APPROPRIATING PEACE AND COMMUNALITY IN AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY TO PROMOTE UNITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA. A RE-READING OF 1 CORINTHIANS 1:10-12.

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Abstract
Peace and communality are virtues in African culture that African Christian theology have enculturated. Since independence, both the church and the nation have battled disunity, instability, ethnic and class conflicts. This is a major distraction that has hindered the church from effective execution the Great Commission and mission. This study explores Pauline teaching on harmonious relationships in 1 Cor. 1:10-12 as a model for promoting unity in the Roman Catholic, Lagos Province, and sustainable democracy in Nigeria. Scholars have expressed different views on the divisions reported in 1 Corinthians. Grace (2011), Naselli (2018), Rhodes (2020) and others viewed the conflicts and division in the Corinthian church as a departure from the centrality of Christ. This paper however examined 1Cor.1:10-12 and the need to embrace peace as Christians and promote unity in the Church. The study adopts mixed methods which comprises the historico-critical method and the existential method in the analysis of 1 Corinthians 1:10-12; secondary data and participant observation. Peacebuilding in the church will serve as catalyst for sustainable democracy because many of the people in governance are members of the church. The Church must imbibe the virtues of peace and communality as enshrined in African culture and the Bible. Keywords: African Christian Theology, Peace, Communality, harmonious relationship, Sustainable Democracy.

Introduction

Nigeria, often called the "Giant of Africa," is a country with diverse cultures, significant human and economic potentials, and complex sociopolitical issues. With over 200 million people, Nigeria is Africa's most populous country and home to over 250 ethnic groups with diverse religious beliefs[i]. The interaction of these characteristics creates both opportunities and challenges like peacebuilding and democratic governance. Christianity has played an important role in the building of Nigeria as a nation.

African Christian Theology contextualizes the Christian faith within the African experience[ii]. It combines indigenous African religious beliefs with Christian doctrine, resulting in a distinctive theological perspective that engages socio-cultural challenges[iii]. As a tool for

advocacy, African Christian theology appropriates African virtues, for dealing with challenges in conflict resolution, social justice, and governance. Particularly, peace and communality are virtues in African culture that African Christian theology has inculturated. Peace embodies co-existence of all life forms, total well-being (spiritual, social, economic), integrity, righteousness, justice and much more. Communality, like Peace, evokes the sense of community and interconnectedness,

Nigeria's glorious history has been punctuated by periods of violent conflict and political instability. The Nigerian Civil War as well as current insurgencies by criminal or separatist groups such as Boko Haram, Bandits, ESN, IPOB, OPC, MEND, NDPVF have posed substantial threats to peace and unity in the country. In such a tumultuous environment, effective peace-building strategies are essential and African Christian theology, with its emphasis on peace, communality, unity, harmonious relationships, reconciliation, forgiveness, and community, provides important insights and strategies for achieving and promoting these goals.

Nigeria's quest for sustainable democratic system has been marred by challenges such as electoral fraud, corruption, ethnic and religious strife respectively. Despite these hurdles, Nigeria has made significant progress toward consolidation of the democratic system of government, since the return to civilian rule in 1999. Thankfully, Christian groups, churches and leaders actively promoted democratic values and practices, advocated for human rights, and took part in civic education projects. Their involvement demonstrates the potential of faith-based approaches to democratic governance[iv].

Understanding the role of African Christian Theology in Nigeria's sociopolitical landscape is critical for a number of reasons. First, it emphasises Christian religion's enormous role in shaping societal norms and behaviors. Second, it establishes a framework for applying theological resources to contemporary issues. Thirdly, it provides a framework for incorporating faith-based approaches into broader peace-building and democratic initiatives, resulting in a more stable and just society.

Conflicts and divisions which exist in the Nigeria's democratic space are also present in the church. Since independence, the nation has battled disunity, instability, ethnic and religious challenges while the Church has been inundated by ethnic and class conflicts. Conflicts in Christianity dates as far back as the Apostolic era, beginning with the Hellenists' complain against the Hebrews over the neglect of their widows in the daily distribution of goods (Acts 6:11). Prejudice was the root cause of this problem. Higgins argued "Where there are differences, prejudice lurks in the human heart."[v] This prejudice was against the Hellenists whose first language would have been Greek and have affinity to Greco-Roman culture. Similarly, frictions and divisions existed in the Corinthain community. 1 Corinthians is Paul's response to the community's challenge. The divisions were internal divisions: 1:10-12; 3:4-5; and 11:18-19. Incidentally, these divisions also had socioeconomic connection as seen in 11:17-34.[vi]

As was the case among the Corinthians, members of Pious Societies in the Roman Catholic Church are often embroiled in conflicts and division in the struggle for relevance and control of the groups and their resources. This has adversely affected social relationships among the Laity in addition to impairing the spiritual lives of members of these pious groups and the overall spiritual growth of the Church. Ethnic and class divisions, rivalry, quarrels, superiority/inferiority complexes, formation of cliques, money politics, dissent to Church

Authorities, and the use of charms as objects of threat to life and property often ensue. Thus, this paper argues the thesis that Pauline teaching on harmonious relationships in 1 Cor. 1:10-12 provides a framework for promoting unity, peace and communalism in the church, as well as serves as catalyst for peacebuilding and sustainable democracy in Nigeria. It is a model for resolving conflicts and divisions in Church, and the promotion of unity and sustainable democracy in Nigeria. The study adopts a mixed method which comprises the historico-critical method and the existential method of biblical exegesis in the analysis of 1 Corinthians 1:10-12 for advocacy.

Conflicts, Ethnic conflicts and Class conflicts

The word "conflict" is derived from the Latin *conflictus* which means collision or clash, Nicholson argued that "conflict is a vague term" despite its everyday usage. The ambiguity is connected to the fact that conflicts are largely unavoidable aspects of human reality. Daily experience shows that conflict or sharp disagreements are associated with interactions of human persons, during work or play. Furthermore, Nicholson believed that conflict in its various forms affects relationships, communities, and nations; and has even made the church contentious[vii].

Causes of ethnic conflicts include real or perceived structural injustices, lack of resources or imbalance in the distribution of resources and wealth, cultural and perceptual differences as well as political affiliations. Mohapatra dissecting ethnic conflicts argued there is need to differentiate ethnicity from nationalism. National identity like ethnicity is a factor that helps a people to self-identify. While ethnicity is a division within nationhood, nationality is the bigger picture[viii]. Class conflicts and classism, as a form of racism. This view is expressive of the rational that "systematic labour market racism has resulted in an over-representation of racialised groups in low-income and precarious jobs" which are connected with poverty and poor health[ix].

Peacebuilding and transformation of Conflicts in Pious Societies

The Peacebuilding and conflict resolution theory propagated by John Paul Lederach (1997) addressed "root causes" of conflicts by providing a framework for transforming conflicts. The root causes of conflict include competition over interests and needs, and perceived threats to identity, security and well-being among others. The Peacebuilding and conflict resolution theory provides valuable insights and strategies for promoting peace, resolving conflicts, and fostering reconciliation through the promotion of dialogue, forgiveness and reconciliation. This in turn underscores as critical, the understanding of the underlying dynamics and narratives that drive conflicts[x].

Pious societies or "sodalities" are organisations and structures created by the church. Their history dates back to antiquity, when, for example, Early Christians formed communities to support each other in faith, prayer, and charitable works. The first example of pious society was established in the 12th century by the Benedictine Order for Lay people to participate in Monastic life. The Franciscans and Dominicans followed suit in the 13th century, forming the Third Order, which like the Benedictines, emphasised spiritual growth and service[xi].

Immediate Context of 1 Corinthians

O'Connor was deliberate in pointing out that the immediate context of 1 Cor. 1:10-12 bothered on divisions in the Community (1:10-4:21). There were rival groups in the community and the rivalry was tearing the community apart (1:10-17). O'Connor declares, and this is central, that Paul realised certain basic flaws in the Corinthians' understanding of Christian Community. Thus, he integrated his replies to their questions into an effort to bring them to a true appreciation of authentic life in Christ[xii].

Exegetical Analysis of 1 Cor. 10-12

^{10}Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες καὶ μὴ ᾖ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῒ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ. ^{11}ἐδηλώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί μου, ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης ὅτι ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν. ^{12}λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει, Ἐγὼ μέν εἰμι Παύλου, Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ.

Translation

^{10} Now I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. ^{11} For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers ^{12} What I mean is that each of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ."

1 Cor. 10-12 describes the situation in the Corinthian church. Verse 10 reads Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες καὶ μὴ ᾖ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα, ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῒ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ (Now I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose). The first statement Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, is an important indication of the character of the pericope, and perhaps, the entire epistle, as a letter of "admonition." Παρακαλῶ - denotes gentle appeal by speech.

It occurs over a hundred times in the New Testament and Paul used it frequently (Rom. 12:1, 2 Cor. 5:20, Gal. 4:12, Eph. 4:1). It carries the notion of calling one's attention to what is truly important as distinct from what the world considers important, pastoral concern for the audience, appeal to God's mercy among others. This opening also is in line with ancient rhetoric tools or forms, which are used in passing messages to multitudes as Keener recognises. In effect, Paul wrote to the Corinthians in a very "engaging way" and not in a hash manner as indicative of a "stern command". These identifiable characteristics with which Paul passed his message in 1 Corinthians are very important as it also influences how far the message is seen and interpreted[xiii].

The divisions should not have occurred. σχίσματα in Classical Greek was used only for actual rents or tears in material; evoking the idea of a complete break or split. It is a worse description than sta/si$ which translates as controversy. This difference is better appreciated when viewed at the backdrop of schisms describing a point of no return. Controversies can be resolved, schisms linger and more often than not, are largely unresolved. Bruce argues that the notion of schism implied here is what is seen in Jn 7:40-43; 9:16; 10:19-21 where different people have differing opinion of Jesus. Thus, divided opinion was Paul's focus which had

resulted to jealousy and quarrels (vs 11; 3:3) and he advocated or appealed that they "mend" what is torn. The bigger picture is that of a church divided internally and against Paul.

Readers assume that from chapter one to four, all Paul had to say to the Corinthians was about division into parties and quarreling. Bruce adds that teachers to the Corinthians were part of the divisions and quarreling. The quarreling went on in the promotion of wisdom and boasting in mere men. The community quarreled against their leaders and together against Paul. This accounts for the opening of Paul's letter to the Corinthians. all Greco-Roman period letters begin with a three-fold salutation: the name of the writer, the addressee and greetings. In 1 Corinthians, Paul's name is mentioned and then Sosthenes, a co-worker. Paul however adds that he was called to be an Apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God. By this statement, Paul effectively excludes Sosthenes and any other "pretender" as an apostle and affirms he founded the church of Corinth and re-states his apostleship which has divine origins (Acts 9:1-9).[xiv]

ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοΐ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ - But that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and the same judgment. From the foregoing, the schism presupposes the existence of contending parties within the Corinthian community, which before was one united community, in keeping with Jesus' priestly prayer - that they be one (John 17:21). The word κατηρτισμένοι is derived katarti/zw is rendered "as perfectly joined together" denotes "to restore, mend or correct" that which is disordered, as if the split was never there. In another sense, Paul's exhortation was to correct that which was morally evil or erroneous, so it becomes ordered. A variant of this meaning denotes a situation where the νοΐ (mind) of the members of the community were to be disposed to each other with mutual goodwill, and that they live in harmony. Furthermore, γνώμη is also translated as knowledge, opinion, sentiment, and sometimes mind or will. Thus, Paul referred to the totality of the persons in the community. Each person is admonished to be of one mind and heart, of one will and purpose, and eschew schisms and divisions in the community as it were.

ἐδηλώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί μου, ὑπὸ τῶν Χλόης ὅτι ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν. (It has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers). The situation in Corinth had been brought to Paul's knowledge "by them of Chloe," meaning those in Chloe's house. Keener described Chloe to be a "wealthy businesswoman, who traveled between Corinth or Ephesus on business". Those who are said to have been of her household could either have been high-status slaves or freed persons belonging to her households, who probably were members of the Corinthian Church. They were not Chloe's children else, they would have been named by their father's household, even if he were deceased as Keener insists.[xv]

Paul also introduced ἀδελφοί a second time, probably to emphasise or remind feuding parties of what they were and what he expected of them. ὅτι ἔριδες ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν - That there are contentions among you. Those of Chloe's household had given Paul the report that there were contentions within the community. The contentions appeared ongoing after the schism had occurred. ἔριδες translates to contentions or altercations which are the results of the σχίσματα. Clarkes was of the view that after the division into parties, the opposing parties must necessarily have contended, to support their respective parties. Allusion to this position is seen in Hellerman who noted that family members in the Ancient Mediterranean world ideally deferred in honour to persons within their kinship groups and competed for honour with

representatives of other families.[xvi] This supposition aligned with the Ingroup and Outgroup crisis in Social Identity Theory. Stern argued the point that the Corinthian leaders wrote Paul, asking certain questions as evidenced in (7:1) but said nothing of this much more important matter. It took Chloe's people to make this known to Paul. The implication is that the leaders should have reported it themselves, if not for the infighting going on among them. Thus, there were divisions and quarrels between the various parties, albeit, for supremacy.

λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει, Ἐγὼ μέν εἰμι Παύλου, Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ. This first phrase of verse 12 λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν which translates as "I say, now every one of you says". Paul now probed deeper into the issue at hand, *everyone one of you is saying*… This is indicative of the issue being one that engulfed the entire community, and everyone, without exception had an opinion. Ἐγὼ μέν εἰμι Παύλου, Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ - I am of Paul, I of Apollo, I of Peter, I of Christ. This is the major issue Paul set to address. The believers had fractionalized themselves into sects or parties, according to the minister or preacher of their fancy or choosing. From Paul's statement, some were for Paul, some others for Apollo, Peter and Christ. Κηφᾶ - Cephas is Aramaic for *Petros* (Peter) and is Paul's preferred name for Peter as seen in Gal. 1:18; 2:9; 2:11-14, 1 Cor. 9:5; 15:5. Stern highlights the fact that Apollos was Paul's successor in Corinth and an effective teacher (Ac 18:24-28). Having lived in Hellenized Alexandria, he may have offered a Greek approach similar to that of the Alexandrian non-Messianic Jew, Philo and this may have attracted a large followership to him. *Kefa* (Cephas), on the other hand, would have emphasized Jewish elements as seen in Acts 10-11 and Galatians 2:11-16, which would also have made him loveable to the Jews in the community. He was the Apostle of circumcision. However, doctrinal differences and preferences for one person over another should not have degenerated into infighting.

Garland noted the expressions Ἐγὼ μέν εἰμι Παύλου, Ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Κηφᾶ, Ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ as slogans or maxims that were in use in Corinth. Paul did not support these sayings because he digressed to other matters. This manner of digression from a topic for a brief period and then returning to the main issue is characteristic of Greco-Roman rhetoric. The digression serves the larger purpose of the orator's total argument, and in this case, it is disunity in the church in Corinth. This is a classic example of deliberative, forensic, or epideictic rhetoric.[xvii]

Similarly, divisions and controversies do not represent the character of the Catholic Christian faith which is professed in Pious Societies. The breach in the Corinthian community and in Pious Societies as a result of σχίσματα has to be mended so that the community can return (κατηρτισμένοι) to its original fervour. To achieve this, contentions and altercations (ἔριδες) must give way because they breed and drive divisions. Personal or group aggregations and their agitations have to be jettisoned or better still, subsumed under the banner of the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom there is no division.

Implications of Ethnic and Class Conflicts

As it was in the Corinthian community, the existence of Ethnic and Class conflicts has far-reaching negative effects on the life of members of Pious Societies, Lagos Province of the Roman Catholic Church in particular. Like the Corinthians, members of Pious Societies appear to forget the spiritual purpose for which they are gathered and have allowed worldly concerns and divisions to get the better of them. Rather than make an impact in both church and society,

they have busied themselves with party spirits and consequently, divisions. The world is influencing members of those Pious Societies who are entangled in ethic and class conflicts. This can be as a result of a lack of understanding of having Jesus living in them. They have not shown they understand the Gospel message and what it means to be Christian.

The divisions in Corinth Paul narrowed to earthly wisdom and pride that goes with eloquence. Primordial hate of ethnic stocks different from one's ethnic group (Igbo, Yoruba, Hausa, Ika, Ikwerre, idoma, Tiv, Jukun etc) and pride that arises from social standing in life should not be allowed to continue to create divisions in Pious Societies in particular and in the Church generally. Paul did well to assert his authority over the church in Corinth as their father, to extinguish the divisions. In the same vein, the leaders of the Church as well as leaders of Pious Societies like Paul, should assert strong leadership capabilities and resolve to tackle ethnic and class conflicts in their various forms within their sphere of authority. Furthermore, Paul was diplomatic in dealing with the issue of division in the Corinthian community but he was deliberate in bringing out the consequences upon those who were behind the divisions with the play on the word Ἀπολλῶ (name of a preacher Apollos) and a)pollumi (to destroy). God will destroy those creating divisions in his Church. The effort to rid Pious Societies of ethnic and class conflicts should be subtle but definite. The wrath of God awaits those who bring about divisions and tear the community of God's people apart. The gentle approach as defined by Παρακαλῶ (I plead), must not be overlooked.

African Christian Theology, Peace Building and Sustainable Democracy

The exegesis above serves the purpose of African Christian theology in Peacebuilding; According to Abu-Nimer, Peace in African Christian Theology, is a holistic condition of well-being that includes bodily, spiritual, social, and communal harmony, not just the absence of conflict. Several Christian-led initiatives in Nigeria demonstrate the practical application of African Christian Theology in peacebuilding and sustainable democracy. These initiatives often involve mediation, dialogue, and community development programs that aim to address the underlying causes of conflict and promote lasting peace.[xviii]

Niger Delta Peace Efforts

The Catholic Church has actively participated in Peacebuilding efforts in the Niger Delta, an area fragmented by violent conflicts over oil riches and environmental degradation. The church has promoted dialogue between communities, oil firms, and the government, calling for equitable resource distribution and environmental justice. The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) has also hosted peace workshops and reconciliation programmes to promote understanding and collaboration among opposing parties.

As put forward by Ikelegbe, the Niger Delta region of Nigeria has long been a hotspot for socioeconomic and environmental challenges, owing to its huge oil reserves and the exploitation and conflict that ensues. For more than a century, the Catholic Church has been active in the Niger Delta, building missions, schools, and healthcare facilities. Because of its long history, the Church has played an important role in the region's sociopolitical landscape.[xix]

The Catholic Church first became involved in the Niger Delta through missionary work in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The Church gradually expanded its presence, creating dioceses and parishes throughout the Delta. This development was accompanied by a greater involvement in social and economic issues, particularly as the region got entangled in

wars over oil resources. According to Ibaba, the Niger Delta has been plagued by violent disputes between local communities, armed groups, and the government. The Catholic Church has actively participated in peacebuilding attempts to address these disputes. The Church has frequently served as a mediator between disputing parties. Catholic clergy have facilitated dialogue between militant groups, local communities, and government representatives to promote nonviolent conflict resolution. For example, the Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Bomadi has played an important role in peace negotiations and advocated for peaceful conflict resolution.[xx]

In an effort to mend rifts within communities, the Church has also started Reconciliation initiatives. These programmes frequently include counselling sessions, workshops, and seminars with a focus on trust-building and forgiveness. Cardinal John Onaiyekan stated that, these initiatives, which represent the Church's commitment to peace, are centred on the theological concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation. In addition, the Catholic Church offers supports to victims of violence in addition to mediation and reconciliation. This includes offering shelter, medical care, and psychological support to those affected by conflicts. Such initiatives are critical in mitigating the human cost of violence and fostering long-term peace.[xxi]

The Kaduna Peace Committee

The Kaduna Peace Committee is another example of the successful integration of theology, peace building, and democracy. Kaduna State, like Jos, has witnessed severe ethno-religious conflict, which is frequently driven by political and economic concerns. Kaduna has a diversified population and a history of intergroup conflict. Religious disagreements and competition for political and economic power have frequently triggered regional conflicts. The Kaduna Peace Committee was formed to address these disputes through discourses and community engagement. Christian and Muslim leaders collaborated to resolve disagreements, foster understanding, and push for policies that promote peace and justice.[xxii]

The Kukah Centre (TKC)

The Kukah Centre (TKC) for Governance has deployed a lot of resources to foster informed and active electorate that recognises the urgent need to participate in shaping government policies. The Centre is also involved in Interfaith dialogue and promotion of conversation among Nigerians leaders in both faith and government. Similarly, the Centre is focused on advocacy which promotes peace and sustainable democracy. She also champions Needs Assessment of political parties. Very importantly, the Peace Accord is another effort by The Kukah Centre in peacebuilding and promotion of sustainable democracy.[xxiii]

Christian Aid and Electoral Participation

The Justice, Development, Peace Commission of the Catholic Church is famed for Peacebuilding and promotion of sustainable democratic programmes. The commissions run Legal Aid units to help those who cannot afford legal services. Other units of the Commission include Empowerment schemes for Challenged persons, Loans and thrift schemes for farmers, petty traders and craftsmen. The Commission has played active roles in promoting democratic processes in Nigeria. Its responsibilities include voter education, election monitoring, and campaigning for free and fair elections. Violence, fraud, and low voter turnout have often

plagued Nigeria's political procedures. Promoting transparent and inclusive elections is critical to the country's democratic development.

Conclusion

African Christian theology has been involved with the task of peacebuilding and sustainable democracy in Nigeria as the Church has been involved in Peacebuilding within her fold and in the sociopolitical sphere. To maximize the potential of African Christian theology in peacebuilding and promoting sustainable democracy, the following recommendations are put forward. Theological institutions should promote a systematic theology that has broader contextualisation to national life of Nigeria as captured by the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church, thus equipping students with knowledge of the place of the Church in politics and governance.

Similarly, the Clergy and leaders of the Laity should be availed ongoing formation and capacity building on issues such as social justice, human rights, and democratic governance promotes advocacy for democratic values. In addition, Christian organisations and denominations should actively engage in advocacy at the local, regional and national levels to influence policies that promote democratic governance, social justice, and human rights.

African Christian theology, peacebuilding and sustainable democracy presents hopeful pathway towards fostering inclusive governance, promoting social justice, and enhancing civic engagement across the nation. By promoting ethical leadership, advocating for social justice, and fostering inclusive dialogue, African Christian communities can contribute significantly to building resilient democratic institutions that reflect the values of compassion, solidarity, and mutual respect. If there is going to be peace in the country, it has to begin in the Church.

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