

Appendix 61:

**THE EYN CONCEPT OF PACIFISM AND ITS RELEVANCE
TO THE NIGERIAN CONTEXT.**

BY

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APPROVAL SHEET

This research project has been read and approved as meeting the requirement for the award of Master of Theology Degree of Theological College of Northern Nigeria/University of Jos.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to Jesus Christ the Prince of Peace and to nonviolent peacemakers all over the world. I pray that the peace of God shall triumph over the evil of our era.

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ABSTRACT

The scourge of violence is apparently seen in our society today. It is difficult to deny this fact when our society is subjugated with hatred, suspicion, anger, killings and all sort of lethal actions that are detrimental to our peaceful coexistence. The situation is worsened with the invention of modern armaments. These artilleries did not only become a threat to the enemies of those who possess them but to the owners as well. The effect of modern weapons is at the access way of every human being directly or indirectly. For long time, people have considered war as a means to peace, and time without number it has failed. It is a shock therefore to see people still experiment violence to achieve peace.

This thesis suggests pacifism as a substitute to violence if we aspire for existence. Since there is a possibility to receive in return for our actions, it is wisely to act nonviolently so that we can receive the same. The purpose of this research therefore is to discover the efficacy of EYN pacifism and to promote such strategy for managing conflict in our society. It focused specifically on Nigeria that is often swiftly enveloped in the waves of violence.

The thesis has five chapters. Chapter one deals with general introduction which glimpse at the tragedy of violence and the way it can be detoured by nonviolence. Chapter two discusses the history of EYN. The history unveiled the kind of environment in which the Church of the Brethren was born that gave them unique worldview of approaching conflict. Chapter three of this thesis talks about EYN basis of pacifism. It is interesting to note that pacifism is practice by Nigerians before the coming of Christianity. The gospel later modified this peace process to what it is today. In chapter four, EYN pacifism is evaluated. It passed through the test of the scriptures and the Nigerian context. It fits well not only because we desire to exist but because our Lord Jesus taught us to love our

enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Chapter five concludes with a solution to our present predicament of possible annihilation by modern military hardware; that is to seek peace and pursue it nonviolently.

ABBREVIATION:

EYN	Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (Church of the Brethren in Nigeria).
TCNN	Theological College of Northern Nigeria.
TEKAN	Tarayyar Ekklesiyoyi Kristi a Nigeria (Fellowship of Churches o Christ in Nigeria).
SUM	Sudan United Mission.
CMS	Church Mission Society.
LCCN	Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria.
D.O.	District Officer.
UMCN	United Methodist Church in Nigeria.
CBM	Church of the Brethren Mission.
DCC	District Church Council.
LCC	Local Church Council.
LCB	Local Church Branch.
CCN	Christians Council of Nigeria.
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria.
WCC	World Council of Churches.
CEAC	Church Education Advisory Board.
CHAN	Christian Health Association of Nigeria.
NIV	New International Version.
RSV	Revised Standard Version.
ICBDP	Integrated Community Based Development Programme.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Violence creates fear, mistrust, and suspicion. In an environment filled with violence, trust and interdependence can hardly exist. When this happens, development of any kind can never be realized and existing infrastructures destroyed. Lives and communities are lost. Imagine the fate of such communities when people do not depend on one another; where differences produces suspicion, distrust breeds contempt, and prejudices fosters hostility. This is the kind of situation we face in Nigeria and likewise millions of people face all over the world. The question that needs to be asked is: Do people normally think of the penalty of war or violence before they engage in it? Not many people go to the extent of counting the cost. But what about Christians, do we count the cost, or do we just let the world squeeze us into its own mold rather than following the footsteps of our Master Jesus Christ?

These questions remind me of one incidence during the 2001 crisis in Plateau State and consequently led me to choose the topic of this thesis: “The EYN concept of Pacifism and its Relevance to Nigerian Christianity.” I feel compelled to write about the absolute necessity of non-violence for mutual co-existence in Nigeria and the world. Nonviolence is often misinterpreted as cowardice. If Christians truly follow the way of Christ, then they cannot ignore His teachings on non-violence. The story that follows justifies the practice of nonviolence and projects true Christ-likeness.

About a week after the crisis of September 7th, 2001, things began to return to normal in Plateau State. Though tension remained, calm had started spreading throughout the city.

It was about 8:00 A.M. when two Muslim boys went to their farm adjacent to the campus of the Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN). The boys were seen on their farm by a passer-by who suspected the boys to be spies sent by some Muslim fanatics. Without any inquiry

the man sent a message to the married students' quarters of TCNN that there were suspicious persons hiding on a farm. Within a very short time the news had spread throughout the community. As it is with hearsay, the information received carried various versions of the real story. Some people heard that there were unfamiliar people within the community. Others heard that Muslims had come to attack the TCNN community. With a situation like this, multiple reactions took place. While some people were running towards the direction where the boys were said to be, other people were running for their life. I do not know exactly what happened to those that ran seeking refuge because I was among those who ran toward the direction of the farm.

Surprisingly, I noticed men and women with heavy sticks, cutlasses, and pestles. All had gathered around the boys who had nothing to protect themselves. The boys were stripped naked and forced to lie flat on the ground. Questions were thrown at the boys from every direction, such as; "Who are you?" "What are your names?" "Who sent you?" These questions were asked without any opportunity for response. Nobody among the interrogators seemed interested to listen to the boys' side of the story. They had no chance to defend themselves.

The boys were severely flogged. The villager, who first saw the boys, drove away and shortly came back with gallon of petrol and a box of matches. He instigated the TCNN students stating that the boys had already gathered all the information that they were sent for and it would be a big mistake to let them get away.

By letting them go it would place the college and the environs in danger. All these allegations were based on assumption because even the man did not bother to question the boys. The mob insisted the boys should be killed. The reason they gave was that many Christians at Anguwan Rogo in Jos were killed in a similar manner. For that reason they (Muslims) needed to be paid in kind. To my consternation, the gathered crowd, students of TCNN many of whom were pastors from various TEKAN churches and associates, unanimously concluded that the boys deserve death.

However, some students from the historic peace church background stood firm in the position that these boys should not be killed. They pleaded fervently with the angry mob on behalf of the two small boys but to no avail. Therefore, the students took a more radical approach since their efforts proved fruitless. They then declared that anybody among the mob who dare touch the boys would have himself or herself to be blamed. They added that nobody is allowed to take the law in his or her hand. These statements threatened the group and everyone held back at once. Instantly the anger was redirected towards the students who wanted to save the boys. The students who insisted on protecting the two boys were badly insulted because the majority thought that it was unfair to protect their enemies. Enemies? On what premise should these boys be regarded as enemies? Was it due to the fact that they were Muslim? Have they committed any offense? Were they fairly accused and justly prosecuted? The boys were about to be killed because of nothing more than being Muslim.

In addition to the insult, one man who sided with the angry mob accused the defenders of having a complacent attitude to the current crisis in Plateau State. He stated that they were not indigenous to the state. He said that the effect of the crisis on the Plateau State was beyond human comprehension. Undisputedly, not only have the indigenes lost their beloved ones, they also lost homes and businesses worth millions of naira. He added that these students who were defending the Muslim boys were “foreigners” and he assumed that they had not been affected by the crisis. If the crisis in Plateau State was considered as religious or political, it would be not possible to differentiate indigene from non-indigenes. This is due to the fact that most of Nigerian communities are multi-religious and multi-tribal. The non-indigenes were also deeply impacted by the crisis. Many non-indigenes lost their homes, shops and more pathetically their lives. Therefore, the issue of not being empathetic with the indigenes over the calamity that befell Plateau State was just not true. The accuser declared this because the defenders were merciful to the Muslim boys. Actually, the crisis did not single out any individual or group of people.

In spite of the insults, these students persisted in explaining the implication of the shedding of innocent blood. They asked the crowd what benefit would be gained from killing these children. It would not pay for the lives and properties that were already destroyed in the crisis. It would not amend the wrong that already had been done. Toward the end of the struggle, the whole alteration turned into a short and concise sermon. Many people began to understand the implication of killing these boys and their anger began to wax cool. A potentially unfolding tragedy turned into a practical theological statement.

It is quite common that people often plan to revenge the wrong done to them without considering the ramifications of their actions. This kind of violent reaction is characterized as a recycling phenomenon; hatred begets hatred, taking a life begets taking another, and a tit for tat syndrome develops. Obviously, vengeance produces a negative repercussion in society. The common reaction to violence done to one is to retaliate in like kind. A vicious cycle then emerges which often escalates out of control. In this paper we will seek to discern how this cycle of violence can be broken based on the teachings of Jesus about nonviolence.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Looking at the incident that was just narrated, one could conclude that if this is the way people make decisions in such a situation in the Nigerian context, our society is in a serious chaos. Nigerian society today like many other societies in the world is filled with rage, hatred, suspicion and mistrust. In spite of the fact that peace choruses fill peoples' mouths, it ultimately has little effect on violence reactions. These choruses come from the lips instead of from the heart. Both political and religious leaders endeavor to see that peace prevails, but in reality it is more in principle than in practice. Leaders fancy formation of peacekeeping forces and the inauguration of conflict resolution committees, but peace is still a fleeting dream. In fact, with the

daily increase of crises around the globe, peace seems farther from reality. From what we see and hear happening around us, violence is escalating on a daily basis. Our policies and practices have taught us to be callous towards injustice and consequently a clearer understanding needs to be learned concerning proper and adequate conflict resolution. It appears no attempts made to seek other alternatives that could be more effective and less destructive than violence. Spontaneous reactions are taken without wisely thinking of the implications.

Looking at the gross injustice that is practiced in the global society, of which Nigeria is not an exception, many churchmen and women who profess Christ as their personal Lord and Savior encourage the church to join the world in a violent revolution of the seemingly oppressed against their oppressors. The 'tit for tat' ethics has always been the model for the world. If the Church is unable to hold firm to the ethics of the Lord Jesus Christ, conformation to the patterns of the world is inevitable. This means that the Church has not been faithful due to her failure to preach the Gospel of Peace given to us from our Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, the Church allows the world to form her into its own mold. When the Church gives reasons why some wars are justifiable, it connotes a variation from the Gospel. War for any reason is not justified by Jesus. So what is the justification of using carnal weapons against our fellow human being after all that we are taught in Scripture proving otherwise? Are we not taught from Scripture that the Devil is behind all the evils in the world? Therefore, attacking one another violently and pointing accusing fingers to our opponent will never bring to solution the problems in our society. Even though this has been the rule of the world since Cain and Abel, there is another way we can correct the evils of injustice nonviolently. Christians in Nigeria should not lack good acumen to direct decision making in confronting violence. When Nigerian Christians lack Biblical judgment and spiritual insight they will respond in the way the world sees as justifiable. They will try by all means to deny or defend their wrongs, well determined to attribute total blame for the dispute on

their opponents¹². Moreover, it has been the pattern in Nigerian society that people alerted to a social ill happening within their community seeks to remedy it instantaneously.

They may invest much energy without a careful study of the situation only to realize that energy has been wasted and nothing good had been achieved. Such unwise decisions that often lead to energy wastage are those decisions that are made to use violence in order to either fight injustice or to correct some social ill in the society. As a result, violence has become part and parcel of our day-to-day events. This is an indisputable fact. Nigerian media like other parts of the world is dominated by news of wars, clashes and violence.

Considering the fact that we are in a technologically advanced era with news and information at our finger tips, violent responses now include a global component. Traditionally, a local or tribal might clash which sticks, sword, bows and arrows whereby few casualties would be recorded, today is a different story. Today with such clashes, it is not surprising to hear the sound of guns and other sophisticated weaponry which at the end claim hundreds of lives. Reaction to injustices in another part of the world can have instantaneous impact in Nigeria. Take for instance, the reactions to the Danish cartoonist's caricature of Mohammed and the Catholic Pope's statement of the Islamic jihad. Not only do we live in the era of information, we also live in a nuclear age, and for that reason, pacifism cannot be overemphasized, as Robert Johannes has rightly noted:

One of the pressing tasks for mankind in this age therefore is the prevention of major wars. Failure in this task could mean literary the end of our national existence and irretrievable disaster for the human race. Yet few steps are currently being taken to create a more stable system of world public order².

¹² Hizkias Assefa, *Peace and Reconciliation as a Paradigm: A Philosophy of Peace and its Implication on Conflict, Governance and Economic Growth in Africa* (Nairobi: Acis, 1993), p.18.

² Robert C. Johansen, "International Relations and Peace" in *Six Papers on Peace: A Symposium* (Elgin: Church of the Brethren General Board, 1969), p.21.

If a small tribal crash can destroy a reasonable number of lives and properties, imagine what would result in a major conflict which involved modern sophisticated weapons. As Johansen has earlier pointed out, few steps are taken to do things that make for peace.

Most efforts, scientifically and economically are directed toward invention of new and more devastating weapons. All kinds of weapons from bayonet to nuclear bombs are designed to terminate people's existence. The bloody tales of human cruelty in violent situations is not just those killed, but also those whose lives are threatened, disfigured or displaced others because of hatred towards one thing or the other. Take for instance the issues of rape and inhuman treatment among war prisoners. Ingrid Rogers in her book: *Sword into Plowshares* rightly maintains that; "every time we cease to see the brother or sister in the person, every time we deny our responsibility as 'keepers', and ego-centrally pursue only our self interest, we are repeating Cain's crime."³

It is most unfortunate that the church, which would have been an effective and efficient instrument of peace, is shirking its responsibility in peace making. Like the world, the church has responded to conflict violently. Consequently, it has been an obstacle for Christians to witness Christ as a Prince of Peace. Even the peace churches have not been boldly propagating the peace message to the world. Many may not consider pacifism as the way to peace. Many are swayed by the attitude of fellow Christians, varying theologies, and the history of Christianity. Many will mention that "millions of people have since been murdered in the name of Christianity . . . Christians have been caught in the contradiction of proclaiming love while promoting death"⁴. It is a bitter irony to do violence to one while affirming that you love him; that you wish to invite them to your Lord, who forgives sins and loves even sinners; and that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. It is hard to believe such a message when it contradicts one's practical life.

³ Ingrid Rogers, *Sword into Plowshares: A Collection of Plays about Peace and Social Injustice*. (Elgin: The Brethren Press, 1983) p.200.

⁴ Ibid.

Besides the obvious problem of a lifestyle contradicting the message of the Prince of Peace, Christians have conflicting views concerning the way to achieve peace. To some Christians, war and violence is a present reality, part and parcel of living in a broken world. There is nothing they can do about it, either to avoid or prevent it. Whatever happens they have to deal with violent confrontation with violence. This is the only way to crush the evils of the world. Those who hold to this idea of war as a reality take away Jesus' alternative way of dealing with crisis. They base their justification on human reasoning. The various interpretations of handling conflict are damaging to the unity of the body of Christ. Within the Christian faith there are many and various approaches in handling violent conflict ranging from the position of pacifism to the theology of the sword or just war. As a Christian one has to ask himself or herself "how would Jesus have reacted to this problem?"

Jesus says we should love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. Jesus would not contradict himself. We see this clearly, when on the cross, Jesus forgave those who crucified him. Jesus could have responded in a violent way using his omnipotence. Consequently, our salvation would not have been achieved since it is only through the shedding of his blood were our sins atoned. Moreover, there would not have been a model for us to the practical side of peace making. It is clearly expounded in the life of Jesus why he did not react violently to his accusers. Jesus' life was not a merely calculated pragmatic response to political or social circumstances he faced; rather it was a normative principle of action for his followers at all times and in all circumstances. So why then do Christians have conflicting views on how to respond to a conflict, we that are called believers and followers of Christ?

The challenge for Christians is to do something today that will provide a promising tomorrow for us and our children. This will only be achieved through nonviolence and forgiveness, the ways of Jesus. I believe humanity is not meant for destruction. God takes no pleasure in seeing someone created in his own image destroyed. Why, then, should we destroy

our fellow human beings and in many cases be actually proud of doing it? Categorically, violence is not the only alternative by which conflict can be resolved, as we shall see in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

1.3 THE PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

Based on the glimpse of the effects of violence we have seen so far in the preceding paragraph, it is evident that violence thwarts the progress of Nigerian society. Violence produces chaos in the presence and uncertainty of the future. For these reasons and many more, Nigerian Christians need an alternative that can better resolve conflict than violence. The primary purpose of this thesis is to discover the EYN concept of pacifism and its efficacy in resolving conflict. This thesis is aimed at offering a Biblically based alternative for Nigerians Christians who face inter-religious and socio/political crises. Pacifism is the Christocentric approach to conflict. It seeks to bring a transformation to the prejudices of many Nigerians who often quench their anger with violence. Many Nigerian Christians conceive that war is the way to peace. Not understanding that justice has already been defeated by adopting violence and other inhumane methods to achieve its goals. These kinds of actions normally give immediate but temporary results.

For instance, a group at a point may emerge with a victory in a certain clash based on their preplanned strategies or their strength at that particular point in time. They may assume that they had defeated their opponents and so their problem is solved. The vanquished on the other hand may seem too weak and quiet. Usually it is false pretence and the opposition is secretly mounting strength and momentum to retaliate. This vicious cycle perpetuates continuously repeat itself. It would surely bring a tremendous change in our society if one side decided not to retaliate. Pacifism breaks the otherwise vicious cycle.

Looking at the nature of this thesis from the outset, it undoubtedly promotes strategies and policies that enhance a peaceable co-existence in a multi tribal and multi-religious society like Nigeria. The need for pacifism in conflict transformation in Nigerian society cannot be overemphasized; looking at the perpetual increase of violence particularly in Nigeria. Therefore, considering the immense havoc that violence has been causing our society, a pacifistic stance would be the most reliable instrument to safe guard the present and the future generations from the impending possibility of annihilation. There is no better alternative that ensures and creates conducive environment than pacifism. No doubt pacifism can establish and sustain a lasting peace in our society. For if we agree that non- violence is the opposite of violence, certainly, the effects of both will also be opposite to each other. Therefore it is impossible to use violence and expect a non-violent result from it. For whatever one sows one expects to reap in kind. This is the reason the Nigerian society experiences perpetual violence. Violence is perpetually sown and little effort is made toward peace building.

This thesis also seeks to encourage continued efforts of peace making in the churches that hold to the peace position. These denominations are a minority in Christendom. Many times these denominations feel discouraged due to the fact that their efforts seem to make little difference. Many feel that it is an impossibility to convince their Christian brothers and sisters to join them on the road to peace much less the task of transformation in the world. This thesis seeks to encourage peacemakers that the little they do does make a difference. The Nigerian church needs to devise strategies for peace building that is proactive rather than reactive. What the historic peace need to do as peace makers is to consider proactive measures directed toward policies and strategies that enhance peace building. By putting forth more efforts, they will influence other bodies of believers that have different views. The more united the Nigerian church is in purpose the more powerful we are in order to overcome the evil of violence. The church needs to wake up from her slumber to shine for Christ through preaching a practical

gospel of peace. For it is only through the example of love for enemy that we will show a true Christ-like attitude. Anything else is misrepresenting Jesus here on earth.

Moreover, this thesis challenges both individual and groups to work for the good of everyone in a community. For if everyone in the community would respect his or her brother or sister as somebody who is lovely and wonderfully created in the image of God, certainly there would be a higher regard for the sacredness of life. This is a powerful instrument that would inevitably check out fears, premature death, damage, hatred, mistrust and all other vices that are generated by violence. In the absence of the fore mentioned things that steal humanity's peace there would emerge a favorable atmosphere that accommodates everybody irrespective of race, gender, and religion.

Dale Brown has something to say in accordance with the point just made. He says: "We believe that non-violence motivated by goodwill is more powerful than the sword; making possible the survival of both parties, while warfare insure the ultimate destruction of both"⁵

The truth of this statement can best be understood or explained by someone who has experienced a war or violence of any kind. For instance, when sophisticated weaponry is used, both parties are vulnerable to elimination. Therefore, to safe guard humanity from such a massive destruction, antiviolence policies like pacifism that are focused towards peace building should be emphasized. We shall therefore see in this thesis the effort of Church of the Brethren in Nigerian (EYN) in sustaining and promoting pacifism in Nigeria which is perpetually threatened by ethnic/tribal, geopolitical and religious crises.

⁵ Dale W. Brown, *Brethren and Pacifism*, (Elgin: The Brethren Press, 1970) p. 149 quoted in *The Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren*, p 93.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

With the indication of the rate at which violence increases in Nigerian society, the church is challenged like never before. So the importance of peace study and its implementation cannot be overemphasized. This is because of the vital role it plays in creating conducive atmosphere for Nigeria as well as the global society. With the new development in communication technology, a crisis is not restricted to just to a particular geographical area in which the crisis is occurring. Kano in 1995 and Kaduna in 2000⁶ are good examples of how quick information is dispersed. The reactions to the crises in these places emerged in the south that might not have been affected. Therefore with the invention of mobile phone and other means of communication, violence can easily escalate to different places within a shortest possible time. Unlike in the primitive era when communication was not as available as in the present dispensation, the modern communication system has shrunk the world into a global village. Again, I point to the Danish cartoonist and the recent statement from the Pope and its negative effect on innocent people.

Therefore, there is a need for gross awareness of interdependence and tolerance in our contemporary society. And one of the ways to do that is by pointing out the danger of violence to our society and suggests an alternative to it. And this is exactly what I seek to achieve in this thesis. It is undeniable that nonviolent means of peace making is very essential in all sphere of

⁶ Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood; Studies in Christian and Muslim Relations* (Jos: Stream Christian Publishers, 2003), pp. 46 and 63.

human life namely religious, political, social and economical. Hence the good news the paper of this kind carries is that we can reverse the terrible vicious cycle in the Nigerian culture caused by violence. If the recommendations, as posited in this thesis, would be implemented, within a short time our turbulent planet could return to its former nature, a peaceable garden. Scripture affirms that when people willingly and decisively choose to solve conflict in a peaceful manner, the sword and the spear that are reserved for wars would be hammered into plowshare and pruning hooks (Isaiah 22.4). Imagine economic importance of the modern sophisticated weaponry converted into implements that would apply to efforts for the common good of all humanity. In addition to that if the huge amount of money that is spent on nuclear weapons and defense be diverted to agricultural or educational development what a gigantic step forward in the progress of humanity.

In order to transform the distorted human perceptions from egocentrism which is motivated by greed and self-interest to Christocentrism that emphasizes the interdependence of humanity, Christians must be empowered to stand firm to the principles of conflict resolution. In this transformation, evil which had been a menace to world peace would be reduced to a barest minimum. Consequently, many people who might have been a threat to others could take up the challenge and come to a full knowledge to the implications and effects of violent actions.

This thesis also seeks to advocate for comparative study of policies specifically between militarism and pacifism and fairly seek to know which has the worst consequence. People often take certain action without a thorough investigation and often this action leads them into a regrettable result. As Scripture says, “the discerning heart keeps knowledge” (Proverbs 15:14), likewise a wise man or women does not rush into a decision. Each of the differing policies needs to be studied and analyzed carefully; economically, politically, socially and religiously. Any policy that is relevant and can determine and ensure compatibility in all of the named perspectives, this policy is the way to peace. It is not enough to take a military action in a certain

situations just because it suits your political ambition or objective. It is essential to look at it in all other perspectives.

Another significance of this research concerning the church is that peace making can open doors for evangelism. Looking at the story narrated in the background of this research paper, many people would agree that the students that saved the Muslim boys have greater opportunity for evangelism than anybody from among the angry mob. The fact that these boys were in a traumatic situation does not mean that they were not listening to the argument of the two parties. If the reason for defense of the boys were religious, they would prefer to listen to the gospel that saves life than that of the other party that destroys life. Thus, a pacifist has a greater chance for sharing the gospel to the Muslim neighbors than the non-pacifist. It is always difficult to testify the love and mercy of the Lord to someone you have already harmed or put in a miserable condition violently. It is irrational and incompatible to be warriors and peacemakers at the same time. Therefore, this study is too vital in fostering peace. Alternatively, this study indicates that nonviolent peacemaking appear to be the most viable hope for an endangered species especially we in this present generation⁷ and our children's children in the future generation. Consequently, the effect of this thesis to the Nigerian church and society cannot be overestimated if widely read by pastor, laity and even non-Christians.

1.5 THE SCOPE OF THE RESEARCH

This thesis does not attempt to give a comprehensive history of the peace church or go into details about other theories that are antonyms to the word under study. Although references may be made to other views, thorough research would be done on the EYN concept of pacifism. In applying it to the wider Nigerian society no specific geographical area will be in focus. The

⁷ Ronald C. Arnett, "Conflict Viewed from Peace Tradition" in *The Brethren Life and Thought*, 23 (Spring 1978, p. 103

reason is that violence caused either by religious, political or any other factors is easily escalated to different geographical locations with the introduction of the modern media of communication. In today's current information world it would be difficult to control crises from spreading to other places. This is the reason the scope cannot be narrowed to just one of few geographical locations.

Nevertheless, since I am dealing with a topic that some churches also identify with, for instance, the Mennonites, I cannot develop the general issues of pacifism for all the peace churches. Even though their aims and objectives may be the same, it is possible that their approaches differ. Except for the sake of reference, my focus will be on EYN in her context. Nevertheless, the methods for peace making defined in this thesis may be applicable to every context since it is Biblical. Where contextualization is needed it can be applied if it does not alter the meaning of the word of God. The effect of this thesis to the Nigerian church and society must not be underestimated.

1.6 METHODOLOGY

In achieving the goal of this research a study of the Church of the Brethren is made right from her inception, considering the factors that led to the formation of the church. Research is also made to find out why the church took a pacific position. Research is also carried throughout the length and breadth of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (EYN), to find out the concept of pacifism and how relevant it is to Nigerian society. Looking at the nature of the research, the historical part is dealt with in the library where some church historians, especially of the Brethren in American and Nigeria have documentation.

Written documentation is scanty concerning the EYN concept of pacifism. To gather current information I used a questionnaire and oral interview to find out the facts of how relevant

pacifism is to Nigerian society. Looking at the nature of the research, it requires both library and field research. The historical past is dealt with in the library while the search for current relevancy by questionnaire and oral interviews. All the three methods have served the purpose for which I intended it. The oral interviews enlightened me greatly in the overall cause of the research. So in addition to the already documented information about the Church of the Brethren abroad and at home and their efforts in peace making, the information gathered in the oral interviews will be especially helpful for the present and future generations.

1.7 DEFINITION

I would have loved to define all the words that appear in the title of this thesis, but to save time and space, I will define the most important one, pacifism. Even if the aforementioned reason may not be very sufficient, there are other reasons that should be considered. Firstly, the word pacifism serves as a core in the caption of the thesis. If pacifism is therefore understood by the reader all other words will not be a problem. Secondly, the word Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, which would have been a problem to some people is briefly defined in the section that deals with the historical aspect of the thesis. Thirdly, and most importantly, pacifism is often misunderstood and thereby misinterpreted wrongly. People will perceive a new understanding when pacifism is defined accurately.

PACIFISM: In order to do justice to this research, pacifism has to be well defined. Too often people misinterpret and misunderstand pacifism. Consequently, Christians will not fully understand God's revelation as it relates to pacifism. Let us begin with the etymology of the word. Since many English words are borrowed from other languages, it would be wise to go back to the root. Failing to do that might lead to define a word with prejudices, biases, or assumptions.

To avoid this error, I would like to begin with the etymology of pacifism. Pacifism is derived from the Latin word *Pacificus*. It is a compound word consisting of *pax* and *facere* which literary mean “peace” and “to make” or “to do” respectively⁸. From this analysis, it is easy to comprehend what is meant by pacifism. It is a peace making process. To stop here will still make some people a bit misinformed or confused. For this research I am going to expatiate more using the two components that constitute pacifism. These are “peace” and “to make.” First of all, it should be noted that a definition is always focused and related to the subject under study. For this reason, hardly a word can be defined that would be wholly accepted because of individual differences, biases and prejudices. However, the actual meaning of a word cannot be tossed despite the different analysis that one may use to interpret or define the word.

Hizkias Assefa in his book: *Peace and Reconciliation as a Paradigm* defines peace thus: “peace is not simply a state of general tranquility or an imposed order that suppresses discord, but rather a net of relationships full of energy and differences.”⁹ This statement implies that even in the midst of crisis, peace is actively present. How? The second part of Assefa’s sentence describes that, ‘peace is a net of relationships full of energy and differences.’ In such a situation, since a net relationship full of energy and differences is mentioned, it implies that while one side is activity violent towards the other side, the other side in response tries to calm the situation. Both sides are actively engaged in doing one thing but with different motives. That is reason Assefa points out that it is a relationship full of energy and differences. He argues his point thus: “Peace is a philosophy, and in fact a paradigm with its own values and precepts, which provides a framework to discern, understand analyze and regulate all human relationships in order to create an integrated, holistic and human social order”.¹⁰ This statement clarifies the distinctions that exist between peace and violence. Each of them cannot be a means to achieve the result of the

⁸ D.P Simpson “Pacifism”, *Casell’s New Latin Dictionary* (New York; Funk and Wagnall, 1960) p.342.

⁹ Hizkias Assefa, *Peace and Reconciliation as a Paradigm: A Philosophy of Peace and its Implication on Conflict, Governance and Economic Growth in Africa* (Nairobi: Acis, 1993) p.18

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p.5.

other. In other words peace cannot lead to violence and vice versa. That is the reason Assefa said that peace is not an imposed order because the peace that is achieved through violence is an imposed one. On the other hand, a peace that is worked out using its precepts and values will surely lead to a lasting peace. The objective of peace as we can deduce from this definition bring opponents to a state of tolerance and respect for one another. From all indications peace tends to preserve the mutual co-existence in our society and bring to order any violent acts that may threaten the society.

Dean. C. Curry gives a more theological definition of peace than that of Assefa when he says: “to make peace is to engage actively in bringing God’s redemptive purpose to bear in all our broken society.”¹¹ If God’s redemptive purpose is going to be preserved in our society, we need to first of all know what God’s redemptive purpose is and its significance for humanity. God’s redemptive purpose is to reverse the devastating condition of man which he found himself in after the fall. Redemption is bringing humanity to its original state. That is a state of peace with God and fellow human being. In this process, God, who has been offended, is the initiator.

Likewise in implementing peace in our society, the offended should take the lead. If that is the case with peace process, it therefore negates the use of violence in order to achieve peace. If God had used violence in order to reconcile us to himself he would not have sent the Messiah but legions. And our salvation would have been an imposition rather than on the basis of faith. That is exactly what happens when force or violence is used as a means to peace. Even though there may be calmness for a moment it cannot promise a lasting peace. There is no way to peace except through peace. Peace, therefore, is sacrificial love. The Biblical principle of love and sacrifice is the only method to use in order to save the world from the epidemic of violence.

Another component of pacifism that we are going to consider is “*facere*” meaning ‘to make’ or ‘to do’. The significance of the careful study of this word is to correct the view that

¹¹ Dean C. Curry (Ed) *Evangelicals and Bishops Pastoral letter*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1984), p. 29.

pacifism is ‘passive’. From the word study of pacifism, we therefore understand that it is an active not a passive word. This is confirmed in the statement of Dale W. Brown when he says: “nonresistance pacifism in an active witness, striving to make peace.”¹¹ History shows that some of the methods used by pacifists like: nonviolent action, nonresistance, non-cooperation and many others do not suggest passivity. Gene Sharp comments on one of these methods thus:

Nonviolent action is a generic term covering a dozens of specific methods of protest, non-cooperation and intervention, in all which the actionists conduct the conflict by doing or refusing to do certain things without using physical violence.

¹²

In refuting to equate pacifism to passiveness, Gene Sharp argues that despite the fact that violence arouses people’s emotions, Christ-likeness in us helps to soften the grievances and graciously helps us to act nonviolently. According to Sharp, irrespective of the cause, the degree, and the scope, “nonviolent action is a technique by which people that sees struggle as essential can wage their conflict without violence.”¹³ This explanation would be of great help to those people who often consider pacifism as similar or synonymous with passiveness.

Unlike passiveness, pacifism is actively moving towards a set of goals in order to halt the annihilation of human race by violence. Although its activeness could not be compare to that of violence either. While violence takes up arms to achieve its goals, pacifism on the other hand does not. One of those people who used this method successfully is Mahatma Gandhi in opposition to the British government. Sharp quotes Gandhi:

You have great military resources and your naval power is matchless. If we wanted to fight you on your own ground, we should be unable to do so, but if the above submissions be not acceptable to you, we cease to play the part of the ruled. You may, if you like, cut us to pieces. You may shatter us at the cannon’s mouth. If you act contrary to our will, we shall not help you; and without our help, we know that you cannot move one step forward.¹⁴

¹¹ Dale W. Brown, *Biblical Pacifism*. (Elgin: Brethren Press, 2003), p. 40.

¹² Gene Sharp “Nonviolent Action an Active Technique of Struggle” in *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargeant Publisher, 1973), p 64

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid, p. 84 citing M.K Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*. P. 100

The successes that can be achieved through nonviolent actions are immeasurable. But because some have negative concepts of it they consider it as ineffective. Like in the case of Jawaharlal Nehru who was a contemporary of Gandhi. He could not believe that Gandhi's method would have yielded a positive result for Indians. Nehru was initially against the nonviolent action of Gandhi. When he was made the Prime Minister of independent India, he conferred that:

In spite of its negative name, it was a dynamic method, the very opposite of a meek submission to a tyrant's will. It was not a coward's refuge from action, but a brave man's defiance of evil and national subjection.¹⁵

From this statement it could be understood that pacifism is not a passive position.

Neither is a pacifist a coward trying to hide behind peace. A pacifist is one who engages actively in peacemaking at anytime and at any cost. So when we combine the two different component that constitute pacifism *viz. pax* meaning 'peace' and *facere* meaning 'to make,' we have peacemaking; an effort by an individual or a group to either endeavor in creating a peaceful coexistence in a community by managing a conflict or taking a non lethal steps in fighting injustice.

In spite of its long history, pacifism is still relatively unused in conflict transformation. However, pacifism is called for in every situation. Peacemaking should be incorporated in our daily activities. Looking at it from that perspective would help us to cultivate the habit of peace making prior to emergency of any conflict. Unpreparedness in implementing peacemaking in our daily lives often allows crises to meet us unaware. This has restricted our peacemaking process to nothing more than reconciliation. The moment the crisis is over the peacemaking process is forgotten until another crisis strikes again. That is why pacifism remains underdeveloped. To save pacifism from this neglected position of only reconciliation to a position of more effective peace making, it should be incorporated in our daily lives.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.87, citing Jawaharlal Nehru, *Toward Freedom*, p. 80

Unlike what other people think of pacifism as passiveness, cowardice and any other negative names they often ascribe, Nigerian Christians have seen many examples of the opposite. Unlike the violence that it is a scourge on the society and its irreparable damages, pacifism has saved many lives and protected valuable property from damage. Pacifism therefore is workable in any given context. Pacifism is able to resolve a conflict and cultivates peace in our society.

These definitions help in giving insight to the study. Whatever prejudices or biases one might have hold against pacifism the true definition would help streamline his or her thoughts to a different direction. Moreover, it also clarifies the doubt and the ignorance, making possible the repositioning of one's preconceived mind towards pacifism in a new light. A closer examination of any philosophy or set of ideas help in knowledge and understanding. Any one who has carefully studied pacifism can be in a better position to criticize it than someone who has only surface knowledge of it.

From here I shall proceed in giving a history of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN), Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. This includes the origin; the beginning and the expansion of the church in Europe and its formation in Nigeria.

CHAPTER TWO: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF EKKLESIYAR YAN' UWA A NIGERIA (EYN).

2.1 THE ORIGIN OF EYN.

The origin of what is called today the Church is traced far back to the day of Pentecost- that particular episode in the history of Christianity when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles. The episode left many in the audience awestruck and filled with suspicion. Then Peter filled with the Holy Spirit rose and gave an apologetic address to the audience. His statement invigorated the audience to repentance and three thousand believed and were baptized in the new faith on that day (Acts 2). That marked the birthday of the Church and confirms the statement of Jesus when he said,

Blessed are you Simon son of Jonah for man did not reveal this to you. And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. I will give you the Key of the Kingdom of heaven, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven” (Matt.16: 17 – 19).

Consequently, everyone who confesses the name of Jesus Christ, believes in him, and accepts him as his personal Lord and Savior traces his root to the day of Pentecost. Nevertheless each denomination of the Church has its own specific birthday. Therefore in order to trace the

formation of EYN it will be of paramount importance to trace the origin of the Church in general and also Church of the Brethren in specific.

Long before, the church had been under one roof with the Pope as the head. The first disintegration began after the chalcedonic council in 451 AD when the Monophysite – “one nature” of Christ was condemned¹. Those who held this view were predominantly Egyptians. The condemnation of this view and the consequent departure of the Egyptian church therefore led to the birth of the Coptic Church. Since then the Coptic Church was separated from the Catholic Church. This schism generated much controversy and enmity between the Catholic Church and the Coptic Church as would later be experienced during the Reformation in the 16th century.²

Martin Luther was rejuvenated with his deep devotion to the study of scriptures. He is considered to be the father of the Reformation Period. He discerned that the Church of his time was contrary to the New Testament Church he read about in the Bible. He felt that the Church was doing nothing less than turning people away from God because of the church’s ineffectiveness in building up the faith of men in God. He therefore determined to unveil and oppose any polity that does not relate people to God.³

Even though Luther’s intention was not to break away from the Catholic Church, it became inevitable when the papacy was unable to accommodate Luther’s teachings and convictions. Eventually the Protestant Church or Lutheranism grew out of Luther’s vision of Church. This period became a gateway for the emergence of several other groups, too. Consequently, the theological tensions became not only Catholics against Protestants but also among the Protestants themselves. The crisis reached its peak when the religious conflicts were no longer differentiated from political conflicts. Considering the situation then, Edward Gibbon commented thus:

¹ William C. Placer, *A History of Christian Theology; An Introduction* (Philadelphia: West minister press 1983, p84

² Alan Thomson, *Church History: New Movements*, (London: Holy Trinity Church (SPCK) 1976) p.7.

³ Ibid, pp. 6f.

The ravages of the barbarians whom Alaric led from the bank of the Sanube were less destructive than the hostilities exercised by the troops of Charles V, a Catholic prince; who called himself emperor of the Romans.⁴

Even before the inception of the Reformation, the Church has experienced many dark periods in her history. There have been terrible deeds done in the name of Christ and the Church. Undeniably, “the war of religion does not form a happy or enlightening period Church history.”⁵ Take for instance Thomas Muntzer who had in 1524 recommended the use of violence in order to bring total cleansing in the church. This resulted in the Peasants’ War of 1524. In spite of how people applauded Luther for the job well done in effecting tremendous and unexpected change in the Church, the aftermath of the Reformation left many people unsatisfied. Many people maintained that the Reformation had left many stones unturned. That consequentially led to the emergence of various groups and movements within the Protestant movement as well as outside. The intention of these groups was to effect a complete change in the Church. Within this period of reform and change, the Anabaptists emerged, neither embracing the Mother Church or the newly formed Protestant and Reformed Churches.

Alexander Mack, recognized as one of the founders of the Church of the Brethren is said to be one of those who were not content with the result of the Reformation. He was born in 1679 at Schriesheim near Heidelberg, Germany. He was a member of the Reformed Church, but became dissatisfied with the religious condition in Germany observing, “the formalism, corruption, persecution and lack of piety in the state Churches.”⁶ Mack observed that there was a great decay of true Christianity almost in every place⁷ and made up his mind not to follow suit. James Quinter summarizes Mack’s conviction from his memoirs thus:

Becoming dissatisfied with the religious system in which he had been brought up and being anxious to ascertain the mind of the Lord as revealed in the scriptures,

⁴ Ibid, p.31.

⁵ Ibid, p.33.

⁶ Rufus D. Bowman, *The Church of the Brethren and War: 1708 – 1941* (Elgin: Brethren Publishing House, 1944), P1 25

⁷ Ibid.

to this source was his mind directed in search for old paths. He became convinced by his reading of scriptures that an immersion in water was the New Testament baptism and a believer the only proper subject for the ordinance and that the doctrines and practices defended in the following work are such as believers should receive and obey. Accordingly, he and his wife and six others in the year 1708, were immersed in the Eder River and covenanted together to walk in all commandments and ordinances of the Lord.⁸

Eder River serves as the cradle for the Church of the Brethren, which subsequently became the mother-church of the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN). This incidence took place at Schwarzenau in the province of Wittgenstein in what is now Germany. This was the province ruled by Count Henry who granted freedom of worship in his county.⁹ The eight persons were Alexander Mack and his wife, Anna Margareta Mack, Joanna Noetinger Alexander Bone, George Grebe, Lucas Vetter, John Kipping and his wife, Joanna Kipping. Having evaluated the consequences of their action, Alexander and his colleagues still sought for an advice from a theologian Hochmann who was Mack's close friend. Hochmann told them "to count the cost".¹⁰ The reason to count the cost was because the state recognized only three churches, namely; Catholic, the Lutheran and the Reformed churches. These churches all practiced infant baptism. The Anabaptists who preceded the Brethren with adult baptism were badly persecuted by the church and also the state. Alan Thomson affirms: "there are official records of the execution of many hundreds of Anabaptists during the reformation".¹¹ However this did not scare the Brethren from practicing what they had believed was biblical.

Expectedly, criticism was aimed at the Brethren from the church and the state when the news of their action was spread. The rulers of the surrounding territories criticized and persecuted the Brethren because they feared that what happened in the Anabaptist revival at Munster in 1535

⁸ Ibid, p. 26 citing Mack Alexander, A Plain View of the Rites and Ordinances, p. V

⁹ Donald E. Miller, A self – instruction Guide Through Brethren History (Elgin: The Brethren press, 1976) p.

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¹⁰ Ibid, p. 6

¹¹ Thomson, p. 39.

to happen in their own territories¹². On the other side of the theological debate were critics called Radical Pietists including Hochmann who looked at the Brethren formation as unfortunate, that they had sold out to the institutionalized church. The Radical Pietists reasoned, that since the Brethren organized themselves, practiced visible ordinances, they would repeat the same mistakes of the established churches all over again. The Brethren defended their position by writing treatises.¹³ In spite of the defense of their position their efforts to receive recognition was of no avail. The Brethren were persecuted and declared a prohibited sect rather than a church.

The lack of recognition did not seem to quench the zeal in the Brethren. Donald

Durnbaugh describes how the movement was gaining strength among the pietists:

At this time a special awakening arose in the heart of many among the friends in this land, who did not wish to remain longer in such division and indifference. They therefore began to unite in prayer and edify one another from the Holy Word. They were called new Baptists because they practised, among other well seeming ordinances, baptism of adults by immersion. They were mostly single minded and good souls. They displayed at first a great earnestness and zeal in their behaviour and conduct, through which many were moved and were drawn into their circle¹⁴

The group continued to increase in number even as opposition continued despite the good reputation as just described by Durnbaugh. The Brethren were loyal to the governing authorities except where their allegiances to God were compromised. Persecution grew intense. When they discovered that Count Henry, the lord of the feudal territory the Brethren lived within could no longer protect them, they had no alternative than to search for a more secure situation. Since they had increased in number, this sojourners' movement from Schwarzenau spread to several areas. Brethren moved to the areas of Marienborn, Creyfeld and Epstein. Alexander Mack and a few others remained behind at Schwarzenau until 1720 when they too had to leave because of severe

¹² Donald F. Durnbaugh, "Early History" in *The Church of the Brethren Past and Present*, (Elgin: the Brethren Press, 1971), p. 13.

¹³ Ibid

¹⁴ Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' church: The History and character of Radical Protestantism*, (New York: Macmillan company, 1768), pp. 125f. Citing "European Origins", pp. 217ff.

persecution. They fled to Westervain in West Friesland, Holland. This congregation is known by more than one name; Surestervin or Surhuisterveen.¹⁵

The movement of the Brethren to other safe havens did not yield absolute freedom from persecution. For instance in Holland, though they were accepted and assisted by the Mennonites, they were not granted a complete freedom of religion. In the Creyfeld area the Brethren encountered severe hardship. Some of them were put in prison while others were made to row in galley boats from years.¹⁶ However none of them denounced their faith as a result of persecutions or hardships. Their conviction was so strong that persecution, rather than weakening the Brethren, did nothing but strengthened them. The fact that many were drowned, burned at the stake, suffered life imprisonment, the persecution served as catalysts for the propagation of Brethren beliefs. Although we cannot dispel completely that persecution restrained or hindered them to achieve a greater success but had not stop them from pursuing what they considered biblical.

The Brethren hoped one day to be in a land that would guarantee a freedom of religious practice. Their desire was to be free from any harassment by the state and the state recognized churches.¹⁷ They desired to be liberated from any form of restriction. This led some of them to contemplate a move to the new world – the colonies of America. William Penn was establishing a new paradigm in which a colony of settlers could freely choose to worship as they pleased.

But why should the Brethren prefer a foreign land than their own fatherland? The truth is that, the Brethren were not persecuted in Europe because of their disloyalty to the governing authorities. They were not found wanton. Even the authorities acknowledged that the Brethren in Europe were morally sound and peace loving. Their character was confirmed in a statement of Count Henry's administrator:

¹⁵ Virginia S. Fisher, *The Story of the Brethren*, (Elgin: The Brethren publishing House, 1957), p. 19.

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church*, p. 127.

...that for a while pious people have been living here of whom we never heard anything evil. They kept themselves very quiet and retired and no man ever makes any complaint of them. Lately forty families of them about two hundred persons have moved out of the country¹⁸.

If the authority had truly recognized the Brethren and how they lived, their security would not have been at stake. This indicates that while in Europe, the governing authorities recognized the Brethren in principle but not in practice. That was the reason the Brethren were restlessly moving from one place to the other as Samuel Smith describes:

Since they could never gain strength enough in Europe to eat their own bread, although in Holland good friends were moved to assist them and actually did show them great love, they were continually longing for a place where by the blessing of God, they might be able to maintain themselves by the labor of their hands, and to pass the rest of their lives in perfect liberty of conscience, which no where in Europe they could enjoy together¹⁹

Consequently, the Brethren had no other intention than to move to a safe place. Peter Becker led the first small wave of Brethren that sailed from Europe to America. Twenty families left Creyfeld in 1719 and settled in Germantown, Pennsylvania. It took four years before their first ordinances of Love Feast and Baptism. The reason was they had to work hard in settling down and organizing themselves.

They organized the first congregation in America on Christmas Day of 1723 after a duly consultation with other Brethren that were still in Europe.²⁰ Peter Becker was chosen to be the first minister of Church of the Brethren in America.

In 1729, Alexander Mack led the second and the largest wave of Brethren emigrants to America. They were about fifty seven families with only fifteen children that were under fifteen, the total number of people were a hundred and twenty.²¹ Mack and the entire group were warmly received in Germantown by the Brethren that preceded them. Mack was made the elder (pastor)

¹⁸ Martin G. Brumbaugh, *A History of the German Baptist Brethren in Europe and America* (Mount Morris: Brethren Publishing House, 1961) p, 52 citing Goebel, *Christliches Leben*, vol, ii, p. 776.

¹⁹ Durnbaugh, p. 128 citing Samuel Smith, *History of the Province of Pennsylvania*, p.189.

²⁰ Durnbaugh, *The Believers Church* p. 128.

²¹ Emmert F. Bittinger, *Heritage and Promise*,

of the congregation. There was no indication to whether the shift of power generated any tension between Mack and Peter Becker, the first leader of the Church of the Brethren in America. Perhaps it was because Mack was highly respected among the Brethren. The humility of Alexander Mack was demonstrated in the Brethren's initial baptism. No one knows the identity of the person who first baptized Mack before he baptized the rest of the Brethren in 1708. To this day nobody knows the person who baptized Alexander Mack. Mack's humility and generous spirit gave him Christ-like attributes for leadership.

In 1733 John Nass led the third and the last party of the Brethren migration to America. A few years after their arrival, precisely on 19th February 1735 Alexander Mack died.²² By 1735 most of the Brethren had made the move to America. The few that were left in Europe joined with other churches.

The Church of the Brethren flourished well in America and by the year 1770 has eighteen congregations. Efforts were made towards reaching out with the gospel message.²³ In respect to the authority of scripture, the Brethren prioritized the Great Commission; sharing their faith with others. Merle Crouse rightly comments on Brethren conviction when he said, "the Brethren have always been convinced that they have something Christian to do out there among the nations".²²

Since many others church groups have began evangelism at home and in foreign land, Brethren deemed it necessary to complement such efforts in evangelizing the world. Africa was one of those areas that were desperately in need of the gospel. The Brethren embarked on foreign mission endeavors. The Brethren went to India and China in the late 1800s. In 1923 the Church of the Brethren Mission came to Nigeria. The following sections of this chapter will discuss the Brethren mission work in Nigeria from its formation, growth and autonomy.

²² Nvwa D. Balami, *Fifty Years of the Church of the Brethren Mission in Nigeria (1923-1973); In a Nigeria Perspective.* (Bethany: A thesis of Masters of Arts in Theology, 1983), p.3

²³ Samuel D. Dali, "The Church of the Brethren Mission in Nigeria 1923 – 1973" in *The Progressive History of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (Kwarhi: EYN publications, 1998)*, p. 21

2.2 THE FORMATION OF EKKLESIYAR YAN'UWA A NIGERIA (EYN)

The Church of the Brethren in America became developed and well organized. What they achieved in America is what they longed for in Europe, the freedom to express their belief without any restraint. They began to move beyond basic survival to evangelism. During this period as was the case with many denominations, the Brethren were swept up with a thirst for evangelism in the far reaches of the world. Being captured with the desire to reach out, the Church of the Brethren resolved to come to Africa, and specifically Nigeria, a region south of the Sahara. Dr Karl Kumm who was the General Secretary of Sudan United Mission (SUM) further motivated this desire. Dr Kumm was on missionary campaign in United States in 1916 when one day he was invited by the Manchester College Chapel (Church of the Brethren affiliated college) to give a lecture on October 23, 1916. At this occasion he challenged his audience for mission work. The Church of the Brethren heeded this challenge and quickened their earlier resolution. Unfortunately, the World War I altered the implementation of this resolution.²²

At the Brethren Annual Conference of June 7 – 15, 1922 held at Winona Lake, Indiana Stover and Ruth Kulp and their colleagues Albert and Lola Bechtel Helser were presented as missionary candidates. The conference voted their approval for north-eastern Nigeria as mission field. A prayer was said for the missionaries at the conference to be effective vassals of God. Stover Kulp and Albert Helser agreed to come to Nigeria first without their wives in order to select a site. So they began their preparations to leave.

The early period of Brethren Mission in Nigeria was during the British colonial rule. It was necessary to go first to London for the initial approval, geographic selection, and demographic back-grounding. On 13, October 1922, Kulp and Helser left the U.S.A for London. They spent two months in London. On the 13th of December 1922 they left London and arrived in Lagos on December 29 1922²⁴.

²⁴ Nvwa D. Balami, p.7 citing the Lagos News Papers *The Nigeria Pioneer* of January 5, 1923.

During their few days in Lagos they contacted Sir Hugh Clifford, the British Governor in Lagos. The Governor not only gave a warm reception to the new missionaries but also gave them a letter of introduction to the Lieutenant Governor in Kaduna. This letter would later be an effective and important document for the missionaries' acquaintance, though it was meant as a mere introduction. In the same vein, the missionaries were well received in Kaduna by Mr. Gowers, the Lieutenant Governor. Mr. Gowers gave them a geographic area in the southern part of Borno Province to begin their mission efforts. He added that the missionaries should travel through Zaria and obtain information from the Church Missionary Society (CMS).²⁵

While in Zaria, Kulp and Helser met Dr. Welter Miller who suggested the possibility of starting mission work in southern Zaria. The missionaries, however, desired to establish the mission work in northeast part of Nigeria. The Brethren's desire for southern Borno Province was instigated by the Lieutenant Government in Kaduna who had told them that there were about 200,000 pagans living there. Having made up their mind they rejected the offer of Dr. Welter Miller. Before they left Zaria, they hired three men named Shehu, Garbed, and John to serve as guide, cook and interpreter respectively. On 19th January 1923, the missionaries and their helpers left Zaria for Jos.

Even though they had their first Brethren Sunday worship in Jos, Nigeria, this was not regarded as the genesis of their mission work in Nigeria. On 23, January, 1923 the missionaries proceeded to Bauchi where they spent two days visiting schools and European workers residing there.²⁶ From Bauchi, the missionaries proceeded to Biu on horseback while their carriers trekked.

They arrived in Biu on February 12, 1923. From the welcome they received on reaching Biu, Kulp and Helser began to perceive the struggles they would encounter. Major Frank Edgar, the District Officer and Mai Ali Dogo, the Emir of Biu, were not happy with the arrival of the

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Samuel D. Dali, *The Church of the Brethren Mission in Nigeria 1923 – 1973*. Pp24f.

missionaries. It is surprising to note that the Emir rejected the missionaries based on the influence of the District Officer.²⁷ The Emir's action may be justified due to the fact that he was a Muslim. The D.O.'s claim to be Christian did not only oppose but instigated the Emir's decision. It has been documented that among the colonist there were indulgences such as alcoholism, adultery and injustice that the presence of missionaries' presence could stifle²⁸. This was vividly shown in the action of Major Frank Edgar towards Kulp and Helsler. However, the missionaries were neither scared nor discouraged with this action, for they knew that the God who had sent them would not leave nor forsake them.

In order to cover up his disapproval, the District Officer told the missionaries that he was not in position to give any permit to them and so he sent them to Mr. H.R. Palmer, the Resident Officer of Borno Province. On meeting the Resident, the missionaries presented the letter earlier given to them by the Governor. Even though the Resident shared the same view with the District Officer, he had no option other than to grant the permission. He, therefore, sent them to establish their mission work at Garkida rather than the missionaries' original desired location. Garkida was at the edge of Borno Province. There was a plan by the British Rule to cut Garkida away from Borno Province and merge it with Adamawa Province.²⁹ Prior to the arrival of the missionaries at the Resident Officer's place, the District Officer already had sent a word not to allow the missionaries to settle in Biu. So the granting of Garkida as the site for the mission work carried accomplished two purposes.

First, placing the missionaries in Garkida satisfied the District Officer of southern Borno Province and the Emir of Biu. Secondly, it satisfied the Lt. Governor's request to place the Brethren Mission in southern Borno Province, though only temporarily. The missionaries left Maiduguri and arrived in Garkida, their designated area on 8, March 1923.³⁰

²⁷ Dali, p. 26

²⁸ Ayuba Ndule, A Lecture Notes on Mission in Northern Nigeria, (Bukuru: TCNN, 2004).

²⁹ Ibid, p.11

³⁰ Ibid

When they finished surveying the area, they resolved to begin work on March 17, 1923. That was the ground breaking occasion for Stover Kulp and Albert Helser and marks the birthday of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (EYN). On this day the missionaries and over thirty laborers began the work as Kulp describes:

This morning long before the sun was coming over the hill, the laborers came and we started work. Our boys and the headman and 30 laborers, we proceeded to the spot for consecration of the ground for our first house in this great land of need. I told the men through an interpreter that this house was not an ordinary house but one dedicated to the honor and glory of Jesus Christ. I read Ephesians 2:14 – 22 and Albert read II Corinthians 5:14 – 6:10. It was impressive to me - very impressive. I hope these people, somehow, can get the spirit of our enterprise. Although it was in English and our two boys were all who understood us yet there is another voice that can speak to these men where our voice cannot be understood.³¹

After the reading of these passages, they bowed on their knees and prayed. From that day forward, it has been the tradition of the missionaries and the workers that they begin each working day with prayer and brief worship service, and in the evening, Bible study.³²

Despite sicknesses and stresses, the missionaries and their workers were able to erect two houses. Kulp and Helser also participated in agricultural work during the planting season. They planted their own farms. Kulp started elementary instructions in reading, arithmetic, and religious instructions for the young boys who worked on their farms. Older men also benefited from the instruction. Unfortunately, Helser grew ill which led the missionaries to go to the hospital in Lokoja for treatment.³³

After the treatment, the doctor advised Kulp and Helser to travel to Jos for Helser's convalescence. So they took a leave and recuperated in Jos. Their leave coincided with their wives arrival to Nigeria from the United States. Since Albert was not strong enough, he stayed in Jos, while Stover traveled to Lagos to receive Lola Helser and Ruth Kulp.

³¹ Dali pp. 29f citing Mary Ann Moyer Kulp, *No Longer Strangers*, p, 23.

³² Ibid, p.23

³³ Ibid.p.31

They arrived in Lagos on October 18, 1923.³⁴ While in Lagos, Kulp discussed with the Governor General about the issue of ownership of the land in Garkida. The Governor General categorically assured Kulp of the approval of land ownership. Later the missionaries were incredulous upon receiving a letter, said to have been written by the Resident Officer of Borno Province stating that the missionaries had to leave with immediate effect³⁵. The letter reads:

I have today received an urgent telegram from the Resident, Borno Province, dated 5th. Inst., instructing me to inform you that his honor, the Lieutenant Governor, has decided you cannot now be permitted to reside at Garkida. I am directed to inform you also that you should return to Bauchi forth with. I need hardly say that I shall be glad to assist you in any way in supplying carriers for your loads. To save time I suggest that you inform the clerk at Biu at once of the number of carriers you require and they will be sent to you³⁶.

Kulp and Helser pleaded with Major Frank Edgar to extend the time frame to enable them to contact the Governor. This request was followed by several other messages that required the missionaries to leave Garkida immediately. However the missionaries insisted on staying legitimately concerned for Mrs. Kulp inability to travel due to illness. Stover Kulp wrote:

Sir: Memo 33T is at hand. Mrs. Kulp is seriously ill with what appears to be appendicitis. In her present condition it would be quite impossible to move her. We have the honor to be, Sir your obedient servants.³⁷

Helser urgently went to Lagos only to discover that it was not the Governor who initiated the plan. It had been a secret plan of the District Officer of Biu and the Resident Officer of Borno Province. They had conspired against the presence of missionaries in Borno Province and had indirectly involved the Governor in their plan. They earlier sent to the Governor that the lives of the American missionaries were at stake because of the natives' hostility. As a result the Governor ordered that they should be relocated to Bauchi for security purposes. When the

³⁴ Ibid, p.32

³⁵ Ibid, p.33

³⁶ Raymond Hickey, *Christianity in Borno State and Northern Gongola* (Aachen: Institute of Missiology, 1984) pp. 21f

³⁷ Ibid, p. 23

Governor discovered that it was a plan of the D. O and the Resident, he scheduled to meet with them and the missionaries at Kaduna to give both sides a hearing.³⁸

When the missionaries and the colonial administrators convened at Kaduna, it was discovered that the D.O. and the Resident falsely contrived the danger of the missionaries' lives in Garkida. The Governor asked the missionaries if they would take the risk and return to Garkida. They agreed and returned to Garkida,³⁹ relegating whatever evil plans that might further fashion against them. Fortunately the Governor took a wise decision by dismissing Major Edgar. Mr. Palmer, the Resident Officer, was transferred to Kaduna as the Lieutenant Governor.⁴⁰

The mission work in Garkida was further strengthened with the arrival of two additional staff: Dr. and Mrs. Homer Burke on 10th January 1924. The increase in the staff made the mission work easier. All health issues were transferred to Dr. Burke and his wife while Stover Kulp and Albert Helser focused on evangelism and education. However, tragedy struck the small and tight knit mission group with the death Ruth Royer Kulp, the wife of Stover Kulp. She died on June 15, 1924. Mrs. Kulp died after she gave birth to a pre-mature child on June 15, 1924. The baby developed a respiratory problem and died the next night. When Mrs. Kulp was told her child has passed away she uttered a few words and died the following day. While she lay dying, she prayed that God would save the Bura people. The deaths of Mrs. Kulp and her child were badly felt not only by the missionaries but also by the Garkida community. Many came from Garkida and the environs and paid their respects to Stover Kulp and the small mission community.⁴¹

The Brethren mission effort was not defeated by this tragic event. Their evangelistic campaign was initiated in the very same year, 1924. Their evangelistic thrust began in such places as Gwabila, Ntawa, Gardemna, Kwanda and Lokoja along the Hawul River. These were all local villages in the vicinity of Garkida. The local response was not encouraging. Many locals

³⁸ Ibid. p. 23

³⁹ Dali, p.34

⁴⁰ Balami, *Fifty – Years of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria (1923 – 1973)*, p. 13

⁴¹ Dali, p. 35.

turned away from the gospel due to the issue of polygamy. However, the missionaries were able to get few converts. The first Nigerians that were baptized by Church of the Brethren missionaries were: Risku Madziga, Plesar Sawa, Njidda, Gwari Kwajafa and Ibrahim Shallangwa. They were baptized in the Hawul River on June 12, 1927.⁴¹ In spite of the handful of believers in nearly five years of toiling, the missionaries were not discouraged.

Instead a mission statement and goal was formed to enhance the evangelistic work of the church thus: “to bring all men and women to Christ so that they might acknowledge him as Savior and Lord over their life, and serve him in the fellowship of the church; to achieve the abundant life so that the kingdom of God shall be strengthened and enlarged.”⁴²

This mission statement served as a mission goal or objective that helped the Brethren Mission to clarify and focus, to expand or extend their work to other areas.

2.3 THE GROWTH OF THE CHURCH

Despite the slow response of the local population to the Gospel, the early Brethren Mission endeavored to reach as many communities as they could. To make their message more meaningful and relevant, the missionaries developed programs that could elevate the physical, psychological, and spiritual welfare of the people. James Poling describes this endeavor in his statement thus:

Creating and supporting structures that nurture holistic health and welfare. Developing institutions that respond with specialized health welfare care for victims of the breakdown of community. Joining in advocacy with those whose health and well being is threatened by the institutions and power that destroy community life, creating and developing alternative health welfare programs and institutions that lead to change in the nature of community itself.⁴³

⁴² Balami, p.104

⁴³ Dali p 36 citing James Poling “Brethren Ministry of Health care”, in *Brethren Life and Thought* 1988.17 p.10.

The four-fold mission programs that served as machinery for the growth of the church were: evangelism, health care, education and rural development.

In the area of health, the Lafiya Program was initiated and directed by Dr. Homer Burke in 1926. Two other medical doctors, Dr. J. Paul Gibble and Dr. Howard Bosler joined the Lafiya Program. The establishment of the Virgwi Leprosarium in 1925 necessitated the coming of these two missionaries. And later Dr. Burke was asked to establish another hospital at Lassa among the Margi people⁴⁴. The hospitals at Garkida and Lassa and the leprosarium at Virgwi served as centers for evangelism. The late Rev. Mai Sule Biu and the late Daniel Mode both received Jesus as their Lord and Savior at the Virgwi Leprosy Hospital.

They later became prominent evangelists in the history of the EYN Church. In addition, Kulp and Helser established an elementary school for 15 Bura boys. This school was later development to primary school and was expanded to other areas. Subsequent development included the establishment of post primary school and middle school which opened in Garkida in 1947. Teachers' educational training was also started in Garkida 1949 and later transferred to Waka in Biu. A secondary school was added to it in 1959⁴⁵.

Due to the fact that evangelism was embedded in the health and education programs of the Church of the Brethren, the church grew at a fast pace. Church leadership became the scale of preference. In order to meet the spiritual needs of this fast growing church, the Brethren Mission established a pastor training school. In 1950 – 52, a school was started in the Chibok area with Ira Petry as Principal. The first students were Hamanu Ngganjiwa, Madu Mshelia, Thlama Wakawa, Mai Sule Biu, Gwanu Tarfa, and Karban Mamza. It was among these students that EYN ordained as pastors. Karban Mamza and Madu Mshelia were the first Nigerian ministers. They were ordained in 1955. The second group of student from this school graduated in 1958. That year Mai

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.40.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

Sule Biu was ordained. From there, the school moved to Mubi and was named Kulp Bible School in memory of the first Brethren Missionary⁴⁶

Another phase of the holistic ministry was the Rural Development Program. This program was established to boost the economy of the rural people. Harold R. Roger who came to Nigeria in 1930 began to plant trees for firewood and for fruits. Von Hall later succeeded him in 1957 and became the first Director of Rural Development Program⁴⁷. With the establishment of this program, the local people began to experience some changes in their community; new crops and modern methods of farming were introduced. This was also one of the ways of communicating the gospel to the people.

With this four-fold holistic ministry, the Church of the Brethren was able to establish congregations in the following locations:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Garkida – 1923 | 6. Gulak – 1948 |
| 2. Lassa – 1927 | 7. Shaffa – 1950 |
| 3. Marama – 1931 | 8. Mubi – 1954 |
| 4. Chibok – 1938 | 9. Uba – 1955 |
| 5. Wandali – 1946 | 10. Mbororo – 1957 |

⁴⁶ Ibid, p.43.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 45.

The first Annual Conference of the Church of the Brethren in Nigeria was held February 20 – 21, 1929. It was at this conference the church was organized into districts. The delegates that attended the conference were five Nigerians and three missionaries. The officials of the district were: M. Ngida Wari (Conference Clerk), M. Bukar Tarfa (Reading Clerk), M. Hyelandika Tarfa (Treasurer), while Stover Kulp acted as the first moderator.⁴⁸

Two other mission bodies joined the Church of the Brethren Mission, which led to the rapid growth of the church. They were the Ashland Brethren, which began work among the Higgi people in 1940. The church among the Higgi communities experienced rapid growth. From 242 in 1958, the EYN church expanded to 3,337 in 1965. Bischof Kraft credited this rapid growth to the indigenous evangelists that were working with the missionaries then. As a result four strong local congregations were added to Mbororo and Kwaka. These were Watu, Mode, Kamale and Lughui.⁴⁹ Unlike the western areas, polygamy in Higgi land has not hindered the spread of the gospel. This was because the leaders in that area came to a conscience that polygamist might be baptized if he believed and accepted Jesus as his Saviour. Even though this decision was contrary to the policy of the Brethren Mission, the indigenous leaders had to take such decision for the interest of the local people of whom Christ also died for.

One of the other two mission bodies that joined the Church of the Brethren was the Basel Mission based in the Gavva area. The Basel Mission before coming into partnership with Church of the Brethren Mission (CBM) had opened a station in Gavva in 1959.

The first missionary was Rev. W. Scheoni from Switzerland. The first two converts in the Gavva area were Rev. Filibus Gwama, the present EYN President, and Rev. Bitrus Fambiya a retired pastor. Scheoni baptized them with six other adults in April 1963. Due to boundary adjustments by the government of Nigeria and Cameroon, Basel Mission chose to amalgamate with Church of

⁴⁸ Ibid, p.50 citing Balami, 73rd year Founders' Day Celebration, Church of the Brethren in Nigeria, EYN Ikeja, Two other mission bodies joined the Church of the Brethren Lagos, 1996, p.4.

⁴⁹ Hickey, p.29.

the Brethren Mission in 1967. Henceforth the two mission bodies have been working together in developing EYN.⁵⁰

2.4 THE CHURCH AT INDEPENDENCE AND BEYOND

The three mission bodies in partnership namely, Church of the Brethren Mission, Ashland Brethren, and the Basel Mission worked in harmony in nurturing what it is today called the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigerian (EYN). On the first day of August, 1972, the Brethren Mission Board office announced the indigenization of Church of the Brethren in Nigeria. Subsequently a committee was inaugurated to draft the constitution. The draft of the new constitution was adopted in April 1972. However, that was not the year the autonomy was granted. The independence day of EYN was 17th March 1973, which coincidentally occurred during the fiftieth year anniversary of the Church of the Brethren Mission in Nigeria. The mantle of leadership was passed to the newly elected indigenous leaders, Rev. Dr. Mamadu Mshelbilla, Chairman, and Rev. Wasinda B. Mshelia, General Secretary.⁵¹

At independence, EYN had 18,000 members, 51 ordained pastors, 260 local churches and 750 preaching points. It possessed 16 districts also.⁵² Based on these statistics, the growth rate of EYN was 360 converts per year. Truly the evangelism under the effort of both the missionaries and native converts was commendable. For a farmer to get a bumper harvest on a virgin land, he had to work extra hard. This is how I can describe the effort of the missionaries and their first converts.

EYN has been a rural church. It spread out through the rural regions of the southern part of Borno State and the northern part of Adamawa state. In 1979, twelve members under the

⁵⁰ Hickey, p.30.

⁵¹ Nvwa D. Balami "Fifty Years of Brethren Mission in Nigeria (1923-1973); A Nigerian Perspective" in *Brethren Life and Thought*, 1984; 29, p. 108

⁵² Dali, "The Expansion and Growth of the Church of the Brethren During the Fifty Years Work in Lardin Gabas" in *Progressive History of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigerian*.p72.

leadership of late Rev. Jabani P. Mambula resolved to start an EYN congregation in capital city of Maiduguri, Borno State. This episode became a gateway to EYN into some cities in Nigeria. EYN members living in other cities of this country learned a lesson from the Brethren in Maiduguri. Eventually EYN started congregations in Yola, Jos, Kaduna, Kano, Abuja, Suleja, Lagos, Jalingo, Numan, Zaria, Gombe, Bauchi, Pokiskum, Damaturu, Bama, Lafia, Port Harcourt and Niger. Since then the numerical growth of EYN has been terrific. In the 1997 statistics, EYN had 230 ordained ministers, 36 districts, 140,000 communicant members, 240,000 average worshippers every Sunday with 1,070 places of worship.⁵³

The Cragos, retired statisticians, as requested by EYN made a more accurate statistical study of the strength of EYN in 2002. They came out with the following result:

Number of District Church Councils (DCC) = 42

Total number of Local Church Councils (LCC) = 396

Total number of Local Church Branches (LCB) = 602

Total number of Chapels = 4

Total number of members = 148,771

Average worshippers each Sunday = 133,651.⁵⁴

The figures given may be tentative due to the physical nature of the statistical research done which provides adequate information of the rate at which EYN grows. Take for example the latest statistics. If the membership of EYN in 1997 is 140,000 and in 2002 membership is 148,771, the increase in membership within this five year period is 8,771. The average yearly gain in membership is 1,754. With the total of 396 local congregations, the average growth per year in each local church is less than five persons.

⁵³ Jabani P. Mambula & Filibus Gwama, "EYN under The indigenous leaders" in *The Progressive History of Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigerian*, p. 79.

⁵⁴ Tom G. Crago and Janet N. Crago, *Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria Statistical Report 2001-2002*, (Kwarhi: EYN Headquarters 2002), n.p.

Comparing this rate of growth with the growth experienced during the Brethren Mission era, we can categorically say that the church is advancing but at a lower pace now. The church needs to put more effort in evangelism in its cause for bumper harvest of souls for the Lord. EYN has passed through many stages of development since independence. For instance, the change of the EYN leadership title, formerly known as the chairman switched to the president. EYN also values other denominations that profess Christ despite the differences in doctrines. Therefore it became a member to the following organizations; Christian Council of Nigeria (CCM), Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Nigeria (TEKAN, Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), World Council of Churches (WCC) Christian Education Advisory Council (CEAC), and Christian Health Association of Nigeria (CHAN).⁵⁵ With the tremendous developmental growth of the church, it is of paramount importance to discuss the impact the church makes on the society especially on the issues surrounding of peace. Since Church of the Brethren is known for her peace making efforts, other Christians in Nigeria need to know what EYN does in promoting peace. Rev. Nvwa Balami observes that “in some places waves of religious violence have occurred, calling for mediation and a tolerant position with the Muslim of our communities. The church of twenty-first century is thus challenged to teach Brethren the peace position.”⁵⁶ The church from the peace background like EYN should mediate in conflict resolution especially in times when Muslim fanatics are challenging the Christian faith. The tensions have reached a point when the patience of many Christians has waxed away. For when Christians would say words like “enough is enough” or “we have been pushed to the wall” or “both checks have been slapped” there is a clear indication of derailing from the truth of the scripture.

What is EYN role as a member of the body of Christ in such a perilous time? EYN can do something within her own parameters to advocate peaceful co-existence in the society and eventually propagate it to other areas. The only thing that can determine the success of EYN

⁵⁶ Ibid, p.104.

peace effort lies in her concept of peace and how this peace message is propagated in principles and in practices. The next chapter deals with EYN views of pacifism. This will consist of basic concepts of peace from the traditional way of resolving conflict as well as the teachings the early Brethren missionaries brought. The next chapter will also look at the EYN understanding of peace today.

CHAPTER THREE: EYN VIEW OF PACIFISM

3.1 THE EYN BASIS OF PACIFISM.

Looking at the history of Ekklesiyar Yan’uwa a Nigeria (EYN) and society in general, we find multiple concepts of the word under study. Certainly every society has a concept of what makes for peace. The Nigerian traditions have understandings of pacifism. In EYN history we also have the introduction of Christian pacifism. The former and the latter concepts of pacifism convey the same idea but in different ways. The people under study might have had limited pre-knowledge of the subject matter before the advent of Christianity. This would imply that pacifism is a strange idea brought by the early Brethren missionaries. In view of the later hypothesis, I want to reason that it is doubtful to suggest pacifism as only an imported idea. As I have stated in the preceding chapter that people have a distorted view of pacifism. They perceive that pacifism is not a good method to manage conflict. This view suggests pacifism is a novel idea. I propose pacifism has been part and parcel of people of every generation in different forms. The method used by people of different generations may differ but all of it is aimed at one goal; to manage a conflict so that it would not be a menace to the peaceful co-existence in any community.

A respondent in my research stated that pacifism is a concept of some Christians in the western world. They live in a mono-cultural and mono-religious society. According to the respondent, we who live in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society should never let pacifism

be our approach. This respondent fears that embracing the position of pacifism, Christianity would be wept out¹.

I think this is the fear of many Nigerians, especially Christians living in the north who periodically experience religious crises. Most often references are made to North Africa and Asia, areas that were initially dominated by Christians but were later invaded and dominated by Muslims. Some think that it was as a result of a pacifist stance that the Church diminished in those areas. However, I posit the diminished Christian presence was a result of the Christians' negligence in the area of evangelism. Instead of the Christians in these areas to be united in purpose, they quarreled over doctrines and theology until the invaders caught them unaware. The implications suggest that the Church in Nigeria and elsewhere can be sustained through the unity of believers in carrying out the Great Commission. The Church cannot be sustained through our readiness to wage war against Muslims or whoever.

By using the definition of pacifism as presented in the first chapter of this thesis, one will understand that the issue of peace is part of the human social structure throughout the generations as earlier noted. This thesis affirms that pacifism is not an imported ideology. People have endeavored in different places and at various times to use their God given talents to manage conflicts within their own communities. In spite of the fallen human condition, there resides in humanity a conscience that gives a moral and ethical direction. No matter how barbaric a person or group of persons may be, they still possess a conscience in their behavior toward fellow human beings. The absence of a conscience relegates a person to something that is less than a human being. Often feelings are directed toward those who advocate for an alternative to pacifism. This is the reason pacifists are often accused with a lack of human empathy. Many people state that pacifists act nonchalantly toward the need of the oppressed against the oppressor. The question one may ask here is whether it is possible to rightly interpret a conscious? When someone has

¹ A. P. Sawa, interview, June 2005.

committed an act of injustice toward you, your conscience discerns that the same act of injustice will create a similar reaction to them. Therefore, if our conscious condemns us from doing wrong to others, we are not far from the biblical teaching that the Brethren missionaries came to witness. I assert that Christianity did not meet Africa in a vacuum concerning the issue of peace making. I also assert that pacifism was not a new concept to the people whom heard the gospel as interpreted by the Church of the Brethren. All people groups have a conscience. They have organized social communities. They have values and precepts. They are all people who have dynamic cultures and unique concepts. I reaffirm my position that the region where the gospel was introduced by the Church of the Brethren had a previous view of pacifism.

I suggest the premise that pacifism is part of the social structure of any given society. The people group among which EYN was planted is not exception. We shall therefore look at the region's traditional view of pacifism. This section will look at how local people went about the peace process and study how effective their methods were in conflict management. In case variations are discovered between the concepts of peace held by the local people with that taught by the Brethren missionaries, the authority of scripture should take the lead in decision making.

3.1.1 Traditional method of peace making.

In any social institution, there is the inevitability of conflicts resulting from political, social, economical or religious factors. Though the level of conflict and its effect during the primitive era may differ from one that may occur in modern times, conflict of any kind is a challenge to people concerned. Similarly, before the coming of missionaries to Nigeria, the local people had encountered many conflicts and at the same time managed many conflicts using norms and values of their community.

Like most African societies, the people of the northeastern zone of Nigeria live in communities. The possibility of conflicts emerging out of life in community will often lead to crises. These crises may claim lives and properties. People are challenged to rise and seek to resolve their problems. This is because in any community, there are responsible, respected, and reasonable people that do not fold their hands and watch the situation get worse in their community. Therefore, basic patterns of conflict resolutions emerge among the communities using local norms, values and precepts. Jannie Malan observes that fighting or talking is typical of conflict resolution in Africa. He maintains that:

For the greatest part of this long period, the setting of such conflicts and their resolutions must have been predominantly local. The events took place between individuals, village communities or tribes who lived in the same or adjoining areas. The people who became involved as interveners...mostly local elders and or tribal leaders.²

Apart from the recent years of the evolution of multicultural communities with the migration of many people groups from the rural areas to towns and cities in Africa, communities were typically mono-cultural settings.³ For instance, Dr. Stover Kulp and Albert Helser first established a church among the Bura community in Garkida. Later, the church spread to the communities of the Margi, Higgi, Chibok, Kilba, Fali, just name a few.

The church met people with a different culture, language, system of thoughts, and traditions. Jabani P. Mambula and Nvwa D. Balami in describing the social structure of these communities in their article titled “Lifestyle of the People” assert:

In the broadest sense of the term, anyone from one’s own area or even one’s tribe, especially if together in a distant town, will be regarded as a ‘brother’ or ‘a sister’. Thus mutual aid and acts of kindness are spread out to a large number of fellow-tribesmen.⁴

² Jannie Malan, *Conflict Resolution Wisdom of Africa* (Durban: African Centre for Contributive Resolution of Disputes, 1997), p.14.

³ *ibid.* p.16.

⁴ Jabani P. Mambula and Nvwa D. Balami, “Lifestyle of the People”, in *Lardin Gabas: a Land, a People, a Church* (Elgin: The Brethren Press, 1973), p.44.

This is typical of the African setting and somewhat unique from the modern western world. This kind of mutuality serves as motivational factor in fostering peaceful co-existence among the clans of certain tribes or villages. In a typical African community, elders or tribal leaders pilot the affairs of their community. One of the important functions of elders/leaders is to safeguard their communities from civil and social unrest.

Councils of elders therefore play vital roles in peace building among African communities. Research shows that the communities that the Church of the Brethren missionaries worked have similar methods in resolving conflict. For instance, among the Margi community, when there is a dispute between clans of a community or between two communities, the elders of the two parties are to take necessary measure at the early stage to avoid occurrence of any lethal action. If this early measure fails and the parties digress into physical combat, the elders never give up the process until peace is achieved. In order to reach a fruitful negotiation due process is followed.

When a life is claimed in a clash, the due process among the Margi community is that the offender will bring a goat and *hya ndalma* - a puppy. The goat is slaughtered and shared into two halves. Each party takes a half. The offended party takes the puppy and keeps it within the family of their clan. The presence of this puppy reminds them of the reconciliation that was made. The offended party may be angry for sometime and may attempt to provoke their opponent. The other party, having known that they are at fault, will try by all means to remain calm. When negotiations are unsuccessful, tit for tat philosophy is applied.⁵ Similarly, among the Fali people, elders play an important role in the peace process. There are times when elders counsel at the expense of their lives. This may occur when both parties are furious and no side is willing to compromise. The conflict will not be left alone without seeking alternatives lest it destroys the peace of the community. So other alternatives are tried until negotiation is reached. One of these

⁵ Moses Thliza, an interview, March 2006

alternatives used in peace building among Fali people is inter-marriage. Intermarriage is one of the bonds that bind clans, tribes, and communities in northeastern part of Nigeria. When there is a clash between two parties, if there is someone in one of the groups whose mother is from the opposing group, they may decide to send him for negotiation. This man would serve as a mediator. He is respected by each group and his voice and counsel will be heard.⁶ When violence has already occurred and casualties are recorded from both sides, elders still make efforts to calm the situation. If casualty is only from one side, similar to what is practiced among the Margi people; *Kelhi* (compensation) would be paid by the offending party. When compensation has taken place normalcy returns to the communities. This process checks out violence from being a routine among the Nigerian communities in the primitive era.

We have seen therefore how each community has an inborn propensity and potentiality to manage conflict. Even though the method may differ from one community to the other, each community strives towards promoting and sustaining peace in their community. In order to understand that Nigerian people cherish peace, there is a common belief that anybody who initiates trouble is not spared when violence breaks out.⁷ That is the reason we have diverse methods of resolving conflicts in Africa, which Malan describes as African practical and relational wisdom that have been rich, successful and rewarding. He posits that, even though these methods of resolving conflict have been successful and has sustained peace among the African communities, the methods are gradually fading away. Malan regards the decline as a result of the influence of methods of conflict management by professionals from the western world. He describes the situation as unfortunate.⁸ He appeals to Africans, "...we should not allow the appeal of such contemporary material to make us forget the time-proven methods, which originated on the African soil."⁹ This implies that before the coming of Christianity, Africans

⁶ Victim Magai Vimtim, interview, March 2006.

⁷ Nyampa T. Kwabe, *Messianic Themes in Psalm 72 and Jukun Kingship: An Enculturation Approach* (Jos: Shalom Publications 2005), p.13

⁸ Malan, p. 16.

⁹ *ibid.*

have actively been engaged in peace process. In the next section we shall see the concept of the early Brethren missionaries on peace and how they conveyed this conviction to their Nigerian audience through their teaching and preaching.

3.1.2 The Teaching of the Early Missionaries on Pacifism.

There has been much discussion within the Brethren/EYN circles whether or not the early missionaries had accurately transmitted the peace position of Jesus and of the Brethren to their Nigerian converts. A look at this will help us to access the present peace position of the Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria (EYN). From our historical part of the discussion found in the previous chapter, we discovered that Church of the Brethren is one of the historic peace churches. A good example of their position can be found in the affirmation at the Annual Conference of June 8-15, 1916:

The Church reaffirms its position in favor of peace even at the cost of suffering wrongfully, if need be, and its unalterable opposition to war and bloodshed under any condition of provocation, and all preparation for war as one of its primal teachings, maintaining that all disputes, national and international, not settled by those involved, should be submitted to a commission on arbitration as the highest and final appeal of nations. And since the government of the United States in its just dealings with its citizens has graciously provided for the free exercise of conscience in these matters, by the authority of this conference, copies of this resolution shall, if needed, be furnished to all members applying therefore which may be used in connection with the certificate of membership from the local Church in which one may reside, all of which may, if occasion arise, be presented to the authorities of our Government in seeking exemption from military service in accordance with any provision of United States law...¹⁰

This assertion clearly tells us of the pacifist position of the Church of the Brethren in the United States. Surprisingly, no such strong assertion exists within any statements of EYN. However EYN claims a pacifist position. This creates a lot of confusion, questions and controversy within and outside EYN. Is EYN a pacifist church? Does it commonly share pacifism with its mother

¹⁰ Rufus D. Bowman, *The Church of the Brethren and War: 1708 – 1941* (Elgin: Brethren Publishing House, 1944), p.170 citing *The Minutes of the Annual Meeting*, 1916, p.12.

church, the Church of the Brethren? Some of the confusion that creates doubt within and outside EYN: Firstly, unlike the Church of the Brethren in the States, EYN allows her sons and daughters to be enrolled in the armed forces and even ordains some members who have retired from military service. Secondly, pacifism has not been stipulated in the EYN constitution. Lastly, there is no document that positions EYN as a church opposing governmental or non-governmental policies that seemingly creates tension in the society.

We have been reflecting that even before the coming of the Brethren missionaries, Nigerian communities had been engaging in some divergence of the peace process. Which one of the two methods of conflict management is presently maintained by EYN; the traditional ways of the local people groups, or the strict pacifist stance of the Church of the Brethren? From our observations we can state that EYN does not hold to the pacifist stance in equal proportion with the Church of the Brethren in the United States. Nor does the EYN church hold strictly to the traditional method originating from the local people groups. There are variations in the peace position of EYN with her mother church, the Church of the Brethren. There has been an interest by the American Brethren as to whether the early missionaries explicitly taught the Brethren peace position to Nigerian converts. According to the late Rev. Nvwa D. Balami, the early missionaries of the Brethren Mission in Nigeria discouraged military service from the beginning. Because of political reasons, they did not come out openly to stop the new converts from joining the military service during the World War II in 1939 to 1945. Balami argues:

Being on British colonial soil, the Brethren chose not to be vocal about military service until they were asked to give counsel. The Brethren Conscientious Objectors were sent to Nigeria for a period of voluntary service. The contact of the Conscientious Objectors of the Church of the Brethren with EYN introduced the horror of war to the Nigerians.¹¹

It is true that the westerners would have the better knowledge of the horror of war than Nigerians because of their access to modern communication media during the World War I and II. However

¹¹ Nvwa D. Balami, *Fifty Years of Church of the Brethren Mission in Nigeria (1923 – 1973) in Nigerian Perspective* (Bethany: A Thesis of Master of Arts in Theology, 1983), p.143.

they were not able to stop Nigerian youth from joining the military service. This was as a result of impression as Balami describes:

Military pageantry has an overwhelming fascination for even Christian youth, and the drilling of troops to the beating of drums finds a responsive chord in the hearts of the Nigerian youth. The army uniform, good pay, education and travel are very attractive, especially so because there is little expectation that it will ever be involved in actual warfare...¹²

From this statement we can deduce that ignorance and lack of job opportunities were the driving forces in joining military service. And even today the latter could be one of the prime factors that drag many youths into military service. Another reason that some people enter the military is the fear of being dominated by Muslims. Those who adhere to this idea conceive that if Christians refuse to join the army, there will be a tendency whereby the Muslims would use their military skills and weaponry to destroy them in a clash.¹³ This does not therefore mean that the pioneer missionaries of the Church of the Brethren did not teach their early converts about pacifism. Robert Krouse similarly observed that pacifism is one of those teachings which Church of the Brethren emphasizes in the United States that were only partially accepted by EYN.¹⁴ Pacifism was taught by the missionaries but Nigerians took its teachings lightly, lightly in the sense that EYN permits her members to join the army.

Contrary to the aforementioned view, Patrick Bugu observed that the pioneer missionaries did not see the issue of pacifism as the first priority for the Nigerians. Instead preaching and teaching of the word of God were prioritized. The missionaries believed that the gospel is sufficiently powerful to transform the life of people. Bugu further argues that this does not mean that the pioneer missionaries were not pacifists nor did they intentionally neglect the Brethren pacifist stance.

¹² Ibid. pp. 143f, citing Pierce Beaver. *Envoys of Peace*, p.105.

¹³ Col. A. P. Sawa (Rtd), interview, June 2005.

¹⁴ Robert Krouse, interview, March 2005.

Possibly, having studied the condition of the people, the missionaries perceived that the immediate needs were salvation, knowledge, and healing. Perhaps that was the reason they embarked on establishing local congregation, school and medical centers. Bugu continues:

Although the Brethren in the United States did not teach peace and pacifism in the way of the Brethren in the United States, their way of peacemaking was very practical. It was seen and understood by believers and unbelievers alike. It was not a peace centered simply on nonviolence vs. violence but a peace deeper than external conflicts. Christianity for them was a way of life, they believed was the way to peace and reconciliation.¹⁵

This statement was further confirmed by one of the missionaries who were in Nigeria in the early sixties. He said that because of the political situation in Nigeria during the colonial regime, Brethren missionaries were hesitant in ushering a strict pacifist position to Nigerian converts. But the missionaries have never hesitated to exemplify their pacifist stance through their words and actions.¹⁶ The missionaries considered teaching, preaching and health services as effective methods to convey their pacifist position. That is the reason Bugu considers the Brethren methods as deeper than just mere external conflict management. It was embedded in their way of life and was expected to transform their converts' worldview.

In spite of their inability to publicly declare the pacifist position in Nigeria due to political reasons, the Brethren were able to share their idea with many people. For instance, some respondents testified how some missionaries expressed their bitterness when their Nigerian foster sons declared their intentions of joining the Army.¹⁷ One respondent said that his parents and their missionary friend mourned when he joined the Army¹⁸. This would imply that the message of pacifism had been transmitted to Nigerian converts of whom the Brethren missionaries

¹⁵ Patrick K. Bugu, "Reconciliation or Pacifism? The Nigerian Experience" in *Seeking Cultures of Peace: A Peace Church Conversation*, edited by Fernando Enns, Scott Holland, and Ann K. Riggs (Telford: Cascadia Publishing House, 2004), p.128.

¹⁶ Ralph Royer, interview, December 2005.

¹⁷ Nuhu Chiwar, an interview, May, 2006.

¹⁸ A. P. Sawa, an interview, March, 2005.

witnessed. As we have said earlier, the missionaries did not meet these people ignorant of a peace process. Since the teaching was not enforced on the believers, they had the right to either, reject, accept or inculturate the teaching to fit their own situation. This eclectic view of pacifism is the makeup of EYN. In the following section a questionnaire and the use of oral interviews are the instruments used to carry out the research.

3.2 Survey of EYN Views on Pacifism.

From the previous sections, we discovered that the local people who accepted Christian faith through the evangelistic effort of the Church of the Brethren missionaries were already actively engaged in conflict management. Coupled with their previous knowledge, the local people received new insight and perspective of peace process from the missionaries. The concept of the peace process in a traditional way differs in some ways from the biblically based one. For instance, the traditional way of peace building looks unto a council of elders for a solution to the conflict. The peace building the missionaries brought shows that peace is more than a solution to a conflict rather it is a way of life. It is the responsibility of every Christian to promote peaceful co-existence in his or her community.

This section focuses on the EYN peace position. If EYN is a pacifist church, how did it become pacifist and what practical examples prove that? Since there are no written documents that spell out the EYN pacifist position, I rely on the oral interviews and the responses from questionnaires dispatched to EYN leaders, clergies and laymen.

The majority of the respondents maintain that EYN is a pacifist church. The reasons they gave was drawn from the fact that EYN was established by a church with peace background – The Church of the Brethren. In the previous pages I cited some examples of resolutions that prove the pacifist stance of the Church of the Brethren. Previously we also saw how the Church of the Brethren missionaries endeavored to influence rather than impose the peace message of their Nigerian converts. EYN continues to maintain the identity of pacifism as it has been received from the Church of the Brethren. EYN has never ceased to be identified as a peace church, even though the church has never made a public pronouncement of this position. What is it then that would enlighten the reader that EYN is a pacifist church?

I was privileged to discuss these issues with six EYN officers who had held a key office in EYN or is currently holding a key office. Four of the six maintain that EYN is a pacifist church. The reasons they gave were as follows:

- EYN is from a peace church background.
- EYN preaches and teaches peace.
- EYN played a vital role during the Nigerian civil war. EYN then sent some people to share relief materials to war victims.
- EYN runs some programs such as Rural Health Programme, Rural Development program, Literacy Program and many others that offer humanitarian services without religious discrimination. To make these programs more effective in meeting the needs of the society, the Rural Health and the Rural Development were amalgamated into Integrated Community Based Development Program (ICBDP). This Program sends extension workers to various places to encourage team work that promote a peaceful coexistence in a community.

- EYN leaders both past and present point out how EYN is well recognized as peace church among the TEKAN Churches. For this reason, EYN was involved in peace building during the Tiv/Jukun, the UMCN and the LCNN conflicts.
- There are some crises in Nigeria that EYN members were affected and did not retaliate towards the perpetrators.
- EYN placed the theme of peace for the 57th Annual Conference held in 2004. This serves as a reminder to all participants of the church's peace position.
- Also the recent inculcation of peace in the Curriculum of EYN Bible schools and seminary tells of the church's effort in peace building.¹⁹

These points seem to conclude that EYN is a pacifist church. However, as it has been pointed out earlier, EYN pacifism is different from that of the Church of the Brethren in the United States. EYN leaders who maintain that EYN is a pacifist church do not consider this variation divisive. Nor does it make the two sister denominations have conflicting views. They argue their point that differences are inevitable since we differ in culture, background, societal policies, worldview, etc.¹⁹ Pacifist practice within EYN is not a carbon copy of that of the Church of the Brethren. EYN pacifism is a variation of the pacifism as practiced by the Church of the Brethren in America.

The other influence we heretofore recognized was the traditional concepts of conflict management before the advent of the missionaries. But which of the two concepts predominate in EYN today? If the people of EYN maintained their traditional way of conflict resolution that was practiced and passed on to them by their forefathers, what happened to the missionaries' new perspective of conflict management? To maintain that EYN is a pacifist church not originating from Church of the Brethren missionaries but from its traditional practices is questionable. There

¹⁹ Bitrus Kwajighui, David Malafa, Filibus Gwama, Karagama A. Gadzama.

are no other church denominations that claim a peace position within the region of northeastern Nigeria. Where EYN is predominant, there are other denominations that do not claim pacifism like EYN does, though they may have biological, cultural or geographical connections. By implication therefore, EYN could not be a pacifist church through any other means than Brethren Mission's influence. This would be the thoughts of many people who consider pacifism to be something alien to the African culture. For if these same people have made several efforts to manage conflicts in their communities, they, too, were doing nothing less than pacifism.

What the missionaries did then was to give it a new look. As Jesus would say; "You have heard that it was said, 'eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' But I tell you, do not resist an evil person..." (Matt. 5:38f). Therefore, the Brethren missionaries were saying to their converts that they should not relent in their peace efforts. They should reform it by deleting the provision made for revenge in the traditional method of peacemaking and encourage the good side of it.

Risku Madziga exhibited conflict transformation using the traditional methods that surprised the missionaries. One day they were out on evangelistic campaign and came across two ethnic groups that were ready to wage a tribal war. Since Madziga was conversant with the tradition of that people, he took off one of his shoes and held it over his head and headed towards them. This action instantly communicated a message to the parties. They immediately stopped. He was able to quell a rather volatile moment by becoming a peace mediator of the old tradition.²⁰ The peacemaker used both the teaching of the missionaries that it is the duty of every Christian to make peace and also inculcated his cultural experience to help to resolve the conflict. The success of this method in solving that particular conflict lies in the understanding both the Christian responsibility of peacemaking and the cultural awareness. The method that Madziga used describes how effective the incarnation is in reconciling man to God. The people of Israel

²⁰ Galen R. Hackman, *Introduction to Brethren History* (Mubi: Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria, 1992), p.158.

withdrew back in fear when God visited them in His glory (Gen. 20). This is how it could have been if it were the missionaries rather than Madziga who approached the people. From the above story, we can see the importance of inculcating both the biblical teaching and the culture of the people in conflict management. It is evident that EYN pacifism is both rooted in their traditional worldview as well as the teaching of the missionaries.

As I stated, I interviewed six EYN leaders. Four of the six stated that EYN is a pacifist church. The other two leaders²¹ posit that EYN is a pacifist Church in principle but not in practice. To these leaders, claiming pacifism does not justify a person or group of persons to be pacifist. To make a policy and equally implement that policy justifies one's position. They argue that EYN has never designed any policy for their pacifist stance not to mention implementation. These two leaders maintain that EYN's inability to make a public declaration of her position as a pacifist church disqualifies her of that claim. Reasonably, one may ask this group of what they mean by principle. If EYN church is a pacifist church in principle it would denote a set of rules and regulations.

If I may expatiate more on the issue of policy, I would ask this group, what policies or principles could be designed for pacifists more than what is obtainable in the scriptures? What about public declaration of EYN pacifist position? I want to argue that it is not necessary. If we agree with the adage that "action speaks louder than words," public declaration is of less importance in EYN pacifist position. TEKAN member churches did not require public declaration before they recognize EYN as a peace church. I think that emerged from EYN's constant cry for peace and also from her practical life as a peace church. Therefore I cannot see concrete reasons raised by this group to argue their points that EYN is not a pacifist Church.

It is understood that there are two views among the EYN leaders; those that perceive EYN church as pacifist and those that negate EYN pacifist position. To further the inquiry in order to

²¹ Bitrus Bdlia and Ibrahim D. Ashifa, interview.

determine the position of EYN on pacifism, it is of paramount importance to go beyond just the views of leaders. What is the general concept of EYN membership in regard to pacifism? The survey shows that 86% of the respondents said that EYN is a pacifist church in practice and they gave similar reasons with that of some EYN leaders. 12% of the respondents said that EYN is not a pacifist church. They relate EYN policies with that of the Church of the Brethren and conclude that EYN is not a pacifist church. 2% of the respondents did not know whether EYN is a pacifist church or not. This group did not give any reason why they took such a stance. Such minds often dangle between two forces. It is possible that this group may have searched for policies drawn by EYN on pacifism and could not see any. Or on the other hand this group may have seen evidences that show pacifism in practice. It became difficult for them to comprehend EYN pacifist position.

Another question that helped me to capture the mind of the people of EYN is whether pacifism is a good strategy for conflict management. 77% of the respondents to this question admit that it is a good strategy. 23% said that it is not a good strategy. Interestingly, when the question was given as to what degree is pacifism a good strategy, the result shows a slight shift in confidence. For 27% of the respondents said that pacifism is a good strategy to a large extent. 50% said that it is good to some extent. While 23% said it is good to a little extent. If 77% admit that pacifism is a good strategy, why should the percentage of those who said 'to some extent' surpass that of them who said 'to a large extent'? This may predict the level of commitment to pacifism when it comes from principle to practice or they are captivated by fear of elimination by Muslims as other people propound.

The next question makes pacifism closer and helps to determine the level of commitment rather than pacifism being just a theory. How applicable is pacifism in a pluralistic society like Nigeria? 65% hold to the view that pacifism is applicable to Nigeria. It is the only way violence can be dealt with. 31% of the respondents said that pacifism is not applicable to the Nigeria

situation. This group considered the heterogeneous mixture of Nigerian society. It would be detrimental to the existence of Christianity for Christians to hold to pacifism. Muslims could take advantage of Christians who embrace pacifism. This group added that there are situations that lack any other alternative than to fight. 4% of the respondents to this question did not know whether pacifism is applicable to Nigeria or not.

However, despite these differences, statistically there is an evidence of a commitment to pacifism among EYN clergy and laymen. With the increasing level of violence and conflict in Nigerian society, there is a possibility of fluctuation in the level of commitment to pacifism. Nevertheless, experiences have shown a sense of maturity and efforts towards peace building among the Nigerian Christians even those from non-pacifist background. Therefore, EYN as this survey has shown is a pacifist church. Similarly EYN should be in the forefront in leading the other Christian bodies in exhibiting a Christi-like attitude to violence.

CHAPTER FOUR: EVALUATION OF EYN VIEWS ON PACIFISM.

4.1 SCRIPTURAL TEACHING.

The preceding chapter has discussed the EYN basis for pacifism. It has been shown that the traditional method of reconciliation and the teaching of the Brethren missionaries shaped the pacifist position of the people of EYN. The Church of the Brethren maintains that their pacifist position is both scriptural and ethical. This conviction was clearly stated in an assertion made in 1932 when the church posited that:

Therefore, we feel bound to avow our conviction that all war is out of harmony with the plain precepts of the Gospel of Christ, and that no plea of necessity or policy, however urgent, can be set up to release within an individual or any nation from the paramount duty which they owe to Jesus who enjoined all men to love their enemies. We express, in all humility, our firm persuasion that all problems, questions and exigencies incident to the well being of civil government and the

social order can be settled under the banner of the prince of peace in strict conformity to his commands.¹

This assertion clearly describes the position of the Church of the Brethren on war. The statement points out that Christians are obliged to love their enemies unconditionally and further declares:

The fundamental ground of our opposition to war is religious and ethical. Our position is one which attaches to the inherent nature of right which grows out of an abiding consciousness of the individual's obligation of what the enlightened soul ought to be. The Christ's way of life revealed in the Holy Scriptures, the voice of the conscience revealed in the soul, make our participation in war under any and all circumstances impossible.²

This affirmation became a driving force for the Church of the Brethren peace witness. Even though the missionaries sent to Nigeria did not make such a strong public declaration as it was in the United States, they propagated the gospel of peace in many other ways. They believed that it is mandatory for any individual or group of persons that follow the foot steps of our Lord Jesus Christ to pursue peace. There was never any doubt about the scriptural basis of the teaching of the Church of the Brethren.

What about the traditional methods of reconciliation that was in practice by the local people before the coming of the missionaries? How authentic and compatible are the traditional methods with the biblical teaching on peace? From the previous studies we have seen how the tribal leaders endeavored to sustain peace in their domains. Such endeavors are nothing less than peace making. Though the traditional people may not have had the Law of Moses like the Israelites, they have conscience which condemns or confirms their actions. As the scripture says:

When Gentiles who have not the law do by nature what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bear witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or excuse them (Romans 2:14, 15 RSV).

¹ Rufus D. Bowman, *The Church of the Brethren and War: 1708-1941* (Elgin: Brethren Publishing House, 1944), pp.237f. Citing *The Minutes of the Annual Conference of 1932* pp.47 – 48.

² Ibid.

The method of peace making which the people were practicing before the coming of Christianity is undeniably of God. John Parratt said that Africans claimed God's revelation in some degree in their cultural and religious heritage.³ The God that revealed his will through the prophets is the same God that put the conscience in the hearts of men. It is true that the revealed will of God revealed to the prophets is clearer than that of the conscience but conscience still accomplishes that purpose for which God made it. That is the reason why the Bible describes it as 'written law on the hearts of men.' Consequently, there is nothing wrong for EYN to recognize both the biblical principles and the traditional methods of peace making with the exception of retaliation that was warranted by the latter methods.

4.1.1 The Old Testament.

Those who argue against the position of pacifism find support from the Old Testament. If the EYN pacifist position claims a biblical basis how does it withstand the defense of war as found in the Old Testament? How does a pacifist explain the God of the Old Testament?

Then he said to them, "this is what the Lord, the God of Israel says: 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.'" The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about three thousand of the people died. Then Moses said, "You have been set apart to the Lord today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day" (Exodus 32:27-29 NIV)

If God could command the Levites to carry out such a massive killing of the Israelites and could also send Samuel to pronounce that:

³ John Parratt, *A reader in African Christian Theology* (London: Holy Trinity Church, SPCK, 1997), p.147.

This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys’ (I Samuel 15:2-3 NIV).

With such utterances many people conceive that there is no place for pacifism in the Old Testament. However, we should look carefully at God’s initial plan for creating man in his own image. If God’s initial plan was that creation should be in chaos, it would have been found in the Garden of Eden. But that was not the case. Adam and Eve lived peaceably even with the beasts of the fields. If God would have punished every sin or disobedience with death, the world would have been an empty space by now.

Considering the incidence in the Garden of Eden, you will agree with me that sin alienated man from God because he disobeyed. Man became an enemy of God at the fall. Man would have been treated as an enemy in respect to the earlier pronouncement which says:

And the Lord God commanded the man saying, ‘You may freely eat of every tree in the garden; but of the tree of knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day you eat of it you shall die’ (Genesis 2:16-17).

When Adam and Eve discovered that they had sinned against God, they hid in the garden. Instead of God giving them what is due them, the penalty of sin which is death, he came with fatherly loving call, “Where are you?” A hostile voice to an enemy would have been “depart from me,” or “woe unto you.” Surprisingly, the man and his wife not only heard the voice of God but experienced God’s love when he covered their nakedness.

Moreover, The Old Testament teaches that; “You shall not kill” (Exodus 20:13 RSV). And to make this law stronger in order to check out murder among his people, God still stresses the sacredness of human life when he says: “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image.”(Genesis 9:6). Many people capitalize on

this reading as just. Many state that this passage negates the issue of pacifism and promote retaliation.

Let us look at the first murder committed in the Old Testament and try to see if the law was applied as it has been clearly spelled out. Cain murdered his brother and pretended to not know his whereabouts (cf. Genesis 4:8). Innocent blood has been shed. God could have killed Cain instantly because he had violated the law. Instead, God's mercy was bestowed upon him and he was only banished and left insecure. However, when Cain complained against this punishment God placed a mark on him. The mark served as a sign of security not as an announcement to his guilt. Justice served would have placed upon Cain the death sentence. On what occasion could justice be applied if not in a situation such as that of Cain? This is an example that God is not interesting in killing and counter killings.

Since peace was the initial plan of God for humanity, his will is to revert to a peaceful atmosphere for his people as the scripture asserts: "I will make a covenant of peace with them and rid the land of wild beasts so that they may live in the desert and sleep in the forests in safety" (Jeremiah 34:25 NIV). That was the type of atmosphere Isaiah that prophesied would be established with the reign of God in men's hearts:

He shall judge between the nations, and shall decides for many peoples; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nations shall not lift swords against nation neither shall they learn war any more (Isaiah 2:4 RSV).

Many pacifists optimistically refer to this passage as a condition that could be attained in this life. Others think that this refers to the time of consummation when all evils shall be swept away. But the passage clearly describes this age not life after. It describes how the resources that are often wasted on weapons can wisely be used to boost the economy of any nation. That can only be possible when God reigns in the hearts of men, who are willing to listen to the voice of God:

I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what, is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go. If only you had paid attention to my commands, your

peace would have been like a river, your righteousness like the waves of the sea (Isaiah 48:17-18 NIV).

We notice in this passage that paying attention to God's commands makes one to live a righteous life and pursue peace. The scripture says: "when a man's ways are pleasing to the Lord, he makes even his enemies live in peace with him" (Proverbs 16:7). We could depict here that peace does not necessarily mean absolute absence of enemies. What is needed is the knowledge of God that can handle enemies rightly. Lack of listening to the voice of God makes one to devise carnal ways of obtaining peace.

Isaiah still relates peace with righteousness when he says; "The fruit of righteousness will be peace, the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence for ever" (Isaiah 32:17 NIV). If the fruit of righteousness is peace, the fruit of wickedness will be war. This implies that involvement in war is nothing other thing than wickedness. That is the distinctive feature of the peace that is obtained through God's way.

So how do we reconcile the issue of peace and righteousness in the life of David? The Bible describes David as "a man after God's heart" (I Samuel 13:14). Even the wars David fought must have been approved by God. A man after God's heart will not contradict God in words and in actions. It came to a point that David thought it wise to build a temple for God. He became disqualified for no other reason than having blood stained hands. Many wars he fought had defiled him and he was not worthy to build a temple for God (cf. 1 Chronicles 28:3; 22:8). David was a man after God's heart, who had fought what many people call Holy Wars or just wars, is attributed with wanton behavior. This behavior made him unworthy to carry out the sacred assignment. Perhaps that is the reason why David later confessed: "...seek peace and pursue it" (Psalms 34:14), because he has discovered the folly of his violent action.

David had achieved a considerable peace during his reign because of his courage and military strength. However, from that experience he understood that violence could achieve only

temporary results. David recommended peace as something worth seeking and pursuing.

There is nothing peace could not achieve. There is nothing violence cannot destroy. Moreover, nonviolence is able to sustain peace more than that which is obtained through violent action.

Let us examine how Elisha implemented a non-violent method in order to establish peace between Israel and Syrians. The Syrian army had intended to destroy the Israelites. Their plot, however, was exposed by Elisha. The Syrians turned against him. Having the Syrian army blinded and taken into the center of the city of Samaria, Elisha refused the king to annihilate them. Instead, he asked the king to feed them and let them go. That was how the Syrians army were stopped from attacking the territory of Israel (cf. 2 Kings 6: 21-23). If violent action would have been taken against the army, there would have been a counter action from the Syrians. There are many other examples of pacifism in the Old Testament. These ones were cited just show that EYN pacifism has a scriptural backing of not only the New Testament but the whole Bible.

4.1.2 The New Testament.

Churches with peace background will often esteem the Sermon on the Mount to stress biblical basis for their position. There are many passages in the New Testament that teach pacifism but the Sermon on the Mount serves as *locus classicus* to the biblical passages on peace. Dale Brown affirms the Sermon on the Mount “functions as a commentary on Paul’s affirmation that the whole law is fulfilled in love”⁴ (c.f. Romans 13:10).

Pacifism is a biblical stance beginning with the reality and priority of membership in the kingdom of Christ. Emphasis is placed on the way of love, a spirit of brotherhood and reverence for life.⁵

You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I said to who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and

⁴ Dale W. Brown, *Biblical Pacifism* (Elgin: Brethren Press, 2003), p.72.

⁵ Robert G. Clouse Ed. *Four Christian Views*, (Elgin: Intervarsity Press, 1981) p.86.

the good, and sends rain on the just and unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? You therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:43-46, 48).

Peacemakers have traditionally understood this passage as a call to nonresistance in the face of violence or oppression.⁶ In this passage Jesus moved the Old Testament law against killing in Matthew 5:38-39 to the more positive love toward all people. This new law does not permit paying back evil for evil but to overcome evil with good. Jesus showed the form of the true reality which dispelled the shadowy images left in the Old Testament.⁷ Jesus' command 'to love an enemy' is clarified in the latter part of the passage which says: 'that you will be children of your heavenly Father.' We are enjoined to do that which the heavenly Father equally does.

To justify his statement, Jesus practically exemplified what it means to love an enemy. Before his arrest, he told his disciples to sell their cloak and purchase a sword. If Jesus was suggesting readiness for war, he would not have said; "it is enough." Two swords to counter multitudes of people preparing for battle (cf. Luke 22:38)? But when the time came to use the sword appropriately, Jesus commanded: "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels," (Matthew 26:52f).

In addition to rebuking his disciples even of self defense, Jesus replaces the lost ear of an enemy. The servant of the priest that fell victim to the sword was an enemy since all that came that night were against Jesus. To prove wrong those who attribute weakness to pacifism, Jesus assured his disciples that he had the right to appeal for angels to defend him. Jesus condemns both retaliation and self defense in this episode. This example and many others serve as legacies Jesus left behind for his followers to emulate. The reason for such action is what Leyton Richards describes:

The way of war is destructive, of Christ is redemptive. War seeks to overcome evil by infliction of injury on evil doer or agents. Jesus Christ on the cross by the

⁶ Church of the Brethren 1991 Annual Conference, p.7.

⁷ William Keeney, *Lordship as a Servanthood: Thirteen Lessons on Biblical Basis for Peacemaking*

endurance of the utmost injury that evil doer cares to inflict. War treats men as things, Jesus always treated them as living souls capable of responding to the love of God; war operates by killing the enemy, Jesus sought to kill the enmity; war crushes men in order to achieve victory, Jesus lost the battle in order to win men.⁸

This is the power that resides in nonviolent action. Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, prophesied about Jesus as the one “to guide our feet into the way of peace” (Luke 1:78b).

Clarence Jordan distinguishes the way of Jesus from the old law. In his book, *Sermon on the Mount*, he describes the scope of the old law which permits one to inflict more injury than received or limits the retaliation to the exact damage done according to the law of Moses (cf. Exodus 21:23-25). Jesus gives a significant change to this perspective; “You have heard that...”, “But I am telling you...” Jordan describes love as the adult stage of the Christian life. Love makes a man to outgrow childish and acts maturely.⁹ He argues his point thus:

To talk about unlimited retaliation is babyish; to speak about limited retaliation is childish; to advocate limited love is adolescence; to practice unlimited love is evidence of maturity...It is the desire of the father that his son becomes adult like him.¹⁰

The love which is unconditionally shown to the enemy is that which is regarded as maturity. This kind of love that is aimed at pursuing peace is also expressed as the wisdom that comes from above (cf. James 3:17). This love equally relates to righteousness as earlier pointed out in the Old Testament. (James 3:18; cf. Isaiah 32:17). From this analysis we could see the reason the Church of the Brethren considers pacifism as a religious policy. So it is never a mistake to hold to it without giving a second thought since both the Old and the New Testament approve of it.

4.2 Nigerian Context.

Considering what pacifism can accomplish as described in the scriptures cited above, we are going to examine how compatible pacifism is with the heterogeneous type of society like

⁸ Geoffrey F. Nuttal, *Christian Pacifism in History* (Berkeley: Basil Blackwell and Matt Ltd., 1971), p. 84

⁹ Clarence Jordan, *Sermon on the Mount* (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1952), p.64.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.69f

Nigeria. In spite of the diversity that is found in the Nigerian society, there is a commonality in the ethnic groups in the EYN region. For instance, the various ethnic groups of *Lardin Gabas*¹¹ claim *M'buma* ancestral origin and therefore are akin to one another. This commonality is described thus:

The soundest proof of the common ancestry of all the people of *Lardin Gabas* lies in the similarities among their languages. Linguists attest that they all are a closely related group characterized by an almost identical sound system, a great similarity in morphology and syntax, and high percentage of identical vocabulary...before the introduction of Hausa, the people of *Lardin Gabas* had little difficulty in understanding each other or in learning each other's language.¹²

Far more than just a claim of common ancestral origin, Nigeria, like most of Africa, is communal in nature. This mutual relationship and peaceful coexistence of these ethnic groups are demonstrated in sharing the joy in the naming ceremony of a new born baby, marriages, and other festive moments. Death also brings people together sharing sorrow over the demised. Few other contexts like Nigeria can easily accommodate pacifism because of the communal life in our culture. For that reason peace is our culture because communal life can hardly be operated in a turbulent atmosphere. This is what EYN pacifism aims for; to remind Nigerian Christians what is inherent in our culture and confirmed right by the Scriptures – that pacifism is a peaceful coexistence in the presence of diversity.

4.2.1 Nigerian Culture

Nigerian culture like any other culture is dynamic. This does not mean that there is nothing peculiar about Nigerian culture. Biyang Kato affirms that and says:

Admittedly, certain characteristics may distinguish Africans from non-Africans; such as a formers' practical approach to problems, solving problems more often by compromise than by conflict, and the emphasis on a communal life as a family or tribe.¹³

¹¹ Lardin Gabas is the name designated to the autonomous Church in north-eastern Nigeria by Church of the Brethren Missionaries and partly by Basel Mission. This name was later changed to Ekklesiyar Yan'uwa a Nigeria.

¹² Chalmer E. Faw, Ed. *Lardin Gabas: a Land, a People, a Church* (Elgin: The Brethren Press, 1973), p.30

¹³ Biyang H. Kato, *Biblical Christianity in Africa*, (Nairobi: Africa Christian Press, 1985), p.40.

I have earlier mentioned communal life which characterizes typical African society. This communality binds the people to act as one people despite the diverse clans and families. That is the reason a Nigerian calls someone from his village a brother. A brother to him does not necessarily mean a biological brother but any person that shares his joy and sorrow. From this perspective it is much easier to transmit the message of peace to the people of Nigeria than any other culture. Since Nigerians identify with brotherhood, this concept can be broadened further into the biblical concept of brotherhood. Consequently, ill will against people is reduced and results in minimal violence.

African culture therefore needs to be appraised in order to communicate issues of value such as pacifism. Excluding culture from the peace dialog, we miss the potentiality of Nigerian cultures' conduciveness toward pacifism. Tite Tienou describes what culture is and what it does:

Culture is an integral system of beliefs (about God or reality or ultimate meaning), of values (about what is true, good, beautiful and normative), of customs (how to behave, relate to other talk, pay dress, work, play, trade, farm, eat, etc), and institutions which express these beliefs, values and customs (government, law courts, temples, or churches, family, schools, hospitals, factories, shops, unions, clubs etc) which binds a society together and gives it a sense of identity, dignity, security and continuity.¹⁴

When we connect the thought of Kato who describes Africans as those who solve problems more often by compromise than by conflict with what is described in this quotation, we can conclude that African culture is compatible with biblical pacifism. So if culture is way of life,¹⁵ we can categorically say that peace is way of African culture.

Since culture outside the Bible depends absolutely on the general revelation, there is a possibility of deficiency. The biblical teaching of pacifism can bridge that gap. For instance, when culture gives as a last resort to retaliate, the gospel of Jesus is there to echo, "You have heard that it was said...but I tell you." However, I concur with Tite who says; "we need to

¹⁴ Tite Tienou, *The Theological Task of the Church in Africa*, (Nairobi: Africa Christian Press, 1990), p.20. Citing LCWE, *The Willow bank Report*, pp. 6, 7.

¹⁵ Kato, *Biblical Christianity in Africa*, p.40.

examine African culture very closely to see what elements are compatible with the Gospel message.”¹⁶ There are many good things in Nigerian culture if rightly utilize will enhance peaceful coexistence among the diverse ethnic groups and religions.

4.2.2 Crises

The disintegration of ethnic groups of the *Lardin Gabas* began with the invasion by the Fulani from the south and the Kanuri from the north. Life was made miserable for the local people. They were using a policy known as ‘divide and rule,’ which made them to succeed in destroying the local dynasties of the local people. Whenever they were coming to invade a village, they would first inform the neighboring villages that they had nothing against them. The villages that were told they would not be harmed would fold their arms and watch their neighbors being attacked.¹⁷ Initially, the attacks were for “raiding for slaves and exacting power.”¹⁸ Later the motives turned to Islamic proselytizing of the people furthering disintegration of community with these ethnic groups. This fueled a series of religious conflicts. Consequently, religious intolerance became the norm. Nigeria is left with suspicion, ill-will, and hatred among one another and among the Christians and Muslims. One could ask how pacifism can be practiced in such a situation. When we critically examine the root causes of the crises, we understand that external factors constitute just a part, while internal problems take the rest. Therefore, if the internal crisis can be resolved, the external force can be dealt with as well. When Nigerians, men and women, Hausa and Igbo, Muslim and Christian can recognize and embrace our common cultures and traditions, can celebrate our commonality, crises can be reduced to its barest minimum.

¹⁶ Tienou, *The Theological Task of The Church in Africa*, p.23.

¹⁷ Doma Nukura, Interview.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p.37.

4.2.2.1 Ethnic crises.

The common causes of conflicts among ethnic groups are economic, political, or religious. In a developing country like Nigeria when population growth has outweighed economic strength, conflicts develop over limited resources. With the overwhelming increase of migration of people from rural communities to towns of Nigeria, has created a heterogeneous type of society. Having lived in such a community for a period of time, some people who might not be the indigenes may claim equal right with the indigenes. They may like to have a share of the economic opportunities or wish to occupy political offices. Consequently, struggles between competing groups and interests for control of power erupt and often develop into violent conflict.¹⁹ Paradoxically, the little resources that are fought for are more often than not destroyed during the crises.

However, the multi-ethnic community in Nigeria did not start with the proliferation of towns and cities. Unity in diversity is typical of African society. A village may have several clans living together. EYN stresses that in spite of our diversity we should to tolerate one another and live together. There is no sense in one ethnic group desiring to survive while terminating the existence of the other ethnic group.

4.2.2.2 Religious Crises

For quite a number of years Nigeria has been known for religious tolerance. Every faith was accorded its due. Muslims respected the sanctity of the church while Christians respected the sanctity of the Mosque.²⁰ However, upheavals of religious disturbances have changed the story.

Both Christians and Muslims have raised arms against one another. This new development has

¹⁹ Shedrack Gaya Best, *The Challenges and Prospects of Peace Building on the Plateau* (Jos: a Paper presented at Annual Conference organized by Centre for Peace Advancement in Nigeria, September, 2006), p.5.

²⁰ Toma H. Ragnjiya,

deteriorated the Christian –Muslim relationship. As a result, people began to ask how reliable is pacifism in ensuring the future existence of the church? Even though some Christians have reacted violently to the actions of the Muslims, the church is still constantly targeted for destruction. This situation makes some people maintain that if the church dares to uphold the teachings of pacifism we will be at the mercy of the Muslims.

When we look at the history of the persecuted church of the first three centuries, we find no record showing the church attempted to retaliate. The church survived. Eusebius described one of the episodes in the life of the church in Phrygia: “A church was surrounded and set on fire with its congregation, the whole village, inside it.”²¹ Instead of the church ceasing to exist in such terrible periods, the Christian faith was maintained and passed to us in fulfillment of the word of Jesus: “...and on this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it” (Matthew 16:18).

It was not persecution that threatened to terminate the existence of the church. It was what Eusebius describes as “danger of worldliness, misuse of power, lowering of moral standards and existence of many heretical and schismatic groups even among its own leaders.”²² The church that had grown stronger even in the face of persecution was reduced to nothing when Christians lost focus and grabbed vain things. The history proves therefore that the church should not fear pacifism. It should fear the infiltration of worldliness. The EYN concept of pacifism is timely and relevant in Nigerian context because it ensures the survival of the church.

4.2.2.3 Political crises.

The politics is another factor that creates doubt of the efficiency of pacifism in creating a peaceful coexistence. It seems difficult to differentiate between political crisis and the religious

²¹ John Foster, *Church History: First Advance AD 29 – 500* (London: Holy Trinity Church, SPCK, 1972), p82. Citing Eusebius.

²² Ibid. p. 85.

crisis because of how religion is often used as a tool in politics.²³ Gaya Best concurs with this fact when he states:

It is because of the failure of the elite to achieve their political ambition of controlling the tradition and the bureaucratic source of power plus the accompanying privileges, that cause them to invent and utilize ethnic, religious and citizenship forms of identity.²⁴

The failure of the politicians to achieve their goals through political policy will often make them blame mistakes on religious and tribal affiliations. The politicians' objectives are to control both the economic and political powers, consequently, enriching the politician and placing their beloved in available positions at the expense of other citizens. Should Christians be involved in this kind of power struggle? We should not. When we begin to ask which religion is the majority, what often comes to our mind is which religion dominates? But this is not what is needed in a country like Nigeria. What is needed of Nigerian religions is not which religion is superior, rather the ability of each religion and its policies to gear towards the transformation of human society through cordial human relationship.²⁵ When we peaceably live in our heterogeneous society we begin to experience heaven on earth.

EYN pacifist stance advocates for such mutual coexistence in our diverse faiths. The secularity of Nigeria calls for all religions to tolerate and accommodate one another as provided in Article 40 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigerian:

Every person shall be entitled to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular he may form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other association for the protection of his interests.²⁶

This provision prohibits the imposing of ideas of a person or group of persons on another. Since individuals have freedom of choice, we should use opportunities to associate with people of other faiths and learn from one another. More importantly, a Christian should use Christ-like manners

² ³ Ragnjiya, p.3.

² ⁴ Gaya Best, p. 7

²⁵ Mary Gerard, *Christianity and The Nigerian Legal System*, A paper presented at WAATI National Conference (Nigeria Zone), Ilorin, 2001.

² ⁶ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 23.

to lay a good legacy in their party by not
ambition.

attacking their opponent for any selfish

4.2.3 Sharia.

Jan Boer rightly observed the situation in Nigeria when he described it thus:

The 1980s in Nigeria were marked by horrendous religious riot that continued throughout the 90s and have already taken us into the new millennium. With the adoption of Sharia in a number of northern states in Nigeria, new tensions and even riots have flared up- a process to which at this moment no one can foresee the end.²⁷

The implementation of Sharia in some of the northern states in Nigeria did not only fuel violence but also questioned the secularity of Nigeria as stipulated in section 38(1) of the Constitution of Nigeria:

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom (either alone or in a community with others and in public or private) to manifest and propagate his religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance.²⁸

The above declaration has been violated with the implementation of Sharia in those states. Julius Adegbola explains the implication of Sharia on Christianity:

Christian who try to witness to Muslim or Muslims who attempt to change their religion must be punished until they die. New Churches cannot be built; the old ones cannot be rehabilitated. Religions cannot be displayed publicly and processions by Christians would be strictly forbidden. Any loud playing of Christian music, public preaching, etc. will be banned.²⁹

The silence of the church in Nigeria over this development may be the termination of its existence. This is what motivated Christians in Kaduna to protest against the implementation of

²⁷ Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood: Studies in Christian and Muslim Relations* (Jos: Stream Christian Publishers, 2003), p.24.

²⁸ Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999, 22.

²⁹ Eunice O. Abogunrin, *Freedom of Religion: A Nigerian Reality*. A Paper presented at West African Association of Theological Institutions (WAATI) National Conference – Nigerian Zone, Ilorin, 2001, p.14, citing Julius O. Adegbola, *The Sharia and its Implications for Christians and other Non-Muslims in Nigeria*.

Sharia in that state. This led to a crisis with claims hundreds of lives and destruction of properties.³⁰ Other happenings in several places with similar religious backgrounds placed a big question mark on the security of Nigeria. Besides that, the proliferation of religious crises in Nigeria raises doubts in the minds of many Christians about the peaceful coexistence with Muslims. If Christians are denied their rights to the freedom of speech or protest against certain policies in Muslims dominated areas and suffer persecution for it, what will happen if they do not act for their right? That is the question many Christians ask who are skeptical concerning the effectiveness of pacifism in managing conflict.

In respect of the on going situation, some Christians think that with the implementation of Sharia in certain states in Nigeria, pacifism would not ensure future existence of the church in those parts of this country. As we have stated, external forces cause little damage to the church. While the external oppression causes unity and historically can make the church stronger, the internal pressures will bring division and instability to the church. If the church should fear anything it should fear internal strife rather than external oppression.

If the church is actively involved in seeking and pursuing peace, Christians who were at the Constitutional Amendments Forum would have taken precaution against inserting an article that may have different interpretations. For instance, Section 275 of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria affirms any State that desires to have Sharia Court of Appeal. Though the Constitution spelled out clearly the limitation of Sharia Court, adherents of Islam may have different interpretation to suit their purpose. Pacifism therefore endeavors towards the direction of actively building peace in calling for clarification of Section 275.

4.2 Summary.

³⁰ Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood*, p.121.

From the study of the scriptures and a review of the Nigerian context, we are made to understand that peace cannot be overemphasized or over stressed. Peace should be the scale of preference in our day to day affairs. If the traditional people who are guided by conscience pursue peace, how much more will the church will be expected to seek peace. The revelation of God in Jesus: “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives...” (John 14:27 NIV). This is not the kind of peace that is obtained through violence as the world would advocate for. With the ethnic, religious and political crises in Nigeria, pacifism is the viable way that will promote mutual and peaceful coexistence in Nigeria and any given society.

The church should not be pessimistic in regard to the way of peace. This is the way of our Lord Jesus as it was demonstrated in the garden of Gethsemane. What is expected of us as disciples is no more than to follow in his steps. Jesus has clearly stated that the world will hate us. Jesus has not further elucidated the point that we should hate the world. The Nigerian church should only follow the cited passage where Jesus enjoined his followers to love their enemies and pray for those who persecute them. EYN considers this as the vital role of the church in the evil society. The church is to propagate the gospel of peace in spite of the cost. Pacifism will aim at leading the Nigerian society into what God has designed it to be.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION.

5.1 Summary

Christianity should be a religion that advocates and prays for peace in the world. As a result of this, humanity could establish an environment that is conducive; where mutual coexistence is experienced. However, this mutual coexistence is violated through the fallen nature of man with an ever-increasing rate of violence around the globe. The abundant gifts of natural resources are misused. Instead for man to use these resources to boost the economy that would have alleviated people from poverty, these resources are used to invent different kinds of missiles that can terminate human life. As a result, poverty, suffering and death increase at an alarming rate. Earth which would have been the fortunate planet among the planets of the universe is on a path to self destruction. Man was fortunate enough to be created in the image of God. He would have used his God's given potential to develop the earth. But reverse is often being the case. Wars, clashes of different kinds and violence of different sorts dominate our media today indicating that the world is in a serious chaos. The amount of destruction that is caused by violence makes an indelible mark on the world. It makes one to ask where the world is heading. The church would have been the hope for the world in such a deteriorated situation. Sad to say that the church does not only shied away from its responsibility, but has assimilated to the order of the world in responding to conflict. It appears that the church considers the way of Jesus as outdated and ineffective in solving the problems of this warring age. Both the church and the world have adopted violence as a way to achieve peace. From all indications the situation is getting worse because violence is never the way to peace.

Wars and counter wars have not achieved what is expected of them. Rather it has put the world in a dilapidated condition. Humanity needs to look for an alternative. Humanity needs an alternative that gives a promising future, where mutual coexistence of people would be realized.

¹⁴This is what EYN concept of pacifism suggests as a solution to the Nigerian situation. Nigeria is a country that is so often threatened with violence. Since the method of pacifism in responding

to evil was taught and practiced by our Lord Jesus Christ, EYN considers it as best for those who are his disciples. And the reason for this study is to introduce this method to the other parts of the body of Christ. The diversity of doctrinal issues found within the body of Christ opens the door for others to conceive that they can fight the evil with evil. The issue of pacifism is neglected and the adherents to it are regarded as cowards. I took considerable time to define pacifism and its significance in peace building because of the importance in its meaning.

In tracing the origin of EYN, it has been discovered that the Church of the Brethren was formed shortly after the Thirty Years' war in Europe. The experiences of the pioneer Brethren during this period and their serious engagement in the study of scriptures shaped their worldview. This worldview made them to maintain that war is contrary to will of God and to the teaching and lifestyle of Jesus. This conviction moved the Brethren to advocate non-violence as a feasible method in approaching conflict. The Nigerian Brethren were among the beneficiaries of the gospel of peace that was propagated by the Church of the Brethren missionaries.

It has been pointed out that this message of peace did not meet the people completely ignorant of peace process. Consequently, EYN accepted the scriptural values of peace and incorporated the positive aspects of the traditional way of peace making with the scripture. From the survey of both the traditional and scriptural teachings of peace, it is made clear that both are from God. The general revelation of moral principles as perceived through the conscience and the special revelation as recorded in the scriptures are both from God. That is what makes pacifism not only applicable to the Nigerian context but can be cultivated and harvested on Nigerians soil. If Christianity is a religion that was brought to us from another culture and confirms our peace process, peace therefore is worth pursuing. Moreover our communal and cultural heritage depicts how necessary pacifism is to Nigerian society. A society with multi-religious and multi-ethnic set up like Nigeria can only obtain unity in diversity through embracing pacifism. Therefore the solution to Nigeria's religious, ethnic and political crises is

pacifism. For any society to make a considerable progress economically, politically and otherwise must consider pacifism indispensable. Without it violence will persistently be a routine in our society.

5.2 Suggestions and Recommendations.

Having seen how essential pacifism is in making our planet a habitable place, there are still more things to consider in making it more effective. The purpose of the suggestions/recommendations in this section is twofold: First to encourage EYN to recommit herself to the task of peace building with all seriousness. It often happens when majority of people is on the other side, the minority gets discouraged. But with the issue of peace we have to take a radical approach, no matter what other people might say. Peace is something that we all need. Where the difference lies is how to achieve it. Some people conceive that they can get peace through violence. For Brethren, peace is the way to peace. Peace churches like EYN should be encouraged to continue advocating for the nonviolent peace process.

Secondly, I ardently seek to call all believers to follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus Christ in managing conflict. The voice of Jesus echoes to our antagonistic generation:

You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I said to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your father who is in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward have you? Do not even the tax collector do the same? ... You therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect (Matthew 5:43-46, 48).

In order to be obedient disciples of Jesus, we have to abide by his word despite the cost. The way may not be convenient for us in a given situation. We must obediently say ‘let your will be done.’

From the survey, I pointed out the diverse views that exist even among the people of EYN in regard to the pacifist stance of the church. On one hand people conceive that EYN pacifism is more of a principle than a practice. On the other hand some people see it more as practice than principle. I side with those who maintain the pragmatic approach of EYN pacifism than the principle. The ideal situation is to keep both in balance. EYN needs to articulate its position on pacifism as the policy of the church. EYN needs to go out and to practice it. What is found currently is that preaching and practicing pacifism is at one's own proposal since it is not in the constitution of the church. This problem started from the outset with the missionaries' failure to incorporate it in the curriculum of KBC as well as in the policy of the church before they handed over indigenous leadership. Therefore to make EYN pacifism stronger and more appealing to EYN members and non- EYN, the following recommendations should be considered:

- EYN should incorporate the issue of peace in her constitution so that it becomes a policy for her members. The absence of pacifism in the constitution of the church makes it optional. That could be the reason why the diverse views exist in regard to the pacifist position of the church. In addition, the inculcation of pacifism in the constitution of the Church will enable the outsider to know the position of EYN. For instance, Church of the Brethren is known of her pacifist position because of the many resolutions and statements made in her annual conferences on peace. For that reason no one would doubt her peace position. Therefore, EYN should make a public statement that would prove her pacifist position. This is much easier with the proliferation of mass media such as the internet, television, radio, magazines and newspapers.
- EYN also should improve on her method of transmitting the peace message to her members. There is a need to teach pacifism in the church right from childhood by

the parents and the church at Sunday school. Moreover, a teaching can be organized for youth at National, District and Local level stressing the effectiveness of non-violent action in the peace process. That would help the youth to participate in the peace process. And as they grow, that concept develops stronger in them. As the scripture says: “Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it,” (Proverbs 22:6). The issue of peace should be stressed among youth because they are the most vulnerable to violence in the society. The politicians, the nationalists and even the church sometimes use the youth to achieve their own ends. If these youths can be motivated to invest their strength, which they often waste in violence into peacemaking, imagine the immense good it will do the society.

- The other parts of the body of Christ that use violent means as the way to achieve peace need to correct their conception of pacifism. Most often pacifism is related to passivity. However in reality, pacifism is completely different from passiveness. Pacifism as it is defined in the first chapter of this thesis is an active word. Passiveness is an inactive word. While a pacifist is actively involved in that which brings peace, a passive person submissively allows to be acted upon. Therefore pacifism should never be considered synonymous to passivity.
- The church should be actively involve in things that promote peace in the local community as Jesus wished for in Jerusalem:

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, “if you, and even you, had known on this day what would bring peace, but now it is hidden from your eyes” (Luke 19:41, 42).

The first and foremost step for the Church in regard to pacifism as a viable instrument in handling conflict is to have a comprehensive knowledge of it. A wrong concept would make

someone approach an idea with prejudice and bias mind. It could be assumed therefore that some Christians disagree with pacifism because they relate it to passivity.

Another important concept that can be deduced from the definition of the Latin word *pacificus* that is translated ‘peacemaking’ is its tense. It is in a present continuous active tense. This implies that peace should be part of our daily business. Pursuing peace only when there is a crisis cripples the efficiency of the peace process. It makes the peace process to perform only one of its functions, which is reconciliation. Whereas to make the peace process function fully, it needs to be implemented in three stages: Pre-conflict stage, conflict stage and post-conflict stage.

Pre-conflict stage in the peace process involves creating awareness about the significance of mutual interdependence in multi-cultural and multi-religious community. Emphasis of the process is on tolerance, forgiveness and love. This is the stage where people would avoid the condition that Jesus observed when he said “if you had known what would bring peace.” The “if” in this statement can be avoided only in this stage of peace process. People are encouraged to refrain from anything that would create tension like altering abusive or provocative words to one another and encouraged to work towards things that would promote a peaceful coexistence.

In a community where pre-conflict management is in session, it is easy to know who is to be warned and what needs to be reported to the appropriate authority. When the pre-conflict peace process is duly implemented, it is easier to manage conflict in the next level. But when this is not done, it makes conflict management harder. The reason is that the situation has not been studied and therefore everything seemed to be complex. And possibly dialogue with people involve has not been taking place. You are starting a peace process at a level when a party or both parties have been affected by tensions. Each side is filled with explosive anger. In the pre-conflict management where peace process is carried out prior to the emergence of violence, the situation is much more manageable even if crisis erupts. That can make the next step in peace building much easier.

The second stage of peace building can be implemented during a crisis. This seems to be the most difficult one because lethal action is involved. This peace that can be experienced even during a crisis justifies the definition of pacifism in the previous chapter. Peace does not mean the absence of conflict. In this stage people lose patience and begin to act mercilessly on their fellow human being. If we consider the popular adage that says ‘two wrongs cannot make a right’, it is important therefore for any of the parties to make peace. A pacifist can play a vital role in this stage to calm the situation. This is possible because a pacifist will involve in a non-lethal action irrespective of the action of his opponent. The non-pacifist will utter words like, ‘enough is enough,’ or ‘we are pushed to the wall,’ or ‘both cheeks have been slapped.’ Such utterances make one to use violence presumptuous to achieve “peace.”

Experience has shown that both parties can hardly ever come to agreement because of their differences through violent action. In the best circumstance a third party or a mediator may be involved to calm the situation. When a third party is called for one has a choice as whether to bring in police or to bring in a peace-building team. The church can serve to offer the world the gospel of peace in Jesus. Our peacemaking should not be meld in the way of the world. We should give the world what we have received from Jesus. The scripture clearly tells who we are and what is expected of us:

No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does bad tree bear good fruit. Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. The good man brings out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks (Luke 6:43-45).

This is what Christians should consider in regards to conflict management. Since a thornbush does not bear figs, it is impossible for violence to beget peace. If the church continues to hold to violent response to violence, the people of the world will continue to set a pace for us in conflict management. And if the people of the world are acting that way because that is what is found in their philosophy, from which philosophy does the church draw on for her own violent reaction?

Our Lord is the Prince of Peace and his subjects should abide by the ethics of his kingdom.

The third stage of the peace process is the post conflict management. This is popularly known as reconciliation after the parties have involved in physical combat. It is a process of bringing back together the parties that have been separated by violence. The main concern here is to convince the offender to accept fault and the offended to forgive. Even though that is the ideal situation, people have been using such an arena to shift blame and assuming self-righteousness even if they were wrong. When both sides are involved in violence, it is often hard to blame any side. This is where non-violence is advantageous over violence because it wouldn't be difficult to know who should be called to book for any action. And when it comes to forgiveness, one has to forgive even if they are badly affected. However, reconciliation should go further than just a process of fault finding and forgiveness between parties. As Robert Johansen observed:

To truly reconcile people living in unjust structures requires not only resolving an immediate conflict. It also means transforming institutional relations that are inherently unloving and unfair such as slavery in the past history, child soldiers, or sex slave, or oppressive political system today. ¹⁵

Reconciliation that brings complete transformation in a community is that which work towards interpersonal and institutional relationships. Any attempt to neglect one of these would make reconciliation partial. For instance, if interpersonal relationships are built but institutionally biases continue to be in place, reconciliation is still far removed. A Muslim and a Christian may be at good terms with one another, or a person from one tribe may be at good terms with someone from another tribe. If from a wider perspective, people continue to be animus to one another, reconciliation has not been absolutely reached.

¹⁵ Robert C Johansen, *Church Mission and Peace Evangelism* (Elgin: Brethren Press, 2006), p.14.

The way peace can be effective in a community is through negotiation. Christians and Muslims living in the same environment can negotiate among themselves and come to an agreement that they will not kill one another. They can make this agreement stronger with a promise that they would unveil anyone coming from outside to cause tension in their community. Moreover, a law can be enforced in a community on the possession of lethal weapons. Yet a community needs to devise means to stop unlawful use of weapons. When that is done, violence can be reduced. The only way to succeed is through embracing the Prince of Peace. We must find ways to approach conflict non-violently. This is confirmed in the statement of Robert Johansen who said since the world is becoming a global village and that weapons of mass destruction are within the possible reach of even developing nations, the Brethren non-violence should be highly valued.¹⁶ Martin Luther King, Jr. stated that through our scientific and technological genius, we had only succeeded in making the world a neighbourhood. Less is done towards ethical commitment that enhances brotherhood.¹⁷ King stresses that we have no choice than learn to stay together. He argues his point thus:

We are tied together in a single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured.¹⁸

Pacifists are looking at human relationships from that angle. Man has ignorantly invented nuclear weapons without considering its reciprocal effect. Though this mistake has been made, we still have the opportunity to sustain our existence when we stop using weapons on our fellow man. This is possible only when we embrace one another in love irrespective of religion, race or whichever barrier that separates and actively address ethical issues non-violently.

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 12.

¹⁷ Martin Luther King, Jr. Internet: http://www.stanford.edu/group/about_king/warandpeace/wpquotes.htm. p.2

¹⁸ Ibid.

Therefore, the level of awareness about the necessity of pacifism as a workable means of approaching violence should be strengthened. This could be done through, peace seminars, workshops and other relevant teachings. A training of this sort, in which non-violence is encouraged, helped to change the perception of people in a crisis situation.¹⁹ Therefore a periodical teaching on the significance of non-violence would be helpful for church leaders, which would enlighten them about the role they can play in peace building in their community. Another seminar can be organized for different classes of people in a community such as the youth, women, men, Muslims, Christians and Traditionalists. Evaluation can be done after the seminar to see how each of the groups mentioned could manage conflict. This would give a clue to the level of understanding for conflict resolution in that community. It would also give a sense of direction towards the next step.

In conclusion, this study would not achieve its purpose without the readers' deep reflection of what is happening in Nigeria and the global society. Killing, looting and destruction are the common order of the day. Some people no longer seem to see the sanctity of human life. Someone can just slaughter his fellow human being like chickens. The most unfortunate part of it is that those who do all sort of violence do so in the name of religion. Probably other religions of the world may justify their violent action based on the fundamental teachings of their religion, but a Christian cannot justify violent action. As the subjects of the kingdom of the Prince of Peace, we should be distinguished from the people of the world. As the scripture rightly enjoins us: "Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did" (I John 2:6). We ought to love our enemies as Jesus did and also preached to the world to put their sword back into its sheath. We have no option than direct all our efforts towards peacemaking. Martin Luther King, Jr. says, "*It is no longer a choice...between violence and non-violence. It is either non-violence or non-existence.*" Think about this; what would have been the reaction of Muslims if those boys were

¹⁹ Adrian A. Helleman, *Active Nonviolence: The Only Viable Alternative*. A Paper presented at the TEKAN Peace Commitment Seminar, Jos 2002, p.6.

killed within TCNN premises? If you are left to choose now, what is the best approach to violence in our society, Nigeria? I hope this study has opened your eyes to see the menace of violence on our society. Evidently, pacifism can transform the situation for better.

APPENDICES. xxxx

Interview with EYN Leaders

I am writing a thesis entitled **The EYN concept of Pacifism and its Relevance to the Nigerian Context**. It is in this regard that I wish to request for your opinion on the following questions. Please feel free to express yourself as you wish in answering the questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Rev. Anthony A. Ndamsai; (MTh. Student, TCNN Bukuru).

Personal Identification of the Informant (Optional).

1. Name.....
2. Age.....
3. Rank.....
4. Occupation.....

1. What is EYN peace position?
2. In What ways does EYN exhibit her peace position?
3. What role did EYN play during:
 - a. The Nigerian civil war?
 - b. The Maitatsine riots?
 - c. Ethno-religious clashes?
4. Has EYN as a Church ever approached secular government authority and stated her peace position against any government policy that may likely create tension?
5. Has EYN officially declared her peace position in one of her conferences or in her Constitution?
6. Is peace teaching included in the curriculum of EYN Bible schools?
7. What is the contribution of EYN towards peace making among the TEKAN churches and the society at large?

8. What are the challenges facing EYN peace position especially in the religious tension in Northern Nigeria?

Questionnaire for EYN Theologians

I am writing a thesis entitled **The EYN concept of Pacifism and its Relevance to the Nigerian Context**. It is in this regard that I wish to request for your opinion on the following questions. Please feel free to express yourself as you wish in answering the questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Rev. Anthony A. Ndamsai; (MTh. Student, TCNN Bukuru).

Personal Identification of the Informant (Optional).

- 1 Name.....
- 2 Age.....
- 3 Rank.....
- 4 Occupation.....

1. Is pacifism a good strategy for handling conflict in a pluralistic society such as Nigeria?
2. To what extent is pacifism relevant to Nigerian context? (Please tick and give reasons for your answer).
 - a. To a large extent.
 - b. To some extent.
 - c. To a little extent.
3. Is EYN a pacifist Church? Yes/ No (Please tick and give reasons).
 - a. If yes, to what extent?
 - b. If no, why?
4. If EYN is a peace Church, of what importance is it to Nigerian Church and society?
5. What do you observe as weakness of EYN peace position in crisis situation?
6. In which ways can EYN peace position be improved for the benefit of Nigerian society?

7. What are the challenges to EYN peace position in Nigerian context today?
8. In your view what should be the role of EYN in promoting peaceful co-existence in a multi-religious society such as Nigeria?
9. How would you interpret - “But if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek also” to Nigerian Christians during a crisis situation? Do you agree with the view that both cheeks have been slapped and there is none left?
10. Have you been a victim of religious crisis in Nigeria before and how did you react?

Questionnaire for EYN Members.

I am writing a thesis entitled **The EYN concept of Pacifism and its Relevance to the Nigerian Context**. It is in this regard that I wish to request for your opinion on the following questions. Please feel free to express yourself as you wish in answering the questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Rev. Anthony A. Ndamsai; (MTh. Student, TCNN Bukuru).

Personal Identification of the Informant (Optional).

- 1 Name.....
- 2 Age.....
- 3 Rank.....
- 4 Occupation.....

1. Did the early missionaries teach the Brethren peace position to Nigerian converts?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No.
2. What do you think were the responses of the converts and why?
3. Would you say EYN is a pacifist Church? (Give reasons).
4. Is pacifism applicable to Nigerian situation? (Give reasons).
5. What do you think is/are the implication(s) of pacifist position in Nigeria context?
6. Is there an alternative to pacifism that could better ensure a peaceful coexistence in Nigerian context?

RESULTS OF THE INTERVIEWS:

A. Interview with EYN leaders.

Six leaders have been interviewed on the pacifist position of EYN Church. Among the six persons, four out of the six affirmed that EYN is a pacifist Church while two of the six partially agreed. Those who affirmed pacifist position of the Church stated the way it is practiced. The methods EYN implement pacifist position is: Through programmes, humanitarian services, conflict resolutions, and nonviolent approaches to crises. Those leaders that maintain partial affirmation to the pacifist position of EYN base their argument on the lack of radical approach to pacifism in the Church. The laxity of the church is apparent in the absence of official declaration and lack of use of media to propagate her peace position. Since it is two against four, I would therefore conclude that EYN is a pacifist Church. However, the points raised by those that opposed the pacifist position of the church should be taken into cognizance as weakness that need to be improved.

B. Interviews with EYN Theologians.

Similar to the views of EYN key officers, there are mix views about pacifism among EYN Theologians. Out of fifty questionnaires sent out, twenty-seven were answered and returned. The responses of the twenty-seven respondents are as follows:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| i. Is pacifism a good strategy? | Yes – 21.
No – 6. |
| ii. To what extent? | To a large extent – 8.
To some extent - 13.
To a little extent – 6. |
| iii. Is EYN a pacifist church? | Absolute yes – 14
Partial yes – 9.
No – 4. |

C. Interviews with laity.

Sixty copies of questionnaires were distributed among EYN lay members. Only twenty-eight were filled and returned. The following data is based on the views of the twenty-eight respondents.

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| i. Did the early missionaries teach the Brethren peace position to Nigeria converts? | Yes – 24.
No – 3.
Neutral – 1. |
| ii. What were the responses of the early converts? | Positive – 20.
Skeptical – 8. |
| iii. Is EYN a pacifist Church? | Yes – 24.
No – 3.
Neutral – 1. |
| iv. Is pacifism applicable to Nigerian context? | Yes – 10.
No – 17.
Other – 1. |

D. Numbers of oral interviews conducted was - 32.

- i. Nos. of those who said that EYN is a pacifist Church is -17.
- ii. Nos. of those who said that EYN is not a pacifist Church is -5
- iii. Nos. of those that are neutral is-10.

E. Summary of the data:

- i. Total numbers of respondents is – 93.
- ii. Total numbers of those who said that EYN is a pacifist Church – 68.
- iii. Total numbers of those who said that EYN is not a pacifist Church – 14.
- iv. Total numbers of other views – 11.

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