

**A pastoral missional reflection on conflict
management in the Niger Delta: The impact of
amnesty on citizens of the Ogba Community who are
opposed to violence.**

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ABSTRACT

Due to the fallen nature of mankind, conflict became inevitable in the world. The ability to effectively manage conflict will lead to peace and sustainable development. However, as argued in this research the humans' actions are not enough to bring peace to any community. The theological reflection in this research is based on a pastoral missional approach.

Though conflict is inevitable, it is not totally negative unless it is negatively handled or neglected. Where people believe that conflict is bad or evil, and approach it in the same mindset, it could lead to unprecedented tragedy; in most cases it leads to excessive emotional and physical stress due to negative reactions. How we handle conflict determines its effect in our lives and societies.

Cultural differences are divinely established to fulfil God's purpose. Though this has caused certain negative worldviews in human relationships, the cross-cultural understanding is important in relationships for peaceful coexistence and progress. Peace and development are sustainable through justice for all.

There are growing crises in every facet of human existence. The negative consequences of conflict that bedevil human society at all levels, could be traced to sin. People that have been living together suddenly turn against each other with cruel hatred. God created man perfectly and gave his instruction, but when man disobeyed and chose to please the self, violence became inevitable. These and many more points are issues discovered and discoursed in this research.

KEY WORDS:

Pastoral reflection, missional reflection, conflict management, amnesty, non-violence, Ogba.

CHAPTER ONE¹

INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT/RATIONALE

This research will focus on the Ogba² community, within the local government area of Ogba-Egbema/Ndoni in the Rivers State of Nigeria. The community is troubled by violent conflicts between the oil companies, government and protesters. This is described as the “Niger Delta crisis”. In the time passed, the community had not used violence as a means in their tension however, recently there have been records of violence in the area. All efforts to silence the protesters have proved ineffective, including the latest amnesty programme of 2009. Many authors, for example Davidheiser and Nyiayaana (2011), Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016:88), Omokhoa (2015), and Ushie (2013) among others, who have written about the Niger Delta crisis, attributed this failure to “not resolving the root causes of the Niger Delta crisis.”

The researcher is of opinion that these authors failed to address the problem from the Christian perspective, where Biblical principles regarding conflict management is taken into consideration – which is also then the focus of this study. Conflict is part of human life and it has negative consequences or positive benefits, depending on how it is being handled (Ibrahim, 2014:39). It seems as if conflict and violence have overtaken every part of the world – and more so Africa – where every aspect of social, political and religious life is caught up in conflict. Okoh (2005:91) notes that resolution of conflict helps to push society towards enhanced humanity, because although conflict is inevitable, careful intervention can lead to social and economic progress.

Conflict management can be defined as the process of altering the severity and form of conflict in order to maximise its benefits and minimise its negative consequences. Between parties, conflict can be resolved through collaboration, accommodation, competition, compromise or avoidance. However, for the sake of simplifying the definitions, conflict management can be described as the act of coordinating

¹ Please note that chapter one is the research proposal of the study.

² A community in Ogba-Egbema/Ndoni Local Government area. It is a local government area of Rivers State, Nigeria, with its capital at Omoku. The area is inhabited by the three tribes, Ogba people, Egbema people and Ndoni people. Ogba is migrants from the old Benin kingdom, while Egbema is subgroups of the Igbo people. The Ndoni is of the Ndokwas people of the Delta State. The Niger Delta is an area of dense mangrove rainforest on the southern tip of Nigeria and comprises nine of Nigeria's thirty-six states: Abia, Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, Imo, Ondo and Rivers (Bekoe, 2005). It is an oil rich region in Nigeria and is therefore, prone to agitation and violent conflict.

the self, a group of people and/or other resources, in order to maintain a peaceful atmosphere for increased productivity (McKibben, 2016:2). Since conflict is foreseeable, its effective management could lead to productivity. Within the African context conflict management might be viewed as one of the core elements of sustainable development. Poor communities frequently experience destruction of lives and properties due to unresolved conflicts and an unsatisfied hunger for power, as is demonstrated by the militant groups in the Niger Delta. There is a need to embark not only on a physical level to reconcile people, but also on a spiritual level to renew the minds of people. Such spiritual intervention will enhance the view on life, humanity as well as the management of the environment. However, cognisance should be taken that spiritual principles for reconciliation might clash with physical expectations. People suffering from material deprivation and consequently living in poverty will inevitably not accept peace except if there are justice, hope for a better future and access to existential necessities of life.

The rationale behind the introduction of the Amnesty Program in Nigeria is to disarm the militant groups in the Niger Delta area. Okonofua (2016:3) stated that from the start, the programme was conceptualised to restoring peace (reconciliation) to the troubled region. However, since the inception of the Amnesty Program in 2009 there has not been a reduction in militancy, instead, more and more militant groups have sprang up with renewed tension. Okonofua (2016:3) also observes that the violence, which appeared to have been abated immediately following the implementation of the Niger Delta Amnesty Program³ (NDAP), has steadily resurfaced, with the Niger Delta Avengers blowing up pipelines and sabotaging oil assets, critically impacting the country's oil output. Davidheiser and Nyiayaana (2011:45) opine that since the 1990s, armed clashes and organised criminal activities such as kidnapping and oil theft (known as "bunkering") have proliferated to the point where there is a danger of violence and disorder becoming the norm in the Delta, to the point that Nigeria's sovereignty has been seriously challenged by militia activities. Yet, arms control policies adopted in the region have been largely ineffective and, in some cases, counterproductive. The discourse went further to give an example in 2004 when the Arms-Buy-Back Program was designed to retrieve guns from cult and militia members. Despite the initiative the programme actually exacerbated the problem of weapons proliferation. It was found that many of the participants turned in substandard guns and used the N250,000 per gun payoff to purchase more advanced and deadly weapons. As postulated by Davidheiser and Nyiayaana

³ The amnesty programme entails a general pardon for those who commit political crime. The word amnesty is a Greek word derived from "*amnestia*". It is an act of grace by which the supreme power in a state restores those who may have been guilty of any offence, to the position of innocent persons (*Novus homo*) and it includes more than pardon, in as much as it abolishes all legal remembrances of the offences. It is an act of authority given by government to pardon persons from guilt or penalty of an offence, especially political offences (Ikelegbe & Umokoro, 2014:20). In Nigeria the Amnesty Program is a pardon for those who use arms to commit various crimes. It is a political strategy to disarm the Niger Delta Militant groups and absorb them into the society in order to ensure peace in the region.

(2011:45) the 2009 Amnesty Program (AP) represents the Nigerian state's latest undertaking in its continuing search for appropriate policy responses to the challenges of arms proliferation and peace in the Delta. The AP, based on the surrendering of arms by militant groups in exchange for freedom from prosecution is an initiative that aims to achieve the cessation of armed conflicts in the region. Davidheiser and Nyiayaana (2011:45) contend that the AP is fundamentally flawed with little potential for promoting security and human development in the region.

Even so, the introduction of the Amnesty Program was a result of the 'paradigm shift' from using military power in ensuring peace, to a new understanding that an essential link towards peace in the Niger Delta is the oil companies and the Nigerian economy as community projects. Ushie (2013:30) suggests that the government and oil industries should work closely with other developmental partners to create jobs and opportunities, using existing community development initiatives. Obi (2014:249) explains that second generation programmes shift away from military structures towards larger communities that are affected by armed violence. Therefore a series of planned activities and events that seek to take weapons away from fighters, collect and destroy such weapons and prepare former fighters for a return to normal family and civilian life are needed. Missional activities such as provision of social and economic infrastructure, compensation for polluted land, youth's skill acquisition programmes and scholarships for students of Niger Delta origin are needed. In the past, the focus of the government has been on the militant groups. Perhaps that is why more and more youths decide to adopt a militant approach in order to attract attention, which could be responsible for the increase in the violence, in spite of the measures taken to ensure peace. It is in this regard that the church with a pastoral missional approach can play a crucial role in establishing peace in the Ogba society.

In addition to the pastoral missional approach, the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder and transgenerational conflict will be discussed. Beiser *et al.* (2010:226) argue that transgenerational trauma inflicts a burden of individual suffering and from a social perspective; it erodes the human capital needed to rebuild violence-damaged civil societies. At the same time, the social conditions that perpetuate post-traumatic stress disorder symptoms and prevent self-healing cannot be neglected. In addressing the erosion of social capital in the Niger Delta, it is noted that there is a need for social interventions aimed at addressing the mistrust of the community and loss of interdependence produced by years of perceived exploitation, violence and conflict.

Taking all the above into consideration, the researcher foresees that this study will contribute to the field of knowledge and human endeavour in the following ways:

- As an academic research it is of benefit for educational purposes and can be useful in developing a curriculum on conflict management to be taught at all levels of educational institutions;
- It can serve as a guide for decision making and conflict management from a Biblical perspective;
- It can be used as a tool for guidance and counselling purposes;
- It will contribute to peace building in the Ogba society;
- It can be useful to organise seminars and workshops for the leaders and potential leaders, both in the church and the secular society of the Niger Delta;
- It will contribute to a possible solution to Niger Delta conflict problems;
- Since conflict and leadership are common in every aspect of humanity, this research will be useful to all aspects of life endeavours, departments and agencies;
- It will also be useful for further research study.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research question is formulated to identify the issues and possible solutions relating to the increase of violence in the Niger Delta Area, in spite of the Amnesty Program, with particular attention to Ogba community. The main question of this research is: How can a pastoral missional approach help the Ogba community with reducing conflict in a violence-ridden community?

In pursuance of the above question, the following sub-questions will be addressed in order to arrive at a conclusion:

- a) What is the effect of the Amnesty Program on the conflict situation in the Ogba community?
- b) What are the reasons for the continuous conflict situation in the Ogba community?
- c) What are the findings of the empirical study on the pastoral missional principles, and transgenerational traumatic stress, and how can community development be of help in conflict management of the Ogba Community?
- d) How can pastoral and missional principles be applied in conflict management of Ogba community with discourse on transgenerational conflict?
- e) What conclusions can be drawn from the study that can help the church to respond to the conflict situation in the Ogba community?

1.3. RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this study is to reflect on how a pastoral missional approach can help the Ogba community with the reducing of conflict in a violence-ridden community.

To reach this aim the following objectives are set:

- a) To determine the effect of the Amnesty Program on the conflict situation in the Ogba community.
- b) To reflect on reasons for the seemingly unresolved conflict situation in the Ogba community; and discuss on transgenerational post-traumatic stress as a notion of unhealed issues of prior generations being expressed in current generations; which if left unattended to, can continue for thousands of years.
- c) To reflect on the findings of an empirical study on pastoral missional principles and discourse on transgenerational traumatic stress in conflict management, and how community development can be of help to manage conflict in the Ogba community.
- d) To determine on how pastoral missional principles can be apply on conflict management in the Ogba community with discourse on transgenerational conflict.
- e) To draw some conclusions from the study that can be helpful to the church in responding to the conflict situation in the Ogba community.

1.4. CENTRAL THEORETICAL ARGUMENT

The central theoretical argument of this study is that community development as a pastoral missional approach can help the Ogba community with the reducing of conflict in a violence-ridden community. The statement means that when conflict is managed effectively, and energy is channelled positively, the violence aspect of it will be mitigated, because conflict can breed violence or it creates new opportunities of growth.

1.5. RESEARCH METHOD AND METHODOLOGY

Because of the multidisciplinary nature of ‘conflict’ and based on the fact that the proposal seeks to make a theological contribution to conflict management in the Niger Delta, the methodology will adopt a descriptive/analytic approach in order to give voice to theological values and theories in praxis (Stanton, 2013:75). It will also include the socio-scientific approach by employing qualitative research methods in order to explore the influence on the Ogba community of conflict events in the Niger Delta and the possibilities of applying a pastoral missional approach in conflict management. In the task to interpret the episodes, situation and context⁴ within the study area the researcher will take both social and theological facts into consideration. In order to answer the research questions, the study entails the following:

⁴ EPISODE: an event that is a part of but distinct from a greater whole and that often has specific significance, here it refers to the event within the Niger Delta conflict. SITUATION: State of affairs in a particular set of circumstances. CONTEXT: the surrounding condition of an event or the circumstances that form the setting of an event, statement or idea which necessitates full understanding.

- a) The researcher will do a literature study to better understand the particular episodes, situations and context of the impact and effect of the Amnesty Program on the conflict situation in the Ogba community.
- b) Having understood the impact and effect of the Amnesty Program there is need to enter into a dialogue with the social sciences to interpret and explain why the situation is going on. Here the question of the causes of the continuing conflict in Ogba will be asked, with the aim to have a better understanding.
- c) At this stage of the research, the researcher will return to his homeland and conduct a qualitative empirical study where the findings of research will be implemented and tested.
- d) The researcher will study appropriate Scripture to be able to raise normative principles from the perspective of mission as the Church-With-Society (Bosch, 1991:368-388) and mission as mediating salvation (Bosch, 1991:393-400). Attention to mission as a quest for justice (Bosch, 1991:400-408) will also be attended to. A literature study on conflict management from a pastoral paradigm will also be conducted.
- e) The last task will focus on the formation of an action plan for specific responses that seeks to shape the episode, situation or context in desirable directions. The researcher will make certain conclusions on the findings of the qualitative research in an attempt to state principles that can lead to effective conflict management.

1.6. EPISTEMOLOGY AND RESEARCH METHOD

Epistemology is described by Alcoff (1999:vii) as a philosophical inquiry into the nature of knowledge, what justifies a belief and what it means that something is viewed as the truth. This study ensues from the epistemology of Practical and Missiological Theology. Practical theology is expected to move beyond the theory to the application of theological studies in everyday Christian life in order to transform the society. In line with this, Ballard and Pritchard (2001:1) describe it as a field of theology that specifically deals with Christian life and practice within the church and in relation to the wider society. The task of practical theology is, according to Willows and Swinton (2000:11), an opportunity to explore the interface between theological and practical living. However, practical theology could be applied based on different theological perspectives; for instance, to the ministers, it is a way of applying theology to their daily encounters; while to the academics, it is a way of looking at theology that acknowledges the significance of practice in the process of theological reflection; the pastoral counsellor will apply practical theology with the contemporary psychological theories; to the politically minded, practical theology provides a method and a perspective within which the need for social change could be highlighted and initiated. One of the approaches of practical theological reflection, as discussed by Ballard and Pritchard (2001:120) was a linear approach whereby the theological question is to

identify what Biblical material and more especially the teaching practices thereof, are relevant to the situation under review.

In discussing the emergence of practical theology, Willows and Swinton (2000:11) trace its roots from the application of theology to the training needs of the clergy. Ballard (2008:285) points out that the question of theological reflection is about God's role in every situation, and humans' response to the reality of the world and the claims of the Kingdom. According to Osmer (2008:4), the following definition describes Practical Theology best: "The task of practical theology is to reflect critically on current practices in light of the Scriptures in order to promote growth in the praxis of the faith community." This epistemological point of departure is also the basis of what pastoral ministry entails, as formulated by Louw (2010:73): "the expression and representation of the sensitivity and compassion of the Scriptures' understanding and portrayal of God's encounter, intervention, interaction and involvement in our human being."

It was Voetius (Kritzinger *et al.*, 1994:1) who described the three aims of mission as follows: "the immediate aim of mission was the conversion of 'Gentiles'; this immediate aim was subordinate to the second goal, the planting of the church; and the ultimate goal, to which both these were subordinate, was the glory and the manifestation of God's divine grace". Bosch (1991:5) seems to add a "philanthropic motive, through which the church is challenged to seek justice in the world but which easily equates God's reign with an improved society". Missiology can be described as the systematic study of God's redemptive revelation in this world through history. Therefore, every aspect of the church's ministry must have a missional dimension and intention.

Every community is designed for God's redemptive purpose and the church, in obedience to the Holy Spirit is the channel through which God's purpose will be accomplished. The church has a dual responsibility, to the fellowship and to the community (Dayton, 1987:59). The mission of Christ is all-inclusive, thus the church must bring the gospel of transformation that is all-inclusive even in the economic system of the community where the oppression of inequality is in evidence as a voice to the voiceless. The *missio Dei* is to participate to help those who lack a meaningful relationship with the living Christ and no longer experience the consolation of faith in Christ. The participants in the *missio Dei* show concern for the underdog (disadvantaged) and those without hope.

Mission in the first place necessitates preaching the Gospel of grace and conversion to those who do not know Jesus Christ or who have always rejected him. Reflection on mission in the early church revealed that salvation was interpreted in comprehensive terms (Bosch, 2011:403). The research will include in the discourse, a change in conflict resolution that involves the church's mediation as a missional approach; the missional involvement of the church in the human society for the wellbeing and justice of the community (Bosch, 2011:413); the liberation approach of the church by studying the

best social developmental strategies that can draw the community to knowledge of Christ's love and forgiveness. The theology of mission as applied in this study is to reveal that God owns the universe and is concerned about every activity of humanity, therefore, the church mission to the community is one form of outward-oriented nature of the love of God which means serving, healing and reconciling a divided wounded human community (Bosch, 2011:505). God who is the creator, redeemer and sustainer of all life constantly works in the world to affirm and safeguard life (CWME, 2012:4). This method, will lead to the understanding of eschatological hope that helps us to realise that the Kingdom is here (Mark 1:15), therefore, it can be different and it must be different. Thus, we work towards the realisation of the Kingdom of God here and now (Bosch, 2011:517). The church as a missional community must be involved in word and deed in people's daily lives in the community; go beyond its ecumenical location, to embrace human life, touching the suffering flesh of Christ in others. However, the challenge of reconciliation ministry of the church as a missional activity is to help identify the presence of God to reassure those that are hurt through injustice and other social vices and conflicts, in order to re-affirm confidence that their pain and the unjust situation are not ignored.

According to Kirk (1999:21), "mission is the disciplined study which deals with questions that arise when people of faith seek to understand and fulfil God's purposes in the world." For the church to engage pastorally with the conflict situation in the Niger Delta she has to seek to understand and fulfil God's purpose in that specific context. Because the Christian faith is a historical faith, Bosch (2016:192) discourses six epochs in the history of the Christian church: the primitive Christianity; the Patristic period; the Middle Ages; the Reformation; the Enlightenment; and the Ecumenical era. The reason for Bosch's historical approach in the paradigm of missiology is that the magnitude of today's challenges can only be appreciated if viewed from the past history. At various stages he mentions the church has witnessed conflict both from within and outside. The whole concept of the *missio Dei* as described by Bosch (1991) and Wright (2006) is that the mission of God expresses the power of God in history to which obedience is required as the only response. As a Trinity, God the Father sending the Son, and together God the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit. Therefore, human mission is a participation in the divine sending as the Holy Spirit empowering and sending the Church into the world to proclaim the salvation of God (Bosch, 2016:399; Wright, 2006:62, 63).

Utilising the concept 'missional' in this study to implicate a specific pastoral style, Keifert (2017:85-87) in this regard describes six movements of the missional church as identified by Van Gelder and Zscheile which will influence the ministry of church in the Niger Delta:

- "The church is functioning in a dramatically changed context. The implication is that the pastoral care will need to be specific and direct.

- The good news as announced by Jesus Christ as the reign of God needs to shape the identity of the missional church.
- The missional church with its identity rooted in the reign of God must live as an alternative community in the world.
- The missional church needs to understand that the Holy Spirit cultivates communities that represent the reign of God.
- The missional church needs missional leadership that equips all God’s people for mission.
- The missional church needs to develop missional structures for shaping the ministry and life to practice missional connectedness (ecumenical relations) with the larger church.”

This study will also follow the Reformed Theology as point of departure, which underwrites commitment to Scripture, stresses the Bible's inspiration, authority and sufficiency (Boice, 1999). It is believed that God reveals himself in the Word (Scripture and Jesus) and in nature, and that man can know God only by means of his revelation.

1.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

1.7.1. Research context (Qualitative)

A qualitative research method will be applied using a pre-designed questionnaire. The data will be collected within the Ogba communities (Omoku and Obrikom). Omoku is the administrative headquarters of the Ogba-Egbema/Ndoni Local Government area, while Obrikom is the community close to the Gas Industry and oil wells within Ogba land. The researcher will visit these communities and carry out research in each of these two communities.

1.7.2. Research design

The research topic is designed to carry out a behavioural assessment in order to identify possible solutions for the conflict in the Ogba community. According to Kothari (2004:3), qualitative research is of importance in the behavioural sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour. Through such method, one can analyse the various factors that motivate people to behave in a particular manner based on their mind-set. In view of the above understanding, the qualitative method has been chosen in order to identify other relevant factors that will help to draw inference within the study area such as, socio-economic status, gender role and agitation, cross cultural and religious influence on conflict and development in the area. For the purpose of exploring every opportunity the research is designed to be flexible in order to consider many different aspects of the

problem identified to be appropriate for the research purpose. This means that the flexibility is to create an opportunity for unforeseen viable factors that could contribute positively to this research result to be included. The study will incline to the community of the Church to determine the role of the church ought to be in conflict management. How can the church succeed where the government has failed to bring peace within the community? However, the result could be applicable to similar situations, because conflict is a general phenomenon. The research is designed to use the procedure of purposive sampling; interviewees include community leaders, religious leaders with particular reference to the church, and persons with adequate knowledge of conflict situation in the region.

1.7.3. **Method of data collection**

The empirical data will be collected through a questionnaire - pre-planned questions that will guide the researcher during interactive sessions with the participants in the form of oral interviews. Open-ended questions will be asked to give the participants opportunity to express their views on the issue. A literature study is also part of the data collection, whereas relevant documents in the field of study have been consulted and will continue to be used throughout this research process to add credibility to the analysis. Having lived in the research area for more than five years and following trend of events, the researcher has personal experience in the community under study. The limit of this research could be affected by the availability of resources and opportunities. Basically, the empirical data collection will be divided into two categories:

- One category will focus on certain individuals, which include interviews with the community leaders/chiefs and any individual who is knowledgeable on the conflict within the community. The researcher will ask questions based on the predesigned questionnaire and record the responses of the interviewees. The reason why it has to be an interview, although using the same questionnaire to interact with the individuals is a strategy of data gathering through the story telling of individuals' experience. During an interview people tend to respond in more detail, than when they are given questionnaires to complete. This view is supported by Osmer (2008:50) when he discusses life history/narrative research. It enables the researcher to give the participant chance to express and share his/her life story of the events.
- In the second category the focus will be on groups, which will include the church leaders and the youths (ages 18 – 39 are regarded as youth and are not under-age which the researcher exempted, this age bracket can think logically). The researcher will again make use of questionnaires which the participants have to complete. The reason for this is to save time because it will be time consuming and stressful for the researcher to fill in their responses while interacting with groups one-on-one. The researcher will be present in order to coordinate and

explain any uncertainties. Priority will be given to the group discussions, which are intended to make the data collection flexible as the opportunity presents itself.

The data collection will thus be done through questionnaires. The participants are allowed to ask questions for clarification in order that they can fully understand the purpose of the research. It will also be made clear to the participants that participation is entirely voluntary, with the option to opt out even after giving consent without any negative impact.

1.7.4. Estimated risk level

The risk level is determined as a medium risk, due the fact that the research topic is regarded as sensitive in nature.

1.7.5. What will be expected of participants during data gathering?

Participants will be expected to answer questions through an interview/filling of questionnaire which will take about one and half hours. They are under no obligation to answer questions which they do not want to answer.

1.7.6. Probable experience of the participants

The participants are adults who are reasonable and able to respond logically to questions relating to the research topic as it affects their community on a daily basis; they will be guided and enlightened on the content, meaning and purpose of the research. The researcher foresees that their experience will be perceived as positive.

1.7.7. Risks and precautions

The possible risks in this research and their precautions are as listed below:

- Physical stress due to fatigue and hunger. Where the participants are tired, there will be short breaks and light refreshments will be provided.
- The participants' identities will be held as confidential and the final document will not reveal the names of the participants.
- Information will be saved and kept within the confines of the researcher and protected from unauthorised access, either in the personal computer as soft copy and the hard copy will be under lock. Before the start of each session, participants will be informed of the ethical considerations and they will be required to sign informed consent.

1.7.8. **Benefits for participants**

The gains for the participants in this study will be the increasing knowledge and understanding that will be obtained through the outcome of this research and the result of this research will be an addition to their knowledge on conflict management.

- Direct benefits for participants: in addition to the above benefit, the participant will benefit from the outcome of this research if peace is restored with the development that will follow. The forums for the researcher and the participants are interactive sessions that would create awareness on the issue of conflict management in line with Biblical perspectives, and they will have the privilege of incorporating his or her ideas or aspirations into the research.
- Indirect benefits for society at large or for the researchers/institution: The outcomes of a knowledge-based research will help the society, the researcher and the institution to have a broad knowledge of the real problem undertaken in the research and the application of the research results will mitigate the risk of constant violence confrontation in conflict situations. The research will be useful for decision-making processes, especially any activities that involves human relationships. Of course, the research will increase the knowledge of the researcher and add academic value to the university under which this research is supervised. The society or readers will benefit from the findings that will be enshrined in the research outcome.
- The general benefits: From the Practical Theological point of view as discussed by Ballard and Pritchard (2001:5) it specifically deals with Christian life and practice within the church and in relation to wider society. As the research present a new approach of using peaceful means to overcome evil through the understanding of the word of God.

1.7.9. **Risk/benefit ratio analysis**

The risks in this research are insignificant compared to the benefits. While the risks may involve time and energy that will be used by the participants, the benefits include:

- Shared knowledge: This will give the participants an opportunity to share their knowledge about the situation in order to find probable solutions to the conflict in their community.
- Wider dissemination of information concerning the community: There is a possibility of publishing the results of the findings, which will create awareness to other concerned individuals or groups, and government may also use it for positive action.
- The expectation of the research is to find possible solutions to the continual violent conflict in the region: If this aim is achieved, it will be for the benefit of the region because there will be safety of life and property.

1.7.10. Expertise, skills and legal competencies

There is no physical project embarked on in this research, therefore, there is no need for any technical expertise or training for the participants, except the knowledge to respond to the questions and the ability to reason, which form the criteria for selection.

1.7.11. Facilities

This research does not require any formal facilities other than writing material which the researcher will provide. The venue could be the community town hall, church auditorium, primary school class or individual house as the case may be. Where it is necessary, permission will be sought from appropriate authority.

1.7.12. Legal authorisation

This research does not constitute any security threat or social hazard that requires legal procedure within the community except the authorisation from the ethical department of the North-West University, which is necessary for this process.

1.7.13. Goodwill permission/consent

The consent of each participant is necessary. Since the research is also involved with the community's leaders/chiefs, the researcher will have to consult with them on a personal visit to their respective residences to seek permission before the commencement of the research activities.

1.7.14. Criteria for participant selection and recruitment

Inclusion criteria: Inclusion criteria will be based on maturity, which means the person must not be under aged, who can think logically. Knowledgeability, the person that will be included should be knowledgeable about the conflict situation in the community; and acceptability, the person must be willing to participate voluntarily in the research. The justification for this choice is for authenticity of the data collection and for consent purposes.

Exclusion criteria: the exclusion criteria are based on accessibility, those who are difficult to access will be avoided; health consideration, those whose health can influence their responses negatively will be excluded; noncitizens of the community will also be exempted; children will also will be excluded. The justification is for ethical reasons and to have reliable information.

1.7.15. **Participant recruitment**

The participants will be recruited as soon as the researcher has ethical clearance. While some will be visited one-on-one, others will be contacted through their leaders (gatekeepers), especially where it involves groups.

1.7.16. **Informed consent (Consent, permission, assent and dissent)**

The informed consent information is contained in the consent letter which will be explained by the researcher to the participants or the group leader who will in turn explain it to the participants. To ensure that they understand the content and are willing to participate in the research activities, they must append their signature to the consent form.

1.7.17. **Incentives and/or remuneration of participants**

Since the research is not funded, the participation is basically voluntary. However, where there is need to encourage the participant especially by refunding travel expenses up to N200.00 for those participants who have to travel to the venue of meeting using public transport it will be done, if they expressly state the need for reimbursement. Refreshments will be served when the session is completed.

1.7.18. **Announcement / Dissemination of study results to participants**

Feedback of the research will be given to the participants within three months of completion and approval of the study through email communication and/or telephone conversations. There will also be a time to visit the participants to say thank you and to give the feedback through the channel that was used for recruitment.

1.7.19. **Privacy and confidentiality**

Privacy: The responses of the participants will be reported as anonymous. During the analysis of the findings the confidentiality of the participants will be protected by using codes instead of names. Their privacy will be respected by excluding others during the interview and keeping information secured in a locked cabinet. The results will be kept confidential by keeping documents and audio tapes safely secured in a locked cabinet where necessary.

Confidentiality: Findings will be kept safe by locking hard copies in a secured place within the researcher's reach and for electronic data it will be protected on a personal computer.

1.7.20. **Management, storage and destruction of data**

- *Data management:* Data will be stored for five years. The findings of this study will only be used for this study and will be destroyed after five years after completion.
- *Storage and destruction of data:* as stated above, the data will be destroyed after five years.

1.7.21. **Monitoring of research**

The researcher is fully involved in the research process to monitor the activities of the participants. Where groups are involved, the seating arrangement will be done to ensure that the venue is hazard free by conducting the research in an uncrowded space so that individual participant will be free to respond without prejudice. The research does not constitute any environmental legal implications that require seeking authorisation. Adverse events could be sudden illness or unforeseen circumstance, which may not necessarily be as result of the research activity but could affect the progress of the research. Where this may occur, medical or appropriate authority will be consulted for a solution. Where an individual needs to be exempted he/she will be exempted accordingly.

1.7.22. **Population/sampling size**

Akanji (2011:97) maintains that the ‘purposive sampling’ approach is one of the more nonprobability sampling methods. This sampling method involves purposive or deliberate selection of a particular sample. The reason for adopting this method of sampling is because there are different groups involved and their input will help to make a comprehensive report. The groups include: the community leaders, the church, the youth (age 18 – 39) who are likely to join militant groups or are already participating in the militancy, and other relevant stakeholders that may be discovered in the course of this research. At least ten (10) samples from each group. However, this research shall not adopt any limit of participants to be interacted with, provided it stays within the scope of the research and ethical viability. The choice of participants is flexible in the sense that those who are available that fall within the categories of inclusion and are willing to partake will be given the privilege to participate. Their knowledge on the issue of conflict in the Niger Delta is one of the criteria as mentioned before. The choice of the church is to be able to reflect on the theological aspect of this research. For simplicity, the content of the above explanation is outlined below:

- **Population:** As already explained, since it is not possible to interact with all the people in Ogba community the researcher will choose samples from the larger populations based on various small groups. The groups will include: youths (age 18-39), church leaders and individuals who are knowledgeable about the research topic.

- Sampling method: This research will adopt the purposive sampling method, which means it is a nonprobability selection. The researcher will consider the choice of participants based on the pre-knowledge of the research topic. Therefore, the concentration will be on persons who displayed a wide variety of perspectives to illuminate the issue of conflict in the community.
- Sample inclusion criteria: As explained above, the criteria of inclusion are based on the fact that the participant must be knowledgeable in the field of the research topic and able to respond objectively. Secondly, the participant must be an adult who is able to respond logically to questions.
- Sample exclusion criteria: The criteria for exclusion include under age and unhealthy individuals whose condition of health might influence his/her logical responses.
- Proposed sample size and motivation: Ten youths or young adults (age 18-39) will be chosen from the two communities giving a total of twenty; the same number apply to church leaders, ten each from the two communities. Five individuals each will be interacted with from the two communities. However, the researcher will be flexible in this regard because something might happen to alter this arrangement. Any variable factor that might affect this arrangement will equally be reported in the final analysis of the result. The motivation for this is to save time and resources that are limited. Secondly, it is easier to manage small groups than larger ones in terms of coordination and effectiveness in getting a reliable result.
- Process of sample recruitment: Every community has its own chiefs and leaders and therefore the researcher has to locate an informant that will guide in identifying the participants. In addition, the researcher is not new in the region and has a pre-knowledge of the hierarchical composition of the community and should be able to identify and recruit reliable participants.

1.7.23. **Data Analysis**

The data will be analysed based on the data collected through the interviews and questionnaires. Microsoft Word would be used to format the research results in line with the NWU research presentation and policy with precautions concerning the reliability of data, computational checks, validation and comparison of results. The analysis will be presented in discourse except where graphs, pictures and tables will be helpful to clarify facts; it would be used accordingly. The researcher is in constant consultation with the study leader for guidance in this regard.

1.7.24. **Role of the researcher**

The researcher will follow the protocol and the inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure scientific validity and to ensure protection of participants. The researcher will supervise the research participants. Reporting serious (unexpected) adverse events to the appropriate authority that requires such information. The researcher will ensure record keeping according to applicable regulations and national or institutional requirements, and will communicate the results accordingly to those who served as research participants and make it public for anyone who may make use of the results.

1.8. **PROVISIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF CHAPTERS**

- Chapter 1: Introduction: This chapter will discuss the framework of this research and includes: the problem statement, the historical background and the nature of Niger Delta with particular emphasis on the Ogba community as a focus of the research, and outline the research methodology.
- Chapter 2: The impact of the Amnesty Program on the Niger Delta conflict: This chapter will discuss the role of amnesty on the conflict situation in the Ogba community. A literature review on the research topic and relevant field will be carried out in this chapter.
- Chapter 3: Causes of seemingly unresolved conflict in the Ogba community. In chapter three, the focus will be to interpret the causes of conflict in the Ogba community. It will also reflect why it is difficult to manage conflict in connection to the Niger Delta with a view to offer solutions.
- Chapter 4: The findings of the qualitative empirical study: After taking all the findings of the previous chapters into consideration, the empirical research will be conducted. The analysis thereof will be presented in this chapter
- Chapter 5: A pastoral reflection on mission as the Church-With-Society in conflict management: In this chapter a study will be done on appropriate Scripture regarding conflict management as well as a reflection on pastoral literature regarding conflict management.
- Chapter 6: Guidelines regarding conflict management based on a pastoral missional approach for the church in Ogba: Guidelines will be discussed which will be helpful to the church in Ogba in their role in conflict management. The researcher will also present a discourse on transgenerational conflict as it applies to missional perspective.

Chapter 7: Summary and suggestions.

Title: A pastoral missional reflection on conflict management in the Niger Delta: The impact of amnesty on citizens of the Ogba Community who are opposed to violence.

Research question: How can a pastoral missional approach help the Ogba community with the reducing of conflict in a violence-ridden community?

Aim: The aim of this study is to reflect on how a pastoral missional approach can help the Ogba community with the reducing of conflict in a violence-ridden community.

	Question	Objectives	Chapter
1	What is the effect of the Amnesty Program on the conflict situation in the Ogba community?	To determine the effect of the Amnesty Program on the conflict situation in the Ogba community.	Chapter 2: The impact of Amnesty Program on the Ogba community. This chapter will discuss the role of amnesty on the conflict situation in the Ogba community. Literature review on the research topic and relevant field will be carried out in this chapter.
2	What are the reasons for the continuous conflict situation in the Ogba community?	To reflect on reasons for the seemingly unresolved conflict situation in the Ogba community. Reflect on Transgenerational post-traumatic stress, which, if left unattended to, can continue for thousands of years (Eshowsky, n.d.; Solanto, 2008).	Chapter 3: Causes of seemingly unresolved conflict in the Ogba community. In chapter three, the focus will be to identify the causes of conflict in the Ogba community. It will also reflect why it is difficult to manage conflict in relation to the Niger Delta.

3	What are the findings of the empirical study on the pastoral missional principles and transgenerational traumatic stress and how can community development be of help in conflict management of the Ogba Community?	To reflect on the findings of an empirical study on pastoral missional principles and transgenerational post-traumatic stress in conflict management, and how community development can be of help to manage conflict in the Ogba community.	Chapter 4: The findings of the qualitative empirical study. After taking all the findings of the previous chapters into consideration, the empirical research will be conducted. The analysis thereof will be presented in this chapter.
4	How can pastoral and missional principles be applied in conflict management of the Ogba community with discourse on transgenerational conflict?	To determine how pastoral missional principles can be applied to conflict management in Ogba community with discourse on transgenerational conflict.	Chapter 5: A pastoral reflection on mission as the Church-With-Society in conflict management: In this chapter a study will be done on appropriate Scripture regarding conflict management as well as a reflection on pastoral literature regarding conflict management.
5	What conclusions can be drawn from the study that can help the church to respond to the conflict situation in the Ogba community?	To draw some conclusions from the study that can be helpful to the church in responding to the conflict situation in the Ogba community.	Chapter 6: Guidelines regarding conflict management based on a pastoral missional approach for the church in Ogba: Guidelines will be discussed which will be helpful to the church in Ogba in their role in conflict management. The

			<p>researcher will also present a discourse on transgenerational post-traumatic stress as it applies to a missional perspective.</p> <p>Chapter 7: Summary and suggestions.</p>
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CHAPTER TWO

THE IMPACT OF THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME IN THE NIGER DELTA

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The Federal Government of Nigeria, under the leadership of the late President Umar Musa Yar'dua, granted unconditional pardon to the Niger Delta militants by introducing an amnesty programme on June 25, 2009 as a step towards resolving the protracted insecurity in the Niger Delta. This chapter will attend to the effect of the Amnesty Program on the conflict situation in the Ogba community. The first part is in regard to the impact of the amnesty programme looking at what is going on generally in the Niger Delta. However, in chapter four some conclusions will be drawn from the empirical research to help the church with its pastoral and missional ministry in the Delta. There the researcher will respond to the question as to what is going on in the Ogba community and how the amnesty programme affects the non-violent citizens of the community.

2.1.1. The role players in the Niger Delta conflict

It will be difficult to talk about the role players without referring to the historical background of the conflict in the Niger Delta. Notwithstanding, in this section the study will try to discuss some of the role players in the Niger Delta area.

2.1.1.1 *The colonial masters/traditional rulers*

In 1885 the Berlin Conference established the major European powers' parameters gaining control over independent African states. The Berlin Conference (German: *Kongokonferenz* or "Congo Conference") of 1884–85 regulated European colonisation and trade in Africa during the New Imperialism period. Called for by Otto von Bismarck, the first chancellor of Germany, its outcome, the General Act of the Berlin Conference is the formalisation of the "Scramble for Africa." The European powers literally divided Africa up between themselves without the consent of the Africans. At this conference, there is evidence, that there was not a single African present because they were considered uncivilised people. They created artificial states that lacked any cultural or linguistic or ethnic coherence (New World Encyclopaedia, Berlin Conference 1884-85). As regards to how the Europeans considered the black races, Burton purported that the Negro is always a child that never develops and that the race is an inferior one, which neither education nor anything else can raise to the level of the whites. Others say that the early consolidation of the bones of the skull in the Negroes is ... the cause of the retardation of the brains in the race (Burns, 1947:58). However, he was proved wrong in the same account that the Negro has advanced considerably since the abolition of slavery and men such as Booker Washington and Professor Aggrey would be a credit to Black race. Even those who maintain that such men are

exceptions and not truly representative of their race cannot deny the fact that the number of exceptions is increasing, and that many of the 'Europeanised Africans', in the Lord Lugard's description, are cultivated gentlemen of considerable attainments.

The conference allocated areas of exploitation; it also enunciated the principle of governance otherwise known as the "dual mandate." The mandate explained that the colonisation of independent African states was for the benefit of both Africa and Europe. Under the terms of the mandate, Europe was to have unfettered access to Africa for its resources and trade, while Africa would benefit from Europe's superior civilization (Okonofua, 2011:21).

Nigeria fell under British authority that tried to gain recognition from the native rulers in the areas under their territories. Either through coercion or deception the treaties of protection were signed by native rulers, without adequate enlightenment. For this reason, they did not understand the true implication of the treaties that they signed. When the colonial powers began to set up administrations in these territories by appointing and posting officials, the real intention of the treaties became clear to the native authorities. Some of them were unwilling to relinquish their positions of power to the British. The British authority did not find it easy to consolidate their authority in some of the areas like the Niger Delta area. Because the British were primarily interested in furthering their economic agenda, local communities and people were manipulated to secure British advantage. Before the imposition and unification of Nigeria were established by the British colonial rule in 1900 – 1906, there have been independent territories with diverse cultural and political systems in existence. They included: the Kanem-Bornu Kingdom, the Fulani Emirates (Sokoto Caliphate) of Northern Nigeria, the Ife Kingdom, the Benin Kingdom, Yoruba Empire of Oyo, and the city states of the Niger Delta, such as Nembe, Bonny, New Calabar and its hinterland, and the Igbo people of the Eastern region (Raji & Abejide, 2014:63).

Scholars and elites of modern Nigeria attest to the forced creation of Nigeria and trace much of the nation's problems especially those concerning ethnic rivalry, political instability, and agitation in the Niger Delta to this founding (Okonofua, 2011:27). Perhaps this account to so many clamouring for restructuring of Nigeria presently, as Okonofua in the above account, quoted David West as saying that:

Since 1914 the British Government has been trying to make Nigeria into one country, but the Nigerian people themselves are historically different in their backgrounds, in their religious beliefs and customs and do not show themselves any sign of willingness to unite ... Nigerian unity is only a British intention for the country.

Therefore, Okonofua (2011:29) maintain that the violence in the Niger Delta today is partly an indictment on the colonial and post-colonial statecraft of Britain. Raji and Abejide (2014:64) argue that the economy imposed on Nigeria between 1914 and 1960 was designed in order to satisfy the needs of

the British economy and political hegemony to meet their industrial needs. The unification is aimed at securing a central direction of policy and pooling resources for administrative purposes.

2.1.1.2. The federal government of Nigeria

This is the supreme authority that oversees the affairs of the Federation under the leadership of the president. Nigeria consists of a very large central government with extensive and excessive powers vested at the centre (Federal Government), thirty-six federating states (plus the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja) and 774 local government areas loosely organised under six amorphous regions: north east, north west, north central, south east, south west, and south-south. Nigeria has over 250 ethnic groups with three most dominant tribes: Hausa-Fulani in the north east and northwest; the Yoruba in the south west, and the Igbo; in the south East (Okonofua, 2011:30). The enormous power vested in the central government and the misuse of the power has led to several conflicts in Nigeria. The oil wealth is distributed unevenly in a manner that benefits only those with access to federal power. The proceeds from oil wealth is used exclusively to build sophisticated infrastructures in the federal capital and many other cities across the nation, while the Niger Delta region from where the wealth is derived is neglected and its people economically, socially, culturally, and politically marginalised.

2.1.1.3. The state government

The state government is the second tier of government in the Federal Republic of Nigeria. They receive allocation from the federal government in order to meet the needs within the various states. The Niger delta states receive what is known as derivation of about 13% of the total revenue generated from the oil in the area. This is a principle embedded in the 1999 Constitution, Section 162 (2), geared towards providing a recompense to the producers of any natural resources for the sequestration (*confiscation*) of their rights to control and manage same, by the Nigerian State (Odje, 2016).

2.1.1.4. The oil companies

These are the Multi-National Oil Companies that are licenced to explore for oil in the Niger Delta area. Okorie (2005) points out how multinational oil companies employed security forces, which include the Nigerian military, navy, and police to secure their holdings against vandalism and attacks and to suppress protesters. However, in the process, these personnel have repeatedly committed acts in violation of human rights by the use of excessive force.

The mining activities of multinational companies which include Shell, Mobil, Chevron, Elf and Agip have led to conflict in the Niger Delta due to serious environmental and social devastation of the host community engaged in the drilling for Crude oil that causes pollution of the rivers and surrounding land, the destruction of subsistence crops and commandeering of local residents' territory through Acts and decrees. The communities have been brutally oppressed by police forces whenever there is opposition

or protest from the local communities, and in most cases it leads to bloodshed and hundreds of deaths. Even though gas flaring is illegal under Nigerian law, Chevron together with Shell and other oil companies operating in the country have been doing it for decades. The repercussions on the local population and environment of such an out-dated technique are devastating. Greyl (2016) observes that the Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) signed by Chevron Nigeria Limited (CNL) in 2005, by which the company undertook to change its way of proceeding in the delta is criticised by the locals as not being respected by the company.

2.1.1.5. The local government

The local government is the third tier of government at the grassroots; it is meant to bring governance closer to the people. The oil proceeds are shared among the three tiers of government. This means that the local government receives a revenue allocation from the federation revenue. The relative success recorded by the amnesty programme is in collaboration with the local government area and in conjunction with the state government.

2.1.1.6. Host communities

This is the location where oil exploration is carried out. The discovery of oil and the exploration in the early stage was met with great excitement and high hopes for the citizens of the host community for rapid social and economic development. However this did not envisage the pains associated with the exploration of oil such as spillages, deforestation, noise pollution, and other ecological effects. The anxiety and expectations surrounding the discovery of oil have waned because the general livelihood of the people has not been positively affected by the discovery of oil (Jike, 2004:688). When the communities in the Niger Delta area later realised these negative effects, they started making a move in agitating for alternative better conditions of living. It was however obvious that the government was not willing to yield to their demands for adequate attention to their polluted and deteriorating environment. The persistent neglect resulted in unrest by the people, which eventually almost got out of hand (Austine & Sunday, 2013:130).

2.1.1.7. Militant groups

These are the groups that are involved in agitation through the use of arms in order to attract government attention. The punitive expedition against the inhabitants of Odi in February 2002 and the formation of the famous Kaima Declaration on 11 December 1998 are examples of this.

Other groups were formed to pursue the agitation, but not necessarily militarised, include the movement for the Survival of Ijaw Ethnic Nationality (MOSIEN), Community Rights Initiative (CORI), Niger-Delta Women for Justice (NDWJ), Chiiccoco movement, Ijaw National Congress and Egbema National Congress. These groups have continued to criticise the government and the oil Multi-National

Companies for the environmental damage caused due to the oil exploration activities by the MNCs (Austine & Sunday, 2013:131). It is unfortunate that the prevalence of years of bad governance which still exists today might have given some Nigerians the impression that the only way to get relief from neglect might be through collective agitation and arms struggles, even if it requires some level of illegality for the government to act or do something about the situation. Jegede and Olu-Olu (2015:277) present an argument which affirms that the amnesty programme was not introduced because the federal government loves the people of the Niger Delta. Rather, it was more or less an economic strategy to tame the violence in the region so it could maximise oil exploration and exportation, all for the huge economic benefits thereof to the treasury of the entire nation and neglect of the indigenous communities.

2.1.1.8. Civil society

This is part of the society that organised itself into an institutions in order to serve as a voice to the people for their safety, health and their rights as a non-governmental organisation. In the context of the Niger Delta, the civil society through its oversight role helps to monitor and comment on how the government is handling the amnesty and the Niger Delta developments. One of the civil societies is the Human Rights Watch which investigated failures of local leaders to direct oil dividends to meet their most important responsibilities in the Rivers State, which is in the oil-producing Niger Delta region. Rivers is the heart of Nigeria's oil industry and its state government is wealthier than that of any other Nigerian state (Human Rights Watch, 2007).

The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) is one of the civil societies that in recent time has turned into one of the largest militant groups in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. The leadership includes Henry Okah, Dokubo-Asari, Ebikabowei Victor-Ben, John Togo, Godswill Tamuno, Ateke Tom, Government Ekpemupolo, Soboma George, Brutus Ebipadei, Solomon Ndigbara and Tubotamuno Angolia. MEND originated from the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) founded by Ken Saro Wiwa as a social movement aimed at pursuing peace and justice. However, it turned to the use of arms after, what many authors considered to be extra-judicial, the murder of the Ogoni activist and playwright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight others by the Gen. Sani Abacha military junta (Okonofua, 2011:96; Oluduro & Oluduro1, 2012:48) which others attributed to the current criminality among the youth (Jegede & Olu-Olu, 2015:175). MEND claims to expose exploitation and oppression of the people of the Niger Delta and the devastation of the natural environment by public-private partnerships between the Federal Government of Nigeria and corporations involved in the production of oil in the Niger Delta.

2.1.1.9. Opportunists

Opportunists are those who use their position to divert resources meant for the general populace of the Niger delta. This group of people play by double standards. They have access to the government and

the militant groups. The opportunists' activities of hijacking the government peace process for their selfish interests and to the detriment of the people contribute to the continuous conflict in the region (Jegade & Olu-Olu, 2015:277). It is difficult to expose them because in most cases they form the members of the negotiating teams.

Having discussed the role-players, the researcher will present the literature study to further portray the particular episodes, situations and context of the conflicting situation in the Niger Delta as it affects the Ogba community, as well as the impact of the amnesty programme by evaluating what is going on in regards to the conflict situation in the region. In view of this theme, it is relevant to begin with the definition of amnesty before understanding the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta.

2.1.2. What is amnesty?

Amnesty is a general pardon for those who commit political crimes. Omokhoa (2015:40) describes amnesty from the Greek word "*amnestia*" which connotes an act of grace by which the supreme power in a state restores those who may have been guilty of any offence against it to the position of innocent persons (*Novus homo*), and it includes more than pardon, in as much as it obliterates all legal remembrances of the offences. *Merriam-Webster Dictionary* defines amnesty as the act of an authority (such as a government) by which pardon is granted to a large group of individuals (Merriam-Webster, 1828).⁵ The *Vocabulary.com Dictionary* helps to put it in perspective as it describes amnesty to mean a pardon for a wrongdoing, which can also signal a government's willingness to overlook something. It sounds a little like "amnesia," and that is because in its more specific sense amnesty means, "forgetting." The government will essentially forget about whatever crime was committed, or whatever horrible things were said. As part of a truce, amnesty can be granted to opposition forces in civil disputes. Amnesty to illegal aliens means the government will deliberately overlook their illegal entry into the country. There can also be a period of amnesty when people can turn in something for which they would otherwise get into trouble, and the Nigeria government offered a period of amnesty for everyone to turn in illegal guns.⁶

2.1.3. Understanding the amnesty programme in Nigeria

⁵ Merriam-Webster 1828. Definition of Amnesty. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/amnesty> accessed on April 30, 2017.

⁶ Vocabulary.com Dictionary <https://www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/amnesty>. (date accessed April 30, 2017) a warrant granting release from punishment for an offense; leniency and compassion shown toward offenders by a person or agency charged with administering justice; a period during which offenders are exempt from punishment; immunity from an obligation or duty; grant a pardon to (a group of people).

The amnesty programme in Nigeria is a pardon for those who used arms to commit various crimes within the Niger Delta area. It is a political strategy to disarm the Niger Delta Militant groups and absorb them into the society in order to ensure peace in the region. As indicated in the definitions above, the Federal Government (FG) through a “Presidential Panel on Amnesty and Disarmament of Militants in the Niger Delta” was set up to manage the process. Militants were expected to embrace the amnesty by turning in their weapons especially guns within a 60-day moratorium, between 6th August and 4th October 2009 (Ikelegbe & Onokerhoraye, 2016:22). Late President Umaru Musa Yar’Adua realised the involvement of youths as perpetrators of violence and militancy in the region, and saw the need to address the problem of militancy in the Niger Delta through a non-violence approach. Seeing that these militants were capable youths whose energies could be harnessed for the development of the nation, he decided to have a rethink on the use of military forces. Instead, he set up a committee to look into the problem of insecurity and youth restiveness in the region. That was the process which led to the declaration of the Amnesty Program.

2.2. THE OVERVIEW OF THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME

In assessing the impact, challenges and sustainability of the amnesty programme, as a strategy of conflict resolution and peace building, Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016:2, 11) carried out a study to critically interrogate the contents and methods of the amnesty. The assessment criteria used were on the basis of inclusiveness, equity, justice, gender sensitivity, legitimacy, management, challenges, sustainability and impacts on violence among other issues. It was observed that the Presidential Amnesty Program (PAP) resting on a DDRR (Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation, and Reintegration) was designed to place the Niger Delta region on the path of conflict resolution, peace building, stability and conflict transformation. Two dimensions of post conflict transition to peace were discussed. First, the military and security interventions to establish and guarantee minimum levels of law and order. The strategy employed here includes DDRR which involves disarmament and demilitarisation, and the creation of a secured environment such that the goals of peace building and developmental interventions could help conflict-ridden societies and aid recovery from war could be achieved. Secondly, the political dimension which precedes the post conflict transition to peace and continues throughout the entire process. The strategy here includes: political dialogue, negotiations, settlement and agreements that become the tentative format and framework, the design and implementation of programmes of forgiveness, reconciliation and justice for the redress of grievances, abuses and losses emanating from the war and violence, and the building of commitment of political leaders, stakeholders and the development of programmes of peace building. According to Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016:13), the political dimension is what builds the trust and commitment of stakeholders, the common ground for the entire process and particularly the structures and processes for peace building to achieve a sustainable peace and security. However, from a Reformed perspective

it is the take of the researcher that forgiveness, reconciliation and justice is not only a political matter but mostly a spiritual matter that will only be obtained through a pastoral process with a missional focus.

The DDRR is to support the ex-militants in order to create confidence in them that government is determined to forgive them by integrating them into the civil society. This approach was necessary in order to prevent them from returning to hostility and thereby preventing reoccurrence of conflict. In the Peace-Building and Recovery strategy it is important to disarm fighters in violent conflict situations especially if the ex-combatants are youths who ought to be useful human resources to the nation. Unfortunately the youth are left to become a lost generation due to neglect and irresponsibility on the part of the political leaders and insufficient ministry of the church. It is evident that the ex-fighters have adopted a way of life that may not conform to the civil society such as addiction to drugs and alcoholism, reliant on weapons and violence (power) as the only means of achieving their goal in the society. To reintegrate them into the society they must give up their military livelihood and to provide them with an alternative livelihood are of the great tasks before the government, institutions and faith communities. This expectation of the DDRR is to be met or else the ex-militants are likely to experience problems in adapting to civilian life. It is in view of this challenge and the imminent threat of ex-militants returning to combat that the international community has turned increasingly to DDRR that are designed to facilitate combatants' transition from professional fighters to civilians and to reduce their incentives to take up arms again. Therefore, Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016:9) are of the opinion that the sustainability of the disarmament and demobilisation processes depends on the successful social and economic reintegration of ex-combatants. To develop new communities' resettlement is provided to demobilised combatants, facilitating access and acquisition of land, tools and credit that will facilitate their livelihood. The openness and acceptance from local communities to help facilitate resettlement and reintegration of ex combatants into civilian and community life is also very important. This has been identified as crucial to sustainable effectiveness of the DDRR programme.

2.3. UNDERSTANDING THE DDRR FROM AN INTERNATIONAL VIEW

It is important to understand the use of DDRR as a tool for the amnesty programme. This understanding will also help to assess the effectiveness of the amnesty programme and to evaluate its impact on the Niger Delta. DDRR as discussed by Caramés and Sanz (2009:8) is a process that targets a specific number of combatants, whether as individuals or groups, belonging to the Armed Forces of opposition groups, in order to disarm, demilitarise and reintegrate these persons into civilian life, the Government

armed forces, or the police. Carames and Sanz (2009:8) went further to define each component of DDRR more concretely as presented below:

- **Disarmament:** Is the collecting, documenting, controlling, and eliminating combatants' small, light, and heavy arms or weapons, as well as ammunition and explosives. It was further explained that disarmament does not just stop at collecting the arms but also includes administering programmes to manage weapons responsibly. Though disarmament is in many ways symbolic, it is also an essential component of demobilisation. Disarmament can be split into a number of stages, including a study on the number of weapons in use, weapons collection, storage, destruction, and redistribution to national security forces.
- **Demobilisation:** This involved decommissioning active combatants from the Armed Forces and other armed groups in an official and controlled manner. The first stage of demobilisation can range from the cantonment of combatants in temporary centres to the gathering of troops in designated camps, including cantonments, camps, gathering points, or barracks. Key to this stage is the planning, cantonment, registration, disarmament, orientation, and final decamping of ex-combatants.
The "R" in DDRR can be divided into reinsertion and reintegration or both, depending on the duration of the programme. Rehabilitation, resettlement, and reconciliation can be added to this.
- **Reinsertion:** Is to assist ex-combatants with demobilisation prior to long-term reintegration. Reinsertion involves assisting ex-combatants and their families provisionally with basic necessities that can include subsidies and services for security, food, clothing, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools.
- **Reintegration:** Provides opportunities for ex-combatants to acquire status as civilians and obtain sustainable employment and a regular income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open timeline, occurring primarily in host communities. Reintegration is part of a country's general development and a national responsibility, often requiring long-term assistance from foreign donors. Initially, reintegration meant giving ex-combatants economic opportunities, especially through vocational training. Gradually, however, programme planners realised the need to incorporate more purely social concerns and focused greater attention on social reconciliation in the context of post-war rehabilitation.

With the understanding of these concepts, the next point in the discourse on the impact of the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta is the historical background, which will help to appreciate the effort that has been made to bring peace to the Niger Delta region after independence. However, this background

does not include the history of the conflict, but strives to identify efforts that have been taken to ensure peace in the Niger Delta before the amnesty programme.

2.4. A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME IN THE NIGER DELTA

Several measures have been taken by successive governments to curb the menace of revolution. Nwankpa (2014:68), in discussing the background of Niger Delta militancy, states that there is evidence of nonviolent counterterrorism (CT) approaches. Several government developmental policies which include: The Niger Delta Development Board (NDDDB) established in 1961 by the Niger Delta Development Act, the Oil and Mineral Producing Area Development Commission (OMPADEC) created by Decree 23 of 1992, the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) set up in 2000, and the Ministry of Niger Delta formed in 2008, are some examples of the developmental approaches adopted by the Nigerian government in countering the revolution until the 2009 amnesty programme (Nwankpa, 2014:68). Before then there was a protest led by the renowned environmental activist in Ogoni land and the President of MOSOP, Ken Saro-Wiwa. It is believed he led a nonviolent campaign against environmental damage associated with the operations of multinational oil companies, especially Shell. In May 1994, he was arrested and accused of incitement to murder following the deaths of four Ogoni elders (Adalikwu, 2007:34). Saro-Wiwa denied the charges, notwithstanding, he was imprisoned for over a year before being found guilty and sentenced to death. On November 10, 1995, Saro-Wiwa and eight other MOSOP leaders were executed by hanging at the hands of military personnel. The incident could have helped to silence the agitators, yet it aggravated to militancy. In 2003, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN), headed by President Olusegun Obasanjo, set up the Joint Task Force (JTF) in the Niger Delta, “to safeguard oil production, secure oil installations, crush community protest and deal with any actions that threaten the activities of the oil companies or personnel within the oil industry” (Ajibola, 2015:2).

Before the introduction of the amnesty programme in May 2009, the Federal Government of Nigeria (which is the third tier of Government in the Federal Republic of Nigeria) had launched a major ground, air and sea offensive to flush militants out of their camps in the Niger Delta. The use of the military coercive strategy which was adopted from 1990 during the Ogoni protests and subsequent militant agitation in the Niger Delta are considered to be ineffective. Since after the decisive attack on the Gbaramantu Kingdom and the military camps in May 2009, instead of subduing the agitators, there was a subsequent militia counter attack on the oil infrastructure which affected the national economy. The crude oil production drastically dropped to its lowest level of below 900,000/bpd by mid-2009 (Ikelegbe & Onokerhoraye, 2016:22). This led to a strategic rethink of government approach to the agitation and militancy in the region. In view of the reconsideration by the government, the amnesty for the militants in the Niger Delta was declared by Nigeria's President Umaru Musa Yar' Adua on June 25, 2009. This

was in line with the constitutional provision in section 175 of the Constitution (1999) of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. It empowered the President to grant any person concerned with or convicted of any offence created by an Act of the National Assembly a pardon, either free or subject to lawful conditions. The President offered an unconditional pardon as well as cash payments to rebels who agreed to lay down their arms and present themselves at the screening centres within the stipulated time of 60 days. The government was targeting up to 10,000 militants within the Niger Delta regions. Below is the extract of the pronouncement:

NOW THEREFORE, I, Umaru Musa Yar'dua, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, after due consultation with the council of States and in exercise of the powers conferred upon me by the provisions of Section 175 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, make the following proclamation:...I hereby grant amnesty and unconditional pardon to all persons who have directly or indirectly participated in the commission of offences associated with militant activities in the Niger Delta; The pardon shall take effect upon the surrender and handing over of all equipment, weapons, arms and ammunition and execution of the renunciation of Militancy Forms specified in the schedule hereto, by the affected persons at the nearest collection centre established for the purpose by Government in each of the Niger Delta States; The unconditional pardon granted pursuant to this proclamation shall extend to all persons presently being prosecuted for offences associated with militant activities; and This proclamation shall cease to have effect from Sunday, 4th October 2009 (Idonor, 2009).

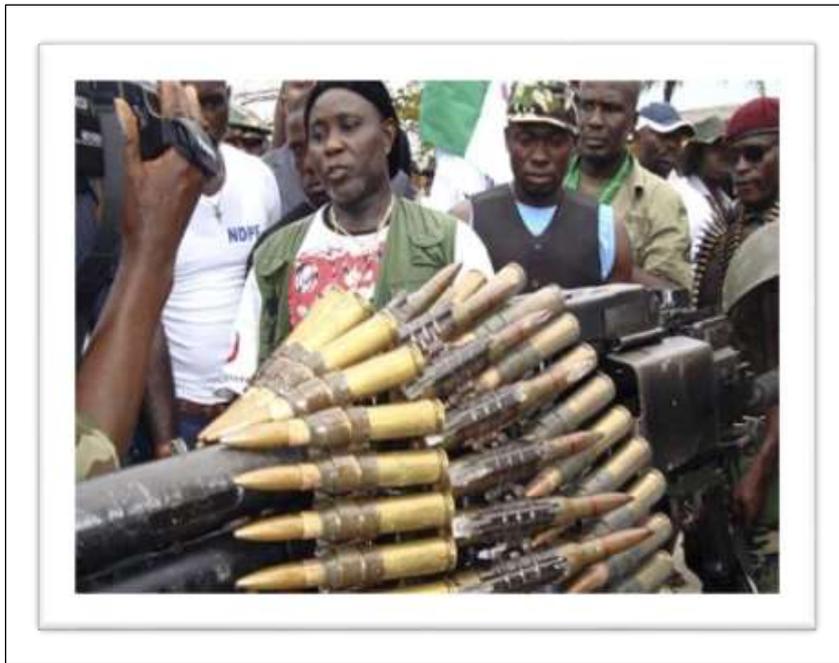
After announcing the amnesty deal, the President freed Henry Okah, one of the suspected leaders of the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), the greatest active militant group. Okah accepted the amnesty offer after treason and gun running charges against him were dropped. Another MEND leader in Bayelsa state, Ebikabowei Victor Ben, also known as Boyloaf, likewise accepted the terms of government which stated that gunmen who surrender their arms will be given an amount of N65,000 cash per month during their rehabilitation.

2.5. RESPONSE TO THE AMNESTY BY THE MILITANTS

It was generally reported that the militant group leaders and members embraced the amnesty—with exception of a few militant leaders who refused for various reasons. Leaders that embraced the amnesty came out of their camps to surrender arms and ammunition to arms collection centres, designated for that purpose, located in Edo, Bayelsa, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Ondo and Rivers. Owen (2009) reported in the World News, Sunday Oct 4, 2009 that Nigeria's last prominent militant leader agreed to halt fighting in the oil-producing Niger Delta and surrendered his weapons in return for an unconditional

pardon. Tompolo, whose gunmen were behind many attacks on the oil industry in the western Niger Delta, handed over rocket launchers, machine guns and explosives to Defence Minister Godwin Abbe at his camp in Oporoza in the creeks of Delta state. It was believed that Yar'Adua's amnesty offer was the most concerted effort so far to bring peace to the Niger Delta.

Below are some pictures to portray the militants' response to the amnesty programme. The surrendering of arms was not done in secret as people were gathered to witness the militants surrendering their arms as an indication that they wanted to embrace peace.



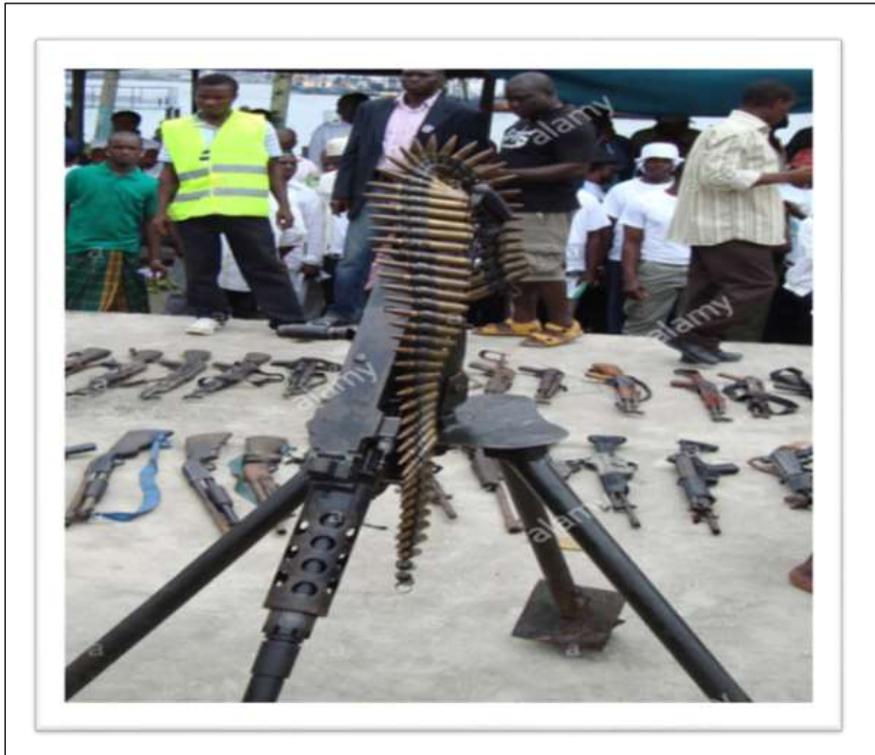
Nigerian militant commander Ateke Tom addresses the media as arms surrendered by former Nigerian militants are displayed at an arms collection centre at the tourist beach in the oil hub Port Harcourt October 3, 2009.

Source: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nigeria-delta-id>



Nigerian militant youths display weapons surrendered by former militants at an arms collection centre at Tourist beach in the oil hub Port Harcourt, October 3, 2009. Hundreds of Nigerian rebel fighters gave up their weapons and accepted an amnesty deal on Saturday in the most concerted effort yet to end years of fighting in the oil-producing Niger Delta. Militant commanders Ateke Tom and Farah Dagogo, both responsible for years of attacks on the oil industry in the eastern Niger Delta, led gunmen from camps in the mangrove creeks to the oil hub of Port Harcourt to disarm.

Source: <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-nigerian-militant-youths-display-weapons-surrendered-by-former-militants>



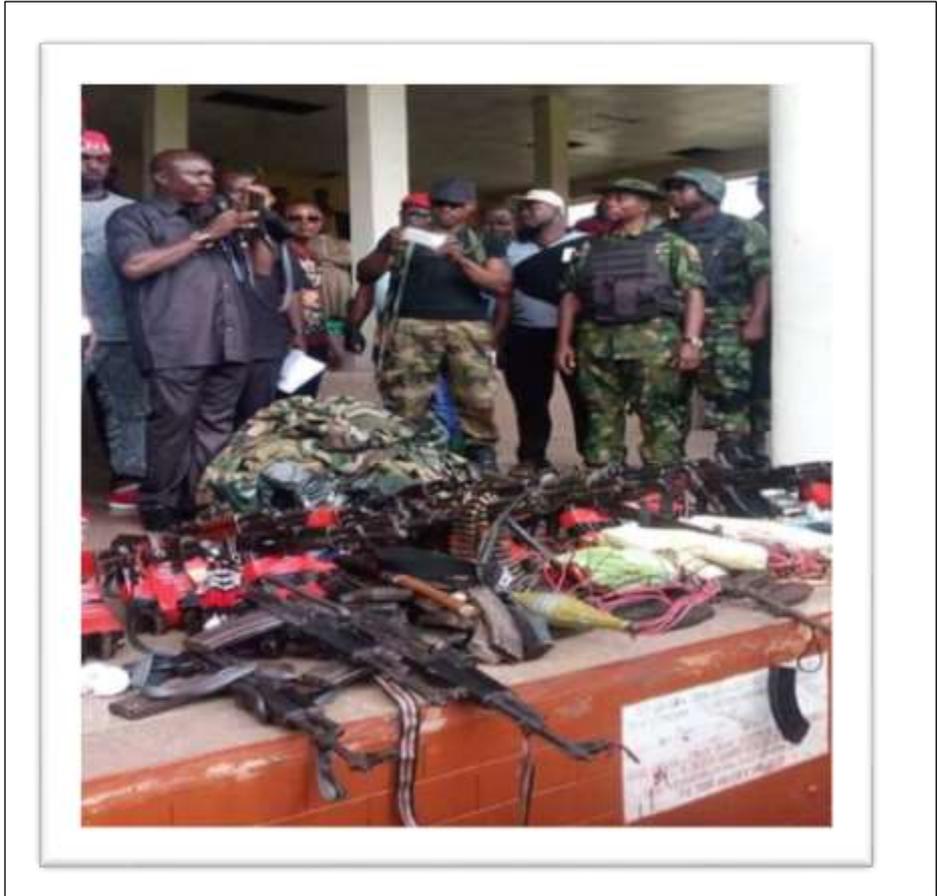
Arms surrendered by former Nigerian militants are displayed at an arms collection centre at Tourist beach in the oil hub Port Harcourt, October 3, 2009. Hundreds of Nigerian rebel fighters gave up their weapons and accepted an amnesty deal on Saturday in the most concerted effort yet to end years of fighting in the oil-producing Niger Delta. Militant commanders Ateke Tom and Farah Dagogo, both responsible for years of attacks on the oil industry in the eastern Niger Delta, led gunmen from camps in the mangrove creeks to the oil hub of Port Harcourt to disarm. Picture taken October 3, 2009.

Source: <http://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-arms-surrendered-by-former-nigerian-militants-are-displayed-at-an>



Militants: Don Wanney of Omoku and his group laying down their arms and removing military uniform.

Sources: <http://www.nairaland.com/3391217>



Militants: Don Wanney of Omoku And His Group Lay Down Their Arms
Source: <http://www.nairaland.com/3391217/militants-don-wanney-omoku-group>

The arms surrendered included 287,445 different types of ammunition, about 2,760 assorted arms and 18 gunboats among others. Davidheiser and Nyiayaana (2011) in commenting on the success of the AP state that during the amnesty grace period, upward of 2,700 feasible and sophisticated guns and 300,000 rounds of ammunition were surrendered by 15,000 militants to the Presidential Amnesty Committee headed by the minister of defence at the time, Rtd. General Godwin Abbe. Since then more militants have enlisted in the AP, taking the number to just over 20,000.

2.6. THE SUCCESS OF THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME AND THE FLAWS

According to Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016:24) the Presidential Amnesty Programme achieved limited success in terms of the conclusion of disarmament, demobilisation and rehabilitation. Noting that the disarmament programme was incomplete and excluded the disarming of the civil population and the control of arms proliferation. Very few quality arms were surrendered particularly when relating

to the number of ex-militants. The demobilisation process was accompanied by inadequacies of facilities and provisions. The subsequent phases of PAP have only had partial demobilisation and rehabilitation. It was further noted that though the reintegration programme made considerable progress, it also suffered from poor monitoring and poor reintegration of ex-militants into communities. This is in comparison to the reintegration training which took place in Ghana, Russia, Ukraine, USA, South Africa, Israel, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Poland and India in such vocational skills as ICT, pipeline welding, ocean diving, air piloting, boat building and sea faring. In 2013, 834 ex-militants were placed in about 100 universities at home and abroad and 459 in private universities in Nigeria for 2012/2013. In 2013, 2,400 were deployed to vocational training centres at home and abroad.

Davidheiser and Nyiayaana (2011:51) observe that the disarmament was only partial, as the militants had held some of the arms back themselves, highlighting their continued mistrust of the government and lack of confidence in its commitment to the peace-building agenda. Later some of the militant leaders regrouped and started hostilities under a different name. It was also argued that the first attempt at the AP resulted in a paradoxical increase in insecurity as little discomfort or delay in the payment of their N65,000 stipends will result into rampage. Another critical point that can be regarded as the impact of AP as presented by Davidheiser and Nyiayaana (2011:57) is that many idle and unemployed youths took advantage of its monetary incentives by registering as militants in order to receive the monthly stipend of N65,000. Thus, the Amnesty Program provided an umbrella for thousands of jobless youths and 'wanted criminals' seeking an avenue for finding employment and escaping justice. The inclusion in the training camps of youths who were not members of militia groups was another misstep (*lapse*) as it raised concerns about their possible radicalisation and recruitment by the more political camp militants.

Another flaw worth noting is that AP exclusively focused on demobilisation of ex-fighters in its design and implementation, and overlooked the desires and feeling of other local residents who also suffered from the region's deterioration. The wholesale bypassing of disaffected non-combatants not only fuelled conflict in the region but also a widespread Nigerian belief that government only responds to lawbreakers with guns (Davidheiser & Nyiayaana, 2011:58). The amnesty was also considered as a vacuum amnesty by Omokhoa (2015:45) because there was no peace deal or formal agreement between the Federal Government (FG) on the one hand and the people of the community and the ex-militants on the other hand; rather, the FG neglected consultations with the governors, regional and traditional leaders on the Niger Delta. It shows that their concern was to win the hearts of those that posed threats to oil exploration without really having in mind to solve the problem of the general populace in the region. Omokhoa (2015:40) further observes that the programme has also brought several unpalatable side effects to the nation including widespread kidnapping (including foreign nationals who worked in the oil and construction companies, any other person even citizens they thought could fetch them money

as a ransom after kidnapping), increase in oil theft, high rate of piracy⁷ and other violent crimes. These insecurity threats were as a result of the high rate of injustice and inequity (social injustice without equitable wealth distribution available to all) in the absence of peace that characterised the lack of development due to negligence and deprivation as the people were living in abject poverty. It is the view of the researcher that political-economic resolutions were pursued rather than a socio-economic resolution.

Omokhoa (2016:48) however appraises the amnesty programme that it helped the Niger Delta youths in no small measure by curbing youth restiveness in the region, while observing that terminating the programme may pose a great challenge to the nation as there may be a flare up of the conflict. The programme helped to secure jobs for many unemployed graduates. More so, it helped to pay monthly stipends, engaged ex-agitators in vocational training/skills acquisition and entrepreneurial development. Ushie (2013:31) also mentions that “While it is commonly believed that the amnesty programme has promoted stability in oil production, there are underlying socio-political contradictions that undermine its effectiveness and credibility”. Obi (2014:257) argues that the Amnesty Program is a product and manifestation of dominant power and is not people-centred or aimed at social development in the Niger Delta.

2.7. THE BENEFIT OF THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME IN THE NIGER DELTA

As observed by Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016:28), there were relative security and peace in the region within the period of amnesty till 2013 which can be attributed to the amnesty programme, particularly the DRR package. Because there was cessation of hostilities between the government troops and armed militias youth restiveness was brought under control to some extent. The restoration of the oil infrastructure and repairs of pipelines and other facilities were carried out, leading to increased oil and gas production to the tune of 2.39 million bpd by February 2012. However, as a point of emphasis, the real beneficiaries of PAP were the oil companies, the federal government, of course the state

⁷ Piracy in the context of this research is the criminal activities of the militants which has to do with hijacking on the sea and water ways within the region, it involved heavily armed criminal enterprises. Those involved in such activities are called pirates and they employ violent methods to steal oil cargo. Conor (2016) postulates that the end of the amnesty program in 2016, may likely increased the activity of piracy by some who have enjoyed the government’s monthly stipends (through the amnesty program). Recent, the report of Bello confirm the assumption, when he wrote that the latest figures from the International Maritime Bureau confirm the rising threat of piracy in Nigerian waters (Bello, 2018). Bello stresses that unemployment is a driving fact for piracy in the Niger Delta, as one of the former pirates in the Gulf region testified that attacks are usually carried out for monetary gain. In his word "When these people see that there is nothing on the ground for them to benefit from... then they go to any means and disturb the economic activities that bring money into the nation" (Bello 2018).

governments in the region, and the ex-militants. Although the non-violent community members, youth and people of the region were the ones suffering from the conflicts, they hardly benefitted from the programme. Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016:74) note that PAP is based on the acceptance of the fact that violent conflict can easily develop if large numbers of people become convinced that taking up arms is not only legitimate but may perhaps be the only way to secure the necessities of life. This view projects the impact of the amnesty programme in a negative light. Contributing to the negative view is the fact that spiritual issues of forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration of relations did not feature in the amnesty programme and the post conflict period. However, as a result of amnesty impact, Amakihe and Goodnews (2014:1) observe that the amnesty actually served as an incentive for warlords to abandon power and insurgents to come out of hiding and be part of the civilian society. However, the amnesty and peacebuilding programmes ushered in a regime of fragile peace, though it did not translate into a better life for the majority of the people in the region because their grievances were still unaddressed.

2.8. COST IMPLICATION OF AMNESTY

The question whether the amnesty programme was underfunded is addressed by Ushie (2013:33) who gives an estimate that Nigeria has devoted substantial resources to the amnesty programme. Between 2009 and 2011, the programme was allocated N127 billion (US\$819 million) in the national budget. Of this amount, N3 billion was the ‘take-off’ grant, N30 billion was spent on militants’ stipends and N96 billion on feeding the militants. In 2012, a massive N74 billion (US\$477 million) was allocated to the amnesty programme. When this is juxtaposed with similar huge fiscal transfers to the Niger Delta region between 2009 and 2012—for the Ministry of Niger Delta Affairs, N241 billion (US\$1.55 billion), and for the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) N 246.6 billion (US\$1.6 billion).

The scale of state largesse (*benevolence*) is astonishing. These fiscal transfers are separate from the subnational budgets of the six core oil-producing states in the Niger Delta, which totalled N1.74 trillion (US\$11.2 billion) just for the fiscal year 2012. This record is necessary in assessing the impact of amnesty in the Niger Delta. While this amount is being spent on the militants the non-militant citizens are neglected, which means that if the non-militant youth want to enjoy this ‘national cake’ they must identify with the militant groups. To this view, Ushie postulates that the political elevation of the Niger Delta has positioned ex-militants and their acolytes as government contractors, middlemen, private militia and leading political actors. It is unequivocally true from many observations that the masses within the community, as comprising the civil society including vulnerable groups such as women and children that hitherto abhorred violence in their struggle have been ignored and excluded in the amnesty programme. Instead, AP has provided an enabling prospect for ex-militant commanders and the elites within the region to bring in their protégés or recruit jobless youths into their groups.

2.9. EVALUATION ON THE IMPACT OF THE AMNESTY PROGRAMME

From the literature study on the impact of the Amnesty Program in the Niger Delta area, there is an indication that the programme brought relative peace to the region and gave government the opportunity to increase the revenue generation from the oil production. The benefits were shared between the government caucus, the elites, and the militant leaders. The programme on the other hand has failed to address the needs of the law-abiding youth and the civil society within the communities of the region. Therefore, it could be said that Amnesty Program is identical to the purchase of peace, rather than laying a solid foundation for building peace that can encompass every citizen of the region. This assertion is informed by the massive system of diverse payment of stipends or allowances, economic empowerment, human capacity building and diverse support, not to the general populace of the Niger Delta but to those who have made trouble or are capable of making trouble and thereby disrupt crude oil and gas production and associated revenues. The monthly payments are somewhat reinforced by the extensive compensation to ex-militant leaders by way of payments, through them for their fighters, surveillance contracts, appointments and influence or access to power (Ikelegbe & Onokerhoraye, 2016:78).

There have been no broad efforts for re-establishing the norms of non-violence in the resolution of conflicts and building an environment of trust. Therefore the conditions for long term peace and preventing a relapse into violence have not been laid through the amnesty programme. There is an impression that payments of the amnesty programme should continue if the ex-militants are to be prevented from returning to violence. Ekumaoko (2013:11) is of the view that the amnesty programme has proved to be incapable of bringing infrastructural and human development to the region. For this reason, the amnesty programme will soon collapse, except if adequate effort is made to prevent this sad occurrence. By and large, he postulates that the collapse of the amnesty will lead to a relapse to open hostility and again reversion to conflict will be very costly if an alternative measure is not taken. Evidently, it is possible to say that the Niger Delta amnesty programme has provided relative peace within the region. What is rather not clear is whether the militants truly surrendered all the arms in their possession, as is the case with most armed insurgents, more so that there is evidence of rising violence in the region and the growing threat from the leaders of the militants.

Davidheiser and Nyiayaana (2011:45), in their critical analysis of Nigeria's Amnesty Programme, contend that the programme is fundamentally flawed with little potential for promoting security and human development in the Delta. The reason being that the amnesty programme rather than being a product of multilateral dialogue and negotiations among all stakeholders and parties was singlehandedly decreed by the federal government.

While the impact of amnesty is lopsided in the Niger Delta towards militancy, it also has a negative impact on the national security. If militancy becomes a yardstick for recognition in the nation, it will

set a precedent whereby people will devise a means of fomenting trouble in order to attract government attention. Therefore, the danger of an amnesty programme as operated in the Niger Delta, poses a threat to national security to the whole of Nigeria.

There is the possibility that the demand by some individuals and groups from the Northern part of the country to grant amnesty to the Boko Haram sect could be connected to the huge budget allocated to the Niger Delta amnesty as a motivating factor. The request is that the Boko Haram insurgents be granted amnesty the same way the Niger Delta amnesty was granted to the armed militants. One notable personality identified to have lent strong voice in favour of amnesty for Boko Haram insurgents is the Sultan of Sokoto, Alhaji Sa'adAbubakar. According to Nwankpa (2014), Alhaji Sa'adAbubakar on the 7th of March 2013, called for "total and unconditional" amnesty for Boko Haram. His demand is largely supported by the northern group—Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF). However, the demand was strongly criticised and rejected by others such as the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). Amnesty is expected to provide momentary social stability, while other efforts are made to restore lasting peace without prejudice. It seems the amnesty programme is contrary to the long-term enjoyment of a stable democracy, human rights and rule of law, especially when it only benefits a few individuals.

It is also noted by Amakihe and Goodnews (2014:3) that the highest numbers of the ex-militants registered during the first phase of the disarmament exercise came from Rivers State, with 6,997, closely followed by those of Bayelsa State origins, with 6,961 militants. About 133 women were also included. There was also an argument that the disarmament process was inconclusive in nature due to the fact that arms were left in the hands of many militants and excluded the stockpiles of arms in the communities. Perhaps this might have contributed to the cause of continued conflict even after the amnesty. This will be the main discussion in the next chapter.

The demobilisation of the disarmed militants was to have commenced immediately after the October 2009 disarmament exercise, but was incapacitated until May 2010 due to ill health of Mr. President Musa Yar'dua that led to his medical trip to Saudi Arabia and his consequent death. However, participants were later moved to the demobilisation camp by the Amnesty Implementation Committee for transformational/reorientation activities in order to change their violence perspective and provide an alternative for livelihood.

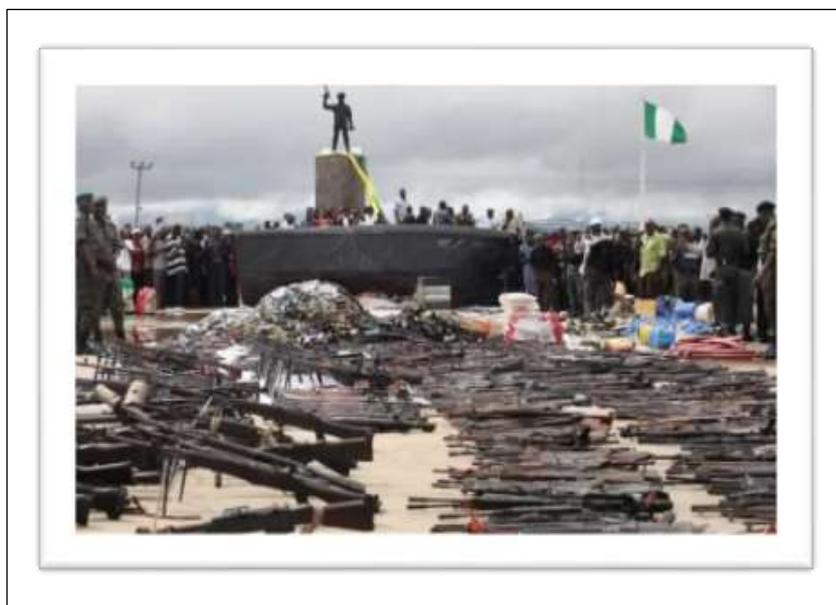
The reintegration which has to do with providing opportunities for ex-combatants to acquire status as civilians and obtain sustainable employment and a regular income were carried out as the ex-militants were trained in various skills in acquisition/vocational and also given admission to study in tertiary institutions both at home and abroad.

Challenges and weaknesses of the Amnesty Program is that the amnesty impacted positively on the lives of the militants. In spite of the successes recorded, there are some challenges regarding the

implementation of the Amnesty Program. It was on record that not all the militants accepted the Amnesty Program. The reason for their refusal is attributed to scepticism that they have no confidence in the government to keep to its promise. The second reason was that some of the militant leaders refused to be identified as militants rather they saw themselves as fighting for justice and therefore, did not need amnesty. This might indicate that not all the Niger Delta agitators surrendered their weapons. Some attribute the relative peace during the amnesty programme to the personality of Goodluck Jonathan who was then vice to President Yar’dua and later become the substantial President as a native of Niger Delta; his position was crucial to the breakthrough achieved during the Amnesty process. This raises the critical question as to what will befall the Amnesty-induced peace process if and when President Jonathan is no longer in office. The research also reveals that there are still traces of militancy in spite of the relative peace enjoyed during the amnesty programme.

2.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter conclude that the amnesty programme was introduced in order to curb the menace of insurgency in the region (Ikelegbe & Onokerhoraye, 2016:11; Amakihe & Goodnews, 2014:1; Ajibola, 2015:6; Ekumaoko, 2013:5). The conflict in the Niger Delta affected the country negatively. The government tried to quell the agitation from the Delta region using military coercive yet this failed to yield the desired result. They then decided to introduce the amnesty programme based on three main components which include disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) as a non-confrontational approach to the conflict. The amnesty was successful in disarming some militant groups as there is evidence of militants surrendering their weapons as indicated below.



One of the arms collection centres.

Source:

<http://ndlink.org/2014/01/28/a-look-into-the-niger-delta-amnesty-programme-success-or-failure>

This chapter can also be summarised that every role-player in the Niger Delta conflict contributed both negatively and positively to the process of managing conflict. Thovoethin and Adio (2010) aver that the Niger Delta crisis is unrelated to a prolonged socio-economic and political alienation marked by poverty, hunger, disease and environmental degradation. Maintaining that the oil-producing communities – featured perpetuated human insecurity (basic needs), lack of infrastructures, ecological damages, theft and unjust distribution of revenue from the sale of oil, coupled with perceived apathy on the part of government and the multinational oil companies. The discovery of oil in the Niger Delta, instead of serving as means of blessing for the region, brought total deprivation of the people from their own property and consequentially endangered meaningful growth and development which resulted into social conflict between militants on one hand and the local elites, government and the multinational oil companies on the other hand. This also degenerated into the problem of hostage taking and kidnapping of expatriates in the Niger Delta region, for enormous ransoms. Prominent indigenes and political elites within the region were also not spared in the hostage for ransom threat. Therefore, what started as resource control agitation and indigenous civil social struggle metamorphosed into a kidnapping and hostage taking business in the Niger Delta region – which has also extended to other regions in the country. Therefore, the amnesty as observed by scholars achieved a relative success, because it helped to disempower the militant groups who lay down their arms in order to benefit from the programme. However, it does not take into account the plight of the non-violence citizens of the region. How this shortcoming affects the peace in the region is the focus of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

CAUSES OF CONTINUOUS VIOLENCE AND CONFLICT IN THE NIGER DELTA IN THE OGBA COMMUNITY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

In chapter two, it was established that the conflict in the Niger Delta region led to the introduction of the amnesty programme in order to solve the problem of militancy. It was also revealed that there is still a presence of militancy in spite of the relative peace enjoyed during the amnesty programme. In this chapter, the focus will be on the reasons for the continuous conflict situation in the Ogba community. Why is it that there is still conflict after the amnesty programme that was expected to solve the conflict situation in the region? There are two key words in this chapter that need to be defined before proceeding those are, 'violence' and 'conflict'. It is also important to make this distinction between the two words, as they are sometimes used interchangeably. However, the understanding in this research is that violence is the product of conflict, but not the other way round. It means conflict can lead to violence when mishandled or unattended to. Therefore, the use of violence in this context indicates that there is a mishandled or unattended conflict.

3.2. WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

Violence is the use of physical force to harm, kill or destroy property. Any act of violation has a negative impact on those who are violated. Ideyi (2008) simply describes violence as any act of man that involves wilful destruction. Man's belongings which could be destroyed include his dreams, his work, his property, his freedom, his rights, his dignity, his moral principles, his life, his beliefs and other things he values, cherishes and works for to enhancement, advancement and protection. The effect of violence could lead to depreciate human worth, enslavement and dehumanisation. Some of those who are

violated experience these acts as detrimental to their cherished values and could decide to respond to what threatened their liberties, identity and dignity if they have the opportunity also with violence, because violence begets violence. Therefore, violence is any action that could lead to destruction of life or properties; in other words it is meant to inflict pain on another. This could also be seen as an act of aggression against a perceived injustice on the part of the civil society,

3.3. WHAT IS CONFLICT?

According to Mullins (1996:723), conflict is a behaviour that is intended to obstruct the achievement of some other person's goals. Mullins sees conflict as arising from incompatibility of goals or ideas from opposing behaviours, which can happen at all levels of human society. Malony (1995:9) defines conflict as desperate feelings of threats to one's self-esteem that can lead to drastic acts of self-defence. While Ellis and Abbott (2011) describe conflict as an interpersonal disagreement or discord among two or more individuals, owing to differences in opinion, competition, negative perceptions, poorly defined role expectations or lack of communication. McKibben (2017:100) explains that the propensity of conflict is inherent to the human condition therefore it is destined to be inevitable. He however, stressed that positive conflict management, with favourable team leadership, can be beneficial. This means that conflict, if managed positively, can stimulate and encourage change to revive team function that has become stagnant, in order to increase productivity, and inspire critical thinking. Conflict can also be defined as a difference between two opposing opinions or desires. In other words, conflict is the opposite view of an individual that poses a challenge to the self or another person. When two views contradict each other conflict ensues. In such a situation, when passion overrides reasoning, the conflict could turn into violence. Conflict does not necessarily have to be violent or resolved through violence. How one manages intrapersonal conflict will affect the approach to interpersonal relationships.

3.4. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF CONFLICT IN THE NIGER DELTA

To better buttress the causes of violent conflict in the Niger Delta, it is imperative to trace the origin of conflict in the region. Raji and Abejide (2014:62) rightly note that there were several ethnic groups, each with its own system of politically independent form of government before the establishment of the Nigerian state by the colonial administration as also pointed out in chapter two. Before the British colonial rule and subsequent amalgamation, the independent states included the Kanem-Bornu Kingdom, the Fulani Emirates (Sokoto Caliphate) of Northern Nigeria, the Ife Kingdom, the Benin Kingdom, Yoruba Empire of Oyo, and the city states of the Niger Delta, such as Nembe, Bonny, New Calabar and its hinterland, and the Igbo people of the Eastern region. Nigeria, being one of the colonies was explored in various ways by the British, first for bitumen, coal and oil. This was evoked after the 1914 ordinance which ordered that the oil and minerals under Nigerian soil were rightfully the property of the crown. The British' involvement was linked to economic expediency and dictated by industrial

capitalism. According to Raji and Abejide (2014:63) the economy imposed on Nigeria between 1914 and 1960 was structured in a way to satisfy the needs of the British economy and political hegemony (*domination*) to solve the contradictions within the capitalist system and to explain the motivation behind the promotion and production of cash crops by the British to meet their industrial needs. The process of unification of Nigeria began in 1906 and was aimed at securing a central direction of policy and pooling resources for administrative purposes. This would in turn allow the southern part of the country to cover the cost of administration and development of the financially weak protectorate of the north. Many Ordinances were promulgated by the colonial British, aiming at denying landowners' right to challenge the occupier of the leased land while the agreement was still binding. The mining company had the sole right to start exploration and extract any resources found on such land (Raji & Abejide, 2014:66). Except that there was a provision of the mining lease to pay compensation to the owner of any building, or of any economic trees, or crops removed, destroyed or damaged by the lessee, his agents or workmen; it also provided that compensation shall not be payable in respect of any building erected or trees and crop planted on land in respect of which surface rent is paid by the lessee under section 32 after the date of which such rent commences to be payable. This could be regarded as British legacy passed on to the Nigerian government that transferred ownership from the British to the Nigerian government. Even when the legislation was repealed and replaced by the Petroleum Act of 1969, it reaffirmed the ownership of mineral resources in the Federal Government of Nigeria.

By 1937, the search for oil in Nigeria by Shell D'Arcy Exploration parties began which launched the history of oil and gas resources in the Niger Delta region. According to a report in the British Petroleum Archive (BPA), Shell D'Arcy's exploration eventually resulted in a large commercial oil discovery in the Niger Delta area (Raji & Abejide, 2014:69). However, oil exploration activities may have started in the 1930s in other places within the Ibo land, however, the general reports shows that in 1956 the first oil well was struck in commercial quantities at Oloibiri in Bayelsa State (Ubhenin, 2013; Raji & Abejide, 2014; Akpan & Umejesi, 2013; Okoh, 2005). This culminated in Nigeria's first export of crude cargo in 1958. Media reports succinctly (*concisely*) describe the growth of Nigeria's oil industry with a current potential of producing three million barrels of crude oil daily, in spite of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) limit on the production of crude oil. Out of a total 126 847 billion barrels held by the Africa continent, Nigeria currently holds 37.2 billion barrels, which translates to 29.3 percent of the continent's reserve.

On the fate of the minority group, Rita Izsák's (2015) assessment on the minority issues portrays how in 1957, the British Government appointed the Commission on Minority Groups in Nigeria (known after its Chairman as the "Willink Commission") with the mandate to: "(1) ascertain the facts about the fears of minorities in any part of Nigeria and to propose means of allaying those fears, whether well- or ill-founded; (2) advise what safeguards should be included for this purpose in the Constitution of

Nigeria; and (3) if, but only if, no other solution seems to the Commission to meet the case, then, as a last resort to make detailed recommendations for the creation of one or more new States". The 1958 report of the Commission did not recommend the creation of new States on the grounds that they would soon lead to new minority groups with similar claims and instead encouraged a balance of power between the different groups under a united Nigerian State. The Commission suggested broad measures, including the establishment of councils in each "minority area" that would "foster the well-being, cultural advancement and economic and social development of the minority area and to bring to the notice of the regional government any discrimination against the area". As a matter of fact, it has been observed by several civil society organisations that, despite the number of territorial reorganisations, the issue of minority groups is yet to be resolved and, in many States, tension between dominant and non-dominant groups persists (Izsák, 2015).

3.4.1. **Resistance to oil exploration**

Raji and Abejide (2014:70) point out that there was opposition from the local landowners over non-consultation by the government and the oil companies. This was particularly the case with the Mineral Oil Ordinance of 1945. The local landowners and the National Council of Nigeria Citizen (NCNC) stalwarts believed that the provision of the Mineral Ordinance in 1945 would bring about marginalisation of the indigenous landowners and control of oil fields in the entire country by the British Government. Colonial intelligence reports reveal that the agitation was intensified by the local protesters because the mineral ordinance did not require the joint venture to get any permission from the local landowners before starting their operation.

3.4.2. **Location of the Niger Delta**

The Niger Delta is located at the estuary (*creek*) of the Niger and Benue Rivers, where both rivers empty into the Atlantic Ocean, making it a vital part of the Gulf of Guinea. Major ethnic groups are the Ijaw and the Ogoni. By 1960–1966 (before the creation of states in 1967), the Niger Delta was made up of the southern part of the then eastern region and all of the then mid-western region. Presently, the Niger Delta is made up of six states: Rivers, Balyesa, Akwa Ibom, Cross Rivers, Delta and Edo, Ondo is also included in the list. They are known politically as the south-south zone of Nigeria (Onuoha, 2015:70). It covers a distance of about 270 miles along the Atlantic Coast and stretches for about 120 miles inland. The Niger Delta topography poses enormous "first nature" geographic challenges and provides a difficult geographical context for its development (Okonofua, 2011).

Onuoha (2015:69) explains how two events in the recent past in Nigeria appear to have positively impacted the security situation in the Niger Delta, which include the granting of amnesty to militants in the Niger Delta, and the election of a 'son of the soil', an indigene of the Niger Delta, Goodluck Ebele

Azikiwe Jonathan as the President of Nigeria on 16 April 2011. Onuoha (2015:69) however, argues that neither the granting of amnesty to militants in the Niger Delta nor the election of Goodluck Jonathan as President of Nigeria, or a combination of both events may resolve the conflict in the Niger Delta and bring about a lasting solution to the problem of peace and security in the region. In Onuoha's article which traces the problem of the Niger Delta from 1950s, he states that the current crisis in the Niger Delta is located in the claim of marginalisation and the resulting quest for autonomy and regional status in the build-up to Nigeria's independence. Across the country, there were demands for autonomy by the minorities in the eastern, northern and western regions. In the eastern region especially, such ill-feelings against marginalisation crystallised into the demand for Calabar, Ogoja and Rivers provinces (COR) along with those for Onitsha and Owerri Provinces among the dominant Igbo-speakers; the Igbos being the major ethnic group in the then eastern region (Onuoha, 2015).

3.5. CAUSES OF VIOLENT CONFLICT IN THE NIGER DELTA

Ibaba discusses the categorisation of agitations in the Niger Delta into four phases as postulated by Owugah thus:

The first phase could be roughly put between the early and mid-1980s. The dominant strategy in this phase was that of legal action by the communities against the oil companies to pay adequate compensations for damages to their property... The second phase was characterized by peaceful demonstrations and occupation of flow stations to get the oil companies to pay 'adequate' compensations or to fulfil their promises to provide certain amenities and to employ indigenes of the community... the oil companies responded by calling in the police and military. The intervention of these state operatives often resulted in destruction of lives and property... The resistance thus assumed a desperately militant form in the third phase...mid 1990s to 1998... characterized by the militant strategy of forceful occupation and shutting down of flow stations, kidnapping of workers, seizure of tugboats and other vessels belonging to the oil companies... The fourth phase is the demand for resource ownership and control (Ibaba, 2008).

From the above, Ibaba identified two crucial issues that are discernible; firstly, the feelings of alienation which are the fundamental causes of conflict in the Niger Delta. Secondly, the deepening of the conflicts and the resultant hostage taking are as result of government's insensitivity to these feelings, demonstrated by its violent response to community agitations or popular protests. A literature review indicates that there are many causes of conflict in the Niger Delta, but this research will only present the ones that are relevant to the topic of discussion.

3.5.1. Marginalisation

The major issue Ojatorotu (2008:93) identifies as the cause of conflict was marginalisation of the Niger Delta as a minority ethnic group leading to agitation for resource control. Stressing that the popular perception in the Niger Delta is that over the years the Nigerian state has sought to maintain relations of power that gradually undermined the position of minorities especially their access to vital natural resources within their region. Other researchers like Ikelegbe and Onokerhoraye (2016:83), Ekumaoko (2013:10), Davidheiser and Nyiayaana (2011:57) also lend their voice to affirm marginalisation as a factor to be considered in addressing the Niger Delta conflict.

Ojatorotu in the above account points out how over the years the Niger Delta people have consistently argued at different forums that resource control is the antidote to the problems of the region. The argument has been centred on issues, such as exclusion and marginalisation of the citizens in terms of enjoying the benefits of the resources within their communities, their struggle for greater access to resource allocation or control, environmental degradation, and egregious (*aggressive*) human rights violations. Onuoha (2015:71) is also of the same opinion that the current crisis in the Niger Delta is located in the claim of marginalisation and the resulting quest for autonomy and regional status in the build-up to Nigeria's independence. He traced conflict to pre-independence, that there was a demand for autonomy across the country by the minorities in the eastern, northern and western regions. Stating that the main reason for the demand of autonomy was the natural thirst for freedom and independence as values and rights in themselves. The demand for autonomy and self-determination by the Cross-River Ogoja and Rivers COR state took a new turn in February 1966 when an indigene from Rivers Province, Mr Isaac Jasper Adaka Boro revolted against the federal government (then a military government under Major General Aguiyi Ironsi) and the then eastern region government and declared a 'Niger Delta Republic'. He was arrested and convicted of treason, but later pardoned and released in 1967 by the federal military government under General Yakubu Gowon. The report went further to explain that Isaac Boro later joined the federal army to fight against the Biafran secessionist forces in the eastern region during the outbreak of the Nigerian civil war from 1967 to 1970. According to Onuoha (2015:73), when Isaac Adaka Boro declared a 'Niger Delta Republic' in 1966, oil production had commenced, but it was not a primary factor in Boro's armed struggle, even though he did refer to it. Instead, the reasons cited were neglect, both perceived and a real, marginalisation, a lack of political freedom and the consequent domination of minorities by the ethnic majority groups. Akpan and Umejiesi (2013:113) also identify the marginalisation of the oil producing states when it came to national revenue sharing as a contributing factor in the Niger Delta conflict.

3.5.2. **Lack of social amenities/Injustice**

Another issue identified by Ajibola (2015:1) as the cause of armed conflict in the Niger Delta region is the “struggle” which emanated as a result of the people’s displeasure against perceived injustices and their exploitation by oil companies in the region. These injustices include non-provision of amenities, non-provision of employment opportunities, and the refusal or delay in the payment of compensation to communities. Ekumaoko (2013:1), as he examined the Niger Delta situation in post Amnesty stated that the Niger Delta is the “honey land” of Nigeria, generating grievances because ‘Nigeria and the world have licked and are still licking the honey whereas the bees are left to sting the indigenes’. In his analytical view Ekumaoko (2013) predicted the future outcome of the conflict situation in the face of amnesty. Stating that Bayelsa produced the vice president then and later the substantial president helped in the militants’ embracing amnesty. Constitutionally the president stands the chance of a second term (though he promised he won’t contest again) and the northerners are agitating to cling to the power again. However, should President Jonathan contest in 2015 that means Boko Haram will go wild and if Boko Haram has been suppressed, a new group will crop up from the north to disturb the peace of the country once more. Conversely, if President Goodluck Jonathan honours his words and decides not to contest, the militants will return to the creeks to continue agitation because the amnesty (surely a failure then) would not have addressed the root causes of their grievances. At the time Ekumaoko (2013) was putting forth this argument, the outcome of 2015 election is unknown, and now by what is happening in the Niger Delta, his analytical prediction is not far from the truth that the conflict in the Niger Delta also has a political influence. Odubo and Tobor (2016) note that researchers affirmed that despite the huge oil revenue derived from the region that sustains Nigeria economically, it is still characterised by abject poverty and lack of social and economy facilities. The effect of such neglect after struggling for developmental and environmental justice later turned into youth militancy with its attendant consequences of violent conflict in order to attract attention to their views, and agitations for social justice, economic equality, and share in the resources of their region.

Omokhoa (2015) clinches his argument on the insecurity threats in the Niger Delta as a result of the high rate of injustice and inequity. He postulates from his perspective that the leadership and beneficiaries of the programme are pro Ijaw which favour the Ijaw and exclude other ethnic nationalities in the region. The question of concern here is: if other ethnic nationalities are not incorporated in the scheme of things as it is in the aforementioned scenario or situation, will there be justice and equity in the equitable sharing and distribution of wealth in the Niger delta region? What will happen to other minority groups within the Niger Delta region which hitherto has abhorred armed conflicts and have used non-violent means in their agitation?

3.5.3. **Resource control/Political interest**

Ushie (2013) notes that Nigeria's resource wealth has been a major driver of conflict in the past 40 years. Obi (2014:254) gives an analysis of how the political elite influence agitation for resource control. Arguing that by the time Nigeria returned to elected civilian rule in 1999, the ethnic minority struggles of the preceding decade had both altered the context of the struggle for resource control and opened the door for a faction of the Niger Delta elite to gain increased access to power at the federal and regional levels – while also paving the way for some civil society actors, erstwhile resistance activists and a new generation of militants to become key actors in the region. More fundamentally, it gave the Niger Delta elite a moral basis to demand greater incorporation into the federal elite, while also presenting themselves as new leaders of the region's struggle for resource control. He emphasised the unsure relationship between individuals within the Niger Delta elite—between the Niger Delta elite and militant/armed groups in the region, and between the Niger Delta elite and those from other ethnic majority groups in Nigeria. Osagie *et al.* (2010:87) is of the opinion that deprivation of the indigenes in the dividends of oil proceeds which are part of the economic factor, accounted for as the greatest cause of conflict, closely followed by the political factor.

For political interest Ibaba (2008) notes that the desperate struggle for power by politicians has helped to lay and strengthen the foundations of militant activities in the Niger Delta. During elections, politicians engage youths as political thugs to secure victory. From all indications, politicians' support is the basis of militant groupings. Due to unemployment, the idle youths who operate as political thugs and militia groups were recruited because of their firepower and paid heavily for services, thereby transforming violence into a commodity priced and purchased in the democratic process. Most elections in Nigeria, especially the Niger Delta region, are dreadful moments due to the involvement of the armed groups in the democratic process, aimed at catapulting their leaders and members to positions of political prominence. In most cases the same means is used to maintain the position and scare away opposition. Ibaba further argues that the inability of government to promote development worsens poverty and hardship, aggravates the anger of those who feel cheated at the elections, and pent-up anger which creates a fertile ground for instability as little disagreements easily turn to violence. One example of such electoral violence was in 2007 when violence was used as an instrument of rigging the general election through the use of guns, dynamite and other dangerous weapons to scare away political opponents, to intimidate electoral officials and law-abiding citizens. The consequence of this was the empowerment of youths who are active militants and have a tendency to legitimise violence.

3.5.4. Insensitiveness by government to the needs of the host community

The discovery of oil and its exploration which mark a new era of national development would have been a thing of joy for the nation and the host community where the exploration was to take place.

However, Aderogba (2016) remarks that it was an unfortunate situation, where the initial optimism that greeted the discovery of crude oil in Nigeria didn't last due to the neglect of oil producing communities by successive governments. Coupled with unprecedented environmental degradation caused by oil spillage, gas flaring and other ecological issues that have adversely affected the nation. Aderogba (2016) further observes that despite the fact that the Nigerian government derives 70 percent of its revenue and up to 90 percent of its foreign earnings from crude oil exploration in the Niger Delta, the poverty level in the region is ranked among the highest in Nigeria. Successive governments in Nigeria have not been sensitive to the plight of the people even when they try to draw the attention of the government to their plight they were brutally suppressed. For instance, instead of addressing the issue of the under development of the oil producing area and official corruption, late General Sanni Abacha decided to hang environmental activists from the Niger Delta region - Ken Saro - Wiwa and eight of his kinsmen. The brutal killing of these Nigerians irked the people of the region and sparked off violent agitation. Fundamentally to this assertion is the emergence of new forms of armed insurgency in the oil producing Niger Delta, which rendered the entire area practically uncontrollable in terms of the conflict situation with renewed agitation of more militant groups. Peterside *et al.* (2011:1) state that where states and social institutions fail to provide basic security, justice, and economic opportunities for citizens, conflict can escalate. At the limit, states may collapse or implode, descending into the most abject forms of civil conflict. The consequence of such insensitivity and social injustice leads to proliferation of groups and conflicts which express the existence of a growing sense of fragmented sovereignty and of the existence of what is called “ungovernable spaces”.

3.5.5. Greed of the elites

It was also identified that the politicians and other leaders within the Niger Delta take advantage of the many unemployed youths in the region who lacked academic and vocational skills to improve their lives and who, because they were jobless, were ready to take up arms against perceived enemies of their communities—the International Oil Companies (IOC)⁸ and the Nigerian state. While there are grievances of neglect and other issues Hoeffler and Collier (2002) opine that greed considerably outperforms grievances. While Okonofua (2013:3) states how the activities of those regarded as important powerbrokers imbed hapless youths in their struggles to benefit clandestinely from the Niger Delta oil complex. Greed in conflict is fuelled by opportunities available in armed conflict and in the instance of the Niger Delta crisis, opportunities in terms of conscripting and luring able-bodied young people, who are poor and with dysfunctional backgrounds, to be used as instruments of violence.

⁸ The International Oil Companies (IOC) are also known as Multi-national Companies or Multinational Oil Companies (MNCs OR MOCs).

Stressing further that the contribution of powerbrokers who use the authority and instrumentality of the state to sponsor the violence is the least reported and researched, yet, it may be the most important risk factor for insurgency in the Niger Delta. Since 1999, these powerbrokers, sensitive to expanding economic opportunities that privilege those who occupy senior positions in government, have targeted peasant youths to play crucial roles in their violent internal struggles to control legitimate and illegitimate opportunities that open from oil extraction. Ajibola (2015) also argues that despite the fact that the people had legitimate reasons for their grievances, these factors are closely related to greed, especially the desire by stakeholders to benefit personally from new opportunities that open from the “struggle.” Crucial to this assumption is that the conflicts are mainly caused by the desire of both the ex-militants’ leaders and the political elites to enrich themselves rather than any altruistic (*selfless*) reasons. Ajibola (2015) asserts that the involvement of youths in militancy and violence in the Niger Delta can be traced to powerful stakeholders within the conflict zone who hid under the guise of the “struggle” to brainwash young, unemployed youths in the region to fight for what were regarded as genuine grievances by the youths but a means of self-enrichment for their leaders. Adesopo and Akinola (2011) add voice to the greed of the elite due to lack of accountability stated that accountability is grossly neglected by most elite, who are only concerned with a higher percentage of resource allocation. Incidentally, it is the poverty-ridden condition of the people that these elite use as the springboard and the basis for their agitations for more resources but less concerned with how resources benefit the people.

3.5.6. Corruption/Poor implementation of the amnesty programme

Ajibola (2015) aptly captures it that corruption has been identified as one of the reasons the empowerment process of the DDR component might not work. The programme has been dogged by allegations of corruption levelled against some top ranking officials in government and the fact that the amnesty agreement between the government and ex-militants was signed by the ex-generals on behalf of the militants, and a majority of the militants were not privy to the content or details of the agreement, especially the part that pertains to the empowerment process does not indicate transparency in the process. Analyses of the Niger Delta conflict increasingly and correctly see governance as both at the heart of the problem and the place to seek solutions, arguing that service delivery across the region is appalling and heavily compromised by patronage and corruption (Newsom, 2011).

On the issue of corruption in the management of the Niger Delta conflict, Peterside *et al.* (2011:10) identify several key points: firstly, the triggering role of corrupt and undisciplined military forces instigating or compounding local crises, and more profoundly of pushing political groups toward armed militancy; secondly, the tension surrounding electoral politics and the proliferation of local revenue

flows (through increased derivation) have intensified since 1999, with the ferocious struggles over access to rents and what is often seen as “their resources” or “our oil” (local governments in particular emerge as arenas of extraordinary corruption and “chop fine”). Third, the state and the political classes have a history of directly supporting and sponsoring forms of violence and the circulation of arms (the electoral cycle is especially pertinent here as was obvious in 2003 and 2007). Finally, conflicts point directly to the ways in which differing forms of authority, territoriality and identity are drawn together in and around the central political logic of struggles over access to and control over oil revenues among differing forms of elite pacts and coalitions. In chapter two, the DDRR was fully discussed in line with the international practices. It was also observed that contrary to the recommendations of the Report of the Technical Committee on the Niger Delta (RTCND) for an international DDRR framework, the Government adopted a “structured DDRR” programme conceived as a national response to stabilise security conditions in the Niger Delta as a prelude to recovery and development of the area. Peterside *et al.* (2011:11) point out the futility of the amnesty programme when they acknowledge that the federal government paid \$40 million to four Niger Delta warlords—Dokubon Asari, General Ateke Tom, General Ebikabowei Boyloaf Victor Ben, and General Government Tompolo Ekpumopolo—to guard the country's oil pipelines for 12 months, which points to the fact that the amnesty and DDRR will leave its own legacy. This happened under the leadership of Goodluck Jonathan; now with the change of government, they are no longer in charge of safeguarding the pipeline; what next? - renewed violence. Peterside *et al.* (2011:11) argue that whether or not pipeline security will be enhanced, the impact on economic diversification, youth employment and confidence in the government will be limited. The grave danger is that the diversion, delays and logic of unmonitored payments will not only produce dissent and splintering among the militants but actually reproduce the conditions that generated the crisis in the first place. Conflict will be further instrumental to the possibility of struggles over amnesty resources, shifting the geographical locus of violence from the creeks to the urban centres.

Again, Wodu (2015) avows that there is an allegation of lack of transparency and corruption in the process of implementing the amnesty programme by analysts who argue that militants of lower cadres were short-changed and pay offs were made to former militant generals in the form of multi-billion dollar security contracts to guard the oil pipe line. The consequence of this is that there is a perception that the amnesty programme may have enriched the powerful class of ex-militant generals that are primary beneficiaries of a war economy which leads to the assumption that violence is the only way to echo one’s disapproval and marginalisation. Poor implementation has been a general allegation levelled against the amnesty programme. Oluduro and Oluduro (2012) and Ejovi and Ebie (2013) identify poor implementation of the amnesty programme. They say it was not implemented as recommended in the report of the Niger Delta Technical Committee, because it failed to engage in direct negotiations or a formal peace agreement with the militants, but consulted with the elites and top government officials

of Niger Delta origin for negotiation and through the militant commanders who were only interested in self-benefits and personal aggrandisement. Ering, Bassey and Odike (2013:424) also aver that Amnesty granted to the militants only serves as a strategy to enable the government and oil companies to continue with oil exploration in order to bring in revenue to government and not to really meet the needs of the people in the region, which amounted to throwing money at issues affecting the Niger Delta instead of addressing them head on.

3.5.7. Undisclosed arms

It was reported that the disarmament was not holistic. Amakihe and Osah (2014:5) opine that violent criminality is not necessarily reducing partly due to the legacy of long conflict, but also partly due to the large quantity of unreported arms (i.e. arms not handed in by demobilised soldiers but held in some underground cache). There is the possibility of militants possessing more than one gun at the point of disarmament but turning in only one gun, while hiding the remaining. There are strong indications that the Amnesty left arms in the hands of many militants, who were not demobilised, thus the propensity to greater sabotage, vandalism, cultism⁹, kidnapping, killings and protests. Also of concern is the fact that though 17,500 have registered, between them they have handed in just 2,700 weapons, which “falls severely short of the arsenals that the militants circulate in the region” (IRIN, 2010). In addition to that, Ejovi and Ebie (2013:134) restate that the total number of ammunitions/weapons handed in by the militants is relatively low compared to the number of militants that registered for the amnesty programme. The region is still ridden with arms and this is evident in the various attacks that have been carried out even after the disarmament exercise.

3.5.8. Fear of discontinuing the amnesty programme

As reported by IRIN News (2010) that ex-militant Nicolas Dickson warned, “If the amnesty programme does not go forward, I promise that Nigeria will not know peace.” However, the insecurity that had threatened the nation’s economy cannot come to an end immediately with the “euphoria” of the Amnesty. For the Amnesty to make a meaningful impact there must be massive developments within

⁹ Occult groups refers to the various groups that uses occultist power for militancy. The cultist activities include for example killing, kidnapping, arm robbing and other anti-social vices. It is not within the scope of this research to go into a deeper discussion of the various group. However, there is evidence that there are more than one or two cult groups, which results in clashes between the groups struggling for supremacy and recognition of a specific area.

the region and the corrupt practices of state officials must be curbed. There is the fear that with the costly Presidential Amnesty Program for ex-insurgents due to end in 2015, there are increasingly bitter complaints in the region that chronic poverty and catastrophic oil pollution, which fuelled the earlier rebellion, remain largely unaddressed (International Crisis Group, 2015). There is the criticism that federal government purportedly abandoned large portions of the recommendations from the Niger Delta Technical committee report and focussed on the amnesty programme. They chose instead to spend large sums of money in the form of huge pay-offs to ex-militant generals, which prompted repeated calls by the ex-militants on the need to extend the Amnesty Program (Wodu, 2015).

3.5.9. The outcome of 2015 general election

In the previous chapter, it was observed that some researchers attribute the relative peace during the amnesty programme to the personality of Goodluck Jonathan as Vice President and later President, who is a native of the Niger Delta that his position was crucial to the breakthrough achieved during the Amnesty process. This also raises a critical question as to what will befall the Amnesty-induced peace process if and when President Jonathan is no longer in office. In the course of finding the causes of conflict in the Niger Delta, the International Crisis Group observed that the outcome of the presidential election also heightened tensions. While most people in the region acknowledge that Jonathan lost, some former militant leaders and groups accept Buhari only conditionally. For instance, the Niger Delta People's Salvation Front (NDPSF), the civil successor to the militant Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force (NDPVF), claims Jonathan's ousting was the product of a conspiracy by Northerners and the Yoruba from the South West against the Niger Delta peoples and the South East. Apparently influenced by that view, some groups are resuming old demands, hardly heard during the Jonathan presidency, for regional autonomy or "self-determination". Immediately after the declaration of General Buhari as the winner of the polls by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) on March 31, 2015, Alhaji Mujahid Asari Dokubo, one of the ex-militant Generals, was reported in the papers to have made a call for war and a return to the creeks (Wodu, 2015).

3.5.10. Custom of attracting government attention

The people of Niger Delta are now used to violence, especially, having passed through a series of suppression in the past. Adesopo and Akinola (2011) postulate that the current episode in the Niger Delta confirms that the only way to get the attention of those in power is to engage in violence. Noting that the failed efforts of the federal government in the use of the Joint Task Force (JTF) and the drastic reduction in oil revenues due to militancy and criminality compelled the federal government to offer amnesty packages to the militants for disarmament. Observers are questioning the reason behind government's offering amnesty which the people did not demand and why government should wait for

violence before listening to community voices? To this end, others believe that the aim of introducing amnesty is faulty as noted by Jegede and Olu-olu (2015:277). Some analysts are of the opinion that the expensive Amnesty Program is indeed running not because the federal government loves the people of the Niger Delta. Rather, it was more or less an economic strategy by the Federal Government to tame the violence in the region so it could maximise oil exploration and exportation, all for the huge economic benefits thereof to the treasury of the entire nation. This assertion is supported by the fact that, the volume of crude oil export which dipped to about 700,000 bpd before the amnesty raised to about 2.6 million bpd. The logic therefore is that the costs of sustaining the programme by Federal Government is less than what it gained as a result of the relative peace enjoyed in the Niger Delta area, which means it is worth a price to pay for peace and economic buoyancy. It is however reiterated that the Amnesty Program benefits just a handful of erstwhile dangerous militants, while the rest of the Niger Delta is struggling in painful neglect. This could be a motivating factor to continue in arms conflict in order to benefit from the oil proceed.

3.5.11. Intergenerational conflict of the Niger Delta crises

Intergenerational conflict refers to the conflict between older and younger generations as they compete for jobs and resources. A social science perspective that holds that stratification is dysfunctional and harmful in society, with inequality perpetuated because it benefits the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor. Generations of people are in competition with one another for power and resources.

It was reported in the Nigerian Tribune of August 26, 2017 that Chief Edwin Clark can no longer negotiate on behalf of the Niger Delta coalition. The coalition of Niger Delta militant position was reaffirmed that the Chief Edwin Clark's led Pan Niger Delta Forum (PANDEF) can no longer enter into negotiations with the Federal Government on behalf of the region (Ebipade, 2016). The coalition comprises the Reformed Niger Delta Avengers (NDA); Niger Delta Joint Revolutionary Crusaders Council; Niger Delta Supreme Egbesu Fighters; Niger Delta Red Scorpion Fighters; Niger Delta Youth Mandate for Justice; Niger Delta People's Liberation Force; Niger Delta Fighters for Resource Control; Niger Delta for Urhobo Resource Control; and Bakassi People's Liberation Force.

The reason behind this decision could be considered transgenerational because it was alleged that PANDEF members consisted of people who could be described as the "Idols of under-development in the Niger Delta." The militants maintained that there was the need for change of leadership from the 'old brigade' if success must be achieved in the struggle for all round development of the region. The militants' groups alleged that Clark was too old and would have remained an opinioned leader rather than being active to interface with the Federal Government on their behalf. They claimed that PANDEF comprised of people who did not want the younger generation to rise but to continue to hold the region

to ransom. They were of the view that the past leaders of PANDEF who held various positions in the past did not influence any development in the region. Instead, they were accused of using their positions even in the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to increase their private properties and estates and to win contracts in the NDDC and Niger Delta Ministry without executing the projects given to them; the youth in the group also accused the older generation of milking the region dry. Therefore, they vowed not to surrender the struggle until the last drop of their blood saw that the region was developed.

The roots of violent militancy and the involvement of youth are discussed by Sutcliffe (2012) who observes that peaceful action in the 1990s was met with brutal military repression emanating from MNC oil concessions, and this has continued even under civilian government with widespread human rights abuses against the citizens. It is documented that the relationship between militarisation and the delegitimisation of non-violent action have provided strong evidence that militancy only occurred in the Niger Delta as a last resort due to the failure of non-violent methods to achieve benefits. Sutcliffe (2012) further postulates in line with trans-generational politics that the shift to violence was concurrent with the rise of the local youths as political actors, which is connected to the inability of the elder generation of local leaders to stand up to the state and MNCs to achieve gains for local communities. Jike (2004:697) observes that the youths in the Niger Delta no longer trusted the elders, they considered the elders as the epitome of the colossal failure in the bid to harness the resources of the area, maintaining that the era of elder statesmanship in the traditional cosmogony is, perhaps, gone for good. This perhaps explains why in every conflict, particularly in the Niger-Delta, the youths are more likely to hold on to a viewpoint that contrasts with those of their elders. The indices of social disequilibria do not end with inconsiderate socialisation procedures or intergenerational apprehension and antagonism.

The youth alleged that their traditional leaders have failed to provide good leadership and turning a blind eye to the plunder of their lands by oil companies. They also accused them of being insensitive to the consequences of 1969 Petroleum Act and the 1978 Land Use Decree by accepting mere paltry (*worthless*) compensation. They felt that local leaders and elders form part of the oil complex which caused the catastrophe of environmental degradation and economic backwardness, through a reciprocal relationship with Multinational Oil Companies MOCs (Sutcliffe, 2012). The transgenerational conflict was summarised by Sutcliffe, when he stated that the violence of contemporary militancy is born in the military repression enacted by the oil complex and its generational constitution is reflective of the complicity of local elders and leaders in the catastrophe wrought across the Delta. It was further argued that the impact of youth militancy has seen a shift in the local 'governable space' in the Niger Delta, whereby youth militancy and vigilantism has come to dominate a political space previously filled by the traditional rulers or local elders. This shift, Sutcliffe affirms is vital to understanding contemporary

militancy and is not explicable without understanding the consequences of petro-capitalism for local intergenerational conflict in politics.

As some will consider the present insurgency as the new generation of ethnic men engaging “in a struggle for freedom and justice, ‘not for themselves’ but for their people” (Oluduro & Oluduro, 2012:51). The political leaders did not think of the future generations as Ezeocha (2016:135) observes. The negative consequences of the perception that violence pays, and validated by the amnesty policy, to have negative unintended consequences not only on the immediate community, but the entire population and generations to come. Greedy elites and politicians are compromising the ability to meet the developmental needs of the future generations (Ezeocha, 2016:52). Some downsides of the amnesty programme that could impact further generations were identified by Ezeocha (2016:193) to include pervasive poverty, culture of violence, insecurity and abuses of office.

The transgenerational conflict is inevitable when corruption overrides justice, as supported by Berdal and Malone (2000:17) who attribute the greed of the elites, who often amassed considerable personal wealth and frequently presided over states that lack the means for effective and disciplined to counterinsurgency due to corrupt practices. The revenues which could have been used to meet the general populace are siphoned into private pockets. In these circumstances, Newsom (2011:4) also observes that corruption and institutionalised patronage effectively block developmental gains of the oil revenue. He identifies multiple political drivers and actors, whose tools for achievement includes the use of violence—economy of violence as well as criminal economics, primarily crude oil theft; environmental damage from industry and oil spills; failure or neglect of local economies and infrastructure; a culture of impunity, particularly for political and militant actors has been identified to be a contributing factor for transgenerational conflict. Researchers increasingly and correctly see governance as both at the heart of the problem and the place to seek solutions (Newsom, 2011:5). It is not far from the truth in the case of Niger Delta what Berdal and Malone (2000:17) report about the elites who repeatedly recruit civilians into unpaid or underpaid armies or militias, sometimes along ethnic lines.

Trauma events such as physical abuse, death of a parent, abandonment, community violence etc. which threaten the life or integrity of the individual or loved one, can greatly affect an individual’s life and behaviour which could be misunderstood and treated as oppositional or depressed. The discussion of conflict from an economic perspective done by Berdal and Malone (2000:16), portrays conflict as irrational or as an aberration and interruption to development. Rather, Berdal and Malone (2000:16) accentuate the fact that violence generated by particular political economies, in turn modifies instead of destroying economics. In this instance, conflict is not regarded as simply a breakdown in a particular

system but as the emergence of an alternative system of profit, power and even protection. This worldview could influence persistent conflict throughout generational history.

However, the explanation of the above assertion in relation to the functions of violence in civil conflict, on one hand could be to change or to retain certain laws and administrative practices that in a sense are regarded as political violence. For instance, the argument in favour of the violence is that the government undermines the economic privileges of the landowners that are cemented through control of the state. Instead of equitable distribution of the oil dividend to every citizen, Ezeocha (2016:16) reiterates how successive governments neglected the people's campaigns from social justice, political emancipation, infrastructural development, resource control and self-determination over the years. Even when the Amnesty Program was introduced, a lot of shortfalls were identified as being discoursed earlier in this research.

3.6. THE CHURCH AS A ROLE PLAYER IN THE NIGER DELTA CONFLICT

Looking at the Nigerian economy one could say there was a remarkable growth from 2001 to 2014, yet there has been no corresponding human development to show for it, as generally the standard of living in Nigeria is atrociously low. That of the people of the Niger-Delta region from where the nation's wealth is derived is the most pitiable. In the analysis of Isike and Alokwu (2010:20), this contradiction was attributed mainly to government's inadequate attention to human development and the age-long neglect of sustainable development in the region, coupled with non-implementation of policies relating to oil exploration and environmental protection laws.

While discussing the nexus between peace and justice, Isike and Alokwu (2010:26) note that it is used as a parallel for justice/righteousness as a signal for the removal of oppression (injustice and working for just and healthy relationships between people and nations). Since liberation is a concept associated with people, it has political, material and social meanings that are expected to bring liberation of the needy, the disadvantaged, the poor, and the helpless.

In appraising the role of the Church and the quest for peace in the Niger-Delta, Isike and Alokwu (2010:30) observe historically the importance of religion in maintaining social stability and the transformation of states for economic development, social change and peaceful co-existence in the society. Giving a particular example of the consequences of the Protestant and Puritan revolutions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which confirm the significant role Christianity played in contributing to the socio-political development in England during and after that period. It was observed that Biblical scholars and theologians interested in development issues were unanimous in their views on the Christian theology as a great resource for addressing societal problems including social, economic, political and other developmental concerns.

In the appraisal of Isike and Alokwu (2010:31), the church has not lived to its full potential as an instrument of peace and development in the Niger-Delta. Apart from peace prayers done in church halls, peace advocacy by a few religious scholars and institutions, as well as uncoordinated piece-meal infrastructural development projects, the church as a body has been largely invisible in terms of conflict transformation and peace-building. It was noted that the churches' efforts at facilitating peace dialogue, yielded little dividends because they are not concentrated around a common agenda of peace and development that cuts across the entire region. In view of the above, the Church in the Niger-Delta region could be described as passive.

However, the coming of missionaries to Nigeria and Niger Delta in particular, as Osuigwe (2014:4) observes, has helped to some extent by introducing some of the languages to written form, establishing schools and hospitals, also contributing to the abolition of some of the inhuman practices such as domestic slavery, human sacrifice, infanticide, twin murders, punishment by ordeal, immolation, and cannibalism. Most importantly, the Christian Missions stood for "social ideals such as brotherhood, freedom, individual rights, justice and honour," and Christianity became "a social leveller".

Christian witness in the region at present is represented by various church groups within the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). There are five blocks of churches in the body:

1. The Roman Catholics;
2. The Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), comprising mainly of the Anglicans, Methodists, Presbyterians, and Baptists;
3. PFN-CPFN (Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria and Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria);
4. TEKAN-ECWA (Tarron Eklisia, Nigeria and Evangelical Church Winning All); and
5. OAIC (Organisation of African Instituted Churches).

Osuigwe (2014:10) argues that so far, no academic study has been carried out on the issue of oil and conflict in Nigeria from the perspective of Christian social witness. Two studies make reference to the church, referring to Augustine Ikein who uses a Methodist view of systems theory to argue for responsible behaviour that places in proper balance economic benefit and human ecology in his discussion on the need to care for the oil-producing areas. The second author mentioned is L. J. Brooks who includes religious associations and church groups in her discussion on local and international NGOs and other groups, arguing that although local NGOs suffered under the military in Nigeria, church groups flourished. Therefore, church groups could have served as veritable instruments in the delivery of community needs, but according to her, they failed to utilise their vantage position (Osuigwe, 2014:11).

The first attempt at Christian witness in Nigeria was traced to the Roman Catholics (the Portuguese) in the 16th century by Osuigwe (2010:18), first to Benin in 1515, and to Warri in the 1570s, but was not successful in the initial attempt. However, by the 19th century, between 1841 and 1891, the major mission churches successfully entered the country. The missionary bodies of the period include: the Church Missionary Society (CMS), that came mainly from Germany; the Wesleyan Missionary Society, that came from England; the Foreign Mission Committee of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland; the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, that came from America; and the Catholic Society of African Missions of France, that came from France.

This section is not meant to present the historical background of the church in the Niger Delta but to present its roles in the conflict management within the region. In this regard, it is pertinent to present the finding of Osuigwe (2010:218-230) on the response of some member of a church who explained the major role of the church in the Niger Delta conflict which includes refining the militant thinking that have led to some renouncing violence. A testimony of a former member of one of the gangs who is now a committed member of the church confirmed the followings:

I used to be a youth leader in Bayelsa State but, before I gave my life to Christ, there was a crisis in which I was involved as a fighter. In fact I would have been killed but I came across a lady who worships in Hilltop who invited me to church. At a point while one leg was inside, the other was outside but when the crisis started, Pastor Ben followed me up. I was in the Government House in Yenagoa. What I'm trying to say is that the church has affected me in the sense that if Hilltop was not to be in Port Harcourt, probably I would've been a dead man (Osuigwe, 2010:218).

It was also reported that the Pastor of First Baptist Church mentioned how his church carried out some ministry to some of the boys directly involved in the violence. According to the Pastor, such ministry helped some militants to repent, renounce violence and now attend the church. He also relates how four youths at different times came to him to surrender their guns as narrated below:

An IYC member came to me to surrender his AK47 rifle and its accompanying ammunition, saying that he was tired of the whole thing. When the boy handed the rifle over to me, we both demobilised it, went to the jetty in the night from where we paddled a canoe to the high seas where it was deep enough and threw both the gun and the live ammunition into the sea. The boy in this case now attends the church. It is the fourth time this has happened.

Osuigwe (2010:219) argues that the basis of this renouncement of violence and refinement in their thinking towards non-violence could be fathomed from the submission by a mother in First Baptist who stated that as Christians they believed that Jesus Christ as their Lord does not believe in violence.

Therefore, Christians should not be violent. This means that the church should preach against violence and injustice and then pray to seek the face of God because there is nothing God cannot do.

In view of the above discourse, the church can be identified as a social force to redefine people's perception of conflict. Omayio (2015:38) is of the opinion that the role of religion in any given society should not be taken for granted. The church as the light and salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13, 14) is expected to produce a Christian character to preserve the society from moral decay. When Christians lose their preservative influence of a godly example, they become useless for God to preserve the decay of society. Those who live after godly principles are a light that brings hope to a world that is lost in darkness. Therefore, if the influence of the Church is covered, it does not affect the community (Dickson, 2011:1075). The church is expected to serve as an anchor that holds life, defines individuals' and communities' perspective of peace and conflict by inculcating godly understanding.

Isike and Alokwu (2010:26) argue that there is something fundamentally wrong with the perception that peace can be achieved through the use of military force because violence only begets more violence.

In the context of the Niger-Delta crisis isike and Alokwu (2010:27) discuss the theological response to the peace process through *shalom* using the church to make the Nigerian government approach the question of security from a people-perspective rather than from a state-centric perspective. Shifting from the common Church practice of misapplying *shalom* by addressing their message(s) of peace only to the victims of violence and neglecting the perpetrators of such violence or addressing only the spiritual needs of the people.

3.7. CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the research has extensively reflected on the causes of conflict in the Niger Delta in the pre- and post-amnesty programme in order to ascertain reasons why the conflict in the Niger Delta remains unabated in spite of the numerous government efforts to restore peace in the region. Many authors have similar and varying views on the issues as summarised below:

One of the critical areas examined by many researchers as a major causes of conflict in the Niger Delta is the aspect of resource control which may be interpreted as a political demand for power to extract and determine the allocation of resources. It was noted in the course of this research that the Petroleum Act and the Land Use Act denied them the practice of 'true federalism' and therefore control of their resources, and should be 'scrapped'. They referred to those Acts as 'obnoxious', and 'piratical laws' which did not allow them to enjoy 'true federalism'. There is this insinuation that without the political and constitutional reviews in the country to favour resource control, there may be no end to the conflict in the Niger Delta. In other words, the insecurity in the Niger Delta arose from the denial of autonomy

and self-determination which the people suffered because of a distorted federal structure. The possibility of the church's attending to this through pastoral missional approach will be discussed in chapter five.

That there are injustice and marginalisation of the minority ethnic groups as a result of an imbalance in power sharing which in turn exacerbated their feelings of perpetual domination by a faction of the majority ethnic groups. Due to this logical fact, amnesty is unable to bring peace and security in the Niger Delta without addressing the fundamental issues of autonomy and self-determination in the federal structure.

As observed in chapter two, there was a surrendering of arms and renunciation of violence by militants, but that does not address the irritation of the entire population because the militants were not the only people that suffered deprivation in the region. The concentration of the amnesty programme on the ex-militants is a negative motivating factor to the non-violent citizens to take up arms against the state in order to be recognised.

There is a concern as reiterated by Ering *et al.* (2013:422) that though the bulk of the crude oil came from the region, the people of the area ranked among the most backward and marginalised groups in the country. All these aggravated the agitations which resulted in many crises in the region. Needless to mention the issue of a proper Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) as observed by the majority of the researchers of the region, because this has been the major issue even before the amnesty programme, but has been neglected in the process.

On the origin of conflict in the Niger Delta, Thovoethin and Yusuf (2010) retrospectively note that the colonial state promulgated Mineral Act in 1911 for their economic interest, denied communities ownership to their natural endowment. After independence, the Nigerian State formulated the Oil Mineral Act of 1969 in line with the British legacy, which established the power to control, absolutely, all mineral resources, including oil, within the territory of Nigeria in the Federal Government. This was further strengthened by the promulgation of the Land Use Decree in 1978. The Land Use Decree invested the ownership of all lands in Nigeria in the government. The implication of the Act, in relation to the belief of the people is that the people of the Niger Delta become tenants in their own homeland and subjects to an institution that they neither recognise nor are able to understand or relate to.

Due to huge amounts spent on the militants, especially the enrichment of their leaders, there was the belief that they may not want the amnesty programme to stop as it was scheduled to have ended by 2015, and that is why there was a resumption of hostility. However, others are of the opinion that the outcome of 2015 election might have reignited the conflict. Furthermore, there is the issue of corruption and improper implementation of the amnesty programme cum greed of the elite and ex-militant leaders.

There is also the observation that the ex-militants did not surrender all their weapons which they fall back to each time there is a threat on their source of income or a delay in the payment of their stipends. But the question is, why should they hold back arms if they have confidence in the government's amnesty? Others contend that the held-back weapons would have been useless if the ex-militants were properly reintegrated with sustainable income including all the inhabitants, which means that there will be no prospects of resuming hostility.

Taking all the information from the first three chapters into consideration, the following characteristics and effects of the conflict in the Ogba community can be concluded as follows:

- The characteristic of conflict in the Ogba community is not different from what is obtained from other parts of the Niger Delta region, which include economic and political struggle. Those involved include the elites, the politicians and the youth. Okoli (2006:86) observes from the rural farmers' perspective in Ogba communities, the negative impacts of oil exploitation activities greatly outweigh the benefits derived. Furthermore, the effects of crude oil exploration and exploitation that involved the exploding of dynamite caused seismic waves, which in turn damaged buildings, crops and properties in the community. The effects on buildings resulted in residual stress, which further deteriorated the property and infrastructure.
- Describing the situation of the Niger Delta community of which the Ogba community is inclusive, Okonofua (2011:54) notes that the Niger Delta was described by the World Bank in 2007 as an iconic representation of destitution amongst the possibility. It observed that the Niger Delta people were excluded from the wealth generated by their resource-rich region and the region had the highest unemployment rate.
- As a result of the neglect and economic hardships, the community used various means to advance their demands for compensation. Discussing the alienation and militancy in the Niger Delta, Ibaba (2008) outlines some of the stages of agitation that have taken place. Ibaba observes that between early and mid-1980s the dominant strategy was legal action by the communities against the oil companies to pay adequate compensations for damages to their property. The second strategy was characterised by peaceful demonstrations and occupation of flow stations to get the oil companies to pay 'adequate' compensation or to fulfil their promises to provide certain amenities and to employ indigenous people of the community. Instead of meeting the community's needs, the oil companies decided to calling in the police and military. With the involvement of the state security operatives and the use of coercive means most cases resulted in destruction of lives and property. The conflict therefore, assumed a desperate militant form in what could be considered the third strategy from mid-1990s to 2009. It is

characterised by the militant forceful occupation and shutting down of flow stations, kidnapping of workers, seizure of tug boats and other vessels belonging to the oil companies.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FINDINGS OF THE QUALITATIVE EMPIRICAL STUDY IN OGBA COMMUNITY

4.1. INTRODUCTION

This study started with a discussion on the impact of the amnesty programme (chapter 2) and possible grounds for the seemingly unsolved transgenerational conflict (chapter 3) in the Ogba community as found in the media and literature. The focus of the study will now shift to an empirical study in order to draw some conclusions to assist the church with its pastoral and missional ministry in the Delta. The question that needs to be answered in this chapter is: What are the findings of the empirical study, and how can community development be of help in conflict management of Ogba Community? The aim of this chapter is to reflect on the findings of the empirical study, and how community development can be of help to manage conflict in Ogba community. In summary the researcher will respond therefore, to the question as to what is going on in Ogba community and how the amnesty programme affects the non-violent citizens of the community. Because of the multidisciplinary nature of ‘conflict’ and based on the fact that the study seeks to make a theological contribution to conflict management in the Niger Delta, the methodology will adopt a descriptive or analytic task in order to give voice to theological values and theories in praxis (Stanton, 2013:75). It also includes the socio-scientific approach by employing qualitative research methods in order to explore the influence on the Ogba community of conflict events in the Niger Delta and the possibility of applying a pastoral missional approach in conflict management. A qualitative research method was applied using a pre-designed questionnaire (See Appendix 2). The data were collected between 19 November to 3 December 2017 within the Ogba communities (Omoku and Obrikom). Omoku is the administrative headquarters of the Ogba-Egbema/Ndoni Local Government area, while Obrikom is the community close to the Gas Industry and oil wells within Ogba land. The researcher had visit these communities and carried out research separately in these two communities.

Below is a map of Rivers State showing Ogba/Egbema Ndoni LGA. River State is the largest oil producing state. ONELGA has the largest number of oil wells in Rivers state and the best source of crude oil in the world. There are twenty-three local governments in Rivers State.



Figure 1: Map of Rivers State, Showing Ogba/Egbema Ndoni Local Gov't Area.

Source: Research Gate, www.researchgate.net, with modification by the researcher

4.2. RESEARCH DESIGN

The research topic is designed to carry out a behavioural assessment in order to identify possible solutions for the conflict in Ogba community. According to Kothari (2004:3), qualitative research is of importance in the behavioural sciences where the aim is to discover the underlying motives of human behaviour. In a qualitative study it is not important to have a large number of participants, since it is based on the investigation of their experiences. Qualitative research is thus more subjective. Through such method one can analyse the various factors that motivate people to behave in a particular manner based on their mind-sets. In view of the above understanding, the qualitative method has been chosen in order to identify other relevant factors that will help to draw inference within the study area such as, socio-economic status, gender role and agitation, cross cultural and religious influence on conflict and development in the area. For the purpose of exploring every opportunity the research is designed to be flexible in order to consider many different aspects of the problem identified to be appropriate for the research purpose. This means that the flexibility is to create an opportunity for unforeseen variable factors that could contribute positively to this research's results. Since it is a social issue with a theological approach it will incline to the community of the Church.

Basically, the empirical data collection was divided into two categories:

- One category focused on certain individuals, which included interviews with the community leaders/chiefs and any individual who was knowledgeable on the conflict within the community.
- In the second category the focus was on groups, which included the church leaders and youths (age 18 – 39 are regarded as youth and are not under-age which the researcher exempted).

It was also made clear to the participants that involvement is entirely voluntary, with the option to opt out even after giving consent without any negative impact.

The sampling method was adopted for the selection of participants. The reason for adopting this method of sampling is because there are different groups involved and their inputs will help to make a comprehensive report. The groups include the community leaders, the church, the youth (age 18 – 39) who are likely to join militant groups or are already participating in the militancy and other relevant stakeholders that may be discovered in the course of this research. The choice of participants is flexible in the sense that those who are available that fall within the categories of inclusion and are willing to partake was given the privilege to participate. Their knowledge on the conflict in the community is one of the criterial requirements.

The planned proposed sample size was ten youths (age 18-39), each to be chosen from the two communities giving a total of twenty; the same number applied to church leaders, ten each from the two communities. Five individuals each will be interacted with from the two communities. Due to unforeseen circumstances – and the flexibility that was built into the proposal – the sample size amounted to 36 participants.

The research was designed to interact with not less than 20 participants, but there was room for flexibility in order to utilise any available opportunity for data collection. A total of 36 persons were interviewed, out of which eight respondents will be presented in the tabular form. These are the ones who filled both the questionnaire and signed the consent form. However, due to the flexible nature of the research, the researcher took advantage to listen with keen interest to some informal interaction within the community and also to observe events and physical phenomena that could add value to data collection. One such opportunity was the privilege to listen to the experiences as narrated by the town crier (one who passes information or makes public announcements in the streets to the people of the community) on the eve of the Nchaka festival. This shows that the Ogba community is still using the old system of communication. The town crier shared his experiences of what he knows about the conflict in the community.

Apart from the six church leaders under the umbrella of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) that was interacted with as a group, all other interviews were done on individual basis. The study was planned to involve all stakeholders in a group, but due to the fragility of the security situation at the

time of this study, the researcher had to take precaution on how to meet with people. Another constrain was due to the fact that some of the community leaders were yet to settle from the effect of the security challenges that scared them from their homes and so it became difficult to meet with them, because they were also the target of the militant or cult groups.

Since the research was also designed to be flexible in order to make use of any available opportunity, the researcher used both formal and informal interviews. The formal interview was with the church leaders; the participants were the officials of the ONELGA chapter of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) drawn from different churches. The participants were adults and educated, with knowledge of the conflict situation in Ogba community, which is evidenced in the way they responded willingly and logically. The interaction was held at Redemption Ministries, No.12 Obor Road, Omoku. The meeting was convened twice through the CAN Chairman; the first was held on Friday 24 November 2017, which was an introduction. The researcher was able to brief the participants on the aim of the research and gave the questionnaire with the information and consent form to the participants, which they completed and signed before the interaction day. The second meeting was scheduled and held on Monday 1 December 2017. The researcher interacted with the participants based on the questionnaire. The interaction was recorded on a smart phone, which also forms part of the analysis in this chapter. The meeting took two hours; light refreshments were provided at the end of the meeting, which was appreciated by the participants. Some were also given transport fare between five hundred to one thousand Naira which is equivalent to R25 – R50.

Other than these pastors, individuals were also given the questionnaire and interacted with on a personal basis. Some preferred to participate without filling in on any paper for fear of incrimination, however, they verbally shared their experiences and what they know about the conflict situation in the community. The number of people who participated without filling in or signing the concept form was 25 persons. Some of the participants showed the researcher physical effects of the attacks on them, such as bullet holes on the walls, doors and windows as part of their personal experiences.

The participant information leaflets and consent forms were given to the participants after explaining to them the aim of the research and research purpose (See Appendix 3). Though some participants pleaded anonymity and therefore, did not complete the consent form. For security reason, no name of any participant will be mentioned in this report as indicated in the ethical consent. Most of the participants preferred and requested to go home and study the questionnaire before responding to it, which was granted.

4.3. DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

The data analysis – based on the data collected through the interviews and questionnaires – was done in line with the NWU research presentation and policy with precautions concerning the reliability of data, computational checks, validation and comparison of results. The analysis will be presented in discourse except where graphs, pictures and tables will be helpful to clarify facts. These will be used accordingly.

4.3.1. Formal interviews

The researcher chose to first elaborate on the two group meetings which were conducted with the officials of the CAN. In this section, the findings of the research will be presented in tabular form to indicate what the different respondents' reactions were. A reflection on the responses will follow after the data presentation in table format. There are six tables in this section each discussing the responses of the participants to the questions asked. Since names of the participants were not used in the presentation, alphabet letters are used to represent the different respondents, eight in total (A to H). Each table addresses a specific question from the questionnaire according to the headings.

4.3.1.1 *Table 1: Personal data of respondents*

RESPONDENTS	QUESTIONS	RESPONSE
A	a. Community? b. Age? c. Religion? d. Marital status? e. Occupation?	Obrikom 56 years Christian Married Business man
B	a. Community? b. Age? c. Religion? d. Marital status? e. Occupation?	Obrikom 49 years Christian Married Civil servant
C	a. Community? b. Age? c. Religion? d. Marital status? e. Occupation?	Omoku 49 years Christian Married Resident Pastor
D	a. Community? b. Age? c. Religion? d. Marital status? e. Occupation?	Omoku Adult Christian Married Pastor
E	a. Community? b. Age?	Erema – Omoku 43 years

	c. Religion? d. Marital status? e. Occupation?	Christian Married Civil servant/Evangelist
F	a. Community? b. Age? c. Religion? d. Marital status? e. Occupation?	Onhaukwu – Omoku 54 years Christian Married Preaching
G	a. Community? b. Age? c. Religion? d. Marital status? e. Occupation?	Omoku 48 years Christian Married Working
H	a. Community? b. Age? c. Religion? d. Marital status? e. Occupation?	Obrikom 61 years Christian Married Lecturer

Table 1 above shows the personal data of the respondents. The table indicates that the respondents comprises of three respondents from Obrikom who signed the concept form and five respondents from Omoku who also signed the concept form, bringing the total of participants who signed the form to eight.

Almost everyone interacted with, testified to be a Christian. This affirms the fact that the majority of inmates of the Niger Delta area, especially in Rivers State, are Christians. In the Ogba Community, although there are those who still practice African Traditional Religion, the majority of the people claim to be Christian.

The age bracket of those who participated in the study ranges from forty-three (43) to sixty-one (61) years of age as indicated in this table. Though there is no identification of gender it is to be noted that both men and women of adult age were interacted with.

4.3.1.2. Table 2: Understanding the conflict

RESPONDENTS	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
A	a. Is there any trace of militancy in this community? And when did it start? b. Why do you think it started? c. What are the security challenges in this community?	Yes. It started in the early 1980 It started because of oil exploration The challenge in the community is killing as a result of cult group fighting for superiority

	<p>d. What according to your view are the root causes of conflict in Ogba Community?</p> <p>e. When did the conflict of the Niger Delta start?</p> <p>f. What has been the steps taken to address the conflict in this community?</p> <p>g. Is your community part of the negotiations to resolve Niger Delta conflict?</p> <p>h. Before the amnesty program, what has been your involvement in any form of agitation?</p>	<p>The major cause is the oil exploration, youths, cult fighting for who gets what.</p> <p>Since the beginning of oil exploration in 1956</p> <p>Negotiation</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>There have been demands to the oil company and government for development.</p>
B	<p>a. Is there any trace of militancy in this community? And when did it start?</p> <p>b. Why do you think it started?</p> <p>c. What are the security challenges in this community?</p> <p>d. What, according to your view, are the root causes of conflict in Ogba Community</p> <p>e. When did the conflict of the Niger Delta start?</p> <p>f. What has been the steps taken to address the conflict in this community?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>It started with youths and cult agitation</p> <p>Youths want to be in control of resources</p> <p>Youth restiveness and cult rivalry</p> <p>Resource control, company's divide and rule system.</p> <p>Some 20 years ago</p> <p>Enlightenment campaign</p>

	<p>g. Is your community part of the negotiations to resolve Niger Delta conflict?</p> <p>h. Before the amnesty program what has been your involvement in any form of agitation?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Peaceful demonstration to companies.</p>
C	<p>a. Is there any trace of militancy in this community? And when did it start?</p> <p>b. Why do you think it started?</p> <p>c. What are the security challenges in this community?</p> <p>d. What, according to your view, are the root causes of conflict in Ogba Community?</p> <p>e. When did the conflict of the Niger Delta start?</p> <p>f. What has been the steps taken to address the conflict in this community?</p> <p>g. Is your community part of the negotiations to resolve Niger Delta conflict?</p> <p>h. Before the amnesty program what has been your involvement in any form of agitation?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Because of the neglect of Niger Delta region of the nation</p> <p>Kidnapping, cultism, secret killing</p> <p>Neglect by the government of Nigeria and by multi-national oil companies, greed by politicians</p> <p>-</p> <p>No steps so far</p> <p>No</p> <p>Prayer was organised, some executives have been meeting the militants in the bush for reconciliation of different cult factions</p>
D	<p>a. Is there any trace of militancy in this community? And when did it start?</p>	<p>No</p>

	<p>b. Why do you think it started?</p> <p>c. What are the security challenges in this community?</p> <p>d. What, according to your view, are the root causes of conflict in Ogba Community?</p> <p>e. When did the conflict of the Niger Delta start?</p> <p>f. What has been the steps taken to address the conflict in this community?</p> <p>g. Is your community part of the negotiation to resolve Niger Delta conflict?</p> <p>h. Before the amnesty program what has been your involvement in any form of agitation?</p>	<p>Kidnapping and killing of persons</p> <p>Power tussle among cultists, politicians and unfair sharing</p> <p>Visited cult camps and negotiated for peace</p>
E	<p>a. Is there any trace of militancy in this community? And when did it start?</p> <p>b. Why do you think it started?</p> <p>c. What are the security challenges in this community?</p> <p>d. What, according to your view, are the root causes of conflict in Ogba Community?</p> <p>e. When did the conflict of the Niger Delta started?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>The year 2014</p> <p>People felt marginalised</p> <p>Killing, kidnapping, raping, this led to people deserting the community.</p> <p>Political rivalry, power tussle.</p>

	<p>f. What has been the steps taken to address the conflict in this community?</p> <p>g. Is your community part of the negotiations to resolve Niger Delta conflict?</p> <p>h. Before the amnesty program what has been your involvement in any form of agitation?</p>	<p>Prayer/peace making</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>None</p>
F	<p>a. Is there any trace of militancy in this community? And when did it start?</p> <p>b. Why do you think it started?</p> <p>c. What are the security challenges in this community?</p> <p>d. What, according to your view, are the root causes of conflict in Ogba Community?</p> <p>e. When did the conflict of the Niger Delta started?</p> <p>f. What has been the steps taken to address the conflict in this community?</p> <p>g. Is your community part of the negotiations to resolve Niger Delta conflict?</p> <p>h. Before the amnesty program what has been</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Rape, kidnapping and killing</p> <p>Traditional rulers selling scholarship/job allocations.</p> <p>Amnesty programme.</p>

	your involvement in any form of agitation?	
G	<p>a. Is there any trace of militancy in this community? And when did it start?</p> <p>b. Why do you think it started?</p> <p>c. What are the security challenges in this community?</p> <p>d. What, according to your view, are the root causes of conflict in Ogba Community?</p> <p>e. When did the conflict of the Niger Delta started?</p> <p>f. What has been the steps taken to address the conflict in this community?</p> <p>g. Is your community part of the negotiations to resolve Niger Delta conflict?</p> <p>h. Before the amnesty program what has been your involvement in any form of agitation?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>2011</p> <p>Due to clash of interests in cult rivalry</p> <p>The root cause of conflict is due to political interest.</p> <p>No idea</p> <p>Bringing in of security team</p> <p>None.</p>
H	<p>a. Is there any trace of militancy in this community? And when did it start?</p> <p>b. Why do you think it started?</p> <p>c. What are the security challenges in this community?</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>It started from 2008 as a secret cult called KGB then headed by Lucky Ahiakwo (late).</p> <p>It was formed as a pressure group then.</p> <p>There was total breakdown of law and order as their slogan was “no law ooo”</p>

	d. What, according to your view, are the root causes of conflict in Ogba Community?	Nothing other than cultism.
	e. When did the conflict of the Niger Delta started?	About 1999.
	f. What has been the steps taken to address the conflict in this community?	Traditional oath taking
	g. Is your community part of the negotiations to resolve Niger Delta conflict?	No
	h. Before the amnesty program what has been your involvement in any form of agitation?	Apart from blocking NAOC Ltd to press down our demands for the development of the community, none

4.3.1.2. *Understanding the conflict:* Table 2 deals with responses to questions on understanding the conflict situation in Ogba community. Seven, out of eight respondents in table 2 affirmed that there is militancy in Ogba community, only respondent D responded negatively to the question whether there is any trace of militancy. Perhaps, s/he did not understand the question when s/he was completing the questionnaire, because during the interaction no one objected to the fact that there is militancy in the community; secondly, the same respondent D mentioned kidnaping and killing as the security challenges. The exact time of its existence could not be ascertained due to variation in opinion as to when it started. However, in responding to why the militancy started in question (2 b), respondent C considered it to have started because of the neglect of the region by Government and Oil Companies and greed by politicians. However, in the opinion of respondent E the people felt marginalised by the Federal Government. According to respondent G, the agitation developed into clashes of interest between cult rivals with a quest for recognition and as a means of livelihood. Again respondent H pointed out that it started in 2008 as a secret cult which started as a pressure group. The group later split into factions and started engaging themselves in conflict as they struggled for superiority and resource control as respondents A and B asserted in their response to the question of security challenges in the community (2 c). Respondent E and H pointed out that there was a total breakdown of law and order which led to people deserting their community for safety.

In responding to the question on the causes of conflict in Ogba community (2 d), respondent A, listed oil exploration, youth restiveness and cult rivalry. While respondent B accused the Oil Company of encouraging the insincerity of the leader by what he called divide and rule system. However, respondent D has a different opinion as the conflict in Ogba Community was attributed to a power tussle among cultists, politicians and unfair sharing. In responding to the same question on the root causes of conflict in Ogba community, respondent F accused the traditional rulers of selling scholarship and job opportunities meant for the citizens. Respondent G on the other hand attached the root causes of conflict to political interest, but responded G did not see anything responsible for the conflict rather than cultism.

As regards to the steps taken to address the conflict in Ogba community, in response to question (2 f) respondent A mentioned negotiation without further explanation, however, denied the involvement of Ogba community in the negotiations of the Niger Delta conflict. In response to the same question respondent B mentioned an enlightenment campaign as a step taken to address the conflict, but affirmed that Ogba community is part of the negotiation team of the Niger Delta conflict. Respondent C has a different view as to the steps taken stating that no step has being taken so far and also denied the community involvement in the negotiations in the Niger Delta conflict. Prayer and peace-making was identified by respondent E and affirmed community participation in the negotiations to resolve the Niger Delta conflict. Respondent F mentioned the amnesty programme as the step but was silent as to whether the community was part of negotiations to resolve the Nigeria Delta conflict; while respondent G mentioned the bringing in of security teams and also disagreed and responded 'No' to community involvement in the negotiations to resolve the Niger Delta conflict. To this point it was discovered however during the interaction that because the militants were usually dressed like Federal soldiers, it became difficult to distinguish between the federal troops and militant groups, since both used the same military uniforms and the same armour. It was also gathered that one of the communities asked the solders to leave their community because they were aiding and abetting the militants in their criminal activities which boosted the morale of the militant groups. Respondent H mentioned traditional oath taking as part of the steps taken to address the conflict in the community and also denied the community involvement in the negotiations to resolve the Niger Delta conflict.

Before the amnesty programme, the community involvement in any form of agitation in question (2 h) according to respondent A, was a demand to the Oil Company and government for development in the community. Respondent B talked about peaceful demonstration at the oil companies. While H mentioned blocking the major Oil Company within the community.

In summary, the root causes of conflict in Ogba community were traced to the activities of traditional rulers and politicians who did not adequately represent the entire community and the younger generation

in particular; some of their activities as indicated above include selling opportunities that could benefit the youth, such as job vacancies and scholarships from the multinational oil company; marginalisation of the less privileged within the community by the elites; political rivalry; power tussles; resource control, etcetera. Some identified youth restiveness and cult rivalry to be the source of security challenges faced by the community.

4.3.1.3. Table 3: Evaluating the amnesty programme

RESPONDENTS	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
A	<p>a. What do you understand by the amnesty program?</p> <p>b. Do you enjoy any benefit from the amnesty program?</p> <p>c. Would you like the amnesty program to continue? Give reason(s)</p> <p>d. Do you think the amnesty program can help to solve the problem of Ogba community? Give reason(s)</p> <p>e. Have you gained anything from the amnesty program?</p>	<p>Settlement to be free</p> <p>No.</p> <p>There is no benefit to the community nor to the people.</p> <p>No, no benefit, government should collaborate with companies and develop the Ogba community.</p> <p>Nothing, neither has the community</p>
B	<p>a. What do you understand by amnesty program?</p> <p>b. Do you enjoy any benefit from the amnesty program?</p> <p>c. Would you like the amnesty program to continue? Give reason(s)</p> <p>d. Do you think the amnesty program can help to solve the problem of Ogba</p>	<p>Pardon.</p> <p>None yet</p> <p>Yes. If it is fully implemented it turns criminals around.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>It will create sense of belonging; empower the youths; and skills will be acquired.</p>

	<p>community? Give reason(s)</p> <p>e. Have you gained anything from the amnesty program?</p>	<p>Not yet.</p>
C	<p>a. What do you understand by the amnesty program?</p> <p>b. Do you enjoy any benefit from the amnesty program?</p> <p>c. Would you like the amnesty program to continue? Give reason(s)</p> <p>d. Do you think the amnesty program can help to solve the problems of Ogba community? Give reason(s)</p> <p>e. Have you gained anything from the amnesty program?</p>	<p>Is to surrender your arms to receive pardon</p> <p>No.</p> <p>No, because the purpose is not achieved and evil is still on increase.</p> <p>No, because it favours one cult group, politicians use it to enrich themselves.</p> <p>Nothing, because after the programme there is still killing in Ogba community.</p>
D	<p>a. What do you understand by the amnesty program?</p> <p>b. Do you enjoy any benefit from the amnesty program?</p> <p>c. Would you like the amnesty program to continue? Give reason(s)</p> <p>d. Do you think the amnesty program can help to solve the problem of Ogba community? Give reason(s)</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>No.</p> <p>Government did not fulfil the promises made.</p> <p>No.</p> <p>More groups will surface asking for amnesty.</p> <p>No.</p>

	e. Have you gained anything from the amnesty program?	
E	<p>a. What do you understand by the amnesty program?</p> <p>b. Do you enjoy any benefit from the amnesty program?</p> <p>c. Would you like the amnesty program to continue? Give reason(s)</p> <p>d. Do you think the amnesty program can help to solve the problem of Ogba community? Give reason(s)</p> <p>e. Have you gained anything from the amnesty program?</p>	<p>Pardon.</p> <p>No.</p> <p>No</p> <p>It causes more harm than good.</p> <p>No.</p> <p>Those supposed to enjoy it are no more.</p> <p>No.</p>
F	<p>a. What do you understand by the amnesty program?</p> <p>b. Do you enjoy any benefit from the amnesty program?</p> <p>c. Would you like the amnesty program to continue? Give reason(s)</p> <p>d. Do you think the amnesty program can help to solve the problem of Ogba community? Give reason(s)</p> <p>e. Have you gained anything from the amnesty program?</p>	<p>Yes. Some militants submitted their weapons</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>If jobs will be provided for the youths.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>To employ the jobless youths.</p> <p>No.</p>
G	a. What do you understand by amnesty program?	Negotiation for a “cease fire.”

	<p>b. Do you enjoy any benefit from the amnesty program?</p> <p>c. Would you like the amnesty program to continue? Give reason(s)</p> <p>d. Do you think the amnesty program can help to solve the problems of Ogba community? Give reason(s)</p> <p>e. Have you gained anything from the amnesty program?</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>No, because it creates room for more youths to engage in militancy</p> <p>No.</p> <p>No.</p>
H	<p>a. What do you understand by the amnesty program?</p> <p>b. Do you enjoy any benefit from the amnesty program?</p> <p>c. Would you like the amnesty program to continue? Give reason(s)</p> <p>d. Do you think the amnesty program can help to solve the problems of Ogba community? Give reason(s)</p> <p>e. Have you gained anything from the amnesty program?</p>	<p>Pardon.</p> <p>No.</p> <p>Yes, so that other who are yet to benefit will do so in the interest of peace</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>No.</p>

4.3.1.3. The above Table *evaluates the amnesty program*: While most respondents acknowledged that they did not benefit from the amnesty programme, some view it as a good strategy for peace because some militant groups surrendered their weapons and thereby wish that the amnesty programme should continue on the condition that it should not be politicised as it was alleged so that others who are yet to benefit may have an opportunity to do so and that job opportunities should be provided for the youths

to reduce unemployment. Most of the respondents are of the opinion that the programme should be discontinued, because they consider it to have created room for more youths to engage in militancy, hence they did not see the amnesty programme solving the conflict situation in the community; instead it created room for more militant groups and some groups are more favoured than others which also leads to conflict of supremacy. One group is trying to override the other, because it seems the strongest militant group will be the one the government and the multinationals will recognise, therefore, instead of sincerely laying down their arms, they see amnesty as a means of getting the “national cake”. Other flaws of the amnesty programme - as testified by the respondents - are that those with the responsibility of implementing the amnesty programme misuse the privilege to enrich themselves and also empower the militant boys in order to use them to gain political power. This could inform the reason why others see the amnesty programme in the community as an act of hypocrisy, noting that the government did not fulfil its promises made. Hence the respondents see amnesty as a government strategy to appease the ex-militant groups to stop destruction of oil installations. However, the amnesty does not contribute to the general wellbeing of the community. Unfortunately, some youths joined the militant groups in order to enjoy the financial grant from the amnesty; the bottom line to this scenario is that the amnesty increases the number of militant groups instead of reducing them.

4.3.1.4. Table 4: Evaluation of conflict in Ogba community

RESPONDENTS	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
A	<p>a. What is the rate of conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>b. What is the nature of conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. What are the major causes of conflict in this community?</p> <p>d. How do you think this problem can be resolved?</p>	<p>Once in a while.</p> <p>Fighting, killing kidnapping.</p> <p>Youth, cult group fighting for supremacy</p> <p>The government and oil companies should negotiate well with the host community.</p>
B	<p>a. What is the rate of conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>b. What is the nature of conflict in your community?</p>	<p>Once in a while.</p> <p>So violent (not a child’s play).</p>

	<p>c. What are the major causes of conflict in this community</p> <p>d. How do you think this problem can be resolved?</p>	<p>Resource control.</p> <p>Proper enlightenment campaign.</p>
C	<p>a. What is the rate of conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>b. What is the nature of conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. What are the major causes of conflict in this community</p> <p>d. How do you think this problem can be resolved?</p>	<p>Always.</p> <p>Conflict between the oil company and community, between cult group, between politicians and traditional rulers, and youths</p> <p>Cultist activities are the major cause.</p> <p>By empowering and employing our young ones, not favouring one particle cult group, reaching them with the gospel.</p>
D	<p>a. What is the rate of conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>b. What is the nature of conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. What are the major causes of conflict in this community</p> <p>d. How do you think this problem can be resolved?</p>	<p>Always.</p> <p>Kidnapping and killing of persons.</p> <p>Power tussle among cultists, politicians and unfair sharing mineral resources.</p> <p>Equal sharing of resource.</p>
E	<p>a. What is the rate of conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>b. What is the nature of conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. What are the major causes of conflict in this community</p>	<p>Once in a while.</p> <p>It was disastrous.</p> <p>Lack of fair sharing and neglect of the youths.</p>

	d. How do you think this problem can be resolved?	Building or setting industries for job creation.
F	<p>a. What is the rate of conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>b. What is the nature of conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. What are the major causes of conflict in this community</p> <p>d. How do you think this problem can be resolved?</p>	<p>Always.</p> <p>Sincerity of leaders.</p>
G	<p>a. What is the rate of conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>b. What is the nature of conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. What are the major causes of conflict in this community</p> <p>d. How do you think this problem can be resolved?</p>	<p>Always.</p> <p>Political interest.</p> <p>Prayer and sensitisation of youth ideology.</p>
H	<p>a. What is the rate of conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>b. What is the nature of conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. What are the major causes of conflict in this community</p> <p>d. How do you think this problem can be resolved?</p>	<p>Once in a while</p> <p>Cult related.</p> <p>Nothing other than cultism.</p> <p>By permanently abolishing cultism.</p>

4.3.1.4. Table 4 is the *Evaluation of conflict in Ogba community*: As regards to the frequency of the conflict in Ogba community respondents A, B, and H agreed that it occurred once in a while. On the other hand, respondents C, D, F, and G are of the opinion that there is always conflict in the community. As regards the nature of the conflict in the community, the respondents were looking at the intensity of the conflict, except respondent G who clearly stated that it has a political interest. In respondent C's opinion, it has both economic and political connotations noting that it is a conflict between the oil companies and the community, between cult groups, between politicians, traditional rulers and the youths.

In their response to how the problem can be resolved, respondent A is of the opinion that government and the oil company should negotiate with the host community; while respondent B, suggests a proper enlightenment campaign. According to respondent C, the conflict can be resolved through empowerment and employment to the youth and to stop favouring cult groups over the citizens, s/he further suggests reaching the militant groups with the gospel; but respondent D suggests equal sharing of resources. Respondent E asserts that setting up industries for job creation will help to resolve the conflict; while respondent H suggests permanently abolishing of cultism from the community.

In summary, to resolve the conflict in Ogba community, as responded by the participants during interaction, there was an emphasis on the sincerity in leadership and suggested that the following issues should be addressed, which include: youth unemployment, lack of fair sharing, neglect of the youths in terms of benefits and allocations from either government or multinational oil companies. The respondents suggested the establishment of industries other than oil companies will help to create job opportunities for the youth; with prayer and proper sensitisation of the youth's ideology in order to avoid the effect of transgenerational conflict which means that the youth who are the leaders of the next generation should be a target for moral and economic empowerment.

4.3.1.5. Table 5: *The role of community leaders/government in the conflict situation*

RESPONDENTS	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
A	<p>a. In what ways have the community leaders helped to solve the conflict in this community?</p> <p>b. In what way has the government helped in solving the conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. In what way did the community leaders</p>	<p>The community leader has called the company for negotiation without conclusion.</p> <p>They always provide security but it is not enough.</p> <p>The leader most times will negotiate and not disseminate the information about the outcome of</p>

	<p>contribute to the conflict in your community?</p> <p>d. In what way did the government contribute to the conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>e. What are the criminal activities in your community?</p> <p>f. What do you think is the reason behind these criminal acts?</p> <p>g. How do you see government's role in granting amnesty to ex-militants?</p> <p>h. Did the amnesty programme reduce or increase the number of militant groups? Give reasons for your answer.</p> <p>i. How has it (amnesty) affected your community?</p> <p>j. Is there any community development provided by the Oil Company or government in this community? Yes/No. if yes, mention them. And state how it has contributed to peace in the community.</p> <p>k. Do you think community development projects can help to solve the conflict situation in Ogba community? Yes/No.</p> <p>l. If yes, what kind of project do you think is needed? If 'No' what do you think is an</p>	<p>their meeting. This also causes trouble between them and the youths.</p> <p>Government has not developed the area. They have not provided an enabling environment for investors to come.</p> <p>Fighting, killing, kidnapping, raping of women.</p> <p>Are cult groups fighting for supremacy, who gets what?</p> <p>Is not enough, they should develop the community and the people.</p> <p>The more they grant a group the more others emerge.</p> <p>Government did not include my community.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Road, light, water.</p> <p>This project has reduced a little, they should provide human capital projects to reduce unemployment</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Human capital project should be provided.</p>
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	alternative solution to the conflict situation?	
B	<p>a. In what way has the community leaders helped to solve the conflict in this community?</p> <p>b. In what way has the government helped in solving the conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. In what way did the community leaders contribute to the conflict in your community?</p> <p>d. In what way did the government contribute to the conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>e. What are the criminal activities in your community?</p> <p>f. What do you think is the reason behind these criminal acts?</p> <p>g. How do you see government's role in granting amnesty to ex-militants?</p> <p>h. Did the amnesty programme reduce or increase the number of militant groups? Give reason for your answer.</p> <p>i. How has it (amnesty) affected your community?</p> <p>j. Is there any community development provided by the Oil Company or government in this community? Yes/No. if yes, mention them. And</p>	<p>We have led delegations to oil companies and government.</p> <p>Nothing has come from government.</p> <p>When a leader cannot stand out to condemn evil.</p> <p>Negligence and paying lip service.</p> <p>Cultism, pipe vandalism, bunkering.</p> <p>Resource control.</p> <p>Not committed (political).</p> <p>It increases</p> <p>Nothing on ground.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Health centre, road, school renovation.</p>

	<p>state how has it contributed to peace in the community?</p> <p>k. Do you think a community development project can help to solve the conflict situation in Ogba community? Yes/No.</p> <p>l. If yes, what kind of project do you think is needed? If 'No' what do you think is an alternative solution to the conflict situation?</p>	<p>At least a sense of belonging that we are a host community.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Human capital development projects.</p>
C	<p>a. In what way has the community leaders helped to solve the conflict in this community?</p> <p>b. In what way has the government helped in solving the conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. In what way did the community leaders contribute to the conflict in your community?</p> <p>d. In what way did the government contribute to the conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>e. What are the criminal activities in your community?</p> <p>f. What do you think is the reason behind these criminal acts?</p> <p>g. How do you see government's role in granting amnesty to ex-militants?</p>	<p>Sometimes calling for reconciliation meetings, organising prayers.</p> <p>No genuine help from government, calling for reconciliation and amnesty.</p> <p>By not sharing the proceeds from the oil company equally and by eating alone.</p> <p>By not empowering and employing our youths and recognising only one group.</p> <p>Kidnaping, cultism, killing.</p> <p>Neglect by government, greed by politicians, neglect by oil company.</p> <p>Amnesty is government's contribution to ex-militants to stop destruction of oil pipeline.</p>

	<p>h. Did the amnesty programme reduce or increase the number of militant groups? Give reasons for your answer.</p> <p>i. How has it (amnesty) affected your community?</p> <p>j. Is there any community development provided by the Oil Company or government in this community? Yes/No. if yes, mention them. And state how it has contributed to peace in the community.</p> <p>k. Do you think community development project can help to solve the conflict situation in Ogba community? Yes/No.</p> <p>l. If yes, what kind of project do you think is needed? If 'No' what do you think is an alternative solution to the conflict situation?</p>	<p>Yes. Because some Niger Delta youth join militant groups so that government can grant them amnesty</p> <p>Amnesty has not reduced criminal activity.</p> <p>Yes. Few roads by oil company.</p> <p>No.</p> <p>Empowerment and employment of our youth to engage them.</p>
D	<p>a. In what way has the community leaders helped to solve the conflict in this community?</p> <p>b. In what way has the government helped in solving the conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. In what way did the community leaders contribute to the conflict in your community?</p> <p>d. In what way did the government contribute</p>	<p>Omoku youth and LGA Chairman inaugurated OSPAC.</p> <p>Same as above.</p> <p>Same as above.</p> <p>Same as above.</p>

	<p>to the conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>e. What are the criminal activities in your community?</p> <p>f. What do you think is the reason behind these criminal acts?</p> <p>g. How do you see government's role in granting amnesty to ex-militants?</p> <p>h. Did the amnesty programme reduce or increase the number of militant groups? Give reason for your answer.</p> <p>i. How has it (amnesty) affected your community?</p> <p>j. Is there any community development provided by the Oil Company or government in this community? Yes/No. if yes, mention them. And state how it has contributed to peace in the community.</p> <p>k. Do you think a community development project can help to solve the conflict situation in Ogba community? Yes/No.</p> <p>i. If yes, what kind of project do you think is needed? If 'No' what do you think is an alternative solution to the conflict situation?</p>	<p>Kidnaping, raping of women, stealing and murder.</p> <p>A means of survival due to unfair sharing.</p> <p>They see it as a means of eating the national cake.</p> <p>It increases</p> <p>Increased crime.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Skills acquisition, employment, scholarship.</p> <p>Giving some persons a means of livelihood.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Employment and scholarship, skills, building of industries.</p>
E	a. In what way has the community leaders helped to solve the	Through setting up a community security (OSPAC).

	<p>conflict in this community?</p> <p>b. In what way has the government helped in solving the conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. In what way did the community leaders contribute to the conflict in your community?</p> <p>d. In what way did the government contribute to the conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>e. What are the criminal activities in your community?</p> <p>f. What do you think is the reason behind these criminal acts?</p> <p>g. How do you see government's role in granting amnesty to ex-militants?</p> <p>h. Did the amnesty programme reduce or increase the number of militant groups? Give reason for your answer.</p> <p>i. How has it (amnesty) affected your community?</p> <p>j. Is there any community development provided by the Oil Company or government in this community? Yes/No. if yes, mention them. And state how it has contributed to peace in the community.</p> <p>k. Do you think a community development project can help to solve</p>	<p>Also in collaboration with the community.</p> <p>By aiding and abating the militants.</p> <p>By sponsoring the militant leaders to attack opposing groups.</p> <p>Kidnaping, killing and beheading, raping, etc.</p> <p>Power tussle, quest to increase wealth.</p> <p>It was an act of hypocrisy,</p> <p>It increases the number, because many were recruited into militant groups after the amnesty.</p> <p>Negatively.</p> <p>Only Elf tried; no visible government project.</p> <p>In our communities there is a relative calmness now.</p> <p>Yes.</p>
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	<p>the conflict situation in Ogba community? Yes/No.</p> <p>1. If yes, what kind of project do you think is needed? If 'No' what do you think is an alternative solution to the conflict situation?</p>	<p>Factories and industries from government and individuals.</p>
F	<p>a. In what way has the community leaders helped to solve the conflict in this community?</p> <p>b. In what way has the government helped in solving the conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. In what way did the community leaders contribute to the conflict in your community?</p> <p>d. In what way did the government contributed to the conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>e. What are the criminal activities in your community?</p> <p>f. What do you think is the reason behind these criminal acts?</p> <p>g. How do you see government's role in granting amnesty to ex-militants?</p> <p>h. Did the amnesty programme reduce or increase the number of militant groups? Give reason for your answer.</p> <p>i. How has it (amnesty) affected your community?</p>	<p>Amnesty programme</p> <p>Amnesty programme.</p> <p>Robbery, kidnaping and killing.</p> <p>Unemployment.</p> <p>No visible action.</p> <p>Yes. Reduced gunshots.</p>

	<p>j. Is there any community development provided by the Oil Company or government in this community? Yes/No. if yes, mention them. And state how it has contributed to peace in the community.</p> <p>k. Do you think a community development project can help to solve the conflict situation in Ogba community? Yes/No.</p> <p>l. If yes, what kind of project do you think is needed? If 'No' what do you think is an alternative solution to the conflict situation?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Electricity and roads.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Provision of jobs.</p>
G	<p>a. In what way has the community leaders helped to solve the conflict in this community?</p> <p>b. In what way has the government helped in solving the conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. In what way did the community leaders contribute to the conflict in your community?</p> <p>d. In what way did the government contribute to the conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>e. What are the criminal activities in your community?</p> <p>f. What do you think is the reason behind these criminal acts?</p>	<p>Bringing in of security team.</p> <p>Bringing in of security team.</p> <p>Conniving with the militant groups.</p> <p>Using the youths as political thugs.</p> <p>Stealing, kidnaping.</p> <p>Personal interest among youth and their groups</p>

	<p>g. How do you see government's role in granting amnesty to ex-militants?</p> <p>h. Did the amnesty programme reduce or increase the number of militant groups? Give reason for your answer.</p> <p>i. How has it (amnesty) affected your community?</p> <p>j. Is there any community development provided by the Oil Company or government in this community? Yes/No. if yes, mention them. And state how it has contributed to peace in the community.</p> <p>k. Do you think a community development project can help to solve the conflict situation in Ogba community? Yes/No.</p> <p>l. If yes, what kind of project do you think is needed? If 'No' what do you think is an alternative solution to the conflict situation?</p>	<p>It's uncalled for.</p> <p>Increase. Because one group was more funded than the others.</p> <p>More youths engaging in criminal activities.</p> <p>No.</p> <p>Entrepreneurship training, scholarship to less privileged.</p>
H	<p>a. In what way has the community leaders helped to solve the conflict in this community?</p> <p>b. In what way has the government help in solving the conflict in your community?</p> <p>c. In what way did the community leaders</p>	<p>Some time ago traditional oath taking was used</p> <p>It was alleged that some of the leaders are in cults.</p>

	<p>contribute to the conflict in your community?</p> <p>d. In what way did the government contribute to the conflict in Ogba community?</p> <p>e. What are the criminal activities in your community?</p> <p>f. What do you think is the reason behind these criminal acts?</p> <p>g. How do you see government's role in granting amnesty to ex-militants?</p> <p>h. Did the amnesty programme reduce or increase the number of militant groups? Give reason for your answer.</p> <p>i. How has it (amnesty) affected your community?</p> <p>j. Is there any community development provided by the Oil Company or government in this community? Yes/No. if yes, mention them. And state how it has contributed to peace in the community.</p> <p>k. Do you think a community development project can help to solve the conflict situation in Ogba community? Yes/No.</p>	<p>By taking sides.</p> <p>Killing, maiming, raping, armed robbery, kidnapping, etc.</p> <p>Cultism and no gainful employment.</p> <p>Because other peaceful youth look at that as being the way to achieve recognition.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Road network, school building, clinic, lights etc.</p> <p>It did not contribute to peace because the hoodlums did not recognise that. Hence the vandalism of some.</p> <p>Yes.</p>
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	1. If yes, what kind of project do you think is needed? If 'No' what do you think is an alternative solution to the conflict situation?	Industries.
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4.3.1.5. *The role of community leaders/government in the conflict situation:* In responding to the role of the community leaders in the conflict situation, respondent A noted that there was a call to the oil companies by the community leaders for negotiation without any conclusions. The same respondent also accused the leaders of not disseminating the information regarding the outcome of their meetings to the public, which also creates tension between the leaders and the youth. On the part of the government, it was mentioned that they provide security which is not enough to quell the conflict situation. Adding that government's role in granting amnesty to ex-militant is not enough, and that the government should develop the community and the people. Amnesty leads to the proliferation of militancy in the land. More so, that federal government did not include Ogba community in the amnesty programme. The respondent however, agreed that there is community development provided in the Ogba community which include road networks, lights and water. It was further stated that the provision of the above projects has little impact on the conflict situation since; according to the respondent it does not include human capital projects to reduce unemployment.

Respondent B also confirms leading a delegate to the oil companies and government on behalf of the community. It was also stated that community leaders contributed to the conflict in the community by not taking a stand to condemn the evil. On the part of the government, it was stated that nothing has come out to be of benefit to the community rather than paying lip service to the community. The government is not committed to the amnesty programme, instead the programme was politicised. Therefore, the amnesty programme increases the conflict situation in Ogba community. The respondent also agreed that a health care centre, roads, and school renovations were provided, which created a sense of belonging as a host community. The respondent also mentioned that human capital development should be provided.

Respondent C stated that the community leaders sometimes call for reconciliatory meetings and organise prayers. This respondent also accused the leaders of contributing to the conflict by not sharing the allocations from oil companies equally and sometimes not giving at all. On the part of the government, the respondent noted that there is no genuine help to solve the conflict in the community from the government and by not empowering nor employing the youth, they recognised and favoured one group over the others. The criminal activities attributed to the neglect of the community by government and oil companies and also the greediness of the politicians in the Niger Delta region.

Therefore, according to the respondent, the amnesty was only to stop the militants from destroying the oil installation, which increased instead of eliminating militancy, because some youths decided to join militant groups so that they could benefit from the amnesty. The respondent however, affirmed that a few roads were provided by the oil company. Also stressed on the empowerment and employment of youth.

According to respondent D, the community leaders through the youth and the local government chairman formed an internal security outfit known as OSPAC. Giving reason for the criminal activities in the community stated that the youth have seen it as the only means of survival due to unfair sharing. According to the respondent, the amnesty is taken as a means of eating the “national cake”, meaning that amnesty did not reduce the conflict situation. The respondent also agreed that community development projects such as a skills acquisition centre, building of industries, and granting scholarships can help to solve the conflict situation in Ogba community.

Respondent E also mentioned the setting up of an internal security outfit (OSPAC) as part of the community leaders’ efforts to solve the conflict in Ogba community. Respondent E also asserts that the government collaborated with the community leaders to defraud the general populace. It was further noted that the same community leaders connive with the militant groups by aiding and abetting to achieve their selfish interests, while those in government use the militant groups as political thugs. E responded further that the reason behind criminal acts in the community is due to the power tussle and quest to increase wealth. The amnesty was also seen as an act of hypocrisy on both sides (the government and the militants); stating that the amnesty increased the militancy, because many were recruited into militant groups after the amnesty. The respondent stated that only the oil companies tried in terms of community development and not the government, noting that there is relative peace as at the time of this research. The respondent also acknowledges that community development such as the establishment of industries can help to solve the conflict situation in Ogba community.

According to respondent F, the amnesty programme which serves as a means of resolving the conflict by government also serves as a means of aggravating the conflict. The criminal activities were attributed to unemployment. The respondent mentioned electricity and the building of roads as the community development projects provided in the community, but also insists that jobs should be provided.

Respondent G mentioned the security team as the contribution of the community leaders and the government; but also accused the community leaders of conniving with the militant groups and the government, using the youths as political thugs. The respondent stated that the reason behind criminal acts in the community is the personal interest among youths. It was stated that the government amnesty is uncalled for because it increases the number of militant groups, because one group was funded more

than the other. The respondent did not agree that there is any community development, but accepted that community development project such as an entrepreneurship training centre and scholarships to the less privileged can help to solve the conflict situation in Ogba community.

Respondent H mentioned that in the past traditional oath taking was introduced by the community leaders in order to solve the conflict in the community. It was also stated that it was alleged that some of the community leaders are in cult groups. The government contributed to the conflict by taking sides. The respondent attributes the criminal activities in the community to cultism and a lack of gainful employment. Road networks, schools, a clinic and electricity were also mention as community development provided in the community, but also mentioned the need for the establishment of industries.

In summary, some of the respondents acknowledge that there are electricity and road networks, also that some of the oil companies in collaboration with government have introduced a skills acquisition/empowerment scheme, employment, scholarships, a health care centre and renovation of schools, which also give a sense of belonging as a host community. However, they also stated that these projects were not properly implemented to meet the needs of the general populace and therefore identified the need for human capital projects which will be of benefit to all. The elites were also accused to be the contractors who in most cases will not execute the contracts awarded to them, to benefit the whole community, but because they are in collaboration with other relevant authorities no one dares to challenge them. It was also alleged that some of the elites influence government to take sides in perverting justice and encouraging marginalisation of the youths and less privileged ones. More so that the amnesty programme as stated above, only benefits the violent group. This necessitates the fact that some opine that the amnesty instead of solving the conflict situation increases it, because other peaceful youths see violence as the only way to gain recognition.

4.3.1.6. Table 6: The church's response to conflict

RESPONDENTS	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
A	<p>a. Why, according to your view is the conflict unabated?</p> <p>b. Do you think the church can help to change the situation?</p> <p>c. In what way do you think the church can be involved to bring peace in the community?</p>	<p>To an extent.</p> <p>They should sue for peace, bringing all parties together.</p>

	<p>d. What has been the role of the church thus far, in bringing peace to this community?</p> <p>e. Do you think it was successful?</p> <p>f. What do you think can be done to eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba land?</p> <p>g. How do you think the church can be part of the process for peace building?</p> <p>h. Do you think preaching changes the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence?</p> <p>i. Do you think the church can involve itself in community development in order to curtail youth restiveness in the community? Yes/No. if 'Yes', what kind of project will be appropriate? If 'No', what do think are alternative steps the church can take in order to manage the conflict situation in the community?</p>	<p>Preaching and winning some souls for Christ.</p> <p>Gradually it will; they should try more.</p> <p>Government should develop the area, they should provide human capital.</p> <p>They should keep on preaching to win more souls.</p> <p>Yes. It cannot be automatic, but gradually they will change.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>They should provide human capital projects.</p>
B	<p>a. Why, according to your view is the conflict unabated?</p> <p>b. Do you think the church can help to change the situation?</p> <p>c. In what way do you think the church can be involved to bring peace in the community?</p>	<p>Unending quest for supremacy.</p> <p>Yes. Through God's word.</p> <p>Crusade, peace talk, seminars etc.</p>

	<p>d. What has been the role of the church thus far, in bringing peace to this community?</p> <p>e. Do you think it was successful?</p> <p>f. What do you think can be done to eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba land?</p> <p>g. How do you think the church can be part of the process for peace building?</p> <p>h. Do you think preaching changes the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence?</p> <p>i. Do you think the church can be involved in community development in order to curtail youth restiveness in the community? Yes/No. if 'Yes', what kind of project can be appropriate? If 'No', what do think are alternative steps the church can take in order to manage the conflict situation in the community?</p>	<p>They have been involved in peace meetings, prayer.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Let the company/government get the people involved, and grass root development.</p> <p>Church should not distance themselves in community conflict periods.</p> <p>Preaching is a veritable tool to peace.</p> <p>Charity to the less privileged.</p> <p>In addition, churches can organise seminars; carry out skill acquisition programmes in various host communities; regular outdoor services.</p>
C	<p>a. Why according to your view is the conflict unabated?</p> <p>b. Do you think the church can help to change the situation?</p> <p>c. In what way do you think the church can be involved to bring peace in the community?</p>	<p>Because the amnesty programme seems to favour one group.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>By organising reconciliation and peace talks; call for community prayers</p>

	<p>d. What has been the role of the church thus far, in bringing peace to this community?</p> <p>e. Do you think it was successful?</p> <p>f. What do you think can be done to eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba land?</p> <p>g. How do you think the church can be part of the process for peace building?</p> <p>h. Do you think preaching changes the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence?</p> <p>i. Do you think the church can be involved in community development in order to curtail youth restiveness in the community? Yes/No. if 'Yes', what kind of project can be appropriate? If 'No', what do you think are alternative steps the church can take in order to manage the conflict situation in the community?</p>	<p>The church has to organise series of prayer, reaching various cult camps and calling for peace and reconciliation in various camp.</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Organising peace and reconciliation meetings. Things should be shared equally and reaching them with the gospel.</p> <p>Calling different groups for peace and reconciliation, reaching them with the gospel of peace.</p> <p>Yes. Preaching with some action changes people's thinking.</p> <p>Collectively organising empowerment and reaching them with the gospel.</p>
D	<p>a. Why according to your view is the conflict unabated?</p> <p>b. Do you think the church can help to change the situation?</p> <p>c. In what way do you think the church can be involved to bring peace in the community?</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Negotiation, prayers, evangelism and counselling.</p>

	<p>d. What has been the role of the church thus far, in bringing peace to this community?</p> <p>e. Do you think it was successful?</p> <p>f. What do you think can be done to eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba land?</p> <p>g. How do you think the church can be part of the process for peace building?</p> <p>h. Do you think preaching changes the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence?</p> <p>i. Do you think the church can be involved in community development in order to curtail youth restiveness in the community? Yes/No. if 'Yes', what kind of project can be appropriate? If 'No', what do think are alternative steps the church can take in order to manage the conflict in the community?</p>	<p>Negotiating and praying.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Encouraging oneness and equal sharing of resources.</p> <p>Yes. Preaching and doing the word that is preached.</p> <p>Yes, skills training and empowerment.</p>
E	<p>a. Why, according to your view is the conflict unabated?</p> <p>b. Do you think the church can help to change the situation?</p> <p>c. In what way do you think the church can be involved to bring peace in the community?</p> <p>d. What has been the role of the church thus far, in</p>	<p>The nonchalant attitude of the church at the initial stage.</p> <p>Yes, by God's grace.</p> <p>By praying and also playing a neutral role in the politics.</p>

	<p>bringing peace to this community?</p> <p>e. Do you think it was successful?</p> <p>f. What do you think can be done to eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba land?</p> <p>g. How do you think the church can be part of the process for peace building?</p> <p>h. Do you think preaching changes the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence?</p> <p>i. Do you think the church can be involved in community development in order to curtail youth restiveness in the community? Yes/No. if 'Yes', what kind of project can be appropriate? If 'No', what do think are alternative steps the church can take in order to manage the conflict situation in the community?</p>	<p>There have been attempts by a few, which is not good enough.</p> <p>Not really.</p> <p>The spirit of unity and love.</p> <p>By organising peace talks and seminars.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Skill acquisition for empowerment.</p>
F	<p>a. Why, according to your view is the conflict unabated?</p> <p>b. Do you think the church can help to change the situation?</p> <p>c. In what way do you think the church can be involved to bring peace in the community?</p> <p>d. What has been the role of the church thus far, in</p>	<p>Yes.</p> <p>Advocacy.</p>

	<p>bringing peace to this community?</p> <p>e. Do you think it was successful?</p> <p>f. What do you think can be done to eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba land?</p> <p>g. How do you think the church can be part of the process for peace building?</p> <p>h. Do you think preaching changes the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence?</p> <p>i. Do you think the church can be involved in community development in order to curtail youth restiveness in the community? Yes/No. if 'Yes', what kind of project can be appropriate? If 'No', what do you think are alternative steps the church can take in order to manage the conflict situation in the community?</p>	<p>Praying and outreach.</p> <p>Yes, but not much.</p> <p>Federal, state and oil companies attention.</p> <p>Advocacy.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Yes.</p>
G	<p>a. Why according to your view is the conflict unabated?</p> <p>b. Do you think the church can help to change the situation?</p> <p>c. In what way do you think the church can be involved to bring peace in the community?</p> <p>d. What has been the role of the church thus far, in</p>	<p>Because church leaders have not come together in unity.</p> <p>Yes.</p> <p>Preaching peace and engaging in fervent prayer.</p> <p>The church has engaged in prayer.</p>

	<p>bringing peace to this community?</p> <p>e. Do you think it was successful?</p> <p>f. What do you think can be done to eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba land?</p> <p>g. How do you think the church can be part of the process for peace building?</p> <p>h. Do you think preaching changes the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence?</p> <p>i. Do you think the church can be involved in community development in order to curtail youth restiveness in the community? Yes/No. if 'Yes', what kind of project can be appropriate? If 'No', what do think are alternative steps the church can take in order to manage the conflict in the community?</p>	<p>Partially.</p> <p>Problem of job opportunity to teeming youth.</p> <p>Preaching the gospel of peace and mercy.</p> <p>Yes, if taken from the right perspective based on the people ideology.</p> <p>Yes.</p>
H	<p>a. Why according to your view is the conflict unabated?</p> <p>b. Do you think the church can help to change the situation?</p> <p>c. In what way do you think the church can be involved to bring peace in the community?</p> <p>d. What has been the role of the church thus far, in bringing peace to this community?</p>	<p>It can be abated should government take drastic measures.</p> <p>To an extent.</p> <p>Through regular evangelism.</p> <p>Effective and regular evangelism.</p>

	<p>e. Do you think it was successful?</p> <p>f. What do you think can be done to eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba land?</p> <p>g. How do you think the church can be part of the process for peace building?</p> <p>h. Do you think preaching changes the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence?</p> <p>i. Do you think the church can be involved in community development in order to curtail youth restiveness in the community? Yes/No. if 'Yes', what kind of project can be appropriate? If 'No', what do think are alternative steps the church can take in order to manage the conflict situation in the community?</p>	<p>To some extent.</p> <p>Total eradication of cultism.</p> <p>Through personal consultation.</p> <p>Yes. To an extent.</p> <p>Industry.</p>
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4.3.1.6. *The church's response to conflict:* Table 6 is to address the question on the response of the church to the conflict situation in Ogba Community.

In responding to questions raised in this table, Respondent A, noted that the church to an extent can help to change the situation, by advocating for peace and bringing all parties together. The respondent pointed out that the church's role in bringing peace to the community thus far has been preaching and winning souls. Noting that the success of such actions is gradual while encouraging the church to do more. The suggestion given on how the church can be part of the peace building is to keep on preaching to win more souls. The respondent affirmed to the fact that preaching can change the thinking of people to sue for peace instead of violence. Furthermore, there was also a call for the church to provide human capital projects.

Respondent B, noted that the unending quest for supremacy is responsible for the unabated conflict, but maintained that the church can help to change the situation through God's word. Crusades, peace talks, and seminars were mentioned as some of the ways the church can be involved in bringing peace to the community. It was also stated that the church has been involved in peace meetings and prayer; it was also affirmed that the action was successful. The respondent stated that the church should not distance itself from the community in conflict situations. It was also affirmed that preaching can change the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence because preaching is a veritable tool to peace. Suggestions to the kinds of projects the church can be involved in, in order to curtail youth restiveness in the community are, charity to the less privileged in addition to organising seminars, carrying out skills acquisition programmes in various host communities and regular outdoor services.

Respondent C, agreed that the church can help to change the conflict situation by organising reconciliatory and peace talks and calling for community prayers. The respondent stated that the church thus far have organised series of prayer, reaching various cult camps and calling for peace and reconciliation in various camps in order to bring peace to the community. In responding to what can be done to eliminate or reduce violence and conflict in Ogba community, it was suggested in addition to organising peace talks and reconciliation meetings. Proceeds from the oil should be shared equally and reaching the people with the gospel. The respondent also agreed that preaching with some action can change the people's thinking.

Respondent D, agreed that the church can help to change the conflict situation in Ogba community through negotiation, prayer, evangelism and counselling. In order to eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba community, the respondent suggested oneness and equal sharing of resources; also affirming that preaching and doing what is preached can help to bring peace.

Respondent E, attributed the unabated conflict in Ogba community to a nonchalant attitude of the church at the initial stage, while agreeing that the church can help to change the conflict situation in the community by praying and playing a neutral role in politics. The respondent noted that there has been an attempt by few churches to bring peace to the community, but it is not good enough. The spirit of unity and love was also advocated in order to eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba community. It was also suggested that the church can be part of the peace building process organising peace talks and seminars. The respondent also affirmed that preaching can change the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence, while noting that the church can be involved in community development through skills acquisition and empowerment.

Respondent F, noted that the church can help to change the conflict situation to bring peace in the community through advocacy. Noting that the role of the church thus far has been praying and outreach

which the respondent stated that it was successful but not much. However, s/he accepted that preaching can change the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence.

Respondent G, attributed the unabated conflict in Ogba community to the lack of unity amongst church leaders. But agreed that the church can help to change the conflict situation to bring peace in the community through preaching peace and engaging in fervent prayer as the church have been doing with limited success. The respondent agreed that preaching can change the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence if taken from the right perspective. It is also agreed that the church can be involved in community development in order to curtail youth restiveness in the community without actually giving a suggestion on which type of project to embark upon.

Respondent H is optimistic that the conflict in the community can be abated if government takes a drastic measure to address the issue. Noting that the church to an extent can help to change the conflict situation through regular evangelism, which was confirmed that the church have been doing that; and to some extent successfully. The respondent is of the opinion that total eradication of cultism can eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba community. To an extent the respondent agreed that preaching can change the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence and that the church can be involved in community development by establishing industries.

4.3.2. **Summary**

It was also testified that the church has been in the forefront in terms of the reconciliatory and negotiation processes. The effort of the church thus far includes prayer, peace talks, visits to the militant camps which some considered to have a partial success. The church has also engaged in outreach to the militant groups. During the interaction with the church leaders, it was learnt that the church's efforts have been a reconciliatory approach and it was able to avert a disastrous attack on the community. In the discussions the militant group was able to open up to the church regarding their planned attack. Although a ransom was paid as part of the negotiation with the militant group in order to eliminate their weapons from the community. Presently it seems as if the people of the community have no confidence in the political and traditional leaders, and that they are looking up to the church for a solution. The participants acknowledged that the church has a role to play in resolving the conflict in Ogba community as a custodian of peace. The provision of job opportunities to the teeming youth was also identified as a factor that can reduce violent conflict in Ogba land.

4.4. **INFORMAL INTERVIEWS**

As discussed earlier, the research design also included informal interviews. It is worth noting here that the findings from the informal interviews were not contradicting what have already being presented in

the formal interviews. It would be a repetition, waste of time and space to go over all what the individuals mentioned. These interviews were conducted with 25 participants and the researcher wishes to reflect on the data under the following headings according to the different themes of the study.

4.4.1. The Ogba Community and transgenerational trauma

The respondents lamented a lack of compensation from government to those who lost their beloved ones and properties. Instead, those who perpetrate the acts of violence and not those affected by the violence were indirectly rewarded and empowered to do more criminal acts. Thus those who have hitherto being law abiding citizens of the community and are marginalised considered it necessary to join the militant groups in order to participate in the benefit of compensation and at the same time take vengeance for their loved ones who have been killed.

Therefore, there is a vicious cycle of revenge which continues until it escalated to the point where the whole community was ravaged with cultist activities. Some of those whose parents were killed continued to nurse the grudge and bitterness without any steps to appease them. Some of the children who witnessed what had happened to their parents and relatives continued to think of how to take revenge which resulted into transgenerational conflict.

There was also an indication that those who renounced violence as a result of the amnesty were abandoned without jobs especially after training, since there was no capital to start with. Some of them decided to go back to what they had renounced and became worse because they wanted to be recognised. Secondly, it seems as if militant activities are the best option for livelihood and so it became difficult for those who engaged in it to come out of it instead there was a chance of luring more youth into it.

4.4.2. The Ogba community and community development

There is the saying that “an idle mind is the devil’s workshop”. In line with this, most of the respondents believed that if industries or skills acquisition centres can be established in order to create job opportunities and empowerment for the youth, it will help to reduce - if not totally solve - the issue of youth restiveness and bring the needed peace within the community, because there may be no time to think of evil activities or joining a cult. Ogba community has been known for their peaceful coexistence and law abiding attitudes. They are orderly, well-organised and hardworking people who do not tolerate laziness. An average Ogba citizen will do anything morally possible to feed and keep his family together peacefully. Their economic activities include: farming, fishing, hunting and other creative work such as artistic design, metal work, carpentering etc. The activities of oil exploitation in addition to the growing population and civilisation can no longer sustain the population. Some have left the community to the city for greener pastures while others continue to press on for survival. A lack of proper education

has also contributed to the problem of the community since the majority of those who engaged in militant actions are illiterate. Some of them through their militant actions have become notable with influence in the community, because they are recognised by government and esteemed by community leaders.

4.4.3. **Ironical trend of precedence in Ogba community**

There is an African proverb which says that, “when you give your item to a thief no one will steal it” - how true this statement is remains uncertain. However, the security outfit introduced by the leadership in ONELGA in order to solve the security challenges in the various communities is known as Official Security Planning Anticrime Control (OSPAC). The introduction of this security outfit within ONELGA was with mix-feelings. That they are enjoying relative peace is appreciated, however, there is still the fear and belief that 90% of the OSPAC members comprise of those who were involved in cultism and have inflicted pain on or even killed many within the community. While some are of the opinion that they are in better position to know those perpetrating crime since they were in the same act before, others are of the view that they joined the security team for immunity instead of sanitising the community. Still others express fear that since the community is supporting them financially now, what happens if they no longer has such financial support? For these reasons some do not have confidence in the OSPAC. Therefore, there is no certainty that the present peace will be sustained.

The origin of the current insecurity as a result of cultism in Ogba community was traced to the activities of politicians especially in the 2003 election when cultist boys were empowered with guns and used as thugs in order to achieve their political ambition. After the boys had executed the assignment as thugs to get the politicians to their position, they wanted to be part of the government, but then they were sidelined. In an attempt to get rid of the “bad-boys” the government initiated war against cultism. The suspected cult members were chased from the capital city (Port Harcourt). Some who could not find a hiding place in the city relocated to their various communities and started their nefarious activities as they had no option other than to use the same gun to terrorise innocent people. Even in the course of this research, it was unfolded that some of the leaders who should have been the vanguard of fighting militancy were the ones protecting them in order to use them for political and economic reasons.

It is shocking to know that bandits who were believed to be faceless in the past are now major stakeholders in the communities as the residents must pay the cultists to allow them to live in peace and operate their businesses. Cultists now assume the position of headship of communities in the Ogba community and determine who gets a job. They are now allocated the office of the Community Liaison Officer to interface with oil companies on behalf of the communities. It was learnt that, an oil company in one of the Ogba communities contracted the recruitment of labour to a particular politician and the

people were disappointed to learn that the employment quotas were given to the various cult groups, undermining the law-abiding citizens who were supposed to get the jobs, especially the graduates. Most of the cultist are either uneducated or school dropouts and they are the ones who now decide who gets a job or employment since they are not qualified to do the job themselves they sell the jobs. The participants during the interaction lamented that whenever there are job opportunities, “you will hear that they are giving them to the youths” and the cultists are now the only organised youths in the area. The trend here is that for one to get a job such a person must be a cultist, or have enough money to buy the vacancy from them. Immediately when one starts to carry a gun, such a person will be recognised and will be given a job. Because of this trend, youths, rather than being discouraged, are strongly encouraged to join a cult. It is shocking to learn that there are graduates who are without jobs, and others who have primary school certificates, becoming the Community Liaison Officer of a multinational company and who can determine what happens in the community.

4.4.4. Traumatic story in the community

In the course of this research, the researcher was able to interact with residents who testified about their ordeal during the attacks of the cultist as militants in the community. They were going from house to house in search of the notable people in the community to kill them or demand a ransom. In the house of one of the victims (who was also a respondent) there were visible bullet holes penetrating through the iron door into the room with a mark on the wall. According to him, they targeted him in the bedroom, but fortunately he was not at home as at the time they came. His family was inside, but none were injured in spite of the various marks of gunshots on the doors and windows. Most of the community leaders could not sleep in their homes - including the paramount chief - who could not be reached at the time of this research, because when the researcher and his assistant visited his home, they were told by his wife that he travelled, perhaps for security reasons? It is uncertain.

Another respondent also shared his experience that he could not boldly go to his house in broad daylight and even in the night he had to notify his family far away from the house to switch off the security light so that he could enter without being noticed.

In another story a man was in the house with his family, when the militant boys entered their home and killed two of his sons in the presence of the whole family. There are stories of how parents were killed in the presence of their children. There is the story of how a family of five were killed without any survivor except one who was not at home at the time of the attack.

At the time of the researcher’s arriving in the community the situation was relatively calm and people could continue with their normal activities, though sceptical. Yet many who had fled the community

were yet to return. It was gathered that during the intense situation of insecurity by 6:00 p.m. the streets in the community will be deserted because the militant boys will enter the community from their camp and begin to terrorise people robbing them of their valuables including food and domestic animals, which they will take to their camp for sustenance. Children were traumatised with the sound of gunshots and could not sleep in the night, while some children fell sick, some died due the situation because economic activities were paralysed. It is worth noting that at the time of arriving in the community on November 20, 2017 the events were still fresh in the peoples' memory as the physical damages were visible. The most dreadful effect of the situation is that the perpetrators of such dastardly acts are from within the community, their families are known to the community, but no one dares to talk for the fear of being attacked.

4.5. WHAT IS NEW IN THIS RESEARCH?

This research was able to evaluate the objectives of the amnesty programme and its ability to restore peace in the Niger Delta. Other researchers have dealt extensively on the issue of conflict in the Niger Delta and also postulated ideas on how the peace could be achieved. They however did not connect their idea to the spiritual dimension by linking the problem of conflict in the Niger Delta to sin. Therefore, their efforts have not yielded good results. The more efforts are made to solve the problem the more conflict it seems to create. This research differs from others in the following ways:

- i. However, with its political inclination, from the empirical study, the conflict in the Niger Delta as a whole and Ogba community in particular seems to be economically motivated. The reason for the conflict is that people pursue their economic value without moral value. Moral value in this research refers to Christian morality or Biblical principles of moral values. Therefore, this research identifies the vacuum created by the non-involvement of the church to impact on moral dimensions of economic life in the community – to stand against any act that undermined the sacredness of human beings. Schnurr (1997:8) points out that the dignity of the human person, realised in community with others is the criterion against which all aspects of economic life must be measured. Human beings should be served by the community leaders or government and not to be exploited for personal interest. It seems as if the community has lost its sense for human value, which is required for humanity to deal with each other, with the sense of respect as a sacred being created in the image of God (Gen 1:27). The leaders either as a government or religious or traditional leaders have failed to realise that all economic institutions must support the bonds of community and solidarity that are essential to the dignity of humanity. In order to achieve Christian moral values, the Scriptures must be the guidance of human behaviour. It may be easier to teach Christian moral values to the community, because about 90% of the inhabitants profess to be Christians. To engage the community through missional

activities, pastors and other church members should personally understand Biblical texts and principles in order to apply them in and outside the ecumenical setting. The Scriptures contain many passages that speak directly of human value and relationships. The church must equip her members with a deeper knowledge of God's purpose of creation and of the dignity of human life in society so as to influence the community to be faithful hearers and doers of the Word.

- ii. Secondly, the people of Ogba community lack Christian discipleship, because the church in the area is not fully involved in a discipleship programme. During the interaction one of the questions put forth to the church leader was 'did the church have a discipleship centre?' (*This interview is contained in the audio record*). The response was that they do not have discipleship centres except one of the interdenominational Christian outreach called Peace House, under the leadership of Gbinle Akande, from Benue State. They recently came to Ogba community and is currently been hosted in one of the private secondary schools where they are carrying out discipleship programmes in the community. This shows that before the arrival of Peace House, there was no concerted efforts to disciple the people, either as a denomination or interdenominational.

One of the participants confessed during the interaction that she has not known much about discipleship until it was introduced by the Peace House. All the CAN leaders testified that the discipleship programme has added value to the peace in the area as it teaches love and forgiveness. People travelled from far and near to attend the programme on a weekly basis. Therefore, this research is of the opinion that discipleship programmes are necessary for peace building and reorientation of the people for good leadership and peaceful coexistence.

- iii. Thirdly, this research identified that the leaders both political and traditional are affiliated to Christianity without exhibiting Christian values. This could mean that they did not understand the principles of Christian leadership and it is a task on the part of the church to disciple the leaders as well as the citizens. The research also identified that some of the churches are more concerned about the spiritual manifestation of power, than the total transformation of the people. While others are more concerned about financial gain than the souls of men that are perishing. Another area of need identified in the process of this research is the yearning of the people for true gospel as they seek for the manifestation of God's power in their lives. The CAN chairman testified how in most cases the Local Government Chairman will call him and ask him to mobilise prayer for the community whenever there is a security threat. The consciousness of God in the hearts of the people is evident in the community, but the application of Christian/Biblical principles in their daily living is lacking. Therefore, there is a need for the

church to engage in a holistic teaching for total transformation of individuals and the community as a whole.

- iv. The research inclines to the opinion of Didier (2017:149) who sees real peace as a right and harmonious relationships with God, right and harmonious relationships with other human beings and the human community, and right and harmonious relationships with nature and the surroundings. The church as a transforming agent of the society has a unique responsibility through the understanding of God's principle of peacemaker as Didier (2017:195) discusses the importance of the church in conflict resolution by explaining the difference between religious efforts and Christian perspective of the peacemaker. Noting, that Christian peacemakers are committed to end violent conflict as opposed to religious extremists who want victory at all costs. Religion is considered as a source of both peace and conflict, which depends on the way it is used. But it still remains a powerful resource that can help create a society where peace is experienced by all.

4.6. CONCLUSION

The empirical study confirmed most of the postulations of previous research on Niger Delta issues. It also gave the researcher a privilege to have first-hand information on the conflict in Ogba community.

Therefore, the researcher feels strongly that every stakeholder in Ogba community should be given an opportunity to learn how they could control their lives and make their own decisions for positive change. Political change plays a significant role in paving the way to sustainable development if the right people are in positions of leadership. By the right people, it means those have the welfare of the people at heart. According to Didier (2017:86), sustainable development is rooted in people's capacity to overcome their own psychological, social and contextual barriers and to become agents of positive change and not passive recipients of change. The empirical studies reveal that the amnesty programme is the idea of a few people in collaboration with federal government which does not represent the interest of the general populace nor has any direct bearing or benefit on the common people of the community and the Niger Delta as a whole. This shows how the people were just considered as mere recipients without being active agents for their own community. The people should have been in a better position to identify the real causes of the conflict and the real solution to the problem if well consulted.

From the empirical study, it is indicated that the community was represented by the leaders without really giving the people feedback. There is therefore, the possibility that those who represent the people are not sincere to really represent the people's interest.

Onuoha (2015:75) affirms the economic-political nature of the conflict by stating that a critical examination from the point of view of the people of the Niger Delta, and as contested in the law court

in the 'offshore-onshore' dichotomy dispute between the oil bearing states in the Niger Delta and the federal government, 'resource control' may then be interpreted as an economic language for a political demand. Indeed, 'resource control' is foremost a political demand, the power to extract and determine the allocation of resources.

For churches to be effective in bringing peace to a community, it must not be run as a personal businesses for selfish interests, a situation where leaders are seen as kings who own whatever belongs to the church. Such practices could breed conflict and marginalisation instead of bringing peace. Didier (2017:201) argues that in such attitude, the leader becomes the centre of focus of the ministry instead of God. The wellbeing of the members and the community become less important and it can contribute to underdevelopment and conflict because it weakens the people with regard to their needs and rights. In this case, political leaders will have a field day by taking advantage of the church's weaknesses to impose their ungodly rules.

It is clear from the respondents that the amnesty programme is not working, there was emphasis on the leadership role and suggested that the following issues should be addressed and resolved, which include: youth unemployment, lack of fair sharing, neglect of the youths in terms of benefits and allocation from either government or multinational oil companies.

Therefore, the role of community leaders and government in the conflict situation has to some extent encouraged the peaceful youths to embrace violence as a means of livelihood. It was also learnt that in the quest to finding solutions to the problem, the community leaders employed the African traditional religion (ATR) by engaging in what is called traditional oath taking to ensure peaceful coexistence in the community but to no avail. Lack of unity amongst church leaders was also stressed as a bane to peace building in the community.

Therefore, the researcher will take the following suggestions into consideration in the next chapter as a guideline that could help in managing conflict in Ogba communities.

- Carrying out skills acquisition programmes in various host communities and regular outdoor services.
- Allocation from the oil companies to the community should be shared equally among community members or invested in such a way that it will benefit every member of the community - oneness and equal sharing of resources.
- Affirming that preaching and doing what is preached can help to bring peace.
- The church can help to change the conflict situation to bring peace in the community through advocacy.

- Total eradication of cultism can eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba community.
- Community development by establishing industries.

CHAPTER FIVE

A PASTORAL REFLECTION ON MISSION OF THE CHURCH-WITH-SOCIETY IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

5.1. INTRODUCTION

The information given in the previous chapter shows that although various approaches have been taken to resolve the conflict in the Niger Delta, all were without fruitful results. Many authors have attributed this failure to injustice, marginalisation, exclusion, greed, corruption and many more reasons. In as much as these factors are feasible in the conflict situation of the Niger Delta, something vital seems to be missing. The researcher is of the opinion that they left a spiritual perspective out of the solution and focus on human efforts alone in conflict management.

In this chapter a critical study will be conducted on relevant literature, as well as study on appropriate scriptures regarding the themes under discussion. The aim is to outline Biblical principles for peace and community development. The argument of this chapter is to respond to the following: (a) how can pastoral and missional principles be applied in conflict management of Ogba community with discourse on transgenerational post-traumatic stress? (b) To determine how pastoral missional principles can be applied to conflict management in Ogba community.

The chapter will unfold as follow:

- Introduction
- The concept and inter-relatedness of pastoral and missional ministry
- The importance of worldviews
 - Christological Anthropology/Worldview
 - African Worldview
 - Worldview and the meaning of life
- Transgenerational conflict
- The problem of sin
- Missiological Need (Public, political and other structures)

But before going into the above outline, it is pertinent to discourse the concept and inter-relatedness of Pastoral ministry and Mission. This is to form the foundation for the discourse in this chapter.

5.1.1. The concept and inter-relatedness of pastoral ministry and mission

To reflect on pastoral mission in conflict management, it is worth knowing the concept of pastoral ministry. The pastoral ministry within the study of Practical Theology is considered by Martin and Davids (1997:876) to be the application of Christian truth to pastoral situations, as both contemporary pursuit and historical phenomenon. De Jongh Van Arkel (2000:153) writes about the communal and contextual approach of pastoral care and states that within a Christian community pastoral care also refers to mutual care, where the wellbeing (spiritual and physical) of everybody in the community is important.

The research inclined to the facts that pastoral care should focus on areas of human frailty and vulnerability in diverse issues of life of which the focus of this research is more on the political governance issue as it affects conflict management and dealing with political injustice, using a pastoral missional approach. Therefore, the definition of pastoral care, according to McClure (2012:270) is a *practical* theology specified as an intentional enacting and embodying of a theology of presence, particularly in response to suffering or need, as a way to increase the love commandment of God among the community members. The discourse of a pastoral missional approach in this research is not limited to personal care, but to extend beyond the congregation to the community outside the church. McClure (2012:273) agrees that while the most familiar forms of pastoral care involve person-to-person-conversations as central to pastoral care, it could also occur in other areas related to practical theological sub-disciplines. The idea of McClure (2012:274) also shows that personal experience can be set within the context of a community, as well as in the context of a historical narrative. The discourse on the new horizons in pastoral care of McClure (2012:275) clearly portrays the idea of this research in the discussion of pastoral care in relation to a missional approach. It centres on the twenty first century approach, which includes three distinct developments thus:

- The move away from the model of care for an individual by ordained professionals, towards the model of care for the community and its members by the community itself;
- The development of pastoral care as a public theology; and
- Strategic participation, rather than personal insight as the final goal.

The emphasis of the above points is that while historically pastoral care was done by the pastor alone, it is increasingly understood as a communal responsibility of the church members in a model of care for all and by all. This is referred to as communal-contextual pastoral care. To apply this in the research context, the pastoral care in the Ogba community is that the church, which includes members and not just the pastor, should reach out to the community. In fact the role of the pastor is to disciple the members to take up the task of pastoral care to the community. This is what McClure (2012:276)

describes as “good” pastoral care in order to build a community in which the different members accompany and support one another through the many complexities of life, creates a welcoming and inclusive place where the faithful and seekers alike convene to find God and each other, and mobilises the community to give sanctuary in which the wounded can rest when buffeted by life’s storms. Therefore, this research will concentrate on the social aspect of pastoral ministry, especially in the area of conflict management, according to Biblical principles and mission to the society. McDonald (2015) depicted pastoral ministry as the ministry of shepherding God’s people. It is a leadership that pictures the image of the Shepherd to describe the roles and responsibilities of those who lead God’s people. McDonald (2015) maintains that pastors have to lead others by gospel-shaped teaching and modelling the application of God’s word of grace, in their own lives.

Missional as simplified by Roxburgh and Buren (2009:45) is about transformation toward a church that is shaped by mystery, memory and mission. Roxburgh and Buren (2009:39) explain these three elements as powerful currents that shape and influence the understanding of missional, as presented below:

- *Mystery*: Roxburgh and Buren (2009:41) recount the story of God’s dealing with Israel in Exodus 2:23-24 that demonstrates God’s mercy. They would have become like so many other marginalised groups—simply erased from the face of the earth as of no importance or value in civilisation. How God chooses these people out of all the peoples of the earth is a mystery beyond human understanding. All that one could explain is that God chose to deliver them from slavery himself and not through an uprising by them. Israel’s experience cannot be explained in terms of human action or preference. In the New Testament also the church is a mystery choice; no one can explain how people are being chosen to form the church. Roxburgh and Buren (2009:42) maintain that like the choosing of Israel, the choice is not really about those inside the church but about being chosen by God to represent him also outside the church, for the sake of the world. The deepest mystery is the existence of the church, in this strange, mixed, social community - known as the *ecclesia* of God - where he has chosen to make and present the mystery of creation. It is also where the empowering work of Christ and the Spirit are present and expressed in the world.
- *Memory*: What sustained the people of Israel in the Old Testament, what develop them into a people with a peculiar identity in Roxburgh and Buren’s (2009:43) discourse is memory. In Deut 6:20-25 Moses referred them to the covenant stipulation as a precondition to success in the land, gave the people an exhortation to remember that covenant in the future and to transmit it to their next generation. Merrill (1994:173-174) states that it is important with the passing of time that descendants of people who have participated in or witnessed events that have been

fundamental to their origin and that explain their unique destiny should be continually reminded of those events lest they lose their sense of history and meaning. This is also applicable to the church in the New Testament. According to Roxburgh and Buren (2009:44), missional church is about a people of memory being continually formed in practices that shape humanity as an alternative story in their culture. The application of this is to look into what is the memory being continually formed in the practices of the Ogba community and how does the church respond? What is the memory formed by the continuous practices of the church within the Ogba community?

- *Mission*: The outgrowth of mystery and memory, according to Roxburgh and Buren (2009:45) is mission, noting that Israel is called for the sake of the world. God calls the church to be the demonstration of what all creation is to be. Therefore, the church is the new Israel, called for the sake of the world. Mission is not something the church does as an activity; it is what the church is through the mystery of its formation and memory of its calling. Therefore, it was reiterated that the church is God's missionary people, which means that there is no participation in Christ without participation in God's mission to the world.

In view of the above discourse the activities of the missional church cannot be separated from the duties of a pastoral ministry that is expected to shape the life of the society through preaching and teaching in a world shaped by many challenges, such as conflict. McClure (2005:17, 18) asserts that preaching can and should pay close attention to the business of re-shaping humans' experience as users of language, and speaking agents, at the deepest possible levels. The understanding of this research in connection to the re-shaping of the human experience – as discoursed by McClure above – is applied to the pastoral ministers who are to model the church in the community through their words and deeds. Preaching can help to consciously resist the scripts of greed, violence and loveless power that dominate the social and political consciousness. Preaching and missional activities are expected to break the effect of transgenerational consequences not only for the adults, but also for their children and potentially their grandchildren. It will take a chapter to talk about what preaching entails though God and his salvation for mankind form the basis for the gospel preaching. But the emphasis in this research is not to elaborate on preaching but how the church through preaching can affect the hearts of the people to love the Lord with all their heart, with all their soul, and with all their mind and by implication transferring the same love to their fellow human beings as themselves (Matt 22:37-39). This is expected to transform the community from a trans-generational cycle of conflict which impacts negatively upon the well-being of the people to a trans-generational love of and for the subsequent generation.

Therefore, the relationship between missiology and pastoral theology is that the two are inseparable tools in affecting the society. It can be simply put that every pastor is a missionary, and every missionary

is a pastor - which means that their duties are not limited to the church. It is common for a pastor to see himself as a congregational pastor. Such pastor separates the congregation from the society, which is impossible because what forms the congregation are part of the society made up of politicians, lawyers, businessmen/women, students and unemployed. Hence, there are two societies in the world, namely the society of the church in the world and the society outside the church in the world, and they all mingle together with different worldviews. The result is that the stronger force overrides the other (Kim, 2017:17).

5.2. THE IMPORTANCE OF WORLDVIEWS

At the end of chapter three, it could be seen that the continuous conflict has deeper roots in different worldviews related to the community. A worldview denotes personal or a group's conception or view of humanity, the world, or life in general. People and culture have a particular model of the universe which is regarded as a worldview. Miller (2001) and Chalk (2006:42) describe a worldview as a factor that determines beliefs, which have an effect on a human being's behaviour. A certain belief is chosen because it is believed that it will produce a certain consequence. In addition to behaviour and beliefs of human beings as lived out in their cultures, are certain assumptions about the way the world is constructed. Darrow (1998:34) reiterates that people's worldview greatly affects their development, prosperity, environment and certain circumstances as it creates different cultural divisions and values. Although, social norms may vary from society to society, Hiebert *et al.* (1999:199) discuss Robert Spencer's argument that the Ten Commandments as outlined in Exodus 20:3-17 to be the basic principles all society must practise to survive, as no society should permit uncontrolled killing, which is in conformity with the command "thou shall not kill". So also societies must regulate sexual relationships against adultery, the ownership of property against covetousness, greed and avarice to foster a sense of sharing with equity in order to maintain moral rectitude. A Christological anthropology or worldview and an African worldview are of relevance to the research theme and therefore a discussion of each will follow.

5.2.1. Christological anthropology/worldview

Christ is to be understood as complete in deity and complete in humanity. To this fact Louw (2000:101) argues that the two natures were related without separation or division and without confusion or change. Meaning and truth in life are terms of Christian understanding, which is linked to the saving acts of God as revealed in the person and work of Jesus Christ as well as the actual intervention of God through his Spirit.

The Biblical worldview is based on the content of the Christian Holy Scriptures. It is believed that the Bible is not only religious doctrine to be believed and religious ritual to be practised, but it also gives a

religious picture of the whole world (Chalk, 2006:79). This means that the Bible is the standard of religious/moral practices. Every Christian community is therefore expected to look to the Bible as their rule of faith and practice and should live and act according to the Biblical worldview, irrespective of their community background.

In an attempt to find a possible solution to a human problem such as conflict as in the case of Niger Delta, it is important to have a worldview according to a Christian perspective. Wright (2006:55) presents four fundamental worldview questions of importance, namely:

- The first question is, where are we? (What is the nature of the world around us?) The response is that we inhabit the earth, as part of the good creation of the one living God, YHWH.
- Secondly, who are we? (What is the essential nature of humanity?) The answer is that we are human persons made in God's own image, who is unique among other creatures in spiritual and moral relationships and responsibilities.
- Thirdly, what is going wrong? (Why is the world in such a mess that it is always characterised with conflict and other humanitarian problems?) The researcher elaborates on this in the rest of the chapter.
- Lastly, what is the solution? (What can we do about it?) The response is that humans' efforts are futile, nothing in and of ourselves can be done to bring peace and salvation. But the solution has been initiated by God through his choice and creation of a people Israel, through which God intends eventually to bring a blessing to all the nations of the earth and ultimately to renew the whole creation (Wright, 2006:55).

In view of the above, the response that humanity inhabit the earth, as part of the good creation of the one living God, YHWH, was emphasised by Wright (2010:40) that the Bible begins with creation and ends with a new creation. The Bible is not just about the solution to the sin problem and how to survive the day of judgement but with the view that Biblical theology of mission needs to take this beginning and ending seriously. This is because the creation narrative provides two of the fundamental platforms for the foundational Christian worldview. Wright (2010:40) further explains how it responds to two fundamental questions that all philosophies and religions answered in different ways, that is: "where are we?" and "who are we?" To put these questions further in clear terms; what is the universe in which we find ourselves? Who created it and for what purpose? Is it even real? Secondly, what does it mean to be human? How do we classify human being—as gods, or merely advanced animals that have evolved a bit further than the rest? Does human life have any value, meaning and purpose? The Biblical responses to these questions affect the Christian understanding of mission in the world created by God and human beings created in His image.

Christological anthropology if applied to the conflict situation in Ogba community should focus on the issue of spirituality and how Christian faith can play a role in helping the community to cope with life challenges, contributing to a sense of purposefulness. This can be achieved through pastoral care in relation to theology of comfort to humanity struggling with the meaning of life, in despair, suffering anxiety and guilt. It is to disciple the community to rediscover the right norms and values that should determine human behaviour.

If the people of Ogba community and the Niger Delta as a whole could understand the vanity of life as contained in Eccl 1:2-4, “what profit has a man from all his labour in which he toils under the sun?” One generation passes away and another generation comes, but the earth remains. Then their response to Biblical teaching will be as it was concluded in Eccl 12:13-14 to fear God and keep his commandments, as the whole duty of man. With the understanding that God will bring every deed into judgment, both good and bad. The problem in the Ogba community, could be attributed to disobedience to God as Wright (2010:40) rightly reiterates that human disobedience and rebellion against God lead to adverse consequences, which pave ways for evil and sin to penetrate into every aspect of God’s creation and every human’s earthly endeavour, leading to conflict and frustration.

From Adam in the beginning sin was introduced through disobedience and humanity became subjected to death and decay and the human environment cursed by God. Intellectually man depends on his incredible power of rationality to explain and excuse his evil schemes, which affects social human relationships. This is described as depravity in Romans 1:28-29 that even as some did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a depraved mind to do those things that are not proper—which they think are right in their own depravity; being filled with all manner of social problems. Also that God made mankind upright, but men decided to put up structures that are against God and have gone in search of their own schemes (Eccl 7:29). This in itself is conflict with self, with others, with God, and with nature.

Dickson (2011:1396) maintains that when a society mentally separates itself from God, such a society is doomed for social chaos and destruction as it is not within the power of man to determine his own moral values. However, Wright (2010:41), presenting a ray of hope for humanity, opines that the gospel of the Bible is to address every dimension of humans’ problems created through sin. By implication the conflict situation in any society can better be resolved through the gospel and not human imagination and principles, of which that of Niger Delta are not exceptions.

God’s purpose is not to abandon or destroy his creation. This forms the basis of Wright’s (2010:41) discussion on redemption; pointing out how God’s redemption was demonstrated through history and events that ran from the call of Abraham to the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ as a

connection between the Old and the New Testament in a single redemptive plan that occurred in two different parts. The call of Abraham in Genesis 12:1-3 is according to Wright (2010:42) marked as the beginning and first great commission, while the resurrection of Christ opened up the second great commission.

Wright (2010:43) argues that the cross and resurrection of Jesus bring us to the central point of the whole line of redemption in history. Noting that the gospel is the story of accomplished victory that will ultimately be universally visible and justified, the cross is central to every dimension of mission of God's people—from personal evangelism among individual friends to ecological care for creation and everything in between. Wright (2010:43) equates the exodus redemption which led to the creation of the covenant people in the Old Testament to the Easter redemption that led to the eschatological gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and the birth of the church which is the multinational fulfilment of the hope of Israel, for all nations to be blessed through the people of Abraham. It also includes the solution to the humans' fallen nature and sin in Genesis 3, and the racial dividedness and confusion in Genesis 11; and the church's existence as a community of reconciled sinners from all races demonstrates the gospel's transforming power. Wright (2010:44) also points out two realities that informed Christian theology of mission, which include: (1) the presence of the Holy Spirit making available to the people of God the same transforming power that energised the life and ministry of Jesus; (2) the existence of the church as the missional community of those who have responded to, and entered the Kingdom of God by repentance and faith in Christ, living as a transformed and transforming community of reconciliation and blessing in the world.

The Biblical worldview affects the church's mission perspective. Steunernagel (2008:63) lists five marks of the mission of the church which include:

- To proclaim the Good News of the kingdom;
- To teach, baptise and nurture new believers;
- To respond to human needs by loving services;
- To transform unjust structures of society; and
- To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and renew the life of the earth.

The application of this to the research theme is that the church in Ogba Community should see the need for evangelism and discipleship. Perhaps it was with this understanding that Peace House under the leadership of Gbinle Akani decided to organise a discipleship programme in the community.

Steunernagel (2008:64) in his discussion of the first two marks of Christian faith, states that its aim is to enable humanity to see who they are, where they come from and what they are here for. It also

identifies Christian faith as a practical life event that connects to the origin of humans' lives and purpose that affects their communities. However, unless Christian faith is shared, it cannot be understood and embraced; as the reality of Christianity is understood as a called out community to portray the image of God and his purpose, in other words as a Kingdom of God here on earth.

What Steunernagel (2008:70) indicates in the last three points as missional marks are that mission involves the *kerygma* (proclamation of Christ's teaching or Christianity) and craving for justice with compassion motivated by the story and model of the gospel as lived out by Jesus Christ, and the search for transformation denounces unjust structures and announces God's justice in every social structure. Mission further portrays that human integrity should recognise the integrity of creation, which is not a mere object of exploitation but is a sacred offer for quality life. Creation and all the resources to mankind must be managed according to God's principles. Steunernagel (2008:64) affirms that justice as a fundamental expression of God for social transformation and as a mark of mission needs to be integrated into the portfolio of church mission. According to Haddad (2008:76), poverty increases in a society due to social structures that worked against certain groups of people in a systemic and unjust way. Therefore, there is the need to critically identify what it means to work for social justice in a practical way. The church needs to take a stance that openly condemns racism and injustice (Haddad, 2008:78).

5.2.2. African worldviews

The African worldview in Ogba community is based on the assumption of communal living where every family and community member is important for the progress and peaceful co-existence. There is a rule that everyone has to adhere to. In Ogba community conflict that arises within the community is settled through communal procedure. However, whether the belief system of the community is right or wrong is an issue that has to be looked at through the gospel lens, because there are some practices in the African worldview that conform to the Biblical principles. Each caste (*social group*) has certain unique skills and specialised functions that are essential for the operation of the society as a whole. Hiebert (1999:360) identifies that individual Africans have certain tasks to fulfil within the family. Their diversity is harnessed through cooperation for societal wellbeing and not for competition.

Therefore, community is the central focus of morality whose identity is enshrined in the community right from childhood so that as they grow they know where they belong and to function within the community (Kunhiyop, 2004:21). Opposite to the African way of living, industrialisation is the growth and development of large urban centres and suburbs. Prior to the increase of industrial manufacturing facilities, fabrication and processing were generally carried out by hand in people's homes. The industrial revolution led to unprecedented expansion in wealth and financial wellbeing for some, e.g. the elite and politicians that gained wealth from the oil companies in the Niger Delta. It also led to

increased labour specialisation. Young people leave rural areas in large numbers seeking potential fortunes in potential industries (Anon, n.d.).

To some extent, the African worldview about the Supreme Being is that he does not care about what happens here on earth and does not know what happens in some parts of the world (John, 2015:9). African religions, according to Grillo (2009) is aimed at harnessing divine powers and channelling them for the good of the community through rituals, which helps to ensure responsible relationships with ancestors whom they believe to be the guardians of the moral order, with spiritual forces within nature and with the gods. The shortcoming of this worldview is that the relationship between man and his fellow human beings is determined by their relationship with the gods whereby secession attracts severe penalty from the community or family. However, in the modern world in Ogba community there is freedom to choose a belief system appropriate to the individual.

The African theologian, Mbiti (2010) in his speech on peace and reconciliation averred that peace is not just for grown-ups (this generation) but also for generations to come. Indicating that learning and experiencing the ways of peace early in life will help to produce a sound foundation for the rest of their lives. Furthermore, he maintained that peace must begin at the cradle, because only through the understanding of peace at an early stage in life can children grow up well, be integrated, and be able to use their abilities to the full. Though Mbiti might have spoken from the African spirituality, it is not far from what the Bible says in Prov 22:6, “train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it.” The African adage which says you can bend a fish when it is fresh because when it is dry it is impossible to change its form is applicable to this passage on child training.

The African tradition’s understanding of salvation is about protection, restoration, preservation, survival and the continuance of human, societal, and environmental life in this world (Mugabe, 1994:32). Reiterating this point further he quoted John Mbiti who sees the African worldview of salvation to reflect physical and immediate dangers that threatens an individual’s or community’s survival, good health and general prosperity and safety. This means that salvation is not just a spiritual phenomenon, but concrete in terms of both what happened and is likely to be encountered by people as they go through daily experiences. Salvation, therefore, means the condition, context or space in which human well-being and the ultimate fulfilment of the individual’s destiny is made possible (Mugabe, 1994:33). The healing ministry of Christ strongly features in African Christianity, as Mugabe (1994:35) points out how the African Christology articulated Christ’s healing as an integrative healing, which is interpreted in the broadest sense of inclusiveness, and not only limited to physical ailments but to illnesses of oppression, racial discrimination, tribalism, joblessness, and all sorts of conflicts in a persons’ life as a holistic healing which does not make any distinction between the body and the spirit. Therefore, conclusively, Mugabe (1994:40) argues that Africans do not see salvation only in terms of an escape

from the wrath of God and the salvation of individual souls in the hereafter. The salvation which Christ offers in his incarnation, life, death, resurrection and *Parousia* (second coming) is a comprehensive salvation which involves the individual as well as the society, soul and body, present and future. Salvation from an African Christian perspective goes beyond personal forgiveness of sin and deliverance from a future judgment to what the experience of “being saved” means in the now and how it affects the social-cultural milieu in which the reality of salvation is expressed.

Salvation in many traditional societies as discussed by Hiebert *et al.* (1999:224) is associated with fear of ancestors, arbitrary spirits, hostile enemies, witchcraft and other invisible forces. Therefore, salvation is understood as been freed or saved from the powers of evil forces that can cause the misfortune that people experience in the world here and now and not about eternity. Salvation could also be in a form of freedom from injustice and oppression of bad governance.

The relevancy of salvation both from a Biblical worldview and a traditional (African) worldview is understood from Hiebert *et al.* (1999:224) who discuss the Biblical worldview in relation to mankind as a whole being in which spiritual, moral, social, mental and physical attributes are inextricably intertwined. Salvation as rooted in the community and individual *shalom* that is built upon right relationship with God and reflects his character, namely, righteousness, love, justice, peace and perfection.

Hiebert *et al.* (1999:224) strongly argue that a Biblical worldview is quite different from Western worldview as it may be assumed that Christianity which believes in a Biblical worldview is a Western religion. Therefore, it was pointed out that while a Western worldview differentiates between spirit and body, and spiritual and material realities, the Biblical worldview presents humans as a whole being. On the other hand, Jenkins (2007:12) postulates that an African worldview, which may be considered basically religious, sees all things to be related or connected, which means that everything is united in existence. Jenkins further explains that in the African world God is understood as Creator, though he is far away. Because the African worldview is religious, everything that exist are "spiritual," a part of one unified whole.

Despite the fact that the African worldview and Biblical worldview tend to see existence as a whole because of the religious inclination of the African worldview, there are great differences between African worldview and Biblical worldview. African worldview is based on African Traditional Religion (ATR). Though similar in nature it does not have a uniform pattern of a practice and belief system. The ATR belief system differs from community to community. Chalk (2006:149) rightly points out that Africans are very aware of an unseen world of spirits, powers and forces. Jenkins (2007:13) observes that the African view of the world is relational. Events and relationships are seen as the main

components of reality. People and social relationships and obligations are the overwhelming considerations. Identity consists in who you are related to and how you are related to them. The relationship between individuals and their roles in events are more critical than the individuals and their separate identities.

5.2.3. **Worldview and meaning of life**

Moral life has been linked to the meaning one attaches to life. Hiebert *et al.* (1999:95) indicate that if there is no meaning in life, there will be no need to give oneself to the well-being of others or live a moral life. Hiebert *et al.* (1999:96) further argue that synchronic (*existence*) meaning is explained to give people a sense of meaning on how their lives are structured and orderly in five ways to (1) show people who they are, (2) chart the progression of their lives, (3) assign a community to which man belongs (4) provide humanity a home in the world, and (5) give worth to what they do and have. The truth is that the problem of morality in Ogba community cannot be generalised because there are people who still believe in moral value. There are youths, who refused in spite of the influence of cultism, to join the group even though they remained poor. The problem is not about the moral belief of the whole community but the few individuals who are power drunk and want to achieve their aims by all means. If the focus is on those who are morally corrupt and forget about those who are morally good, it will still be the same failure that was experienced in the introduction of the amnesty programme. While reaching out to those who are disillusioned with the Gospel and the programme of transformation, the church should identify those who are morally good and train for godly leadership. When this happens, those who accepted the gospel and are transformed will also pass through the process of discipleship for godly living. This is because the problem has been identified with the leadership. It could also be applied that those who engaged in killing, kidnapping and other violent actions against humanity have little or no value for life.

From the general theme of this research, the emphasis is on those who oppose violence that the amnesty programme ignored in the first place. The consequence is that the weaker youths will accept that there is no gain in remaining moral and becoming poor, while others who are sinning in their moral life are getting what they want.

There is a high possibility of conflict if a person's worldview is threatened, especially when human value is attached to possession or resources in the ancestral land. From an African point of view, Ayuya. *et al.* (2015:57) discuss the African worldview in which conflict and events such as misfortunes, sicknesses, deaths and failures, as well as successes of various kinds are explained in the traditional African view where God is invoked through some special rituals such as on mountains, caves or in synagogues. There is the belief that certain aspects of human behaviours, if not all, are explained and

understood from these African worldviews. External agents, such as the ancestors and spirits tend to determine human behaviours in these worldviews, because the spirits of the departed ancestors are believed to look after the best interest of their descendants and at the same time can also send them illness and misfortune when they are moved to wrath. Ancestors are interested in the wellbeing of the family to which they gave life, helping those who revere them and obey laid down rules, while punishing those who deviate and bring disgrace and harm to their kinsmen (Hiebert *et al.*, 1999:119). In similar view, Ayuya *et al.* (2015:58) maintain that health and well-being is not seen merely as a biological matter, but on bonding the human body and the soul in full harmony, which means that the absence of a harmonious relationship with the members of the supernatural world and lack of interpersonal, family and community conflict resolutions and tensions could result in illness. The impact of this is that before now, when cultism was not introduced to the community, there was peace and less evil in the communities. However, when those who engaged and used occultism to gain influence in the community, the worldview of some of the youths changed to believe that moral living does not pay. What was witnessed in Niger Delta and Ogba community in particular was like what was described in Ps 73:5-6 “those who engage in evil acts are full of pride in their heart and clothe themselves with violence always carefree and increase in wealth”. However, it is the Christian mind that will understand, like the Psalmist in Ps 73:17-18, who understand their final destiny, and know that they are placed on a slippery ground.

Because some joined in the cultic activities, the community began to witness a different kind of conflict, not only with the oil companies and government but with themselves, especially those who were in cults. Therefore, the mission to the community should begin with ministry to the occult groups. Because their perspective of God has changed, while God is seen as being slow to meet their needs, they have a quick solution to their needs without realising how quickly they are disintegrating.

Grillo (2009) generally speaks of the African worldview in terms of the religion which holds the belief that there is one supreme creator (God), who is the maker of a dynamic universe. After setting the world in motion, the Supreme Being withdrew to an inaccessible destination from the concerns of daily human existence. For this reason, people do not directly offer sacrifices to, or worship the Supreme Being. Instead, they turn to secondary divinities who serve the Supreme Being as messengers or mediators between humanity and the Supreme Being. These secondary divinities are sometimes portrayed as children of the Supreme Being, but religious teachings also regard them as refractions of a divine being.

Okeke *et al.* (2017:4) observe that among the Igbo the universe is conceived as two worlds: the visible and invisible in their worldview. There is the belief that conflict is inevitable whenever anyone goes against the rules of the land especially when it affects their belief system. Okeke *et al.* (2017:5) give a

particular example in some parts of the Igbo land in Nigeria such as Njaba LGA of Imo state, Udi and Nsukka areas of Enugu state, Awka, Nkpor, Ogidi, Aguleri, in Anambra state, where the early Christian converts not only converted their heathen neighbours to Christianity, but also showed contempt for the traditional taboos by eating the forbidden fish from certain streams in the towns. According to tradition, the fishes were not allowed to be touched or killed, for they were dedicated to the gods of the stream, but the Christian converts caught and ate them, just to show that the gods of the stream had no powers to harm them, because God created all things for man's use. Such action provoked anger of the traditional worshippers. Though they left the converts to the vengeance of their gods, but when it seemed as if the gods have not taken notice, the natives resolved to fight for the gods by ostracising (*excommunicating*) the Christian converts.

The role of the ancestors is dominant in the moral life of the African worldview, which forms the moral policy of individuals, families, clans and societies with which they are associated. They attribute peace and success to how well they serve the ancestral spirits according to the statement below:

If we failed to appease the spirits there would be no village of Ilenwe now. This street where we stand would be the den of leopards, and these houses the haunt of owls. Our farms would have to be restored back to the former status of forest and our bones be scattered all across the plain, washed back and forth by each returning flood. Let the spirits take vengeance on such a man who dares to speak against our juju shrines, and let the ghosts of our ancestors haunt him. May his days be darkened; may the spirit of his ancestors detest him let them abhor his sacrifice (John, 2015:8).

The above excerpt shows a typical African elder in Nigeria reprimanding a young man who decided to abandon the traditional religion for Christianity at the village square, which led to rejection by the community leaders and even his own father has this to say:

...you know that I am a prosperous man, a member of a notable Society. I have large farms and fishing rights; I have goats and sheep and hens; I have four wives and six daughters. All these because I have served my idol, as did my father and his father for many generations. Not only so but when I longed for a son to continue my name after my death, I paid great sums in sacrifice to the spirits who at last heard my petition and granted me a male child. To despise the spirits; to walk the way of strangers; to deny the tribe of his birth; this is too much. So mourn with me, for my son, my only son is dead! I have no son! (John, 2015:10)

The traditional African worldview means that there is no love for anyone who renounces the traditional religion because it centres on the ancestral spirits, whom they believe can continue to influence present life on earth. In fact, associating with the offender to them means sharing in the consequences from the spirits' wrath. They are to be remembered, respected and revered because of their status as the intermediary between the living and God (Chalk, 2006:21). Concerning the moral values, Chalk (2006:219) notes that an African worldview holds the belief that God is the source of moral values on the assumption that he has communicated them to the ancestors. The African worldview of morality as pointed out by Kunhiyop (2004:17) is that God is good, which also demand that humanity should be good in their relationship with one another. This means that morality is tied strongly to the belief that God exists. As regards to the understanding of right and wrong, Hiebert *et al.* (1999:197) postulate that every society has a sense of moral order to survive by identifying what is good and evil in order to maintain human relationships in the communities. However, the basis for a belief system in any community may differ from one community to another, just as social norms vary greatly from one society to another (Hiebert *et al.*, 1999:199).

5.3. TRANSGENERATIONAL CONFLICT AND PASTORAL MINISTRY

O'Neill (2015:8) specifically notes that the effects of violence, traumatic experiences and social segregation impact upon parenting affecting the early attachment and capacity of the child to self-regulate.

Beiser *et al.* (2010:226) in their discussion of Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) state that the Niger Delta experience suggests that disasters of human design set in motion two types of losses, namely human and social loss. In turn this creates a vicious spiral of social disorganisation and mental health problems. Loss was also identified to inflict a burden of individual suffering and from a social perspective it destroys the human capital—the productive human capacity within a given community—needed to rebuild violence-damaged societies. According to Beiser *et al.* (2010:226) it is necessary not to neglect social conditions that could perpetuate symptoms and prevent self-healing, pointing out the need for social interventions aimed at addressing the mistrust in a community and loss of interdependence produced by years of perceived exploitation, violence and conflict.

5.3.1. Effect of transgenerational conflict

It may be difficult to define transgenerational conflict. However, for the purpose of this research it could be described as the impact of unresolved conflict on present and future generations. The impact could be the traumatic effect which creates a lasting mental or social disorder on a subsequent generation or a grievance transmitted to the subsequent generations for vengeance through storytelling and history. Simply put, transgenerational conflict from the above description is a conflict that extended from one

generation to another. Such conflict cannot be resolved on the superficial level, either by settling one group of people or be coerced to calmness.

Looking at the historical background of conflict in the Niger Delta as discussed in chapter 3 (cf. 3.2), the amnesty programme wouldn't have been the ideal solution, especially the way it was organised to favour a few groups of agitators. Also considering the discourse in chapter 2 (cf. 2.4) government's approach to the non-violence approach of the Niger Delta's communities, by using the military to stop the people from protesting against the government for unjust treatment, and setting up a commission that did not really address the demand of the people, created the present predicament. By introducing amnesty to retrieve arms from militia groups and ignoring the law abiding citizens of the community and those who lost their relatives during military and militant attacks also contributed to the present problem. However, the conflict in Ogba community, like any other Niger Delta community, took a different dimension of cultism that instead of joining forces within the community to seek for common goal, the youth became a threat to the peace in the community and a problem to the government and community leaders.

Managing conflict in a community where transgenerational conflict is common could pose some challenges such as misapplication of conflict resolution strategies without identifying the hidden threat. Therefore, understanding the treatment goal is important. Seedat (2013:187) presents several specific goals of treatment that should all be kept in mind, which include to reduce symptom severity; prevent the occurrence of, and/or treating comorbid (*multiple illnesses*) disorders; decreasing functional impairment; modifying pathogenic (*the causing disease*) elements, fear schemas (*mental pattern*); building resilience; preventing relapse (*deteriorating situation*) and improving quality of life.

Relating transgenerational conflict to worldview means that while the African worldview believes in vengeance for themselves, the Christian worldview which is based on Biblical principles believes in forgiveness and reliance on God. Again the worldview of those in authority also impacts on the peace and otherwise of the community especially when those in authority embrace the African worldview of brotherhood not minding the effect of the action of their group on the general populace. It breeds sentiment and chaos. However, when the Biblical worldview which encourages believers to use their wealth and position for the wellbeing of the populace, is lived out there will be peace. As Paul in Phil 2:3-5 points out, "not to do anything out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility considering others better than self". He discourages selfish interests, but to also take the interests of others into consideration in order to portray the attitude of Christ Jesus.

5.3.2. Causes of transgenerational conflict

A traumatic theory that is presented by Kirmayer, Gone and Moses (2014:307) is that the events endured by communities not only have a negative impact on individuals' lives, but it also results in future problems for their descendants. Kirmayer *et al.* (2014:308,309) argue that intergenerational transmission may occur at many levels, including:

- Interpersonally, through altered parenting;
- Within families, which may be disrupted by loss of members or exposure to stressors like domestic violence;
- At the level of the community, when many individuals and families are impacted by disturbances of social networks and experiences of safety and solidarity that affect health; and
- At the level of the nation, where the suppression of culture and the disruption of family and community threaten the continuity of the whole peoples.

Structural factors have also been identified as a contributor to mental health problems for indigenous peoples, especially when the community is disrupted from the traditional patterns of subsistence. Kirmayer *et al.* (2014:311) maintain that undermining community autonomy, the mass expropriation of aboriginal lands and resources, and the creation of enormous economic inequalities could lead to the consequences of such a structural effect, which could motivate the indigenous youth to change into a profound disjunction between traditional lifeways and the modern opportunities to pursue their own life projects in the rural and remote communities. The challenges within indigenous communities include ambivalent attitudes of the larger society, such as the persistence of negative images of indigenous peoples in the popular imagination. In the discourse of causes of conflict in the Niger Delta area (cf.3.5.3) it was noted that the attitude of the politician transforming violence into a commodity priced and purchased in the democratic process, which affects the way new generation thinks about violence.

Kirmayer *et al.* (2014:312) suggest that studies of historical trauma must be balanced by analyses of how political and economic dynamics interact with community wellbeing, and how those forces can be aligned to produce contexts that allow individuals and communities to pursue ways of living that they value. Other researchers recommend that policy decisions should be reviewed to examine the impact on the unemployed, with often poor levels of educational attainment, who live in areas of deprivation and exposed to violence (O'Neill, 2015:18).

The studies on transgenerational conflict evaluated the impact of conflict experienced by one family member on another family member of a younger generation, regardless of whether the younger family member was directly exposed to the event (O'Neill, 2015:26). There is the understanding that family

violence over a number of generations leads to a situation whereby “violent behaviours become the norm in families where there have been cumulative intergenerational impacts of trauma, expressing themselves in present generations as violence on self and others” (Atkinson *et al.*, 2010:139). This research inclined to the lack of love and misuse of power in the society as responsible for transgenerational conflict. This may continue to the subsequent generation if nothing is done to address the causative factor(s). There are clinical suggestions by researchers on how to respond to transgenerational conflict.

5.3.3. Dealing with transgenerational trauma

The discourse in this section is centred on a general approach in dealing with transgenerational trauma, which could begin with treatment of Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. Taking other guidelines into consideration, Seedat (2013:187) acknowledges that there are two distinct approaches that are of proven benefit in the treatment of PTSD which include pharmacological and psychotherapeutic. Therefore, the first choice in Post-traumatic stress disorder to be made is whether to offer medication, psychotherapy, or both. Psychotherapeutic treatments, if not used initially, can be added to, or replace pharmacotherapy. To this, Seedat (2013:188) asserts that chronic PTSD is defined as PTSD of more than 3 months’ duration. Seedat maintained that most treatment guidelines recommend the use of either selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) or exposure-based, trauma focused cognitive-behaviour therapy (TF-CBT) as first-line therapy.

On dealing with trans-generational trauma and building resilience, Devine *et al.* (2015:86) point out the focus on caregivers by training them to become “the mechanism of change for their child by focusing on the trauma of the child at its core. Providing intergenerational psychoeducational group sessions for parents (for unresolved parental traumas), individual sessions to address parental trauma impact on the child, and a child and parent intervention to address trauma related behaviours and symptoms and promote stronger parent relations”.

To address transgenerational trauma Devine *et al.* (2015:90) list five practice steps that were provided by the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies, which include the followings:

- 1) Respect the concerns, needs, strengths and human rights of individuals, their families and communities;
- 2) Be grounded in established scientific and clinical knowledge of trauma mental health and other related professional knowledge;
- 3) Recognise the legitimacy of multiple perspectives on trauma and related concerns;
- 4) Promote an open dialogue among different voices on trauma and related concerns;

- 5) Integrate different perspectives and positions on trauma in the quest for what is helpful in order to steer those who seek informed recommendations to generate focused debates on areas where there is as yet no broad consensus and to stimulate enquiry.

Dealing with transgenerational trauma through a psychosocial approach according to McNally (2014:6) is to address the wellbeing of individuals in relation to their environment. Because the inner world (psycho) and the outer world (social) influence each other. Noting that psychosocial aspects of dealing with transgenerational trauma cannot be responded to within a medical/clinical setting alone, as it has implication for longer term impacts of transgenerational trauma if wider social contexts are not adequately responded to. Therefore, the social aspects of the traumatised individual and community have a significant impact on their wellbeing. The point here is that transgenerational trauma can have long lasting impacts and will be influenced by the environment the person has had to live in as a child, adolescent and adult, which in turn could affect conflict management.

Becker and Weyermann (2006:16) are of the opinion that any approach to trauma which reduces it to a mental or physical pathology alone must be avoided, arguing that trauma is not simply an illness but always a social and political process as well. It is further argued that the PTSD approach is insufficient as it only diagnoses individuals and disregards cultural and social specifics and the insensitive introduction of Western medical concepts of trauma (such as PTSD) should be avoided because it obscures the political and social aspects of suffering and may misrepresent political and social problems as individual psychopathology. Becker and Weyermann however contend that symptoms should be defined and described within their specific contextual meanings. This means that individualised forms of help need to be provided and those helping need to be keenly aware of the specific contextual issues impacting on such trauma and that such measures need to be provided on a long-term basis (cf. McNally, 2014:53).

According to Becker and Weyermann (2006:16), traumatic experiences never disappear completely from the mind hence the goal should not be for healing in its usual sense. Rather those affected by trauma could learn to integrate the traumatic experiences into their lives and find a way out of the role of the victim. They may at some point be able to lead a fairly normal life. It is also pointed out that their suffering, which is linked to the social process both in origin and throughout its development, will not stop. It is further stressed that trauma work should not just be a social and medical issue but a cornerstone of the peace-building process.

Empowerment was identified as the core of the psychosocial approach. Becker and Weyermann (2006:17) note that empowerment and disempowerment form the core concepts of psychosocial efforts worldwide. The terms which are used in different political circles. Some put more emphasis on self-reliance and elimination of social welfare structures and the development of market forces. Others focus on overcoming and eliminating social injustice and on expanding the opportunities for individuals to

shape their own lives. Both interpretations underline the capabilities and the responsibility of the individual.

Elaborating on the empowerment approach in dealing with the traumatic situation, Becker and Weyermann (2006:18) postulate that empowerment which contains the word 'power', has many different meanings, including agency, strength, capability, competence, authority, vigour etc. some of the dimensions and key concept of empowerment are outlined as follows:

- At the individual level, power can be understood as power within. People are able to recognise their own situation as shaped by adaptation, dependence and/or oppression, and they develop a wish to change. They understand that they have the possibility to influence and shape their own lives. They have the power to act, to make decisions and to solve problems.
- Empowerment includes power with the realisation that individuals are not alone but are part of a group and that change can take place when people work together. This power involves thinking, acting and networking with others in a social context.
- The third level is concerned with the changing of social power relations. It is a question of oppression and marginalisation and of reducing the power of dominant groups (power over). The goal should be participation in power in the societal processes.

Empowerment as reiterated by Becker and Weyermann (2006:18) is not limited to developing more positive feelings about oneself and gaining insight into existing situation. It is also to develop the ability to do something about the situation. This calls for actually participating in the social process with a realistic prospect of changing existing power structures that may constitute unpleasant situations.

Different aspects of women's empowerment are also outlined which as adapted from Rodenberg and Wichterich (1999) to include the following. It is important to point out here that the empowerment is not only related to women but to all groups who are affected by the social conflict in order to mitigate its traumatic effects.

- i. **Personal empowerment:** self-confidence, self-assurance, self-respect, opportunities and greater freedom.
- ii. **Legal empowerment:** formal legal security, making use of existing laws, influence on legislation, reproductive rights.
- iii. **Social empowerment:** visibility and social presence, participation in public life, respect by other members of the community, networking.
- iv. **Political empowerment:** participation in political groups and political organisations, influence on political institutions, participation in international political processes, participation in UN conferences.
- v. **Cultural empowerment:** power to shape cultural definitions; influence the symbolic order; maintaining or expanding women's culture and position in religious systems.

- vi. ***Economic empowerment***: economic literacy, property and means of production, income and decision-making power in reference to money, reduction of dependence, risks and stress, economic organising, social security, influence on economic policies.

Another way of dealing with transgenerational trauma is strong emotions of pain and hurt could be to let out, and expressing it to God and a trusted friend. A support system should be provided by their Christian community. This means the church should be in the forefront to identify a traumatised individual and community in order to strategise on how to reach out to them in order to reintegrate them to normal life in the society. Hill *et al.* (2016:23) argue that there may be need for those who are traumatised to tell their story. If they are able to share their experiences, after a while their reactions will become less and less intense.

The conflict in the Niger Delta has a long historical background as revealed through this study, from many factors that feature in the struggle within the area. It seems as if the church has been dormant, perhaps restricting itself to the pulpit ministry. The church has the duty to proclaim the Kingdom of God, but sometimes forgets that the replicate of the Kingdom of God must be seen here on earth through the church “Go ye and make disciples...” (Matt 28:19). In this case it appears that the legacy of the early missionaries in the colonial era might have influenced the church’s understanding of its role in the society. Therefore, this section will reflect on how the church can influence the society through a pastoral missional ministry.

Conflict is not only a personal issue, it is also communal and every community is coordinated by their leaders. For instance, the Niger Delta conflict is a regional problem which affects every community within the region. To be an effective leader, the leader must be creative in conflict management. It means to develop an atmosphere and communal process in which each member can express their hopes and dreams, share their differences, search together for goals and alternatives that will allow each person to accomplish what is important to them and together invests in the general welfare of the community (Hunter, 1990:211).

5.3.4. **Generational transmission of trauma**

In the discussion of intergenerational transmission of trauma, Portney (2003) avers that parents who have witnessed traumatic events may pass dysfunctional worldviews to their children. The report on transmission of the effects of e.g. the Holocaust trauma to the "second generation" provoked articles on intergenerational transmission within the clinical cases. Portney (2003) also points out how parents, suffering from PTSD, have difficulties in modelling a healthy sense of identity and autonomy, appropriate self-soothing mechanisms and inability to maintain a balanced perspective when faced with

life challenges. Instead, they model catastrophic or inappropriately numbed and avoidance or withdrawal responses. Seedat (2013:187) maintains that the symptoms are common in both adults and children. The common characteristics could have a broad range of other outcomes, such as negative feelings and anxiety disorders, behavioural disorders which include attention-deficit restiveness with its associated misconduct, and drug abuse. Therefore, the parents' high levels of anxiety can significantly interfere with the child's developmental progress. The self-image of the children are obviously affected by the image of their parents, which means that parents' success in coping and being resilient determines the child's reaction whether positive or negative.

5.3.5. Effects of posttraumatic stress disorder on conflict management

The conflict situation in the Niger Delta cannot be divorced from the prevailing economic and political conditions. The previous situation of apartheid in South Africa can be taken as an example. Though the acute circumstances in South Africa occurred within the context of the apartheid laws, poverty, oppression and violence were experienced within many black townships. The stress associated with these circumstances is extreme and comparable to catastrophic events outside the range of normal human experience (Michelson, 1994:48). The circumstances of the Niger Delta include the deprivation of economic and political rights of the less privileged which form the majority. Michelson (1994:48) identifies one stress-related condition recently recognised as a distinct syndrome relating to environmental stressors linked with PTSD, as the research on the effects of combat-related stress and the experience of civil conflict, indicate that traumatic experiences have a significant effect on the combatants' functioning. If this position is true, then managing conflict must go beyond granting of an amnesty programme with monetary benefits to a few who surrender their arms, and must include all that are affected by the phenomenon.

Braga *et al.* (2012:9) in their discourse on the repercussions of traumatic messages on the lives of the offspring of Holocaust survivors note that it may contribute to the development of resilient patterns, when they are associated with the defence of communal values, social, and political activism. Devakumar *et al.* (2014:3) note that conflict creates an ecosystem that persists, which is not always suitable to harmony and its legacy is frequently an environment that fosters violence. It could be difficult to curb violence in a community where a child grows up to experience violence as a means of achieving certain objectives, including quieting agitating groups through military coerciveness and in the process destroying life and properties. According to Devakumar *et al.* (2014:4) children who witnessed frightening events (for example, in the Spanish civil war of 1936) are 'more immune' to the horrors of violence; it is especially applicable to child soldiers, who may experience dehumanising conditions

during a formative period, but there is a danger that maladaptive behaviours are passed on to the next generation.

5.3.6. Pastoral ministry and mission in conflict situations

Hunt (2016:129) sees Christian mission as the proclamation and realisation of the gospel beyond the church that should be uniquely tied to public discourse around social and political change in modern democratic societies. It appears, however, that political leaders have failed in their responsibilities due to selfishness, greed, love of money, lust for power and craving for accumulation of wealth, which could continue from generation to generation, except there is a transformation through the gospel. This can happen through the pastoral ministry and missional approach of the church, which involves interacting with the people in order to understand their perspective to life and interpreting their human reality in relations to God's revelation, as to why humans exist, which is about the relationship between God and humanity, between humanity and their fellow human beings. In addition, to know is that the nature and resources are in-trust to humanity by God for safekeeping (Gen 2:15). This is important because some pastors in the contemporary society limited their activities to pastoral care neglecting the mission of the church, to bring healing to the broken hearted not only to the individual, but to the society who are torn apart in conflict.

Asimor (1979:623) in his psychological view is of the opinion that acts of selfishness and unkindness that is witnessed in the society may not be a result of natural human selfishness and unkindness. It may be that people do not know how best to cooperate. This means that there is a need for proper orientation on interpersonal relationships. There is the belief that man has a tendency to love and show kindness more than hatred and conflict, because man was originally made perfect in love, which means that if man is in its perfect nature, he tends to be kind and loving. To buttress this point, Ellens and Rollins (2004:25), in their expository of Genesis 2:25—3:24, discourse the fall of man from innocence into guilt. The fallen man could be viewed with a variety of lenses. Two of these are relevant in this discourse, which are the theological lens and psychological lens. Viewed from a traditional Judaic or Christian theological lens, Ellens and Rollins (2004:25) identify at least five things in the Scripture that is worth noting, (1) the authority and rule of God in the universe, (2) human dependency upon God, (3) the obligation for humans obedience to divine rule, (4) the punishment that humans experience when they disobeyed, and (5) the link between human disobedience to God and the generalised malignancy (*distortion*) in the universe. The intent of this view is to respond to the question of the omnipotent and omniscient transcendence of God in relation to the flawed creation. The emphasis is to point out the relationship between God and humanity as a covenant commitment in which human behaviour has a consequence that can lead to alienation of the covenant relationship, thus distancing humans from God.

Ellens and Rollins (2004:26) aver that the broken relationship constitutes a condition in which humanity fell into such confusion about the meaning of lives that shame, fear and guilt are incited in humanity. Sin is seen as the alienated posture of those who have broken relationships, which are essential to the fulfilment and actualisation of their true natures.

In Genesis 1:27 it is stated that God created man in his own image. The image functions to mirror God to the world, to be God to the non-human in the universe (NIB, 1994:345). Because God is love (1 John 4:8, 16) to love one another is rooted in the essential character of God, which from beginning to the end is love. Here love is the symbol of one who is born of God and knows God (Burge & Hill, 2012:1569).

Therefore, if man is created in the image of God and God is love, then love is the natural thing for man. That is why when Adam saw Eve for the first time (Genesis 2:23) he did not express hatred, but love by accepting the woman as bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. However, after the fall of man in Genesis 3:9-12, man no longer maintained that standard. This is why Adam could not own up to his weakness for accepting the forbidden fruit from his wife instead he shifted responsibility by saying, “the woman whom you gave to me”. For this reason one can say that man was originally created perfect to love and show kindness, but sin, which is the act of disobedience is responsible for the negative change in man to become hostile leading to hatred and conflict (Frethier, 1994:362). Primal sin is according to Frethier (1994:366) considered to be mistrust of God’s world which manifests in disobedience and other human behaviour. Man has the desire to do the right thing, but there is a sin tendency that is more present. Paul wrote in Rom 7:19-20, “For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do — this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it”. If humanity are left to themselves especially from childhood, they will be more inclined to do evil than to do right things because of selfishness. As Wright (2002:568) observes that it is powerless to prevent sin from doing what it chooses in the flesh and eventually bringing death, noting that Paul is preparing the mind of his audience for the contrast with the Spirit’s indwelling that will do what the law could not.

Looking at the fall of man through the psychological lens of Ellens and Rollins (2004:31) as they debate the fall to account for the problem of human pain and universal disorder. It explained why man could conceive beautiful ideals but hardly create them, long for a perfect world but not fashion one, hope for a genuine love but seldom express or experience it. God created the world and humanity and saw that everything was very good. Humans’ excessiveness in their egotism led them away from their divine position with the wrong perspective of God’s mandate. As a result of sin, God’s intent for communion and for human relations seemed alien to them. The consequences of the fall as experienced in the universe include pervading falsehood, debilitating anxiety and the deceptive injustice of human reality,

which of course are the root causes of conflict in the society. This has been the aspiration of man from the beginning. While Ellens and Rollins (2004:32) describe a crucial stage in psychological development of human growth from the childlikeness of Eden to mature Kingdom building and cultural responsibility, it is equivalent to the human growth process of birth and adolescent disengagement from parents, both inherently healthy processes, and the subsequent independent adulthood. Like Adam and Eve, freedom if wrongly approach can lead to unnecessary anxiety and regrettable pains.

“The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?” (Jer 17:9 NIV). Prior to this verse, it was stated that cursed is anyone who puts his trust in man and turns away their hearts from God. Humans’ efforts cannot change human wickedness. The utterance of the prophet, whose personal experience has convinced him that the mind and will of the human being is deceitful and perverse, suggest that the Lord knows the condition of the heart and He alone can do something about it (Miller, 2001:708). These points seem to have positive significances in the efforts to resolve the Niger Delta conflict that have not yielded positive results. The Life Application Bible commentary on the above passage from vv. 5-9 shows that the people of Judah were trusting in false gods and military alliances instead of God (LASB, 1989:1260) thus they were barren and unfruitful. In contrast, those who trust in the Lord flourish like trees planted along a riverbank. In conflict situations, those who trust in the Lord will have abundant strength and wisdom to resolve their problems. The human heart is inclined towards sin, but the power of God is able to help man to resist it.

The conclusion can therefore be made, that the sinfulness of a man's heart is under the divine scrutiny; it is foolishness to trust in man for he is not only frail, but false and deceitful. There is an inclination for humanity to think and present themselves as doing the right thing in the sight of men. The heart and conscience of man in its corrupt and fallen state is deceitful above all things. It is subtle and false. It calls evil good and good evil, puts false colours upon things and cries peace in war situations. It cheats men into their own ruin and this will be the aggravation of it, that they are self-deceivers and self-destroyers. Herein the heart is desperately wicked and deadly without God. What will become of a man if what is in him which should be the candle of the Lord, gives a false light. If man who is to represent God and is entrusted to support his interests, betrays him in society? Such is the deceitfulness of the heart that one may say, who can know it?

As an evangelist, Turnbull (1980:166) also describes a pastor as an ambassador who is expected as the highest minister accredited to act on behalf of the King. The appointment of Christians and pastors in particular as ambassadors in the Kingdom of God, as Adam was appointed is to take care of the earth. The regenerated Christian is saddled with the same responsibilities of ensuring the redemption of the society through the gospel message. Paul in 1 Cor 9:16 states that “...I am compelled to preach.” An

ambassador does not live for himself. Paul recognised that preaching the gospel is not by choice but a necessity, he is entrusted with a commission to work for Christ (Barton & Muddiman, 2001:1123).

There is no end to the conflict in the world, as Song (2005:24) observes that no sphere of life is immune from it, not even religion, including Christianity. As Christians move up the social ladder to join the rich and the powerful, there is a concern to what kind of experience does the church try to shape in the world of conflict? What kind of preaching would the church be able to preach in order to shape people's experience in a world of conflict? In other words, what kind of preaching will be credible today in a world of conflict?

5.4. SIN, THE ORIGIN OF CONFLICT

It is written in Gen 1:31 that "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good". Benyamini (2016:19) comments on this, that creation is good, but is always on the verge of slipping into badness and the word "good" also contains a hidden knowledge of the bad and of the return to the first primal badness. This means that the phrase "very good" derives from the fact that now there is someone to restrain this goodness, someone who will rule it as an agent of the creator. Simply put, originally it was good but there is a tendency to get bad if no one tend to it. Therefore, when man was created God re-evaluated the creature and saw that man was "very good", because he had created an agent that maintains the goodness of the creation. It is worth noting that man as an agent of the Creator was ordained as a perfect man and not the fallen man. "God saw" could denote that there was a review of all that God had created, including mankind – there was no mistake nor rebelliousness. There was no crookedness or corruption especially, with man who bears his image. What God saw was love and not hatred; there was no selfishness or greed in man. So everything was "very good" - the attribute of God was infused into his creature, and man as a primordial creature that bears the image of God on earth represent him. Looking at the perfect stage of humanity as God's creatures, there was no idea of dissatisfaction or disaffection.

Then comes another stage of seeing; this time it is the humanity that saw—in Gen 3:6 where we read about the Fall of Man. "And when the woman saw". The way God sees things is different from the way man sees it and the way humanity looked at things affected their imagination, except if they looked at everything in the world from God's perspective; there is always a tendency to have a misconception of God's creatures including man. Looking at situations from the human imagination and desire, it could lead to dissatisfaction and disaffection. The woman imagined that the tree was good for food when God had already told them not to eat it, because it was pleasant to the eyes and a tree to be desired. Evil imagination could lead to endless desire to make one wise. She took of the fruit thereof and they both ate. According to the Christian belief, this was the beginning of sin in the world (Slick, 2008). Sin is the result of disobedience towards God and the beginning of inevitable conflict. A deviation from the

Word of God leads to the fall. Slick (2008) observes that the fall of Adam as the "original" sin and the hereditary fallen nature and moral corruption that is passed down from Adam to his descendants, contending that Adam, the first man is the one who sinned and thus caused sin to enter the world. Even though Eve is the one who sinned first, because Adam is the head (representative of mankind), his fall included or represented all of humanity (Slick, 2008). Slick (2008) further argues that original sin is not a physical corruption, but a moral and spiritual corruption. Comparing it to the Reformed doctrine of total depravity which states that sin has touched all parts of a person, namely the heart, mind, soul, will, thoughts, desires, etc.

White (2017) avers that the original sin is the doctrine which holds that human nature has been morally and ethically corrupted due to the disobedience of mankind's first parents to the revealed will of God. In Scripture, the first human transgression of God's command is described as the sin of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden resulting in the fall of mankind. The doctrine of original sin holds that every person born into the world is corrupted by the fall and people are powerless to restore themselves unless rescued by God (White, 2017). According to White (2017), original sin is a condition, not something that people do. It is the normal spiritual and psychological condition of human beings, not their bad thoughts and actions. White (2017) further cites Biblical passages where people connect with original sin like Psalm 51:5, which says, "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" and Ephesians 2:2 which says that all people who are not in Christ are "sons of disobedience." Ephesians 2:3 establishes this, saying that we are all "by nature children of wrath." On this premise, White (2017) argues that if this is the case, it can only be because humanity are all by nature sinners.

The Council of Trent (1545-63) held a series of Roman Catholic theological meetings in response to the Reformation. The council gave the official approval to the idea that original sin was transferred from generation to generation by propagation. This formalised the notion of original sin as part of the Roman Catholic doctrine. The Council explicitly ruled out the idea that original sin was transferred by "imitation"; in order to block the idea that human beings just copied the bad example set by their parents and others (BBC, 2009).

5.5. MISSIOLOGICAL NEED (Public political and other structures)

By missiological approach the church in the community should reach out to them with Biblical witness, in the way it was described by Smit (2015:3) that Christians tell the story of God's actions in human history through their testimony. They testify about God's goodness, a goodness he has made known, revealed and which defines his purposes. From the Scripture God does not change, he remains who he

is (Ex 3:14). The missional church only retells the story of his deeds in the history of humanity through the testimony of his goodness that he has made known concerning his purposes.

Hunt (2016:129) is of the opinion that a Christian vision on individual and societal structures should not be limited to forms of personal behaviour and church organisation. Rather, it should be extended to social and political behaviours that must both account for and justify themselves within the broader social setting. What this means precisely is that public life demands a public theology, because the church as agents of God must justify their intentions and actions in public, to the public, in relation to social and political structures shaped by Christian witness.

The *missio Dei*—Trinitarian understanding that mission is God’s mission— affirms that the church is both the fruit of mission as well as the agent of mission for God (Cray, 2017:103). This means that both the Triune God and the church, as the community of God’s people, are missional by their very nature. Therefore, pastoral ministry will be incomplete if it is not missional in its approach to affect the community.

Missiology has been shaped significantly during the last century, especially towards concern for social and economic justice and engagement in the public sphere. As a part of Christian theology, it also has been developed to deal with the changing contexts of secularism, multi-religious contexts, globalisation, and political conflicts. It is evident that the scope of mission is not limited to the religious and spiritual realm but deals with all realms of public life, including the socio-economic and cultural life of individuals, communities and nations, but equally there is evidence that there is a certain reluctance to engage in the area of politics, especially in dealing with state politics. Kim (2017:16) insists that there are numerous cases in mission history on the struggle of missionaries over the issue of church and state politics, but by and large, missionaries traditionally tended to maintain a certain distance from state politics. In his account of church history Gonzalez (1985:368, 369) reveals how from the time of the Hussite struggle against foreign invaders, they have been convinced that Christian faith must not be something private, but must have an impact in society, leading to greater justice. Gonzalez (1985:369) mentions how Ernst Bloch, a Marxist philosopher who earlier misunderstood the Christian values and presupposed that Christianity has been an instrument of oppression, however, was prompted by the same Marx himself to see in the early Christianity a movement of protest against oppression. Bloch then reinterprets Christian doctrines and Biblical history as having a positive value which lies in the message of hope. The “principle of hope” was early Christianity’s most significant contribution to human history. Some of the important aspects of human social issues that need missional influence in order to address the social conflict are discussed below.

5.5.1. Mission and social justice

The role and concern of the leaders are very important in the healing of transgenerational conflict in any society. In the society where people are too busy and less concerned about God, they tend to listen to authority and well-meaning individuals. The church could be one of the channels through which a given community can be transformed morally through a missional approach. The task to prepare members to understand the Biblical principle of leadership as encouraging those who have exhibited the understanding of the moral quality concept to serve as a witness in the public sector with their voices and influence should not be undermined. To this effect, Kim (2017:8) is of the opinion that public theology could be identified as critical, reflective and reasoned for engagement of theology in society to bring the Kingdom of God, which is for the sake of the poor and marginalised, by engaging with the academy, the church and society.

However, the preaching of love and justice is an inseparable function of the church both as a prophetic declaration and pastoral care (Amos 5:15; Mic 6:8; James 2:8). The most profound understanding of love springs from God's action in the life of Jesus when it is stated that "In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins" (1 John 4:10). By responding to the hostility of man with love shows how God demonstrates love for mankind to enjoy his presence and yet refuse to live according to his wish. Therefore, God is in himself mission through and through. Sending and being sent are integral to his nature, for love is un-calculating in the pursuit of its object. It perseveres even when opposed, rejected and misinterpreted. Love is centrifugal – it always tends outwards from its centre (Kirk, 1999:29).

In a world shaped by conflict, preaching should pay close attention to the business of re-shaping human experience. McClure (2005:17) states that preaching can help humanity to consciously resist the scripts of greed, violence, and loveless power that dominate the social and political consciousness of the people. McClure (2005:18) however stresses that through preaching individuals can rediscover their ability to reorient the manner of speaking the peace of God in new and redemptive ways.

The concept of liberation as it relates to people, especially in view of God's liberation of Israel from slavery in Egypt, has political, material, and social meanings which when applied in society brings about *shalom* aimed at the liberation of the needy, the disadvantaged, the poor, and the helpless. Isike and Alokwu (2010:26) draw the interconnection between love and justice, as love is the driving force of *shalom*, while justice is its end result. Arguing that since God acts to bring about justice through salvation, salvation is at once an expression of both God's love and justice. On his part, Steunernagel (2009:62) argues that the mission of the church must be holistic, as God provides peace for humanity

as well as for the whole creation, focusing on the *shalom* of God in creation that affects and embraces all of human life and all human beings as a community gift.

For the church to be effective in this mission of peace through love, the focus must be directed towards social justice to all without any form of prejudice; the church must be free from financial taxation in order not to influence its messages with fund raising and relinquishing the primary obligation of delivering the redemptive message that will shape the society by making disciples of all nations. Therefore, Christian love must be in action as Stott (1992:151) presents love as an action. Love is not just romance, let alone eroticism. It is not even pure sentiment or emotion, though it sounds abstract, it leads to positive attitudes and concrete actions which include patience, kindness and goodness, and seeks the true welfare of others at whatever personal cost (Stott, 1992:151).

5.5.2. **Mission and politics**

Pastoral ministry, must be extended to the society, the church must concern itself to the social wellbeing of all human beings. Therefore, social politics can be used as a tool for conflict management. Recently, many Christians started to examine and re-examine their political and social responsibility. Skillen (1980:3) supposes two reasons, which might have been responsible for this new trend. Firstly, there is the possibility of the Spirit of God inspiring the church and Christians to fulfil the commands of Christ to be peacemakers in the world of conflict (2 Cor 5:18), to minister the mercy of God and lead a righteous life and show an example of a servant leadership to the society. It involves being the light of the world and salt of the earth, and to give justice to the oppressed. Secondly, Christians along with other members of the society are affected by many aspects of public life. In addition to these reasons, if the church fails to involve itself in the political structure of the society, it will have little influence and this could pose danger to the mission of the church, because the structure will determine the limit and value of the message to be presented on the lighter consequences and in the severe consequence, persecution will erupt to discourage the propagations of the gospel message.

The great responsibility and opportunity Christians have today are to develop and contribute to the political system in view of government and the political community that render true justice to every citizen, both Christian and non-Christian alike. However, this cannot be achieved as pointed out by Skillen (1980:10) without unity in the ministry of the church and seeing that the Christians are divided, they thereby constitute part of the problem. Christians have adopted so many positions and perspectives in the name of Christianity that the Christian faith appears to be a threat to political stability rather than the great contributor to peace, justice, and public trust. Latini (2011:25) observes that in pre-modern societies, religious tradition provided indisputable guidance for daily living and a definitive answer to

human existential questions. It does seem however, that in the present global, cosmopolitan society, religious traditions no longer determine the course of human existence.

It is important to clarify the stand of this study as regards to church involvement in the social politics. It is not an advocacy for the church to take over political power, but through the gift of the Holy Spirit, there are those with administrative ministry within the Christian community and with the understanding that social action to some extent will mean political action. In examining Christian involvement in politics, Stott (2006:33) makes this assertion why it is extremely important to examine the relationship between Christianity and politics for two reasons. Firstly, to convince those who are overcautious that there is an appropriate involvement of Christians in politics and that this is part of the Christian calling. Secondly, to delineate the boundaries of that calling so that those who have become deeply involved in politics might appreciate the limits of that involvement and the danger of politicising the gospel. The point is that in carrying out its missional role, the church does not seek political power or pleasures for itself. In taking a prophetic stance it must not serve its own ends, ministering only to those of the message entrusted to it (Kirk, 1999:216).

If the pastor lost focus of the missionary calling of the church to the society (Eph 4:12), they will have little impact in the church, instead they will be busy strategising how to attract more members like the Pharisees in Matthew who travelled over land and sea to win a convert and when he became one, they made him twice as much a son of hell (Matt 23:15) - it is regarded as opposing the mission of the kingdom (Boring, 1995:435). The Church must look inward first and actively repent of their sins, to avoid superficial misuse of scriptures and live to please God, so that through God's power of the Holy Spirit, they can transform the society. In discoursing the contradictions and tensions within ministry, Cormode (2009:102) opines that pastoral ministry is to equip the people of God to engage in the mission of God outside the church.

If the Biblical revelation has no place for "secular politics" in the sense of a political life that has nothing to do with God's authority and revelation, Skillen (1980:17) asks "What is the source of our modern sacred/secular dualism that has led us to separate from God's authority and Biblical revelation so far from practical politics?" He observed that the Bible shows distinctions between priestly offices and the offices of kings and judges. The life of total service which God expected from his people in Biblical times was not without diversity or distinctions. For example, parents had special authority in family life, priests and prophets performed distinct religious services, kings and governors held unique public offices, teachers and craftsmen displayed their special God-given gift and talents. The emphasis here is the recognition of God in all these diversity. Where man lost focus of God in his activities it would be

characterised by corrupt practices, hence a fight against corruption begins with a fight against godlessness, not with arsenal but with a missional encounter.

Campbell (2000:158) quoting from Aristotle (book 1, chapter 2) stresses the need for the church to be part of social policy making stating that:

It is evident that the state is a creation of nature, and that man is by nature a political animal. ... The proof that the state is a creation of nature and prior to the individual is that the individual, when isolated is not self-sufficing and therefore he is like a part in relation to the whole. But he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself must be either a beast or a God.

Therefore, politics as applied to pastoral care are intended to convey the idea of broadening the context of pastoral care to include the communal aspects of human experiences. Politics of pastoral care mean a descent from prejudice and a cloistered view of human problems to the harsh realities of life in society. Politics must be about wisdom, not just about manipulation. What point has the altering of injustices if all that are given in return is a new and insatiable quest for false security? If politics should encompass a vision of the totality of human life, in pain as well as pleasure, in rest as well as movement, in death as well as the struggle for survival, then such a vision should come somewhat from the style of pastoral care. Christian pastoral care should surely be capable of bringing to society a missional awareness of finitude, of the uselessness of running from the pain necessary for living and of the oneness of all that God has created (Campbell, 2000:167). Therefore, pastoral ministry should include preparing the church for socio-political transformation that will ensure justice for all citizens without prejudice.

When an institution is separated from the church, the church cannot exercise its power as given by God. Okesson (2016:143) argues that we cannot witness to institutions without doing so through power, which lies at the heart of how institutions emerge, solidify, and exert influence in the world. Therefore, for any institution to be affected by the mission of God, rising above human powers and over time, assume spiritual characteristics and if the gospel is about Christ's reign over the entire world (Eph 1:10) and the kingdom of God about power (1 Cor 4:20), and the role of the Church to witness to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realm (Eph 3:10), the gospel must relate to such institutions and take its rightful position.

The two-fold responsibility assigned to man in the garden as a mission, which could also be regarded as creational mandate: to be fruitful, rule and subdue the earth (Gen. 1:28-30) was not a heavy burden but a gift from God for humanity to occupy and enjoy, not fearing creation. This mission indicates that the first way in which all humanity can glorify and serve God is by caring for his creation (Adeyemo,

2006:11). Christianity has been identified as a religion of creation, salvation and eschatological culmination with the understanding of the physical world and history as the arena of God's activity. Thus, in order to do theological reflection with any integrity there is in the first place an adequate doctrine of creation. How is God involved in the wondrous processes of nature that are being unravelled almost daily? (Ballard, 2009:286). This should also be a reflection in the human political system.

Relating to the exercise of rule and dominion in this context, Okesson's (2016:143) discourse is more on the importance of power as influential tools for social transformation through the gospel. Observing that the longer certain "powers" operate in a given society, the more they take on a life of their own, which reveals another aspect of institutional life. Though institutions arise from human agency, over time they become resistant to change. Institutions by nature institutionalise, which means they create boundaries, establish rules, operate according to norms, and provide roles for people. Since the church is not separated from the society, sometimes the rules affect the church and its mission.

5.5.3. **Mission and power**

Power, whether political or spiritual is necessary in the church ministry to make the message relevant to the society stressing the need for institutional witness. Okesson (2016:146) observes that it will be difficult to engage in institutional witness without some kind of thoughtful engagement with power, which most people do not locate within the discourse of missiology. The reasons behind this reluctance, were traced to historical legacy of Western missions who have been accused of collusion with colonial institutions and/or culpable for the misuse of power, whether openly in coercive practices or more subtly through the means of articulating theology to other people through Western cultural lenses. Okesson (2016:146) gives other reasons why power is not a topic people associate with redemption. Perhaps deep down there is the feeling that power is too carnal, dirty, certainly not the kind of thing that spiritual people talk about. This view necessitated Danladi (2009:23) to stress the need for Christians' commitment in Nigerian politics. Danladi (2009:27) reiterates that the pioneer missionary did not encourage Christians to fully participate in politics, as anyone who is interested in governance of the country was considered unspiritual and politics were regarded as dirty game. Christians were encouraged to distance themselves from politics. Many missionary agencies did not create an enabling environment for their converts to actively participate in politics, neither allowing them to engage in any social action to correct injustice or challenge the corrupt practices of the political elites. Since they considered the strategies adopted by politicians to win elections as dishonest and their attitude constitute deception and insincerity (Danladi, 2009:29).

However, from a theological point of view, Okesson (2016:146) maintains that power is aligned with the gospel stating that at the very heart of the gospel lies the issue of power referring to the kingship of

God to have position over the entirety of the Christian faith and the whole of creation. While Gray (2007:176) identifies politics from a theological perspective with the concepts that transferred the notion of God into political sovereignty as a final and total authority in the person as a main decision-maker with whom the power of the state ultimately lies.

With the belief that God will once again rule the world and that this has already begun in the incarnation, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, there is no limitation in the authority of a Christian as stated in Matthew 28:18-19 “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations....” The Holy Spirit is the one who empowers the disciples and were authorised to carry out the Messiah’s prophetic ministry in which the community of Jesus’s disciples after Easter realised under the guidance of the Spirit that the church of Jesus Christ is to be a universal, inclusive community of all nations (Boring, 1995:503; Wall, 2002:37). It is affirmed that with the loss of power comes the loss of Biblical imagery as well as the loss of Kingdom relevance for huge swaths of human life (Okesson, 2016:146).

God in Genesis 1:28 gave manpower to rule and subdue the earth ‘in righteousness’. God gave humanity a responsibility as caretakers, which linked human righteousness and the welfare of the earth with justice. The power given to humans must be understood as a care-giver, to nurse and not to exploit as the image of God, to be a ‘care-taker’ of God’s creation, both human and non-human (Mathews, 1996:174; Wenham, 1987:33; Fretheim, 1994:346). Adam compromised this power with his disobedience to God in the Garden (Gen 3:17). Matthews (1996:174) also points out that sin impacts the prosperity of the earth and its inhabitants. The above passage shows how human sin elicits God’s curse upon the land and the later wickedness of human society resulted in the destruction of the whole earth by the flood (Gen 7:21-23). Although Jesus came to reclaim the power for mankind, Satan still came to tempt Him in Matt 4:10 (I will give you the power if you worship me). Jesus portrays an example that power is not to be craved for, but to be received from God as Blomberg (1992:85) observes that the success syndrome, empire building or guarantees of health and wealth are the instruments Satan uses to draw humanity away from God which will only end up in death. Those who deviate from the Word of God crave for power, but those who depend on God in obedience to His Word wait for the perfect time to receive it from God. The Apostles waited and they received spiritual power (Acts 1:8; 2:4). They utilised it in accordance with God’s purpose. On the contrary, Simon craved for the same power to the point of offering money, but was rebuked by Peter because his heart was not right with God (Acts 8:18-21). Simon thought he could buy the Holy Spirit’s power with money in order to manipulate the power for his own benefit in complete disregard of the community’s welfare and salvation (Wall, 2002:139). The only way to receive God’s power is to do God’s will first. To first seek God’s Kingdom before other things (Matt 6:33). The climax of Jesus’ teaching on humans’ anxiety is

that when priorities regarding treasures in heaven and on earth are right, God will provide for fundamental human needs (Blomberg, 1992:127). Hill (1972:145) assumes that the Kingdom could mean God's sovereign rule or kingship, which demands man's undivided loyalty and obedience to God, while righteousness is in agreement with the will of God as man obeys and trusts in him. The motive of those who crave for power is not to please God for their selfish interest, they can go to any length to acquire the power and can use the same power to deceive and exploit the people. Perhaps that is why people are confused about the happening in the church today. Confusion came because the power of God in some cases has been replaced by the craving power that manipulate and masquerade themselves as God's power. God does not give humanity power to enhance their own lives, but to glorify him by building up others. It does not matter whether it is spiritual or political. When Saul received the power from God (1 Samuel 11:6-13) he was humble and was able to rescue those under oppression through divine empowerment (Birch, 1998:1055), but when God renounced him, he became arrogant and began to crave for the power to the point of becoming evil in his desire to maintain the power (1 Samuel 22:7-19; Birch, 1998:1149).

Without the spiritual power of the Triune God, the political power is in chaos, characterised with all forms of conflict. Jesus told Pilate he would have no power over him, if it were not given to him from above (John 19:11). Even the power that Pilate claims according to O'Day (1995:821) is false, because the authority over Jesus' life and death rests with God. The exercise of power by Pilate in this context is to serve as an instrument to fulfil God's purpose of redemption which Pilate himself did not know. At his resurrection Jesus said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you..." (Matt 28:18-20). This is the same power and authority that Satan uses to try to seduce him in the desert (Blomberg, 1992:85). After his resurrection Jesus gave a marching order with authority to make disciples of all nations, a decisive initiation into the Christian community (Blomberg, 1992:431). People may crave for power on their own and perhaps this contributes to the reason why they could not make a positive impact in the society. Frethier (1994:362) comments on the effects of God's punishment of humanity's disobedience, after eating the forbidden fruit, that basically it relates to humans' primary role in the society; disruption in relationship among animals; between animals and humanity; between humanity and humanity, and between humanity and God. Disobedience to God leads to humiliation, domination, subordination, conflict, suffering and struggle, to affect every aspect of human life and disharmony reigns supreme.

God was and is in every historical event, for example in the great persecution of the church from AD 295 when a number of Christians were condemned to death for refusing to join the army and for leaving it. The persecution was severe because there was no Christian in state affairs, until AD 313 when the

“Edict of Milan” was signed as part of an agreement between Constantine and Licinius (Gonzalez, 1984:103, 107). During the reign of Constantine Christianity not only became a *religio licita*, it soon was the only legitimate religion in the empire. The situation was similar to that which prevailed in certain periods of Israel’s history as an independent nation. As it has happened then, so also now the new situation leads to compromises. Frequently the compromise was in the area of social justice, the “court prophets” finding it either impossible or imprudent to criticise the authorities when the latter had connived and even colluded in injustice. Still, since the membership of church and state for all practical purposes overlapped during the entire period from Constantine to the dawn of the modern era and since the rulers explicitly acknowledged that they were as much responsible for the religious and moral life of their subjects as they were for politics, the realms of religion and politics were somehow held together (Bosch, 2016:411).

Some theologians see power as a necessary evil following the entrance of sin into the world. Okesson (2016:147) argues that when power is associated with sin it is often understood as synonymous with violence and certainly with the demonic realm. It is important for the church to understand and be certain about the moral foundations of divine power. The Psalmist acknowledged that power belongs to God and His unfailing love (Ps. 62:11-12). If indeed power and unfailing love belong to God, then his children are in the better position to exercise the power of God here on earth in order to demonstrate the unfailing love of God to mankind.

Okesson (2016:147) further argues that the key for moving forward is to locate God’s power in a way that guards humans (and institutions) from idolatry, while freeing humans to the full benefits of regal (royal) stewardship. Christ reorients persons to God by reimagining God’s power for humans (Luke 22:25; John 13:3-17). This teaches the role of a Christian in its community devoid of oppression as seen in the world today which inevitably creates a connection between the gospel message and the life situation of the church as Jesus did not use his superiority to exploit the privilege his disciple expected (Culpepper, 1995:425; O’Day, 1995:728). Christ redefines power from the inside out: through obedience to the Father, by serving others, revealed in weakness, and ultimately through the cross, by which Jesus disarms the principalities and powers (Col 2:15), revealing a new kind of humanity in the world.

The distribution of power in social institutions is not inherently dirty if it comes under the lordship of Jesus Christ. In Jesus’ leadership he exalts the weak, chooses the pathway of suffering and reveals a new kind of power in the world seen in the way he redefines spiritual power, reorders politics (Matt 20:25), discloses true economics (Luke 12:33-37) and reveals the true nature of social relations (John 13:34-35). For humans to be faithful image-bearers, they must conform to how God uses power. In

other words, if power is of God and Jesus represents such power to the fullest, then human power must conform to Jesus Christ. We do so through the Holy Spirit, our Advocate (Okesson, 2016:149). God through His power brought life into existence from the chaotic and formless nature, therefore, power must be creational and life-giving; the power of God is not to destroy but to build. The reaction and interpretation of power should be to give life and hope to the oppressed, power rightly understood calls forth life.

The understanding of creational power as Okesson (2016:150) puts it, that God's power brings the world into existence and God shares his nature with creation and the expectation is that human power must conform to the image of the Son and shared amongst other humans possess creational properties. Apostle Paul's understanding of this creational power necessitated his statement that, *the authority God gave me for building you up, not for tearing you down* (2 Cor 13:10). God uses power for others, for the world. Human power should do likewise. Where human power is subject to divine power, it leads to a healthy and secured society because it serves the purpose of God on earth. If the society arises from the distribution and usage of power, the church must sever its energies on the inside before it can faithfully witness outside in the society. Culture is not just outside, but is deeply woven into the fabric of local congregations. The church should pay attention to the structures of power in order to understand how they should be employed for the good of others in the community.

5.5.4. **Missional movements**

It is important to discuss some of the missional movements for missional churches as outlined in chapter one of Keifert (2017:86). One of these movements is that Jesus announces the reign of God that is both already but not yet fully in action and calls into existence a church that lives out of that already, but not yet fully of the gospel of the reign of God. Furthermore, a critical reorientation of a missional ecclesiology, meaning the reorientation of the will of the Triune God in the person of the Son and through the power of the Holy Spirit, calling, gathering and sending of the church in the work of God's mission into the world. Rather than perceiving missiology as a movement within ecclesiology and therefore, properly speaking, the work and mission of the church, this movement places God as the chief actor who invites the church to participate in God's mission in the world.

The church as an alternative community in the world should not be an isolated community in the fallen world. The church must rather penetrate into every fabric of the society with the re-creational Word of God with the understanding that the world is fallen; its powers and principalities, though redeemable, are profoundly against the reign of God. This alternative community will embody a different system of power and economics than that of the principalities of the world. The themes of a holy priesthood from 1 Peter strongly inform this movement in the missional church (Keifert, 2017:86). The position of the

church in the society is to give hope. Stott (1992:388), in his discourse of the church and society, regards the church as the messianic community, characterised by the truth, love and holiness to which Christ called it. The church as a foundation to hold the truth and as a pillar to thrust it high. As for love, Christ through the cross destroyed the dividing wall of hostility between people of different races, nations, tribes and classes. Therefore, the new society of Jesus Christ is marked as truth, love and holiness. This mark is what differentiates the people outside the church in the world, and the people of the church in the world. Stott (1992:389) stresses that it is through the church as a redeemed community, who maintains without compromise the values of Christ's kingdom that God gave the world blessings of family and government by which evil is restrained and relationships are controlled. He reiterated the fact that the church must penetrate society as salt and light. It is legitimate to deduce from these models that Jesus intended his followers to influence the world for good (Stott, 1992:389 – 390).

5.5.5. Mission and public responsibility

Kim (2017:8) in her analysis of the recent development in public theology, the formation of the Global Network for Public Theology, and active scholarly discussions through the platform of the International Journal of Public Theology, argues that there is significant interest in the public engagement of theology in contemporary society. Referring to David Tracy's publication "The Analogical Imagination" (1981), Kim (2017:8) suggests the three publics of theology as academy, church and society. She further articulates that there are three types of theology corresponding respectively to each public: fundamental theology, systematic theology, and practical theology. In the context of "Christian socialism" in the early 20th century, Archbishop William Temple developed the church's engagement with public life. His contributions to the church's approach to social welfare were the most significant. In his most influential book, *Christianity and the Social Order* (1942), on the question of the church's involvement in socio-political and economic issues, Kim lists the four things, emphasised by Archbishop William namely: sympathy for those who suffer which a Christian heart and conscience cannot ignore; the educational influence on the social and economic system; Christian justice; and the duty of conformity to the 'Natural Order' which is to be found in the purpose of God. The article also stated particularly the concern about the sufferings caused by lack of good accommodation, malnutrition and unemployment, and maintained that the church needs to challenge the existing system and "find an appropriate social order which provides employment, steadily and generally . . . Christian sympathy demands this". Kim further argues that the Church cannot, without betraying its own trust, omit criticism of the economic order. Also affirming the voice of the weaker sections of society and emphasised choice, freedom, and responsibility when it comes to the church's involvement in social transformation.

Kim (2017:9) discusses Niebuhr's *Nature and Destiny of Man* (1955) which examined two Christian attitudes to government: first, the government is an ordinance of God and its authority is attributed to God, and second, the authorities are subject to divine judgement. Kim (2017:9) alleges that, although the principle of order and its power prevent anarchy, its power is not identical with divine power.

The monopolisation of the public by dominant secular bodies could override Christian influence and render the message irrelevant to the majority, unless the church is concerned about the public discussion and decision-making in the whole spectrum of life in wider society. By so doing they can influence the desired change which can best be achieved through a restructuring process. For reformation to take place and be meaningful in the society, various segments of the society should be involved to bring their own expertise into the debate and contribute to the formation of policy for the common good; this in turn will transform the Christian community as well. In view of this discourse, Van der Walt (2010:411) argues that Christians and theologians have no clear view of involvement in society.

Kim (2017:10) considers the ideal of John Courtney Murray which presented a Catholic defence of American constitutionalism and argued that the Catholic community could participate fully in American public life with religious integrity. Kim (2017:10) explores the fact that "American consensus" recognises the sovereignty of God over nations as well as over individual people based on the tradition of natural law and the principle of consent. Kim (2017:10) further points out that, in the US constitution, the state is distinct from society and limited in its offices toward society and that the freedom of the people is not libertarianism but a "moral and spiritual enterprise, which mean the freedom to do what is right". Kim (2017:10) sees the need for the church to work with society to establish a "new moral act of purpose and a new act of intellectual affirmation".

Leffel (2017:178) opines that social movements are just one type of public actor. Traditional institutions, non-governmental organisations, business corporations, political parties, lobbies, interest groups, ethnic communities, and smaller less formal organisations such as clubs, civic associations, artists' collectives and sports leagues are all public actors. So are individuals who share or "publish" their creative productions with others in all walks of life. So also is the church, as a constellation of congregations, denominational structures, academies, service organisations, missions, social advocacies, and Christian individuals all together regarded as the public. The policy and action of each public actor is important to identify and understand their functionality within the public sphere whether its intentions are virtuous or nefarious. The clarity of its claims and the opportunities it pursues are of interest.

In societies where religion plays a strong and important role the institutions of the society reflect the religion. Yet in societies where religion plays a more secondary role to say that all political concepts

are secularised theological concepts is an overstatement. Gray (2007:175) is of the view that political concepts in the medieval period were built upon theological ideas. The application of political theology in pastoral mission or as a responsibility of a missional church is important to understand how the political actor outside the church operates and with an idea on how to counter the nefarious scheme. The aim of this is to be able to liberate the society from injustices and oppression without compromising the Christian faith. Kim (2017:12) argues that liberation and political theologies, in spite of their differences, share many common features in contrast to public theology, whereas public theology has a different emphasis from the other theologies. The key aim of theological engagement is to challenge any kind of monopoly in public life and to seek for a fairer and more open society by employing advocacy, critical dialogue, and debate. Political theology should aim at encouraging effective participation of Christians in politics, with the focus to do God's will (Danladi, 2009:98).

Kim (2017:17) discusses the public theology as a topic of social stimulation using Jürgen Habermas' book *God for a Secular Society: The Public Relevance of Theology*, which asserts that theology must publicly maintain the universal concerns of God's coming Kingdom, because "there is no Christian identity without public relevance and no public relevance without theological Christian identity. Furthermore, as the theology of God's Kingdom, Kim argues that theology has to be public theology in the mode of a public, critical and prophetic complaint to God. In like manner, theology should exhibit general concern in the light of hope in Christ for the Kingdom of God by becoming political in the name of the poor and the marginalised in a given society, by thinking critically about the religious and moral values of the societies in which it exists and by presenting its reflections as a reasoned position.

Kim (2017:18) discourses on John de Gruchy's assertion which shows that the relationship between power and powerlessness has always been a struggle for democratic theory and the church's role is important in keeping those who are in power accountable and at the same time empowering those who are weak to exercise their rights for the good of the whole society. Challenging the notion that a democratic system will produce morally responsible citizens as a matter of course. It means that democracy without Christ will always end up or continue in crises. It is the morally formed and empowered who are able to make democracy work which cannot be achieved in any other system or personality except in Christ.

5.5.6. Mission and peace-making

Kurtz (1982:116) observes that many Christians are uncomfortable with the deliberate use of conflict for social change, pointing out the critics of those who argued against a conflict theory (conflict as strategy for change) maintained that "the role of the church in this age of alienation is to serve as a channel for God's reconciling love as it flows from God to man to his brother". Kurtz however, argues

that conflict is inevitable where persons exist and act in interrelationship and interdependence, as they do in the church. It is important to learn how to contain these tensions and to channel them to constructive ends. According to Kurtz (1982:117), it is important for clergymen to understand the emotional factors involved in conflict and advises that clergymen, who are often comfortable with the way of life in modern society to a win/lose approach to conflict, should experiment where feasible with integration as a strategy.

Reychler (1997) discusses how attention has been drawn by the increased engagement of churches or church communities in the search for détente (*cooperation*) or constructive management of conflicts, making reference to the voice of the American bishops in the nuclear debate in the eighties. The role of churches in the democratic emancipation of Central and Eastern Europe or the impact of church leaders in the conflict dynamics in several African conflicts was debated. Pointing out how the role of the church attracted considerable attention in various parts of the world, which include religious role players for instance Desmond Tutu and Allan Boesak from South Africa. Reychler (1997) gives more examples, e.g. Sudan, Mozambique and Zaire and also noted how Mgr. Jaime Gonçalves, the Archbishop of Beira played an important role in the realisation of a peace-agreement in Mozambique on 4 October 1992 which ended a gory (*unpleasant*) war that wasted millions of lives and half of the population were on the run for safety. Reference was also made of Zaire, how Monseigneur Laurent Monsengwo was elected as chairman of the "High Council of the Republic" and played a central role in the difficult negotiations between President Mobutu and his opponents. The Burundian Catholic bishops, representing half of the population, are now mediating towards the development of a more collegial (*mutual*) government to prevent further violence. Reychler (1997) also mentions the role of the church in empowering people in the Third World with the Liberation theology and many recent efforts to provide peace services in conflict areas, including field-diplomacy.

While discussing the role of religion in the conflict of Sudan, Nsubuga (2015) claims that religion is able to organise and mediate beliefs and practices shaping norms and the way people behave in their day-to-day life. Religion creates a framework in which its followers interpret the world around themselves and how they respond and adapt to situations and encounters in their day-to-day life with what they believe are righteous and justifiable action.

The church as the salt of the earth and light of the world (Matthew 5:13-14) is expected to be the promoter of peace and justice playing an active role in conflict resolution. The Church can help in social conflict by preaching e.g. about forgiveness both to the victim and victimiser as a tool in the process of conflict resolution.

References have been made to the Christian contribution to non-violence and peacebuilding with the key concepts of reconciliation that is based on God's own reconciliation with a sinful humanity, the powerful model of Jesus' self-sacrifice to redeem humanity and his invitation to "turn the other cheek", and finally his attention to the poor and the marginalised that encourages Christians to care about the dignity of the human person. In Christianity, there is a close relationship between social justice and reconciliation. Christian values were also identified as the heart of the Western conception of human rights. In the aftermath of World War II, the work of Christian denominations and the ecumenical movement were recognised as important pillars for the peaceful reconstruction of Europe and in the establishment of the European Communities. Maintaining that Christianity provides a whole set of non-violent responses to conflicts worldwide, both within and between societies is to be noted (The British Academy, 2015:29).

Wafula (2012:19) discusses the role of the church as peacemaker and reconciler which is strengthened by the fact that the social and political crises in the society radically question the message of the gospel. Postulating that the Church's charisma and the unique nature vis-à-vis reconciliation, at whatever level are required lies in the fact that the Church feels obligated to go to the roots of the conflict in order to bring healing and true reconciliation. Wafula (2012:21) further traced the role of the church in Kenya's politics to the advent of colonialism where the church and state were fused, as the Church enhanced the government's role in provision of services entrenched in development.

The ideal of the missional church is also reiterated by Wright (2010:73) that it is not a new idea, suggesting that the concept of a missional church can be understood from Biblical theology as the community of people chosen and called since Abraham to be the channel of blessing to the nations. This implies that if what God had accomplished in Christ, according to Wright (2010:75) is nothing less than what God promised to Abraham, to bring about the blessing of all nations on earth, then the role of the church in the social conflict is to ensure peace through the blessing of the Prince of peace (Isa 9:6) could be achieved.

Kim (2017:15) affirms that missionaries have always interfaced with aspects of public life. Life was never confined as "private" within ecclesiological boundaries. Identifying that the discussion of the priority of evangelism and social involvement was at its peak in the 1960s and 1970s when evangelical and ecumenical discussions were heated over the issue, however, both parties gradually came to a certain consensus over the issue. Therefore, pastoral ministry ought to extend beyond the ecclesiastical boundaries to affect the community outside the church as well.

More recently, "The Cape Town Commitment" contains the section on "truth and public arenas," which says, "We encourage Christ-followers to be actively engaged in these spheres, both in public service or

private enterprise, in order to shape societal values and influence public debate” (CTC, 2010:195). More explicitly in the section on “Christ’s peace for the poor and oppressed,” the statement mentions modern slavery, human trafficking, poverty, disabilities, HIV and ecological issues. “The Common Call” from Edinburgh 2010 called for mission to be involved in liberation for all poor and oppressed, to critically reflect on systems of power and accountability in the use of power structures.

This research aligns closer with Public Theology as a reformation, rather than Liberation Theology as a revolutionary. There is no total liberation in this world because God has not yet created the promised new heaven and new earth, the home of righteousness; not yet has the justice of the Kingdom ousted all oppression and the peace of the Kingdom removed all violence, The promised perfect peace is yet to be manifested, as we are in between the past and the future (already and not yet). However, the reformation is to ensure that evil does not override good in the society, which is made possible through the pastoral and missional responsibilities of the church.

The World Council of Churches (WCC) statement prepared by the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism (CWME), “Together towards Life: Mission and Evangelism in Changing Landscapes,” states that mission from the margins calls for an understanding of the complexities of power dynamics, global systems and structures, including local contextual realities and acknowledged that mission has generally aligned with the privileges of the centre and largely failed to challenge economic, cultural and political systems which have marginalised some people. It also emphasises that Christians are called to acknowledge the sinful nature of all forms of discrimination and to transform unjust structures (Kim, 2017:15). In their view the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF) consultation in 1983 stated that evil is not only in the human heart, but also in social structures. The mission of the church includes both the proclamation of the Gospel and its demonstration. Christians must therefore evangelise, respond to immediate human needs, and press for social transformation (Bosch, 2016:417).

As Christ has reconciled the church to God so also is the responsibility of the church through the power of the Holy Spirit as a missionary to engage in a reconciliatory ministry in the community. Jesus came to give peace to the world that was characterised by chaos of violence due to the fall of man. Paul’s theological teaching of reconciliation runs parallel with the *shalom* and to the Kingdom of God as used in the gospels by Jesus in his preaching. Carmichael (2008:1) states that the Kingdom is an eschatological concept designating in its fullness a perfectly redeemed creation, a vision only wholly fulfilled when God is all in all. In this present world the Kingdom is both ‘now’ and ‘not yet’. If then the state of reconciliation with God and others corresponds to the term the Kingdom of God. Humanity should expect to find the same tension between now and not yet in the case of reconciliation.

Carmichael (2008:2) notes that within many modern conflict situations the pattern of “now” and “not yet” can be discerned, where the work of reconciliation extends far back into the conflict phase. Carmichael (2008:2) stresses the need for inclusion of the present reality and the future fulfilment of the Kingdom of God among the theological principles on which a pastoral theology of reconciliation rests. Even in the midst of raging injustice or conflict, there is a likelihood of finding persons and groups that could constitute signs of hope, flames of truth and reconciliation lighting the darkness around and pointing to the possibility of wider reconciliation.

Carmichael (2008:4) observes that in 1989, when apartheid was dying but not yet dead and there was severe political violence, a study guide was produced in South Africa by an ecumenical group of theologians, members of the National Initiative for Reconciliation. One contributor wrote the following:

South African Christians cannot and may not ignore, avoid, or overlook the seriousness of the injustice, pain, polarisation and sin of the structures which control people and which tower above their lives. If you claim to be a child of God you have to take action against sin and death and stand for life and hope. However, how can you get involved? How can you be changed and liberated from years of conditioning, indoctrination, and religious spiritualisation? Having had to walk this painful road myself, I believe that the most important means of changing perspectives and attitudes is through an event of encounter, exposure or experience. God through his Holy Spirit uses experiences of exposure to the world of others to bring about change, freedom, growth and reconciliation. The incarnation of Christ provides the essential model to guide us towards this road of reconciliation with those in the other world.

To reiterate the church’s responsibility in the world peace isike and Alokwu (2010:26) stress that Christianity as a religion of peace is expected to be at the forefront of championing the cause of peace in the world, following the example of Jesus Christ who is the Prince of Peace whose mission is reconciliation between God and humanity and within humanity. Therefore, in the context of the Niger-Delta crisis, theologising the peace process through *shalom* entails using the church to make the Nigerian government approach the question of security from a people-oriented rather than from a state-centric perspective.

5.5.7. Mission and social structure

As people are no longer satisfied with the liberal politics, Leffel (2017:49) maintains that the society moves, almost unconsciously, into two directions at once: towards anarchist dissolutions, as well as towards meta-modern reconciliation, while the troubles mount. The present social conflicts are multidimensional. The political economy is crumbling at every sphere. The first to feel the effects of it

is the poor, waged workers, minority communities, women, students and the unemployed. However, insecurity, discrimination, and class conflict affect all and sundry. Leffel (2017:49-50) queries the responsibility of the missiologists in such a situation. He presents six categories of public action around which humanity can organise sustained collective social engagement and state that there is a need to:

- Theoretically describe the existing social and cultural opportunity structure—the context—that both constrains and liberates the public witness.
- Compose a comprehensive, theoretical/theological rhetorical master frame to shape the public witness and issue a coherent, unified public call to action.
- Develop a public action strategy including clear objectives and new tactics of social engagement.
- Build new mobilisation structures for organisational strength and recruiting resources.
- Generate a transformative culture to demonstrate and reinforce the new sensibilities to be promoted.
- Support the personal formation of transformative missional.

According to Bosch (2016:395), the church may be perceived as an ellipse with two foci. In and around the first it acknowledges and enjoys the source of its life; this is where worship and prayer are emphasised. From and through the second focus the church engages and challenges the world. Reiterating that both worship and social concern as a focus should never be at the expense of one another, rather, stand in each other's service. The WCC extract on the church and the society's responsibility noted that:

The church is called to be a prophetic "sign," a prophetic community through which and by which the transformation of the world can take place. It is only a church which goes out from its Eucharistic centre, strengthened by word and sacrament and thus strengthened in its own identity that can take the world on its agenda. There will never be a time when the world, with all its political, social and economic issues, ceases to be the agenda of the church. At the same time, the church can go out to the edges of society, not fearful of being distorted or confused by the world's agenda, but confident and capable of recognising that God is already there (WCC, 1983:50).

The church is an instrument in God's hand to shape and establish peace in the world, if it became blunt, then it will lose its relevancy. The revolutionary thinking on the issue of public mission as argued by Okesson (2016:143) is that one cannot witness to institutions without understanding the myriad ways institutions arise and operate according to power. Presenting the dilemma on how most people think of power as a dirty, noxious and somewhat sordid thing. The theology in the West has little room for it,

leading to the subtle impression that power lies outside the gospel thus influencing the meaning of kingdom-related words such as reign, rule, and theocracy. This concept has been inculcated in the mind of African Christians by their Western missionaries especially during the colonial era; this has also created the wrong impression that Christianity is a Western religion within the African context. Some Africans assumed that religion was used to exploit and rob them of their valuable resources because Christianity failed to address their socio-political economic suppression and other related problems. Okesson (2016:143) is of the opinion that without a theology of power, we are prone to either spiritualise such words (or thus never relate them to the vicissitude fluctuation of life) or interpret them through human cultural lenses. The argument is for the development of a theology of power to take a more active role in dealing with institutional powers rather than spiritualising them. Emphasising that since the kingdom of God has to do with power, rulers and authorities (Eph 3:10) and since the very heart of the gospel relates to power and the kingship of God. To this discourse, Kim (2017:16) contends that conversation with public theology could enhance missiology and public engagement, since state politics are the main body in the public sphere in most contemporary situations and also a tool for change.

Wallis (2014:6) insists that the common good is a “new ethic of civility” (*good manners*) and a vision drawn from the heart of religious traditions that allows humanity to make their faith public but not narrowly partisan. Wallis avows that religion does much better when it leads to care about the needs of everybody not just its own community alone. In the application of this to Christianity, Kim (2017:18) comments that the idea of common good derives from Jesus’ commandment “to love our neighbours”, which Wallis regards as “the most transformational social ethic” and that the treatment towards the most vulnerable is the “moral test” of any society’s integrity. When religion serves politics rather than dominating it, it will provide a source of moral values and the separation of church and state should not mean the segregation of moral values from the public life. Responding to the question of how to bring prophetic values rather than parochial and partisan interests into political and public life, on the basis of understanding the image of God as the foundation of a “theology of democracy,” Kim (2017:18) argues for two key aspects of democracy: the absolute worth of every human person and fundamental respect for every individual together with equal rights for political participation and social opportunities. Furthermore, Kim sees it as the relational capacity of human beings within these two aspects that make democracy possible. There are problems with the understanding of the common good, such as the questions of how to protect individual rights while seeking the common good; who should define the common good within a modern plural and secular state, on what grounds, and in whose interests.

5.6. CONCLUSION

The righteousness of God could be demonstrated by a leader to ensure peace of Christ. Paul describes it as follows: “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible,

whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross” (Col 1:16-17). It may be difficult to experience peace in the community if the authority of the church is compromised and ungodly people are allowed to exercise authority. From the end of the middle ages until now, many have come to think of earthly politics as something quite separate from Christ’s authority and almost unrelated to his future kingdom of perfect peace and righteousness. Skillen (1980:27) also draws the attention to the final phrase of Matthew’s Gospel where Christ announced the reality of his universal authority and instructed his disciples to make godly disciples of all the nations. It is true that not everybody will understand Christ’s Lordship over the universe, but his faithful disciples will understand, accept and practise obedience in their public lives.

There is a need for leaders to be conscious of every situation, sizing it up and as quickly as possible take decisive action to fix the problems in order to avoid violent situations. A leader’s understanding of the people and his relationship with them will enable him to draw the best out of them. A leader must be decisive and confident in leading the people but he or she must command the respect of the people.

Leaders who model their lives in the way of integrity will function in faithfulness that can lead to trust in the society. Where there is such trust, the leader commands respect and people are keen to listen to him/her. This can reduce tension and conflict in the society. When leaders undoubtedly and consistently express their integrity through faithfulness in the discharge of their responsibility, they will gain credibility within their community.

In order to maintain integrity and faithfulness, leaders must see to it that they fulfil every promise made within their jurisdiction. It also means that one cannot promise what can’t be provided. Even when there are unforeseen circumstances that will lead to failure of fulfilling a promise, it must be explained to the beneficiaries, which will also be evidence to them. It means that a promise should not be made just to give the people empty hope that will never come to be, rather leaders should see it as an obligation to fulfil the promise not as unto man alone but unto God who has the power to enthrone and dethrone. Lasting peace is not attainable outside of God’s will, because in the world there are many troubles (John 16:33) and the integrity of leaders is tested by how they are able to keep to their word.

In a world where people are dependent on each other and every individual exists within a web of inter-human relationships, it is totally untenable to limit salvation to the individual and his or her personal relationship with God. Hatred, injustice, oppression, war, and other forms of violence are manifestations of evil, while the concern for humaneness, for the conquering of famine, illness, and meaninglessness is part of the salvation for which we hope and labour (Bosch, 2016:406). Christians pray that the reign

of God should come and God's will be done on earth as it is in heaven (Matt 6:10). In affirmation to social concerns of pastoral care as a missional ministry, Wright (2006:44) comments, where else does this passion for justice and liberation that breathes in these various theologies come from if not from the Biblical revelation of the God who battles with injustice, oppression and bondage throughout history right to the eschaton? Where else but from the God who triumphed climatically over all such wickedness and evil (human, historical and cosmic) in the cross and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ? Where else but from the mission of God?

The story of the Good Samaritan illustrates a Christian's attitude of love without discrimination even to those outside the church. Luke's narrative portrays the lawyer's interrogation in the story with the aim to tempt Jesus: "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25). Jesus told him to love God and love his neighbour as himself, then he further asks, "And who is my neighbour?" wanting to justify himself (Luke 10:29). Reflecting on the good Samaritan in the context of the people in the Niger Delta who sees themselves as the resource owners, justifying their actions in destroying the oil installation, bombing, kidnapping and other activities that threaten security of life and property to scare those they consider as outsiders, without thinking of how it will affect even other citizens of the same region. The justification of their acts is based on the marginalisation and exploitation. The church's preaching can create the awareness that human efforts are useless to free oneself from the bondage of sin while at the same time address the liberation of the community. In the unexpected image of the Samaritan—a man who would have been seen as the enemy—who stopped to bandage and care for the wounded Jew, when the priest and Levite did not. Those who made a choice to pursue violence as a way of political gain are also neighbours to be reached with the gospel of love. Boersema (1999:48) argues that the purpose of our stewardship, in addition to honouring the Lord is concerned with the welfare of our neighbour. Christ presented himself as a model when he says, "love one another as I have loved you" (John 15:12). However, this love is expected to be extended to the community outside the church. Love for your neighbour means harmony, instead of conflict.

A rational ethic aims at justice, whereas a religious ethic makes love the ideal. The latter ideal is supported by viewing the soul of one's fellow human beings "from the absolute and transcendent perspective" which leads to the presence—in every vital religion—of a hope for a society in which the ideal of love and equity will be fully realised. However, this is complicated by the fact that, within the religious ideal, a "mystical" emphasis exists side by side with a "prophetic" emphasis (Bosch, 2016:412). The mystical dimension tends to make an individual or a group withdraw from the world, devalue history, claiming that one's true home is not here but in heaven and seek communion with God without attending to one's neighbour. The prophetic dimension prompts the believer to get involved in society for the sake of the neighbour.

The Christian understanding is that the Church is called and sent by God to be engaged in the holistic development of society. Therefore, a holistic understanding of the church's involvement in society reaffirms the notion that God is not only concerned with the supernatural, but is active to humanise the world and that God's power is active in the secular life of humankind. The extent to which the church understands this mandate will undoubtedly direct its involvement and determine its relevance in the socio-political and economic challenges of modern society.

CHAPTER SIX

GUIDELINES REGARDING CONFLICT MANAGEMENT BASED ON A PASTORAL MISSIOLOGICAL APPROACH FOR THE CHURCH IN OGBA COMMUNITY

6.1. INTRODUCTION

In the study thus far attention has been given to the conflict situation in Ogba community and how a pastoral missional approach could help to solve the problem. The emphasis is not just on pastoral care, but how the church could use the pastoral ministry and mission in solving the social evil that causes conflict. From the research perspective the pastoral ministry goes beyond pastoral care within the church; and it is not only the pastor's business, but the whole community of believers should be involved. So far, the study was able to reveal the fact that human efforts alone cannot solve the conflict caused by sin, except through God. The emphasis is on the understanding that the church as the community of believers in Christ is the steward of the gospel message that is not only about personal salvation for individuals, but is also about salvation for every community, city, nation, social system, the earth and all of creation. The gospel as agreed by West (2007:1) is expected to break down every barrier and dividing wall for the sake of equity, justice and reconciliation in communities. This is made possible when the gospel is embraced holistically. The conflict situation in the Niger Delta and Ogba communities in particular cannot be separated from the problem of sin, which is a general human phenomenon. This resulted to the fact that the researcher could identify the following aspects as contributing to the continual conflict situation in the community, namely:

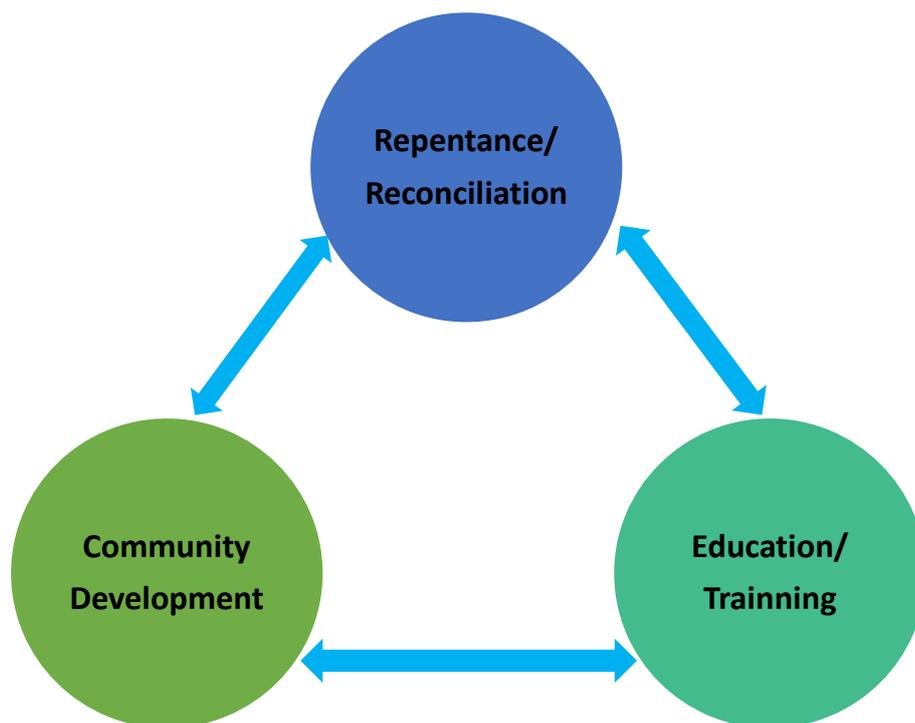
- Greed
- Selfishness
- Inequity
- Lack of job opportunities for the youth
- Different worldviews
- Existence of cult groups
- Insincerity of leaders
- Resource control/Political interest
- Insensitiveness by government to the needs of the host community
- Corruption/poor implementation of amnesty programme
- Resources control and derivation problems
- Political and economic marginalisation

In trying to find a solution to these mentioned problems, this chapter will give guidelines and information that will be helpful to the church in Ogba community for their role in conflict management. The researcher will also present a discourse on transgenerational conflict as it applies to missional perspective. The contents of the chapter will unfold in three dimension as follow:

STEP 1: Repentance and reconciliation

STEP 2: Creating awareness and educating the community

STEP 3: Community development and strategy



The diagram above represents the three steps that will be discoursed on how to find a possible lasting solution to the conflict in Ogba community. The steps can also be applied to other Niger Delta areas and in sustaining peace in the society following a pastoral missional approach.

6.2. STEP 1: REPENTANCE AND RECONCILIATION

The researcher is of the opinion that one of the steps in resolving conflict is for each party to realise two things: First that they are not perfect and they can make mistakes. The conflict in Niger Delta is not about the individual alone, it is rather on a multidimensional level. Even though individuals are affected, they are affected through the dysfunctioning of the community. In a conflict situation, self-evaluation

is necessary to know what is good and bad in the behaviour and the knowledge should lead to repentance when bad attitudes are discovered. Secondly, every individual and every group have an active role to play in order to maintain peace. The failure of one can lead to the failure of all. When one is able to realise that his/her action is affecting the other person then there is need to repent.

6.2.1. Repentance

This generally has to do with the realisation of one's wrong attitude, or behaviour, with the willingness to change for positive living. One who repents has a *responsibility* to also reconcile with those who might have been affected by his previous lifestyle in order to maintain good relationships. There is also accountability to God, to self, and to others. The understanding of this is important as it affects every stakeholder in the community. A lack of accountability has led to people behaving in the way that seems good to them without considering how it affects others. It means the church who is the body of Christ, have the responsibility to transform the community through a missional approach. The pastor in the church as a spiritual leader is expected to teach the word of God and disciple people for godly living. The community through the teaching should repent and understand their role in the community to ensure peace.

The pastoral conflict management in the context of this research is to help people in their brokenness and hurt. To help people to realise the true values of life and relationships. To work towards the healing of broken relationships. The church could also influence the society positively in order to ensure peace in the communities that are ravaged by conflict. The role of the church in conflict management was discoursed in chapter 3 (cf. 3.7). The church is expected to serve as the light and salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13, 14). This means the church is to produce a Christian character to preserve the society from moral decay. The pastoral ministry of the church should go beyond preaching on the pulpit, but to holistically shape human society. These include creating awareness and educating the community, which is the theme of the discussion in the step two.

Although sin enslaves and impoverishes humankind, God demonstrates His love even when humanity was in its poor condition of sin (Romans 5:7-8). Therefore, man need to repent of their sins in order to escape God's judgment. It is not just repenting of sin, but there is a responsibility towards self, towards others (James 5:16) and towards God. Mario (2014:92) discusses how God's heart has a special place for the poor, so much so that He Himself "became poor" (2 Cor. 8:9). The example the church should follow in line with what the Apostle Paul instructed the Christians in Corinth is that of Christ though wealthy in all of the divine privileges chose to become a poor human being in order to give humans access to the riches of salvation (Adeyemo, 2006:1407). It goes beyond showing compassion and a readiness to help those in distress, however commendable those virtues may be, it is heavily weighted

on the side of divine grace and service, which both set a pattern for missional activities, mirrored in God's gifts to his creatures. God's gifts in grace are for the purpose of serving the needy people (Martin, 1986). This could mean that a regenerated society should ensure the wellbeing of others and not be self-centredness.

The entire history of human redemption is marked by the presence of the poor. The Saviour was born in a manger, in the midst of animals, like children of poor families. He was presented at the Temple along with two turtledoves, the offering made by those who could not afford a lamb (cf. Lk 2:24; Lev 5:7). He was raised in a home of ordinary workers and worked with his own hands to earn his bread. When he began to preach the Kingdom, crowds of the dispossessed followed him, illustrating his words: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor" (Lk 4:18). On this note, Dickson (2011:1495) articulates that the true understanding of God's salvation to humanity through grace will motivate the church to give to others as God gave.

While the essential mission focus of the church involves the transformation of earthly realities through the Gospel, it also involves concerns for the poor and social justice. It was pointed out in chapter 3 (cf. 3.6.3) that political interest motivated an increase in militancy in the Niger Delta area. This shows that there is need for those who engage in politics must be those who are willing to serve other human beings with God's love. It is also good to point out here that without the fear of God and application of his love commandment (Lev 19:18; Lk 10:27) no one can really love his fellow human being in their fallen nature. We are only able to do this through the power, relationship and guidance of the Holy Spirit (Rom 3:10). Only in Christ we are able to love our enemy. As discoursed in this research, man's nature is morally and ethically corrupt. Due to the corrupt nature of humanity, it becomes difficult to think and act in a Godly manner that can correct the structural imbalances outside of God. This is where repentance is necessary in order to turn from the evil ways.

The need to resolve the structural causes of poverty, was stressed by Mario (2014:159) who believes that it cannot be delayed, not only for the pragmatic reason of its urgency for the good order of society, but because society needs to be cured of a sickness (e.g. poverty) which is weakening and frustrating it and which can only lead to new crises. To bear responsibility in the community's welfare projects which can meet certain urgent needs, should be considered. It is the responsibility of the church to speak against the irresponsibility of community leaders to ensure that the problems which lead to conflict are radically resolved. It is not possible to find a solution for the problems in the community if the root of the problem is not identified. Inequality would not have been a problem if man was not driven by the sin of greed and lack of love that caused them to take advantage over the less privileged ones.

As it has been discovered from the empirical study (cf. chapter 4), the church in seeking solutions for the conflict situation in the community must not act as another power structure, but as a servant bringing the good news of God. One cannot know or be able to see the need to bear responsibility until there is a turnaround, away from power struggles to the redemption power of God that leads to repentance. The pastoral ministry of the church is to use a Biblical approach in handling the problem of inequality. It was stated that the poor will never cease out of the land (Deut 15:11), but it is not a yardstick to discriminate or consider them as a lazy people nor objects of victimisation and exploitation. It should be an opportunity to help others and not to be callous about them. Poverty in reality may not be as a result of laziness, but could be as a result of unfortunate circumstances.

The scripture states in Isaiah 30:15 the promise of the Sovereign Lord that in repentance and rest will salvation be given to the nations. In quietness which represents peace and trust is strength. Repentance here is in line with the position of this research, which means turning away from evil ways and be reconciled to God, to self, and to other. Evil leads to trouble in the society and robs people of their strength, which could also mean life.

Life and peace are inseparable, because without peace no matter the position and wealth, life could be miserable. This is so true to the situation in the Ogba community, because there is no peace and an abundance of life and joy; many of the people cannot live in their own homes due to the evil activities. One of the respondents stated that he can only enter his house under the cover of the night, after calling his family members to switch off the security light so that no one could see him entering his house.

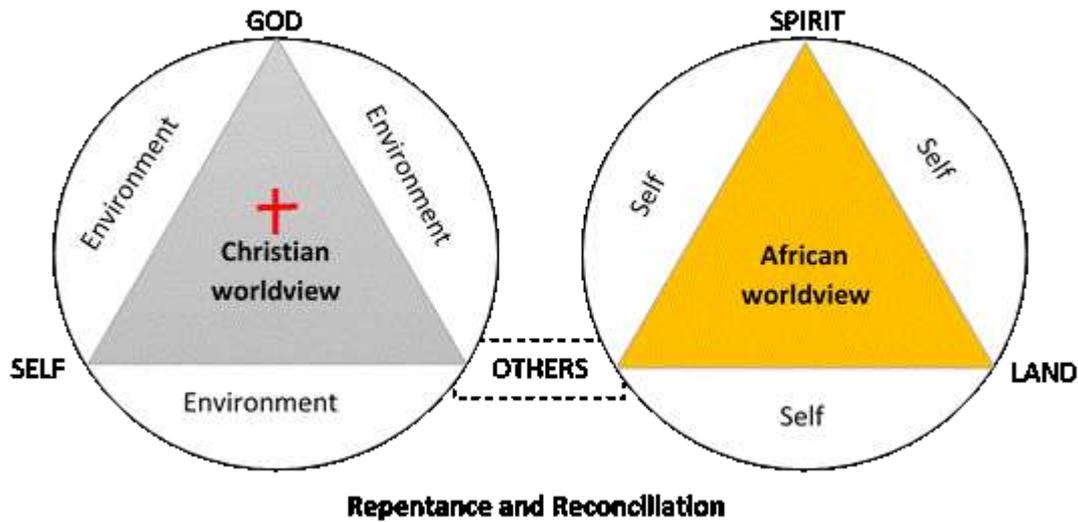
Peace is achievable through reconciliation with God, neighbours and self, as the three most important relationships of man. The researcher argues that when these three aspects of reconciliation are perfected, nature (as the fourth most important relationship) can be inhabitable as a gift from God. The Ogba church must help the church members and the community to find healing and reconciliation in these four relationships. The absence of peace is a threat to life, a reduction of life, a destruction of life, and suffering that leads to annihilation. In an African worldview context peace means tranquillity, good fortune, good health, with the freedom to live and to work. However, from the Biblical worldview, the peace of God is beyond physical and material possession (Phil 4:7; John 16:33). Mbiti (2010) argues that peace has both communal and personal dimensions and ignoring one aspect could affect the other. In the past, the Ogba community was always known as a caring community, but with the advance of violence, the people's confidence in each other has reduced. Mbiti (2010) further points out that where there is no peace, there is suffering for the individual and the wider community, including children, husband, wife, family, village, neighbours, clan, society and the environment (nature).

In Ogba community peace and prosperity are the focus of their major festival called ‘Nchaka’. In this ritual, the eldest person in each clan walks in procession to the river saying a prayer of thanksgiving, proclaiming blessing and peace for the land. They also unanimously declare curses on any evil person in the community who can cause trouble. The point here is that the people desire peace in the community, but did not apply the Biblical principle in their quest for peace – this could be referred to as cultural imagination, which means their actions are not Biblically motivated, but culturally. The people of Ogba call God “Chukwu Abiama” meaning God of self-existence, or “Churkwu diligwu” meaning God that dwells in heaven. They do not use the name “chukwu” which means god for their shrine-idols. They refer to it as “erinsi” which connotes mediation between the people and the spirit world. To some extent, they believe that the “erinsi” also mediate between god and man. If a crime is committed in the community and someone is suspected, the only way to exonerate him or herself is to undergo the traditional oath at the shrine. The essence of African Traditional Religion in Ogba community is to ensure peace and security of the people, in order to ensure blessings and progress. Mbiti (2010) captures the understanding of the African Traditional Religion by pointing out that it portrays more actions on peace that function all the time at many levels of life including peace and reconciliation in person-to-person relations, in the family, in the neighbourhood, in the community, and among peoples (tribes) that may have disputes or fights with one another. Peace is not taken for granted. The fact that people quarrel, have disputes and serious differences, that they fight and even injure or kill one another is a tragic reality of life. But the question remains that if the Ogba community does not repent and turn away, even from cultural traditions in order to be reconciled with the living God, how can everlasting peace be possible?

The Church should therefore, guide the people to return from every evil way into which they have gone astray so they can have rest and settle in the way of God and bear responsibility. It is only through the grace of God which provides forgiveness, that humanity can be strengthened to life to the glory of God.

6.2.2. Reconciliation

It is important to discuss reconciliation after repentance. The diagram below shows the approach of two different worldviews as it affects reconciliation and lasting peace in conflict situations. The diagram presented below is the idea of the researcher in order to discuss the concept of reconciliation of the two worldviews.



The interpretation of the elements in the diagram above will form a heading for discussion in this section:

6.2.2.1. Reconciliation in a Christian worldview

In the Christian worldview, reconciliation is to establish right relationships with God, with self, and with others, which presents the triangle shape. The circle represents the environment or the community which inhabit nature. It is sin that brings a curse upon the earth. Since God is in charge of the universe, man has little control over it. If sin led the curse of the nature, then reconciliation with God and fellow human beings will also bring God's blessing. Reconciliation either with God, self, and others takes place within the environment created by God. Violating God's commands affects nature, this was the situation after the man disobeyed, God pronounced a curse on the ground which represents the nature. It also indicates that whatsoever one does affects their environment, either positively or negatively.

God is at the top of the triangle in the Christian worldview, relating to both individual and others which could represent groups of people, the church or the nations of the world. God made reconciliation in Christian faith possible through the death and resurrection of Christ. This is represented with the symbol of the cross inside the Christian triangle. Irresponsible behaviour as disobedience to God is regarded as a transgression (a kind of attitude and life style that does not take God and his will seriously in the making of decisions). Louw (2015:191) states that foolishness robs life of its meaning. The Bible does not project a pessimistic view of life (merely doomed sinners), nor does it promote a kind of optimistic view of life (everything is fine and humans are angels). Rather, the life view of the Bible is realistic, in that anyone who does not reckon with the will of God will experience meaninglessness. On the other

hand, those who in obedience do the will of God, experience a fulfilled life. Therefore, greed, killing and other evil perpetrated by different groups of people in Ogba community, and Niger Delta in general, are sin against God and that is why life is meaningless in spite of God's gift of natural resources (the oil).

The church's efforts in resolving conflict should begin by identifying the sin that leads to conflict in the community. Some of its manifestations were discussed in chapter 3 (cf. 3.6) as the causes of conflict in the Niger Delta which will be mentioned later in this section as well.

Resolving conflict will be difficult if the root cause is not addressed. What people see on the surface, such as greed and marginalisation is not the root cause of conflict, but a manifestation of human fallen (sinful) nature. Turaki (2012:151) confirms that human crises, tribal wars, conflict and violence stem from spiritual alienation and broken relationships. Therefore, Christian conversion that does not affect all relations of life leaves the church very weak and powerless to change and transform the community. The community must first of all be reconciled with God, with the understanding that the devastating communal and social sins wreak havoc in the societies.

The self in the diagram, represents the individual's relationship with God and with fellow human beings. In the discourse of theological dimension of guilt, Louw (2000:405) avers that in the presence of God, guilt is describes as a condition of alienation and estrangement, which is experienced as a result of sin. The ethos of the Bible has a religious base in which there is the fundamental conviction that a disturbance in people's fellowship, as in the individual is to be explained by a disturbance in a proper relationship with God. A sound relationship with God needs to be established in order for human beings and for society to function properly and adequately. Reconciliation does not exclude human responsibility; every individual has a responsibility to God and to their fellow human beings. A pastoral care in this regards should be particularly concerned with understanding people in terms of their relationship with God and understanding people in terms of their moral value, normativity and virtue. In line with what Louw (2000:137) observes that Christ's work of reconciliation includes a transforming power, which enables people to act differently and to change surrounding circumstances, which sees reconciliation as a functional and relational issue affecting humanity.

Others in the diagram is the connection between the Christian worldview and the African worldview. Similar to the postulation of Heek (1999:264), Christians should not allow tradition, custom, or culture to stand in the way of communicating the Gospel to others in order to reconcile them to God. Sin involves both personal and social misdeeds, acts which violate the individual's particular social environment. The conflict in Ogba community affects both individuals and the community, including women, children, youth, families, men, and leaders. For example, the act of selfishness and greed

exhibited by leaders and individuals is a sin against God and humanity. Therefore, the reconciliation should be both vertical and horizontal to God and to fellow humans that have been affected by the act of sin.

The connectedness of the “other” between Christian worldview and African worldview reconciliation is that first the community is made up of both Christians and non-Christians. Secondly, the effect of sin affects everyone in the community.

6.2.2.2. *Mission of the church and reconciliation*

Reconciliation cannot be effective or achievable if Christian communities and even pastors continue to tolerate different forms of enmity, division, lies, slander, vendetta, jealousy and the desire to impose certain ideas at all costs. Mario (2014:92) affirms that the word ‘church’ refers to God’s people or believers and this means that Christians ought to be God’s leaven in the midst of humanity, in other words the church is meant to ease the tension that causes conflict in the society.

It means proclaiming and bringing God’s salvation to the world, which often goes astray and needs to be encouraged, given hope and strengthened on the way. The Church should be a place where mercy is freely given, where everyone can feel welcomed, loved, forgiven and encouraged to live the good life of the Gospel. In Africa the African traditions’ roots are still so evident and the church needs to teach the community Biblical principles regarding these rituals in order to avoid syncretism. Mbiti (2000) denotes the measures that enact peace and reconciliation in an African setting with profound religious significance for putting peace and reconciliation into action. An example of a ritual observed among the Luo and Maasai peoples in Kenya when there were disputes or fights among them are as follows:

The elders arranged for peace parleys and after both sides had agreed on the need and satisfactory terms for peace, a great inter-societal rally was convened on the border where the battles had been fought. Men, women, youth, and children convened along the border on the covenant day. They chopped down trees whose white sap is used as poison for arrow tips. These poison trees were formed into a fence along the common border, with the antagonists facing one another across the newly formed poison-tree fence. The weapons of warfare were placed along the fence: spears, bows and arrows, swords and shields. This fence of poisonwood and weapons was a symbol of the war that had divided the two communities.

Then they took a black dog and laid it across the fence. The dog was cut into two and blood was allowed to flow through the fence and onto the ground, on both sides of the fence. Then the mothers with suckling babies exchanged their young back and forth across the

fence, so that Maasai mothers could suckle Luo babies and Luo mothers suckle Maasai babies. Prayers followed this, in which the respective elders beseeched God to bless the covenant of peace. The participants pronounced anathemas on anyone who ever crossed that fence to do evil (Mbiti, 2000).

From the above example the lessons include:

- (1) There is need for both parties to show willingness and readiness to work out peace.
- (2) Both parties decided and agreed on the terms of reconciliation.
- (3) It is all-inclusive reconciliation: men, women, youth and children, even babies.
- (4) Above all God is involved as a witness and sustenance of the covenant.

Mbiti (2000) emphasises the offering of prayers to God which recognises the spiritual dimension of peace and reconciliation. Showing how the above culture realised that peace is a gift from God, where and when people genuinely want it. Furthermore, offering prayers is also a recognition that God's will for society and nature is peace. God will bless human measures for peace and reconciliation. Although, their desire seems to be sincere, their ignorance about Biblical principles is evident.

The understanding in African tradition is that reconciliation of warring factions required sacrifices and the shedding of blood. Turaki (2012:143) states that by the shedding of the blood of Christ, the ritual in African tradition was eliminated and Jesus' sacrifice was the final offer for reconciling man to God and man to man. Therefore, the Ogba church must educate the community on Biblical principles regarding repentance, God's forgiving, reconciliation and restoration. Hence, reconciliation with God brings reconciliation with others. Efforts to reconciling the militant groups with the community and heal the wound inflicted and restore security could be fruitless without the knowledge and acceptance of God's reconciliation through Christ. This is in accordance with what Turaki (2001:171) professes that reconciliation of humanity in the body of Christ on the cross is the basis and prerequisite for lasting peace in humanity and in the world. Furthermore, it is only when believers submit themselves and their lives to Christ Jesus and live according to Biblical principles, that they can overcome selfishness, greed, enmity and other social evils that threaten the peace, harmony and justice in the community. The lack of peace in the world is deeply rooted in human sin, selfishness and greed. Therefore, to find a solution for the problem in the Ogba community the church must target the root cause as a starting point. According to Turaki (2001:172), any other protest for justice and method of peace employed would be without solid ground to stand upon.

6.2.2.3. *Reconciliation in African worldview*

The circle which represents the environment/nature in the Christian worldview is dominated by self. The implication of this is that reconciliation is unacceptable to one who does not know God if it is not for his/her own benefit, meaning that the relationship is based on self-interest. This makes it difficult to have a lasting solution to conflict situations. Applying this to the Niger Delta crisis, the amnesty programme was embraced not because the people really desired peace, but for what they could benefit from it. So when the benefit is threatened, denied or unsatisfactory, the conflict continues and becomes even worse than what it was. It shows that there is no true repentance, but a conditional change of attitude.

Therefore, when everyone pursues their divergent moral interests it can ignite conflict, leading to crises and violence that will be difficult to resolve. Therefore, the church should develop a discipleship programme that would be able to change the value of community and individual in Ogba community. This will be discoursed in step 2, where education and training are important to create awareness on the real expectations for humanity in order to ensure peaceful co-existence.

The importance of kinship in Africa is demonstrated in bearing responsibility for one's blood relations, which takes precedence over any obligation to strangers and outsiders. Turaki (2012:171) rightly points out, it is the bane of the African community as it fosters tribalism, sectionalism and denominationalism, which also leads to behaviour that breeds crises, conflict, violence, a domineering spirit, prejudice and stereotyping. Therefore, the church should first and foremost rid itself of such negativities in order to effectively disciple the community outside it.

Spirit in the diagram: The African worldview believes that God is far away from mankind as discussed in chapter 5 (cf. 5.4) so God is here replaced with spirits. Therefore, anyone who sins is not against God, but against the spirits. The pastoral missional responsibility is to reach out to the people with the understanding that this act in itself is sin against God, in accordance to Isa 42:8: "I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols." Ogba Community, like any other Niger Delta area is ravaged by cultism, which is also an act of allegiance to the spirits. This is the act of total depravity in man which Louw (2000:406) regards as ultimate guilt that occurs when one rules God out of their lives and so without God, one becomes self-centred. All actions of the one without God stem from a corrupt centre and are merely egoistic attempts at self-fulfilment.

The focus on the community, rather than the individual where communal moral accountability counts beyond personal accountability is also stressed by Turaki (2012:172). It means that personal responsibility is undermined whereby the individual behaviour and character are judged as good or bad

if it is in accordance with the tribal values or contradicting it. It does not matter to them what the universal value is. Attitudes, behaviour, ethics and morality are dominated by fear of those with moral power. Since those who are strong are feared and the weak are ignored, the result is insecurity, instability, crises, violence and chaos due to the rule of fear enforced by dictators and the powerful. In the situation where fear and pretence dominate a human's heart, instead of love and respect for one another, little things can spark up violence, because there will be false respect and obedience. People will do things not because they want to do it but out of fear, of which if they have their way, they will resist. Hence, any little opportunity to resist will be accepted not minding the consequences.

Land: to an African land is attached to spirituality, living in the land demands certain rules for peaceful coexistence. So when the people go against the rule of the land, conflict and calamity will affect either the offender or the whole community, until the land is appeased through sacrifices. There is the belief that the spirit governed the land, so when the community which represent others in the diagram, reconcile to the spirit and the land, the reconciliation of the land and the spirit is achieved, the individual can go on to achieve their desired goals within the context of the reconciliation.

Another aspect that was pointed out earlier is that in the African context communal living is important. Even though self is dominant in an African setting, it is perpetrated through the interrelatedness of the community. Self is seen in position and wealth without minding how one gets to the position or got the wealth. The common denominator between the Christian worldview and the African worldview is the recognition of others. However, while in the Christian setting the idea of others is extended to the universe which Christ died for and so salvation is all-inclusive. However, in African context others are within the community of interrelatedness. The belief that the pursuit of moral goals takes precedence over moral behaviour undermines responsible behaviour and ethics (Turaki, 2012:171). This is also applicable at community level who will not see anything good in another community if it is not of benefit to them. In this case, the issue of responsibility became conditioned to self-interest.

Louw (2014:41) also quotes two African leaders who strongly uphold this view in their separate statements:

Let the West have its Technology and Asia its Mysticism! African's gift to world culture must be the realm of human relationships (Kenneth Kaunda, 1967:22).

The spirit of Ubuntu—that profound African sense that we are human only through the humanity of other human beings—is not a parochial phenomenon, but has added globally to our common search for a better world (Mandela, 2005:82).

Therefore, Louw (2014:42) comments on this stating that the most remarkable and tangible dimension of Africa spirituality relates to the unique notion of communality and collective solidarity that African societies exhibit in all spheres of life. Despite the fact that the individual manifest self in the community, there is a profound sense of interdependence from the extended family to the entire community. In fact, the relationship and interrelatedness include the relation between those who have departed (the dead).

This research has emphasised that according to a Biblical worldview, human relationships with one another depend on their relationship with God the creator. Where humanity fails to reconcile with God it will be difficult to have a lasting reconciliation with their fellow human beings. From the Biblical point of view, a human is made up of three components or dimensions, which functions as a unit of a living being namely: body, soul and spirit (Gen 2:7). It is easy to identify body and spirit from the creation pericope: “The Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.” Nevertheless, the aspect of human soul is not obvious; the body was moulded from the dust and the spirit was breathed in by God. There is no mention of soul in the creation pericope, however, in Deuteronomy 6:5 it is mentioned: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” The soul has been described by Turaki (2012:71) as the seat of human personality and self-consciousness. That at creation, the union between the spirit and body resulted in man becoming a soul which blends the spirit and the body together to communicate and cooperate as a human being. On this note, the activities of the soul is said to determine human will or heart that is demonstrated in volition; the intellect, thought and reason from the mind; and human emotions that is seen in affections, desires and feelings. The soul and the spirit are the immaterial part of humanity that may be difficult for anyone to comprehend by human understanding. Those who believe are considered as spiritually alive who can also understand the spirit according to 1 Corinthians 2:11 which says: “For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God.” The spirit and soul was also mentioned in Hebrews 4:12 which states: “For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” According to Turaki (2012:71), the soul affects a human conflict and pervasiveness. Therefore, the knowledge of how the body, soul and the spirit function will help in the discourse of human nature as it affects human activities and relationships, which will also serve as a guide to the church in approaching the conflict situation in Ogba community. Repentance as pointed out earlier is made possible when one realises that there are deficiency and failure as a result of sin. Below is the discourse of the three human components as they affect the behaviour.

The soul: In the discussion of human nature, Turaki (2012:72) emphasises the three main functions of the soul thus:

- *Volition* as the faculty of the soul that involves decision-making where things or events originated. It functions when one decides either to do or not to do something. This means that the soul governs or determines human actions and desires, either good or bad.
- *Mind* is identified as the faculty of the soul that is the centre of human thoughts, intellectual activities, knowledge, wisdom, reason, perception, speculation, understanding, discernment and imagination. When the human mind is turned away from God it will focus on what it can get which results in greed and selfishness as discussed in chapter 3 (cf. 3.6.5). The opportunist within the Niger Delta and of course Ogba community whose mind is not set towards God could take advantage of the people's ignorance for their selfish purpose.
- *Emotion* is described by Turaki (2012:72) as the faculty of the soul that is the centre of human likes or dislikes. It could be the reason for the unabated conflict in the community because the political leaders, as mentioned in chapter 3 (cf. 3.6.3) brainwashed the youth resulting in short periods of peace, but any peace that is not based on the truth will not last. On the contrary, the gospel of the church is able to turn human being's perspective to God's perspective. The emotion faculty affects how human beings respond to their environment and community, either to love or hate. The activities of all the faculties of the soul as discussed are a collective response to human behaviour, which is interrelated and not in isolation.

God intended the soul or self which is now the dominant part of human nature, to be under the authority of the spirit that is given by God. However, after the fall, the soul "took over" power and now dominates both the spirit and body. The implication of this is that until there is a renewal of man spirit through Christ, the soul continues to dominate the spirit and the body.

The Spirit: Man as a triune being according to Strauss (2004) is created in the image of God, likewise man is a trinity that has a spiritual nature, separate and distinct from the body in which it dwells. The spirit of man, being the sphere of God-consciousness is the inner or private office of man where the work of regeneration takes place.

The word "spirit" when used in the Scriptures has several meanings. Whenever the word "Spirit" with a capital letter is used, it refers to the third Person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit of God. The word "spirit" spelled with a small letter may have one of several different connotations. It can have direct reference to the spirit of man which is as much a part of the tripartite nature of man, as the Spirit of the living God is a Person of the Holy Trinity, or it can indicate an evil spirit such as any agent of the devil. It means that there is the spirit of peace and the spirit of violence.

The work of Turaki on the Trinity of Sin is extensively used in this chapter because it portrays the idea of the researcher which states that human imagination in its sinful nature cannot find lasting solution to conflict in the Niger Delta and in any community. To bear godly fruit seems to be very difficult with mankind as stated in John 15:5 that if a man remains in Christ and Christ in him, he will bear much fruit; and apart from Christ no one can do anything good. Being in Christ therefore, demands a total surrender of the body, soul and spirit. As Turaki (2012:69) further discusses the primary function of the spirit which from creation was to enable communion with God. It is the spirit that is supposed to have dominion over the body and soul in worship and service to God, as it is the source of consciousness of God.

Turaki (2012:69, 70) discusses the manifestation of human spirit in three main areas of human life:

- *Conscience* is described as the faculty of the spirit that spontaneously discerns what is right and what is wrong. The conscience accuses people when they are wrong though one may tend to respond by silencing it. Those who thus silence the spirit conscience are regarded to have a “dead” conscience. Strauss (2004) stresses this fact, as he argues that in the unfallen state the Spirit of man was illuminated from heaven, but when the human race fell in Adam sin closed the window of the Spirit, pulled down the curtain and the chamber of the spirit became a death chamber and remains so in every unregenerate heart until the life and light giving power of the Holy Spirit floods that chamber with the life and light giving power of the new life in Christ Jesus. Therefore, by implication, those who do not have the regenerated Spirit are not able to handle the conflict of the world, because of the deadness of their spirit. In the scripture, Paul describes such people who do not have the regenerated spirit as corrupted, according to Titus 1:15-16 which states that: “To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted.” The result of a corrupted conscience is abandoning the faith and following deceiving spirits and things taught by demons which are attributed to false and hypocritical teachings and that their consciences have been seared as with a hot iron (1 Tim 4:1-2). Conscience, according to Turaki (2012:69), provides humanity with spiritual discernment that is imparted by the Spirit of God rather than by reason or science, which are out of tune with spiritual matters. In chapter 3 (cf. 3.6.6) the effects of corruption as causes of continual conflict in Ogba community were stressed. By implication, if those who manage conflict are not regenerated in their spirit, they will not be able to find a lasting solution to the conflict.
- *Intuition* as discussed by Turaki (2012:70) is the faculty of the spirit that senses non-human communication or knowledge. Some things are known not by physical or intellectual knowledge, but a revelation of the Holy Spirit. This assertion was supported in Jeremiah 33:3

that states: “Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know” (cf. 2 Pet. 1:20, 21). It was however affirmed that due to the fall the sinfulness could be a hindrance to humanity hearing or sensing the voice of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

- *Communion* is the third faculty of the spirit discussed by Turaki (2012:70) which affects the worship of God. Arguing that man do not know God through senses, thoughts, imaginations or feelings, but through the spirit as the Holy Spirit imparted himself or communicates with man through the human spirit. It was also emphasised that the fall deeply affected the human spirit. Instead of leading humanity to God, it opposed and worked against him. Instead of directing the soul and body in harmony, it lost control and became subject to them. It is dominated by spiritual surrogates (*substitutions*) and spirit powers that have taken the place of God. The confusion of man to understand and clearly distinguish between the spirit and soul pointed to the fall that necessitated the corruption of both of them resulting in the exhibition of the characteristics of deception, duplicity, inconsistency and contradiction. Turaki (2012:71) asserts that the cause of self-centeredness is as a result of the subservience of the fallen spirit to the fallen soul and body.

The body is the physical part of the human being. Turaki (2012:73) describes the body as the focal point of human experience in the physical and social world. Humanity experience sensations of taste, touch, smell, sight and hearing. The body bears the burdens of human misery and happiness. This means that whatsoever happens within the human soul and spirit is physically reflected in the body. It is the body that physically demonstrates love for God and fellow human beings. Turaki (2012:74) also notes that the fall adversely affected the body, which seeks to overpower the soul and the spirit and dominate them through its sinful desire, passion, sensuality, lust and greed.

The above discussion is to establish the reason why conflict management is difficult with human imagination or schemes. Because after the fall, humanity became corrupt and self-centred which led for example to greed and lust, which according to Turaki (2012:89) originates in human desire for possessions and pleasure. While greed leads to gratification of sinful desires of the body, lust gratifies sinful pleasures of the heart. This is to confirm the findings in chapter 3 (cf. 3.6.5). By implication, since human nature is corrupt, even if all the good suggestions of this world are put together for implementation, man cannot overcome conflict. This means that there is no perfect way one can manage conflict except through a regenerated human being that can only be achieve through Christ. Regeneration cannot take place until one realises the need to turn away from the sin towards God.

The effect of worldview on conflict in Ogba community as discussed in chapter 3 (cf. 3.7) is that justice as a fundamental expression of God for social transformation and as a mark of mission, needs to be

integrated into the portfolio of church mission, in order to change any worldview that is contrary to the Biblical worldview. The effect of the fall on human beings, as Turaki (2012:91) points out is that the normal use of human eyes, mind, senses and soul is perverted. The normal and good pleasures of seeing, hearing, feeling, touching, imagining, sensing and thinking grew grotesquely (*strangely*) out of proportion and humanity developed an insatiable desire for sinful pleasures. Man's behaviours towards God's gift of pleasures were distorted. Meaning that man no longer thinks correctly about the created world.

Therefore, every person born into the world is corrupted by the fall and every community is powerless to restore peace to themselves unless they understand and accept the salvation of God (Romans 5:12-21). This means that all the other things humanity focus their desires on are just empty shells, which, after getting one, the attention is shifted to another because there is an insatiable appetite for more. To this point, Turaki (2012:94) agrees that despite the sporadic attempts to address the conflict caused by human greed and lust, none of the human solutions work. This is because when God is not present, Satan, evil and sinful rushes in to take possession of the human heart (Luke 11:24-26). Humanity cannot cleanse themselves of the influence of sin or transform the damage sin has caused, except through Jesus who is able to renew and transform man through the ministry of the Holy Spirit and the Word.

Sin is rooted in disobedience toward God and can manifest as beliefs, attitudes, behaviour and practices in false doctrine of African Traditional Religion and the corrupt value systems of different worldviews. The church is expected to take in position that openly condemns all forms of unjust practices that could instigate conflict. As Turaki postulates (2012:170), the encounter of ATR with Christianity and modernity generated new social formations and values that complicated the network of relationships among individuals, people groups, communities, societies, and nations. Therefore, Turaki (2012:170) outlines five basic traditional beliefs that influence ethics and morality in the African setting thus:

- *The pursuit of cosmic harmony*, which springs from an organic or holistic view of life.
- *The pursuit of spiritual meaning*, which springs from the view that all of life is spiritual and that events must be interpreted from a spiritual perspective.
- *The pursuit of mystical and supernatural powers*, which springs from the dynamism that pervades traditional thinking and spurs a desire to obtain power. Perhaps this is where cultism stems from.
- *The importance of a kinship community*, which springs from a communal view of life.
- *Fatalism*, which springs from a belief that one is powerless in the face of overwhelming spiritual forces so that the difficulties of life must be accepted.

The above concept of life and value system affects the modern complex society negatively by accepting the ethic that the end justifies the means. The implication is that people focus on achieving goals for themselves irrespective of the consequences of their actions on others; which in itself is the reflection of self-centeredness and greed. The practical example of this in Niger Delta is where the leaders, who should think of the welfare of the people, support cult groups to perpetrate evil in the community in order to achieve their political ambition. Despite the kinship experience in Ogba community, because of greediness, there is a distorted relationship even among the people of the same community. There are great division and lack of trust.

One of the phenomena that is seen in the Niger Delta as a whole and Ogba community in particular is the situation of insecurity. Corruption couples with the conflict and mistrust between individuals and groups, contributes to the rise of a new form of ethics, attitudes and behaviour that is not within African or Western cultures.

When social values are solely defined within the context of community or kinship, the group or community determines moral values. In such situations, Turaki (2012:172) notes that those who loot either government or any institutions for the benefit of their own group think of themselves as heroes and are not ashamed of what they have done. Their actions do not benefit the majority of the people, but the few who benefit tend to be the leaders in the community who even encourage them by rewarding them with honorific titles and social recognition.

On this note, Turaki (2012:173) insists that to address those issues that lead to conflict, one has to recognise that human attitudes and behaviour are influenced both by their innate fallen nature and by the culture in which they were raised.

6.2.3. Theological reflection on the causes of conflict in Niger Delta

At this point some of the manifestation of sin that hindered the resolution of conflict in Ogba Community should be considered; of course it is applicable to any conflict situation.

6.2.3.1. Greed and selfishness

The issues that manifest in the conflict of the Niger Delta and Ogba community include greed and selfishness. The understanding that self cannot be satisfied without God is necessary in dealing with the effect as it encourages the body to indulge in sinful excesses. Turaki (2012:92) discusses greed in relation to pride which draws to status, fame, honour, pomp and power that corrupt the thoughts and imagination, thereby encouraging humanity to feed his/her lust for pleasure of the eyes, mind and soul (1 John 2:15-16). Sin of greed, as agreed by Turaki (2012:93) cannot be dealt with, unless man realise

that the real object of their desire will never be found in anything less than God. There is only emptiness behind greed and lust; to address the problems caused by greed and lust with human efforts leads to more problems without solutions. Turaki (2012:98) further points out that the spiritual vacuum created as a result of departure from God is filled with all kinds of spiritual forces which embarked on a spiritual war and dominated with the desire for pleasure to distract humanity from God or increased the fear of evil spirits in order to fear and obey them rather than God the creator.

Like the event in the Garden of Eden, where man tried to find a solution to their problem, Turaki (2012:99) states that the image of God in man has been corrupted by sin. Some who are aware seek to address the problem by turning to self-made efforts and by doing that. They are sewing “fig leaves” to cover the sinful natures of which human remedies are merely temporary that leaves humanity burdened with a sense of anxiety.

6.2.3.2. *Inequity*

Looking at the growing poverty and inequality in the society, Taylor (2000:32) discusses how economic globalisation has social disparities which have generated new wealth and unprecedented comfort, where only the elites could afford the most sophisticated technology and a large portion of the populace is being driven into extreme forms of poverty. It is possible to mix up inequity and inequality as one. However, a close study reveals that though they are closely related there are differences between them. While inequality could be referred to the condition of being unequal expressed in numbers. Inequity could be synonymous with injustice and unfairness, it relates to more qualitative issues. There may be inequality in wages, as a results of inequity due to society disorder.

Taylor (2000:33) advocates that the church is the only hope of survival for the victims of social disorder and expresses the challenges for the missionaries to include how to avoid the pitfalls of missionary paternalism—what could be regarded as overprotectiveness on one hand and the failed secular welfare system on the other. Maintaining that the redemptive power of the gospel is the only source of transforming people in such a way that it enables them to overcome the dire consequence of poverty, giving examples of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, South Korea, and South Africa among others who have come to see churches as the source of hope from which the urban poor gain strength, encouragement, and language to cope with poverty. However, there is a strict warning that the prosperity advocated here does not commensurate with what is considered “prosperity theology”, but that Christian prosperity is in line with ethical responsibility and with intentional solidarity to get rid of the effects of sin in the society, as mentioned in Eph 4:28 that believers ought to have a social conscience for the needs of the poor. Greed and selfishness lead to inequity, it lacks the Biblical principle that says: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.” (Phil. 2:3-4)

Where everybody looks only to their own interests, it could result in survival of the fittest that can breed oppression that can subsequently lead to conflict.

6.2.3.3. *Worldviews*

The African tradition is aware of good and evil but there is a distorted idea of both, because they lack the true knowledge of God. While it is stated that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom (Prov 9:10; Ps 111:10). The African tradition prides much in the knowledge of the secrets and how to manipulate the spirit world successfully. The implication of this on social justice and peace, as discussed by Turaki (2012:178) is that Africans are aware of the principle of punishment or retribution, but there is always a religious ritual that can be used as a means of escape from punishment or to shield against any moral consequences. Therefore, the focus is on correct rituals and correct religious practice rather than goodness and virtue, or purity and holiness. Because pursuit of power is more important to those who lack the knowledge of God's principle, they are concerned with getting the right results without worrying about the right moral behaviour or ethics. It then becomes difficult for people of integrity, honesty, sincerity and faithful to succeed in politics, because they will not fit into the group of the economic looter. Turaki (2012:179) argues theologically that African traditional morality is very different from Christian morality, which is based upon Scriptures and reveals the will of God. Stating that deeds are not to be separated from motives which are judged by the Spirit of God and his world.

For the church to make an impact in resolving the conflict in Ogba community there is a need to understand the communal value and how it affects the wellbeing of the general populace. The knowledge will serve as a guide to combat social and communal sin and create a climate for social justice and the development of a social condition in which human dignity and freedom can be achieved. Turaki (2012:181) notes that the theological moral concepts and insights provide principles for dealing with social and communal sins in Africa and the world. The social conflict cannot be solved except relationship is established between societies and between individuals that will include justice and participation. Turaki (2012:184) is of the opinion that besides preaching repentance and forgiveness of sins, whether of individuals or communities or tribes, there is need to stress Christian principles relating to justice, freedom, rights, equity, sustainability and participation. It stresses the need to address structural sins that affect cultures, religions, economies, politics, societies, communities, institutions and nations. This means that the sin of injustices, oppression, discrimination, biases, prejudices, corruption, conflict and violence are not just to be confessed, but to be redressed and eradicated socially and structurally.

6.2.3.4. *Cultism*

The major influence of violence as understood from these studies is the activities of cultism. In response to the question concerning the understanding of conflict in the empirical study (cf. chapter 4) some respondents stated that cult rivalry is one of the major security challenges faced by the Ogba community. Turaki (2012:168) emphasises how secret cults play a major role in African traditional religions, because they are deeply aware of the mysteries of life. The secret cults offer access to knowledge that goes beyond common knowledge and common sense. As Turaki (2012:168) notes that some of the cults initiate “deeper” knowledge that goes beyond what is taught in the Bible. Such knowledge is referred to as the knowledge of Satan (Rev 2:24). Such opportunities to knowledge may appeal to human curiosity and quest for deeper knowledge. Turaki (2012:169) also observes that many Christians are drawn into cults or sects that show the outward forms of Christian spirituality, while underneath is the bedrock of pagan spirituality which manifests spirit powers, working miracles, performing healings, and many more that could be mistaken for the work of the Holy Spirit. Such counterfeit spirituality is seductive and destructive. One of the suggestions put forward as to how the violent conflict in Ogba community could be reduced or resolved is the total elimination of cultism. Elimination of cultism could lead to spiritual warfare. The church should understand the power that is in Christ Jesus as it is established to exercise that power on earth (Matt 16:19; 28:18-20).

6.2.3.5. *Insincerity of leaders*

Leaders here refer to both political and community leaders. It was observed that the traditional rulers and politicians did not adequately represent the entire community and the younger generation in particular. The church should engage the community with the gospel of Jesus Christ for redemption of the human heart in all areas of human endeavour. Because some of the leaders are members of the local assembly, the church will be able to succeed in transforming the leaders if money is not a priority over the human soul.

Therefore, the church’s mission to proclaiming reconciliation should be rooted on the concept that peace is the tranquillity that flows from right leadership coordination. When people who are in authority put efficient order into the structures of the society and effectively coordinate it for the benefits of the entire community, there will be peace.

6.2.4. **The church as an example of communal living**

In Ogba community, kinship is highly valued like in other African traditions that always long for a kinship community. To this end, Turaki (2012:114) admonishes that the church is the community in which Christ breaks down tribal difference, barriers and divisions and creates a new humanity, centred

on himself. Though it is not possible for everybody in the community to accept this concept believers are expected to demonstrate love in the community. Their inward baptism with the Holy Spirit and their outward water baptism seal their new identity, unity and oneness. Turaki (2012:115) mentions the inner transformation of people who become followers of Jesus to have greater social implications. It could affect the host community by showing others the mercy, grace, love, peace and forgiveness they have received in everyday life. The attitude of love as demonstrated by Jesus should be the model of the church, to respond not only to the needs of fellow believers, but also to the needs of the whole community. It is a distinguishing mark and testimony to Christ's redemptive work.

Like other forms of conflict in every community, Turaki (2012:116) agrees with the fact that the social, moral, economic and political corruption and decay are as a result of sin as has been the emphasis in this research (Chapter 5, cf. 5.6) on the origin of conflict. The church is a new community created for a new humanity who are recreated in Christ Jesus. "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation." (2 Cor 5:17-19) The church is to lead by example and practise the message of social responsibility for those who cannot sustain themselves due to lack of opportunity. This is the passion of Mario (2014:160) who states that the dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies.

6.3. STEP 2 – EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY

"...teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20).

The command to go into the world and make disciples of all nations also applies to every ethnic group of which Ogba community is no exception. Teaching means to educate the disciples in a guided principle. The commission is a continuous one from generation to generation (2 Tim 2:2). It is the responsibility of the church to teach and raise faithful people in the church, as they in turn affect their community through their various endeavours. It is the responsibility of the church today to carry on with the great commission of Jesus. Ogba community can be evangelised in every generation if the church will continue to raise faithful disciples who will in turn rise to assume individual responsibility to teach the Biblical principle in the community.

6.3.1. Teaching to observe God's commandments

The gospel experience gives internal joy that undermined earthly procession and motivates believers in Christ to share such joy with others for the total wellbeing of the community. Mario (2014:9) expresses

that an authentic experience of truth and goodness naturally seeks to grow within any person who has experienced a profound liberation by becoming more sensitive to the needs of others. To lead a dignified, peaceful and fulfilling life, one has to reach out to others and seek their good. By implication of Mario's position, peace and joy are achievable and lasting when others are taken into consideration and not centred on self, because good life is cultivated by being given away, while it weakens in isolation and comfort. In accordance to Mario's position above, one could assume the fact that to enjoy the best in life is to fearlessly depend on God's word and sail excitedly for the mission to communicate life to others.

The community should be helped to understand the concept of peace that is given by God. It leads to the transformation of the human community. This is what the prophet Isaiah describes as the peace of God (Is 32:17; 11:7-9) as the era of righteousness. The only way which a troubled community can be transformed into a blessed community is by a divinely ordered transformation, where folly will change to wisdom and reliance on God (Van Gemeren, 2012:660). It is more than the absence of conflict, but the divine reconciliation of humanity to God, to creation, and to one another. In addition, it is expected to give abundant life which eliminates injustice and exclusion.

The success of the church does not come by proselytising only, but also through missional activities of irresistible attraction and teaching which aim at transforming lives. In line with what Mario (2014:22) regards as evangelising the community, the church is expected to be involved in the mission of God through words and deeds in order to affect people's daily lives.

The effectiveness of conflict management begins by being compassionate at the outcry of the oppressed, weeping for other people's pain and feeling a need to help them. As a mandate of a missional church to the society it should not be affected by the prosperity culture that destroys human love. As Mario (2014:49) argues that the call for greater security will not yield any positive impact in the society until exclusion and inequality in society and between peoples are reversed. Without which, it will be impossible to eliminate violence. Without equal opportunities, the different forms of aggression and conflict will find a fertile ground to grow and eventually explode beyond remedy. This is because any society who neglects any part of its responsibility to the people cannot guarantee peace through political programmes, law enforcement or security surveillance. Therefore, the church should be a voice for the voiceless by ensuring equity.

For effective conflict management the church should be able to teach people to understand that sin could lead to conflict in the community and how to address it. From the outcome of the study one can discuss further how human depravity is a hindrance to finding solutions to social conflict, which is also evident from the empirical study carried out in Ogba community. There are good ideas as to how the conflict

in the area could be resolved, but there is no assurance that the implementation of those ideas would bring a lasting solution due to the influence of sin. There is a need to teach the community on how to live a selfless life in order to develop the community for the benefit of all.

Conflict tends to be part of human existence due to the inconsistency of humanity. The role of the church should go beyond preaching and winning souls, but should engage in real discipleship to teach and redirect the people's concept of God. Turaki (2012:37) observes that the concept of God is fuzzy for some traditional Africans. An example can be mentioned of one such a belief: the Africans believe an ancient Greek myth regarding the creation, that there were many gods who brought forth creatures through mating and birth and that it is the lesser gods who introduced evil and sin because of conflicts between them. This idea is not only unbiblical, but neither can it be scientifically proven. Therefore, the knowledge of God and understanding of the effects of sin in human society would help to have the right attitude in conflict management.

During the celebration of the 2017 Nchaka festival of the Ogba community, the introduction of the welcoming address presented in Obrikom reads as follows:

Nchaka Ogba New Yam Festival celebrated annually around November/December. It is a period of thanksgiving to God for life and a bumper harvest. Prayers are offered for good things to come – wealth, love, peace and blessings of God to visit the community while bad omen like death, sickness etc. should take leave. It is to be celebrated by all, both Christians and non-Christians (NCHAKA, 2017).

The use of capital 'G' in the spelling of 'God' in the address was deliberate, because they believe that the thanksgiving is to the supreme or sovereign God. The researcher was privileged to meet with the chairman of the organising committee to find out why they decided to involve the Christian faith in their traditional festival, although the church declined the invitation. He stated that the community wants to get rid of anything that is fetish, because he believed that the old practice of celebrating the festival has encouraged cultism. The old practice is that people use the occasion to demonstrate their spiritual and cultic powers in the public like the picture below:



One of the magicians during Nchaka festival in Omoku displaying his feats to challenge other magicians in a contest (*old practice*)

Photo credit: ajumokenwaeze

The researcher also gathered that the 2017 Nchaka eliminated some practices that have to do with cultic power compared to what it used to be. Despite the control, the picture below shows one of the things that kept the church out of the celebration of Nchaka. The picture below shows youths celebrating 2017 Nchaka festival.

With a careful observation,
you will see a snake on his
neck



The finding is that this cultic practice was actually a ritual, which the community realised was not good and they wanted it to stop. The church can take advantage of their desire to change in order to introduce the right teaching and cultural behaviour.

The welcoming address also contains the following remark:

...the inclusion of some fetish items into it tried to keep Christians away. Christians should remain part and parcel of this celebration so that the area that does not conform to their faith can be corrected. It is when Christians keep away from it that non-Christians own it as their exclusive right and introduce activities which do not conform to the tenet of Christianity. For example “Ojini-wosa” which is an invitation to test the wizardry or witchcraft one is carrying which was never part of New-Yam celebration. These bad and ugly additions must stop from this year (NCHAKA, 2017).

The above extracts show the people’s desire to turn back to God, because the destructive power of evil was exposed. Therefore, they call on Christians to help them by teaching the true gospel. In the opinion of Turaki (2012:41), evil should not be accepted as inevitable and sin should not be tolerated. What is expected is to recognise that the creation is good and to seek to maintain that goodness by striving to create just, participatory and sustainable societies based on God’s moral laws. This is aimed at eradicating poverty, hunger, disease, wars and many vices that humanity experience as a result of sin.

6.3.2. **The influence of mission in community peace**

The gospel should be used to dismantle any evil embedded in the structures of the society that has the potential for disintegration and conflict. To this end, Mario (2014:67) identifies the biggest threat of the church which gradually takes shape to include the grey (*inactiveness*) pragmatism of the daily life of the Church in which all appears to proceed normally, while in reality faith is wearing down and degenerating into small-mindedness; developing tomb psychology that slowly transforms Christians into what could be described as mummies in a museum. There is disillusion with reality as if Christians have lost interest and joy of mission and all that pertain to the unity of the church with the temptation to cling to a faint melancholy (*depressed*) as if there is no hope. The emphasis of Mario (2014:67) is that Christians should not allow themselves to be robbed of the joy of evangelisation. The evils in the world and those around the Church should be challenging factors for commitment in mission which can help the growth of the church.

For the church to successfully manage conflict affecting the society there is need to manage internal conflict. Internal conflict here refers to those conflicts and wars that take place within the people of God and in different denominations as communities of believers. In the neighbourhoods and in the workplace Mario (2014:79) imagines how many wars are caused by envy and jealousy, even among Christians. As observed that spiritual worldliness leads some Christians to war with other Christians who stand in the way of their quest for power, prestige, pleasure and economic security. To the extent that some are

even no longer contented to live as part of the greater Church community, but stoke (*encourage*) the spirit of exclusiveness, creating an “inner circle”. Instead of belonging to the whole Church in all its rich variety, they belong to this or that group which thinks itself different or special. The consequence of the division is that teaching would be cantered on organisational ideology rather than on Biblical principles.

This calls for the unity of the Church which Christ prayed for: “...that they may be one” (John 17:11, 22). Of course there is no unity if there is no love and that was the new commandment Jesus gave as an identity for his disciples. Where love is lost, there security is lost, but people sometimes look for security outside love and everybody becomes a suspect.

The love and unity must be evidence to the outside world for them to admire how Christians care for one another and how they encourage and accompany one another as Jesus said: “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another” (John 13:35) and as his heartfelt prayer to the Father: “That they may all be one... in us... so that the world may believe”. Therefore, Mario (2014:80) warns the Church to beware of temptation of jealousy! The church as body of Christ is all in the same boat and headed to the same port! Christians must ask for the grace to rejoice in the gifts of each other, which belong to all.

6.3.3. **Knowledge on the effects of transgenerational conflict**

The conflict in the Niger Delta and Ogba community in particular is like a vicious circle. Unguided (*without control*) youths are fully involved in the struggle. Many of them who have taken part in militancy have seen many evil acts and have learnt to use violence as a way of solving life’s problems. Some were forced to do terrible things against their communities. As stated earlier some of those who terrorise Ogba communities are known to the community. They may find it difficult returning to normal life in the same community because of what they had done.

The conflict situation in Ogba community is traumatic, hence teaching and educating the people to understand how to manage and prevent intergenerational traumatic stress disorder is important for the prevention of continual conflict situations. It may be difficult for individuals to handle the traumatic situation due to lack of knowledge. From the study of transgenerational trauma, social deprivation and poverty have been identified to exacerbate (*worsen*) the mental health impact of adverse events in the life of a family, including the consequences of the conflict.

In their report on a pilot study of mental health in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, Beiser *et al.* (2010:221) in the study of human rights abuse in the Delta which culminated in severe violence in 1995, and followed by continuing low level conflict and chronic discord describe the prevalence of PTSD,

and its individual and communal determinants in two villages. The findings show that PTSD inflicts a burden of individual suffering and, from a social perspective it erodes the human capital needed to rebuild violence-damaged civil societies of which the affected communities are not aware (Beiser *et al.*, 2010:226).

The need to specially help these traumatised youths has been stressed by Hill *et al.* (2016:49) who suggests that they need to tell their stories and be heard like others who have experienced trauma. It was also pointed out that for them to return to normal life, they will need to know that people love and care for them. They also need to repent of the evil they have done and know God's forgiveness.

There is a need for pastors to have the knowledge on how to handle transgenerational trauma so that the church would be able to help the community through seminar and teaching to give information and create understanding on the pain, loss and trauma the community might have experienced.

At the same time, Beiser *et al.* (2010:226) aver that the social conditions that perpetuate symptoms of PTSD and prevent self-healing cannot be neglected. Hand-in-hand with clinical interventions, there is a need for social interventions aimed at addressing the mistrust of the community and loss of inter-dependence due to years of perceived exploitation, violence and conflict.

It is assumed that intergenerational transmission of trauma seems to have a particular significance in the offspring of parents with a history of major trauma and subsequent Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Children of parents who suffer from PTSD are most likely to develop a specific lifetime vulnerability to traumatic stress and are possibly more likely to develop comorbidity (*multiple diseases*) (Portney, 2003). It was also stated that harms to health may be long lasting within an individual's lifetime. Devakumar *et al.* (2014) establish that there is an increasing awareness that adverse effects may continue through intergenerational biological mechanisms. Greater awareness of the potential intergenerational consequences of conflict may lead to their early recognition and improved diagnosis and response. Documentation of the consequences will also add to the overall evidence on the effects of conflict on health, which may weigh more heavily in the balance when violent conflict is an option.

Conflict caused by imbalance could lead to further traumatic situations. Kirmayer *et al.* (2014:311) argue that structural factors such as the disruption of traditional patterns of subsistence, the undermining of community autonomy, the mass expropriation of aboriginal lands and resources and the creation of enormous economic inequalities contribute to mental health problems for indigenous peoples.

People are traumatised when their land is forcefully taken from them and enjoyed by other, while the original owner watches helpless or becomes a second-class citizen in the same country or community (Chapter 3, cf. 3.4.1). The church should be able to identify the act of injustice in the land policy of the

nation that could lead to grievances. Even where there is need for the government to utilise any land, the indigenous people should be given priority and not to wait until they agitate for it.

For the youth, the structural imbalance could translate into a profound incoherence between traditional lifestyle and the modern opportunities to pursue their own life projects in the rural and remote communities where many indigenous people live. Kirmayer *et al.* (2014:312) further discuss a situation where communities are under extraordinary pressure to open land to extractive industries. Looking at the benefits of such developments that could bring more jobs and infrastructure, the people must remember that there will also be a radical alteration of community dynamics. The consequences on the indigenous people include swift increase of inequality, irreparable environmental disturbance and an overwhelming influx of outside labourers. The situation, extensively impacts on community wellbeing that extends beyond the processes and outcomes and is commonly considered within the trauma-and-healing framework.

To address a transgenerational trauma there should be an unbiased analysis of how political and economic dynamics interact with the community's wellbeing and how those forces can be aligned to produce contexts that allow individuals and communities to pursue ways of living that they value in a godly manner. In the discussion on transgenerational trauma Devine *et al.* (2015:82) indicate that transgenerational trauma has been linked to psychological and physiological transmission factors and although practise in transgenerational trauma treatment is an emerging field, there has been extensive research that shows association between parents' PTSD and children's psychological distress. This means that the church should be constantly updated on how to handle transgenerational trauma in the community.

6.3.4. Strategies for social transformation

The need to raise more godly politicians through the church, who are genuinely disturbed by the state of society and the people, especially the lives of the poor has been stressed. Mario (2014:62) sees it as imperative for government and financial leaders to take heed and broaden their horizons, by working to ensure that all citizens have dignified work, education and healthcare. It is true that God can inspire any politician to draw good plans for the society and therefore, the researcher is of the opinion that there is also a need to train godly people on godly principles for godly leadership, which can bring about a new political and economic approach that would help to break down the wall of separation between the economy and the common good of society.

As the church carries out its missional activities, there is need to include teaching on the responsibility of political leaders and how Christian leaders should function in public settings. It has been underlined

in this research that when the church failed to apply a holistic missional approach by concerning itself with the contemporary issues of the society, it may lose its relevancy. The empirical studies revealed that the church in Ogba community was accused of not reacting to the evil of the society initially until it escalated.

It is not enough to preach about the kingdom of heaven and neglect to ensure that the kingdom of the earth must reflect the kingdom of heaven as the church desires in the prayer “...thy kingdom come, they will be done on earth as it is in heaven” (Matthew 6:10). Abogunrin (2005:261) argues that failure to react appropriately to the world situation or communicating with the world *in which the church* exists, means that they cease to be relevant. This argument is in line with the liberation theology that protests against the church that has forgotten its prophetic voice, instead collaborates with the injustice and oppressive regimes in Africa and elsewhere. According to Kunhiyop (2004:100), the situation in Nigeria necessitates the church’s involvement in the political landscape of African nations. He recalls an episode in 1999 general elections, when President Obasanjo of Nigeria, who was imprisoned by the military, claimed he had been born again while in prison. After winning the election, he made it public that he was a Christian president. He gained a large following in the Christian community because of public acknowledgement of his Christian status. The concept of peace and the approaches depend on the understanding of those in leadership. Kunhiyop (2004:100) reiterates how Christians in Nigeria began to realise that Muslims, who are usually in every government, push an Islamic agenda which is detrimental to church interests and a threat to the peace of the nation. For example, the secret introduction of Nigeria as a member of the Organisation of Islamic Conference and the introduction of Sharia as legal code in many states within the north are clearly seen by Christians as politicising of Islamic religion. In other words religion and politics are seen to be bedfellows. This means that political power brings opportunities for the enhancement of one’s religion.

Using tribal-religion to address a conflict in Benue state, Nigeria, where it was reported in January 2018 that Fulani herdsmen killed 73 people in a particular village. Labdo (2018) who is also Muslim Fulani, states that he wants his people to start verbally attacking instead of defending. With the understanding of the power of politics, he boasted how they (Muslim/Fulani) organised people to take over power from President Goodluck Jonathan who was a Christian in 2015 general elections. He further states that if others are interested, let them also use their initiative to mobilise people and take it from them. The reason for the above emphasis in this research is that the Niger Delta problem is a multidimensional conflict, which also includes the political system of Nigeria and the attitude of the leaders (cf. chapter 3; 3.6.3; 3.6.9; 3.8). This assumption is in connection with the understanding of socio-politics as a tool for conflict management. From the above, it shows that people desired power over other people to achieve the aim for a particular group, instead of meeting the general needs of the people. The people

of Niger Delta and Ogba Community in particular cannot be seen in isolation without looking at the impact of leadership at the national level. This is because national politics affect every community. In fact the politics in Nigeria are divided along ethnic and religion sentiments. Therefore, the task of the church is to educate and support Christian politicians on how to unite the nation and at the same time ensuring that justice is sustained through integrity and the fear of God.

The economics of any nation depend on the political composition. Kunhiyop (2004:102) argues that political involvement may help to bring about better infrastructures, education and life styles. The church stands a better chance to develop if she engages in government and the political realities of her context. If the Biblical principle is employed by church members who get involved in politics, there would be an opportunity to make positive contributions in government and politics. The aim of this research discourse on the church's involvement in politics and governance is not just for its direct benefits when her members are in government, but with the notion that the leadership of a nation affects its peace and progress. The church is expected to ensure social justice, as in Prov 28:5: "Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully." Those who base their morals and ethics on the principles of God are able to bring stability to any nation. Dickson (2011:716) commenting on Proverbs 12:10-11, states that the righteous use their prosperity for the benefit of the people while the wicked used the people to gain their prosperity. When the righteous prosper they use their wealth for the benefit of their community. In the same way, the influence of the ungodly destroys the community, because they exploit the community in order to gain their wealth. The exploitative tendency of the politicians and elites in Ogba community indicates that they lack a godly leadership; therefore, the church's response to the conflict should include training godly people who can transform the conflict situation to a safe haven of peace and development.

6.3.5. Missional leadership in conflict management

The concept of missional leadership in the context of this research is that the church as a missional entity should be able to cultivate from the congregation to influence the society. God should be the centre of activities and focus of the people. In other words, the church should be the centre where godly leaders are produced for community service and development. West (2007:1) points out that there is a growing understanding that the church as the people of God are stewards of a gospel message that is not only about personal salvation for individuals, but is also about salvation for communities, cities, nations, social systems, the earth and all of creation. Furthermore, West (2007:1) reiterates how the Gospel of Jesus Christ engages the church in Christ's active redemption in every aspect of the society in order to break down barriers and dividing walls for the sake of equity, justice and reconciliation for all the peoples of the earth.

The focus here is that the church should play a role model of leadership to the community in order to make the gospel more practical to the people outside the church, as opposed to the injustice perpetrated by the ungodly leaders of the society. If members of the church are in leadership at all levels of the society, then the church in her missional approach can play a prophetic role like in the Old Testament's time where prophets like Amos and Jeremiah challenged Israelite kings who tolerated or perpetrated injustice in their kingdom (Bosch, 2007:401).

The attitude of the missional leaders is to cultivate the mind of discipleship both in the church and outside the church. West (2007:6) emphasis on missional leaders as cultivating an environment of a missional-mind set through discipleship and spiritual formation, to help people discover the habits and practices of Christian life for the sake of others.

6.4. STEP 3 - COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND STRATEGY

So far this research has discoursed the need for repentance and responsibility, which is the beginning of ensuring lasting conflict management. The importance of education through a missional approach has also been stressed as the second step in conflict management. The outcome of true repentance and understanding of the teaching is seen in human and social development. This includes spiritual, economic and all that affect human existence positively. In the course of this study, development has been one of the key matters that were stressed as a panacea for peace building. Bieler (1974:36) adds voice to this clarion call to extend the developmental process to all and not just to a few individuals or one aspect of a developmental project, but holistically as it affects human existence, arguing that the development of one man is inconceivable without the development of all the others. Economic and social developments are only a part, a necessary part, of man's development. The aim of real development is the enrichment of the human spirit at all levels. It is important to emphasise once more that the full development of man is not a simple question of economic growth and that man's true stature may develop only in communion with Christ.

Bieler (1974:55) identifies inequality and injustice as the cause of accumulated dissipation (*corruption*) of individuals and institutions that exist today, which appears in the endless greed of the rich. Such greed and selfishness call down both the judgment of God and the wrath of the poor, with unpredictably terrible consequences—unresolved violent conflict. Indeed, such is one of the most certain causes of the unleashing of violence in today's world and of the resultant revolutions. The violence and revolutions in turn spawn new injustices, introduce new inequalities and bring new disasters, which is the basic corruption of man and of institution.

Most significant of this point is the case of the Nigerian amnesty programme which recognises the militant above the general populace of a particular community who are law-abiding (Chapter 2, cf. 2.9).

It was also emphasised that the church's mission is not that of leading people to itself. Its task is on the contrary to prepare them to participate with others in the global renewal of society in view of the new world. Its goal is the realisation of an authentic humanity that it prefigures and finds in Christ by the double testimony of the words and its acts (Bieler, 1974:86).

In recognition of the fact that all human efforts are useless without God, Nyirongo (1994:53) argues that without acknowledgement of the Lordship of God in our lives we cannot truly reform society. Political tools which may include economic planning, military strength or large populations, organisation of political parties, manipulation of media, propaganda, cultural revival and all of government's apparatus for social transformation and peace building cannot be effective without acknowledging the sovereignty of God with his due regard in the national activities.

Therefore, the church as peacemaker is expected to shine the light of Christ in the chaotic community of violent conflict. It is not just to settle disputes in conflict situations, but to see God in the situation, how God can be glorified in the conflict. Where God is ignored in the disillusion of conflict, the solution may be temporary or ineffective. Poirier (2006:270) reiterates that the church must utilise the ordinary means of grace that God has given to promote peace-making in the family of God and community.

6.4.1. Development as missional approach

The church in Ogba communities should be able to see needs in their community that need intervention. The world was created because God saw the need to reform the formless world. Just as one cannot deny the existence of conflict or ignore it as Berkley (1998:194) stresses that the church must make an effort to identify those issues that can lead to conflict. Pastoral conflict management should include, instruction, encouragement, edification, condemnation of evil practices, and envision peaceful coexistence in the church and the society as a missional. Some of the problems that can affect the peace of individuals in the community include:

- Joblessness: the church may not be able to provide jobs for the whole community, but can advocate for job creation.
- Anxiety created by inability to meet basic needs: when people are deprived of their basic needs small things can trigger conflict. The earlier such problems are identified and solved, the earlier violent conflict can be averted.
- Unfavourable working conditions: it is not enough to create job opportunities, but to create an enabling environment where workers do not feel exploited, but feel that they belong in order to contribute to the progress of the organisation and for community or national growth.

- Lack of good health. Good health is an asset to individuals in any community. When people are not healthy either psychologically, emotionally or physically it could lead to traumatic situations and subsequently affect the peace in the community.
- Inadequate medical facilities and caring for all categories of people: pregnant women, children and old-aged people.
- Lack of understanding of Christian faith.
- Broken relationships

It is not just to identify problems as outlined above, but the church should be able to find means of solving these problems. The church should constantly work towards helping others. The church does not exist for itself and as such is expected to be involved in assisting others as they work through their conflicts. Like in the case of Ogba community, the church may not be able to provide all that is needed to maintain peace as regards to meeting their material or developmental needs. Teaching and advocacy can help to change the acts of injustice. The church should also have a limit of compromise. Where there is need to change a system that could create conflict, it can be introduced through teaching and advocacy.

Effective teaching and obedience in conflict management can lead to sustainable development in any community. The process outlined by Collins (2007:48) is important in concluding this part:

- *Building social support:* by promoting more cooperation, better communication and unity in the community, organisation, and the church. There should be greater support and less isolation among the members. People should be encouraged to love and show concern for one another.
- *Getting help from others:* including people in the community who have specialised expertise and are able to contribute to the resolution of the conflict.
- *Teaching social skills:* so people are more competent in coping with stress, relating to others and managing their lives.
- *Equipping lay people:* giving them training and encouragement so they can provide counselling, education, tangible assistance, self-help group support, and other aid to needy people in their communities.
- *Preventing conflict:* by anticipating the future and helping anxious individuals and groups of people develop the skills that will effect positive life changing with the aim of preventing future conflict.
- *Changing the community:* sometimes by taking social, political or other action to reduce poverty, stress, unemployment, violence, ignorance, sinful behaviour or other environmental conflict-prone situations.

Good relationships begin with the knowledge of Jesus Christ as the prince of peace. It also depends on how people react to issues with honesty, sincerity and skilfulness. Collins (2007:317) discusses conflict and interpersonal relations in light of the following assertion as shown below, the researcher added to the discussion in line with the research objective thus:

- i. *Good Relationships and conflict resolution begin with Jesus Christ:* As the prince of peace Jesus was able to make peace by breaking interpersonal barriers and the wall of hostility that divide people. Jesus promised in John 14:27: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” The understanding of this promise could help in handling anxiety which often leads to intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict.
- ii. *Good relationships depend on people:* The ability of people to consider relationships more important than their anxiety will help to reduce violent conflicts and be able to manage their differences for the good of each other. The attitude and characteristics of the persons involved in the disagreements affects the conflict situation. When people are transformed within, a slow process of change begins in their outward behaviour. With time this enables them to build better relationships and more able to handle conflict in a matured and godly manner. This can be achieved through individual commitment, regular times of worship, prayer, and meditation on God’s Word, which is made possible through the missional responsibility of the church. It is also important to note that in the secular world, this principle feasibly applies literally, however, it can be applied in moral and leadership training where there is Christian leadership to compliment the missional response in the society.
- iii. *Good relations focus on issues:* Often, tensions arise from differences concerning more specific issues rather than human hatred. The herdsmen of Lot and Abram argued over use of the limited pastureland. When the two masters sat down to discuss this, their focus specifically was on the disputes between the two groups of herdsmen, which was amicably resolved. Paul and Barnabas were able to resolve their difference without attacking each other. Those who focus on tackling the issue, rather than focussing on the other person, will resolve their conflict with greater responsibility. Nevertheless, when interpersonal relationships are destroyed, future opportunities may be lost.
- iv. *Good relations involve determination, effort and skill:* The Bible and psychology agree that good relationships depend on the consistent development and application of skills, such as listening carefully, watching, understanding oneself and others, trying hard to communicate accurately, and refraining from unkind comments or emotional outbursts. The skills could be learnt, but there is also the possibility of forgetting what is learnt in the midst of conflict. The

role of the missional church within the community is to constantly teach and live by example within the community to ensure peace.

6.4.2. Developmental approach

It seems as if theologians and Christian developmental workers, like their secular counterparts, have struggled to understand what true development really means. Bragg (1987:38) proposes an alternative framework for understanding human and social change from a Christian perspective which is referred to as transformation. While the concept of transformation is said to have permeated the Biblical record from the Old Testament images of *shalom* and the reign of God in Israel, to the New Testament church and the kingdom of God. Throughout the Bible, it portray how the existing reality is transformed into a higher dimension and purpose, apart from the formless earth that was transformed into an inhabitable world, the salvation history of a rag-tag slave group in Egypt is changed into the Hebrew nation; a small band of powerless Jews are transformed into the church that altered the course of history. Christ's ministry was transformational too—he changed water into wine, a few loaves of bread and fishes into a feast, a Passover supper into powerful symbols of his death and communion, and even the Roman executioner's cross into a sign of victory. Transformation is to take what is and turn it into what it could and should be.

Bragg (1987:39) sees transformation as part of God's continuing action in history to restore all creation to himself and to its rightful purposes and relationships. Sin, the social and cosmic anti-creation, has distorted God's original design and purpose for creation. This is manifested in the way every facet of society has been distorted from the original design of the Creator. Oppression and injustice, racism, alienation, and exploitation in the structures of communities and nations are the results of idolatry and disobedience to God. Transformation does not extract people from their earthly contexts for other worldly piety, but rather changes the contexts as well as the people in terms of attitude and worldview.

God's purpose for humanity is to reflect and manifest his nature in man, to live as his image in the world, his co-creators and stewards, rather than as predators of creation. God intends that social structures reflect and promote justice, peace, sharing, and free participation for the well-being of all. The goal of transformation is that God's purposes be realised, as is revealed in the Old Testament concept of *shalom*—harmony, peace, health, well-being, prosperity, justice—and in the New Testament the image of the kingdom, which is both present and coming. Transformation seeks to repel the evil social structures that exist in the present cosmos and to institute through the mission of the church the values of the kingdom of God over and against the values of the “principalities and powers” of this world. The church is at the centre of God's purpose for society so that through the church, the wisdom

of God in all its varied forms might be made known. The contribution of the church to the community development is to transform all relationships towards redemption.

Bragg (1987:39) describes transformation as joint enterprise between God and humanity in history, not just a mechanistic or naturalistic process. It involves a changing human condition and relationships in the entire community. Transformation in relation to development, does not only apply to a particular community or underdeveloped community, but to the human race including those that can be termed overdeveloped countries, while the developed community needs transformation to free itself from a secular, materialistic condition marked by broken relationships, violence, economic subjugation, and devastation of nature. The underdeveloped community needs transformation from the subhuman condition of poverty, premature death, hunger, exposure, oppression, disease, and fear. It therefore, implies that transformation is a continuous process in all stages and all categories in human development. Secondly, transformation which leads to physical development should be centred on the knowledge of God for total transformation of the human community.

Bragg (1987:22) proposes a modernisation approach to development and although this research does not in totality assimilate the concept of modernisation except if it is within the context of the community and of benefit to all and sundry. In other words, a transformation that can be of benefit to individuals and communities for peaceful living. However, the context of modernisation theorists here gained acceptance after World War II, especially as they sought a response to the Cold War and the needs of new nations. Notwithstanding, it is pertinent to present this discourse because there are also some critique about modernisation.

The ultimate goal is to increase production and economic growth which will raise the standard of living and provide a good life for as many as possible. By spreading the economic benefits of the capitalist market system, modernisation theorists hope to destroy the need and desire for a socialist movement—that advocates for a political system in which the means of production and distribution is controlled by the government and operated according to equity and fairness, rather than market principles. It is important to quickly point out here that human effort to ensure equity without the knowledge of God may not last.

The modernisation theorist (Bragg, 1987:23-23) assumes that traditional—rural and agrarian—societies are in some absolute sense underdeveloped and that their values and institutions cause underdevelopment as well as express it. “Resistance to development” came to be a pejorative (*harsh*) criticism of any non-Western society, as though the Western model of development were the determinant of human existence and those who declined to accept it, were backward and too ignorant to accept it. Such attempts to define what is good merely against the standard of one’s own experience

is what Bragg (1987:23) considers as the height of ethnocentrism (where one think that their own culture is superior to others), which is also contrary to the position of this research. To this end there is an example of a Maasai¹⁰ elder who refused to send his son to a government school, because Western education was considered teaching the child to despise the ways of his ancestors. One could asked if his position is influenced by ignorance. Some writers argue that traditions are not necessarily a hindrance to true development, but can be positive forces to build on.

Neither western nor the traditional system of development is advocated in this research, nor any system that is not build on Biblical principles to deal with sin and with the knowledge on how to maintain a godly society.

6.4.3. Dependency and underdevelopment

The Dependency theory is an attempt to understand the increasing disparities between the rich and poor as a phenomenon in human existence, which can be applied to both individuals and communities. The root cause of underdevelopment in one part of the world, according to these theorists is the advance of development in another part. Some theorists maintained that dependency can be a factor in relationships within a national economy as well. It is because of the dependence of rural communities of the Third World economies in urban sectors that there is such an income disparity between the two. The Dependency theory stresses the vulnerability of economies that are not autonomous (Bragg, 1987:28, 29). However, this research aligns with Kottar (2013) who enumerates unfortunate situations that can lead to suffering, poverty and possible underdevelopment to natural disasters, oppression, laziness and simply living in a fallen world necessitated by sin. This is not to say that when you are poor or underdeveloped you are the worst sinner, neither is wealth associated with righteousness. Some may even become wealthy through oppression and ungodly ways and by so doing deny others who are genuinely struggling to succeed their right. It is also important to point out that the above points do not mean that everyone who is poor is lazy, because there are other factors and misfortune that can lead to poverty.

6.4.4. Development as a mission of God for the church

Every community is designed for God's redemptive purpose and the church through the Holy Spirit is the channel through which God's purpose will be accomplished. The church has a dual responsibility,

¹⁰ Maasai, also spelled Masai, are an ethnic group of pastoral people with strong warrior traditions who live in East Africa, mainly in Kenya and Tanzania. They are characteristically tall and slender in build.

to the fellowship and to the community. Dayton (1987:59) observes that some believers are gifted and called to act out their Christianity in the spontaneous ways of everyday living, while others are gifted and called to be, at times, in addition to their other social tasks, more active in social transformation in the larger secular community of which they are part.

For the church to be salt and light in the world, Dayton (1987:60) maintains that it must first accept the tasks of transforming itself in order to honestly proclaim justice in the world. This means that community development that brings social transformation must begin from the church, starting from its “Jerusalem”. Ottuh (2014:1) postulates that the gospel that does not consider the physical needs of its target community will not make any impact.

Boersema (1999:47) recognises sin as the major cause of most economic problems. Economics are primarily concerned with the allocation of scarce resources to people. It is obvious that sin has significantly increased the scarcity problem. This necessitates the discourse in Step 1, which focuses on repentance and responsibility. Although God created everything good, sin has caused the ground to be cursed. Sin has been identified as the causes of unfaithful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to humanity, which distorts both human knowledge and wills, consequently leading to sinful economic action and enslavement of people to false gods. This also led to the discourse in Step 2, which deals with training to give information about the true God through holistic missional activities. God institutes governments in order that the licentiousness (*recklessness*) of man be restrained. Those in government are themselves made up of sinful people. Sinful men and women inevitably make mistakes and are tempted to abuse power. Such abuse of power in most cases leads to human suffering, poverty, inevitable conflict and underdevelopment.

Therefore, for development to be meaningful to the people, they should have a Biblical value system. Lack of understanding of Biblical principles could be responsible for the vandalism and misuse of public utilities especially when the power of sin is in force and people are not evangelised nor taught as Jesus’ disciples who must bear responsibility in their community.

6.4.5. **Developmental agenda**

In order to help the church in Ogba community, some key elements on development are proposed. Number i to v are listed by Swart (2006:143), while the researcher also added some suggestions:

- i. *Reconciliation and demilitarisation*: the fundamental basis of people-centred development will be effective when the aggrieved party understands that peace will lead to equity and justice. There is no greater contributor to human suffering until the barrier which affects developmental action is dealt with. The forces of reconciliation and forgiveness can only

excel with the demilitarisation of the community. This means the reallocation of military resources to alleviate poverty and to convert the community or economy to sustainable modes of production. It means that military assistance has to be limited if it cannot be eliminated.

- ii. *Lifestyles and technologies:* These must lead humanity and in particular the rich, to redefine the good life, with greater emphasis on social, intellectual and spiritual quality of life. It must lead the human economic growth directing its energy towards the devising and application of environmentally sound technologies as the basis for future improvements in the well-being of humanity.
- iii. *Spiritual development:* This is relevant to the strategic role of the church in development. This constitutes development in subsequent generations in relation to the uses of power, values, love, brotherhood, peace and the ability of people to live in harmony with one another. Moreover, in relation, the church can truly excel and become central to the achievement of sustainable development. On the basis of a theoretical concept of change that holds structural change to be dependent on the emergence of an alternative human consciousness, the churches can truly make a contribution on the structural level.
- iv. *Family development:* The most basic unit of human society – essential to the construction and maintenance of strong integrative social structures and the individual's most important source of economic and psychological security. This insight requires a new approach in tending to the deprivations and exploitation of women and children. Contrary to the traditional separation of these groups from the family in social development programmes, the social agenda has to be the restoration and strengthening of the family in ways that increase equality, love, mutual respect and responsibility.
- v. *Political democratisation:* Exclusion of certain groups from elective positions in government could suppress the creative social energy of civil society, the people-centre development. Assistance is to be provided to non-elected governments only in instances where they clearly and directly contribute towards democratisation. Non-governmental organisations are to be made the primary channels of other aid intended to benefit people who live under authoritarian governments (Swart, 2006:143, 149).
- vi. *Social development:* The church can for example get involved in water projects that will be of benefit to the people in the community. Humanitarian services to reach out to the needy in the community and providing training that will empower the youth economically. Promotion advocacy and other voluntary agencies with missionary mindedness to create good relationships among the people and moral values in the community.

- vii. *Economic Development*: The ministry of the church goes beyond preaching to the people. It should include some establishments that can give employment to many of the indigenes of Ogba community. Business enterprises such as a printing press; information and technological centre; establishment of schools and hospitals etc. will help to train and create employment for the people, especially the youth.

6.4.6. **The principle of community development**

In the first place the community development of the church should be based on faith in God. The sin and the disorder of the community are a spiritual problem and cannot be solved by merely showing compassion. Jesus' ministry is all-encompassing in Luke 4:18, which states that: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed." The principle of community development of the church must be based on holistic transformation.

6.4.7. **Identifying community needs**

It is not enough to carry out community development without identifying the needs of the community. A project may turn out to be a waste if the people are not interested in it or if it does not contribute to human capacity building. Bragg (1987:21) maintains that economic or material wealth does not necessarily constitute a "good life." Identifying the desire of most communities is to be a little more secured in terms of better health care, crop prices, tools, and nutrition without giving up their way of life that stresses family cohesion, group cooperation and the value of each member of the community. Bragg (1987:21) observes that there is a format of development pursued by government and private agencies based on a model of better life that is inappropriate to the needs and goals of most communities.

The church in her reconciliatory activities can also be committed to improve the lives of people in Ogba community by way of humanitarian service. Some respondents mentioned that some militants, who renounced their criminal activities, later went back to it and became sometimes worse than before, because there was no follow-up to address their economic and social issues that led them in the first place to engage in criminal activities. Jobbins *et al.* (2017:4) observe that the links between the humanitarian, environmental and conflict resolution fields are increasingly overlapping. Those affected by the crisis in Ogba community could be pacified by conducting intervention projects that are sustainable in the long-term such as facilitating a return to normal livelihoods in the aftermath of adversity experienced as a result of criminal attacks by the militants. According to Reychler (1997), religions contribute to peace building by empowering the weak, influencing the moral-political climate, developing cooperation and providing humanitarian aid. Didier (2017:77) postulates two kinds of aid

by distinguishing between humanitarian aid, which is immediate assistance to those affected by disaster or crisis, and developmental aid, which is aimed at poverty alleviation. However, Didier (2017:78) asserts that for a peacekeeping missions to be effective, the root causes of the conflict must be addressed and dealt with seriously. Looking at the corruption in Ogba community one could ask to find out if any humanitarian or developmental aid will really profit those affected. Didier (2017:85) talks about sustainable development that can affect all and sundry within the community, the social, political, economic and environmental dimensions of human life. If development is only focused on the present and does not include all the dimensions of human life, it could have negative impacts on the life and wellbeing of both the present and the future generations. This implies that everybody, including the poorest, must be part and parcel of any decision that affects their wellbeing and their future generations for sustainable development to take place.

However, it is not out of place to mention that there should be groups of people who are saddled with the responsibility of coordinating the total wellbeing in any giving community. These are commonly regarded as the leaders, but not just leaders but leaders with the mind of God.

6.4.8. Community participation

The biggest flaw of the amnesty programme includes the lack of consultation with the people and exclusion of some groups of people in the community. By community participation, the community should be given a chance to be the actual teamsters of what project is to be carried out, based on the information they have receive through teaching. The church should identify the level of their giftedness in order to determine the level of their involvement, both in decision-making and participation. People will develop interest if they are part of the project. Fields (2014) notes that interest will be automatic for people who have an opportunity to be a part of shaping something that responds to needs they have or issues they face. Even when there is a specific project targeting certain groups, the relevant beneficiary should be contacted at first before commencement and not at the end of the project.

6.4.9. Collaboration with relevant stakeholders

The Church in Ogba community may not be able to meet all the needs of the community. They may be in need to partner with other non-church organisations in the community that could support real community development. The Multinational Oil Company and government have tried to provide community development projects, but in most cases their approaches lack moral integrity to affect every individual. Therefore, the church needs to be in unity of purpose and integrity. This means to be morally positive and spiritually neutral.

There may be fear of being unequally yoked or being distracted from the mission of God by being tangled up in human activities. However, as Field (2014) points out that as long as the church exercises at least a mustard seed's worth of discernment, there will be many benefits and advantages in partnering with others in areas where both the church and non-church organisations are concerned or passionate about which will be of immense benefit to the community. God can use any one and any means to accomplish his ultimate purpose in human community. The church could find ways of partnering with schools in mentoring and tutoring. In collaboration one may ask questions to find out who are interested in what the church intends to do. It could be in the area of manpower or financial resources.

6.5. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR RELATIONSHIPS

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher wants to summarise some guidelines that are important for healthy relationships. All these guidelines are based on Biblical principles that are found in scriptures such as Romans 12 where Paul educates believers on healthy relationships.

- *Consideration for individual differences:* people have different intrinsic values. Conflict could be handled effectively when individual differences are taken into consideration. People should be for value who they are and not only on what they do. Communication should be with dignity and human value. This calls to appreciate every individual for who they are, because they bear the image of God. It also means to acknowledge interdependency on one another.
- *Commitment to task:* Everyone should be committed to their role. In relation to the church, every member should be committed to the mission of the church. The mission should serve as a unifying force to achieve the best in the community.
- *Think about the progress of others:* people should be able to invest in each other by supporting each other's progress. By doing so, the whole community will make progress.
- *Avoid anything that leads to an inferiority complex:* No one should think of themselves as more important than the other with the understanding that everyone contributes to the realisation of the community's goal. Leaders should understand that they cannot do anything without the support of their subordinates. Everyone is gifted differently by God and everyone's gift should be appreciated.
- *All people should be treated as contributing peers* regardless of their scope of responsibility: the remuneration may differ, but every member of the organisation has something to offer and deserves to be paid for their contributions.
- *Leaders should develop leaders:* Leadership is the process of giving power away, not collecting it. This means that there is a need for delegating power to others in order for them to be part of the progress in the community.

- *Personal interest should not override community interest:* The mission of the community should take precedence over individual purposes. Personal agendas should always be subordinated to the community's agenda or mission.
- *Inclusiveness:* Every member of the community should participate in both decision-making and the implementation of projects in order to have a sense of ownership of results. Through participation the people could be motivated to put in their best. The community is made up of different tribes. They should be encouraged to development cordial relationships that enable people to care for and learn from one another so they can tap from their diversity.
- *There should be integrity and honesty:* Everyone should have access to information concerning the situation in the community. The more people know, the more they become partners. The more reliability and integrity are displayed in dealing with the people, the more trustworthy will the people be. When people have confidence in each other, either as a leader or subordinate, the less tension and possibility of conflict situations there will be. Honesty, integrity and trust are essential in every activity of mankind. Both leaders and followers desire to see these attributes in each other. God also expects his people to walk in integrity of sincerity of heart. With honesty and integrity, trust is built in relationships and within the community.
- *Be open to criticism:* Confrontation is not always evil especially when it challenges negative behaviour, it could be a sign of caring. Since the community is made up of diversity, such diversity could mean conflict, but not necessarily violence. The way one responds to confrontation could expose his or her emotional maturity status. On the other hand, how one confronts the other person also shows the motives, either in love and caring or out of hatred and envy. Putting this in perspective, Wright (2000:136) maintains that confrontation addresses conflict by caring enough for the other person to engage him/her in a relationship in which both parties are held accountable to their stated values. It means that if one really cares about the other person, he or she will give feedback on what they see and how they respond to it, which should be done with sincerity of heart. Criticism without constructive action could be taken as destructive gossip. Criticism usually holds one accountable to other's values, rather than their own personal value.
- *People should be willing to forgive:* There can be no healing of emotional wounds if there is no forgiveness. Because human beings are not perfect beings, there should be room for mistakes and people should forgive one another. Leaders and followers should be able to forgive. Leadership involves the risk of making decisions which may not really be the best. Wright (2000:137) states that there is a direct correlation between forgiveness and empowerment. No one can be empowered without the freedom to fail or make a mistake.

6.6. CONCLUSION

For the church to have a lasting impact in the society it must be effective in the renewing and transformation of humanity, societies, communities, tribes, race and nations. The whole public life should be the concern of the church as it is the concern of God. For sustainability of peace in Ogba land, the responsibilities of the church should include raising missional leaders at all levels of the society. It should be aimed at shaping cultural imagination within the congregation in order to create an environment wherein people discern God's activities among them and in their community. The proposed model in this chapter is based on three steps, namely repentance and reconciliation, education and training, and community development.

One of the root causes of conflict in Ogba community is the struggle for supremacy by various groups. This struggle is manifested from inside-out as discoursed in the human nature, which reveals the distortion of God's creatures through sin. This means that the fall resulted in inner conflict, the spirit, soul, and body "forgot" the natural order and competed for supremacy. Therefore, noting that it is only in God that the sinful nature which encouraged conflicts could be subdued. It means that when humans surrender their totality—body, soul, and spirit to God - God will restore the correct order and there will be peaceful and harmonious living with one another. Because the image of God in man has been corrupted by sin, it creates fear and anxiety in the world and therefore, peace is lacking. Every effort by man to ensure peace is self-made, like Adam and Eve discovered that their own efforts could not really cover their sinful natures, except with God's intervention. Human efforts to alleviate conflict are temporary and that leaves human beings burdened with a sense of anxiety. Therefore, there is a need for repentance and reconciliation, not just repenting, but to do the right thing based on the Biblical injunction. Repentance should be in light of the misuse of power and wrong worldview. The church and community alike should repent and critically reflect on the need for accountability in the use of opportunities and power structures. Reconciliation is important in all four relationships of man, namely with God, with themselves, with others and with nature.

In keeping Biblical principles, teaching is important to impact the life of the community. In Deut 6:6-7 the Israelites were commanded to wholeheartedly commit themselves to the command by obeying and teaching the next generation. Teaching must encourage the people to be obedient to God in their daily experiences and experience Him in all aspects of life. The teaching of the church should be able to facilitate all-inclusiveness and full participation in the life of the community. This implies that all sorts of discrimination against any human being should be resisted as it is unacceptable in the sight of God. The people should be made to know and to reject any values and practices which could lead to negative consequences in the community. Finally, faithfulness to God and a commitment to Biblical principles, compel one to confront corrupt practices and evil assumptions, unjust systems, politics of domination

and exploitation in the economic order. Mission should motivate the church and individuals to serve God's purpose in life, rather than satisfy individual greed to pursue change towards a better world, while challenging the self-interest of the powerful who desire to maintain the status quo at the detriment of the masses.

Community development is expected to meet the holistic needs of the people. The community resources should be mobilised to transform the community into what God intends it to be. This means, that the church should be concerned about the situation in the community and how the church can educate and help the people to find solutions to the community problems. For sustainable development, indigenous leaders are to be involved within the community through discipleship training. Leaders ought to be developed before assuming their position in order to avoid pitfalls. What people complained negatively about the leadership's role in the conflict situation of Ogba community could be as a result of individual leaders who are not adequately and morally trained in a godly principle. The people on the other hand may not even choose the right leaders, as based on moral values. Therefore, the efforts that lead to lasting peace should be based on Biblical principles.

Lastly, the focus of the chapter shifted to the formulation of guidelines regarding healthy relationships based on Biblical principles. The researcher is convinced that these guidelines can contribute to peace in Ogba community.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS

7.1. INTRODUCTION

This research is divided into seven chapters. In this last chapter the previous chapters will be summarised and suggestions for further research will be given. The motivating factor of this research was born out of the concern over the incessant violence in the Niger Delta in spite of the efforts and resources that have been invested to ensure peace in the region and secondly, to reflect on the impact of the amnesty on the non-violence citizens of Ogba community. The aim was to engage in a pastoral missional reflection in order to provide Biblical based conflict management principles which can help the church on how to deal with the situation.

7.2. SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS

Before the suggestions, it is important to summarise the content of each of the preceding chapters. The summary will be given chapter by chapter as discussed in this research. The title of the research is:

A pastoral missional reflection on conflict management in the Niger Delta: The impact of amnesty on citizens of the Ogba Community who are opposed to violence

Chapter one from the proposal of the research, presents the background of the study regarding the introduction of the amnesty programme by the Nigerian federal government. It was expected that the militant groups would surrender their arms in exchange for freedom from prosecution. The introduction of amnesty was an initiative that aimed to achieve cessation of armed conflicts in the region. The need to go beyond the physical level that has to do with human imagination and method in reconciling people, or finding solutions for the conflict situation was stressed. The researcher is of the view that conflict can best be managed through spiritual renewing of the mind. People suffering from material deprivation and consequently living in poverty, will inevitably not accept peace except if there are justice and hope for a better future and access to existential necessities of life. This chapter also discussed the methodology of the study and proposed a focus on the church as a missional community who is expected to be involved in word and deed in people's daily lives in the community. The church is expected to go beyond its ecumenical location to the surrounding community as well.

Chapter two discussed the impact of the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta. Considering the conflict situation in the area. It discusses the descriptive-empirical task in order to identify what is really going on. The discussion was narrowed down to a literature study about what is going on in Ogba community and how the amnesty programme affects the non-violence citizens of the community. As part of the descriptive-empirical task, a qualitative study was also done and reflected on in chapter five.

In chapter two the researcher presents the literature study to better understand the particular episodes, situations and context of the conflicting situation.

The understanding of the amnesty programme in Nigeria revealed that it was a political strategy to disarm the Niger Delta Militant group and absorb them into the society in order to ensure peace in the region. Under its terms militants who freely handed over their weapons and demobilised wouldn't be prosecuted and would even receive benefits. The allowance was significantly higher than Nigeria's minimum wage. Leaders of militant groups were also offered large and highly profitable contracts in the oil industry and other sectors of the economy. In the wake of the amnesty programme, ex-militant leaders gained political power and influence in the cities to which they returned.

The amnesty programme according to the findings was initially designed for youths who were active members of armed militant groups. Evidence shows that youths, who weren't part of any armed militant group, started to mobilise into new groups or join existing ones in order to benefit from the amnesty programme. In some instances, they quickly purchased weapons on the black market to enable them to participate in the programme.

The study revealed that several measures have been taken by successive governments to curb the menace of insurgency without success. In addition to setting up a commission to handle Niger Delta issues, military coercive was employed, which also aggravated the situation that developed from communal agitation to militancy. In the historical background it was learnt that before the introduction of the amnesty programme in May 2009, the military had launched major ground, air and sea attacks to flush militants out of their camps in the Niger Delta. The strategy which was adopted from 1990 during the Ogoni protests and subsequent militant agitation in the Niger Delta is considered to be ineffective because after a decisive attack, instead of subduing the agitators, there were subsequent militia counter attacks on the oil infrastructure which affected the national economy.

The response to the amnesty by the militants was assumed to be positive, because many of the militant leaders embraced the programme and surrendered arms. However, it was later discovered that the amnesty was a flaw, because there was no reliability on neither side, not the government nor the militants. The government only responded and cared for the lawbreakers and the militants used the benefits from government to acquire more weapons, since the amnesty programme involved financial benefits to the militants.

Though within the period of the amnesty, there was relative peace in the Niger Delta region, however, it could be described as peace in the necropolis, outwardly quiet, but underneath full of evil. In the opinion of many researchers and from the empirical findings, it became clear that the amnesty programme was a failure, because the programme brought several unpalatable side effects to the nation, the region, and Ogbia Community in particular, which include wide spread kidnapping, increase in oil

theft, high rate of piracy and more agitation for amnesty in other parts of the country, especially from the north for the Boko Haram group. The empirical studies in Ogba community confirmed this assertion. The insecurity threats were attributed to the high rate of injustice and inequity (social injustice without equitable wealth distribution available to all) in the absence of peace that characterised the lack of development due to negligence and deprivation as the people allegedly lived in abject poverty.

Chapter three seeks to find out the causes of conflict in Niger Delta area as it affects Ogba community. This is to address the question on why there is violent conflict after the amnesty programme that was expected to solve the conflict situation in the region.

The historical background of the conflict was traced to the economy structure imposed on Nigeria between 1914 and 1960 by the British colonial government. The process of unification of Nigeria began in 1906 and was aimed at securing a central direction of policy and pooling resources for administrative purposes. Colonial intelligence reports reveal that the agitation was intensified by the local protesters, because the mineral ordinance did not require the joint venture to ask any permission from the local landowners before they started their operations.

The cause of persistent conflict in the Niger Delta in spite of the amnesty has been attributed to so many factors, which include e.g. the concentration of the amnesty programme on the ex-militants. It has negative motivating factors to the non-violent citizens. Due to the wrong precedent others felt that the only way to attract the attention of government was to take up arms. Most authors discourse, cantered on political and economic standpoints and propose a human solution. However, the position of this research is to reflect on these issues based on the theological perspective since it seems all human efforts have failed to address the problem of Niger Delta.

Chapter four's discourse centred on the results of the empirical study in Ogba community. The aim of the chapter was to reflect on the findings of the empirical study on pastoral missional principles and transgenerational post-traumatic stress in conflict management, and how community development can be of help to manage conflict in Ogba community. As the study revealed that the crisis in Ogba community like any other Niger Delta area was deeply traumatic for community members. One thing that characterised the conflict and complicated the process of conflict management was the lack of trust. The findings reveals that there was distrust among those who were perceived as loyal to the government versus those who were perceived as loyal to the militants, which created major challenges to conflict management. In summary, the empirical studies reveal that the amnesty programme introduced in the Niger Delta was the idea of a few people in collaboration with federal government which did not represent the interest of the general populace, nor had any direct bearing or benefit on the common people of the community and the Niger Delta as a whole.

Chapter five made a critical study of appropriate scriptures regarding the Biblical principles of conflict management, as well as a reflection on pastoral and missional literature regarding the issue.

In the course of the study, it was apparent that the activities of a missional church cannot be separated from the duties of a pastoral ministry, who is expected to shape the life of the society through preaching and teaching in a world shaped by many challenges, such as conflict. The study wanted to establish the fact that redemption, due to preaching can help to consciously resist the hands of greed, violence and loveless power that dominate the social and political consciousness. Preaching and missional activities are expected to break the effect of transgenerational consequences not only for the adults, but also for their children and potentially their grandchildren. This resulted in a trans-generational cycle of conflict which could impact upon the well-being of subsequent generations.

This research agrees with the view that learning and experiencing the ways of peace in early life will help to produce a sound foundation for the rest of their young people's lives. This means that peace must begin at the cradle in accordance with the scripture: "Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not turn from it." (Prov 22:6) Understanding of peace at an early stage in life is expected to help children grow up well, be integrated and able to fully utilise their abilities.

The emphasis in the chapter was that pastoral missional responsibilities of the church are not limited to the church. It is not possible to completely separate the congregation from the society, because what forms the congregation are part of the society made up of politicians, lawyers, businessmen/women, students and the unemployed. That is why the pastoral ministry like the missionary responsibility must reach out to the world to change the societal worldview.

The effect of conflict and transgenerational conflict were also discoursed in chapter five. The research discoursed lack of love and misuse of power in the society as responsible for transgenerational conflict. Unless something is done to address the situation, it may continue to subsequent generations. The discourse centred on conflict management from a theological perspective in relation to social justice which cannot be achieved without good governance. The research is of the view that good governance cannot be achieved, except the church is involved in training members to engage in political activities with sound Biblical principles.

To achieve good governance in the above assertion, the researcher aligned with the opinion that the Christian vision on individual and societal structure should not be limited to forms of personal behaviour and church organisation. It should be extended to social and political behaviours that must both account for and justify themselves within the broader social setting. This is because it takes public missiology to shape public life. The church as a mission of God, must justify their intentions and actions in public,

in relation to social and political structures shaped by Christian witness. The church is an institution that teaches Biblical principles of leadership that could have an effect on both political and social life of the community. Identifying and encouraging those who understand and exhibit moral quality to serve as a witness in the public sector with their voices and influence.

It was established in these studies that social evil and conflict are encouraged by sin. To understand this point, the origin of sin was discoursed. Sin through disobedience paved ways for evil to penetrate into every aspect of God's creation and every human earthly endeavour leading to conflict and frustration.

Another aspect that affects social conflict is the specific worldview of the community, which was discoursed in this research. People's worldview greatly affects their development, prosperity, environment and certain circumstances as it creates different cultural divisions and values. A worldview affects the way humanity approaches issues of life, the understanding of God and values. It is affirmed that in God will humanity find solutions to their problems as the gospel is to addresses every dimension of a human's problems created through sin. By implication the conflict situation of any society can better be resolved through the gospel and not human imagination and principles.

The emphasis of this study in regards to pastoral ministry is to prepare the church for socio-political transformation that will ensure justice for all citizens without prejudice. The church is not to take over power, but should not distance itself from the problems in the world. While the command to make disciples is to change or transform the world system that could bring its inhabitants peace. It also means to illuminate the "dark part of the world" as light and preserve the world as salt.

While Christians can be taught on godly principles of leadership in the church, the church as the body of Christ is not to take up political power, but they must most certainly have an impact on political decisions. Church members are Christians who are involved in different occupations and activities. God is interested in the public arena of human social and economic life.

As the content of chapter five, missional engagement in the public sphere dominates the discourse, which emphasis that God's people are called to engage in various activities of the created world. One of the ways the Bible teaches believers to engage the secular or public sphere for God's mission is in a position to serve the state (political power). Examples abound of Joseph, Daniel and Esther who divinely gained high-level positions in the pagan imperial governments, even in such positions they could serve God and His people.

The lesson to learn from these people that can help Christians to live and act as a missional in any position God placed them include (1) they accepted the realities of the public sphere, they became part of it in spite of its ambiguity. However, did not allow ambiguity and cultural differences to change their

knowledge of God. (2) They worked constructively and conscientiously for the government and for social benefit. Their political enemies could not fault them like in the case of Daniel (Dan 6:4). Joseph saved the lives of the Egyptians and other nations including his family members. (3) They preserved their integrity. The moral integrity of Joseph was evident in Gen 39:7-10; Daniel and his friends did not cede their total loyalty to the God for the king as their integrity stood firm. God uses their power for the sake of others and for the world. Human power should do likewise. Where human power is subject to divine power it leads to a healthy and secured society because it serves the purpose of God on earth.

The role of a missional church as an alternative community in the world should not be an isolated community in the fallen world. The church must rather penetrate into every fabric of the society with the re-creational Word of God.

The summary of chapter five is that any community or government that lost godly values is bound to experience conflict of all kinds. The characters and actions of leaders affect the peace and other aspects of the community. The Church is called and sent by God to engage in the holistic development of society in order to glorify God. God is not only concerned with the supernatural, but active in the world and his power is active in the secular life of humankind. The church's understanding of this will direct its involvement and determine its relevance in the socio-political and economic challenges of modern society. Therefore, for the church to be relevant in the community faced with conflict, it must go beyond its ecumenical setting and holistically engage the society.

Chapter six which seeks to provide helpful guidelines to the church in Ogba community on conflict management emphasised the fact that human efforts are worthless without God. Without the acknowledgement of the lordship of God in human community, man cannot truly reform the society. Political tools which may include economic planning, strength of military, etc. and all of government's apparatus for social transformation and peace building cannot be effective without acknowledging the sovereignty of God in the national activities. Therefore, the church as peacemaker should shine the light of Christ in the chaotic community of violent conflict. It is not just to settle disputes in conflict situations, but to see God in the situation and how God can be glorified in the conflict.

The guidelines were discussed in three major steps, which include: (1) Repentance and responsibility, (2) Training and education, and (3) Community Development.

To link conflict to sin was discoursed, that the effects of sin led to human problems. This means that sin is the major cause of most economic problems. Economics are primarily concerned with the allocation of scarce resources to people sin significantly increased the scarcity problem. Although God created everything good, sin has caused the ground to be cursed. Sin has been identified as the cause of

unfaithful stewards of the resources God has entrusted to humanity, which distorts both human knowledge and will.

Consequently it leads to sinful economic action and enslavement of people to false gods. The influence of the gospel in the community's peace was also stressed with the emphasis that the gospel should be used to dismantle any evil embedded in the structures of the society that has the potential for disintegration and conflict. The evils in the world and those around the church should be a challenging factor for commitment in mission which can help the growth of the church. Despite all the efforts and attempts to address the conflict caused by human greed and lust, both at local and international level, none of the humans' solutions work. This is because when God is not present, Satan, evil and sinful rushes in to take possession of the human heart. The effects of transgenerational post-traumatic stress on conflict was reemphasised in chapter six with suggestions on how the church could be able to help the community through seminar and teaching to understand the pain, loss and trauma the ex-militant and others might experience. The community and ex-criminals should be encouraged to depend on God for total healing by forgiving each other.

The chapter stressed that development is one of the key matters as a panacea for peace building. The development should not just be for the benefit of a few individuals or one aspect of the developmental project, but holistically as it affects human existence, furthermore, the development of one man is incomplete without the development of all the others.

7.3. SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

In this section, the researcher wishes to point out some of the issues that were identified as relevant for further studies. This could not be elaborated in this study due to time and scope of the studies.

Government Transparency and Conflict Management: It was discovered that the government needs to be transparent in its activities within the communities in the Niger Delta and in the nation as a whole. The local communities should be involved in the governance of oil production. This will reduce the tensions that provide justification for militancy in the region. This research discovered that the welfare of the people is politicised. This is evident on the fact that those who can interrupt governmental activities are rewarded with some welfare packages. Job creation will curtail the level of youth restiveness, but should not only be used to reduce militancy but as a duty to all citizens.

Integrity of political leaders: According to the Nigeria constitution Section 14, the Federal Republic of Nigeria is based on principles of democracy and social justice, the three tiers of government (*the federal, states and local governments*) should conform to the constitution. The research shows that there is a deviation from this constitutional content. The same section declares that sovereignty belongs to the people of Nigeria from which government derives all its power and authority. It is also enshrined that

security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government and the participation by the people in their government shall be ensured in accordance with the provision of the constitution (Nig. Constitution 1999:25-26). In view of this, the Nigerian president should endeavour to use a referendum in any controversial issue affecting the people instead of using military or security agents to silence the opinion of the people. Conflict begets conflict, authority should not be used to suppress opposition but to seek and maintain the welfare of all citizens irrespective of religion and ethnic background.

One aspect the former president Olusengu Obasanjo emphasised and tried to achieve was the federal character as enshrined in Section 14(3) of the Nigerian Constitution which states that the composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few state institutions or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or in any of its agencies. Therefore, government should ensure there is no marginalisation of any group within its sovereign states.

Discrimination is a hindrance to peace and progress of any nation or community. In the analysis of Section 17(3) of the Nigerian constitution which states that the state shall direct its policy towards ensuring that all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment. It is quite unfortunate to hear of widespread nepotism, favouritism and discrimination of all kinds in the government agencies. A situation whereby children and relatives of top public officer are secretly recruited into government establishment without due process.

Leaders should create enabling grounds for individuals to know and act within the value system of the community. When leaders operate in a different manner from the constitutional value, the community could be a victims of being trapped between the articulated values of their community and the cultural realities of how they are treated. In this case, there is conflict to be resolved through awareness and training. The Christians are called to model in the church and community life, the very fruit of the spirit that is taught and preached as a practical demonstration of Christian faith. This should be the norms of Christian political leadership.

Building godly leaders from the church to the society: The need for Christians to participate in political leadership has been emphasised, but time does not permit to discuss on how to develop such leaders. It is regrettable that no matter how notorious a leader may be, some will be hailing him because their needs are met. The same people could turn around to condemn the same leader not because he has

changed, but because they are not getting their expected benefits. The church should educate the members not to be part of this human paradoxical attitude. Total obedience to God is what is required of any man to assume godliness in leadership, Therefore, the church and the people would not have the moral boldness to challenge the political leaders who fail to fulfil and live up to expectation in their responsibilities if in their spiritual leadership they behave the same way.

The Biblical leadership is expected to be a servant of relational leader. The leader is expected to identify, reinforce and add the values that will shape the way community lives and performs its activities. Christian leaders, ideally, should incarnate the Biblical values articulated by Paul, with a strong commitment and respect for the individual. They should know the value of community as a natural expression of human relationships grounded in the creative love of God.

The suggestion is that the church should be able to speak against any human rights abuses and promote human dignity especially in a time of conflict. In situations of oppression, the church should stand on the side of the oppressed and with love assist the oppressors deal with their evil deeds.

The church should properly educate the community members on their rights as individuals and their roles in national development. This will prevent them from being used by deceptive politicians as tools for winning elections. It would also protect them from some influential community leaders who may incite the people to protest for their own selfish ends. This is because the people would seek out information and facts for themselves before they act, rather than depending on the instructions of some privileged class.

The Church should educate the oil companies that, the peaceful atmosphere in Ogba communities devoid of violent conflict before now is attributed to the respect for their elders, peaceful heritage, fear of God and respect for the law. For this reason, the oil companies should work harder on their strategies to maintain a good relationship with the communities. Where possible, the church and the oil company should work in synergy to bring the desired development to the communities.

7.4. CONCLUSION

This research has emphasised the role of leadership in conflict management which must be built on the righteousness of God. It is not about manipulation, but about sincerity and integrity. The man that was mandated to rule the earth in Genesis 1:28 was a perfect man. The importance of integrity is that it reflects God and provides the moral authority for leadership.

This godly quality was missing in the Niger Delta region and in the nation, as it affected the implementation of the amnesty programme in the Niger Delta. This research reveals that no matter how good the principle of man may be, it may not be able to find solutions to the problem of society, except

that there is a transformation through the gospel of Jesus Christ. The fundamental principles that should guide all humans' practice are discovered in the Bible.

The church must arise in its missional approach to influence those in power and position of authority in order to bring the desired change in the society for the benefit of all. The church must ensure that those politicians who bear Christian identity bear accountability and act according to Biblical principles to address the causes of conflict in the society which include injustice and greed. The church cannot reach out to the society without first setting an example for the community outside its ecumenical setting. Though the church needs money to run its affairs the aim of establishing local churches should not be based on raising funds, but for transforming lives that will in turn transform the society.

Therefore, effective conflict management is that which takes into consideration the welfare of all and not just to settle a few individuals or groups. The social justice and positive transformation with the fear of God should be the guiding principle in overcoming conflict situations in any community.

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ADDENDUM A: ACRONYMS AND MEANING

ACE	Adverse Childhood Experience
AIC	Amnesty Implementation Committee
AP	Amnesty Program
APJN	Anglican Peace and Justice Network
ATR	African Traditional Religion
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CWME	Commission on World Mission and Evangelism
DDR	Disarmament, Demilitarisation and Reintegration
DDRR	Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
DRR	Disarmament, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
ECWA	Evangelical Church Winning All
EMS	Evangelical Mission Society
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
MNC	Multi National Company
MOCs	Multinational Oil Companies
NAOC	Nigeria Agip Oil Company
ND	Niger Delta
NDA	Niger Delta Avengers
NDDC	Niger Delta Development Commission
NWU	North West University
ONELGA	Ogba Ndoni Egbema Local Government Area
OSPAC	Official Security Planning Anticrime Control
PANDEF	Pan Niger Delta Forum
PAP	Presidential Amnesty Program
PTSD	Post-Trauma Stress Disorder
RP	Research Proposal
RTCND	Report of Technical Committee on the Niger Delta
SPDC	Shell Petroleum Development Company
SSRIs	Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors
TEAM	Towards Effective Anglican Mission
TF-CBT	Trauma Focused Cognitive-Behaviour Therapy
WCC	World Council of Churches

WCC World Council of Churches
WEF World Evangelical Fellowship

ADDENDUM B: QUESTIONNAIRE

Qualitative research – Pastor Joseph John

1. PERSONAL DATA:

- a. Community:
- b. Age:
- c. Religion:
- d. Marital Status: Married Single Divorcee Widow Widower
- e. Occupation.....

2. UNDERSTANDING THE CONFLICT:

- a. Is there any trace of militancy in this community? If yes, when did it start?
.....
- b. Why do you think it started?
.....
- c. What are the security challenges in this community?
- d. What, according to your view is the root causes of conflict in Ogba Community?.....
- e. When did the conflict of Niger Delta start?
- f. What has been the steps taken to address the conflict in the community?.....
- g. Is your community part of the negotiations to resolve Niger Delta conflict?.....
- h. Before the amnesty program what has been your involvement in any form of agitation?
.....

3. EVALUATION OF AMNESTY PROGRAM:

- a. What do you understand by the Amnesty program?
.....
- b. Do you enjoy any benefit from amnesty program? If yes, in what way
.....
- c. Will you like the amnesty program to continue? Give reason(s)

d. Do you think the amnesty program can help to solve the problem of Ogba community?
..... Give reason(s)

e. Have you gained anything from the amnesty program?
.....

4. EVALUATION OF CONFLICT IN OGBA COMMUNITY COMMUNITIES

a. What is the rate of conflict in the Ogba Community?
Always Once in a while No conflict

b. What is the nature of conflict in your community?
.....

c. What are the major causes of conflict in this community?
.....

d. How do you think this problem can be resolved?
.....

5. THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY LEADERS/GOVERNMENT IN THE CONFLICT SITUATION.

a. In what ways have the community leaders helped to solve the conflict in this community?
.....

b. In what way has the government helped in solving the conflict in this community?
.....

c. In what way did the community leaders contribute to the conflict in your community?
.....

d. In what way did the government contributed to the conflict in Ogba community?
.....

e. What are the criminal activities in your community?
.....

f. What do you think is the reason behind these criminal acts?
.....

g. How do you see government's role in granting amnesty to ex-militants?
.....

h. Did the amnesty program reduce or increase the number of militant groups?
Give reason for your answer
.....

i. How has it (amnesty) affected your community?.....
.....

- j. Is there any community development provided by the Oil Company or Government in this community? Yes/No. If 'Yes', mention them.....
..... How has it contributed to peace in the community?.....
- k. Do you think a community development project can help to solve the conflict situation in Ogba community? Yes/No.
- l. If 'Yes', what kind of project do think is needed?.....
.....
If 'No', what do you think is alternative solution to the conflict situation?.....
.....

6. THE CHURCH'S RESPONSE TO CONFLICT

- a. Why, according to your view is the conflict unabated?
.....
- b. Do you think the church can help to change the situation?
- c. In what way do you think the church can be involved to bring peace in the community?
.....
- d. What has been the role of the church thus far, in bringing peace to this community?
- e. Do you think it was successful?.....
.....
- f. What do you think can be done to eliminate or reduce violent conflict in Ogba land?
.....
- g. How do you think the church can be part of the process for peace building?
.....
- h. Do you think preaching changes the thinking of the people to sue for peace instead of violence?
- i. Do you think the church can be involved in community development in order to curtail youth restiveness in the community? Yes/No If 'Yes', what kind of project can be appropriate?
.....
..... If 'No', what do think are alternative steps the church can take in order to manage the conflict situation in the community?

ADDENDUM C:

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT FORM



HREC Stamp

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION LEAFLET AND CONSENT
FORM**

TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY:

A pastoral missional reflection on conflict management in the Niger Delta: The impact of amnesty on citizens of the Ogba Community who are opposed to violence

ETHICS REFERENCE NUMBERS: NWU-00219-18-A6

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Dr Amanda Du Plessis and Prof Johannes Knoetze

POST GRADUATE STUDENT: Joseph John

ADDRESS: 55 Wolgan Street Potchefstroom

CONTACT NUMBER: +27-0628664872; +234-8053371302

You are being invited to take part in a **research study** that forms part of my PHD in Pastoral Studies. Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this study. Please ask the researcher or the other person explaining the research to you any questions about any part of this study that you do not fully understand. It is very important that you are fully satisfied that you clearly understand what this research is all about and how you might be involved. Also, your participation is **entirely voluntary** and you are free to say no to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part now.

This study has been approved by the **Research Ethics Committee of the North-West University (NWU Potchefstroom), South Africa** and will be conducted according to the ethical guidelines and principles of Ethics in Health Research: Principles, Processes and Structures (DoH, 2015) and other international ethic guidelines applicable to this study. It might be necessary for the research ethics committee members or other relevant people to inspect the research records.

What is this research study all about?

This study will be conducted in Ogba community and will involve a semi-structured interview, conducted by an experienced researcher who is trained in research interviews; participants will be included in this study from another group.

➤ We plan to:

- Evaluate the impact of the Amnesty Program in Ogba community;
- Evaluate the continuing causes of violence in Ogba community;
- Reflect on a pastoral approach to conflict management within Ogba community;
- Identify how the church should respond to conflict in Ogba community.

Why have you been invited to participate?

You have been invited to be part of this research because you are part of this community and with experience of conflict within the Niger Delta region your contribution may help to find solutions to the situation.

What will be expected of you?

You will be expected to answer questions through a semi-structured interview process which will take about one and half hours. You are under no obligation to answer questions which you don't want to answer.

Will you gain anything from taking part in this research?

The gains for you to participate in this study will be the increasing of knowledge and understanding that will be obtained through the induced introspection and the result of this research will add to your knowledge on conflict management. You will also have a privilege of incorporating your idea or aspiration into the research.

Are there risks involved in you taking part in this research and what will be done to prevent them?

Possible risks in this study and the precautionary measures are as follows:

Possible Risks	Precautions
Physical stress due to fatigue and hunger.	Short breaks and light refreshments will be provided.
Social injury due to failure to protect the confidentiality of responses by participants that hold leadership positions.	The participants' identity will be held as confidential and the final document will not reveal the names of the participants. Information will be saved in computers that are personal and with a password.
Legal issues due to breach of ethical considerations such as breach of confidentiality.	Before the start of the each session, participants will be informed of the ethical considerations and they will be required to sign informed consent.

How will we protect your confidentiality and who will see your findings?

Anonymity of your findings will be protected by using codes instead of your name. Your privacy will be respected by holding the exclusion of others during the interview and keeping information secured in a locked cabinet. Your results will be kept confidential by keeping documents and audio tapes safely secured in a locked cabinet. Only the researchers and data analysis company will be able to look at your findings. Findings will be kept safe by locking hard copies in locked cupboards in the researcher's office and for electronic data it will be password protected. As soon as data have been transcribed it will be deleted from the recorders. Data will be stored for five years.

What will happen with the findings or samples?

The findings of this study will only be used for this study and will be destroyed after five years of completions.

How will you know about the results of this research?

Feedback will be given to you within three months of completion and approval of the study through email and/ or telephone conversation.

Will you be paid to take part in this study and are there any costs for you?

Unfortunately, this study is not funded and therefore your participation is totally voluntary in nature. I am willing to refund travel expenses up to N200.00 for those participants who have to travel to the site using public transport, should they expressly state the need for reimbursement. Refreshments will be served when the session is completed. There will thus be no costs involved for you, if you do take part in this study.

Is there anything else that you should know or do?

If you are in need of any information about the study, you are welcome to contact any of the following persons:

- Myself, Joseph John at +27-0628664872 /+234-8053371302 / jencotech@gmail.com
- My study promotor, Dr Amanda du Plessis at +27-018-3892888
/Amanda.duplessis@nwu.ac.za
- The Faculty of Theology Research Ethics Committee via Mrs Nadine Havenga at **Nadine.Havenga@nwu.ac.za** if you have any concerns that were not answered about the research or if you have complaints about the research.

- You will receive a copy of this information and consent form for your own purposes.

Declaration by participant

By signing below, I agree to take part in the research study titled:

A pastoral missional reflection on conflict management in the Niger Delta: The impact of amnesty on citizens of the Ogba Community who are opposed to violence.

I declare that:

- I have read this information as it was explained to me by a trusted person in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
- The research method was clearly explained to me.
- I have had a chance to ask questions to both the person getting the consent from me, as well as the researcher and all my questions have been answered.
- I understand that taking part in this study is **voluntary** and I have not been pressurised to take part.
- I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be handled in a negative way if I do so.
- I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interests, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed to.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....

Signature of participant

.....

Signature of witness

Declaration by person obtaining consent

I (*name*) declare that:

- I clearly and in detail explained the information in this document to
- I did/did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as discussed above.
- I gave him/her time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....

.....

Signature of person obtaining consent

Signature of witness

Declaration by researcher

I *JOSEPH JOHN* declare that:

- I explained the information in this document to
- I did / did not use an interpreter.
- I encouraged him/her to ask questions and took adequate time to answer them.
- I informed him/her that I will available, should he/she wants to ask any further questions.
- The informed consent was obtained by an independent person.

- I am satisfied that he/she adequately understands all aspects of the research, as described above.
- I am satisfied that he/she had time to discuss it with others if he/she wished to do so.

Signed at (*place*) on (*date*) 20....

.....

Signature of researcher

.....

Signature of witness

ADDENDUM D: ETHICS CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



Private Bag X6001, Potchefstroom,
South Africa, 2520

Tel: (018) 299-4900
Faks: (018) 299-4910
Web: <http://www.nwu.ac.za>

Research Ethics Regulatory Committee

Tel: +27 18 299 4849
Email: Ethics@nwu.ac.za

ETHICS APPROVAL CERTIFICATE OF PROJECT

Based on approval by **Research Ethics Committee of Theology (TREC)** on 14/02/2018 after being reviewed at the meeting held on 07/12/2017, the North-West University Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (NWU-RERC) hereby **approves** your project as indicated below. This implies that the NWU-RERC grants its permission that, provided the special conditions specified below are met and pending any other authorisation that may be necessary, the project may be initiated, using the ethics number below.

Project title: A pastoral missional reflection on conflict management in the Niger delta: The impact of amnesty on citizens of the Ogba community who are opposed to violence.															
Project Leader/Supervisor: Dr A Du Plessis & Prof Dr JJ (Hannes) Knoetze															
Student: J John															
Ethics number: <table border="1"><tr><td>N</td><td>W</td><td>U</td><td>-</td><td>0</td><td>0</td><td>2</td><td>1</td><td>9</td><td>-</td><td>1</td><td>8</td><td>-</td><td>A</td><td>6</td></tr></table>	N	W	U	-	0	0	2	1	9	-	1	8	-	A	6
N	W	U	-	0	0	2	1	9	-	1	8	-	A	6	
Application Type: Full Single Application															
Commencement date: 2017-11-01															
Expiry date: 2018-10-30															
Risk: Minimal															

Special conditions of the approval (if applicable):

- Translation of the informed consent document to the languages applicable to the study participants should be submitted to the TREC (if applicable).
- Any research at governmental or private institutions, permission must still be obtained from relevant authorities and provided to the TREC. Ethics approval is required BEFORE approval can be obtained from these authorities.

General conditions:

While this ethics approval is subject to all declarations, undertakings and agreements incorporated and signed in the application form, please note the following:

- The project leader (principle investigator) must report in the prescribed format to the NWU-RERC via TREC:
 - annually (or as otherwise requested) on the progress of the project, and upon completion of the project
 - without any delay in case of any adverse event (or any matter that interrupts sound ethical principles) during the course of the project.
 - Annually a number of projects may be randomly selected for an external audit.
- The approval applies strictly to the protocol as stipulated in the application form. Would any changes to the protocol be deemed necessary during the course of the project, the project leader must apply for approval of these changes at the TREC. Would there be deviated from the project protocol without the necessary approval of such changes, the ethics approval is immediately and automatically forfeited.
- The date of approval indicates the first date that the project may be started. Would the project have to continue after the expiry date, a new application must be made to the NWU-RERC via TREC and new approval received before or on the expiry date.
- In the interest of ethical responsibility the NWU-RERC and TREC retains the right to:
 - request access to any information or data at any time during the course or after completion of the project;
 - to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modification or monitor the conduct of your research or the informed consent process.
 - withdraw or postpone approval if:
 - any unethical principles or practices of the project are revealed or suspected,
 - it becomes apparent that any relevant information was withheld from the TREC or that information has been false or misrepresented,
 - the required annual report and reporting of adverse events was not done timely and accurately,
 - new institutional rules, national legislation or international conventions deem it necessary.
- TREC can be contacted for further assistance via Rudy.Denton@nwu.ac.za or 018 299 1600.

The RERC would like to remain at your service as scientist and researcher, and wishes you well with your project. Please do not hesitate to contact the RERC or TREC for any further enquiries or requests for assistance.

Yours sincerely

Prof Refilwe Phaswana-Mafuya
Chair NWU Research Ethics Regulatory Committee (RERC)