

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

**FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE PEACE IN POST-WAR LIBERIA: A
THEOLOGICAL APPRAISAL OF THE WORK OF THE LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN LIBERIA**

BY

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DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that with the exception of references made to other people's works, which have been duly acknowledged, this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate: -----

Date: -----

Candidate's name: George Sundagar Moses Wee

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this thesis was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of theses laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

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ABSTRACT

Sustainable peace is a great need in post-war Liberia. The Lutheran Church in Liberia is determined to provide an appropriate Christian response to building sustainable peace in the country. The main objective of this study, therefore, was to do a theological appraisal of the post-war peacebuilding work of the Lutheran Church in Liberia.

In order to do this, a conceptual study of conflict in general and a contextual study of the Liberian civil war in particular were conducted to enhance the understanding of the Liberian conflict. Interviews and participant observation were used to collect the data for the field work.

The study found out that the Lutheran Church has three programmes aimed at helping to build sustainable peace in Liberia. These include the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme, HIV/AIDS Testing and Counselling Programme and the Lutheran Development Service in Liberia programme. These theologically relevant interventions have made great impact in various communities in Liberia. However, the Lutheran Church has some deficiencies (e.g. lack of effective monitoring, inability to mobilize funds internally, and internal rivalry) and external challenges (e.g. insecurity, social injustice, and land disputes in the country). In view of the challenges, the Lutheran Church alone cannot effect sustainable peace in the country. Therefore, the study has made several recommendations for sustainable peace in Liberia, which include the need for joint-church effort, the need for government support and collaboration, the need for educational reform, and the need for inter-religious dialogue.

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DEDICATION

To Rev. and Mrs. Herman Dusu and my wife, L. Teewon Wee

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Liberia is a country in West Africa. It is bordered on the West by Sierra Leone, on the East by La Cote d'Ivoire, on the North by the Republic of Guinea, and on the South by the Atlantic Ocean. Liberia was founded by the American Colonization Society (ACS) in 1822, as a home of freed black slaves who were expected to promote missionary activities in the country (Johnson, 1906; Alao, Mackinlay, & Olonisakin, 1999).

The country was established on Christian principles. The freed slaves were Christians, and most of their leaders were ministers of the gospel (Johnson, 1906). Liberia got its independence on July 26, 1847. Socio-politically, there are two major groups of people in Liberia: the freed slaves (Americo-Liberians) and the indigenous. Hence, for more than a century, the country was dominated politically and economically by the freed slaves who constituted five percent (5%) of Liberia's estimated population of 1.8 million. They considered the indigenous population primitive and uncivilized and subjected them to oppression (Alao et al., 1999). They failed to integrate the indigenous Liberians and maintained themselves separately in politics, religion and education. The Americo-Liberians denied the native Liberians citizenship until 1904 when citizenship was conferred on all the indigenous in

Liberia. Even the citizenship did not guarantee the indigenous people social equality with the settlers (Alao et al., 1999).

The Americo-Liberians' rule came to a halt in 1980 through a military coup led by a native, Master Sergeant Samuel K. Doe. The natives' long quest for freedom from the Americo-Liberians' rule is captured in Doe's takeover speech:

We are beginning this new government with much knowledge and experience about the great injustices suffered by the masses of our people.... For too long did the masses of our people live in their own country, only to be treated like slaves in a plantation. For too long have our suffering people cried out for freedom, only to be put behind the bars.... (Osaghae, 1996, p. 61).

The political transition, which was hailed as "the dawn of a new era," marked the second phase of the beginning of a continuous political and civil struggle in Liberia (Given, 1986). Doe ruled as head of state and was elected President in 1985. His rule was marked by political violence and instability, high levels of ethnic conflict, nepotism, discrimination, dramatic economic decline precipitated by widespread corruption, a lack of political will, lack of progress in political reform, and elimination of real and perceived enemies, which led to frequent political and civil unrests.

Liberia degenerated into a brutal bloody civil war launched by the Charles Taylor led National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL) on December 24, 1989. By 1990, the civil war had claimed about 5,000 lives and turned an additional one million Liberians into refugees with thousands being internally displaced (Agbu, 2006). Alao et al. (1999) found that "the ethnic composition

of Liberia and the political tensions that developed as a result are central to the civil war.” (p. 14).

The devastating Liberian civil war brought increased ethnic division and animosity, and it broke down the social structure and moral values in the country. The war has not just affected the social fabric of the Liberian society but also the root of Christianity in the country.

Liberia has been the trauma of a country that in effect collapsed, resulting in the massive displacement of the population both within the country and to neighbouring countries. It was not just a military crisis, but a crisis that affected the entire civilian population... (Alao et al., p. 115).

Several armed factions emerged to contest the future of the country, which resulted in “a situation where power devolved into the hands of sub-state actors—not politicians and statesmen accustomed to the use of power, but traders, petty criminals, and religious bigots” (Alao et al., 1999, p. 115).

The Liberian civil conflict attracted the intervention of regional peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, and the UN through its Observer Mission in Liberia (UNOMIL). More than fourteen peace accords were signed and five different interim governments were established at different times, but these did not bring the needed lasting peace (Agbu, 2006). In pursuit of peace, Liberia held general and presidential elections on July 19, 1997, which brought Charles Taylor to power. However, the elections did not end the conflict.

In 1999, a second face of a protracted civil war emerged claiming thousands of lives (Adebajo, 2004). The fighting ended after the exit of Charles Taylor from Liberia in 2003, and successful elections were held on

October 11, 2005 that saw Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as Liberia's first female and post-war President. However, the current state of the peace in Liberia is fragile and genuine reconciliation is yet to be achieved.

The history of the Liberian protracted civil conflict and the uncertain results of peacebuilding efforts in Liberia strengthen the position that sustainable peace cannot be achieved in Liberia without true reconciliation. Instead of the conflict being finally resolved what has been more commonly and often experienced is some kind of resurgence. Military and political intervention and negotiations may bring cessation of hostility, but sustainable peace is achieved by means of reconciliation. This requires the intervention of the Christian church. The Bible says that God has given the Christian Church the ministry and the word of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19).

Liberia is now in the post-conflict stage. It is quite obviously a risky stage where a reversion into violent conflict or resurgence of war is a possibility. The military hostility has ended but the wounds that the war inflicted are not healed. Studies have shown that not less than "50 percent of all ongoing conflicts have emerged from previous violent conflicts" (Sida, 2004, p. 32). A godly reconciliation is therefore necessary.

Statement of the Problem

Post-war situations have the potential to regenerate conflict. In the event of war, the resolution of the conflict is a vital quest. However, when peace is restored, there is a great need for managing the peace, in order to prevent the resurgence of the war; otherwise, the war may just end to begin again. Thus, managing peace may require constructive communal and

structural factors that will foster true reconciliation and community wholeness. Fostering true reconciliation and community wholeness should be the concern of the Liberian Christian Churches and Christian organisations. The Liberian Lutheran Church is one of the oldest Christian bodies in Liberia, and it is concerned and deeply involved with peacebuilding in that country.

Therefore, the statement of the problem for this study is: What are the mechanisms that are being put in place by the Lutheran Church in Liberia to foster sustainable peace in post-war Liberia? In other words, this study seeks to find out the role of the Lutheran Church of Liberia in fostering sustainable peace in Liberia, in order to help prevent the country from degenerating into further bloodshed. This study is of the view that there is a need for an appropriate theological and practical church response to fostering reconciliation and sustainable peace in Liberia.

Research Questions

This study sought answers to the following research questions:

1. What was the nature of the Liberian civil conflict?
2. What reconciliation processes have been put in place to restore peace in Liberia?
3. How far have different bodies been involved in the reconciliation process?
4. Why is the role of the Lutheran Church in Liberia more prominent in the post-war peacebuilding process in Liberia?

5. In what ways could the Lutheran Church be more effective in the reconciliation process and restoration of sustainable peace in Liberia?
6. How can sustainable peace be achieved in Liberia?

Purpose of the Study

This study is designed to present and describe those factors that foster sustainable peace in order to inform the peacebuilding process in Liberia. It uses the descriptive approach to describe and reveal the important role the Christian church has played in building sustainable peace in Liberia and what the Lutheran Church needs to continue to do to sustain the peace.

Significance of the Study

In the field of conflict management and peacebuilding, less has been said about the role of the Christian church in fostering reconciliation which is the heart and soul of conflict management and transformation. Many materials have been written on peacebuilding but very few concentrate on the Christian church's involvement in fostering durable peace in post-conflict situations. The important role of the church in peacebuilding has been undermined by either prevailing tyrannical political structures, or the church's failure to play its appropriate role in conflict management. Thus, this study is significant in that it looks at the peacebuilding work of the Liberian Lutheran church in fostering sustainable peace in post-war Liberia, where the resurgence of conflict has been frequent for years.

This study is not only beneficial to the people of Liberia, but principles drawn out of the study are also of great use for post-conflict studies and peacebuilding in other war-ravaged countries. The study will contribute new knowledge to the existing body of literature in the field of conflict studies and peacebuilding. It will benefit the church, policy makers, academics, and practitioners who are actually on the field. Pastors, teachers and church leaders can use it for workshops and seminars. Academicians can use it for research purposes. It will also be used to inform government policies and regulations in Liberia and other countries.

Delimitation of the Study

There are other areas of concentration regarding the Liberian civil conflict. However, this study has limited itself by looking at fostering sustainable peace in post-war Liberia with special reference to the theological appraisal of the work of the Liberian Lutheran Church to fostering this peace in the country. However, references are made to other areas where necessary.

Definition of Terms

Certain terminologies and acronyms of the study need to be defined.

Sustainable peace: Sustainable means that which is durable or lasting. This study adopts the definition that peace is “the transformation of conflictual and destructive interactions into more co-operative and constructive relationships” (Assefa & Wachira 1996, p. 43). It is the restoration of harmony. Hence, sustainable peace is considered as lasting peace.

Theological Appraisal: Assessment or evaluation from a theological perspective.

TRC: Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Americo-Liberians: This refers to the freed black slaves, who were brought from the United States of America to settle in Liberia under the auspices of the American colonization Society, and their descendants. Other freed black slaves were subsequently engrafted into this group.

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States. A West African regional organisation established in 1975 to amongst other things, regulate inter-state disputes.

ECOMOG: Economic community of West African States Cease-fire Monitoring Group. It is an intervention force formed by ECOWAS in 1990 to intervene in the Liberian civil war.

AFL: Armed Forces of Liberia. This is the name of the military arm of the Liberian government.

NPFL: National Patriotic Front of Liberia. It was the main rebel faction (led by Charles G. Taylor) which started the arm struggle in 1989.

IGNU: Interim Government of National Unity, the provisional government of Liberia headed by Dr. Amos Sawyer from October 1990 to 1994.

UNOMIL: United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia. It was formed on September 22, 1993 by Resolution 866 of the United Nations' Security Council to observe the implementation of peace accords in Liberia.

Organisation of the Report

This study is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction to the study. Chapter two presents the conceptual framework of conflict and peacebuilding, while chapter three focuses on the contextual framework of the study. Chapter four presents and discusses the data from the field research and Chapter five presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

Research Methodology

This study has made use of both library research and field research. The library research considered both primary and secondary sources on the subject. The field research was conducted in Liberia and it focused mainly on the work of the Lutheran Church in Liberia in fostering sustainable peace in post-war Liberia. The field research took on an empirical form. Its nature can be defined as evaluation. It is a theological appraisal of the peacebuilding work of the Lutheran Church in Liberia.

Empirical research has two major approaches, quantitative and qualitative. This study adopted both approaches but relied mostly on the qualitative approach and used the quantitative approach where necessary.

The qualitative method is considered the main tool because it is more useful in such evaluative research. Though quantitative concepts of assessment are relevant in analyzing certain strategic and targeted sectoral projects, there are limitations where social development is characterized primarily by complex long-term process. Research has discovered that quantitative approaches are less helpful in assessing non-material dimension of social development and the

process nature of social development activities (Marsden. & Oakley, P., 1990). In certain cases quantitative method may lead researchers to make prolific unwanted generalizations. Qualitative and intuitive analyses acknowledge the partial views of reality that are obtainable. They are more concerned with describing processes as they evolve over time, gathering information about how the various actors involved in a process interpret socio-political developments. The interpretation of such data is geared towards making statements about the nature of the processes analyzed.

Data Collection Procedure

The researcher employed personal interviews and participant observation method in the data collection process. The investigator, a native of Liberia and a victim of the Liberian civil war, was not a distant observer. Though the research project was undertaken in Ghana, the researcher travelled to Liberia and spent three months for the field research. The investigator could not visit all the political sub-divisions of Liberia because of limited time, bad road condition, and insecurity, in most of the regions but was able to travel to five of the strategic counties of Liberia: Montserrado, Margibi, Bong, Nimba and Grand Bassa, to observe and to have a firsthand experiential knowledge of the present state of the peace in the country. The researcher also participated in the peacebuilding programmes and activities of the Lutheran Church in Liberia with evaluative eyes. While it is true that human by nature approaches and interprets events and issues from a pre-supposed or bias position, the researcher has tried as much as possible to maintain an objective distance in evaluation and analysis of data collected.

Participants in the interviews were chosen by purposive sampling. This technique was used because the researcher needed to interview the kind of people who could provide the needed information. In this case, random sampling would not have been helpful. Fifty persons (twenty-eight males and twenty-two females) were therefore purposively sampled and interviewed individually using twenty-one main questions (The questions are placed in appendix A). The fifty respondents consisted of six parliamentarians (five males and one female) from the House of Representatives, five traditional leaders (four males and one female) from the National Traditional Council of Liberia, fifteen grassroots citizens (seven males and eight females) drawn from the fifteen political sub-divisions of Liberia, sixteen persons (ten members – five males and five females, and six leaders—two males and one female from the church leadership, and one male and two females drawn from its three peacebuilding agencies) from the Lutheran Church, and eight beneficiaries (four males and four females) drawn from communities where the Lutheran peacebuilding work in Liberia was predominantly concentrated.

Twenty-one main questions (sixteen open-ended and five “yes” or “no”) were used in the interviews. However, during the interviews and discussions, answers to each main question prompted sub-questions not indicated in the interview schedule and the researcher was able to make sense out of the responses given by the respondents. The interview questions were grouped under three major categories. Category one contained eight questions and they were addressed to the leaders of the Lutheran Church with the aim of finding out more about their peacebuilding involvement, persuasion and impact. Category two contained five questions and they were addressed to

forty-four of the fifty respondents excluding the six leaders from the Lutheran church. The five main questions focused mainly on the impact of the Lutheran peacebuilding programme and respondent's impressions about the programme. Category three contained eight major questions aimed at finding out the general state of the peace in post-war Liberia, the causes of the civil war, possible means to sustainable peace in the country, and how the Liberian TRC and the Liberian Church are perceived in relation to sustainable peacebuilding. Questions in this category were referred to the fifty respondents.

The interviews were conducted in two places: Monrovia (Montserrado County) and Totota (Bong County). In Monrovia, the six leaders of the Lutheran Church were interviewed from the 20th-27th of March 2009 at the headquarters of the Lutheran Church (on 12th Street, Sinkor), at the convenience of the participants. The ten Lutheran members (five from the St. Peter's Lutheran Church, 12th Street, Sinkor, and five from St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, Paynesville, Monrovia) were interviewed on Sundays (March 22 and 29, and April 5, 12, and 19, 2009) respectively, interviewing two persons on each day. The six parliamentarians were interviewed on Wednesdays, at the Capital Building (on April 15 and 29, and May 6 and 20, 2009). The five traditional leaders were interviewed at the headquarters of the National Traditional Council in Monrovia (from May 11-15, 2009). Interviews were conducted based on appointment. Each interview conducted in Monrovia lasted for one hour and thirty minutes.

The fifteen grassroot citizens from the fifteen counties (regions) and the eight beneficiaries of the Lutheran peacebuilding programme were

interviewed in Totota, on the Lutheran peacebuilding stakeholders conference held from April 21-24, 2009. The conference brought together sixty participants and ten observers from the fifteen counties. Each interview in Totota lasted for one hour.

Literature Review

This section sought to review and draw upon some of the relevant literature on peacebuilding, most especially those that are relevant to the Liberian civil war and its post-war peacebuilding.

In their book, *Peacekeepers, politicians, and warlords: The Liberian peace process*, Alao et al. (1999) explained the destructive and devastating forces that engulfed the Liberian society for more than a decade. The book has assessed the complicated response mechanism needed to restore a workable level of stability to the Liberian society. It traced the historical roots of the Liberian civil crisis, outlined the different accords signed and explained why most of these accords failed to bring durable peace to Liberia. However, the book is somehow limited in that it does not address the second phase of the Liberian civil war—the conflict that led to the exit of former President Charles Taylor into political exile in Nigeria in 2003.

This book, notwithstanding, has provided a useful historical background to the Liberian civil conflict beginning from 1989 to the 1997 Liberian elections. It described the events of the Liberian conflict and the intervention of regional and international bodies and has evaluated the different levels of the Liberian peace process up to the regime of Taylor.

Ellis (2001) also discussed the Liberian civil conflict from another angle. His work, *The mask of anarchy: The destruction of Liberia and the religious dimension of an African civil war*, described the unfolding of events at different levels of the Liberian society, recounts the history of the Liberian civil war—tracing the historical roots of the violence, and interpreting the different events of the war from a religious perspective. The author described a twofold-dimension of the Liberian history: the religious or spiritual history and the political or administrative history. In his view, the spiritual history of Liberia is distinct from its political history. Thus, he argued that the religious dimension of the Liberian civil war influenced the events of the civil war. The strength of the book lies in the way the author carefully traced and examined the causes of the Liberian civil war and its religious implications. It is a histo-religious interpretative approach to the Liberian civil conflict. However, the book leaves out the mechanisms for sustainable peace in Liberia.

Aboagye (1999) also looked at the Liberian conflict focusing on ECOMOG's experience in conflict resolution, management, and peacekeeping in Liberia. He discussed the origins, causes and anatomy of the Liberian civil war, with concentration on ECOMOG's experience in addressing the Liberian conflict from 1990 to 1997. He adopted a descriptive-narrative approach to chronologically recount the origin and development of the Liberian civil conflict. The ex-ECOMOG soldier discovered that there were irregularities in the ECOWAS and ECOMOG intervention in Liberia. He lamented that ECOMOG entered Liberia politically, tactically, economically and logistically, unprepared. According to Aboagye (1999), the "try and error" campaign made the peace process difficult and it inflicted high cost on the

sub-region. The work was intended to serve as a useful guide for the avoidance of pitfalls in the conduct of similar operations in the future, and to draw out lessons that will enable readers to prevent their countries from the horrors of wars.

The author found out that lasting peace could be achieved in Liberia through reconciliation. However, he intentionally or unintentionally ignored the role of the Christian church in fostering that reconciliation.

The causes and effects of the Liberian civil war have been documented by other writers. But what is most important now is a deeper concentration on how Liberians can reconcile their differences. The church is God's earthly agent of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19). Hence, any suggestion for reconciliation that leaves out the Christian church is incomplete.

Post-conflict peacebuilding is a key issue in conflict studies. This is because the post-conflict stage is a very crucial stage in peacebuilding. In the 1992 agenda for peace, post-conflict peacebuilding was labelled as "actions to identify and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Boutos-Ghali, 1992, p. 11). In his book, *Post-conflict peacebuilding and prospects for democracy with reference to Africa*, Adebo (2005) wrote:

Post-conflict peacebuilding is a distinct stage with clear tasks in the process of conflict transformation. Implementation of these tasks provided largely in the peace accords a change from violent confrontation to non-violent actions that enhance trust and legitimacy necessary for establishing a lasting peace. The process moves from signing of a peace accord through implementation to consolidation. This opens up the way for approaching the democratic path—a

struggle for building and strengthening institutions based on the will of the people (p.36).

He argued that “conflict resolution or peace accord brings peace message to the capital city, while reconciliation brings it to the village and to home” (p. 31). He viewed peace as “a people’s agenda pursued through a soul-searching dialogue to overcome the effects of violence and to experience reconciliation” (p. 31). Adebo has therefore come up with the following:

The focus of post-conflict peacebuilding is to create a system, which routinely involves in the tasks of non-violent conflict transformation and development. This can be summed up as an effort to strengthen the three major pillars of society...the state, civil society and economy and assuring a balanced functioning of the three in their mutual relationships (p. 37).

Post-conflict peacebuilding and prospect for democracy with reference to Africa is a relevant book for this study because the book primarily focused on post-conflict peacebuilding. In his book, *West Africa’s trouble spots and the imperative for peace-building*, Agbu (2006) indicated that addressing post-conflict situation is a major issue in West Africa. He raised concern for the failure of post-conflict resolution in West Africa noting especially Liberia and Sierra Leone where conflicts raged on and for many years. Agbu (2006) analyzed the causes and interconnection between conflicts in the various trouble spots in West Africa and advocated the need to effectively move away from traditional peacekeeping to the more sustainable peacebuilding effort and strategy. He described peacebuilding as the longer-term task of reconstruction and reconciliation and argued that this type of peacebuilding is an alternative

strategy both for addressing the post-war demands of conflicts and for building a basis for containing future conflicts. In his view, an integral aspect of peacebuilding is to reduce the war-related hostility by repairing and transforming damaged relationships, trust building and future imaging.

Agbu's work can be used for the background study to the Liberian civil war and to assess the Liberian peace process in view of some of the peacebuilding strategies discussed in the book. Agbu's work is significant to this study in that it goes beyond 1997 and in some way focuses on the post-war demands. However, Agbu also approached peacebuilding from a purely political perspective with no reference to the role of the church.

The Christian church's role in peace and reconciliation is vital in post-conflict situations. In his work, *Forgiving or forgetting?*, Carroll (1999) has noted the unique responsibility of the Christian Church in peacebuilding. He has argued that the church is a major factor in sustainable peacebuilding. He stressed that peace with justice, true reconciliation that builds a society in which people can live in trust, safety, and dignity is at the heart of the gospel. Apart from spiritual mandate, the Christian church is the agent of change and reconciliation in a dehumanized society. Carroll's work is a good material because it has reinforced the fact that the church is the agent of reconciliation. However, it appears that Carroll goes too far to the extent of fostering liberation theological ideology, which is not the focus of this study.

The book, *Peacemaking and democratisation in Africa: Theoretical perspectives and church initiatives* edited by Assefa and Wachira (1996), has discussed the issue of peacebuilding in Africa. It has asserted that a renewed drive for peace and good governance has swept across Africa and thus, church

leaders have been key actors in this drive citing instances of their peacebuilding initiatives and commitment to peaceful change. The book explores this transition phenomenon as it unfolded in eastern and southern Africa. It contains the contributions of African scholars reflecting upon the theological, historical, philosophical and traditional perspectives of the churches' involvement in the socio-political transition in Africa, drawing upon the case of South Africa, Mozambique, Madagascar, Zambia, Zaire and Kenya. This book recognizes the peace efforts of church leaders in conflict situations in Africa and shared the same theological and peacebuilding persuasion that this study aims to portray. Therefore, it is referred to in this work time after time.

In *The journey toward reconciliation*, Lederach (1999) viewed peacebuilding as a journey that aims at reconciliation. He also argued that reconciliation itself is a journey that requires truth, mercy, justice, and peace to meet and trash out differences. He indicated that peace is a spiritual and theological as well as a juridical concept and that negotiated agreements alone do not make peace but people do. The author used the story of Esau and Jacob and its outcome to build his theological foundation for peace and reconciliation. Lederach (1999) analyzed the story and concluded as follows:

The story of Esau and Jacob leaves us with this landscape of memorialized places that celebrate metaphorical movements. Reconciliation is a journey, an encounter, and a place, God calls us to set out on this journey. It is a journey through conflict, marked by places where we see the face of God, the face of the enemy, and the face of our own self (p. 26).

This book emphasizes the fact that the process of healing takes time, highlighting that the nature, meaning, and process of reconciliation create the framework for addressing conflict. Understanding peacebuilding as a journey will enable conflicting parties to forge toward true reconciliation. *The journey toward reconciliation* is one of the useful tools, serving as a key reference for this study.

The books reviewed are different in their approach to peacebuilding. Those of Carroll (1999), Assefa and Wachira (1996), and Lederach (1999) are theological while the rest are more political. However, one central concept that runs through all is the concept of reconciliation. Sustainable peacebuilding demands fostering true reconciliation. “Reconciliation involves restoring damaged relationship among parties in harmful conflicts” (Adebo, 2005, p. 33). It involves addressing the ways and means of rebuilding broken relationships. The process entails “self-examination, acknowledgement of responsibility, public admissions, apology, forgiveness and restoration” (New Sudan Council of Churches, 2004, p. 24). Agbu (2006) has discovered that reconciliation is the key to sustainable peacebuilding. Cule (1990) has also indicated that peacebuilding is often hindered by “the three poisons of human relations: ignorance, hatred, and greed” (p. 23). Thus, overcoming these three will take serious effort of reconciliation. In this case, the church has a major role to play.

Conclusion

Post-conflict stage is a more risky stage in conflict management. At the post-conflict stage, a relapse into violent conflict or war is a possibility.

Liberia has just emerged out of a protracted civil war that had affected the socio-economic, political and religious fabrics of the country, leaving wounds yet to heal. Sustainable peace is possible in Liberia by means of true reconciliation, which can be achieved through the instrumentality of a neutral body notably, the Christian Church.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: CONCEPTS IN PEACEBUILDING

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the concept of conflict with regard to its nature, type, sources, and conflict management and transformation strategies.

Nature of Conflict

The word conflict is derived from the Latin word “confligere.” The Latin word “confligere” is a compound word which means “to strike together.” From the Latin perspective, when two or more ideas, thoughts, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours strike against each other, then conflict has occurred (Fayose, 2001).

Generally there are two major categories of conflict: Intrapersonal and Interpersonal conflicts. Intrapersonal conflict is psychological in nature. It occurs “when an individual experiences real or imagined incompatibility among needs, goals or roles” (Fayose, 2001). Interpersonal conflict occurs when there is a perceived divergence of interest among individuals, groups, or organizations. However, the focus of this study is on interpersonal or social conflict, which specifically relates to the Liberian situation.

Deutsch, according to Halverstadt (1991), defined interpersonal conflicts as “power struggles over differences: differing information or beliefs,

differing interests, desires or values and differing abilities to secure needed resources” (p. 4). Hall (1969) also defined interpersonal conflict as “essentially the circumstance—both emotional and substantive—which can be brought about by the presence of differences between parties who are in forced contact with one another” (p. a). This definition of conflict relates to marital conflicts and intra-state conflicts. Often differences exist between husband and wife who are in forced contact. Opposition parties and the ruling party in a country are similarly in forced contact. Despite their differences they are forced to co-exist and interact on national issues.

Weeks (1992) stated that interpersonal “conflict is the outgrowth of the diversity that characterizes our thoughts, our attitudes, our beliefs, our perceptions, and our social system and structures” (p. 7). Mensa-Bonsu and Effah (2003) also agreed that conflict is the outgrowth of perceived divergence of interests, beliefs, aspirations or goals. Conflict occurs when parties in a state of interdependence perceive a divergence of interests or believe that their goals cannot be achieved simultaneously and such scarcity can generate unhealthy competition for domination or control.

The various definitions highlighted in this study recognize that interpersonal conflict is based on differences. However, it must be noted that differences in themselves are not conflict. Conflict occurs when there is a perceived or real divergence of interest, value or belief, aspiration, goal and ability and the inability of parties with differing views or perspectives to manage their situation.

Conflict can escalate, stagnate as well as die depending on the approach of the parties involved (Mensa-Bonsu & Effah, 2003). A conflict

may die when the object or the basis of the conflict ceases to exist or no longer relevant because of genuine reconciliation between rival parties.

Perception of Social Conflict

Conflict is perceived differently by different people. There are two major perceptions of social conflict. Many perceive conflict as negative. In this sense, conflict is unacceptable and it should therefore be resolved or be made to disappear. Thus, the absence of conflict is perceived as a positive state. In this perception, conflict is viewed as a disruption of normal, desirable social interaction, a 'dysfunctional' state of social relations (Lederach, 1985). Conflict theorists such as Lederach (2003), Rothman (1997), Weeks (1992), Augsburger (1992), and Halverstadt (1991) also hold the view that conflict is a normal condition of human existence and it is neutral from its formative stage. Conflict in this view is and will remain part of human existence on all levels of social organisation.

The two perceptions of conflict have perhaps further dictated the terminology each group of practitioners explore in dealing with conflict. Three major terminologies have been developed over the years: Conflict Resolution, Conflict Management, and Conflict Transformation.

The term conflict resolution is an early and one of the dominant concepts today. "It emphasizes the need to understand the 'root causes' of conflict, how conflict evolves and ends" (Heinrich, 2006, p. 4). Conflict resolution can be viewed as a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central incompatibilities, accept each other's continued existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other.

This concept portrays the understanding that conflict is negative and undesirable and therefore must be eliminated. It also connotes that there is a final resolution to a conflict. This concept encourages approaches that primarily focus on stopping violent confrontation and reducing the overt expression of conflict. It acknowledges the destructive effect of conflict. However, it can be described as a narrow concept because it does not appreciate the positive aspect of conflict. Furthermore, not every conflict can be resolved or eliminated as such. “Conflict begs to be *viewed* not merely as a problem waiting to be solved but as an opportunity for growth, cooperation, and development waiting to be fulfilled” (Rothman, 1997, p. xv). Conflict is essential to, ineradicable from, and inevitable in human life and that it is as much a part of our existence as is evolution (Augsburger, 1992; Weeks, 1992).

The concept of conflict management builds on the assumption that conflict evolves and develops along certain, predictable patterns and dynamics which can be understood and regulated (Lederach, 1985). This concept sees conflict as a natural element of human relationships and concludes that it can be managed. However, no one can really manage human action and interaction in ways one might manage things in the physical sense. Heinrich (2006) has rightly argued that the concept of conflict management narrows the focus too much on the technical aspects and the practical side of dealing with conflict because it emphasizes skills and methods, rather than adequately capturing the procedural nature of peacebuilding.

The term conflict transformation was formulated by John Paul Lederach in the 1980s based on his intensive experience of dealing with conflict in Central America (Lederach, 2003). Conflict transformation is

based on the view that conflict is normal in human relationships, and it is a motor of change. Conflict Transformation concept is descriptive of the dynamics of conflict and prescriptive for the underlying approach to peacebuilding. It suggests that conflict can move both in destructive as well as constructive directions. However, the focus of the transformational approach is to minimize the destructive impact and to maximize the constructive, mutually beneficial processes and outcomes of conflict (Lederach, 1985; Heinrich, 2006). This study has, however, adopted the concept of conflict transformation but used the three terminologies (conflict resolution, management and transformation) interchangeably to refer to the process of sustainable peacebuilding.

Conflict, therefore, is neither negative nor positive in its formative stage. The existence of conflict is not in and of itself a negative phenomenon as some may perceive it. “Indeed, it is a sign that the relationship is alive” (Mensa-Bonsu & Effah, 2003, p. 4). Thus, the generalization that conflict is entirely a negative phenomenon is a misconception of conflict and it may escalate conflict to the degree of destructive fight. Conflicts may create social consciousness and awareness. The fight against Trokosi in Ghana is an example. “The fight against Trokosi has exposed the existence of other outmoded cultural practices and demonstrated a need to tackle them as issues affecting national development” (Mensa-Bonsu & Effah, 2003, p. 5). Some conflicts create the ground for the unity or cohesiveness of a group. Such conflict situation brings people together to solicit solutions and redefine or re-identify their common interests and derive a more cohesive vision of the vitality of their relationship. Some conflicts serve as catalysts for progress and

end up with organisational improvement. The conflict between the Jews and the Gentiles on the issue of circumcision which led to the successful Jerusalem Council, in Acts chapter 15, is an example.

However, conflict has the potential to be positive or negative. It can be positive or negative depending on how it is approached or handled. If a conflict is not properly managed or transformed it may result in negative or destructive conflict. On the other hand, a well managed conflict may tend to be positive. Hence, conflict is neutral from its inception. Halverstadt (1991) has explained this concept from the perspective of the Chinese character for “crisis” and concluded with the same idea that conflict presents simultaneously a danger of divisiveness and opportunity for wholeness or reconciliation. He explained that the Chinese character for “crisis” means both “danger” and “opportunity.” One character is “wei” (danger), a face-to-face encounter with a powerful animal. The other character is “chi” (opportunity), the blueprint of an open universe. Similarly, conflict thus presents both danger and opportunity at the same time. Thus, well managed conflict turns to be positive or constructive.

There are two types of negative social conflict: Tractable and Intractable conflicts. Fayose (2001) discovered that “negative social conflict is tractable when it is resolvable but the parties, for whatever reason, fail to recognize that some sort of efficient solution exists” (p. 54). Intractable conflict describes a conflict that cannot be resolved. It is said to be stagnated and defiant to treatment. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an example of an intractable conflict that defies solution (Ruether & Ruether, 1989).

Sources of Conflict

Conflict is primarily based on differences. Katz (1966) has identified three major sources of conflict. He identified economic, value, and power differences as the major sources of conflict. According to him, economic conflict is a struggle or fight over scarce resources. The scarcity of resources and the attempt of individuals or groups to control these limited resources, may generate and escalate conflict. Other conflict theorists refer to economic-based conflict as resource or resource-based conflict. A country may degenerate into civil violence because of the misappropriation of the country's limited resources by the national government. Differences may also occur over ministry budget allocation, or which development programme to prioritize and at what time. Some member of the planning committee may argue that more funds be allocated to human resource development and empowerment, while others may advocate for more money to be allocated for food production (agriculture). In the Christian church, leaders often fall apart because of disagreement on how church funds should be allocated.

Conflict may base on value. Value-based conflicts are provoked by differences in belief systems or philosophy, principles, and ideologies of individuals, groups, communities, or organisations. Diverse preferences, principles, beliefs and ideologies that are incompatible often generate and escalate conflict. Value-based conflicts are some of the most difficult conflicts because it is based on belief and value systems. Religious conflict between Christians and Muslims can be described as value-based conflict because it is based on religious beliefs, values, and faith persuasion.

Value-based conflict also often surface in a country's political leadership selection. A country, for example, may be divided on the choice of President, considering the external world powers' interest. People of democratic persuasion will vie for a candidate with a good reportage with the West, especially U.S.A. and Great Britain. Those with a communist persuasion will desire and advocate for a communist oriented leader.

Power-based conflicts occur when one individual or party strives to dominate, rule or control the other. Halverstadt (1991) has found that conflicts occur in voluntary institutions whose structures and processes permit and even entice unaccountable uses of power. The situation in Zimbabwe is an example of power-based conflict. President Robert Mugabe led Zanu-PF government endeavours to remain in power regardless of the depreciating national economy and the deplorable living condition of the Zimbabwean people. This attitude effected the 2008 Zimbabwean elections. It attracted pre and post-electoral violence and political instability which the country is yet to recover from. In a church setting, if the Pastor is a dictator and forces his or her way to rule in every decision making, the congregation or other leaders may show their dissatisfaction by boycotting the implementation of decisions that are imposed by the Pastor.

Azar and Burton (1990) have also identified basic human needs as a major source of conflicts. As captured by Fayose (2001): "The frustration or satisfaction of the basic human needs for security, identity, and recognition that both groups and individuals encounter is a primary cause and source of conflict" (p. 56). People feel frustrated and dissatisfied when they are not secured, recognized, or when their identity is at stake. Threats to self-esteem,

marginalization or dehumanization of others generate conflict. The Hutu-Tutsi conflict and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are clear examples of need-based conflict (Dudley, 2000; Rothman, 1997; Ruether & Ruether, 1989).

Resource-based conflicts are easier to be resolved or transformed as compared to value-based and identity-based conflicts. Resource-based conflicts are resolvable once a formula for sharing which answers the concerns of the parties is derived. Power-based conflicts may be transformed through the same formula. In recent times power sharing has been the method of addressing power conflict on the national level. This method was applied to the Kenyan political chaos, and in the recent Zimbabwean political situation. However, the method is yet to yield its intended result in those countries. Value-based conflicts and identity-based conflicts are the most difficult and intractable conflicts.

Mensa-Bonsu and Effah (2003) have also identified six sources of conflict: information, values, resources, behavioural, structural/organizational and relational. They concluded that disputes or conflicts may arise out of one or more of these sources. The value-based and resource-based conflicts are the same as the value-based and economic-based conflicts identified by Katz.

Data or information-based conflicts occur when there are differences over information. The implication is, new information which challenges old ideas can be a source of conflict. For example, La Cote d'Ivoire plunged into civil nightmare when new information emerged that the former Ivorian Prime Minister, Alassane Quattara, the main Ivorian opposition leader, was not a true citizen of the country and therefore could not run for the presidency.

Contradictory information, disinformation (deliberate misleading information) and incomplete information can create conflict.

Behaviour, however, is common to the four major sources of conflicts described earlier. Behaviour in this context is the overt action based on one's desire and thought. Conflict may develop when a person's conduct violates other people's belief systems or makes unreasonable demands on others.

Structure or organisation-based conflicts relate to institutional set-up and social injustices in society: bad governance, suppressive constitutions or institutional policies, and corrupt justice systems. Relation-based conflicts may take the form of personality clashes. The way people relate to one another can be a source of conflict. However, structural and relational conflicts may emerge from any of the four major sources of conflict.

Moreover, it must be noted that conflict is dynamic, not static. Conflict may start from an economic basis, but it may transform to or escalate into a power problem, value differences or need-based problem. Thus, one conflict may be a combination of all forms.

Types of Conflict

Conflict theorists have identified different forms or types of conflicts. While others may consider the four major sources of conflicts as types or forms of conflict, one needs to be careful not to confuse sources of conflicts with types of conflict. Voutira and Brown (1995) have described five types of conflicts. These are ideological conflicts, governance and authority conflicts, racial conflicts, environmental conflicts, and identity conflicts.

According to Voutira and Brown (1995), ideological conflicts are those that occur between the state and insurgent movements. Governance and authority conflicts are said to be conflicts based on the distribution of power and authority in society. Thus, the primary source for such conflict is power. Individuals quest to control or dominate others often generate conflicts. When there is power imbalance in society the outburst of conflict is eminent. Governance and authority conflicts “address changes to the existing structure of the regime and control of resources” (Voutira & Brown 1995, p. 13).

Racial conflicts have their root in racist ideology. Racial discriminations in the U.S.A. and Europe are examples of this type of conflict. Environmental conflicts are conflicts that occur over the control, use and misuse of resources. When resources, which supposed to be used for development to better the lives of a given people, are misappropriated by certain individuals or group, conflict erupts. Thus, the source for this type of conflict is economic. Identity conflict has its dominant or controlling factors as religious, ethnic or linguistic differences. Identity conflicts can be subdivided into territorial conflicts, ethnic and minority conflicts, religious assertions and struggles for self-determination. At the heart of these conflicts is the quest for security and the devolution of power.

There are also intra-state and inter-state conflicts. Intra-state conflict is an internal conflict (Heinrich, 2006). It can either be an armed conflict (violent conflict), ethnic conflict or socio-political dispute between the government and opposition within a particular country or state. The protracted civil wars that devastated Liberia and Sierra Leone are examples of intra-state conflicts. According to Heinrich (2006), 83 percent of all wars or armed

conflicts since 1945 were intra-state conflicts and 62 percent or 13th of the 21 peace-keeping operations since 1988 were intra-state conflicts. Inter-state conflict is a conflict that occurs between two or more states. The Iraq and Iran war, the Nigerian-Cameroonian conflict over the Bakasi Peninsula are examples of inter-state conflicts.

Strategies for Dealing with Social Conflicts

Based on the works of Follett (1940), Blake and Mouton (1964), Rahim (1992) and others, conflict theorists have identified five major intervention strategies namely, competition (win-lose), avoidance (lose-lose), accommodation (lose-win), compromise, and collaboration or cooperation (win-win) strategies.

The competition approach is also referred to as the win-lose approach (Halverstadt, 1991). Likert and Likert (1966) have asserted that the win-lose appears to be the prevailing strategy for resolving conflicts, but it is coercive and destructive. It promotes dirty fight and allows parties to abuse power. In the win-lose strategy, one party lift its interest high above the other party's interest. The most common thing is that both parties fight to obtain an upper hand or control. It may in this sense be described as the fight-to-win strategy. One party fights to defeat the other. Each party to the conflict often applies physical force or power to exert his or her will over the other. The implication is that the most powerful party will win and settle the conflict. That is to say, peace is in might. Hence, the win-lose style does not amicably deal with conflict but escalates conflict. As Fayose (2001) has indicated, "the defeated party is wounded and dissatisfied with the outcomes. The party may drive the

conflict underground and resort to covert tactics’’ (p. 63). Mensa-Bonsu and Effah (2003) pointed out that the solution found through this strategy is not durable and remains only as long as the most powerful remains powerful.

The win-lose strategy generates oppressive forces of tyranny, greed, exploitation, injustice, violence, deceit, and death. It leads to destructive and underground battle. In the situation of war, the less powerful and wounded group usually resorts to guerrilla tactics. This may be the present situation in Afghanistan between the United States led Allied forces and the Taliban, as well as that of Iraq.

The avoidance (lose-lose) strategy is associated with withdrawal method of dealing with conflict. In this approach, one party in the conflict may decide to withdraw from the conflict arena. This strategy may be good for easing tension or calming down the situation for the purpose of recollecting thoughts, and planning on how to approach the situation later. “This strategy may be effective in the short term, but it can be self-destructive in the long run’’ (Fayose, 65).

Mensa-Bonsu and Effah (2003) has found out that the avoidance strategy may or may not be negative depending upon the subject matter or situation, but it has a propensity to postponing the time of engagement until a violent confrontation. Thus, the nature of the eventual confrontation may exacerbate the conflict, compound the difficulties of the resolution effort, and make reconciliation very difficult. Many often engage in the avoidance strategy because of fear of the perceived consequences of fighting. Children and subordinates often apply the avoidance approach.

The avoidance approach can be described as mere defence mechanism. It is a means of self-deception which people use to dodge opportunities from engagement in what could possibly lead to transforming a conflict situation for the better. Avoidance therefore is not an effective solution to any conflict situation.

The accommodation (lose-win) strategy is characterized by low concern for self and high concern for the other party. One party willingly plays down differences and emphasizes commonalities with the quest to please or satisfy the concerns of the other party. Accommodation style may be considered as a flexible approach for mutual coexistence. However, this strategy is not the best to handling social conflict. There is a limit to which one can accommodate issues. If one stretches him or herself beyond the elastic limit in the falsehood of conflict transformation, the result may be an outburst of violence.

The compromise method “involves the parties adopting a half-way house approach in order to achieve peace” (Mensa-Bonsu and Effah, 2003, p. 23). It is a give and take strategy in which both parties give up something to reach a mutually acceptable solution. This method may work in the short-run in some case but not in all cases. In an ethnic conflict, the elders from both sides may meet and reach a compromise in the interest of peace, but the decision could later be considered outmoded and thus unacceptable to the younger generation. Moreover, in a give and take method, the lesser party may give out more and receive less while the powerful party may give out less and gain more. This could serve as a source for future conflict. In an armed

conflict for instance, the weaker party may accept a compromise in order to re-strategize and build up its military strength and prepare for continue warfare.

The collaboration or cooperation (win-win) style is “characterized by openness, exchange of information, and examination of differences to reach an effective solution acceptable to both parties. It is associated with problem solving which may lead to creative results” (Fayose, 2000, p. 65). Conflict is therefore best managed or transformed under win-win conditions where conflicting parties build on mutual benefit and emphasize more on common interest with the future consequences in view. The goal for win-win approach is reconciliation. It promotes what Halverstadt (1991) termed as “fair fight” (p.10). When the conflicting parties decide to collaborate or cooperate for the purpose of peace, they become active participants in the search for elements that facilitate and bring appropriate solutions. Mensa-Bonsu and Effah (2003) asserted that the process “may involve discussions with or without third party intermediary neutrals who may assist the parties by facilitating the discussion” (p. 23).

Other forms of conflict management strategies mentioned in Chapter VI of the UN Charter on peace and conflict resolution include negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration (adjudication) and judicial settlement. The SIPRI-UNESCO (1998) described these methods as diplomatic initiatives. Negotiation can be understood as a shared effort to solving a problem. It is the process of discussion and communication between two or more parties which is meant to lead to an agreement. This process affords the conflicting parties an opportunity to exchange promises and make binding commitments to resolving their differences. The negotiation approach presupposes that the

conflict is negotiable and that the parties to the conflict recognize the legitimacy of the other side's interest. However, not every conflict is negotiable. For instance, value-based conflicts are not negotiable unless it is transformed to interest-based conflict. In negotiation, parties' needs, goals or interests are the subjects of negotiation in order to reach mutual acceptable and beneficial solutions.

Mediation is a process in which a third party assists the conflicting parties to reach a negotiated settlement (SIPRI-UNESCO, 1998). The third party (mediator) has a limited role of facilitating the discussion or negotiation. Mediation may lead to conciliation. Negotiation, mediation, and conciliation are some of the methods used in a win-win strategy of dealing with social conflicts. Arbitration is another third party intervention approach. It is a process in which an outside party draws up a settlement for the parties to a conflict. In binding arbitration, the parties agree to be bound by the settlement devised by the arbitrator (SIPRI-UNESCO, 1998). Settlement of a conflict through arbitration presupposes the existence of a legal code that is generally accepted as applicable, the existence of an authority that is accepted by all parties to the conflict, and the availability of sanctioning mechanisms. In the case of international conflicts and intra-societal armed conflicts, the UN and other regional bodies fit in the third party position of arbitrator. However, adjudicated settlements often tend to create a win-lose situation.

The superordinate goal approach, and the Graduated and Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension Reduction Model (GRIT) are other comprehensive approaches to conflict de-escalation (Sherif, M. & Sherif, C. W., 1953; Fayose, 2001). Sherif and Sherif (1953) acknowledged the effectiveness of a

superordinate goal approach in conflict management. In this method, conflicting parties are persuaded to work interdependently in order to accomplish a goal and achieve success in reaching that goal. The underlying concept is that when conflicting parties gain success in working on a common superordinate goal, pre-existing differences become less important.

The goal of the GRIT model is to reduce tension and mistrust to the level where conflict transformation methods can have greater chance of success. In this model, each of the conflicting sides makes an initial series of limited collaborative gestures with the hope that the other side will reciprocate. The more the initiated efforts are reciprocated by the other side, the more the first party initiates cooperative moves, creating de-escalation atmosphere (Fayose, 2001).

However, the strategies discussed may not bring about sustainable peace in every conflict situation, most especially in the case of intractable conflict. “Intractable conflicts are prolonged, intense, destructive, and deadlocked conflicts that emerge out of people’s deep motivations, values, and needs which cannot be compromised” (Fayose, 2001, p.76). Intractable conflicts usually defy resolution. These characteristics are evident, in for example, the war in Somalia, and the Tutsi-Hutu conflict. Intractable conflicts are often based on irreconcilable moral, religious, political, socio-cultural or value-based differences. In relation to intractable conflicts Rothman (1997) wrote:

When people’s essential identities... are threatened or frustrated, intransigent conflict almost inevitably follows. However, in such

conflicts, conventional methods of conflict management are usually inadequate and may even exacerbate the problem (p. 5).

He therefore proposed the ARIA framework for conflict transformation. He described the ARIA framework as a journey through Antagonism, Resonance, Invention, and Action. In Rothman's ARIA framework, Antagonism (the first step) surfaces the issues and brings out festering angst and annoying issues for discussion. Resonance is a process of fostering a harmony that can emerge between disputants, a harmony emerging out of a deep exploration and articulation of what goes on within them. It focuses on the needs of all sides. Inventing is the process of brainstorming mutually acceptable, creative, and integrative options for addressing central and underlying aspects of the conflict. Action is then built upon the previous stages, implementing what should be done and why, by whom, and how.

Several other approaches to addressing intractable conflict has been proposed by conflict theorists which include crisis management, fostering ripeness, conflict analysis, constructive confrontation, dialogue and so on. According to Fayose (2001), "Crisis management is a preliminary measure with the goal of stopping the violence and reducing human suffering resulting from the conflict" (p. 74). It involves separating rivals, peacekeeping, humanitarian services introducing observers, and containing and constraining criminal activities.

Fostering ripeness aims at establishing an authentic commitment to addressing the conflict among rival parties. Ripeness is defined as "a commitment by the parties to change the direction of the normative social processes of the relations towards de-escalation" (Coleman, 1997, p. 81).

Ripeness has to do with an opportune time or event that provides the opportunity for conflicting parties to come together, interact, and overcome their differences. For instance, the Ghana at 50 (Jubilee celebration) was a ripe event that could have brought opposing parties, especially former Presidents J. A. Kufour and J. J. Rawlings together.

Conflict analysis involves analyzing and the identification of the manifest and latent issues—root causes and context of the conflict, escalatory dynamics, and other factors before any form of intervention. It defines the what of the conflict and provides clues to the how of dealing with the conflict.

Constructive confrontation, in the view of Burgess and Burgess (1991), is a creative way of dealing with deadlocked conflicts. This approach aims at constructive transformation of conflictive relationship. Relationship is then restored by fostering a process of confrontation that the parties consider fair and effective. The goal is not identifying a resolution to the conflict but advocating an incremental approach that views conflict as part of a process that can be improved so as to be effective and positive. Conflicting parties are helped to understand the underlying concerns of the conflict and to address overlay concerns in an incremental way.

Dialogue is another creative method used in dealing with intractable conflict. Dialogue is an inclusive, facilitated forum characterized by face-to-face exchange of ideas, information, personal story sharing, honest expression of emotion and thought, affirmation of values, clarification of viewpoints and deliberations of solutions to issues and concerns that matter most (Du Bois & Hutson, 1997). The primary goal of dialogue is to build a contact between conflicting parties to enable them express their grievances understand and

appreciate each other's concerns. The process involves inquiry, temporary suspension of judgment and positions for the purposes of exploration and public acknowledgement of the value of the other's needs and interests.

Dialogue and negotiation may work hand in hand. Poole and Warner (1998) have found that dialogue and negotiation seek to bring conflicting parties to an agreement or compromise in which implementation is a vital subsequent step.

In his book, *Eight essentials steps to conflict resolution*, Weeks (1994) has proposed eight steps to transforming conflicts. He has urged parties to a conflict to create an effective atmosphere, in which the conflict resolution process takes place; clarify wrong perceptions of conflict; focus on individual and shared needs; build shared positive power; look to the future and then learn from the past; generate options; develop "doables"; and make mutual-benefit agreements.

All of the intractable conflict transformation strategies discussed are essential but they may not be the effective immediate approaches when it comes to hostile armed conflicts.

Dealing with Armed Conflict

Dealing with armed conflict is a complex task in conflict management. The UN recognizes negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement and regional arrangements as methods of peace intervention in violent conflicts, and allows sanctions, blockading, and violent intervention in order to restore peace between warring parties (SIPRI-UNESCO, 1998)). However, the use of force is the last option the UN resorts

to in conflict intervention. The United Nations also uses embargo (trade, travel and armed embargo) in dealing with armed conflicts. For instance, in May 1992, Yugoslavia suffered UN imposed oil embargo in an attempt to end the Bosnian civil war.

In most cases, many practical approaches are sequentially followed depending on the nature of the armed conflict. These include fact-finding missions, the call for cease-fire, monitoring, negotiation, mediation, military intervention, political dialogue and negotiation, peacekeeping, and peace enforcement. These and other approaches can be categorized under conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution, and peace-building. Conflict prevention aims at three major goals (SIPRI-UNESCO, 1998). It is intended to prevent dispute or conflict from escalating into armed or violent conflict, to prevent old conflicts from recommencing, and to prevent existing conflict from spreading. This process includes measures outlined by Chapter VI of the UN Charter such as diplomatic initiatives and preventive deployment of troops. Diplomatic initiatives include preventive diplomacy, negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, and judicial settlement. These methods are some of the conventional intervention strategies used in dealing with armed conflicts, which include fact-finding missions, imposition of cease-fire, warnings, embargo, inspections and monitoring. In the case of preventive deployments, civilians and/or military forces may be used.

Negotiation may range from bilateral (mostly for inter-state conflicts) to multilateral. However, Zartman (2000) has discovered that bilateral and large-scale multilateral conflict negotiations in regional or sub-regional organisations are not an effective way of ending conflicts in Africa. He

therefore proposed “trilateral” or mediated bilateral negotiations as the most effective approach.

The SIPRI-UNESCO (1998) has discussed peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace enforcement and peacebuilding as methods of dealing with armed conflicts, which are useful in this discussion. Accordingly, a method is considered peacekeeping when a neutral military personnel and/or civilians are used to help warring parties prevent, manage or transform conflict be it in the case of intra-state or inter-state conflict. These forces are usually organized by an international or sub-regional organisation; for examples, the United Nations, NATO, AU, and ECOWAS. Peacekeepers are intended to complement the political process of conflict transformation and the restoration and maintenance of peace. They normally operate with the consent of the warring parties and are normally permitted to use force only in self-defence. This approach has its pedigree in Chapter VI of the UN Charter on peace and conflict resolution. Peacemaking takes place after conflict has broken out, and it aims at establishing a peaceful settlement. This process may employ a range of diplomatic, judicial or conciliation initiatives. Peace enforcement is an action sanctions by Chapter VIII of the UN Charter involving the use of political and economic sanctions and/or military force to restore peace. In this case measures are taken against conflicting factions to coerce them to act in ways that will instil peace.

However, these strategies are useful in dealing with hostile-conflicts. But they may not be effective in post-conflict situation. In a post-war situation, especially the case of Liberia, where hostility has ceased, deep

rooted post-war issues need to be addressed if sustainable peace must be achieved.

Peacebuilding takes place in the aftermath of a conflict (Adebo, 2005; SIPRI-UNESCO, 1998). It is an action to strengthen and solidify a political settlement, such as economic reconstruction and re-establishment of normal civilian life. Peacebuilding is a post-conflict concept which involves a continuum of responses, including economic development, national reconstruction, security, and conflict transformation. Its purpose is to establish sustainable peace and avoid a return to hostile conflict. However, in the case of armed conflicts, conflict managers do not often achieve the goal of peacebuilding because of the lack of relevant strategies to achieving genuine reconciliation. Adebo (2005) has stressed the need that peacebuilding mainly focuses strengthening the three major pillars of society—the state, civil society and economy—and assuring a balanced functioning of the three in their mutual relationships.

Power Sharing Approach

The power sharing approach appears to be a new phenomenon to dealing with political-violence in Africa (Adebo, 2005). The Republic of La Cote d'Ivoire, Kenya, and the most recent political deadlock in Zimbabwe are examples of this approach. The Ivorian civil war which started 2002 came to a halt through the formation of a power sharing agreement between the Laurent Gbagbo led government and the Soro Guillaume led New Forces in 2007. Kenya and Zimbabwe followed the same path in 2007 and 2008.

Power sharing creates the sense of political accommodation, but it does not solve post-conflict problem of psycho-social trauma.

Peacebuilding is, therefore, the appropriate approach to post-conflict situations. It goes beyond the cessation of overt violence to reconciliation and peace. But, the approach, progress and achievement in peacebuilding largely depend on the concept that parties involved in the peace process hold about peace.

Concept of Peace

Assefa (1996) has identified three major concepts of peace which have direct reflection on dealing with post-conflict situations. The first view indicates that peace is the absence of violence. Some people consider peace to be the absence of overt physical harm to people and property which emanates from wars, riots, murders and vandalism, among others. This concept does not present the whole understanding of peace. Peace is not merely the absence of violence. Curle (1971) has discovered that the first stage of conflict is when conflict is hidden. It is a condition when injustice against certain individual or group of people in a community has not yet been discovered and people may claim to have peace. Overt conflict may erupt when the affected party is made aware of the injustice. Thus, it means that the absence of overt violence is not the presence of peace.

A major pitfall of this conception of peace is that the concept does not recognize the effect of structural violence (Assefa, 1996). In other words, the mechanisms to controlling overt violence may condone or perpetrate structural violence. Structural violence is defined as “social and personal violence

arising from unjust, repressive and oppressive national or international political and social structures” (Assefa, 1996, p. 43). A system that perpetrates repression, abject poverty, malnutrition and starvation for some members of a society while other members enjoy opulence and unbridled power inflicts covert violence with the ability to destroy life, except that it does it in a more subtle way. Wehr (1979) has discovered that it is not only the gun that kills but also lack of access to the basic means of life and dignity equally does the same.

The second concept relates peace to a condition of tranquillity, the absence of disagreement or dispute, a condition in which conflicts are banished and people live in calm and serenity. This conception fails to recognize conflict as a fact of life. It denies the existence of conflict and thus, it can lead people into the misguided perception that by avoiding conflict, it will go away (Assefa, 1996).

The third view is that peace is not merely the absence of conflict or violence (Assefa, 1996). In other words, peace goes beyond a preoccupation with the absence of conflict or violence. It is therefore seen as the transformation of destructive interactions into more cooperative and constructive relationships. This is the most appropriate view of peace. It equates peace with conflict transformation. Thus, peace is not merely a condition of general serenity or imposed order that suppresses disagreement, but it is rather a network of relationships full of energy and differences.

It implies that peacebuilding must incorporate structures through which personal and socio-political differences can be identified and worked out in ways that are satisfactory to all parties involved, as well as the society at large

(Assefa, 1996). In this sense, peace can be achieved when the root causes of the differences or conflictual relationships are explored and adequately dealt with. After the cessation of overt violent conflict, reconciliation—the necessary tool for sustainable peace and development must be of priority.

Reconciliation and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

Post-conflict condition is more crucial and critical. It is a condition in which when the appropriate mechanisms for sustainable peace are not explored and adhered to; it leads to the reoccurrence of a more serious violent conflict. True reconciliation is therefore the preventive tool to this condition. The field of conflict management, resolution and transformation has often been treated as social science discipline. Though intermittent references to reconciliation are found in various writings, much of the literature in this discipline however does not adequately deal with the concept of reconciliation (Assefa, 1996). Lederach (1999) also affirmed this fact when he wrote:

There are few if any effective models of action and frameworks of thinking that emerge from the disciplines of international relations and political or social sciences. Politicians and humanitarians alike turn toward religious, philosophical, and biblically based concepts. They try to make those concepts work at a social and political level (p. 64).

In view of the foregoing, reconciliation is found and more meaningfully discussed in the theological literature.

Theological Concept of Reconciliation

One of the important themes in Christian theology is the concept of reconciliation. The term reconciliation is from the Latin root word “conciliatus,” which means to walk with, to work together, “to come together,” or “to assemble” (Assefa, 1996, p. 46). It is a restoration of harmony in a broken relationship. Matthew 18:15-17 provides the theological impetus for the Christian concept of reconciliation. It enjoins the offended to initiate the process of reconciliation. It says:

Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector (Matthew 18:15-17, NKJV).

In Pauline religious thought, reconciliation embodies the concepts of love, grace, forgivingness, justification, righteousness, atonement, and peace (Romans 5:1-21; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Ephesians. 2:14-16). Paul sees reconciliation as the act of God in relation to his creation. God reconciled with fallen humanity through the atoning death of Jesus Christ. God’s reconciling act in Christ Jesus features love, grace, forgivingness, justification, righteousness, atonement and peace.

Love is premium to God’s act of reconciliation (John 3:16, Romans 5:8). He demonstrated his love towards humanity while humanity was still in its fallen or disobedient state. Christ Jesus’ birth, life, suffering and sacrificial death demonstrate the love of God to humanity in a concrete term. Thus,

Christ came to restore broken relationship between God and humanity. Grace, as often used in the New Testament, means God's unmerited favour toward sinful humanity (Ephesians 2:8). "It may also denote God's withholding judgment and restraining sin" (Enns, 1989, 636). By grace God took the initiative to freely love, forgive, seek the restoration of fallen humanity and provide protection, comfort, and strength to the afflicted and oppressed.

Forgiveness is the act that sets the offender free from the guilt and the consequences of his or her wrong action. Wink (1998) discovered that the Greek word which is translated "to forgive" in the New Testament is "aphiemi" which means to let go, loose, set free, acquit, dismiss, and remit. Forgivingness then is the act of letting go, loosing or setting someone free, removing the burden of our enmity from the offender's shoulders. Forgivingness is closely linked with the word for grace, emphasizing that God's act of forgiveness is rooted in his grace; no human merit is involved.

Theologically, forgivingness means "to pardon" or "cancel an obligation or debt" (Arndt & Gingrich, 1979, p.125). It is then the legal act of God in removing the charges against the sinner because atonement for the sins has been made by Christ. Forgivingness does not replace reconciliation, but it is a step toward reconciliation. The reconciliation framework demands that humanity recognizes his or her wrong, confess, and repent from it; in order to enjoy God's pardon and restitution.

Justification in the Christian thought means "to declare righteous." It is a legal act whereby God pronounces that the believing sinner has been credited with all the virtues of Jesus Christ (Enns, 1989). It is God's forgivingness or acceptance of unrighteous humanity as righteous and free

from the guilt and consequences of sin. Theologically, justification is a functional aspect of reconciliation which precedes reconciliation. Righteousness is captured in the concept of justification and atonement is embedded in the concept of propitiation. According to Enns (1989), propitiation is derived from the Greek words “hilasmos” and “hilasterion” meaning “to appease or to atone” and stresses that the holiness of God was fully satisfied, his wrath appeased, and his righteous demands were met through the atoning death of Jesus Christ.

Thus, peace in this context is the ultimate goal of the reconciliation process. Peace then is the embodiment of love, grace, justification, and atonement. The biblical concept of peace is determined by the Hebrew word “shalom” which signifies totality, wholeness, harmony, integrity, and well-being. Shalom signifies peace with God, peace with oneself, peace with one’s neighbours, and peace with nature. Thus, genuine reconciliation is a ministry and gift given to the Christian Church by God himself (2 Corinthians 5:18-21). No secular politician, warlord, and military General can truly appropriate this gift. The ultimate goal of reconciliation is to re-establish love, trust and respect between estranged parties. As Kern (1996) has rightly put it, “True reconciliation means healed relationships in which the abusive behaviour of the few will not occur again” (p. 4). For Lederach (1999), Peace is both the beginning and the result of the reconciliation process.

In addressing post-conflict situation, Lederach (1999) explored and applied the concept of Psalm 85:10 in his international reconciliatory meetings in Nicaragua and came up with four necessary components of peace. According to Lederach (1999), the Spanish version of Psalm 85:10 is literally

translated as, “Truth and Mercy have met together. Justice and Peace have kissed” (p. 53). He argued that reconciliation incorporates the search for Truth, Mercy, Justice and Peace. Thus, Psalm 85 shows that conflict has revelatory and reconciling potential when the four energies are embraced and all their concerns are recognized as proper. The passage provides new and deeper insight into the idea that reconciliation is a journey to take and a meeting place where we meet ourselves, others, and God. With this view Lederach (1999) wrote:

Psalm 85 presents reconciliation as a dynamic social space where different but interdependent social energies and concerns are brought together and given voices. The primary practical task of those working for reconciliation is to help create the dynamic social space where Truth, Mercy, Justice, and Peace can truly meet and thresh things out (p. 60).

Lederach’s assertion is an indication that true reconciliation cannot take place without Truth, Mercy, and Justice. Truth constitutes transparency, revelation, and clarity. Mercy calls for acceptance, compassion, forgivingness, and healing. Justice demands for accountability and responsibility. Peace in this process stands for harmony, security, respect and well-being of people and society.

In the process of reconciliation, peace is both the beginning and the result of the reconciliation process. Lederach (1999) therefore described peace as the mother and child of the process of reconciliation. Peace as mother is recognized as whatever helps establish conditions for negotiation on political, economic, and military issues that have divided the society. At this

first level, peace is equated with a shift in relationship where rivals cease hostilities, open negotiations, begin to communicate, and lay the platform to work through their differences in socio-political ways rather than military ways. As a child, peace is seen as the result, the unfolding process that is given birth by the negotiations. The negotiated framework prepares the stage for truth and mercy.

At the practical and functional level, truth takes the form of a National Truth Commission. Depending on the situation, Truth Commissions may be established by people within the country or by international participants. The primary task of the Truth Commissions is to investigate what has happened, particularly in terms of war crimes and abuse of human rights. They are not responsible for providing justice, rectifying matters, or rendering judgment and sentence. A Truth Commission is clothed with the responsibility to create space for public and social acknowledgment of the wrongs. “A major reason for the establishment of a Truth Commission is its contribution to reconciliation process after particularly abusive and violent periods of a country’s history.”(The Life and Peace Institute, 1997, p. 11). A Truth Commission can break the cycles of impunity and provide a public forum for discussion regarding the fate of the guilty when combined with judicial reform. The rationale presupposes the importance of recognizing the dignity of the victims and what happened, the need to reinforce the rule of law, and deterrence of future violations.

Truth-telling through the Truth Commission is different from spiritual motivated confession (Lederach, 1999). Spiritual motivated confession is self-motivated and is directed toward the offended. Truth Commission seeks for

accountable confession. It may take the form of objective outsiders who would investigate the event and speak on behalf of truth in a broad public forum. The confession done at this forum does not come from the motivation of the offender; rather the offender is investigated in public. Truth Commission is oriented toward the past. Its objective is to establish what happened, who did it, and who was affected. The social fabric of society cannot be healed without public acknowledgement of the wrongs of the past.

In the process of reconciliation, the need for truth is urgent. In a post-war situation, the victims of violence may want to forgive and reconcile, but they may need to know who their offenders are and what they did. For example, Duncan (1994) has recorded that most of the direct victims of the violent attacks and assassination carried out by the apartheid regime in South Africa indicated that they were ready to forgive, but they needed to know who their offenders were and what they did.

Mercy, in the reconciliation process, takes the form of political amnesty and impunity. The purpose for amnesty is to move beyond the cycle of hatred, retribution, and vengeance. This recognizes that yes, the past must be acknowledged, but the present life demands that we start anew. Thus, providing a new start is the minimal goal, and healing is the ultimate goal. Amnesty can be offered unconditionally in the form of grace, or offered beforehand, or offered on condition that one tells the truth. In the case of South Africa, amnesty was offered beforehand as an incentive to encourage individuals to come forward and tell the truth (Wink, 1998). In Argentina amnesty without punishment was negotiated as part of the peace framework before the Truth Commission took up its mandate (Lederach, 1999).

Justice is incarnated in the form of war crime tribunals or accountability. It focuses on the present and argues for action in the present. Lederach (1999) discovered that justice is one of the most complicated aspects in the process of reconciliation. Executing justice is a very complex task. “Not only is it difficult to determine who did what, but it is impracticable to mete a fitting punishment. Inappropriate punishment is likely to perpetuate the cycle of hatred, recriminations, and vengeance” (Fayose, 2001, p. 89). Moreover, there can be grievous abuses of justice system itself. However, the cry for justice cannot be ignored in the process of reconciliation and peacebuilding. This is because when justice is ignored, the victims of injustice will not be satisfied and reconciliation will not be effective. In fact when justice is denied, the victims would feel they have been victimized twice.

On the other hand, to bring truth, mercy, justice, and peace together in a post-war situation, justice should be exchanged with truth. For others justice is done when the truth is told with repentant spirit. Truth itself is a difficult thing and it is not easy for people to admit their wrong, especially in the case of violent acts against humanity. Justice in the form of capital punishment or equal measure of wrong done in the past does not really bring about national healing. In fact those who insist on waiting till such justice is done may never reconcile for “justice is seldom completely done” (Wink, 1998, p. 22).

Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)

Many countries have used Truth and Reconciliation Commission approach to national healing in dealing with post-conflict issues. However, Boraine (1994) has discovered potential obstacles to Truth Commissions.

These obstacles include, an obsession with past over present, a degeneration into witch hunts, a threat to current stability and democratic processes, a further fragmenting of divided societies, a possible swamping of national court systems with prosecutions resulting from evidence derived from commissions, the unreliability of security files, violations of due process for the accused themselves, and the use of Truth Commission for public relation purposes. Also the fear of the civilian population about reprisals and suspicion about the credibility of the commission is another major challenge. In Africa where political situation often changes by means of military coup, the fear of reprisals is a serious matter. However, this is not unique to Africa. This was also a major problem in the case of El Salvador (The Life and Peace Institute, 1997).

Some governments used the Truth Commissions for public relations purposes. This was the case with the Truth Commission set up by the Uganda's dictator, Idi Amin, in 1974 in response to international pressure. His main purpose was public relations, not determining truth (The Life and Peace Institute, 1997). However, other Commissions have overcome the potential obstacles and served a variety of valuable purposes in laying the groundwork for reconciliation. South Africa's Truth Commission is a good example. Wink (1998) found that the South African multi-ethnic administration's TRC, established in 1995, was able to operate on the basis of principle rather than fear. It had the mandate and power to investigate crimes, grant amnesty to those who made public disclosure of their crimes, and determine reparations for victims.

Other countries such as Argentina, Chile, El Salvador, Uruguay, Guatemala, and Haiti applied the TRC approach to building post-war peace but they were not as successful as South Africa (Wink, 1998). One major shortcoming of Truth Commission is that it does not address the psycho-social trauma of post-war children (Ressler, Tortorici, & Marcelino, A. 1993). Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a major common problem in post-war situation. UNICEF accounts that at least ten million children have suffered from war trauma during the past decade (Ressler, et al., 1993).

Post-war Reconciliation Process

First of all, in Christian theological thought, reconciliation is the initiative of God. God, the offended could have punished humanity, the offender. Instead he initiated the process of reconciliation by re-establishing relationship with the same humanity who offended him. The Matthew 18 principle discussed earlier demonstrates God's reconciliation approach and lays the theological framework for reconciliation in the way God intended the process to be. Though difficult in human society, it is so far the relevant approach.

Post-war reconciliation is a complex process, especially in a non-Christian or religious pluralistic society. In deep-rooted conflicts:

People experience deep pain, turmoil, and loss. In response, they build layers of protection and insulation. They do this to deal internally with their experience and to defend themselves externally from further anguish and violence. However, the work of reconciliation calls for

relationships and a journey through those layers of isolation (Lederach, p. 63).

Reconciliation then is a journey to healing wounds that are inflicted by war or deep-rooted conflicts, and it has elements of time and sequencing. Lederach (1999) has established that reconciliation requires time and space for acknowledging the past and envisioning the future for the purpose of reframing the present. Truth concentrates on the past, mercy and justice focus on the present and reconciling peace is the future goal. The formation of a Truth Commission and the establishment of amnesty programme are undertaken in the framework of a negotiated peace.

There are no magic wands or formulas that can be applied to healing and rebuilding of societies moving from war to peace but the process depends on time and sequence. Lederach (1999) has described three models of the process of reconciliation based on his observation, participation, and experience in international peacebuilding. These three models are: The past-present-future model, the present-future-past framework, and the future-present-past model.

The past-present-future framework of reconciliation is oriented toward dealing with national issues and the broader civil society that has experienced the war. In terms of time, this approach assumes that what happened in the past must first be established in order to make it possible to live together in the present and move together as a society into the future. The case of South Africa is an example. The framework of past-present-future suggests that the demon of the past must first be cast out in order to make peace in the present and for the future.

The present-future-past which Lederach (1999) observed in Nicaragua suggests that reconciliation is catalyzed by the present common economic needs of society. The common need for survival creates interdependence in the present. People focus on the present and what is needed to move toward the future for their families bracketing the past and setting it aside.

In the future-present-past framework the past is more severely bracketed than in the second framework. The major reconciling factor in this framework is the quest for future posterity. In Cambodia, “the future, the shared common hope for future generations, provided a space within which they could relate and work together in the present” (Lederach, 1999, 76).

Peacebuilding: The Role of the Christian Church

The Church has a responsibility to foster reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5: 18, 19). “Certainly peace with justice, true reconciliation that builds an inclusive society in which people can live in trust, safety and dignity is at the heart of the Gospel” (Carroll, 1999, p. vi). The Christian Church has a unique role to play in fostering genuine reconciliation between formerly warring parties. The fact that the church has often failed at this task in no way mitigates the role of the church in peacebuilding. Halverstadt (1991) put it this way: “The prophetic tradition of the Christian faith calls us to pursue God’s justice and compassion in all human affairs” (p.189). Hence, “peacemaking and reconciliation are mandates and not merely options for the Christian church” (Assefa, 1996, p. 51).

In many parts of the world, the Christian Church has fostered reconciliation and sustainable peacebuilding. One great example is the case of

the Church of South Africa, which nurtured the process of change from apartheid rule to democracy in that country. Laomla (1996) recorded that the South African Church fought for a non-racial society in which all the people of South Africa would be afforded equal opportunities to participate in all areas of South African life. It sought for a society in which the worth of all human beings is recognized and protected by a bill of human rights in accordance with the spirit and values of the gospel, and it campaigned for racial and political reconciliation. The South African Church engaged in a ministry of mediation, prophetic witness and public pastoral care within a political atmosphere unprecedented in the history of decolonization and freedom struggles in Africa. Church leaders such as Bishop Stanley Mogoba, Archbishop Desmond Tutu (who chaired the South African TRC) and others played major roles in the political transformation and post-conflict healing in South Africa (Wink, 1997).

Elsewhere in Mozambique, the Mozambiquean Christian Council organized peace seminars and conferences to help consolidate peace agreements during the Mozambique civil war. The Christian Council in collaboration with UNICEF created a programme called “Preparing People for Peace” to foster the peace process (The Life and Peace Institute, 1997). Churches have been involved in conflict management and peacebuilding training. In April 1994 the Sudanese Council of Churches trained local peace monitors in Kenya in interpositioning to strengthen cease-fire and peace agreements. In the same year the Norwegian Refugee Council and Norwegian Church Aid convened a week-long workshop on peacebuilding in Afghanistan (The Life and Peace Institute, 1997). The Christian Churches around the

world have often approached peacebuilding through psycho-social trauma initiatives, rehabilitation programme, peacebuilding training, counselling and reconciliation programmes which are essential to addressing post-war problems.

Conclusion

Conflict is a dynamic inevitable human phenomenon. It may occur from various sources which mainly include economic, value, power, and basic human needs. Conflict is neutral and it may escalate or de-escalate based on how it is handled. This chapter has discussed many conflict management approaches from conventional to non-conventional ones and found that most of the approaches fall short to addressing post-conflict peacebuilding. The conclusion drawn is that true reconciliation is the answer to post-conflict situation.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Context plays a vital role in analysis and interpretation. Therefore, the primary objective of this chapter is to look at Liberia's geo-historical, socio-political structures, religions, and the Liberian civil war and its ramifications.

Brief Geo-History of Liberia

Liberia is relatively small both in size and population. The country lies between 4 degree 20 inches and 8 degree 30 inches north of the Equator and situated 11 degree 30 inches west of the Greenwich Meridian (Schulz, 1973). It has a maximum breadth of about 280 kilometres between Buchanan and Nimba and boasts of about a 595-kilometer (370 miles) coastline along the Atlantic Ocean. Liberia covers an area of about 43,000 square miles. Its low coastal marshy plain is backed by a rolling plateau broken by mineral-bearing hills and a rocky promontory of mountain ranges within the Guinea highlands with about 4,000 feet elevations. Much of the interior is rugged and highly forested with some river basins flowing northeast-southwest into the Atlantic Ocean (Aboagye, 1999).

The climate of Liberia is determined by the location of Liberia within the tropics, the distribution of the high and low pressure belts over the African

continent throughout the year, the direction of the Liberian coastline, and by the relief (Schulz, 1973). The climate of Liberia is tropical and humid. The constant mean temperature is 800 Fahrenheit. The country experiences two seasons in a year: the Rainy Season lasting from May to November and the Dry Season, which runs from November to April. The coastal area of Liberia experiences the heaviest rain fall while the hinterland experiences less rainfall.

Liberia was founded by the American Colonization Society in 1822. It was transformed and known as the Commonwealth of Liberia from 1839 until the declaration of independence on July 26, 1847 when it became the Republic of Liberia (Richardson, 1959; Guannu, 1997). The country has the longest history of independence on the continent of Africa. It is the oldest black Republic second to Haiti which got her independence in 1804.

As mentioned in chapter one, there are two broad groups of people in Liberia: the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous people of Liberia. The first group comprises the descendants of freed slaves from America and the West Indies and the descendants of Africans whose ships were intercepted and recaptured on the high seas by the British or United States navies while being transported as human cargo. The recaptured Africans were sent to Sierra Leone and Liberia as freed slaves (Hildebrandt, 1996; Clark, 1986). Those sent to Liberia were referred to as “Congos.” They were acculturated and merged with the freed slaves from America and the West Indies (Ellis, 1999) and “congos” became the common name for all freed slaves and their descendants in Liberia.

The indigenous of Liberia are divided into 16 official ethnic groups: the Bassa, Grebo, Kru, Krahn, Gio (Dan), Mano, Kpelle, Kissi, Loma, Gola,

Gbandi, Belle, Dei, Mende, Vai, and Mandingo. Recent anthropological investigations, however, indicate as many as about 28 ethnic groups (Nelson, 1984; Aboagye, 1999).

It is believed that some migrated from ancient Mali, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d'Ivoire, and Upper Volta between the 13th and 15th centuries as a result of either invasion, rumours of invasion, or natural disasters like famine and pestilence (Guannu, 1997). However, prior to the arrival of the 16 official ethnic groups, oral history revealed that some people lived in parts of the land during the prehistoric era of Liberia (Richardson, 1959; Guannu, 1997).

Liberia does not have an official indigenous national language; English is the common and official language in Liberia. The Liberian pidgin English is spoken across all ethnic, gender, and age groups, and it serves the purpose for general and easy communication across the country.

The population of Liberia was less than ten thousand in 1848 when only the freed slaves were considered citizens of Liberia (Guannu, 2000). It was about 2 million in 1984 and estimated at about 2.5 million in 1990 (Aboagye, 1999). The 2008 national population and housing census put it at 3,476,608 and the growth rate at 2.1 percent per annum.

The Political Structure of Liberia

Liberia is politically subdivided into counties. In 1847, Liberia had three counties with other colonies independent of the new state (Guannu, 2000). By 1980 the number of counties has increased to nine; thirteen in the 80s; and fifteen counties by 2003 (See the map of Liberia in appendix B).

Liberia is a unitary State and it practices a representative democracy. The Legislative arm of government consists of the House of Representatives and the House of Senates. Until 1907 when the tenure of the President was amended to four years, a President was elected for two years, and could re-run as many as he or she wished. Presently, a president serves for six years and is eligible to run for two terms.

Education

There are two major systems of education in Liberia: the traditional educational system operated by the indigenous people, and the Western form of education pioneered by the Americo-Liberians. The traditional education is the oldest education system in Liberia. This ancient educational institution consists of the “Poro” Society for men and the “Sande” Society for women. The “Poro” is the name for the traditional secret society for men while the “Sande” is a secret society for women. The “Poro” School offers advanced training in the arts and sciences, and teaches morality. The Sande Institution imparts knowledge on morality midwifery, housekeeping and the duties of women in society. The Sande Society is known for its practice of female gender mutilations. However, the traditional system of education has drastically declined in favour of Western education because of its failure to modernize practices that are not in conformity to modern society.

The Americo-Liberians held firmly that the Western education was the best and most productive system of education. Thus, Liberia’s educational system is modelled after that of the United States, and (from 1822 to 1847) it concentrated on producing lawyers, preachers, and politicians to the neglect of

technical and vocational education. In 1965 President William V. S. Tubman introduced compulsory education for ages between 6 and 16 with the aim of dealing with the problem of illiteracy in the country. This campaign was poorly patronized owing to limited resources (Guannu, 2000). Moreover, the indigenous people might have seen this new development as a new form of slavery, as children of natives were made to stay with Americo-Liberians who treated the native children as slaves under the pretence of education and civilization. Very few native Liberians benefited from this scheme. In the 1980s, the education system was still facing challenges. Aboagye (1999) has recorded that about 66% of the student population was in public schools and 34% in private and mission schools with a high dropout rate between the primary and secondary levels.

Economic

Liberia adopts the capitalist economic system. The Liberian economy is agricultural-based. From 1822 to 1944, Liberia was self-sufficient in food production, most especially rice, the Liberian staple food, and it was later considered the fastest developing country in the world after Japan (Schulze, 1973). But this favourable economic situation was marred by the poor management of the Open Door Policy in the last two administrations of Tubman's 27-year rule (1944-1971) (Guannu, 2000).

Liberia is rich in natural, agricultural and mineral resources including timber, rubber, coffee, cocoa, diamond, gold and iron ore. Agriculture remains the principal occupation of the majority of the people. About 80% of the population are farmers. A vast majority of the rural working population

are involved in traditional subsistence production of rice, cassava, maize, yams, cocoyams, peanuts, sugarcane, plantains, banana, and assorted vegetables accounting for about 60% of agricultural production. Commercial production concentrates mainly on tree crops such as rubber, coffee, cocoa and palm products accounting for about 25% of export earnings. The major foreign concessions were Firestone Rubber Corporation, the Guthrie Rubber plantation and the rubber plantation of the Liberian Agricultural Company (LAC).

The Firestone Rubber Plantation (the world's largest rubber plantation) in Harbel determined the country's economic position for about sixteen years with government revenues rising from \$320,000 to nearly \$4m in 1950 (Schulz, 1973). Liberia was the largest producer of iron ore in Africa and the third largest in the world in 1967. Liberia saw a heavy economic decline in the 70s especially under President Tolbert's administration and this decline continued in the 1980s due to poor economic management and the oil crisis in the early 1970s, which coincided with the world slump in sales of rubber and iron ore (Alao, et al., 1999). At the same time, international aid to Liberia declined from \$80 million in 1975 to \$44 million 1976, internal debt rose to \$168 million in 1976, and inflation reached 11.4 percent the same year (Sessay, 1992).

By 2005, the Liberian economy has collapsed due to the civil conflict, and its foreign debt reached US\$4.7 billion in 2009, the situation which pushed the Sirleaf's government to place Liberia under the HIPC (Heavily Indebted Poor Countries) programme (Evanthoduka & Washington, Dec.2008-Feb. 2009).

Religion

Liberia has three major religions: Liberian Traditional Religion (LTR) or African Traditional Religion, Christianity, and Islam. Though the traditional religion has been somehow weakened by the presence of Christianity, it is still a major religious force in Liberia. The Liberian Traditional Religion is no different from African Traditional Religions practiced in Africa in terms of beliefs and practices. The African traditional belief in supernatural powers manifested itself in the Liberian civil war as every fighter sought spiritual power for warfare. Much has been written on African Traditional Religions by Idowu (1973), Mbiti (1970), and others. Therefore, this study seeks only to highlight the fact that African Traditional Religion was the alpha and omega in pre-historic Liberia and it is still a formable force in the Liberian religious system.

The Christian religion is the most dominant modern religion in Liberia. From the establishment of Liberia, the country has always been considered a Christian state. As Schulze (1973) aptly remarked: "This opinion is certainly well founded with regard to the constitution and the principles on which the country is governed" (p. 97). The country was founded by Christian men in 1822 and thus Christianity was seen and practiced as the de facto religion. With this assertion one would wonder how such a Christian country could degenerate into a bloody and devastating civil war. The war has therefore raised a big question on Liberian Christianity, and it is a wakeup call for Liberians to rethink and rejuvenate their Christianity. The Americo-Liberians practiced a syncretistic Christianity and this was passed on to the indigenous Liberians. Government officials and high profile Liberians were both

members of the Christian church and the Free Masons (Guannu, 2000), the source of political power and prestige in Liberia since 1847.

Guannu (2000) recorded that the Islamic religion came before 1822, but its progress was slow due to the presence and prestige of Christianity and the tribalistic nature of Islam in Liberia. The pioneers of Islam in Liberia (the Mandingos) portrayed the religion as a Mandingo monopoly. As a result, a majority of Liberians find it difficult to even distinguish Mandingos from Muslims today. Thus, it is a common view in Liberia that all Muslims of black complexion are Mandingos and all Mandingos are Muslims. This tribalistic nature has always made Islam unattractive to other ethnic groups in Liberia. Like in La Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana and Nigeria, Islam is a dominant force mainly in northern Liberia.

Foreign Relations

There is no doubt that Liberia has a historical diplomatic and economic relationship with Europe, especially the major players in Europe, Great Britain, France, among others. For instance, in 1848, Great Britain was the first state to recognize the independence of Liberia followed by France in 1852, and Germany in 1855. Guannu (2000) has discussed the historical relationship between Liberia and Europe. Therefore, this study seeks to concentrate more on Liberia's historical relationship with the United States of America which is relevant to events of the war that unfolded in Liberia. Liberia is a strong ally of the United States.

The political foundation of the Liberian state was laid by the government and the people of the United States. Surprisingly, the United

States did not recognize Liberia's independence until 1862 (fifteen years after independence). Guannu (2000) stated that the delay was partly due to anti-black syndrome in the United States at the time. Hereafter, the tie between Liberia and the United States has been strong. Some critics have alleged that Liberia is the colony of the United States. Almost all of the Liberian Presidents in the first Republic were freed slaves and sons of freed slaves from the United States. The United States relationship with Liberia is such that Liberia is not free to have diplomatic relationship with countries that are not allies or otherwise perceived to be enemies to United States' foreign policy and interests. Any Liberian President who befriends countries that are not pro-United States risks losing his or her office. Presidents William R. Tolbert and Samuel Doe became victims to this in 1980 and 1990. A pro-United States Liberian President is in this sense a good President to the Americans regardless his or her domestic policy.

One can describe the U.S.-Liberia relationship as a traditional husband and wife type of relationship, where the husband is a dictator and determines what is good or bad for his wife. In this type of marital relationship, the husband is always right and he decides for the relationship. He can have as many friends, wives and concubines as he chooses, but the wife is not free to even choose a friend of her choice. Thus, the United States is the dictatorial husband while Liberia is the feeble traditional wife. Generally, Liberians have not realized that the U.S.-Liberia relationship (a deadly neo-colonial practice) is detrimental to Liberia's future.

Prior to the war, Liberia was referred to as Little America by many. The country was a strategic staging post of some importance to the United

States in many ways. The Robert International Airport in Liberia was built by the United States government and it served as a stand-by for the U.S. strategic refuelling and landing station for rapid deployment forces during World War II. The United States established its Omega navigation stations and a Voice of America transmitter in Liberia to reach sub-Saharan Africa. The United States had always kept five hundred strongmen at the U.S. Embassy near Monrovia, which served as the CIA station for the region. Moreover, The Firestone Rubber Plantation is operated in Liberia by U.S. interests. Liberia received much help from the American people especially in the areas of education and health during the first Republic (Alao et al., 1999).

Liberia is a founding member of many international and regional organisations including the then League of Nations founded in Paris in 1919, the United Nations (U.N.), the African Union (AU), ECOWAS, and the Mano River Union (MRU).

The Liberian Civil War

Chapter one has highlighted important facts about the Liberian civil war. Therefore, only a brief description is necessary here in order to pave the way for the discussions on its causes and effects. The Liberian civil war was one of the worst and devastating bloody civil war in the history of West Africa. The civil war was launched by the Charles Taylor led NPFL on December 24, 1989 in Butuo Nimba County (North-Eastern Liberia) and it lasted up to 2003. Taylor launched his rebellion with the promise to topple Samuel Doe's dictatorial regime, restore full constitutional democracy and the rule of law, rebuild the economy based on free enterprise and unify all

Liberians regardless of ethnic origin, class, social status, religion or political affiliation. The war which many Liberians expected would last for a short period of time, lasted for fourteen years and was fought by more than twelve armed factions with regional and international intervention, notably ECOWAS and the UN. The main warring factions included the NPFL, AFL, INPFL, UNIMO J and K, LPC, and LURD. Doe was killed by the INPFL on September 10, 1990 but this did not end the fighting, as heavy atrocities and gross human right violation continued. By the end of the fighting in 2003 Liberian infrastructures have been totally destroyed, several thousands have been killed, millions exiled, and Liberia has become a failed state in West Africa.

Causes of the Liberian Civil War

Aboagye (1999) indicated that the Liberian civil war was pre-conceived in the womb of the commonwealth and the Americo-Liberian oligarchy whose contraptions of power resulted in the monopoly of political power to the exclusion of the exploited indigenous Liberians. However, it must be noted that the Liberian civil conflict has its origin in the history and formation of the country. The root causes of the war can be traced far back to the circumstances in which the country emerged and the attitude of Americo-Liberians toward the indigenous population of Liberia, which fuelled the continued Americo and native Liberians rivalry in Liberia. Thus, the precipitating causes to the Liberian civil war can be categorized under the following factors: socio-political, cultural, economic, identity, international, and religious; to be dealt with one after the other.

Socio-political Factor

As already mentioned, Liberia was established as a home of freed black slaves in 1822 under the auspices of the American Colonization Society (ACS). Prior to the arrival of the freed slaves and the formation of Liberia, the land was populated by indigenous ethnic groups governed by chiefs and kings.

However, the settlers introduced a socio-political system incompatible with that of the indigenous Liberians. The settlers built a class system exclusive of the indigenous Liberians and failed to integrate themselves socially but monopolized political power in Liberia and subjected the indigenous Liberians to harsh rule for 133 years. They created the social hierarchy they had experienced in the United States but with themselves as the socio-economically dominant class (Alao, et al., 1999, p. 14).

They dominated the political, social and economic life of Liberia and consistently excluded the indigenous Liberians from the decision-making processes that affected their lives. This socio-political disparity was a major source of constant conflict and war between the settlers and the indigenous Liberians (The TRC of Liberia, 2009). It was a major factor that led to the bloody military coup in 1980. Thus, the Liberian civil war was a struggle and demands for political power.

Cultural Factor

The Americo-Liberians, born and grew up in the United States, were culturally different from the indigenous Liberians. They differed in education, politics, religion, and culture. The cultural differences promoted ethnocentrism which served as one of the major sources for conflict in Liberia.

The Americo-Liberians considered the American culture as superior to the native Liberian culture and prohibited intermarriage between a settler and an indigenous Liberian (Guannu, 2000). They could not understand and relate appropriately to the natives. They therefore imposed the western culture on the indigens. According to the Liberian TRC (2009), the settlers innocuously attempted to degrade the identity and status of the indigenous Liberians. They attempted to erase the cultural identity of the natives by surreptitiously coercing them to adopt English names and culture. Guannu (1997) recorded that indigenous Liberians who did not adopt the western ways of life were treated as aliens. The settlers considered the African culture as barbaric, heathen, and uncivilized.

Economic Factor

The economic policies of Liberia was formulated and controlled by the settlers. From 1822 to 1980, the Americo-Liberians controlled the resources of the country to the detriment of the indigenous Liberians (Guannu, 2000). The indigenous people did not have access to education, health care, and other infrastructure. The unskilled and less formally educated indigenous Liberians relied on farming and hunting for existence. The disparities in the distribution of the national resources set the platform for conflict in Liberia. There was consistent conflict between the settlers and the indigens on the issues of trade and land (Aboagye, 1999). The slave trade was a major source of tension between the two groups. The settlers opposed the slave trade but the natives saw it as means of economic gain.

From 1822 to the end of the First Republic, land disputes were major sources of rift between the settlers and the indigenous Liberians. Indigenous Liberians were at times coerced at gun point to sell land to the settlers (Aboagye, 1999). The forced and mischievous ways of land acquisition by the settlers and their ally (the ACS) resulted in the “Twin Battles of 1822” between the settlers and the indigenous (Guannu, 1977). The First Republic’s land-ownership policies deprived many of the poor indigenous Liberians of their land. Their traditional farm lands were bought by the affluent settlers. Most often, the meagre amounts offered for land were not paid (Liebenow, 1987). The Americo-Liberians coercively replaced the traditional system of land ownership with a system based on western standards and by 1980 much of the land has been take over by the Americo-Liberians (Guannu, 2000).

Identity Factor

One of the major causes of the Liberian civil conflict is identity crisis. The Americo-Liberians lost their African cultural identity and perceived themselves as Americans instead, and were recognized as such by Africans and the British colonial authorities in Sierra Leone (Nelson, 1984). This perception shaped their attitude towards Liberia and it made them aliens to their fellow Africans. Their attitude and lifestyle and symbols of their new state reflected this philosophy. It was therefore difficult for them to even think of reintegration in the African society.

This lost of identity is reflected in the national motto on the seal of Liberia: “The Love of Liberty Brought Us Here” (See appendix B for the Seal of Liberia). A sentence in the declaration of Independence is another

indication of this wrong perception of identity: “We the people of the Republic of Liberia were originally the inhabitants of the United States of North America” (Guannu, 2000). It implies that they did not recognize the indigenous people as part of Liberia. The ideology of the settlers was to have Liberia as an “exclusive settler-dominated society serving as an African outpost of Western civilization” and the settlers as the “black colonial aristocracy” (Sawyer, 1997; Aboagye, 1999). This was a direct affront to the indigenous Liberians who owed their allegiance and identity to the land of Liberia. Thus, they consistently opposed the settlers who they considered aliens and invaders. As early as 1822, some chiefs lamented thus:

The Americans were strangers who had forgotten their attachment to the land of their fathers; for if not, why had they not renounced their connection with the white men (that is, the agents) altogether, and placed themselves under the protection of the kings of the country (Guannu, 1997, p. 34)?

This has since been a major source of misconceptions, fears, mistrust, and hence conflict between the two groups up to date.

The International Dimension

The policies of ACS backed by the US government prepared the ground for future conflicts in Liberia. The TRC of Liberia (1999) has found that the major historical antecedents of conflict between 1822 and 1847 were dictated by the autocratic policies of the ACS and its principal backer, the U.S. Government. In 1819, the ACS drafted all of the law and policies without any reference to indigenous Liberians. The land for the first settlement was

literally seized at gun point from King Peter (Dei Paramount Chief of Cape Mesurado) by U.S. Navy Captain Robert Stockton and ACS agent Eli Ayers. As the TRC (1999) noted, this was a significant root cause of future conflict between the settlement and the native Liberians. It asserted that the ACS was largely responsible for the socio-political disparity between the settlers and the natives. The settlers adopted the practices of the ACS and the period following the declaration of independence in 1847 exacerbated pre-existing conflicts and generated new ones.

The freed slaves in the first place were imposed on the natives of Liberia. The ACS, in its quest to relocate freed black slaves to Africa, did not engage in dialogue or seek adequate permission from the indigenous already living in the land. Perhaps this was due to the view that they were sending “civilized Christians” who would bring enlightenment to “primitive,” “unchristian” and “uncivilized” Africans who (in their view) would also be excited to receive them. This was a grievous mistake judging from a civilized worldview. The ACS did not do much to prevent the political nightmare that Liberia would face in modern times. They did not unite the strangers and the landlords but rather empowered the strangers to operate at will and oppressed the landlords. The attitude and behaviour of the Americo-Liberians did not also help the situation. They took an ethnocentric approach in their socio-political and economic structures and gained political hegemony in Liberia.

The 1980 Coup

The April 12, 1980 bloody military coup that halted the Americo-Liberians' oligarchy and brought the native Samuel Doe to power was a direct native response to the oppressive and exploitative rule of the Americo-Liberians. Many believe that the coup was masterminded by the US government because of Tolbert's non-alliance policy and his diplomatic ties with the Soviet Union and China (Guannu, 2000). The 1979 rice riots and the subsequent clamp-down by the government leading to the arrest of key members of the People's Alliance Party prepared the ground for the coup (Alao, et al., 1999).

The military junta (seventeen indigenous non-commissioned officers) murdered President William R. Tolbert along with 27 of his presidential guards and established the People's Redemption Council (PRC) government headed by Samuel Doe and mainly people with no political pedigree (Lamb, 1984). Thirteen leading members of the Tolbert's administration were executed on April 22, 1980 followed by the execution of Adolphus Tolbert (President Tolbert's son) (Ellis, 1999). The killing of the leading Americo-Liberians created breeding grounds for animosity and continuous political struggle and retaliation.

Leadership crisis within the PRC paved the way the Americo-Liberians to retaliate. Leadership rivalry broke out between the coup makers (Doe and Thomas Quiwonkpa) and Doe changed the Liberian constitution in 1984 and became a civilian President following the 1985 elections marked by harassment, intimidation, and rigging. In the midst of these, Quiwonkpa launched his failed coup on November 12, 1985. Doe's army killed the coup

plotters and carried out genocide campaign against the Gio and Mano ethnic groups of Nimba County, the home of Quiwonkpa, killing more than 3,000 Mano and Gio civilians in the process forcing many to exile in La Cote d'Ivoire (Abu, 2006; Alao, et al., 1999). Doe's brutal action paved the way for the people of Nimba to anticipate a regime change and join Taylor's rebellion. Taylor was one of Quiwonkpa recruits and close allies in the PRC based on his marriage to a close relative of Quiwonkpa (Ellis, 1999).

The Doe and Quiwonkpa rivalry which eventually became a Krahn-Mano and Gio conflict is believed to have been masterminded by the Americo-Liberians who view themselves as the custodians of political power in Liberia. They employed the divide and conquer approach to weaken the native Liberians and win back political power from the natives who were politically immature and power drunk. Power greed and unbridled demands for political power exhibited by both Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberians are among the major driving forces for conflicts in Liberia (Aboagye, 1999).

Religious Factor

Another root cause of the Liberian civil war which more people seem to shy away from is apostasy. Liberia was founded on Christian principles. The founding fathers and their founding sponsors (the ACS Agents) were Christians, most of whom were ministers of the gospel. The emancipated slaves were sent to conduct missionary activities in Liberia as well as the rest of Africa. Even the historic event of the declaration of Independence took place in the Providence Baptist Church in Monrovia (Guannu, 1997). But

Liberia left the path of true Christianity when Freemasons became a stronger force in the Liberian society. Liberia went away from God when state leaders began to practice occultism and high level of syncretism. They were leaders in their churches yet the Masonic Temple was the source of power and influence (Alao et al., 1999). When a nation turns away from God it becomes vulnerable to destruction. This was the case with Israel during the days of the Judges. The war was an echo calling for Liberians to be truthful to their God.

The religious dimension of the Liberian conflict cannot be ignored. Joshua Milton Blahyi (Butt Naked), a LPC-Krahn hero of the April 6, 1996 battle for Monrovia, confessed that the Liberian war was a result of constant demand for blood from the occult world in Liberia (Blahyi, an interview on 07/04/09, Capitol Building, Monrovia). Religion was aptly and negatively used “as an opiate to arouse the passions of individuals to become combatants” (Aboagye, p. 318). Many traditional Liberians see in the horror of the war as evidence of profound disorder in the spirit world, while others argue that the abuse of religious tradition was one of the root causes of the war (Ellis, 1999).

Effects of the Liberian Civil War

The Liberian civil war has a devastating effect on Liberia and the sub-region. Thus, it has political, psycho-social, economic, and religious effects. Politically, it destabilized the political structure of the country and rendered Liberia a failed state. It tainted Liberia’s democratization process, created mistrust between Liberia and its neighbours and made Liberia unpopular in the community of nations. It created political instability in the region and put

political and military pressure on the sub-region and the international community.

The war has psycho-social effects on the people of Liberia. It has deepened the ethnic division and animosity between ethnic groups in the country. By the end of the war in 2003, Liberia has become a divided society with high demand for psycho-social rehabilitation of the affected masses. The civil war destroyed family and societal values and increased social vices in Liberia. It was characterized by high human rights violations, atrocities, large-scale massacres, cannibalism (Ellis, 1999), rape, sexual abuse of women and girls, ethnocidal killings, among others. Men and women have been prematurely widowed. Many children have become orphans without parental support and many have become exiles in neighbouring countries.

Following the December 24, 1989 invasion, Doe's militia men killed indiscriminately and burned more than 200 innocent children alive in Kanplay, Nimba County (Shaw, 1990). All the warring parties used child soldiers between the age of 15 and 17. These children were exposed to various kinds of brutality, killings, rape and drugs abuse. They were forced to take drugs, kill friends and family members including their parents, labour, rape and be raped, serve as sexual slaves and prostitutes, engage in cannibalism, torture and pillage communities. Many were forced to be 'juju' controllers, ammunition carriers, spies, armed guards, and so on (The TRC of Liberia, 2009).

By 1990, the raging civil war has destroyed about 5,000 lives. Over 600 civilians, mostly Gio and Mano, were massacred in the St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Monrovia on July 30, 1990 by the AFL (Sesay, 1996). Others put the figure at about 562 (Aboagye, 1999; Youboty, 1993).

By 1994, almost two-thirds of high school students in Liberia had seen someone killed, tortured or raped and about 77% had lost a close relative (Sesay, 1996; Aboagye, 1999). In 1995, about 850,000 refugees have fled the country; 455,800 in Guinea, 360, 000 in the Ivory Coast, 16, 000 in Sierra Leone, 14, 000 in Ghana and 4, 200 in Nigeria; and over a million internally displaced and 150, 000 dead (UNHCR, 1995; Sesay, 1996). The nature and magnitude of atrocities committed, especially against women and children, by the various warring factions including government forces, were in epic proportions (The TRC of Liberia, 2009). These have left high level of trauma and deep scars on the collective psyche of the people of Liberia.

Economically, the war devastated the Liberian economy which was on the decline because of bad economic policies and mismanagement of the economy. The war was marked by the exploitation and depletion of the natural resources by the warring parties and destruction of the nation's infrastructures. The Liberian warlords saw the war as an opportunity to exploit the natural resources and enrich themselves. Liberia suffered brain drain as majority of the most skilled and educated people either fled the country or got killed. The pre-war illiteracy rate of about 76% has been further worsened by the war, which rudely terminated the education of many youths and kept many more out of school and placed them in the fields of battle as child-fighters (Aboagye, 1999).

By the end of the hostilities, Liberia's natural resources have been exploited and depreciated and the economy collapsed. The collapse of the economy reinforced a comprehensive destruction of the Liberian infrastructure. Basic amenities such as electricity, water supply and medical

services were already broken down and many Liberians have come to depend on international relief for their subsistence. The energy source of electric power supplies was destroyed and wood and charcoal became domestic energy sources for Liberians. The reliance on fuel wood and charcoal also has a deteriorating effect on the Liberian forest.

On the religious front, Liberia faces the challenge of uniting the majority Christian population with the minority Muslim population. The war deepened the mistrust between the Christians and Muslims in the country and this has become a source of sporadic skirmishes between the two in the north of the country. Moreover, there is a high moral decadent and increased idolatry in Liberia. It has weakened Christian moral values and made Liberia a fresh mission field.

Currently, the civil violence has ended and Liberia has a democratically elected government. But post-war Liberia faces the challenge of reconciliation, high level of illiteracy, unemployment, high degree of corruption, security risk, poverty, judiciary meltdown, idolatry, and all forms of immorality.

Intervention Strategies

Many strategies were used in dealing with the Liberian conflict. These included mediation, dialogue and negotiations and military intervention. But when mediation, dialogue and negotiations could not hold military intervention strategy became dominant.

In the early 1990, when the Liberian civil war intensified and brutal without the sign of direct international intervention, the Inter-Faith Mediation

Committee built on the initial peace efforts of the Christian Council of Liberia and lobbied for local and international support for the cessation of hostility and political stability. ECOWAS took up the challenge to intervene and set up a Five-Member Consultative Group on Liberia designated as the Standing Mediation Committee (SMC) on May 30, 1990 comprising Nigeria, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, and Sierra Leone, leading to the formation of ECOMOG with military contingents initially drawn from the member states of the SMC led by Nigeria (Aboagye, 1999). It later included small contingents from elsewhere including Tanzania and Uganda. The ECOWAS peacekeeping force landed in Monrovia on August 24, 1990. The peacekeepers were militarily resisted by Taylor and were drawn into the battle, thus changing their nature of operation from peacekeeping force to peace enforcement. This eventually led ECOMOG to use sophisticated weapons and air raid to seduce the Taylor's forces.

A Liberian National Conference was convened in Banjul August 27-31 under the auspices of ECOWAS resulting in the establishment of an interim government without the involvement of the main rebel faction, the NPFL. Dr. Amos Sawyer was elected interim President with Ronald Diggs, a representative of the Liberian Council of Churches, as vice-President for the Interim Government of National Unity (IGNU). This government was installed on 22 November 1990. Aboagye (1999) was right when he argued that ECOWAS' action was a clear deviation from its own peace plan which called for the formation of an interim government determined by all parties to the conflict. The process was flawed by the absence of the NPFL.

Unfolding events of the Liberian conflict and the conduct of the ECOMOG operation in response to these events resulted in the deployment of a United Nations Observer Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in 1993. On May 7, 2001, the UN Security Council imposed a ban on the export of diamonds from Liberia and placed travel ban on senior government officials and their spouses. The existing 1992 arms embargo was tightened and provision of military training to the Taylor's government was banned. These sanctions were renewed in 2002 (Adebajo, 2004.).

Generally, ECOWAS military intervention sought for ceasefire and cessation of hostilities, the establishment of an interim government, disarmament and encampment, rehabilitation and re-integration of all combatants, holding of general and presidential elections, reconstruction and re-training of the Liberian Army and security forces by ECOMOG as the framework of peace in Liberia (Armon & Carl, 1996).

As noted in chapter one, more than fourteen peace accords were acceded and five different interim governments were established at different times. On July 19, 1997 the general elections which brought Charles Taylor to power were held following Abuja agreements of 19th August 1995 and 17th August 1996 which resulted in the greatest level of disarmament, demobilization, and re-habilitation plan since 1990. But all of these did not bring lasting peace to Liberia because of the failure of the parties to fully and timely implement the peace agreements. ECOMOG untimely withdrew from Liberia in 1999 following pressure from President Taylor whose intension was to have complete state control.

The war resurfaced when two other rebel factions LURD and MODEL emerged in 1999 and 2003 to unseat Taylor resulting in massive atrocities and the exit of Charles Taylor from Liberia in 2003. The United Nations Peacekeeping Force took over peacekeeping mission in Liberia in 2003 with troops from African Countries, and Asia. Hostilities ended and successful general and presidential elections which brought Madam Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf to power followed in 2005. But the deep wounds created by the war and the psycho-social trauma that followed remain a challenge.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Liberia (TRC)

In a quest to foster peace and reconciliation in post-war Liberia, the Liberian government established the Liberian TRC in 2005 and its commissioners (chaired by Cllr. Jerome J Verdier, Sr, a member of the Lutheran Church in Liberia) were inducted into office on February 20, 2006 to promote peace, unity, security and reconciliation in post-war Liberia. The Liberian TRC was mandated to investigate and determine responsibility for egregious domestic crimes, gross violations of human rights and serious humanitarian law violations as well as to examine the root causes of the Liberian conflict and to recommend measures to ensure that truth, justice and reconciliation become permanent features of Liberia's socio-economic, political, legal and cultural landscape (The TRC of Liberia, 2009). In this sense, Liberia adopted the past-present-future approach to post-war peacebuilding. Despite the work of the TRC, reconciliation is still a challenge.

Many Liberians have lost faith in the TRC and raised doubt on its capability to bring about reconciliation in post-war Liberia. Thirty-four of the fifty respondents interviewed were of the view that the TRC is powerless because its work has been politicized and undermined by the government of Liberia. They explained that the government which is supposed to implement the recommendations of the TRC opposes the very truth and justice that are required for reconciliation. Therefore, the work of the TRC has become a national formality. They raised doubt of how the findings and recommendations of the TRC could be implemented.

Others indicated that the TRC is faulty because the starting point of their investigation is wrong. They argued that it would have been helpful if the work of the TRC could deal with crimes committed from 1822 to 2003 instead of 1979 to 2003. They also indicated that the TRC lacks the moral authority and integrity for the task of reconciliation, citing division among members of the TRC as the basis for their judgment. The division among members of the TRC as cited by some Liberians could be attributed to a high level of political maneuvers by politicians and stakeholders who fear the outcome of the TRC. It could also be based on member's personal interest in the political drama of Liberia.

The TRC (2009) has received constant criticism from members of both the Executive and the Legislative branches of the Liberian government. President Johnson-Sirleaf stated that the TRC established to be a healing process "has also run into problems because of lack of honesty, accusations, even division within the commission itself. All of that have taken away from

the reconciliation goals. . .” (Elavanalthoduka, M. & Washington, J. W., Dec. 2008-Feb. 2009).

The members of Parliament interviewed shared similar sentiment. They also described the TRC as faulty, lacking the moral authority to reconcile Liberians. Leading members of the deformed Liberian warring factions vehemently oppose the TRC. Some have vowed they will not appear before it. Examples include Prince Johnson, leader of the deformed INPFL rebel faction and Senior Senator of Nimba County and George Dwell of the deformed LPC rebel faction and former speaker of the National Transitional Legislative Assembly.

These are indications that the Liberian TRC is in a serious jeopardy and it will only function effectively with the backing of a reputable international body like the UN, to sanction the implementation of its recommendations. Thus, it however appears that the political approaches to peacebuilding in Liberia are far from fostering genuine reconciliation in Liberia and the TRC is certainly not building peace.

The implication of the views on the TRC is that Liberians need something more than the TRC to fill the vacuum that has been created as a result of mistrust in the political provision for post-war peacebuilding. Liberians would respect an institution they can trust. The TRC is time bond and therefore it is not a sustainable process. Since peacebuilding is a continue process, it needs a programme that will continue longer enough to achieve lasting peace.

The problem of the TRC, among other things, has left Liberia with a fragile peace. The fragility is characterized by insecurity, corruption and

injustice among others. The UN holds the view that the current peace in Liberia is fragile due to the problems of reconciliation, insecurity, social injustice, among others (Elavanalthoduka & Washington, Dec. 2008-Feb. 2009). President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf also affirmed the fragility of the peace in Liberia despite relative progress made. She cited the challenges of reconciliation, ethnic problems, land disputes, armed robbery and insecurity as prevailing problems (Elavanalthoduka & Washington, Dec.2008-Feb. 2009).

With the level of insecurity in Liberia and the UNMIL's action of cutting down the UN peacekeeping force in Liberia, the Liberian population is worried and uncertain of the security of the country when UN peacekeeping troops completely pull out of Liberia. This fear is based on the experience of the dirty bloodbath that followed when ECOMOG peacekeeping troops withdrew from Liberia in 1999. In the midst of these, the Lutheran Church in is determined to foster sustainable peace in Liberia.

History of the Lutheran Church in Liberia (LCL)

This study is more interested in the peacebuilding work of the LCL in fostering sustainable peace in Liberia. Therefore, it is necessary to look at the history of the Lutheran Church and its involvement in the post-war peacebuilding process in Liberia.

The Lutheran Church in Liberia is outstanding in its post-war peacebuilding programme in Liberia. To evaluate its peacebuilding programme a historical sketch of the church is vital. However, the Church does not have any published written document but a pamphlet giving information about the Church and the ten years anniversary celebration

material of its trauma healing and reconciliation programme served as authentic documents on the church and its programmes. These documents and interviews held with some of the leaders of the church, and participant observation were key sources of information for this section.

The Lutheran Church in Liberia (LCL) is the fruit of the Lutheran Mission in Liberia. According to Guannu (2000), the church was established in 1860 by Morris Officer, an American Missionary of the Lutheran Mission in Liberia (LML). The mission started with school for boys and girls at Muhlenberg, a site forty miles from the coastal city of Monrovia on the bank of the St. Paul River. The mission work was concentrated in rural central and north-western Liberia mainly among the Kpelle and Lorma ethnic groups. It established a literacy programme in 1948 and translated the Bible into Kpelle and Lorma to enable the indigenous people read the Bible in their mother tongues.

The church under-went a three-stage transformation from a mission to a national church. From 1860 to 1947, the operation was known as the American Lutheran Mission in Liberia under the leadership of the missionaries. It metamorphosed and became the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia from 1947 to 1965. It finally became a national church under indigenous Liberian leadership and took the name the Lutheran Church in Liberia on January 6, 1965 with Rt. Rev. Roland J. Payne as its first Bishop. The Rt. Rev. Roland Diggs was the second Bishop of the Lutheran Church in Liberia and he played a vital role in the Liberian peace process. He served as Vice President in the Interim Government of National Unity headed by Dr. Amos Sawyer. The Rt. Rev. Harris Sumoward is its third and current Bishop.

The vision of the Lutheran Church in Liberia is “to make Christ known to all people through discipleship, training and service rendering thereby providing reconciliation through proclaiming and demonstrating the redemptive and transforming love of Jesus Christ” (Pamphlet of the LCL, n.d.). Its purpose is “to exhort, serve the body of Christ and humanity through the all-sufficient grace of God, and to also advance a biblical standard of living” (Pamphlet of the LCL, n.d.).

The LCL currently has about seventy-five thousand members, seventy ordained Pastors, one hundred and twelve ordained deacons and deaconesses, two mission fields, forty-six Parishes with over fifty congregations and about two hundred preaching points in fourteen of the fifteen counties of Liberia. It has also established itself in Guinea. The Church is in partnership with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the Oldest Church of Sweden, the Danish Evangelical Mission in Denmark and the Lutheran Church of Bavaria, Germany.

The Church has functional and leading educational institutions in Liberia which include the Lutheran Training Institute, and the Zorzor Lutheran Elementary, Junior and Senior High School in Lofa County. It also has two hospitals, the Phebe Hospital which runs the Phebe Hospital School of Nursing in Suakoko, Bong County, and the Curran Lutheran Hospital in Zorzor, Lofa County. The Phebe Hospital is one of the leading hospitals in Liberia which provided immense humanitarian services during the civil war.

The Church currently runs a trauma healing and reconciliation programme (THRP), an HIV/AIDS programme, a development service (Lutheran Development Service) and a Handicapped and Disable Ministry.

Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme

The Lutheran Church in Liberia started the trauma healing and reconciliation work in 1991 when the Church began to train its Pastors, lay leaders and health workers in collaboration with the Christian Health Association of Liberia (CHAL). It was formerly established and named “Trauma Healing and Peacebuilding Programme” (THPBP) in 1992. In the same year, the THPBP began to work with Liberian refugees in Guinea, Sierra Leone, and La Cote d’Ivoire and extended to Ghana in 1993. It trained pastors, refugee community leaders and health workers in trauma healing, counselling, reconciliation and peacebuilding. According to their Tenth Anniversary report, over four hundred and fifty persons including refugee community leaders, pastors, and nurses were trained in the Ivorian cities/towns of Danane, Man, Tabou and Jouan Hounein in 1992. In 1995, the Lutheran Church invited the Lutheran World Federation/World Service (LWF/WS) to join in the implantation of the work. With the help of the LWF/WS, the Church vigorously expanded THPBP’s activities in Liberia, La Cote d’Ivoire, Guinea and Ghana. This partnership resulted in the establishment of the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme in 1998. THRP has three departments, administration, training department and resource department.

The Church of Sweden is the international partner and sole sponsor of the LCL-THRP in Liberia. It has local partners which include the Liberian United to Serve Humanity (LUSH), National Security Network for Peacebuilding (NSNP), Liberia Female Law Enforcement Association (LIFLEA), CHAL, and the Inter-religious Council of Liberia. Others are New African Research Development Agency (NARDA), S. Edward Peal

Counselling Centre of the United Methodist Church, Jesuit Relief Services (JRS), West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), and Peacebuilding Resource Centre (PBRC). The defunct National Reconciliation and Reunification Commission was also one of its partners.

Aims and Objectives of THRP

The main objectives of the trauma healing and reconciliation programme include:

- a. To help foster sustainable peace and reconciliation in Liberia
- b. To address the psycho-social problems of the traumatized Liberians
- c. To help prevent the resurgence of further bloodshed
- d. To Institutionalize peace building in the security sector
- e. To establish a peace resource centre

To help meet its objectives THRP focuses on four major areas: Security sector reform, promoting and strengthening peace at the community level, developing and strengthening peacebuilding capacities of leaders and lay leaders within Lutheran Church in Liberia, and information sharing (networking).

In the area of security sector reform, the programme trains security personnel in the areas of conflict management, trauma healing and reconciliation as means of transforming and equipping the security agencies in Liberia. According to their 2008 tenth anniversary report, THRP has conducted such trainings for security personnel in ten counties (regions) of Liberia, Sano, River Cess, Bong, Montserrado, Margibi, Maryland, Grand Kru, Grand Gedeh, Grand Bassa and Nimba Counties. Those who have

benefited from these trainings include personnel of the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization (BIN), Liberia National Police (LNP), National Security Agency (NSA), Ministry of National Security (MNS), Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI), the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), Special Security Service (SSS), Liberia National Fire Service (LNFS), the Monrovia City Police (MCP), and the defunct Anti-Terrorist Unity (ATU) of Charles Taylor.

The researcher had the opportunity to personally meet with some of the security personnel from different security agencies who have benefited from the training and are now part of the programme, on the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation stakeholders conference held in Totota, Bong County, Liberia from the 21st -24th of April 2009.

To promote and strengthen peace at the community level, the programme engages in trauma counselling and reconciliation programme at the community level. It therefore trains volunteer community members, leaders, and church leaders to enable them participate in the process of reintegration, reconciliation and peacebuilding (Tenth Anniversary Report, 2008). According to the Coordinator of the programme, more than fifty Community Based Organisations (CBOs) have received trainings and more than three thousand persons have benefited from the CBO and collaborative workshops and trainings. The programme organized community forum where community members meet openly to share their experiences with one another for the purpose of facilitating the process of forgiveness, reconciliation, and relationship building among community dwellers.

According to THRP's tenth anniversary report, the programme catered for the psycho-social needs of Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) and participated in the 2005 disarmament programme in Liberia. Classes were conducted for ex-combatants focusing on peace and human rights, trauma counselling, peace building and civic education. THRP also trains leaders and lay persons of the Lutheran Church in the areas of conflict management, trauma healing and reconciliation to address the post-war challenges in their places of assignment.

HIV/AIDS Programme

The Lutheran Church started this programme in 2001 based on the rapid increase of the HIV/AIDS pandemic as a result of the war in Liberia. The programme is in partnership with the National AIDS control programme in Liberia and the Pan-African Christian Aids Network; and it runs testing and counselling programme across religious and ethnic lines. It has its headquarters in Monrovia with a functional centre each in seven of the fifteen counties in Liberia.

The programme does not encamp HIV/AIDS patients. Accordingly, this is done to avoid stigmatization and discrimination. However, it provides its patients with food, drugs and clothing on a monthly basis. It has, in some ways, helped to restore hope to many hopeless HIV/AIDS patients in the country. The centres visited were well equipped in terms of facilities, medical equipment, and trained personnel. Patients expressed their happiness about the programme and indicated that they have found meaning to life through the programme. However, the Lutheran HIV/AIDS programme operates outside

of the local churches. There is no HIV/AIDS office or department in the local churches of the Lutheran Church in Liberia. This (for them) is meant to encourage people from all walks of life to feel free and make use of the facilities.

The Lutheran Church in Liberia has a unique history for HIV/AIDS in Liberia. Notably, HIV/AIDS was first discovered in Liberia in 1986 by the Curran Lutheran Hospital in Liberia. This means the disease was discovered four years prior to the Liberian civil war. However, the spread of the disease experienced rapid increase during the war. The war was characterized by rape and sexual immorality. In the absence of HIV/AIDS awareness and sex education, the spread of the virus was obviously uncontrollable. Hardship and poverty increased the level of sexual immorality in Liberia as women and young girls gave their bodies in return for money, food and security in their struggle for survival. Liberia experienced the infiltrations of lots of foreigners and foreign forces, some of whom might have contributed to the spread of the disease since most of them had the dollar power. For instance, troops were drawn from Uganda and Tanzania to join the ECOMOG peacekeeping force in Liberia. Until now Uganda was known for its high rate of HIV/AIDS in Africa. UN peacekeeping troops were also drawn from different countries and continents to participate in the peacebuilding process in Liberia.

Lutheran Development Service in Liberia (LDS-Liberia)

LDS-Liberia is the development arm of the Lutheran Church in Liberia established in January 2002 in collaboration with the Lutheran World

Federation, Department for World Service Liberia Programme. It was established as a transitional organization expected to take over the activities of the Lutheran World Federation, Department for World Service in Liberia. It was established in the wake of infrastructure depletion and socio-economic challenges that threatened human existence in Liberia as a result of the protracted and devastating Liberian civil war.

LDS-Liberia is a semi-autonomous Lutheran NGO envisioned to carry out a highly quality wholistic development programme with emphasis on grass-root development. It exists to help support the needy and to actively work for the fulfilment of basic human needs irrespective of religion, race, ethnic origin, beliefs or political affiliation. It sets as its goal to contribute to the improvement in the living standard of rural and poor population in Liberia. LDS-Liberia undertakes projects aimed at a wholistic sustainable development based on Christian principles and it works with people to fulfil their basic needs in health, food security, small business development and other grass-root level community initiatives. According to the Director, the programme uses existing local knowledge including socio-cultural elements that are useful to development activities; it supports and promotes when possible the Lutheran Church in Liberia in its human Right advocacy and community peacebuilding through the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme as well as HIV/AIDS activities.

Currently, LDS-Liberia has four major areas of concentration: agriculture and food security, infrastructure construction and rehabilitation, micro-credit for empowerment, and capacity building and skill training. LDS-Liberia is operating in two districts each of Bong and Lofa Counties: Sanoyea

and Zota Districts in Bong County and Salayea and Zorzor Districts in Lofa County. This programme is helping to empower people and community in these districts to meet their basic human needs and to help them to be relevant in society. The programme provides agricultural tools and seeds for farming and cattle for cattle farmers. It also gives allowances to farmers as an encouragement for them to produce food for personal consumption and commercial purposes. The programme also promotes community development projects, which bring communities together at district level.

Conclusion

The Liberian civil war has its deep root in the political struggle between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous population. This unresolved past resulted in the 1980 bloody coup, which eventually paved the way for the 14-year civil war. The Liberian civil war was marked by atrocities and gross human right violations. With a great need for sustainable peace, the Lutheran Church in Liberia is determined to respond to the post-war situation in the country.

CHAPTER FOUR
PEACEBUILDING IN POSTWAR LIBERIA: A PRACTICAL
APPROACH

Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the data collected from the field research. The field research was conducted in Liberia with the focus of providing a theological appraisal of the peacebuilding work of the Lutheran Church in Liberia. After 14-year armed conflict there is no doubt that there are a lot more to be done in relation to reconciliation and sustainable peacebuilding in Liberia. The civil war has widened the ethnic division in the country and inflicted deep wounds that need to be healed. The current peace in the country is fragile. The Liberian TRC has failed to bring sustainable peace in Liberia. However, the Lutheran Church in Liberia is engaged in post-war peacebuilding, and it is making some impact in Liberia at the community level.

The Lutheran Church and Post-war Peacebuilding in Liberia

The six selected leaders of the Lutheran Church were interviewed to find out the role of the Lutheran Church in the post-war peacebuilding process in Liberia. On the question of whether the Church was involved in any form of post-war peacebuilding, all the leaders interviewed answered affirmatively.

This was also attested to by other non-Lutheran respondents. The Church's action is consistent with 2 Corinthians 5:18, 19 which provides a theological impetus for Christian peacebuilding.

As to the practical steps the Lutheran Church has taken to facilitate peace and reconciliation in the country, the leaders disclosed that they have three programmes running in the country which are practical steps in addressing post-war situation. These three enumerated were the Lutheran Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme (THRP), HIV/AIDS Testing and Counselling Programme, and the Lutheran Development Service in Liberia (LDS-Liberia). They however, stated that the THRP is their major peacebuilding agency with nationwide coverage and impact. Leaders of these agencies were also interviewed to find out about these agencies and information gathered from the selected Church leaders and leaders within their peacebuilding agencies are featured in this work. According to the leaders interviewed, the Lutheran Church started the THRP to respond to the disunity, animosity, ethnic division, and psycho-social wounds caused by the protracted Liberian civil war.

The Scope of the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme

On the question of the scope of the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme, the leaders interviewed explained that the programme is intended for the whole of Liberia and it is operational in almost all of the counties (regions). They indicated that the programme has influenced and impacted people in all of the fifteen political sub-divisions in Liberia and it has representative groups in those counties, with the exception of River Cess.

It was, however, discovered that THRP's presence and operation in the other counties is not as strong as it is in part of Montserrado, Bong, Lofa and Nimba Counties. On the stakeholder conference held from April 21-24, 2009 in Totota, Bong County, many of the participants from the other counties complained of how their regions have been isolated and therefore operation in those areas has been very slow. The Coordinator of the programme attributed this to the lack of adequate financial resource and man-power.

Motivation

On the question of what motivated leaders of the Lutheran Church in Liberia to establish the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme, the Special Assistant to the Lutheran Bishop explained that the church was motivated by the need for peace and reconciliation and the church's desire to contribute to societal healing for the Christian Church is God's agent for reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19). He added that the Church was moved by the fact that the Christian Church has a significant role to play in peacebuilding. According to him, the goal of THRP is to contribute to the peacebuilding process in Liberia through the strengthening of community and civic structures in Liberia. The programme seeks to address the psycho-social problems of people affected by the Liberian civil war with the aim of helping to build sustainable peace in post-war Liberia. He stated that the Lutheran Church is of the view that it is only through genuine reconciliation that sustainable peace can be achieved in Liberia and that the church, as God's agent of reconciliation in the world, has a major role to play in reconciling divided societies. The Lutheran leaders interviewed were unanimous on this

position and they pointed out from the Bible that reconciliation is a centre theme in Christian theology (2 Corinthians 5:18-21; Romans 11:15; Matthew 5:9; 24).

The motivational factors for the church's involvement in peacebuilding as expressed by the Lutheran leaders indicate that they have an understanding of the church's theological and social responsibilities to society. The church is called to be responsive to the circumstances of the society and the people to whom it ministers (Psalm 122:6; 2 Corinthians 5:18, 10). Therefore, the church has a role to play in reducing or eliminating the root causes of open violence, reconciling people and effecting peace. Peacebuilding and reconciliation are mandates from God and not merely an option for the Christian church. The biblical provision is quite clear: "Now all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. . . ." (2 Corinthians 5:18, 19 NKJV). The Church can fulfil the reconciliatory obligation in societies devastated by civil war by preparing the ground and cultivating the spirit of social reconciliation.

Strategy

On the question of the kind of strategy adopted in this programme, the Coordinator asserted that the Lutheran Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme adopts a four-fold strategy. This was in reference to the THRP's four major areas of focus discussed earlier: security sector reform, promoting and strengthening reconciliation and peace at the community level (community-based approach), capacity building, and information sharing (networking). He added that THRP uses mediation as a means to settle

disputes between rival parties. According to the Coordinator, the programme creates a forum where community members meet openly to share their experiences with one another for the purpose of facilitating the process of forgiveness, reconciliation, and relationship building among community members.

Security sector reform, community-based peacebuilding and capacity building for peace builders are relevant approaches when they are adequately implemented in post-war situation. The mediation approach to settling disputes is a conciliation response which is commanded by God (Matthew 18:16). The community forum that facilitates the process of reconciliation is a positive problem-solving approach that helps in peacebuilding process. A necessary condition for peace is for people to really learn about one another, to start to understand, appreciate and accept one another. Interaction among community members helps remove mistrust and enhances unity.

The community-based peacebuilding is an appropriate incarnational approach to peace and reconciliation. It brings peacebuilding to the door steps of the people and involves the people in the process. It requires identifying with the people and using their culture and worldview as a medium to addressing painful issues in their existential context. You cannot reconcile people from a distance. For Jesus Christ to concretize the love of God and reconcile humanity to God he incarnated into the human society of his days (John 1:1-14).

Impact of Lutheran Peacebuilding Work

The Lutheran Church leaders were asked about the impact of their peacebuilding programme in Liberia. The respondents indicated that their work has brought transformation to the lives of many Liberians in Liberia and outside Liberia. They asserted that through the trauma healing and reconciliation programmes, they have trained and empowered many Liberians including security personnel who now settle disputes and serve as community counsellors in various communities in Liberia. They also explained that the trauma healing and reconciliation programme networked and collaborated with the Liberian Women for Mass Action for Peace which led to the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) in Accra in 2003. Moreover, the six leaders interviewed indicated that their HIV/AIDS programme and the development service programme are also, in a way, helping to restore hope to many people in Liberia.

To assess what the Lutheran leaders have said about the impact of the Lutheran peacebuilding work in Liberia, five major questions were posed to forty-four of the fifty respondents excluding the Lutheran leaders.

Knowledge and View

To test respondents' knowledge about the Lutheran peacebuilding programme in Liberia, question one was asked to ascertain whether or not respondents were aware of the Lutheran peacebuilding programme. Forty of the forty-four respondents ((91%) responded affirmatively. Twenty-five out of these forty respondents said that they got to know about the programme through the ongoing trauma healing and reconciliation programme, which

have brought some transformation in their communities. Six got to know about the programme through church membership. Five persons said they got to know about the programme through the radio while four expressed knowledge about it through friends who are participants of the programme.

However, two of the forty-four respondents (6%) denied any knowledge of the programme while two acknowledged that they have heard about the programme but did not know much about it. It must also be noted that these last four respondents are full members of the Lutheran Church in Liberia who are aware of the programme. But they were indifferent because of their dissatisfaction with the head office of the Lutheran Church. For instance, they indicated that the head office was insensitive to their needs. Thus, their responses were influenced by their personal dissatisfaction with the operation of the head office.

Leaders of the Lutheran Church contacted confirmed there is a leadership problem in the church. They indicated that there are some who oppose the present bishop of the church. It could then mean that the four, two of whom denied any knowledge of the programme as well as the two who did not know much about the Lutheran peacebuilding programme fall within that category. It could also be that local Churches of the Lutheran Church in Liberia which seem to oppose the bishop do not benefit much from the national head office, which may have informed responses of the four. This is a common phenomenon in human institutions.

Nevertheless, the responses indicate that majority of the respondents have experiential knowledge about the Lutheran peacebuilding programme in

Liberia by virtue of its positive effect in their community while some demonstrated superficial knowledge of the programme.

On the impact of the Lutheran peacebuilding work in Liberia, thirty-one of the forty-four respondents indicated that the peacebuilding programme of the Lutheran Church in Liberia has tremendously contributed to peace and reconciliation in their communities. In the view of these respondents the Lutheran Church is immensely contributing to Liberia post-war peacebuilding.

Twenty of these thirty-one respondents stated that THRP has reconciled hostile communities and families in parts of the country. Some indicated that THRP successfully facilitated dialogue and reconciliation between the Mandingo and Gio-Mano ethnic groups in some communities in Nimba County. They also mentioned that the programme has helped settle disputes between some members of the Mandingo and Loma ethnic groups in parts of Lofa County. These ethnic groups have been living together peacefully in the respective counties but they became bitter enemies during the war.

Six indicated that through the programme, some rebels who committed brutality against their own people during the war have reconciled with those they offended and restored into their respective communities. They cited four cases in Lofa and Bong. They also made reference to the impact of the Lutheran HIV/AIDS in Monrovia, and the Lutheran Development Service in Bong and Lofa. Five expressed that they have personally benefited from THRP's capacity building programme and were involved in community peacebuilding in their communities.

However, nine of the forty-four respondents acknowledged positive impact of the programme but could not be emphatic since their knowledge about the LCL's peacebuilding work was based on radio and friends.

Four of the forty-four respondents also said they did not know much about the Lutheran peacebuilding work in Liberia therefore they could not tell whether or not it is making impact. Interestingly, these four persons are full members of the Lutheran Church in Liberia who expressed dissatisfaction with the head office of the Lutheran Church. The impression they created was that they did not want to associate themselves with whatever the Lutheran Bishop is doing in Liberia. Their persistent action is an indication that the Lutheran Church itself has a problem on hand to deal with and if they do not address the perceived issues of the aggrieved party in their rank and file, it will derail their peacebuilding effort.

Nevertheless, the responses and personal observation show that the Lutheran post-war peacebuilding initiative is making some significant impact at the community level. The testimonies of security personnel, ex-combatants and people in the communities where the Lutheran work is actively concentrated attested to this fact. Here are some of the testimonies captured from participants of the four-day THRP stakeholders conference attended in Bong County, April 21-24, 2009.

The work of the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme has transformed my life Before attending the THRP TOT workshop in 2006, I had negative perception about those who held arms during the war but with THRP training, my perception has changed. I am now a peace builder in my place of work and residence. The programme has

been very fruitful and there is a need for continuation to enhance the post-war peace process.

This was a testimony of a participant, a trainer of trainers (TOT), from Bong County, Central Liberia. He was excited about the Lutheran trauma healing programme. A female participant from Lofa County also testifies that:

After the 2005 elections post-electoral violent conflict erupted in Lofa which had the people in the county living in fears. THRP intervened and brought all the stakeholders in the conflict to a dialogue and settled the conflict.

A male security personnel also testified that the THRP TOT programme has helped the security. It has enabled the security network to solve problems for civilians peacefully without going to the court; and it has helped to solve problems within the communities and between some members of the joint security. A participant from Gbarpolu County also testified: “We were able to use the knowledge and skills from THRP trainings to resolve the conflict between Garma, Zuo and Garyama communities which have been violent to each other in our county since the end of the civil war.”

This type of conflict is currently dominant in Liberia as people who fought on the side of different factions from the same community are forced to live together in the same community or region after the war. They still perceived each other as enemies. Therefore peace workshop and a reconciliation driven dialogue are of great necessity for such a situation.

Another participant testified that the Lutheran development service has brought some level of socio-economic transformation for farmers and small

scale business people in Salayea District, Lofa County. He expressed the wish that the programme will expand in other parts of the county.

A female participant from Bomi County testified that THRP TOT training has equipped their organization with peace facilitating and creative skills and techniques in resolving conflicts at the community level. Another participant from Grand Cape Mount County testified of the impact of THRP in his county:

THRP has equipped us and we were able to help settle dispute between the conflicting youths in Sinje Township and helped structure their youth leadership. As a result of THRP intervention in Sinje, we now have religious coexistence in Sinje and the Muslims have allowed churches to be built in their strongholds. In Kanta Town, conflict existed among the community leaders that stopped a construction of a Mosque, but with the intervention of THRP, the conflict was resolved and the Mosque has been constructed.

One respondent testified that prior to THRP's peace workshops and community-based counselling activities in their region, he had a negative perception about life and he had wanted to seek for retribution against those who killed his parents and relatives during the war. But through the counselling work of THRP, he has forgiven and reconciled with his offenders and they now relate cordially with each other.

These responses are indications that the Lutheran Church is making tremendous impact at the community level in post-war Liberia. In view of the foregoing, the Lutheran Church's trauma healing and reconciliation programme, HIV/AIDS testing and counselling programme, and the LDS-

Liberia are practical and theological church responses to the Liberian post-war situation. The effort of the Lutheran Church is in line with the theological concept of shalom. In reference to Paula Clifford's statement as captured by Ndawula (2008):

The object of theology is God's own mystery, the God of revelation. Theology sees everything with God's eyes and theology's proper perspective is the faith perspective. While the mystery of God is the formal object of theology, its material object is everything: God and the world, the church and society (p. 84).

This theological concept provides the impetus for the Christian church to respond to social issues both theologically and practically and the Lutheran Church in Liberia has embarked on this path.

Trauma healing and reconciliation is a vital need to help heal the psycho-social wounds and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) of Liberians who have suffered all sort of horrible atrocities. The psycho-social effects that result from protracted civil conflicts are more harmful as compared to the physical damage of the war itself. It is therefore necessary to address the psycho-social impacts of the war in addition to physical reconstruction and relief programme. This programme is somehow in line with the theological concept of shalom (peace with God, peace with oneself, peace with one's neighbours, and peace with one's environment). THRP has touched lives of people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.

However, the programme does not employ the use of the word of God (the Bible). In response to whether THRP uses the Word of God in its peacebuilding activities, LCL leaders interviewed were unanimous on the fact

that THRP does not necessarily use the Bible as a tool for trauma healing and peacebuilding in order to allow the free participation of people from different religious backgrounds and persuasions. This is consistent with the position of the Lutheran Church. The church has stated that:

This work should be looked upon as a contribution of the church to the Liberian people and society in a crucial time; it was not to be considered as an evangelistic activity aimed at converting non-Christians or recruiting new members (Trauma healing and reconciliation programme: Tenth anniversary report, 2008, p. 24).

Whatever the intention of the church maybe, a peripheral approach to the word of God is self-contradictory. The position of the Lutheran Church is an apparent contradiction to its vision and purpose. As indicated earlier in this work, the church envisioned “to make Christ known to all people through discipleship, training and service rendering thereby providing reconciliation through proclaiming and demonstrating the redemptive and transforming love of Jesus Christ,” and its purpose is “to exhort, serve the body of Christ ..., and to also advance a biblical standard of living” (Pamphlet of the LCL, n.d., pp. 2, 3).

LCL envisioned to make Christ known to all people through three things: discipleship, training, and service rendering. Disciple-making involves teaching, preaching, training, and helping people to reconcile with God and community. The second portion of the vision aims at providing reconciliation through two things: proclaiming and demonstrating the redemptive love of God. Service rendering, proclaiming and demonstrating the redemptive love of God are inseparable with disciple-making. This vision is an embodiment

of the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20), and it is theologically sound. It implies that the LCL bases its theology and practice on the word of God. The purpose of the Lutheran Church implies that the church values Christ and the word of God as the means of providing the biblical standard of living as inscribed in the word of God.

There is no doubt that the vision and purpose of the Lutheran Church influence its desire for societal reconciliation through THRP, HIV/AIDS testing and counselling programme, and the LDS-Liberia programme. However, one would have expected the word of God to be an integral part of its programmes and activities as a genuine reflection of the church's vision and purpose.

The Bible reveals the Triune God to humanity and it prescribes the theological content and framework for reconciliation and Christian social responsibilities (Matthew 18: 15-18; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Luke 4:18-19; 10:5, 9).

Thus, sidelining the word of God in this church-initiated post-war peacebuilding programme undermines LCL's core objective of helping to foster peace and reconciliation in Liberia. In the Christian religious thought, reconciliation is "impossible without God playing the central role and Christ being the means" (Darko, 2004, p. 33). Reconciliation is central to both the Christian and African traditions. Asamoah-Gyadu (2004) has noted that the first cord that reconciliation strikes in the African tradition is the desire to maintain a harmonious relationship with the divine, which is vital for life, good health, community wholeness, and even for the appropriation of the Christian faith. The gospel is God's message of reconciliation which can

speak to the African religio-cultural context. Any Christian response to conflict must start from the promise and principles of Christian peacebuilding enshrined in the Bible.

In the Pauline theological thought, God has given the Christian church the ministry and message of reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5:18-20), and it is in reconciliation to God that the people of the world may experience true healing and community wholeness. Therefore, the church is expected to invite believers and unbelievers to be reconciled first to God as a prerequisite for reconciliation with others. There is therefore no reason for the church to shy away from using the gospel in its social responsibilities.

A wholistic approach to peace and reconciliation is necessary if reconciliation in its true sense must be achieved in a society characterized by hatred, animosity, ethnic division, injustice, and the quest for retribution. The theological concept of shalom (peace) requires four dimensions of reconciliation, which include reconciliation with God, reconciliation with oneself, reconciliation with neighbours and the human community, and reconciliation with nature. These four dimensions depict the spiritual, personal, social and ecological dimensions of reconciliation (Assefa, 1996). It is a vertical, personal, and horizontal understanding of peace.

The spiritual dimension is the vertical dimension and it has to do with the restoration of broken relationship with God. This dimension influences the personal and horizontal dimensions. “Spiritual reconciliation spills over to the personal, from the personal to the social, and from the spiritual and the social to the ecological” (Assefa, 1996). The spiritual dimension is at the centre of the whole process of peacebuilding.

Thus, if sustainable peace must be achieved then these four dimensions have to be integrated. This is not to suggest that LCL should turn their peacebuilding programme into church planting campaign. But to emphasize the theological fact that true reconciliation finds its meaning in God's word, and the neglect of the principles of the word of God will jeopardize any church-initiated peacebuilding programme. The peacebuilding process that enables conflicting parties to reflect on the spiritual implications of their behaviour is most likely to establish a more conducive environment and atmospheric condition for the just and sustainable solutions to their conflict.

In peace negotiations, Assefa (1996) has rightly observed that conflicting parties usually come with hedonistic intention and enshrined position to blame their opponents and deny or defend their wrongdoings. Engaging them with the spiritual dimension in the peace process creates access to the more deep-seated, affective base of the parties' behaviour. It enables them to examine their own attitudes and actions critically and encourages them to accept responsibility, confess their wrongdoings, be flexible with their demands, grant and seek for forgiveness, and seek for mutual beneficial solutions to the conflict.

The wholistic approach to peacebuilding integrates theological, relevant social science and cultural techniques, and it can help initiate what Assefa (1996) referred to as "reconciliation politics," which promotes a politics of co-operation and emphasizes communal spirit of healing and wholeness instead of divisive political completion of winner takes all. The principles and values of the wholistic approach to the concept of peacebuilding touches the various dimensions of human life and nature:

integration between the spiritual, psychological, intellectual, and socio-economic dimensions on one hand and harmony between the individual, society and nature on the other (Assefa, 1996).

Liberians have practically lost faith and hope in their politicians and are looking to the church for inspiration and leadership. For instance, on the questions of how Liberians perceive the church and as to whether the church can foster reconciliation in Liberia, forty-two of the total fifty respondents (84%) described the Christian church as a reputable institution that can foster the needed true reconciliation in Liberia. Out of the forty-two respondents, twenty-eight persons were of the view that the Christian church, as an institution, is neutral and therefore able to foster reconciliation. Fourteen indicated that the church is the reputable body to foster true reconciliation because it has the gospel of peace which is capable of mending broken relationships. They also expressed that the Church of Liberia is the hope for sustainable peace in Liberia.

Eight of the fifty respondents (2%) expressed reservation about the church's ability to foster reconciliation in Liberia, arguing that the church itself is not united and that the church needs to first unite itself to be more prepared to foster reconciliation in Liberia. Interestingly, those who shared this reservation were Christians. This implies that they are not comfortable with the relationship that exists between the Christians denominations in Liberia.

Though eight expressed some level of reservation, the responses depict an indication that Liberians have lost confidence in a purely political approach

to peace and reconciliation and they are yearning for the church to fill the vacuum.

Respondents expressed high expectations about the role the church can play in the post-war Liberian society. Forty of the fifty respondents said that the Liberian church should rise above denominational differences and champion the national course of reconciliation while ten added that the various Christian denominations should together spread the message of peace and reconciliation, good governance, and speak against the ills in the society without political influence.

It means that the platform has been created for the church to take its appropriate role as the agent of reconciliation, using the principles of the gospel. The only critical issue, however, is how to carry out this advocacy and still be perceived as neutral. Once the church is a bit firm against political and societal ills, it is often perceived as antagonist to the power that be. However, this difficulty should not hinder the church, but it must inform its theological framework for peacebuilding in context.

The post-war situation has provided an opportunity for the church to help restore ethical values in the Liberian society. In such a situation, the church should construct a framework informed and influenced by the Christian faith, in which the ministry of reconciliation can be conducted (Magesa, 1996). A church-led peace and reconciliation may fail just as the politicians have done if the church does not use genuine principles and strategies different from the politicians.

Christianity derives its principles and values from the word of God, and it holds out hope for the whole of humanity. As Wink (1998) has rightly

indicated, the effort to heal a society racked by ethnic hatred and political oppression can be helpfully undergirded by Jesus' message of God's reign. God is a peacemaker, reconciler, counsellor and trauma healer. His word has what it takes to address socio-political, economic, cultural, psycho-social, and identity issues and to bring about unity and peace in post-war Liberia. The Bible addresses the issue of identity and projects human dignity (Genesis 1:26-27). God's word "is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12 NKJV). The rightful meaning of truth, justice, mercy, love, forgiveness, reconciliation and peace (shalom) is found in the word of God. In a "Christian" dominated society, like Liberia which for years took the path of destruction and the blood of many is crying from the ground, it is appropriate to call the nation to repentance at the same time using the word of God to give them hope and heal their wounds.

Deficiencies in the Reconciliation Programme

Though the Lutheran peacebuilding programme is making some positive impact at the community level, respondents identified some major deficiencies of the programme. They can be categorized as internal challenges.

On the question of the challenges that the Lutheran Church faces in their effort to sustainable peacebuilding, the six Lutheran leaders interviewed unanimously highlighted financial resource mobilization as their major challenge. They indicated that the three agencies (THRP, HIV/AIDS

programme, and the LDS-Liberia) are not financed by the Lutheran Church in Liberia because the church is not well resourced financially. The church depends on external sources (international organizations that are linked with the church) for financing the three agencies. According to them, most of their donors are withdrawing their financial support. As to what mechanism was being put in place to address this challenge, the respondents highlighted plans to submit project proposals to other international NGOs in and outside of Liberia for help.

This is a serious challenge to the Church because lack of funds can lead to the reduction in human resource needed to carry out the work. Another implication is that their post-war peacebuilding effort will cease should the external motivation or funding collapse. To sustain such laudable programmes the organisation needs to make effort to mobilize resources internally before soliciting support from outside for supplementation. This programme needs government support and collaboration.

On the question of what participants see as deficiencies of the Lutheran peacebuilding work in Liberia, these were the responses of the forty-four respondents (excluding the six Lutheran leaders): Ten of the forty-four respondents (23%) stated that the programme lacks effective monitoring system. By lack of effective monitoring system respondents meant the programme has no effective system in place whereby it will keep an eye on the work in the field. Respondents said that the church and the leaders of the programme do not check on or inspect the work of the volunteers who serve in various capacities in the various regions. Some serve as chairs of community peace councils, coordinators in the security agencies, regional coordinators

and field workers. According to the respondents, some of these volunteers are not actually building peace but they always attend conventions and submit reports that are not verifiable, in order to attract recognition and financial benefit.

As to what should be done to improve the programme, these respondents stated that the Lutheran Church should put an effective monitoring mechanism in place to keep an eye on what is being done on the field to enable the church to evaluate the work and correct pitfalls.

Eight respondents (18%) expressed the view that the means of recruiting volunteers is ineffective and problematic. According to them the ineffective system of recruitment of volunteers is sending wrong signals to the public. By ineffective system of recruitment respondents meant the system of selecting participants to attend national training and refresher programmes from the counties is faulty. It must be noted that those who attend these programmes and trainings serve as volunteers on the field. However, the respondents indicated that THRP's regional and local coordinators and representatives in the regions usually select their friends and relatives who do not have the passion for the work to participate in the national conferences and training programmes because of the monetary benefit of participating. Such people return and do not implement what they have acquired. These respondents suggested that THRP recruits workers who have the passion for peacebuilding and train them for the task.

Eight respondents (18%) also stated that the programme lacks direct initiatives to improving the relationship between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberians. According to them, the Lutheran peacebuilding

programme has no programme in place to engage the two groups and foster reconciliation between them. In their view, unless these two groups are reconciled, sustainable peace cannot be achieved in Liberia. They suggested that the Lutheran peacebuilding programme works toward this goal.

Six respondents (14%) expressed the church's inability to decentralize the programme. This means the church has not been able to establish functional local offices in the various regions to coordinate and supervise the work in the regions. According to the respondents, this is affecting the motivation of the volunteers working in the rural areas. In their view, decentralization will help the programme to make tremendous impact.

Six of the respondents (14%), notably members of the Lutheran Church in Liberia, cited the church's inability to reconcile its internal differences and heal the wounds of its members who have been equally traumatized by the war. These respondents suggested that the Lutheran Church should look inward before looking outward. This means that they should deal with their internal problems before addressing societal issues.

Five of the respondents (11%) also stated that the programme has not built a networking relationship among its workers on the field. According to them, this is impeding their peacebuilding activities in the rural areas. By lack of networking respondents meant the peacebuilders under the umbrella of THRP do not work as partners in community peacebuilding. Animators, trainers of trainers, and members of the various peace councils of THRP on the field are not acquainted with each other therefore do not join forces to meet the numeral post-war challenges. They, therefore, suggested that the

programme build a networking relationship between workers on the field, as means of improving the programme.

One respondent (2%) also stated that the programme has not engaged the judiciary system in the country even from the community level. They indicated the need for the programme to engage personnel of the judiciary so as to improve the justice system in Liberia. According to them this can be done by conducting seminar, workshops and training programmes among personnel of the judiciary. The view of these respondents is significant because corrupt justice system is a source of conflict and violence. When people are denied justice, they may resort to taking the law in their own hands.

These are genuine issues respondents raised, and the Lutheran Church needs to address them if the church must meet the demands of the post-war challenges in the various regions. The responses point out poor monitoring, ineffective recruiting, lack of initiatives to reconcile the Americo-Liberians and the natives, internal conflict, the issue of decentralization, poor networking relationship among field workers, and inability to engage the judiciary system as deficiencies of the programme.

The poor monitoring system, ineffective recruiting, lack of initiatives to improve ethnic relationship involving the two traditional rivals in Liberia, the issue of decentralization, and the internal problem of the Lutheran church can be considered as major deficiencies. Ineffective recruiting and lack of networking relationship among workers can be categorized under lack of monitoring. A brief discussion on the major deficiencies is therefore vital.

Monitoring

Monitoring is crucial in peacebuilding, especially in post-war situations. Without an effective monitoring mechanism, it would be difficult to measure progress and failure. It is difficult to effectively plan, organize, control and lead or direct an organisation to achieve its ultimate goal if there is no means to monitor the activities and work of the organisation.

From a theological perspective, monitoring is key in God's programme. The Scripture proves that God adore monitoring. The Creator does not leave his creation to operate on its own as a clock. He put Adam and Eve in charge of the Garden of Eden and gave them policy to guide them. Genesis 3:8-19 indicates that he did not abandon them. He maintained relationship with them.

The event of the Tower of Babel demonstrates that God monitors human activities: "But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built" (Genesis 11:5 NKJV). Monitoring presupposes a plan in place and the need to oversee it. God's divine programme from Genesis to Revelation shows that God monitors his people. God monitors his divine programme so he expects his creature (humanity) to emulate his example. The Jerusalem Council recorded in Acts chapter fifteen is an indication that the New Testament Church monitored and networked its activities. This doctrinal monitoring exhibited by the New Testament leaves an example for Christians. When a system is left to itself to work it will collapse. It must be known that Christianity eschews mediocrity and adores excellence. Therefore, whatever a Christian organisation plans to do should be done well.

It is the lack of effective monitoring and adequate recruitment policy that has resulted in recruitment malpractices in THRP's operation at the local level. The study discovered that many people participate in the programme because of the training and conference allowances they receive, and some coordinators recruit their own people just to increase their allowances. This is material-driven nepotism and it has the potential to hinder the effort of the Lutheran Church. The attitude of recruiting or participating in peacebuilding for monetary benefit brings into question the motive for involvement. The church needs to keep an eye on personnel of the trauma healing and reconciliation programme and examine their motives. The Lord Jesus Christ is concerned about people's motive for their action. In the story of the widow's mites, Jesus affirmed that God looks at the motive behind one's action. He applauded the sincerity of the widow who put two small mites (coins) in the Temple treasury and condemned the insincerity of the rich who gave out of their surplus (Mark 12:41-44).

The motive of peace-builders matters. Peacebuilding should not be based on hedonistic motive. It is not intended to solicit donor's support and enrich oneself. Peacebuilding becomes mere formality when it serves as a basis for attracting international donors' support. If the purpose for peacebuilding is profit making, then any body can get involve.

Monitoring implies the existence of coordination. If the work and activities of an organization is not well coordinated, monitoring and teamwork (networking) are impossible. Christianity is a networking religion. The Jerusalem Church and the Antioch Church were far apart geographically but there was a strong coordinated networking relationship between the two and they performed marvellously. Networking in peacebuilding implies that peace-

builders work toward a common agenda of peacebuilding, not ethnic or individual agenda. There must exist a synchronize effort that promotes synergy. The Father-Son-Holy Spirit relationship (the Trinity) provides the theological impetus for coordinated networking relationship that must exist among Christian peacemakers.

Initiatives to Improve Relationship

Six respondents indicated that THRP lacks the initiatives to reconcile the traditional rivals in Liberia, the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous people of Liberia. The respondents view is relevant because fostering reconciliation between these two groups is a necessary path to sustainable peace in Liberia. All the civil conflicts that occurred in Liberia have their root in the historical hostile relationship that exists between these two groups. Therefore, any peacebuilding effort that ignores improving the relationship between the two cannot bring the needed peace in Liberia. It is God's desire for people in a hostile relationship to reconcile and come together. Building new relationship between people who have long perceived each other as enemies, takes more than good programmes. It requires that the agent of reconciliation takes the risk to reach out across the lines of hostility. This is what the Lord Jesus did in reconciling the Jews and the Gentiles (Ephesians 2:13-16).

Decentralization

Decentralization is necessary for community peacebuilding. Theologically, it is an incarnated approach. Christianity is a decentralized

religion and anything that links with it must follow this tradition. Jesus' statement to the Samaritan woman clarifies this point:

. . . the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth . . . (John 4:21, 23 NKJV).

Decentralization takes into consideration of establishing local offices to coordinate peacebuilding effort. But it goes beyond establishing offices and organizing programmes at the local level. In relation to peacebuilding, it implies training and empowering people at the community level to build peace. A well coordinated decentralization is a good prospect for peace. Peace is genuine when people at the community level get involved in building their own peace. THRP has been able to provide training for people at the community level but the process of empowerment and coordinated supervision is lacking.

Decentralization would imply that THRP mobilizes more funds to employ more workers. Presently, THRP relies on international donors for financial and technical support; it has twenty-two employees and relies mainly on volunteers for the work. This programme, therefore, need government support and collaboration to enable it foster the needed peace in Liberia.

Internal Rivalry

The response gathered from some of the members of the Lutheran Church and confirmed by the leaders interviewed is that the church has an internal leadership rivalry. This internal problem has the potential to undermine their peacebuilding effort in Liberia. A house that is divided against itself cannot

stand (Matthew 12:25). The Church should amicably deal with its internal problems as it endeavours to build peace in society. The blind cannot lead the blind.

It was realized that THRP's work is almost non-existent in the local churches of the Lutheran Church in Liberia. Hence, the sentiment expressed by the six Lutheran members is a wake-up call for the church to encourage trauma healing and reconciliation work within the local branches of the Lutheran Church.

A major deficiency which respondents did not consider is that the Lutheran Church has not constructed a peacebuilding framework informed by the Christian faith in which to situate the ministry of reconciliation. This has been captured in the previous discussions on the THRP's position on the word of God as it relates to peacebuilding.

It was moreover discovered that LCL's peacebuilding programme and activities are adult-oriented. They have not put any programme in place to address the Post Traumatic Stress Disorder of the post-war children in Liberia. Keen attention and relevant programmes to meet the psycho-social needs of post-war children are necessary for sustainable peacebuilding and posterity.

External Challenges

Apart from the deficiencies highlighted and discussed, the church is confronted with external challenges. These include insecurity, lack of reconciliation, corruption and injustice, and land disputes that characterize the current peace in Liberia. The views of the respondents indicate that these are major limitations for the Lutheran Church in Liberia.

On the question of the current state of the peace in Liberia, forty-six of the total fifty respondents (92%) stated that the Liberian post-war peace is fragile. Fragility in the view of the respondents implies that anything can happen at any time. Three of the respondents (6%) stated that the peace in Liberia is stable and genuine. Their judgment was based on a comparison between the deplorable condition of the state of Liberia during the war and the current calm and relatively stable condition of the country.

One respondent (2%) also viewed the state of the peace as not genuine and not fragile. Not yet genuine because, in the respondent's view, a lot still needs to be done and not fragile because nobody is ready or willing to go back to war. This person took the middle of the road position with the recognition of the fact that Liberia has moved beyond a bloody hostile conflict position to a relatively peaceful state. Thus, the country has not arrived at genuine peace, but it is no more a failed state.

The responses show that majority (46 persons) of the respondents view Liberia post-war peace as fragile. On the matter of what constitutes the fragility of the peace, twelve of the forty-six persons cited the problem of insecurity and also indicated that the causes of the war have not been addressed, twelve cited lack of reconciliation, eleven cited the problems of corruption and injustice, and eleven cited the problem of increased land disputes in the country as threats to the peace in Liberia. In other words, forty-six of the respondents said the Liberian post-war peace is fragile owing to the problems of insecurity, reconciliation, corruption and injustice, and increased land disputes in the country.

Insecurity

In the respondent's view, insecurity means people are living in fear in Liberia because of security threats. They indicated that the ex-fighters are still around and there is a breakdown of law and order in the country. Therefore, violence can occur at anytime. They indicated that due to security malpractices and unprofessionalism, corruption and bribery on the part of security personnel, the security agencies are not trusted, leading to constant mob justice in the country. The respondents also explained that the presence of ex-fighters and increased armed robbery in the country are major sources of insecurity in Liberia. According to them, majority of the ex-fighters were not accepted into the new Liberian security sector. Consequently, the ex-fighters, most of whom are without jobs, have also grouped themselves in different armed gang causing havoc for citizens in the country to extent that people hardly sleep in peace in most parts of the country. These issues mentioned by respondents are major challenges for the Lutheran Church for it is somehow beyond the control of the Lutheran Church.

Insecurity is truly a threat to peace. There can be no genuine peace when there is insecurity or when people feel insecure. Furthermore, it is difficult for people who have gone through years of armed brutality to be at ease when they perceive the possibility of reverting to the state of violence. The issue regarding the new security sector as expressed by the respondents indicates that the insecurity is, to a larger extent, the result of the methodology used in the security reform programme instituted by the present government. The Johnson-Sirleaf led government dissolved the national army and the security sector to form a new national security under the security sector reform

programme. As a result of this programme majority of the deformed security forces were not considered in the new army. Perhaps this was done to bring sanity in the security forces and preserve the integrity of the national security.

However, this action appears to be causing more harm to Liberia's post-war peace process than good. To deny the ex-fighters the opportunity to serve in the new security forces without instituting substantial measures that would transform their lives and empower them to be responsible citizens is a threat to peace. Sometimes it is essential to buy peace in such situation, by either absorbing the ex-fighters into the new security and bring them under discipline or providing education and skills training for them to empower them to become relevant in society. This approach would help minimize armed robbery, insecurity and chaos in post-war society.

Lack of Reconciliation

Twelve of the forty-six respondents who viewed the Liberian post-war peace as fragile cited lack of reconciliation as an indication of fragility. By reconciliation they meant healing the wounds caused by the Liberian civil war. They expressed that the bloody civil war has ended but reconciliation has not taken effect in Liberia. There is still ethnic division and tension in the country which can easily derail the relative peace in Liberia. They cited the hostile relationship between the Lorma and the Mandingo ethnic groups in Lofa County and that of the Gio-Mano and the Mandingo in Nimba County as examples. They also expressed that Liberia is still far away from socio-economic and political reconciliations without which peace cannot be sustained.

Liberians were bitterly divided on factional and ethnic lines during the civil war. The physical war has ended but the wounds have to be healed. Without reconciliation it is difficult for people who have lived in broken and hostile relationships for years to live peacefully with each other. To reconcile is to heal the wounds by re-building the broken relationships between individuals, communities, and ethnic groups. Peace without true reconciliation is no peace. Reconciliation is the ultimate goal for any peacebuilding process. It is a journey that requires conscious effort of the peacemakers and the parties in a broken relationship. This journey must begin from a step. The platform for reconciliation has been laid in Liberia, the bloody hostility has ceased. Therefore, the process of reconciliation must begin. The view of the respondents and the reality on the ground present a clear indication that Liberia needs more attention in the area of reconciliation.

Corruption and Injustice

Eleven of the forty-six respondents indicated that the peace in Liberia is fragile because there is still high degree of corruption and injustice in the country. In relation to corruption they expressed that corruption, which is a major factor for war in Liberia, is still rampant, most especially in the institutions of state. According to them, public officials are involved in acts of malfeasance such as bribery and embezzlement of public funds. They expressed the view that Liberian government officials are only concerned about enriching themselves thereby neglecting the economic plight of the general population of the country. They expressed the fear that the

widespread corruption in the country could trigger violence if it were not checked.

Respondents viewed injustice in Liberia from two dimensions. They expressed the view that the people who committed atrocities during the war are living in the country with impunity. In their view this is an injustice to the Liberian people and it is a potential threat to peace in the country. Hence, those who committed atrocities during the war must face justice.

They also expressed that there is a high degree of injustice in the judiciary. According to them, the justice system in the country is still not devoid from political discrimination. Furthermore, those who have money commit crimes with impunity. They emphatically stated that there is no justice for the poor in post-war Liberia. The Justice system in Liberia favours those who have money. This means that the law is for those who can afford to pay.

The respondents' assessment on corruption and injustice implies that there is socio-economic and political injustice in Liberia. Corruption itself is social injustice. Respondents' view on corruption and injustice in Liberia seems to commensurate with the reality on the ground. Firstly, it is true that those who committed atrocities in Liberia are still living in and outside of Liberia with impunity with the exception of former President Charles Taylor and his son, Chucky Taylor. Charles Taylor faces charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity in The Hague for atrocities committed by the RUF rebels in Sierra Leone and Chucky is serving ninety-nine years jail sentence in the U.S.A. for the atrocities he committed in Liberia. Apart from the two, all of the Liberian war-lords and those who are responsible for gross atrocities in

Liberia have not faced justice. For instance, the TRC of Liberia (2009) findings indicate that:

All factions to the Liberian conflict committed, and are responsible for the commission of egregious domestic law violations, and violations of international criminal law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law, including war crimes violations (p. 9).

This is an indictment on all warlords and those who committed gross atrocities during the war yet majority of them are walking free in Liberia. Some are currently serving in the Liberian government.

Thus, many Liberians are not satisfied with this development and they are agitating for justice. This is an indication that the current peace is fragile as people may seek for retribution. There is a need for a peacebuilding process that will bring together, the four important elements of reconciliation, truth, justice, mercy, and peace, to resolve their differences.

The reality on the ground also shows that the justice system in Liberia has serious problems. Liberia's media and public opinion surveys consistently show that law and order are primary concern in Liberia. The justice system in post-war Liberia is still fragile and polluted. It only favours the rich and stands as enemy to the poor. The researcher observed this on his constant visit to the National Police Headquarters (Central) and the Temple of Justice—observing police's action, court proceedings, and personal interaction with private and state lawyers, court officials, as well as complainants and defendants. It was discovered that bribery is the only common language which majority of the law enforcers, lawyers, judges and personnel in the judiciary understand best in post-war Liberia. Tom Kamara's (2009)

summary assertion on the justice system in post-war Liberia also attests to the reality:

Now more than before, the purse looms higher as determinant of justice. No longer fearful of overpowering influence of the state and harsh reprisals as was the case a few years ago, the law is for those who can afford to pay. In this, the mass of poor people are left outside or in the corridors of the “law”, unable to enter because of the price tag attached (pp. 6, 7).

This is an indication that there is still structural violence, which must be addressed. Thus, the respondents are justified to think that the Liberian post-war peace is fragile based on the presence of corruption and injustice in the society. As stated earlier, corruption itself is a social injustice. Socio-economic and political injustice has been one of the major causes of military coups and civil war in Liberia. Therefore, their presence is a threat to peace and a provocation of war in the Liberian context. It is not only the gun that kills but corruption and injustice also do kill. Injustice can lead to civil disobedience in society.

Corruption or socio-economic and political injustice is a sin in the sight of God. God is strongly against social injustice. Through the prophet Amos, God stresses that righteousness and justice are essential to a healthy society (Amos 2:6-7; 8:4). Thus, a society that tramples on the less privileged and the poor is not healthy and therefore cannot experience God’s peace. Human beings were created in the image of God. Therefore, they have an innate resistance to injustice. Hence, if there must be sustainable peace in society corruption and injustice must be checked.

Land Disputes

Eleven persons indicated that the post-war Liberian peace is fragile because there are still land disputes in the country. They stated that land dispute is on the increase in post-war Liberia posing threat to the current peace in the country. They cited the constant land disputes between the Lorma and the Mandingo ethnic groups in Lofa County, that of the Gio-Mano and Mandingo ethnic groups in Nimba and the unresolved land dispute between the Liberia Agriculture Company and the Bassa ethnic group in Grand Bassa and Rivercess Counties, all of which have resulted into physical violence. The respondents expressed the fear that land disputes between clans and different ethnic groups may easily ignite widespread overt conflict in the country.

The respondents' view on the fragility of the current peace in Liberia in relation to increased land disputes in Liberia needs to be appreciated on the ground that land dispute is a major source of dirty conflict in human society. Land related conflict is an identity conflict which is difficult to be resolved. The Israeli-Arab conflict in the Middle East, which may likely draw the whole world to war, is an example. Furthermore, land related conflict is not a new thing in Liberia. Right from the beginning of the nation's history, land disputes have been one of the major bones for contention between the settlers and the indigenous of Liberia. The settlers or Americo-Liberians were in constant conflict and fight with the natives because of disputes over land. It constituted part of the structural violence that the indigenous Liberians constantly stood against up to the 1980 coup which terminated the Americo-Liberian's political hegemony in Liberia.

The problem relating to the Mandingo ethnic group in Lofa and Nimba Counties can be understood from a historical context. The Mandingo people have no specific region of their own in Liberia. They gradually migrated to Liberia through Guinea as traders and they were received by both the Lorma ethnic group in Lofa County and the inhabitants of Nimba County in Northern Liberia. They acquired lands from their hosts through mutual friendly manner as well as one-sided intermarriages (Mandingo men married Lorma and Nimba women but Lorma and Nimba men could not marry Mandingo women). From these two counties they spread to other counties in Liberia. Until the civil war the Mandingo ethnic group mutually co-existed with their counter parts in the two regions (Lofa and Nimba), but the Mandingo became enemy to the people of Lofa and Nimba counties during the war when the Mandingo ethnic group became ally to Samuel Doe and later joined and formed factions that fought against Charles Taylor who was largely supported by the other ethnic groups in Nimba and Lofa.

Therefore, the consistent rivalry between the Mandingos and other ethnic groups in Lofa and Nimba is a threat to peace. It means that these ethnic groups have not reconciled their differences. This problem, if not addressed, may lead to constant ethnic clashes in those regions. What is needed now is a constant reconciliatory dialogue that will mend the broken relationship between the Mandingos and the other ethnic groups.

It is worth noting that the response from the forty-six of the total fifty respondents (92%) that the peace in post-war Liberia is fragile confirms the UN's description of the state of the peace in Liberia and the position of the

government of Liberia (Elavalthoduka & Washington, Dec. 2008-Feb. 2009).

Moreover, many Liberians feel that the root causes of the war have not been adequately addressed and this is a threat to sustainable peace. Respondents were of the view that the war was the result of socio-political and economic inequalities, and inhumane treatment meted against the indigenous Liberians by the Americo-Liberians, which has fuelled hostile relationship between the two.

Respondents were asked as to whether the factors that resulted to the Liberian civil war have been adequately addressed. There were divided views on this question. Twenty-five of the respondents asserted that some of the factors have been addressed while twenty-five categorically stated that the causes of the war have not been addressed and that they are still prevalent in the country. Those who said that some of the factors have been addressed indicated that the rivalry between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberians is now an issue of the past and the problem of ethnicity has been minimized. Their view was influenced by the number of indigenous Liberians in the present Liberian government, and the relative cordial relationship that exists between the two ethnic groups who are traditional archrivals, Gio-Mano ethnic group and the Krahn ethnic group. The present Liberian Legislature is dominated by the indigenous Liberians. Unlike in the past, the indigenous Liberians make up of about 82% of the ninety-six-member National Legislative Assembly and most of the natives are now holding ministerial and deputy ministerial positions in the Executive Branch of

government. The current Vice President of Liberia is also an indigenous Liberian.

The point must be made that it was obvious for the native Liberians to dominate the present National Legislative Assembly because members of this august body are elected by people in their constituencies and the natives were the ones in those constituencies with the electorates. The few Americo-Liberians who returned from the U.S.A. settled in Monrovia and the major coastal cities. This could account for the small number of Americo-Liberians in the Liberian Parliament.

Those who indicated that the factors that caused the war are still dominant in the Liberian society stressed that the natives are still looked down upon and marginalized by the Americo-Liberians even in the present government. Four of the six Parliamentarians interviewed added that the Americo-Liberians and the Executive Branch of government do not respect the National Legislature because it is dominated by indigenous Liberians.

The respondents also indicated that ethnicity is still a national problem and that it has moved beyond Gio-Mano and Krahn problem to national problem. They also made emphasis on the present rampant corruption in government, high degree of illiteracy, poverty, socio-economic and political injustice, and power imbalanced in the country as indicators that nothing has changed in Liberia.

The responses indicate that Liberians are somehow divided on the existence of the factors that fuelled the civil war. However, the reality on the ground shows that some of the factors that resulted to the war are relatively on

the decline, but most of them that often trigger overt conflict in Liberia are still prevalent in the socio-political fabric of the post-war Liberian society.

One of the factors that appears to be on the decline as some respondents indicated is the Americo-Liberians and Native Liberians rivalry. Unlike during the period of Americo-Liberians' political hegemony, indigenous Liberians now have equal opportunity to be elected and occupy higher political positions in Liberia. However, this is not enough for sustainable peace in Liberia. This kind of political transformation existed before the outbreak of the civil war in 1989. This conflict appears to be on the decline but the two groups have not reconciled their differences. The fact that they are not currently at war does not mean the problem has been addressed. Without true reconciliation, love, unity and respect for one another these two groups may just suspend their differences to attract international recognition and support, but the struggle for political domination will continue.

It is worth noting that the conflict between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberians is more of attitude problem. Despite that the institutional and structural barrier has been removed the two groups still perceive each other differently. Thus, it still poses a threat to peace and reconciliation in Liberia. There is a need for these two groups to change their attitude and perception toward each other. The Americo-Liberians and indigenous Liberians rift-created-wounds are still deep and fresh in the minds of many Liberians, and the sentiment for retribution cannot be ignored.

The Americo-Liberians have an edge over the indigenous Liberians in many ways. They are more educated, more exposed and economically

equipped than the natives. They are more united than the indigenous Liberians. They love and respect each other and have a strong sense of family-tie than the 'native boys'. The indigenous Liberians are divided along ethnic lines. In the recent past, when a native has advanced Western education he or she considered herself more of an Americo-Liberian than a native. A native may easily take side with the Americo-Liberian class, be it right or wrong, than taking side with a fellow native. This is because identifying with the Americo-Liberians gives one educational, socio-economic and political advantages. This implies that the issue has changed from the old structural or institutional problem to neo-structural problem. Thus, the identity crisis has not been resolved.

Respondents' views about how sustainable peace can be achieved in Liberia also present another challenge for the Lutheran peacebuilding programme. Twenty of the fifty respondents (40%) said that sustainable peace can be achieved in Liberia through forgiveness and reconciliation. In their view, sustainable peace can be achieved in Liberia when Liberians let go the brutality of the war and come together again as one people.

Fifteen respondents (30%) indicated that sustainable peace can be achieved when the factors that caused the war are adequately addressed. They cited the rivalry between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberians, ethnicity and social injustice as major factors that need to be addressed. Fifteen other respondents (30%) said that lasting peace can only be achieved in Liberia when those who committed gross atrocities in Liberia are made to pay for what they did. This means that people who were responsible for the brutality in Liberia should face the wrath of justice. Eleven out of the fifteen

who shared this view were the grass-root Liberians drawn from the fifteen political sub-divisions of Liberia.

The responses show that forgiveness and reconciliation are key factors for sustainable peace in Liberia but the need to deal with the root causes of the war; and the need for truth and justice should not be overlooked. Sustainable peace is unachievable unless the root causes of the conflict are identified and dealt with. Sustainable peacebuilding implies that peacemakers look beyond the surface; address the substantive and emotional issues that are at the root of the conflict, and work toward restructuring the broken relationships.

The need for justice is a crucial issue in Liberia. For example, an organization known as the “Forum for the establishment of a war crime court” in Liberia, headed by Mulbah Morlu, is campaigning for a war crime court to be established in Liberia in order to bring those who bear heavy responsibility of the Liberian civil war to justice (*The Inquirer*, 2009). The TRC of Liberia (2009) also shares a similar view. It asserted that prosecution in a court of competent jurisdiction and other forms of public sanctions are desirable and appropriate mechanism to promote the ends of justice, peace and security, foster genuine national reconciliation and combat impunity in Liberia.

Justice in the form of war crime tribunal, as being advocated by some Liberians, is a demand for accountability. It means that those who committed crime during the war must account for it. This aspect of justice presents two difficulties, the determination of who did what during the civil war and the determination of the appropriate punishment for crimes committed. The difficulties identified, however, do not make the idea of justice useless. This is because if justice is neglected, those who have suffered wrongs and abuses

will feel they have suffered double injustice. But the pursuit of justice in this sense is a challenge for the Lutheran peacebuilding programme. It does not have the power to execute such justice.

Forgiveness and reconciliation imply truth, mercy, justice and peace. Forgiveness is a genuine step to reconciliation and peacebuilding but one cannot forgive easily without knowing who exactly his or her enemies are. Forgiveness implies that the truth must be told. People who are affected by the protracted civil war in Liberia need to know their offenders. This will in the end foster genuine forgiveness and reconciliation. In Christian theological thought, forgiveness follows confession. The first Epistle of John indicates: “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9, NKJV). This passage clearly indicates that confession of wrong deeds is the prerequisite to receiving forgiveness and cleansing. In the case of Liberia confession will take the form of truth and forgiveness takes the form of mercy.

As stated earlier, peace without justice is a fragile peace. Justice is an essential ingredient in the process of reconciliation. Reconciliation incorporates the search for truth, mercy, justice and peace. Thus, to foster sustainable peace in post-war Liberia peacemakers must find a place where truth, mercy, justice and peace can meet and reconcile.

Conclusion

Though Liberia has a democratically elected government, its post-war peace is still fragile. Political peacebuilding approaches appear to be futile. The Christian church is the last resort to fostering the needed reconciliation in

that country. The Lutheran Church in Liberia has made some significant impact, but it has some deficiencies and external challenges, which suggest that the Lutheran Church alone cannot build the needed peace.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

Summary

Liberia is in a post-conflict state. The country experienced a protracted civil war with debilitating impact on the socio-economic and socio-political development, moral values of the people and the social system of the Liberia people. Regional and international intervention has resulted to cessation of hostilities and a democratically elected government. Currently, the country is in a post-conflict state. The sustainability of the peace depends on how well the post-conflict stage is managed. Political arrangement to dealing with the post-conflict situation appears ineffective and the Christian church seems to be the hope for reconciliation. The Lutheran Church in Liberia is involved in the post-war peacebuilding process. This study was therefore set up to do a theological appraisal of the peacebuilding work of the Lutheran church in Liberia.

The study has discovered that the church has three programmes which gear towards fostering sustainable peace in Liberia. These include the Trauma

Healing and Reconciliation Programme (THRP), HIV/AIDS programme and the Lutheran Development Service of Liberia (LDS-Liberia).

The Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme addresses the psycho-social problems of those traumatized by the horrors of the Liberian civil war and fosters reconciliation in the divided Liberian society. This programme is the Liberian Lutheran Church's major peacebuilding agency in Liberia, and it is carried out through training, seminars, workshops, counselling, mediation, dialogue and negotiation. The HIV/AIDS programme addresses the needs of those affected and infected by the deadly disease, while the LDS-Liberia equips and empowers people so that they would be able to meet their basic human needs. It currently focuses on agriculture and food security, infrastructure construction and rehabilitation, micro-credit for empowerment, and capacity building and skill training. The study found out that many Liberians have benefited from these interventions. Through these programmes, the church is making a great impact on the lives of many Liberians thereby contributing to sustainable peacebuilding in post-war Liberia.

The three programmes are relevant in addressing post-war situations and they are consistent with the theological concept of "shalom" (peace with God, peace with oneself, peace with one's neighbours, and peace with one's environment), except that the church practically watered down the first and major aspect of the concept, reconciliation with God. The effort of the Liberian Lutheran Church is laudable most especially in a situation where many churches view peacebuilding as a responsibility of political institutions.

Trauma healing initiative is a necessary approach to responding to psychosocial wounds of people in post-war societies.

However, it was realized that the Trauma Healing and Reconciliation Programme has not made much impact in the local churches of the Lutheran Church in Liberia. Moreover, the local churches are not fully involved in the programme. While it is appropriate for the church to reach out to meet the needs of society, it is essential for the church to consolidate its effort from within. The study found out that the programme has some deficiencies. The trauma healing and reconciliation programme, lacks effective monitoring, initiatives to improve the relationship between the two major rivals in Liberia (Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberians), and faces the issues of decentralization, and internal leadership rivalry within the church. The ineffective monitoring of volunteer field workers has resulted in recruitment malfeasance, thus recruiting people with hedonistic motive. Field workers in communities of the various regions do not know each other and their peacebuilding activities are not well coordinated. The programme lacks the initiative to reconcile the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous Liberians. Without genuine reconciliation of the two groups, sustainable peace cannot be achieved in Liberia.

Moreover, it was found out that the programme does not embrace the word of God (Bible) as a tool for peacebuilding. This can be considered as a major theological pitfall of a church-initiated peacebuilding programme. Reconciliation is a central theme in Christian theology, and it takes its theological impetus from the Bible. Peace is a biblio-theological concept and

the true meaning of reconciliation is found in the Bible. Therefore, the word of God is appropriate for peace and reconciliation.

The HIV/AIDS programme is also in line with Christ's ministry. The Lord Jesus did not just preach the gospel, but he did heal the sick (Matthew 4:24). The church of God is therefore enjoined by the Lord to heal the sick and demonstrate compassion for the sick and needy. The church is a healing and compassionate community of faith in the midst of pain and suffering. Thus, by caring and providing some services to HIV/AIDS patients, the Lutheran Church has in a way demonstrated an understanding of its biblical obligation to society. Providing counselling services, treatment, food, clothing and embracing HIV/AIDS patients in a post-war situation is a theological and practical response to social problem.

However, it was discovered that at the congregation level, there is still lack of internal motivation to respond to the challenge of HIV/AIDS in the local churches of the Lutheran Church in Liberia. There is a need for decentralization, a process that will empower the local assemblies to establish and conduct HIV/AIDS programmes at the local level to reduce stigmatization. Local churches need to have room for openness, transparency, honesty and love for infected people so that the latter would be free to disclose their HIV/AIDS status without fear. If war affected and HIV/AIDS infected people can be loved and cared for by the church, they will find concrete meaning in the love of God. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a societal problem that should not be left with the secular institutions or be haphazardly attended to.

The Lutheran Development Service was found to be an appropriate response to the socio-economic plight of people living in a post-war society characterized by acute poverty. Socio-political reconciliation cannot be sustained without economic reconciliation. Sustainable peace should be viewed and understood from a wholistic theological concept of “shalom.” One of the causes of the war as indicated by Liberians is poverty. Thus, any peacebuilding process that does not help the people to gain some level of economic peace is a fragile process. Through the LDS-Liberia, the Lutheran Church is emulating the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus met the needs of the poor and the vulnerable in society.

Conclusions

Genuine reconciliation is a need in post-war Liberia. People of a nation who desire to live in peace must also live as one people. Until all sections of Liberians see themselves as having a common destiny, there is no way they can agree to live together as a nation. This is a great challenge that all Liberians need to embrace.

The civil war has ended but the post-war Liberian society is still characterized by hatred, acrimonies, agitation for retribution, ethnic division, insecurity, social injustice, land disputes, structural violence, amongst others. This is an indication that the current peace in Liberia is fragile. Political provisions to address the situation have not worked out and many Liberians see the Christian Church as the last resort to fostering true reconciliation and sustainable peace in the country.

The Lutheran Church, which is determined to provide an appropriate Christian response to building sustainable peace in Liberia, therefore, has a great task to perform. The Church needs the cooperation of the people. Liberians need to orient their minds and attitudes towards God's nature and attributes and make personal contributions to sustainable peacebuilding in the country.

The Christian church has what it takes to foster sustainable peace in Liberia. However, it requires collective effort of the churches, the state, citizens and every institution in Liberia. This study has made a number of recommendations. Liberia will experience genuine and sustainable peace if these recommendations are considered.

Recommendations

The Lutheran Church's post-war peacebuilding efforts face huge deficiencies, challenges and limitations. The deficiencies or internal challenges include the Church's inability to mobilize funding internally, ineffective monitoring, lack of initiatives to mend the relationship between the Americo-Liberians and the natives, the issue of decentralization, and internal rivalry in the Lutheran Church. For the Lutheran Church to be effective in its post-war peacebuilding campaign, the study recommends that the Church should address the deficiencies as indicated in chapter four.

In view of the external challenges (insecurity, challenge of reconciling people who have taken enshrined ethnocentric positions, corruption and social injustice, and land disputes) of the Lutheran Church in Liberia, it cannot foster the needed sustainable peace alone. It needs the collective involvement of the

Christian churches and denominations in Liberia as well as the collaboration of the Liberian government. Thus, the study has made the following recommendations to the Liberian Churches, stakeholders, and the state. For sustainable peace to be achieved in post-war Liberia, the following needs should be considered.

The Need for Joint-Church Effort

The study recommends that churches in Liberia join hands to address the post-war situation in Liberia. Peace is so special that it should not be left alone with politicians who may get involved because of their own political agenda. There is a need for the Liberian Council of churches to join hands with the Lutheran Church and take up the challenge to mobilize the churches and pursue the cause of peacebuilding. The study discovered that majority of the Liberian people view the church as the last resort to fostering genuine reconciliation in the country. The Christian church is the only reputable and generally neutral institution that the people can trust. The Christian churches and para-church organizations should therefore unite above their doctrinal differences to pursue reconciliation in Liberia. If the Christian churches, in the interest of peace, can unite, strategize and mobilize financial and human resources for national reconciliation and peacebuilding, they will achieve more than one church or denomination. Peacebuilding programmes should be decentralized and well coordinated.

The joint-church effort should build on what the Lutheran Church has started and focus on reconciliation through training, peacebuilding workshops/seminars, constructive dialogue, trauma healing, socio-economic

development, socio-political education, human rights and the effort to restore moral value in the Liberian society both at the local and national levels. Joint-church peace initiatives should prioritize what will help translate forgiveness, reconciliation and peace in thought, word and deed. This is consistent with God's perspective of reconciliation and it can enable rival parties to demonstrate forgiveness and rebuild relationships. The negative thought towards offenders should be replaced with positive thought about the offenders. This is consistent with Paul's admonition: "Finally brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy --- meditate on these things" (Phil. 4:8).

There should be a well-defined and biblical-based effort for psycho-social trauma initiatives for the Liberian children, teen-agers and youths who have suffered acute and chronic trauma during the war. They need to be helped to readjust their perspectives and return to normal and safe environment. If nothing is done to rescue the situation, they could end up being perpetrators of new conflicts and violence in the future. Recreation centres, school, health and Christian counselling services will be a great help. The Church can make good use of Christian psychiatrists, educators, doctors, pastoral counsellors, and other knowledgeable Christians.

The joint-church peacebuilding initiatives should consistently organize problem-solving workshops for politicians, civil society groups and community leaders, and engage them with the wholistic theological perspective of reconciliation. This can create channels for people representing

conflicting parties unofficially, and those who seek to collaborate in analyzing and finding solutions to particular issues. Conferences on reconciliation should centre on biblical principles and seek the importance of developing the culture of truth, the need for rehabilitation of the Liberian society, recognition of justice and the need for a culture of sacrifice and goodwill.

The joint-church peacebuilding initiatives should consider the word of God (the Bible) as relevant tool for peacebuilding and call the country to the wholistic theological perspective of peace and reconciliation. This approach is necessary in a country characterized by hatred, animosity, ethnic division, injustice, inequality, ethnocentrism, and the quest for retribution. The Church should help the nation to repent and reconcile with God. This vertical and spiritual dimension of reconciliation should be of priority. As indicated earlier, engaging conflicting parties with the spiritual dimension in the peace process creates access to the more deep-seated, affective base of the parties' behaviour. It enables them to examine their own attitudes and actions critically and encourages them to accept responsibility, confess their wrongdoings, be flexible with their demands, grant and seek for forgiveness, and seek for mutual beneficial solutions to the conflict.

The Need for Government Support and Collaboration

Post-war peacebuilding cannot be devoid of government support and collaboration because the issue of insecurity, among other things, is beyond the control of the church. Therefore, the Liberian government should see reason to support and collaborate with church initiatives for sustainable peace in the country. Instead of TRC, the government should collaborate with the

church. TRC is quite expensive and because of its political nature, it is very limited. It appears that it is not a sustainable process as it is time-bound. The church programme is a continuous process, which is consistent with the journey of reconciliation. The government should provide adequate security, moral, financial and logistic support for the church to champion the cause of reconciliation.

The Need for Educational Reform

This study recommends that conflict management, resolution and peacebuilding should be included in the curriculum of the Liberian educational system and be taught from primary to tertiary level including the security training academies. Such peace education should emphasize how people and communities have overcome the past and reintegrated. This will equip future leaders with the relevant knowledge and skills in peacebuilding and it will serve as a vehicle for conflict prevention. Peace education is a cost-effective programme for long-term attitudinal change in society. Ignorance played a major role in the escalation and prolongation of the Liberian civil war.

Moreover, peace education programmes should be organized in schools, communities, media and religious institutions. This will help introduce reconciliation principles into the Liberian society.

The Need for Improving Relationships

Post-war peacebuilding programmes should seek to improve relationships between rival ethnic groups especially between the Americo-Liberians and the indigenous people of Liberia. Reconciling these two groups

is vital to building sustainable peace in Liberia. All the major civil conflicts that took place in Liberia have their roots in the hostile relationship between the two groups. Peacebuilding initiatives should seek to promote communication and dialogue between the two groups to help them recognize their common human identity so that they can be flexible and accept one another as one people. Open face to face communication and dialogue is consistent with the biblical method of reconciliation and the willingness of one party to initiate reconciliation as a result is consistent with what God did through Jesus Christ.

Peacebuilding initiatives should make effort to bring the natives and the Americo-Liberians together to help them trash out their differences and reconcile. If the issues between the two are not amicably addressed, Liberia will revert to war in the long run.

The Need for Inter-religious Dialogue

Inter-religious dialogue is a vital approach in fostering peace in a religious pluralistic society. Post-war peacebuilding effort in Liberia should therefore consider bringing together religious leaders to dialogue and find a common ground for reconciliation. The heads of the Islamic group, heads of Orthodox churches, Pentecostals, Charismatics, and African traditional adherents need to come together to find lasting peace for the nation.

The Need for Truth, Mercy and Justice

Peacebuilding effort in Liberia should create a dynamic social space where truth, mercy, justice and peace can meet and trash things out.

Conflict is characterized by misinformation and different perspectives of reality. A transformational process should therefore seek the truth. This can take the form of confession of wrong deeds, revelation of malicious secrets, and recognition of one's identity. The truth must be told. People should be helped to recognize their wrong deeds, confess them and apologize. True confession of one's wrong and sincere apology can attract forgiveness which can lead to reconciliation. The victims of the Liberian civil war may want to forgive, but they need to know who their offenders are and what they did. Confession of sins and repentance are central to reconciliation in Christian theological thought and practice, for God honours the requests of those who repent from their wicked ways (2 Chronicles 7:14; 1 John 1:9).

The Americo-Liberians and the indigenous people of Liberia should be helped to come to terms with their true identity. The hatred, animosity, and division between the two groups emanate from the fact that they have not considered their true identity in God, the creator. They should be taught to know that they all were created in the image of God and for that matter are equal. Acceptance of this truth will eliminate the issue of ethnocentrism and address rivalry based on socio-political, cultural, economic and religious inequalities.

Mercy should take the form of forgiveness. The truth, revelation of malicious secrets and confession of wrong deeds, should be exchanged with forgiveness. The assurance of mercy or forgiveness could serve as a motivating factor for telling the truth. This has worked in South Africa, where the South African TRC exchanged public declaration of the truth with amnesty.

Justice must be done. Justice is an integral part of peacebuilding. For reconciliation to take effect truth and mercy must come together and justice and peace must kiss (Psalm 85:10). Justice here implies accountability, equality, and restitution. God is the God of justice and he rewards those who do well with blessings and holds people accountable for their wrong deeds. Those who committed atrocities in Liberia should accept responsibility of their wrong and the victims should receive reparations. This study has argued that when the victims are not given justice they will feel that they have been victimized twice. It is also realized that justice is seldom done for it is difficult to determine who did what, and it is impracticable to prescribe the appropriate punishment for wrong deeds. The search for justice may also generate conflict. Therefore, the Mathew 18 principle and the process of finding a social space where truth, mercy, justice and peace can meet should be considered.

This study has argued that when the truth is told and amnesty is given then in a sense justice is done. It is difficult to tell the truth, therefore those who tell the truth should be rewarded with amnesty. Moreover, as people seek to hold others accountable for their wrong deeds, the former should also take the pains to look inward and do what is right.

Justice in the form of equality can range from political and socio-economic equalities, fair distribution of natural resources, human value, and human rights. This form of justice seeks the elimination of structural imbalance in society. One of the root causes of poverty and war in Africa is structural imbalance which is consistent with unjust social frameworks. This form of social structure exploits the poor and the weak and increases the

wealth of the so called rich and powerful in society. This has been the case in Liberia since its independence. Socio-political and economic justice and the respect of human value should be the way out to eliminating inequalities in the Liberian society.

Moreover, the Liberian government should seek to reform the justice system in the country. The current justice system is weak and could serve as a source for further conflict. An effective legal system can contribute to reducing sources of violence and re-enforcing the rule of law. It is a divine responsibility of the government to punish evil and reward those who do well (Romans 13:1-7).

The Need to Review Diplomatic Relationships

Liberia should seek to critically review its relationship with the United States of America and refine it to the standards of international democracy.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule

Category One: For the Selected Leaders of the Lutheran Church in Liberia

1. Is the Lutheran Church in Liberia involved in any form of post-war peacebuilding?
2. What practical steps is the Lutheran Church taking to facilitate sustainable peace in Liberia?
3. What is the scope of the Lutheran Church's peacebuilding work in Liberia?
4. What motivated you (the Lutheran Church) to get involve in the post-war peacebuilding work?
5. What strategy (ies) do you adopt in your post-war peacebuilding work?
6. What is the impact of your peacebuilding work in Liberia?
7. Do you use the Word of God (the Bible) as a tool for peacebuilding?
8. What are your challenges and how do you intend to overcome them?

Category Two: Respondents Excluding the Lutheran Leaders

1. Do you know about the peacebuilding programme of the Lutheran Church in Liberia?
2. How did you come to know about the programme?
3. What is the impact of the Lutheran peacebuilding programme in your community?

4. What do you see as deficiencies of the Lutheran peacebuilding work in Liberia?
5. What do you think should be done to improve the programme?

Category Three: For the Fifty Respondents

1. What is the current state of the peace in Liberia?
2. What were the causes of the Liberian civil war?
3. Have those factors been adequately addressed?
4. How can lasting peace be achieved in Liberia?
5. What is your assessment of the Liberian Truth and Reconciliation Commission?
6. What do you think of the Christian Church in Liberia in relationship building sustainable peace in Liberia?
7. Do you think the Church can help bring about reconciliation in Liberia?
8. What do you think should be the role of the church in building lasting peace in Liberia?

APPENDIX B

The Map of Liberia



Source: Ministry of Planning & Economic Affairs

The Seal Of The Republic Of Liberia

