of that inquiry. The case study was considered an appropriate research design for this study because it focused on the investigation and description of a contemporary phenomenon in depth in its natural context and is suitable for examining religious organisations' role in conflict and peacebuilding in selected West African countries using the case study of the Catholic Church.

1.10.3 Target Population

In this study, the target population involved all stakeholders of faith-based organisations, particularly the Catholic Church, who carry out peacebuilding activities. They include, but are not limited to, Catholic religious leaders, conflict management entities, etc.

1.10.4 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

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A sample is a portion of the total population that is of interest in a study, which can adequately represent the entire population during the study. For the purpose of this study, Ghana and Nigeria were the countries selected to participate in the study. From these, ten (10) participants were chosen through a purposive sampling technique. They included individuals from major religious organisations, particularly the Catholic Church and other key faith-based players operating in Ghana and Nigeria. Such organizations' executives were interviewed about their experiences with conflict resolution, peacebuilding, development, and advocacy.

1.10.5 Data Sources

Data was collected both from primary and secondary sources.

Primary data was collected through interviews with key informants. As a result of the interview protocol, it is possible to analyse both different aspects and contextual meanings. Individuals' opinions, views, and convictions were gathered in these areas. Interviews with individuals from several major religious organisations and other key faith-based players operating in West Africa were also included. Such organizations' executives were interviewed about their experiences with conflict resolution, peacebuilding, development, and advocacy. As a consequence, the viewpoints of people who were interviewed for this study were reflected, which represents their current or prospective engagement in peacebuilding efforts.

In addition, secondary data was gathered from online sources, books, journals, and articles in libraries, as well as scholarly literature (both published and unpublished). The study also used written materials such as newspapers, graduate project papers and theses, government reports, and peace and conflict journals in addition to printed materials. This was to gather additional

information relating to religious organisations' unique roles in peace-building operations in the
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case study nations, including relief, development, and issue advocacy.

1.10.6 Data Collection Tools

Interviews, according to Bryman (2008), are an effective way to gain access to people's perspectives and meanings of circumstances. Again, interviews are useful for obtaining participants' ideas, beliefs, and thoughts. To assist the researcher and supervise the interview process, an interview guide was used. This enabled the researcher to obtain the perspectives, attitudes, and opinions of the study participants pertaining to the study topic.

1.10.7 Data Analysis, Management and Presentation

The data collected was analysed to derive the findings. The collected data was arranged and coded by giving labels to distinct and familiar thoughts. The data was analysed through thematic analysis. Thus, the coded data was discussed under themes. These themes were further sub-themed for pattern matching. Responses were quoted in the analysis to ensure the thoughts of the respondents were captured and to reflect the findings of the study.

1.10.8 Ethical Considerations

As the study involved individuals, ethical considerations had to be tackled. As a consequence, the research was carried out in accordance with basic research ethics. Before the data collection, the participants' permission was sought. In addition, the researcher protected the privacy of both the participants and the research organisation. Participants were also told that their comments would only be utilised for academic reasons, and that any personal information they gave would be kept private. The interviewee further informed the attendees that they were free to leave at any time.

1.10.9 Chapter Organisation

The study is comprised of four chapters, summarized as follows.

Chapter One (1) - Introduction.

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Chapter Two (2)-Overview of the Link between Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding

Chapter Three (3) – The Role of the Catholic Church in Conflict and Peacebuilding in Selected West African Countries

Chapter Four (4) Summary of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

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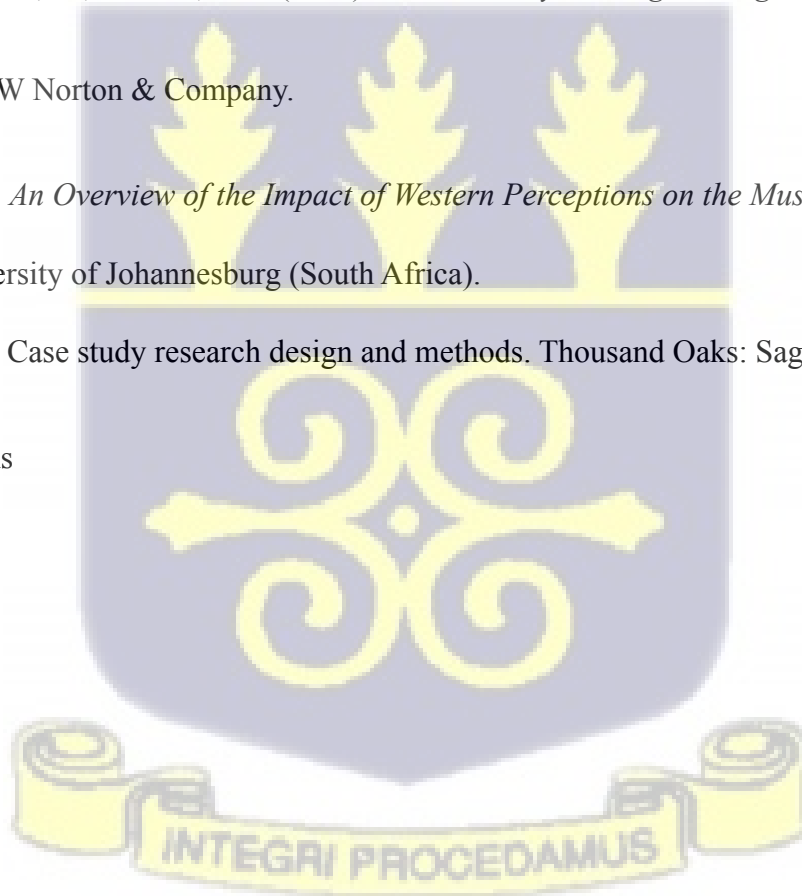
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Publications



CHAPTER TWO

AN OVERVIEW OF THE LINK BETWEEN RELIGION, CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING

2.0 Introduction

Religion plays a significant role in shaping cultural norms and values. Religion is integrally intertwined in individual and communal notions of peace because it confronts the most important existential dilemmas of human life (e.g., freedom and inevitability, fear and faith, security and insecurity, good and wrong, and holy and profane) (Marx & Engels, 2012). Religion has also developed laws and ideas that have provided civilization with cultural commitments to critical peace-related values, such as empathy, openness to, and even love for strangers, and the suppression of unbridled ego (Caputo, 2013).

Whereas religion has always played a role in international politics, it has received additional attention following the Iranian Revolution, the end of the Cold War, and the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Modernization and secularisation appeared to lessen world wars after the Cold War. However, ethnic or religious ties play a role in many current worldwide conflicts. A cursory examination of the world's deadliest conflicts demonstrates the pressing need to better

comprehend religion's role in human strife (Wallenstein, 2018). Religious disagreements are getting more difficult to reconcile. Religious conflicts are difficult to control militarily because they are intellectual battles (Atran & Ginges, 2012). This is demonstrated by the rate at which these confrontations escalate and continue.

Nevertheless, according to Smith and Hackett (2012), religion may be used to manage and reconcile conflict, just as it has been used to influence it. After all, no faith promotes conflict. As a result, religion may certainly contribute to the bridging of cultural divisions, the promotion of international human rights, the redress of severe injustices, and the promotion of peaceful conflict resolution (Karakaya, 2015). The complicated links between religion, conflict, and peace building are examined in this chapter. It examines how religion contributes to societal divides that lead to conflict and instability. Furthermore, the chapter looks at how religious actors in Africa (West Africa) have constructed bridges to enhance societal cohesion.

2.1 Religion and Conflict

Notwithstanding previous research (e.g., Sachs, 2010) revealing that religion remains strongly linked with prosocial behaviour, religion has been widely discussed as a major reason for conflict, particularly Islamic terrorism, throughout the last two decades (see: Berman & Laitin, 2008; LaFree & Ackerman, 2009). Ranstorp (1996) investigates a number of terrorist episodes in the 1990s, ranging from the doomsday cult Aum Shin Rikyo to the radical Islamist group al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya, to show that individuals claiming to be led by God have expanded their terrorist operations. He feels that the rise in terrorist violence is disproportionately hurting Muslim communities because "religion and politics are inextricably linked" in Islam (Ranstorp, 1996, p. 44). Juergensmeyer (2003) looked into a variety of religiously inspired terrorism incidents, including Christians bombing abortion clinics, Protestants and Catholics associated with conflict

in Northern Ireland, Muslim factions carrying out jihadi-style attacks, as well as Jews who aided Yitzhak Rabin's assassination. Juergensm found numerous similarities among such religiously motivated terrorists, which include a conceptualization of conflict as symbolic, instead of strategic, a desire to fight the demeaning powers of modernism, and a belief in themselves as heroic transformational leaders. Stern (2004) conducted interviews with Muslim extremists in Middle Eastern refugee centers, Christian anti-abortion campaigners in the US, among others. She discovered that the root of religious violence was a combination of humiliation and alienation from modern institutions' "perceived decay." According to Avalos (2005), religion provides a fictitious availability of limited resources for mankind to strive for. Those without limited resources desire them, while those who desire to maintain them. The limited resources during religious conflict remain intangible goods that religion provides, which include blessings and everlasting salvation.

Some experts, on the other hand, are sceptical about the link between religion and conflict. For instance, according to Pape (2005), over 95% of the suicide terrorists in his research were driven by a secular instead of a religious purpose: forcing democracies to withdraw their armed troops from the perpetrators' countries. Indeed, Assaf Moghadam (2005, p. 98–99) claims that separating religious from secular reasons remains difficult in and of itself.

Again, some academics contend that conflict is caused by larger political and economic causes, which are often not linked to religion. For instance, thorough research relates to ethnic polarisation (Montalvo & Reynal-Queral, 2005), limited economic opportunity (Mousseau, 2011), and challenges to managing resources in contentious conflict (McCauley, 2013).

Lastly, studies claim that religion and conflict are linked, albeit in a complex manner. Whereas religions (such as Islam) remain unrelated to terrorism in general, Juergensmeyer (2006) claims

that whenever conflicts are framed as religiously motivated, they can be considered "cosmic wars," in which traditional rules against violent acts are broken and altercations become more barbarous and brutal. Initially, these issues were mostly about marginalisation and societal discontent, not religious teaching or conviction. "However, the idea that religion remains the means by which these concerns are conveyed renders it worisome," Juergensmeyer (2006, p.141) observes. Likewise, Hoffman (1995) claims that religion may legitimate violent acts and increase their severity by turning violent conflicts into heavenly obligations.

2.1.1 The Church and Conflict

The mediaeval Christian church's history is a terrible one. Religious conflicts may quickly escalate to bloodshed, as shown by Martin Luther's protestant radical reformation followers and the "Holy War." (Roth, 2002). In 1095, Pope Urban II held a sermon in which he urged Frankish knights to march to the East in order to liberate Christians from Islamic dominion and the Holy Sepulchre from Muslim domination. War for the cause of the Church became respectable, if not desirable. In the mid-nineteenth century, Pope Leo IV declared that anybody who died in battle for the Church would receive a divine recompense. Later, Pope John VIII designated victims of holy war martyrs, absolving them of their sins if they died fighting. His heart, on the other hand, should be pure. Nicholas I said that men should not bear arms for their sins in order to combat the unfaithful (Kéry & Kery, 1999).

Christianity, like other African religions, has been seen wielding authority and exacerbating regional conflicts. Throughout the colonial period, Christianity was introduced to the majority of Sub-Saharan African countries (Manala, 2013). According to Bompani (2015), the colonial political environment benefited missionaries and their converts, even if they did not employ

physical coercion to convert people to Christianity. Christian ideas and practices have regularly played a role in conflict and bloodshed in post-colonial African countries.

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Various churches' involvement in the country's subsequent turmoil resulted in the death of an estimated 1 million tutsi (Mller, 2006). According to Longman's research, Christian churches were heavily implicated in Rwanda's 1994 Tutsi massacre. The majority of Rwandese were slaughtered, according to the report, at various church-owned "holy places" that acted as killing fields. Following President Juvenal Habyarimana's killing in 1994, the Tutsi ethnic minority fled to Catholic and Protestant churches for safety. This did not deter Hutu fanatics from chasing and murdering Tutsis in churches. Churches were bombed, and many Christians, including clergy and lay leaders, were killed. The Hutu exploited the Hamitic myth (the Old Testament's concept of the "lost tribe of Israel") to portray the Tutsi as foreign conquerors from Ethiopia, to which they should return. This was shown by their remains being dumped into the Nyabarongo River in Ethiopia (Longman, 2001). The Rwandan genocide was perpetrated by individual Roman Catholic priests while the Rwandan Catholic hierarchy stayed mute. Churches, on the other hand, were often deafeningly silent (Schliesser, 2018).

The fact that militias attended mass before killing missions, and that some killers halted during massacres to pray at the altar, suggests that the killers believed their crimes were justified by church doctrines. Instead of being "neutral," Rwanda's Christian churches assisted in the genocide (Longman, 2001). The church's continuous backing for the Hutu-led state was misinterpreted as an endorsement of the anti-Tutsi rhetoric. By pushing their people to embrace the new administration, church leaders gave the genocide organisers legitimacy. As a result, they did not issue a formal condemnation of church desecration, creating the impression of sympathy for the atrocities. In churches around the country, Interahamwe militants assaulted and slaughtered Tutsis.

An attack by Tutsi-dominated rebel forces led church staff to kill, with the killings justified as a protective measure (Longman, 2001).
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2.1.2 Islam and Conflict

According to historians, early Muslims escaped persecution by non-Muslim Meccan elites and brought Islam to Africa as a refugee religion (615–616). They fled to the Christian country of Aksum (modern-day Ethiopia) for safety, where the kind King permitted them to openly practise their faith (Voges, 2012). In the 7th century, the first contact between Islam and Christianity on African territory was undoubtedly amicable. Despite this long history of peaceful coexistence, Muslim-Christian relations in Sub-Saharan Africa have become more fraught with distrust, strife, and hostility.

Approximately half of Africa's population is Muslim, and African Muslims account for nearly a quarter of all Muslims worldwide. The existence of Islam on the continent varies depending on the location and whether Muslims form a majority or minority population. Peace suggestions and exhortations abound throughout the Holy Quran and the Hadith of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). As the Holy Prophet taught, they stress compassion, tolerance, and patience while opposing extremism and violence. Islam in Africa, as elsewhere in the globe, is connected with both positive and negative notions (Alsheha, 2012).

African Muslim reform movements have morphed into Salafi-jihadist organisations that employ violence to attain their political objectives. One of the main reasons for the recent decline in peace in some parts of Africa is the rise of Salafi-jihadi groups such as Boko Haram in Nigeria, al-Shabaab in Somalia and Kenya, the Movement for Monotheism and Jihad (MUJAO), and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) in Mali and parts of West Africa. These and other Islamic

organisations in Africa have insisted on establishing an Islamic state by "sword jihad." To further their objective, they have exploited selective Qur'anic interpretation (Akhter & Qadoos, 2017).

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The intricacies of the relationship between Islam and violence in Sub-Saharan Africa are shown by al-Shabaab's in Somalia, which has long fought for the formation of an Islamic state (Ingiriis, 2018). The Islamist regime in Sudan exploited Islamic themes and symbols to justify murder against dhimmis throughout the civil war (second-class citizens, such as African indigenous religionists and Christians). In Southern Sudan, prominent Islamic clerics issued a religious decree (fatwa) in 1992 that legalised jihad. The Sudanese Islamist government responded by launching a military operation against the southern Sudanese as a result of this proclamation (Sharkey, 2012).

Tensions between Muslim and Christian communities in Nigeria, for example, have fostered societal hostility and resulted in the deaths of numerous people. The rising tensions and conflicts in Nigeria between Christian and Muslim communities are rooted in both pre-and post-colonial histories and policies, as well as the post-colonial emergence of religious revivalist and reformist movements concerned with "contesting public space" and wielding political power in an economic, social, and political context (Salawu, 2010). In mostly Muslim northern Nigeria, the adoption of Islamic law (sharia) in the late 1990s heightened tensions between Muslims and Christians. Twelve northern states had included sharia law in their constitutions by 2003. Christians in these countries feel disenfranchised. As a response, Christians, notably Pentecostals, mobilised to "resist attempts to Islamize Nigeria" and "turn Nigeria into Christian territory." (Angerbrandt, 2011). Furthermore, Salafi-jihadi organisations, notably Boko Haram, have been active in Nigeria since the 1980s, wreaking havoc in northern and central Nigeria (Aghedo & Osumah, 2012). In 2012, the Salafi-jihadi organisations AQMI and MUJAO both sought to create

an Islamic caliphate in Mali. Boko Haram, al Shabaab, and other religio-political Malian organisations have all "gained territorial control over sections of their own nations" as a result of their "desire for spatial isolation" (Lecocq, 2013).

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Salafi-jihadi leaders in other African nations provide more proof of their deliberate ability to portray violence in Islamic terms. As a result of this circumstance, moderate Muslims have felt forced to act and prevent this information manipulation. Muslim leaders in Kenya have devised programmes to oppose jihadi ideology, such as the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims, the Center for Ihsan and Educational Development, and Building Resilience against Violent Extremism (BRAVE). Anti-jihadi media and social media activities have benefited greatly from BRAVE (Ndzovu, 2018).

2.1.3 Religious Conflicts in Ghana

Whereas Ghana's religious conflicts are not as severe as those in other West African nations, there seem to be long-standing religious conflicts in Ghana, many of which entail intra- and interethnic animosity and sometimes turn violent. In the Northern, Brong-Ahafo, and Ashanti regions, Muslims have been involved in violent incidents. In 1996, for example, a religious conflict between Kotokoli and Dagomba at the Akim Oda Zongo resulted in six murders, the burning of ten houses, and the destruction of property worth millions of cedis (GT, 17/9/96). Wa, Upper West Region (GTR, 15/12/97), Tamale, Northern Region (GT, 6/12/1997), and Kumasi, Ashanti Region (GT, 5/9/98) have all recorded Muslim-Christian conflicts. At Wenchi in the Brong Ahafo Region, conflicts between Tijaniya and Al Sunna Muslims occurred in 1994 and 1998 (GT, 6/10/97; 29/1/98). A dispute between the two parties over ownership rights to the Wenchi Muslim cemetery sparked the 1998 rioting, which resulted in four deaths, twenty-four major injuries, and property destruction (GT, 19/1/98). When the then-Inspector General of Police (IGP) indicated that if

foreigners were proven to be behind the violence, they would be deported (GT, 27/1/1998), he implied that there could be non-Ghanaians involved in the conflict. Around the same time, a conflict between the Tijanniya and the Al-Sunni occurred in Tamale, Northern Region, in which one person was killed and numerous others were hurt (GT 9/12/97). Police were invited to stop violence in another dispute between Muslims in Chereponi, Northern Region, about who should succeed the sitting imam after he died (GT, 15/4/2000). Although there have been violent clashes between Muslims and Christians, they are far less common. There were no instances of violence between Muslims and Christians during the era when all intra-Muslim disagreements were documented (Tsikata & Seini, 2004).

A religious conflict that has been much reported and debated is between the traditional religious authorities of the Ga Traditional State and Christian churches operating in several suburbs of the capital, Accra. The annual ban on drumming and dancing, which precedes the Homowo festival of the Ga people, is the point of conflict as several Christian churches have refused to observe the ban and have been attacked by organised unofficial enforcers of the ban (Tsikata & Seini, 2004).

2.1.4 Conflict between Religious Communities in Nigeria

Nigeria's religious conflict between Muslims and Christians is possibly the country's most serious political issue (Korieh & Njoku, 2007). Since the 1960s, religion has played a significant role in the Nigerian civil war, with missionaries and religious partisans competing for souls, frequently resulting in fatal warfare. Tensions between them arose in the 1980s, when many Christians perceived that the nation's predominantly Muslim north had enormous political and economic power. The government's covert decision to join the 45-member Islamic Conference Organization (OIC), through which Saudi Arabia and Iran vie for diplomatic and political dominance with their competing views of a suitable Islamic society, heightened tensions. The government of Nigeria's

reasons for joining the OIC were most largely driven solely by economic considerations. Oil-rich OIC members would have anticipated financial assistance. However, several Christians believed that Nigeria's OIC membership would jeopardise the country's secular status and damage Christians' position. Muslim supporters say that Nigeria is a part of the Commonwealth, a "Christian" organisation overseen by the British monarch, who is a Christian Protestant by law (Haynes, 2016). The problem remained unsolved until 1987, when a fresh theological argument emerged.

Tensions between the two factions had already spilled into political confrontation. Earlier in 1987, anti-Christian protests erupted in portions of northern Nigeria, and they erupted again in May and October 1991. Over 3,000 people were murdered in Christian-Muslim confrontations between 1987 and 1993. In May 1992, Christian Kafafs attacked Muslim Hausa and Fulani in a series of fierce conflicts, killing roughly 1,000 people. Churches were set on fire, killing and wounding Christians as well as Muslims (Samaila, 2008). The continuation of the military dictatorship, a regime that sought to avoid public political debates, provided the political framework for this religious violence. As a result, Muslim public outrage and dissatisfaction were channelled towards religious matters, with political parties outlawed and no legislature in place. As a result, numerous ordinary Muslims became 'fundamentalists,' dreading what they saw to be an expanding danger from Islam, whereas several Christians reacted (Sulaiman, 2016).

Inter-religious conflict, especially involving Muslim and Christian groups, has become a common element of life in Nigeria ever since the early 1990s. One of the worst-affected states was Kaduna, in northern Nigeria. In general, Nigeria saw a high degree of religious violence in the 1990s, with over 10,000 people killed, with Kaduna being the deadliest region (Lamorde, 2018).

2.2 Defining Peace and Peacebuilding

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Peace is sometimes defined as the absence of conflict. However, peace, wealth, and democracy form a mutually reinforcing triangle (Loyd, 2012). Economic development and resource allocation cannot be equal in the absence of democracy. Inequalities become more pronounced and could become a cause of conflict without sustained growth, and developmental progress is quickly lost without stability (Stewart, 2016). Positive peace denotes the absence of implicit and systemic hostility, oppressive institutions, and unequal relationships; it encompasses peace on many levels, including acts, attitudes, and structures (Galtung & Fischer, 2013). According to Shields (2017), the re-establishment of relationships, the constructive settlement of problems, and the creation of social institutions that represent the demands of the whole population are all examples of positive peace. All parts of a healthy society that one may imagine for oneself are included in positive peace: universal justice, financial well-being, environmental harmony, and other essential ideals. It describes a situation in which fairness and equality reign supreme, with the goal of promoting and improving the quality of life for people (Jeffrey & Pruitt, 2019).

As one might expect, the term "peace building" is not clearly defined and is applied to a variety of situations. Following the proclamation of Boutros Boutros-Ghali, then-Secretary-General of the United Nations, on his Agenda for Peace in 1992, the term "peacebuilding" became popular (Boutros-Ghali, 1992). Since then, the term "peace-enhancing work" has become the most widely used to describe it, and it places a high value on how things are carried out. It necessitates the use of a wide range of strategies, procedures, and phases in order to transform only governance styles and equitable systems into more long-term and harmonious partnerships. The United Nations distinguishes between several sorts of involvement to achieve a desired outcome (United Nations, 2010). The major sorts of action, in addition to humanitarian aid or emergency aid aimed at providing at-risk communities with an immediate way to survive, are: Peacekeeping entails taking

steps to cease hostilities and reaching an accord by diplomatic, political, and military methods, if necessary, with a focus on diplomatic attempts to end war (Bellamy et al., 2015). Religion and international relations' academic and policy-oriented literature abounds, claiming that religion is a helpful, if not indispensable, instrument for achieving peace. According to Carter et al. (2015), religious beliefs, values, religious leaders, and faith-based organisations are regarded to have significant power to nurture peace in each and every culture and/or in the worldwide arena. Religious stakeholders could play a range of functions in conflict management, including educators, advocates, and mediators. They can potentially influence behaviors, offer education, health, or relief services for peace-building; disseminate ideas like democracy and freedom, and encourage disarmament (Phan, 2016).

2.3 Religion and Peace

A large body of evidence suggests that religion discourages aberrant and unlawful behaviour (e.g: Olson et al., 2006; Sherkat et al., 2011; Adamczyk, 2012; Adamczyk et al., 2017). Individuals who believe religion remains essential are more inclined to follow religious prohibitions against criminal activity effectively, study religious materials and participate actively in their beliefs (Pew Research Center, 2008, as cited in Miller, 2008). People are exposed to how their religion sees certain acts through such events. As a consequence, extremely religious people are less prone to condone illegal and immoral behaviour (Adamczyk & Palmer, 2008; Adamczyk & Felson, 2012).

Control theory, which is based on Durkheim's (1912–1952) work, proposes that people more religiously engaged are socialised into ideals and standards of loyalty and ties, which limit their criminal behavior (Durkheim & Swain, 2008). These practices involve sanctioning mechanisms that aid in ensuring and maintaining social norm compliance (Davis, 1948, pp.73–74), and belief systems that legitimise normative behaviour (Wuthnow, 1995; Greeley, 1997).

Religious people remain less inclined to participate in illegal action since their beliefs encourage prevalent standards and they remain more inclined to have relationships with law-abiding people. [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh)

According to a large body of studies (Sherkat et al., 2011; Adamczyk et al., 2017), religion does, in fact, inhibit a wide spectrum of aberrant and criminal behaviours.

Just recently the role of religion in fostering peace has been investigated and explained. The three faiths of Abraham provide potent peacemaking justifications. Previously, religious individuals and organisations have mediated and reached an agreement. Various churches participated in the anti-apartheid and peaceful transition campaigns in South Africa. The most significant instance is the successful mediation of the Mozambique civil war in 1992 by the Rome-based Sant'Egidio Group (Smock, 2006).

Religious peacemaking appears to be a good reaction to religious abuse, given the development of religious conflict and Appleby's "ambivalence of the holy." (Appleby, 2008). Scholars, governments, and non-governmental organisations have all become increasingly aware of religion's role in supporting peace. The Good Friday Agreement, which ended the decades-long "Troubles" in Northern Ireland in 1998, is one such example. At the request of Pope Benedict XVI, a secret meeting was called between Catholic Father Alex Reid, John Hume, the head of the Social Democratic and Labour Parties, and Gerry Adams, the leader of Sinn Fein (Jafari, 2007). The Protestant Reverend Roy Magee urged his congregation to embrace a ceasefire in 1994, in addition to visiting notable loyalists in jail.

Both Pastor James Wuye and Imam Mohammed Ashafa also have a religious peacemaking tale to tell. In 1992, they engaged in a religious war. In Zongon Kataf, Wuye lost his right arm, while Ashafa lost his spiritual teacher and two cousins. In 1995, they recognised that both religions had peace warrants. To foster interfaith cooperation, they established the Interfaith Mediation Centre

(Piereder, 2014). They have been working to promote religious unity in Kaduna since then. Wuye [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) and Ashafa were invited by the Plateau State Administrator to visit Yelwa-Nshar in November 2004. It took five days of sharing and haggling to get everything done. It was the first time the two groups had met face-to-face. To facilitate the meeting, Wuye and Ashafa employed a combination of preaching and mediation. The pastor frequently alluded to the Koran, but the imam resorted to the Bible.

2.4 Religious Approaches to Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding

As on the opposite side of religious conflict, the role those religious players may offer in peacebuilding has been extensively examined and analysed. During the past few decades, religious leaders and organisations have been a powerful force for social justice and the peace movement in the world at large. Religion contributes to peace-building through empowering the weak, moulding the moral-political context, encouraging solidarity, and giving humanitarian aid. People might be motivated by assisting protest movements. Examples are: the work of the World Council of Churches and the All Africa Conference of Churches to mediate the cessation of the Sudan conflict in 1972 (Moix, 2006); and attempts made in Nicaragua in the 19th century by John Paul Lederach (Professor of International Peace-building at the University of Notre Dame). Again, several churches in South Africa were at the forefront of the fight against apartheid and the peaceful transfer of power. The effective arbitration conducted by the Rome-based Community of Sant'Egidio to assist in ending the civil conflict in Mozambique in 1992 remains one of the most spectacular and widely quoted incidents (Smock, 2006). Additional instances of religious leaders and faith-based non-governmental organisations (NGOs) serving major roles as arbitrators in track II diplomacy initiatives are less well-known yet crucial. Various initiatives have been made in the Middle East, for example, to promote an interreligious "track" that runs alongside political diplomacy.

In the 1980s, churches issued a declaration recognising the goals of the East and West's peace movements, as well as God's anti-bomb campaign in North America and Europe. This suggests that people and religious groups from a variety of religious affiliations are increasingly active in attempting to stop conflict and support post-conflict reconciliation in many regions of the globe (Sisk, 2011).

2.4.1 Mediation

Third-party engagement projects in which religious beliefs, artefacts (i.e., symbols, documents, photographs, thoughts, etc.) and organisations assume a prominent role are referred to as faith-based mediation. The use of sacred artefacts and the involvement of religious actors in mediation is nothing new. For example, in 1985, the Pope effectively mediated a disagreement between Chile and Argentina over the Beagle Channel (Garrette, 1985, cited in Rugar, 2020). Other religious players, like Quakers and the Interfaith Mediation Center in Nigeria, have also mediated conflicts in many regions of the world (Abu-Nimer, 2001). Sierra Leone remains another example of how the mediator's religious allegiance influenced the outcome. Religious players in Sierra Leone, like the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL), have figured prominently in supporting reconciliation and mediation efforts, as well as drafting and signing the Lome Peace Agreement.

Mosques and churches were both key participants in Sierra Leone's spiritual, cultural, and socio-economic progress before and post-independence, which was amongst the reasons for the founding and engagement of IRCSL. When the conflict erupted, ordinary Muslims and Christians pushed their religious leaders to participate actively in halting the slaughter (Turay & English, 2008). IRCSL leaders have used their religious integrity and influence to peacefully resolve the

dispute by actively pursuing dialogue with the coup plotters, paying attention to their concerns, [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) and denouncing the coup and the junta's human rights atrocities.

In addition, as part of a peaceful resolution attempt, IRCSL recommended organising a national consultative conference, sealing the Liberian border, and designating a peace ambassador. The Council's active participation in promoting and supporting the discussions that resulted in the Lome Agreement was recognised by granting the IRCSL a leading role in the Council of Elders and Religious Leaders that will be constituted to resolve disagreements over the Agreement's interpretation (Turay & English, 2008). IRCSL members have been participating in reconciliation, assistance, human rights education, democracy, and reintegration projects, notably for children and combatants, despite the fact that the Council was never created. IRCSL was also successful in convincing the rebels to free fifty-four abducted children.

Another instance in which the mediator's religious affiliation had a significant impact on the mediation process is the Civil War. With their informal stature and lengthy experience at the conference, the President of Niger, a member of the Organization of African States' (OAS) Advisory Committee, suggested that Quakers hold a secret meeting of lower-level officials from both sides to consider potential areas of collaboration (Connolly, 2014). The involvement of the Quakers was regarded as successful, since both the insurgents and the government agreed to hold a peace conference. Despite the fact that the Biafrans remained the most refractory group when it came to the discussions, the Quakers managed to persuade the Biafrans, "the Quakers managed to persuade the Biafrans that we should go to the Peace Conference and continue talking when the battle was underway" (Connolly, 2014).

2.4.2 Convening Dialogues

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Governments and organisations have embraced interfaith dialogue as a crucial instrument for establishing peace in situations where there is a religious component to the dispute. "Building social capital" is a term used in certain academic papers to describe the process of creating ties between different groups (van Ommering, 2009). There are several instances of this type of activity, which is a major emphasis of several faith-based organisations. Here are a few examples: In Israel, the Interreligious Coordinating Council brings together 60 faith-based organisations and supports conversation and study groups, including the study of each other's sacred texts, to create deeper understanding (van Ommering, 2009). Likewise, Caritas Southern Africa invites blacks together in South Africa to collaborate on community initiatives in an attempt to build compassion and tolerance across hostile groups. Following the violence in 2001, various groups in Jos, Nigeria, engaged in or sponsored peace-building and conversation workshops. The Nigerian Christian Association (CAN) hosted Christian and Muslim gatherings, took part in interfaith workshops, and built relationships with Muslim counterparts. Jamatul Nasril Islam, an Islamic group, spearheaded the Christian-Muslim dialogue and took part in all government-sponsored peace committees (Best & Rakodi, 2011). It appeared that religiously mixed seminars helped participants gain confidence. Other strategies included mixed-faith sports tournaments, nonviolence courses, speaking to a variety of groups, including students and indigenous people, and broadcasting unification messages on the media (Best & Rakodi, 2011).

2.4.3 Development Aid and Humanitarian Assistance

In terms of Islam, there remains a rising incidence of Islamic NGOs operating in various areas of Africa. These groups' actions are stated to be an "entanglement of help and umma." (Soares & Otayek, 2007). In other words, they integrate various development and humanitarian assistance activities, like medical aid, distribution of food, and education, with proselytising activities, which

include promoting specific forms of moral livelihood and inculcating a feeling of belongingness to the umma, the Islamic community's global community. As a result, the activities of these groups may be connected to the region's wider Islamization and Arabization processes. Mayke Kaag reported eleven Islamic NGOs in the central African country of Chad in 2004, six of which were Saudi-based, one Kuwaiti, one Libyan, and three Sudanese, with money coming from these and many other countries based on Islamic ideals of cooperation and charity (zakat and sadaqa).

The Catholic Church plays a prominent role in the development sector when it comes to Christianity. In several African nations, the Catholic Church has positioned itself as a key actor in education and healthcare during and after the colonial period. In 2009, according to Gifford (2015, pp. 86, 90, as cited in hlmann et al., 2020), "it was reported of over 12,000 Catholic children's schools, 33,000 elementary schools, and approximately 10,000 secondary schools, including about 20 Catholic universities," Along with orphanages, aged homes, facilities for mentally challenged individuals, and rehabilitation centres, the church "controlled" 16,178 health centres, including 1,074 hospitals and 5,373 out-patient clinics. The Catholic Church has made tremendous efforts and extended its operational territory in recent years, while healthcare and education have long been essential operations. As Nigerian theologian Stan Chu Ilo says, the church has played a significant role in development since the Second Vatican Council ended in 1965. One of the reasons for this is a renewal of the Church's self-understanding in relation to the social environment in which the gospel ought to be delivered. Evangelization is essential, and it necessitates involvement in the social circumstances of those who will hear the gospel (Ilo, 2014). The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965) involved several meetings in Rome that brought together all Catholic Bishops from across the globe to formulate a new agenda for the church and its role across the globe. The Social Teaching tradition, which is focused on Catholic teaching about human dignity and the common good in society, covers a wide variety of socioeconomic

and political issues, *Gaudium et Spes*, the 1965 "Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World," expressed this in one of the Council's formal publications. Liberation theology arose in Latin America and, to a lesser degree, Africa in the aftermath of Vatican Council II. It is founded on the belief that God is on the side of the impoverished and that the church's role is to strive for socio-economic justice. As a result of these developments, the Catholic Church in several African nations has grown increasingly active in development-related initiatives in the past few years (Lauterbach, 2016). These initiatives are often managed through Commissions for Justice and Peace and/or Commissions for development, which remain under the ultimate control of national conferences of Catholic bishops, with financing coming from both Western Catholic and secular development groups (Lauterbach, 2016).

2.5 Religious NGOs at the United Nations

From its very inception, the United Nations has maintained relationships with non-state actors. During the 1990s, players of this type became more active in transnational efforts to achieve global social and economic justice, which led to the formalisation of their relationships with the United Nations (Carrette & Trigeaud, 2013). Although the importance of religion in international relations is a well-established field of study, the engagement of religious NGOs in UN matters has attracted little attention until lately, despite the fact that religion and religious organisations have been at the UN since its inception. Over the past sixty years, tremendous transformations in geopolitical reality have impacted the interaction between religious players and the United Nations, as well as the growing tenacity with which religious groups have attempted to infuse their voice into public discussion. The conditions of the NGO-UN relationship were initially defined in Article 71 of the United Nations Charter, which indicates that the Economic and Social Council, one of the UN's main organs, may consult with (primarily international) "non-governmental organisations" with expertise in issues pertaining to the Council's deliberations. The

Charter succeeded in establishing the essential political space for the UN and civil society groups to communicate and collaborate on this basis.

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From 1945 to about 1990, the first generation of NGO-UN cooperation was characterised by primarily formal, arms-length participation by NGOs in UN deliberative processes. The Second Vatican Council (1962–1965), which aimed at redefining the Church's relationship with society today, developing Catholic teaching on issues of social justice, and profoundly impacting Catholics' understanding of their role in the international arena, was particularly significant for Catholic organisations. The Holy See received a "Permanent Observer" position at the United Nations in 1964, making it the first non-member state and religious organisation to do so. In about the same period, the United Methodist Church built the 12-story Church Center for the United Nations, which acts as a key meeting site for religious and other NGOs and remains, possibly, the most conspicuous presence of religion at the UN today. Interstate wars, humanitarian crises, national government capacity declines, and rapid breakthroughs in communications technology have all fuelled the development and greater engagement of civil society at the United Nations since the 1980s.

In the nearly two decades since September 11, 2001, UN and member-state-led efforts on religious issues have thrived and grown in prominence. Here are a few examples: In 2001, the United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution outlining a "Global Agenda for Civilizational Dialogue"; in 2004, UNESCO launched a flagship project on the promotion of interfaith dialogue; and in 2005, a tri-partite coalition of Member States, UN agencies, and religious NGOs organised a high-level UN conference on interfaith cooperation—exploring the role of religion in promoting intercultural understanding as well as strategies for interfaith cooperation for sustainable development (Rugar, 2020).

The goal of religious non-governmental organizations' (RNGOs) activities in the current UN [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) setting is to influence thinking and action among individuals in decision-making positions. This can include influencing debate by providing additional information or perspectives, pressing for the fulfilment of stated commitments, bringing socially marginalised voices to the table, or supporting forums for NGO collaboration that help develop and shape global public opinion on issues worthy of UN consideration. Carrette (2013) argues that religious NGOs are ideally suited to these duties since they are frequently closely tied to enormous networks of people and material resources.

2.6 Religious Diplomacy in Africa

In a couple of major examples, religious diplomacy has succeeded in restoring peace in communities ripped apart by violence when governmental institutions and international organisations have been unsuccessful. One of the greatest examples of religious groups' dedication to peace is the extraordinary peacemaking achievements of the Catholic lay movement in Mozambique. They were able to clinch a peace deal in October 1992 because of their calm and subtle diplomacy, which included multiple rounds of discussions between opposing groups. This halted years of civil conflict between FRELIMO and RENAMO (Haynes, 2009).

For the last 30 years, particularly during periods of political upheaval and violence, religious leaders from various African countries have been asked to serve as mediators. In nations like Benin, the DR. Congo, and Congo, for instance, religious leaders were asked to head sovereign national conferences during the early 1990s, and they were generally successful in fostering a peaceful transition process from a one-party system to political pluralism (Kattara, 1993; cited in Lado Tonlieu Ludovic, 2021). Thus, this was a huge step forward in terms of peace and security. In nations where no national conference was held, like Zambia, churches figured prominently in

ensuring a fairly peaceful transition to multiparty politics during the early 1990s. National truth and reconciliation commissions were also tasked with appointing religious leaders to lead them.

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Archbishop Desmond Tutu led the first commission of its sort in Africa, guiding the post-apartheid reconciliation process in South Africa. After this, several clerics from other nations, notably Côte d'Ivoire and Togo, have been nominated to similar tribunals (Smock, 2006).

In an area formerly dominated by Christian and secular social and relief activities, Islamic social and humanitarian services have grown in prominence in the past few decades. The Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC) in Kenya remains among the most effective Muslim peacebuilding players in Africa, incorporating Muslim traditional methods and ideals into its conflict settlement activities. The formation of a Joint Committee of Clans to observe unrest and help deter violent confrontation in the Wajir district; and increasing awareness of women's participation in peacemaking in their neighbourhoods are just a few of its accomplishments (Bouta et al., 2005). Apart from Muslim peacebuilders, there remains an increasing appreciation of the role of particularly religious women, in African peacebuilding. Various initiatives have been undertaken to make such efforts increasingly visible (Marshall et al., 2011; Onsati, 2014). For instance, the Sudanese Women's Voice for Peace (SWVP), for instance, helped to establish peace in Sudan via peace education programmes aimed at raising awareness and preventing violence at the grassroots (UNHCR, et al., 1998, cited in Rugar, 2020).

Another significant development in this subject in the past few decades has been the proliferation of interfaith peacebuilding projects, as well as the gradual recognition of their role in peacebuilding on a global scale. Interfaith groups operate at the local, national, and international levels in Sub-Saharan Africa. In peacebuilding, multi-faith organisations have the ability to neutralise efforts to split communities on the basis of religion (Appleby, 2008; Opongo, 2008).

Furthermore, they go a long way toward "changing the negative attitudes and mistrust that exist across religious groups," as well as engaging in "dialogical action," which means "organised activities to reform the social structures of injustice within society" (Opongo, 2008). One such group is the Coalition for Peace in Africa (COPA), established in Kenya. Its activities include advocacy, education, interfaith dialogue, and Suluh (the Arabic term for reconciliation) conflict resolution strategies, as well as traditional African conflict management and resolution strategies that include chiefs, elders, women, and the youth.

2.7 Church Diplomacy: The Case of the Catholic Church

The Pope remains the Church's chief representative in international diplomacy. The early Popes depended on delegates to carry out their jobs. True papal diplomacy started to emerge in the eighteenth century (Strikwerda, 1995). During periods of political turmoil, the Pope's message to the public had additional weight. For instance, John Paul II (1978–2005) mastered the art of centralised and customised diplomatic behaviour. It is arguable that some of the Popes' diplomatic missions (Johnston & Cox, as cited in Fahy, 2018) had some impact. One of their numerous diplomatic actions is that in 2007, Benedict made a successful petition to Iran to save British navy servicemen.

Due to the nearly non-existent official diplomatic contacts between Iran and the UK, the British government approached the Pope for assistance. By writing to Ayatollah Khamenei, the Pope was able to secure the release of the imprisoned sailors (Rooney, 2015). More recently, Pope Francis' interest in and utilisation of diplomatic service has led in a deterioration of US-Cuban relations, as well as the signing of an official agreement between the Holy See and the Palestinian Authority, and his description of the 1915 Armenian slaughter as "genocide" (Gibson, 2014).

Notwithstanding its small physical dimension, the Holy See maintains diplomatic relations with several numbers: The nuncios, meaning "envoys" or "messengers") remain the pope's representatives. Canon law regulates formal external-political interactions in the internal-political arena, as stated in Canon 362: "The Roman Pontiff has the intrinsic and sovereign authority to designate, dispatch, pass, and recall his own legates to individual churches in various countries, as well as to governments and civil authorities."

The existence of the Holy See in formal international affairs demonstrates its actual power (e.g., the demand for diplomatic recognition by the Holy See of other emerging nations like Palestine). Track-two diplomatic efforts, which include faith-based diplomacy, occur when the Church assumes leadership in international affairs (Byrnes, 2017). Official government diplomatic efforts remain, by definition, top-down, while official involvement remains a bottom-up interaction. In the context of international politics, what both approaches have in common is that they are primarily concerned with and employed for peace-building efforts (Lederach & Appleby, 2010).

The representation of the Holy See and engagement in European Union and United Nation debates are two prominent instances of the Church's strategy and the related theoretical research. As a result, the Church's involvement in European party politics is unsurprising. The Holy See's presence at the United Nations, on the other hand, remains even more illustrative. The Holy See has been interested in the United Nations since its inception (Chong & Troy, 2011).

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented an overview of the link between religion, conflict and peacebuilding. It covered extensive issues on religion and conflict, Peace and Peacebuilding Religion. Furthermore, it discussed Religious Approaches to Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, Religious NGOs at

the United Nations, Religious Diplomacy in Africa, and Church Diplomacy, with particular reference to the Catholic Church.

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CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING IN SELECTED WEST AFRICAN COUNTRIES

3.0 Introduction

The study had three (3) specific objectives: to investigate the relationship between religion and conflict in selected West African countries, to examine the adoption of conflict and peacebuilding mechanisms by the Catholic Church in selected West African countries, and to assess the effectiveness of the Catholic Church's conflict management initiatives in selected West African

countries. A qualitative approach of face-to-face interviews was conducted where thematic analysis was for data triangulation and corroboration of qualitative findings. A total of ten key informants with at least ten years of experience of working in religions, conflict resolution, and peace-building initiatives were interviewed.

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3.1 The Relationship between Religion and Conflict

In line with the objective one, the study unraveled the following emerging themes that are enumerated below: double-edged interdependent nexus; Religions use their sacred texts, symbols, rituals, in addition to institutions for promoting peace; resolving conflicts and addressing social injustices before violence breaks out. The aftermath of the conflict's damage inter-faith tensions stifle peace; Islamic State or al-Qaeda affiliates and Boko Haram religious massacre and theologically ideas-based conflict.

3.1.1 Double-edged interdependent nexus

In practically every varied community, religious differences are a source of potential conflict. Because most individuals are uninformed of other faiths, there is some inherent friction, albeit this does not always mean conflict. Religion, similar to ethnicity or race, is not always conflictual, but it does serve as a means of identifying oneself and one's group from others. Those who have less power, whether political or economic, are often more aware of the clash than those who have more.

A response from a key informant (Parish Priest in Accra with 26 years of experience) on the relationship between religion and conflict unraveled the emerging theme of "double-edged interdependent nexus". The research participant averred that:

The Roman Catholic Church has over 1.2 billion adherents worldwide (Kumar et al., 2021). Catholicism penetrates every element of society in some war-torn Catholic and non-Catholic

nations, where religion and conflict relationships have a double-edged interdependent nexus in [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) stimulating peaceful coexistence for development and acting as potential agents for conflict and terrorism. The Catholic church plays a crucial role in harmonising divergent societies, particularly during and post war in conflict-countries like Sierra Leone, Liberia, South Sudan, Congo, Rwanda, Colombia, and Philippine nations across the world.

According to Fox (2000), religion and ethnicity have been key sources of internal strife since the conclusion of the Cold War. The study relied on data from the Minorities at Risk dataset as well as data from other research to investigate the link between religious and ethnic causes of violence. The data demonstrates that religious issues are at the heart of the majority of ethnic disputes or conflicts. When an ethnic group's religious beliefs are threatened by another ethnic group, or when religious rules are seen to call for conflictive behaviour, religion can lead to ethnic conflict. Through the employment of religious institutions and legitimacy in the conflict, religion can become involved in ethnic conflicts for secular reasons. This religious engagement can occasionally turn a secular quarrel into a religious one.

3.1.2 Religion promotes peace through the use of symbols, rituals, the invocation of sacred texts, and the use of its institutions

More significantly, the Catholic Church's vast resources are being used to develop lay peacemakers via lifelong education and training in peacemaking. A Rev. Father with 21 years working experience indicated that:

“While many people consider religion to be a cause of conflict and division, the fact is that religion plays a wide range of roles in war and peace. We are deploying our emblems and rituals, invoking our holy texts, and using our institutions to promote peace. All faiths, particularly those with cultural dominance, are capable of marshalling significant resources for peace. It must be

admitted, however, that religions may be co-opted into the service of violence, and this happens frequently. The task at hand is to continually use the Catholic Church's doctrinal, institutional, and cultural clout to present a persuasive peace narrative in the face of violent assault".

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Rugar's (2020) study has the goal of helping Africa strengthen its conflict prevention and reduction policies and programmes. Religious violence is on the rise in Sub-Saharan Africa, according to this study, which suggests that religious groups might be a potent though underutilised weapon in the prevention and resolution of many African disputes. Because they have compelling narratives, religious traditions, texts, rituals, and symbols can easily become the cornerstone of ethnic or nationalist agendas that divide people. They may, however, tell stories of human dignity and healing.

Also, Kadayifci-Orellana (2009), as consistent with the literature, opines that leaders frequently use holy texts, and religious myths that develop in conflict circumstances to give support for their policies as well as resolve conflict with them. First, institutions that can help with peacebuilding and reconciliation through mobilizations of their followers use religious texts and myths to influence peace rather than escalate violence.

Furthermore, Antwi (2021) observed that religious diversity has become a 21st-century reality, which is consistent with the literature, the interpretation of sacred texts, on the other hand, appears to be a barrier in the connection between individuals of various religions. It is noted that some faiths have exclusionary tendencies in their traditions and sacred texts, which makes intra- and interreligious communication difficult. This research examines the importance of interpreting Judeo-Christian texts in encouraging intra- and inter-religious discourse for harmony and mutual coexistence among people of various faiths. The research demonstrates how narrative analysis can be used to promote intra- and inter-religious interaction. It advocates a paradigm of holy text

interpretation that promotes peace and harmony rather than dividing individuals of various religious and socioeconomic backgrounds.

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3.1.3 Resolving conflicts and addressing social injustices before violence breaks out

The Church's primary goal and responsibility is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and make disciples throughout the world. What it does mean for the church in terms of strategic peacebuilding (SPB) is that, without losing its own spiritual communion identity, the Catholic Church organically interacts with the imperatives and trajectories of SPB.

The above assertion was highlighted by a key informant where the emerging theme of "resolving conflicts and addressing social injustices before violence breaks out" was identified from the analysis. The view of the Senior Rev. Sister with 17 years technical expertise in peacebuilding initiatives indicated that: "Strategic Peace Building (SPB) seeks to ensure that before war breaks out, all structures, organisations, institutions, and aspects of culture collaborate to establish productive, peaceful channels for resolving conflicts and correcting social injustices. The Church naturally finds itself in such a field, with her educational institutions, social justice endeavours, and parish-based moral formation initiatives that teach the laity to make sense of the globe through the prism of "gospel thinking."

Similarly, to the literature Rugar (2020) conducted a study on the role of religious organisations in conflict and peacebuilding in sub-Saharan Africa, using the Catholic Church and the Islamic religion as case studies. The study observed that wars, armed conflict, and instability continue to plague Africa, causing human misery and impeding progress across most of the continent. The study research investigates not only the religious dimension of violent conflicts and insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa, but also the responsibilities of faith-based institutions in consolidating peace, utilising their skills or resources effectively and barriers that attenuate the execution of their roles.

The study emphasised and introduced a diverse range of religious actors, including ordinary people, leaders, grassroots organisations, NGOs, transnational networks, and organised institutions, who can play an important role in peacebuilding efforts, in addressing social injustice or inequality, societal and religious marginalisation, structural malfunctioning, state failure, global dependency dynamics, and so on that affect conflict and peace (though they cannot replace the work needed to address other interconnected issues).

3.1.4 The devastation left in the wake of the conflict

No major religion has escaped involvement in deadly warfare. However, we must be wary of a nearly universal tendency to oversimplify the role of religion in international politics. Conflict is rarely caused solely or even mostly by religion. Because so much focus is placed on religion as a source of conflict, the function of religion as a force for peace is sometimes disregarded. Certain peace-related government policies are frequently motivated by religious convictions and affiliations to push for certain peace-related government policies, particularly during post-conflict reconstruction to pave the way for peace.

The aftermath of the conflict's damage emerged as a key theme. The opinion of the respondent who is Catholic Scholar and Rev Father with 20 years of working experience averred that:

"The church initiatives discuss the wreckage that the fighting has left behind. SPB acknowledges that peace accords are only the first step towards achieving a lasting peace via human rights advocacy, restorative justice, reconciliation, and community healing. Political violence's wounds must be treated. Similarly, the church advocates for fair mechanisms to be established to ensure that the causes that led to the conflict are not ignored. This may necessitate the prosecution of people who have infringed on others' human rights. It might also entail judicial and security reforms, a comprehensive reworking of political systems, and efforts to reintegrate people who

participated in the conflict or lost their property due to forcible eviction. The Church, with her [University of Ghana](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) Catholic social doctrine, teaching on the harmful effects of sin, and sacramental ministries of reconciliation, communion, and healing, provides some natural sites of convergence”

The literature confirmed a similar role played by religious institutions in addressing the devastation left in the wake of the conflict. Perryman (2019) investigated the role of the black church in addressing collateral damage left after the US war on drugs. The study looks at how African American pastors in metropolitan areas respond to the concerns of congregants and/or local communities that have been touched directly or indirectly by mass imprisonment. Because of its unique sociocultural position and historic role as a resource for black social and economic concerns, the Black Church must contribute to finding solutions to the severe collateral damage of mass imprisonment, which predominantly affects children and families. The study unraveled the distinctive contributions of African American religious experience through urban pastors' tactics, practices, and experiences that directly and indirectly address the costs and collateral damage of mass imprisonment.

Again, Ochieng (2019) conducted a study on the role of women in peacebuilding and post-conflict transformation in Africa from the Catholic Church perspective. The study indicated that women all around the globe play a vital role in the preservation of culture and the promotion of peace. Women, on the other hand, have been noted to be underrepresented in peace negotiations and in the planning and implementation of post-war reconstruction initiatives during times of conflict. This research looks at the role of women in the Catholic Church and how they may help with conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the African context. According to the report, women play a vital role in preventing communities from crumbling in many combat zones, even when the fabric of society is falling down. It continues to state that, as a strong supporter for women's

empowerment, the Catholic Church has a critical role to play in ensuring that they are given more chances.

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3.1.5 Inter-faith tensions suffocate peace; act as a conduit for conflicts

Religious leaders and institutions can mediate conflicts, serve as a channel for dialogue between opposing parties, and provide peacemaking training. Although it receives less public attention, this sort of Christian peacemaking is now becoming increasingly essential. Another type of religious peacemaking is interfaith discourse. Its goal is to alleviate interfaith tensions that may create future conflict or stem from prior conflict, rather than to resolve a specific issue. Even in areas where interreligious tensions are at their worst, interfaith communication is growing. Frequently, the most tumultuous interfaith partnerships may serve as the backdrop for the most profound and fruitful discussions.

During the interview "inter-faith tensions stifle peace; conduit for conflicts" emerged. It was indicated by a Roman Father with international experience in Nigeria, Camerone and Ghana on Peace and Security that:

“Nigeria's inter-faith tensions stifle peace between Muslims and Christians, which has been the country's most serious political issue during the 1980s to date. The religious attacks emphasize the threats that asymmetric terrorism and violence against Christians in ethnically and religiously diverse communities continue to pose: inter-faith tension that stifles peace; a conduit of inter-religious conflict. There is a projected global trend of Christian violence where Islamic gunmen raid or shoot congregants at services, causing the burning of churches and suicide bombings during the Easter or Christmas season. ”

It is undisputable that inter-faith conflict exists in Nigeria. Consistent with Orji (2011) study in Nigeria, he investigated the manner in which Christian and Muslim groups provide humanitarian

aid to internally displaced persons. The study noted that even the distribution of aid to those affected by the conflict was also influenced by faith-based organisations and victim lines of faith. [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh)

The structure of relief efforts, sources of finance, selection of help recipients, and the kind of services supplied by Christian and Muslim groups are determined by their faith connections. Although most religion-based groups in Jos take a faith-centered approach to helping, focusing their relief efforts on supporting their own religious communities, mechanisms of interfaith collaboration in aid giving are beginning to form (Orji, 2011).

3.1.6 The Islamic State or al-Qaeda affiliates and Boko Haram religious massacre

Despite the fact that they share a common belief system, are murderously hostile to Christians, and have exchanged various forms of communication, the significance of which remains unclear, Boko Haram appears to be largely an indigenous movement, with little evidence of strategic or tactical cooperation between the Islamic State or al-Qaeda affiliates and Boko Haram.

The Boko Haram religious massacre was found during the interview with one of the key informants (Roman Father with international experience in Nigeria, Camerone and Ghana on Peace and Security) noted that: “According to the United Nations, the Boko Haram insurgency has killed at least 36,000 people and forced two million people to flee their homes over the course of decades. In Nigeria, about 7 years after the mass kidnapping of the 279 Chibok girls, there is still no answer in a country where more than 600 schools have been closed as a result of a wave of mass kidnappings. More than 300 boys come barefoot and exhausted, a week after they were abducted from school in a Boko Haram-claimed raid. In the northern Cameroon town of Mozogo, at least a dozen residents were murdered, including eight children. On Christmas Eve, Boko Haram insurgents stormed a largely Christian town and burned down a church in northeast Nigeria, killing many people. Before setting fire to a church, the terrorists kidnapped a priest and stole medical supplies from a hospital, among several countless other attacks” As consistent with

the literature Adesoji (2010) investigated the Boko Haram uprising and Islamic revivalism in Nigeria. He observed the ambivalence of certain prominent Islamic leaders who, although not actively participating in the insurgency, either did little to prevent it from erupting or simply weakly denounced it. In the study of the Boko Haram insurrection, these internal elements, together with expanding Islamic extremism throughout the world, create a very volatile Nigerian society prone to violence. Given the Nigerian government's stance on religious strife, this violence may become a regular issue. The study documented the Boko Haram insurgency, as well as its ties to the promotion of Islamic revivalism and the threats it represents to the Nigerian state's secularity and peace.

Similarly, Aghedo and Osumah (2012) conducted a study on the Bokom Harram uprising: how should Nigeria respond? Inconsistent with the study, it was noted that insurrection, which has resulted in widespread insecurity, is a result of government failure and institutional instability, according to the essay. As a result, it suggests that rather than focusing on oppressive state security, Nigeria should embrace a human security strategy to successfully confront the rebellion.

Furthermore, Onapajo and Usman (2015) investigated a study on "fuelling the flames": Boko Haram and deteriorating Christian–Muslim relations in Nigeria. Boko Haram terrorism is currently posing a serious danger to Nigeria's survival. Since Boko Haram's terrorist actions began in 2009, a growing amount of literature has emerged in the scholarly community, including a variety of assessments of the phenomenon from diverse perspectives. This research demonstrates the many patterns of conflict between religious organisations throughout the Boko Haram era, and a number of violent encounters that have resulted from religious tensions. Given the evidence shown in the study that Boko Haram is a threat to both Christians and Muslims, the authors argue for religious unity to combat Boko Haram's threat.

3.1.7 Theologically ideas-based conflict

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Theological conflicts over ideas have risen sharply in recent years. In Africa, the Sahel, Nigeria, and Somalia are three geographical hotspots for violent religious conflicts. All of these disputes have already or are on the verge of spilling over into neighbouring nations. The violence has resulted in thousands of deaths and millions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, as well as undermining the afflicted nations' political, economic, and social growth.

During the interview, a theologically based conflict concern from the key informant's response became prominent. The opinion of the respondent who is Catholic Scholar and Rev Father with 20 years of working experience averred that:

"Despite Islamist insurgencies predominating in theologically ideas-based religious conflicts or wars, the West African Subregion is experiencing an increase in religious conflicts or wars. The origins of these disputes have become differences in ideologies or theological doctrines, among other factors that appear to have both religious and secular elements. Interreligious conflict is more likely when ethnic and religious identities are in unparallel. Weak regimes both facilitate religious extremists' operations and make their ideology an enticing option for the general public. Countries in North Africa and Nigeria provide external assistance for religious extremism".

In line with the literature, Bagaji, Etila, and Ogbadu (2012) studied Boko Haram and Nigeria's recurrent bombings as a terrorism-based attempt to impose religious ideology. Attempts to impose religious ideology or religious-based ideas on Nigeria's secular society are nothing new. It was tried by the head of the Maitatsine sectarian group in 1981, and it resulted in large-scale upheavals or conflicts. Nigeria has seen many religious crises between the early 1980s and 2012. Since 2009, the country has been ravaged by large-scale and inconceivable bomb assaults perpetrated by the Boko Haram organisation. Although Boko Haram's philosophy and objectives

are similar to those of the Maitatsine sectarian group, its organisational planning, armed resistance, and modus operandi are similar to those of the Taliban, and the organisations' attacks were the most violent and damaging thus far, all in the guise of religious ideology or theological principles.

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3.2 Adoption of Conflict and Peacebuilding Mechanisms

In line with the second objective, the analysis unraveled several themes accompanied by corresponding discussion as enumerated below as: adoption of alternative dispute resolution; reliance on early warning signals and mediation; Peacebuilding and reconciliation and validating the support of indigenous approaches to peace.

3.2.1 Adoption of alternative dispute resolution

Alternative dispute resolution (ADR) has moved to the forefront of the legal industry in recent years. This is because alternative dispute resolution methods like mediation and arbitration have several advantages over traditional dispute resolution methods like litigation, which can be costly and time-consuming. Mediation and arbitration can also be effective in a variety of situations, particularly when confidentiality and privacy are important. The adoption of alternative dispute resolution emerged theme was found during the interview response with the key informant that indicated that:

"The Catholic Church in Ghana is actively involved in the formalisation and implementation of interfaith collaborations towards peace. During the 2016 election, for example, alternative dispute resolution was implemented to assist in maintaining peace and averting unrest. This entails taking a variety of approaches through anticipatory and reconciliatory strategies, which have resulted in high-level dialogue meetings, strategic meetings with eminent statemen, the use of surveillance reports as a basis for dialogue, information dissemination via radio, and the use of Alternative

Dispute Resolution to mediate disagreements. By transforming religious differences, the goal is to maintain societal cohesiveness and democratic government" [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh)

Edzii (2018) averred that, individual and group disagreements continue to represent a threat to the region's peace and security, despite progress in ending civil wars and uprisings. These countries are today classified as having weak institutions, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of human resource capabilities, all of which are critical for resolving conflicts. The study employed Ghana as a case study to analyse the effectiveness of ADR in West Africa, considering the aforementioned structural and agency issues. ADR has been advised by donor partners such as the UNDP and the World Bank as a way to control the dysfunctional nature of conflicts.

Nolan-Haley and Annor-Ohene (2014) also established that since 2005, the Ghanaian Judicial Service has used ADR as part of its broader structural adjustments. The ADR Act 798 (2010) creates the legal framework for ADR, which aims to promote justice for everyone by providing speedier, faster, and more economical services to help rebuild trust in the formal judicial system. According to the findings, ADR is widely used in Ghana by both religious and non-religious organizations. By rebuilding, reconciling, and healing damaged connections between disputants, it is beneficial in resolving individual and group disagreements. Once their issue is resolved, disputants are willing to suggest ADR to others. Despite the benefits of ADR, its implementation is restricted due to a lack of resources, inadequate centres, ongoing political intervention, and a shortage of skilled specialists. Given the numerous benefits of ADR procedures, the research advised increased information and sensitization among Ghanaians, as well as further training, particularly for future attorneys, and a review of the legislation to change the governing board clause and separate ADR from politics (Nolan-Haley & Annor-Ohene, 2014).

3.2.2 Reliance on early warning signals and mediations

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Various conflict resolution systems have become widely established in recent decades. They are increasingly important in international relations for controlling, managing, and resolving possible causes of conflict. While disagreement may be harmful, it also has the potential to generate innovative collaboration in a win-win situation. A mediator can help with this process by mediating a negotiation that has reached a stalemate. Mediators are increasingly important in international relations for controlling, managing, and resolving possible causes of conflict. While disagreement may be harmful, it also has the potential to generate innovative collaboration in a win-win situation. The objective is for people to work together as problem solvers, looking for solutions. The adoption of mediation and early warning signals emerged theme was found during the interview response with the A Rev. Sister with 25 years in peace missions indicated that:

“During and after the election, we trained and deployed 32 ADR Animators representing leaders in 21 hotspots across Ghana. Despite the fact that the figures were insufficient in the face of unanticipated post-election events, they were nevertheless valuable. Some religious leaders employ Alternative Dispute Resolution Animators to arbitrate disputes and grievances that were fueling diabolic and reprisal activities—a treat to peace and conflict resolution and, in some cases, preemptive and preventative steps from Early Warning Signals reports. There is a close-door meeting with political leaders, traditional authorities, and youth groups, underpinned by Early Warning Signals. Where conflicts arose, mediation was undertaken with the parties to ensure peace. Mediation is one of the major tools used by the Catholic Church for public discourse on conflict resolution both in Ghana and the West African Region”

Palihapitiya (2018) noticed that official interfaith organisations are becoming an essential aspect of conflict prevention and early response systems, which is consistent with the findings. While national early warning systems and peace negotiators may be useful in addressing structural

obstacles and conflict, the study stresses the need of more regional or "organic" intrafaith and [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) interfaith procedures that could be mobilised to prevent violence at its source. Faith-based early warning systems have shown to be an effective tool for identifying early signs of violence and controlling in-group members in deeply divided communities in order to prevent religious and ethnic conflict. The benefits of utilising local or community-based early warning and early response systems, as well as the benefits of leveraging new or existing community organisations, particularly. The circumstances of Sri Lanka and Nigeria highlight the need of faith-based groups for early warning and action. From 2002 to 2006, the paper documented evidence of a community-based conflict early warning system in Sri Lanka, as well as building a similar system for Nigeria in 2013, which inspired the study.

Again, the empirical literature about the influence of the Catholic Church in public discourse on conflict resolution is evident. For instance, Itçaina (2013) in his study examines the Catholic Church's discourse and activities on the Basque question and finds them caught between deliberative and adequate logic. The study looks at how the Catholic Church thinks about and/or participates in public debates about the Basque ethno-territorial dispute. The study compares and contrasts Russian and institutionalist perspectives with the Church's deliberative ideals and practices. The primary findings of the empirical study, which distinguishes between the Church's contribution to public discourse on conflict resolution and how it has deliberated on the ethno-territorial question inside its own institutional machinery. It was determined that the Church's supremacy of appropriateness logic reduced deliberative activities to an active but marginalised state.

Lastly, empirical evidence suggests that similarly in Mozambique, a country with a lot of religious variety and no dominating religion, there are nearly equal numbers of Catholics, Protestants, and Muslims in this diverse religious culture. Following independence, the Catholic Church in

Mozambique suffered significant changes. Throughout the colonial period, the Church in [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) Mozambique was a status quo-oriented, pro-government institution; after 1975, it became an independent-minded African organisation (Morier-Genoud & Anouilh, 2013). It established a new theological and political orientation, refusing to remain silent, contributing to the rise of open confrontation and crisis with the state. Following independence, the Marxist government sought to eradicate the Roman Catholic Church's political role in civil sectors; after failing, the government tolerated and controlled the institution. In the 1980s, Mozambique became embroiled in a civil conflict, which the Church helped stop in the early 1990s. Peace talks were held in Rome, and a peace deal was reached in 1992, followed by the country's first multiparty elections in 1994. From 1975 to 2000, the Roman Catholic Church in Mozambique was instrumental in forging peace through mediations and dialogue meetings amid times of revolution, war, and democracy. It follows a three-step process. Mozambique's mythological establishment in Mozambique; its reorganisation and intervention after self-government under Socialism and wartime environments; and finally, it's becoming a mediator and a midwife for democracy in the country in the early 1990s (Morier-Genoud & Anouilh, 2013).

3.2.3 Peacebuilding and reconciliation

The Vatican is tasked to serve all people, with a "preferential option for the poor," for those who were overlooked by others and are victims of discrimination, injustice, or tyranny. It is deeply rooted in local communities, where it shares in people's lives, suffering, hopes, and dreams, often in regions where few other organisations exist, building tremendous empathy and trust. In addition, the Church is called to be an urgent peacemaker, to alter society and to have a deeply positive vision of peacebuilding, mediation and reconciliation. One of the respondents, who is a senior administrative officer to the office of the Bishop, indicated that:

"I've been a priest for 23 years, and I have witnessed a lot of bloodshed. I have dealt with a variety of armed groups. If you are a priest who is indebted to the people and insists on the truth and denounces deception in denouncing violence begun by disputing factions, you'll have to make yourself a target of armed factions or disputing parties. I've taken part in a number of peacebuilding and reconciliation programmes aimed at resolving interethnic conflicts and other issues. Because of its trusted position and presence in communities, the Church is involved in peacebuilding, mediation, and reconciliation throughout all levels. It is viewed as an unbiased actor who strives for the greater good and speaks out for people who are typically ignored.

The literature recounted how several conflict-resolution techniques have been implemented and are still being used to bring peace to Bawku, but the area has yet to achieve long-term peace. The obstacles and opportunities of the peace process in the Bawku Traditional Area, in Ghana's Upper East Region, are examined in this study. The research also provided evidence of processes utilised by both the state and some religious CSOs/NGOs to address the dispute, as well as how the issue might be resolved to promote regional peace, in which the Catholic Church plays a crucial role (Noagah, 2013).

Ferris, (2005) also averred that through realistic peacebuilding programmes, church development organisations have brought together adversarial groups and assisted them in working together under a common goal, transcending hostility and prejudice. Kulang (2019) recounted how the Church's neutral status at the national level and its leaders may play an important role in peacebuilding, as demonstrated in South Sudan with members of the national-level mediation team. In the run-up to the signing of the peace pact in 2019, the Vatican aided the peace efforts in South Sudan by organising a high-level conference with leaders in Rome.

Again, Manrique (2019) gave illustrations of scenarios of the Catholic Church in peace building globally and reconciliation in Colombia. It involves the formation and nurturing of nonviolent

resistance communities (such as San José de Apartadó) against violence and injustice. The function of the Catholic Church as a permanent and legitimate mediator is included (for example, when individual bishops and priests have served as mediators in talks between governments and guerilla forces). Events are often created in order to influence public perception (such as the Week for Peace). Economic growth initiatives to contribute in the building of peaceful conditions (such as the Peace and Development Programme of the Magdalena Medio region, in existence since 1995). The creation of safe spaces to advocate for a negotiated solution; the formation of permanent and interactive conflict analysis forums (e.g., the Jesuit research centre CINEP's activities); and the provision of possibilities for political and moral accompaniment by peacebuilders. The enactment of scenarios to establish trust and provide a climate for intelligent ideas to emerge in Colombia

3.2.4 Interfaith dialogue meeting, education and advocacy

Interfaith discourse refers to cooperative, constructive, and positive contact between people of diverse religious traditions (i.e., "faiths") and/or spiritual or humanistic concepts on a personal and corporate level. It varies from syncretism or alternative faiths in that interfaith conversation gatherings, education, and advocacy on common problems for peace and conflict resolution are typically the emphasis of debate. Rather than synthesising new concepts, this is necessary for faiths or viewpoints in order to increase tolerance of everyone else.

A response from the interview guide revealed the concern of "interfaith dialogue meetings, education, and advocacy" as a mechanism for promoting peace and conflict resolution. A vicar general is the bishop of a diocese's primary deputy for administrative power and has the title of local ordinary of the Catholic Church indicated that:

In the 1980s, Pope John Paul II promoted gatherings in Assisi to promote interfaith cooperation. [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh)
In a book co-authored with Marcello Pera in 2004, Pope Benedict XVI advocated a more moderate and cautious stance, stressing the importance of multicultural communication while reasserting Christian doctrinal identity in Jesus of Nazareth's revelation. In 2013, Pope Francis became the first Catholic leader to call for "sincere and rigorous" interfaith dialogue with atheists, arguing that "dialogue is not a secondary accessory of the believer's existence," but rather a "deep and indispensable expression of trust, fundamental for peaceful coexistence and conflict prevention. In a similar trend, the church in West Africa is using interfaith dialogue meetings with Muslims and other Christian-based faith organizations and education of its congregants against resorting to violence as a means to register grievances and support CSO advocacy efforts against conflict and to promote peace”.

On that basis of interfaith dialogue meeting, the literature indicated that Nigeria has a long history of sectarian warfare, mainly between Christian and Muslim communities. A fresh initiative has been underway in Kaduna, Plateau, and other places since 1995, with remarkable success and rising worldwide attention. This article examines the work of Imam Muhammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye in the field of interfaith dialogue in Nigeria. Traditional conflict resolution procedures do not always provide the unique components that religious peacemaking can bring. A religious setting, for example, may be especially receptive to displays of regret, remorse, and forgiveness. Traditional diplomacy may be ineffective in achieving peace or managing conflict. The instance of Ashafa and Wuye indicates that religion may be a component of the solution rather than a promoter of conflict. In their study on attempts at peace in Nigeria using inter-faith dialogue, they have proven that dialogue is one of the underutilised mechanisms for promoting peace and repelling violence among various religious institutions in Nigeria.

Again, a study was conducted by Issifu (2017) on the Role of Civil Society Organizations in [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Ghana. It recognised efforts initiated by community-based organisations and faith-based organisations (FBOs) like the Catholic Church to play an important role in conflict resolution and conflict resolution through peacebuilding procedures and mechanisms. For example, a coalition of civil society organisations—Action Aid Ghana, West Africa Network Peacebuilding (WANEP), and Advocacy Peace Group—undertook education and advocacy programmes and held inter-faith dialogue meetings towards resolving conflicts like the Dagbon and Bawku Crisis.

3.3 The Effectiveness of Religious Organizations’ Conflict Management Initiatives

The effectiveness of a religious organization’s conflict management depends on the approaches, processes, and procedures for resolving peace, mediating, and ensuring resolution of conflict situations. It covers mechanisms, strategies, and conflict analysis and tactics employed by either the government, CSOs, or interfaith-based mediating institutions. The study observe that issues related to conflict analysis, conflict handling styles conflict management and transformation mechanisms, alternative dispute resolution spectrum, and indigenous approaches to conflict resolution approaches helps ensure effectiveness of conflict management.

3.3.1 Effective conflict analysis

Conflict analysis is the investigation of a conflict's profile, causes, players, and dynamics using certain frameworks, tools, and procedures in order to get a structured and systematic knowledge of the conflict (Aubyn, 2015). It is the most crucial and required step to take before engaging in any intervention in order to obtain a better knowledge of the conflict's origins, nature, and dynamics. The key issue of “Conflict Analysis” was identified. The response according to a lecturer in Peace and Security who is also Catholic by faith interviewed indicated that:

"In Ghana, Nigeria, and several other West African nations, the judicial technique of dispute resolution has failed to settle the many conflict issues. The effectiveness of such an approach has resulted in more resentment than comfort, bringing relief to disputing parties. The main reasons for the ineffectiveness and poor performance of the often-used poor conflict analysis and ineffective conflict management styles are the following: during the inception phase of the conflict, the overreliance on political and governance mechanisms with little regard to the role of religious institutions are factors. The rest include poor logistics, delay in deployment of troops to the crisis areas, lack of cooperation by parties to the conflicts, and non-implementation of faith-based religious, NGOs, or CSOs whitepapers or recommendations submitted to the government".

Referring to the literature, effective conflict analysis depends on three things: Situation Profile (a brief overview of the setting in which the intervention will take place is provided in the); Causal Inference; (an examination of the issues and elements that contribute to conflict) Analysis of Stakeholders (The primary conflict participants are mapped out, and their roles and effects on the dispute are evaluated) and Conflict Situations (examines the relationship between the conflict profile, the reasons for the conflict, and the stakeholders involved, as well as the patterns and hinges that have occurred over time) (Aubyn, 2015; Aubyn, & Abdallah, 2013).

Bukari (2013) in his study on exploring indigenous approaches to conflict resolution emphasized the need for a proper stakeholder analysis of the real parties in the conflict is required in order to involve them in the negotiation and mediation process. The study indicated that key stakeholders are frequently left out of the dispute resolution process, and they must all be recognised and brought into the process. Youth and women's organisations, as well as individuals from other sections of the traditional territory, such as Zebilla and Garu, are among the stakeholders who are frequently left out of mediation and negotiating procedures.

3.3.2 Conflict handling styles' effectiveness

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Understanding how to manage disagreements is a crucial component of being a successful leader.

If a manager does not understand effective conflict management styles and how to apply them in various scenarios, they are left to handle conflict without a guideline. The evidence and the need to prioritize measures to ensure effectiveness of “Conflict Handling Styles” came to bear in this study. This is because the effectiveness of conflict handling styles was compromised due to poor conflict analysis and an ineffective conflict management strategy. The Most Rev. Father of the Catholic Church with over 25 years international working experience based in Ghana indicated that:

“Individuals' experiences, knowledge, beliefs, and values provide them with a number of conflict-resolution options. Conflict solution styles and techniques used by religious organisations help to determine the effectiveness of the outcome of their programmes in consolidating peace and resolving conflict. This involves people's systematic responses or sets of behaviours when confronted with disputes as a result of intervention initiated by the religious organization. These are known as conflict resolution styles. Avoidance, strategic disengagement, confrontation, compromise, cooperative issue resolution, and third-party decision making are all effective conflict-handling techniques that depend on the cultural context”

According the literature, conflict handling styles involve avoidance and denial, where parties avoid the problem and deal with it in a passive manner. When the perceived negative effect surpasses the perceived beneficial outcome, avoidance is adopted. It also covers strategic withdrawal: a technique that appears to be avoidance, but action is delayed or postponed because a future event demanding certain measures is anticipated (Gunkel, Schlaegel, and Taras, 2016). It usually gives parties time to re-strategize or adjust strategies before confronting one another.

When the sides in a quarrel physically or emotionally "attack" each other with threats, insults, or

violent deeds, this is known as a confrontation. It typically results in a lose/lose position; only a few times does it result in a win/lose situation when the stronger side wins (Vokić, & Sontor, 2009). Also, the literature indicated that effectiveness of conflict resolution can be realized via joint problem-solving that entails parties constructively listening to each other with the goal of identifying the root cause of the problem and resolving concerns. This means that to solve the problem, the parties must collaborate with all parties to ensure effectiveness of peacebuilding and conflict resolutions process (Demirdögen, 2011).

Again, Owan (2018) opined that the effectiveness of religious organizations' conflict management initiatives depends on arbitration, dialogue, and effective communication. Similar evidence is demonstrated by the literature in Nigeria. According to the findings, teachers' job effectiveness is notably high in the Obubra Local Government Area. Arbitration, debate, and good communication tactics were also discovered to be successful. The finding demonstrated that the four conflict resolution procedures (arbitration, conversation, effective communication, and smoothing) had a combined substantial impact on the work performance of secondary school teachers. Also, according to the findings, secondary school administrators should learn to apply a range of conflict management tactics and include them in every conflict situation that arises in their schools, rather than relying on one strategy as the ideal across all circumstances.

3.3.3 Effectiveness of conflict management and transformation mechanisms

Catholic Relief Services provides practical counsel and thought on transitional justice and reconciliation. When civilizations move out of violence, sustainable peace necessitates the administration of justice, and communities must discover means to accomplish reconciliation and repair (Gallen, 2016). Since the country's 2016 peace treaty with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia was signed, the Catholic Church has launched substantial efforts to promote and enable reconciliation. Catholic Relief Services has pioneered a "Binding, Bonding, and Bridging"

initiative in Mindanao, in the southern Philippines, to address local land problems and foster peace among Muslims, Christians, and Indigenous Peoples (Powers, 2021). Catholic clergy have worked in formal truth and reconciliation commissions in Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana, Burundi, South Sudan, and Peru. Catholic Relief Services (CRS) was the first to implement a programme.

Similarly, in West African region, the one of the Parish Priests in Accra with 26 years of experience indicated that:

“Our conflict transformation activities cover context transformations initiatives where we ensure shifts in the context of a dispute that have the potential to drastically affect each party's perspective of the conflict as well as their motivations. We also undertake structural transformations changes in the conflict's underlying structure, such as the participants, their issues, conflicting aims, and connections, or changes in the society, economy, or state in which the conflict is situated. The actor transformations are when actors decide to shift their aims or their approach to conflict in general. Finally, issue transformations relate to the reformulations of views taken by parties on significant issues at the core of the dispute, as well as how such positions are reframed in order to find agreements”

As consistent with literature the conflict transformation mechanism offers long-term actions and procedures aimed at changing the many features and expressions of conflict by addressing the core causes of that conflict. The goal is to turn negative destructive conflict into positive constructive conflict, and it takes into account structural, behavioural, and attitude factors. Actor transformation, issue transformation, context transformation, and structural transformations are examples of conflict transformations (Väyrynen, 2019).

Considering empirical literature of evidence in West Africa, a study was conducted by Akanji, (2011) towards a theology of conflict transformation: a study of religious conflict in contemporary

Nigerian society. The study underscored the how conflict transformation is an ineffective mechanism in peace building and conflict management. The goal of the study is to provide practical, theological ideas to the ongoing discussion about how Nigeria might end the unwelcome religious struggle between Muslims and Christians and develop a peaceful, harmonious society. The study relied on John Paul Lederach's conceptual framework for conflict transformation, and empirically explored two religious conflicts that occurred in the Northern Nigerian cities of Jos and Maduguri. An in-depth description of the socio-scientific and theological techniques used in the research was reviewed. According to the findings, religion can make the biggest contribution to the endeavour to end religious strife in Nigeria by demonstrating a practical theology in both spirituality and strategy for conflict transformation and peacebuilding. As a result, a theology of hospitality is proposed based on practical results from war zones, as a slow but effective mechanism of improving and accomplishing the desired transformation of a conflict situation on a short and long-term basis for peace.

Again, the literature indicated that Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) was also found to be actively involved in arranging workshops targeted at sharing information about peacebuilding, towards conflict transformation. Cultural rituals and values were also included into the organization's operations. The report recommended that CJPC undertake efforts to attract more youngsters on board in order to secure a thorough shift in attitudes and views toward rival groups for peace (structural transformation). This would ensure that their views toward peaceful cohabitation are molded at a young age, resulting in long-term peace. The report also suggests that NGOs and other players have a role in peacebuilding under the present draught national policy on peacebuilding and conflict management (NPPBCM) (actors transformation initiative) (Sang, 2012).

3.3.4 Consolidating indigenous approaches to conflict resolution

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Again, throughout history and across the world, several church leaders have urged Christians to respond to the Gospel and to be craftsmen of justice, peace, and reconciliation. Pope Francis has recently made a point of visiting a number of countries that have experienced terrible conflict, including Israel and Palestine, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Central African Republic, Myanmar, and Colombia. He has set an example of dedication to the Church's purpose of conflict resolutions and promoting peace in conflict-torn places by supporting or validating indigenous initiatives to consolidate peace.

Another Rev. Father with 21 years working experience indicated that: “similarly the church has under taken several initiatives in the West African Sub Region by collaborating and supporting indigenous approaches in conflict management such as rapid, local and inclusive humanitarian response; influencing social norms and behaviour; peacebuilding, mediation and reconciliation; strengthening democratic governance through citizen participation; speaking truth to power, witnessing and accompanying suffering; providing quality and inclusive healthcare and education; and supporting sustainable livelihoods.”

Drawing inference to the literature, Ghana has a variety of ethnic disputes, the most of which have lasted for years due to the kind and style of conflict resolution procedures employed to resolve them. Bukari (2013) observed that because most of our problems have traditional origins, many of the solutions to these conflicts fail to use home-based (indigenous) techniques to resolve them. Many resolution measures have been employed and are still being utilised to bring lasting peace to Bawku, but the area has yet to achieve it. The article offered empirical validation on the need to utilize indigenous methods in the Bawku Traditional Region might be investigated in settling the ethnic conflict in the area, based on the perspectives of traditional actors. The research demonstrates that indigenous conflict resolution strategies are effective. Consequently, the need

for the inter faith organisations consolidating the implementation of the indigenous approaches in [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) resolving peace remain critical to be considered. More also, the study demonstrates that by combining indigenous Kusasis and Mamprusis indigenous approaches, indigenous conflict resolution methods in the Bawku Traditional Area can be beneficial in resolving the dispute.

Additionally, Wahab, and Odetokun (2014) undertook a study on indigenous approaches to housing-induced domestic conflict management in Ondo City, Nigeria. A total of 421 residential structures (2.39 percent) were sampled. Domestic strife is more common in tenement buildings where tenants must share utilities and amenities, according to the study. The nature, causes, and effects of domestic conflict among inhabitants, as well as ways for resolving such disputes, are examined in this research. It claims that indigenous dispute resolution procedures work best in traditional civilizations and recommends that they be used in settlements with similar indigenous.



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CHAPTER FOUR

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Introduction

While the previous chapter outlined the results and presented the discussions as established in the literature, this chapter covers the summary of findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

4.1 Summary of Findings

The study had three (3) specific objectives: to investigate the relationship between religion and conflict; to examine the adoption of conflict and peacebuilding mechanisms by the Catholic Church; and to assess the effectiveness of religious organizations' conflict management initiatives.

The findings of the study were:

In line with Objective One: to investigate the relationship between religion and conflict

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- Catholicism pervades every aspect of life, creating a double-edged, interdependent nexus that promotes peaceful cohabitation for development. Religion, on the other hand, is seen as a possible cause of strife and terrorism. The Catholic Church has therefore embraced a critical role in enhancing the positive religion and conflict nexus through bringing disparate communities together, especially during and after war or conflict.

- Through the use of symbols, rituals, the invocation of sacred texts, and the use of its institutions, religion really plays a variety of roles in both war and peace. All faiths are capable of marshalling enormous resources for peace, particularly those with cultural domination. However, the study acknowledged that religions may be co-opted into the service of violence, and that this occurs regularly. In the face of violent assault, the Catholic Church uses religion to foster good relationships by reducing conflict potential through the use of its theological, institutional, and cultural influence in delivering a compelling peace.

- Before violence breaks out, the Catholic Church's Strategic Peace Building (SPB) aims to guarantee that to build constructive, peaceful routes for reducing conflicts and addressing social injustices, all structures, organisations, institutions, and parts of culture collaborate. The Church is teaching the laity how to think about the world through the prism of the gospel."- impetus of fostering a positive relationship between religion and conflict resolution.

- The Catholic Church recognises that religious conflicts are based on theological views. The West African Subregion is seeing an upsurge in religious conflicts or hostilities. Differences in ideologies or theological concepts, among other variables that appear to have both religious and secular components, have sparked these conflicts. When ethnic and religious identities are at

odds, interreligious conflict is more likely. Weak governments make religious extremists' activities easier and their ideas more appealing to the wider population.

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In line with Objective Two: Adoption of Conflict and Peacebuilding Mechanisms

- Alternative conflict resolution was used by the Catholic Church during Ghana's 2016 election to help keep the peace and prevent unrest. This entails a variety of approaches through anticipatory and reconciliatory strategies, which have resulted in high-level dialogue meetings, strategic meetings with eminent statesmen, the use of surveillance reports as a basis for dialogue, information dissemination via radio, and the use of ADR to mediate disagreements.
- Mediation is one of the most important methods utilised by the Catholic Church in Ghana and the West African region for public debate on conflict resolution. Alternative Dispute Resolution Animators are used by certain religious leaders to arbitrate conflicts and grievances that are fueling diabolic and reprisal activities—a path to peace and conflict resolution. Early Warning Signals support a closed-door gathering with political leaders, traditional authorities, and youth organisations for peacebuilding and conflict resolution.
- Because of its accepted role and engagement with communities, the Catholic Church is active in peacebuilding, mediation, and reconciliation at all levels. It is viewed as a neutral player who works for the greater good and stands up for people who are typically ignored, as seen by members of the national-level mediation team brokering peace in Ghana, Nigeria, South Sudan, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Kenya, Colombia, and the Philippines, among others.
- In Ghana, the Catholic Church focused on interfaith dialogue meetings, education, and advocacy alongside civil society organisations in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Through peacebuilding processes, education and advocacy programmes, and interfaith discussion

meetings, it worked with community-based organisations and other faith-based organisations (FBOs) to play an essential role in conflict resolution in Bawku.

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In line with Objective Three, assess the effectiveness of religious organizations' conflict management initiatives.

- The effectiveness of conflict management is stifled by primary causes of the ineffectiveness and poor performance of the often-utilized conflict analysis and conflict management styles. Overreliance on political and governance procedures, with little attention to the role of religious organizations, were issues during the conflict's early stages, as well as non-implementation of faith-based religions, NGOs, or CSO whitepapers or recommendations made to the government.

- Religious organisations' conflict resolution methods and strategies aid in determining the success of their programmes' outcomes in consolidating peace and resolving conflict. This refers to people's systematic responses or patterns of behaviour when confronted with conflicts as a result of a religious organization's intervention. Conflict resolution styles relied on are avoidance, strategic disengagement, compromise, cooperative issue resolution, and third-party decision-making, all successful conflict-resolution approaches that are culturally dependently deployed.

- Conflict management and transformation mechanisms' effectiveness is relied on through conflict transformation activities, structural transformation changes, actor transformations (where actors decide to shift their aims or approach to conflict in general), and issue transformations (reformulations of parties' positions on significant issues at the heart of the dispute, as well as how such positions are reframed in order to reach agreements).

- The church's conflict resolution effectiveness is realised through the collaboration efforts on indigenous approaches to conflict management in the West African Subregion, such as

offering quality and inclusive healthcare; influencing social norms and behaviour; peacebuilding, mediation, and reconciliation; strengthening democratic governance through citizen participation; speaking truth to power; witnessing and accompanying suffering; and providing rapid, local, and inclusive humanitarian response.

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4.2 Conclusion

The study concluded as follows:

In line with the objective one, the relationship between religion and conflict has looked to be skewed negatively in recent decades in the West African Sub Region, with significant regional peace and inter-religious cohabitation appearing to be threatened. This is due to theological and ideological conflicts that underpin the disorganized religious reliance on symbols and using religious institutions to promote conflict, rising social injustices, and panic through the religious insurgency of Islamic State or al-Qaeda affiliates Boko Haram.

In line with the objective two, the use of alternative dispute resolution, reliance on early warning signals and mediation, peacebuilding and reconciliation, and validating the support of indigenous approaches to peacebuilding appeared to be yielding significant results in the Catholic Church's adoption of conflict and peacebuilding mechanisms. This is due to the Vatican's strong institutional structures and vision, which is based on the principle of hospitality and an efficient dispute resolution process that has been used in recent years.

In line with the objective three, the effectiveness of religious organizations' conflict management initiatives of the Catholic Church is the result of institutional structure, resource allocation,

capacity investment, reputation gained over the years and the mainstreaming of peacebuilding and conflict resolutions approaches as part of its routine programs.

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4.3 Recommendations

- The reconciliation effort must not be impeded by a lack of administration of justice and reparations. Christians, through the Church, are urged, however, not to fail to live up to forgiving ideals, particularly when victims have suffered irrevocable loss, have not gotten justice, and have not been compensated. It reinforces the need for personal inter-religious apologies and regret in promoting long-term reconciliation. Influential Islamic institutions and religious groups must provide public education, participate in advocacy and dialogue meetings, and be vocal in their condemnation of Islamic insurgency violence. They are also urged to work together with young groups and actors to combat radicalization and other ideologically oriented interfaith violent aberrations in order to assist in strengthening mutual coexistence.
- As African communities move (slowly but inexorably) closer to contemporary standards and institutions, the usefulness of traditional dispute resolution approaches must not be eroded. Traditional methods' effectiveness was based partly (but consistently) on the values held in high regard by community members; as these values fade away, either due to modernization or disruptions caused by prolonged civil wars and insurgencies, traditional methods will become less and less effective. Regrettably, when they lose their lustre, they are not replaced by a robust and capable modern judicial system capable of quickly resolving conflicts and providing efficient answers. In this regard, the Church, the CSOs, and other inter-faith organisations should employ and optimise alternative peacebuilding methods underpinned by indigenous initiatives to ensure peace process ownership and reconciliation.

- In contrast to Western methods, which emphasise punishment, the emphasis here is on [University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) reconciliation for peace building. While the West is only "discovering" alternative dispute resolution and restorative justice as better ways to deal with crime and conflict, African nations are still being pressured to abandon traditional conflict resolution procedures. A comparison of the efficacy (in terms of conflict avoidance and reoccurrence) of African traditional conflict resolution with Western approaches centred on punishment and reclusion must be an intriguing study with potentially significant results, which should be further investigated.

- The most popular and effective methods of settling issues through the courts are frequently fraught with corruption, leaving the losers embittered. Liberalism is not a rejection of lawlessness; rather, it is the conviction that institutional frameworks that reflect the common good reduce conflict risk. According to the study's neoliberal theory, governments in the West African subregion should strengthen economic interconnectedness, collective human rights norms (such as democracy), and mutual security to maintain peace. According to the liberalism theory, institutionalized collaboration, shared principles, and economic interdependence are all required for a democracy to avoid conflict.

- It is necessary to create an evidence-based learning programme with religious leaders, examining what has and has not succeeded in previous engagements with the West African government. This might begin with mutually beneficial sectors like humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding, and responding to pandemics.

- Faith leaders and faith groups must be more profoundly and routinely involved in political analysis, programme design, development, and implementation in conflicts and peace issues at the local and national levels. Engaging religious actors as important stakeholders with unique social and cultural insights should be a significant pillar in all facets of conflict resolution.

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UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

LEGON CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS AND DIPLOMACY

**RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS' ROLE IN CONFLICT AND PEACEBUILDING IN
WEST AFRICA: A CASE STUDY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH**

THIS IS PURELY AN ACADEMIC EXERCISE, HENCE ANY INFORMATION GIVEN
WOULD BE STRICTLY TREATED AS CONFIDENTIAL.

INTERVIEW GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Objective 1: To investigate the relationship between religion and conflict

- In your view, what is the relationship between religion and conflict?
- What is your view about the inter-faith tensions of Islam and Christianity in creating conflict?

- Can you explain the scenario where religion can create both conflict and peace simultaneously?
[University of Ghana http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh)
- In what way does religion promotes peace (in terms of symbols, rituals, the invocation of sacred texts, and the use of its institutions)?
- How does the Catholic Church resolve conflicts and address social injustices?

Objective 2: To examine the adoption of conflict and peacebuilding mechanisms by the Catholic Church

- What are some of the conflict and peacebuilding mechanisms adopted by the Catholic Church?
- Are there alternative dispute resolution methods adopted by the Catholic Church in resolving conflicts?
- In what way does the Catholic Church identify faith-based early warning systems in preventing religious and ethnic conflict?
- What is the motivation of the Catholic Church in undertaking peacebuilding and reconciliation programmes aimed at resolving conflicts?

Objective 3: To assess the effectiveness of the conflict management initiatives by the Catholic Church

- What conflict analysis and conflict management styles are adopted by the Catholic Church in the management of conflicts?
- In your opinion, do you consider the conflict analysis and conflict management styles adopted by the Church to be effective?

- What challenges are encountered in ensuring effectiveness and good performance of [University of Ghana](http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh) conflict analysis employed by the Church?
- Any further comments?

