

# Examining Religion as a Solution for Peace in Enugu State, Nigeria: A Study [2010-2016]

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## ABSTRACT

This study delves into the role of religion as a potential remedy for fostering peace in Enugu State, Nigeria, during the period spanning 2010-2016. Anchored on sensitivity theory, the qualitative research method was employed to analyze the dynamics of religious influence on peace and conflict. The findings reveal that while religion has historically contributed to violence and unrest, particularly through manipulation of adherents, imposition of laws, and economic factors, there exists a potential for religious tolerance and enlightenment to mitigate these tensions. The study advocates for inter-religious dialogue as a governmental initiative to sustain peaceful co-existence among African Christians and Muslims in Enugu State.

Keywords: Religion, Peace, Enugu State, Nigeria, Sensitivity Theory, Inter-religious Dialogue, Peaceful Co-existence.

## INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is the African country with the largest population, almost equal to that of all other West African countries combined. It is the most culturally and ethnically diverse African nation. It is one of the Nation States in the world with an approximate balance between its Christians and Muslims apart from the minority adherent of other Religions. The two religions poised are unique in their style of propagating peace [1]. Yet numerous challenges sometimes threaten their peaceful coexistence in Nigeria unlike countries, like Mali or Somalia that have been divided based on religion. For Nigeria to be in existence today is good news and deserves mention. Nigeria as a country needs to be rescued, not only from its moral drift but also from the bondage of wrong religious idealism, manifested as divisiveness and violence.

To understand the dynamism of the two religions (Christianity and Islam) in ensuring peace subtly demand a definition of the basic terms [1]. The word Christianity was first used in New Testament at Antioch in Syria where the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians meaning the followers of Christ (Acts 11:26). Christianity is based on the life, teaching and the death of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christian religion. In line with this [2] argues that Jesus is the foundation of the New Testament and that New Testament itself is the foundation of Christianity. The tenets of Christianity are recorded in the book of books called the "Holy Bible. In Romans 14:19: He says, 'let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification'. John 16:33 He says "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. John 14: 27 repeated the chorus when he says, 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you'. I do not give to you as the world gives.

Again, in Romans 12:17-18, the scripture instructs, 'If someone has done you wrong, do not repay him with a wrong. Try to do what everyone considers to be good. Do everything possible on your part to live in peace with everybody'. All these are indications that Christianity helps in character modification, love for one another, truth, obedience and respect for elders, parents and people in authority. This is also evidenced in Ephesians 6:1-3, 'Children, it is your Christian duty to obey your parents, for this is the right thing to do.' Respect your father and mother" is the first commandment that has a promise added; "So that all may go well with you, and you live a long life in the land." In the same vein, Quran that came into Nigeria between around 1100 AD and spread through Jihad by Uthman Dan

Fodio in 1984 portrays Islamic religion as a religion of peace [3]. This is captured by Muslims in Islam with the nomenclature surrendering to the will of God or one who surrenders to the will of God calls for peace [4]. The tenets in Quran 49:10 uphold that humanity is but a single Brotherhood thereby authorizing all to make peace with our brethren. Quran 16:129 also follows suit that Allah is with those who are righteous and those who do good. In Koran 41:34, we read: "he who replies evil with good makes a friend out of an enemy. Good and devil deeds are not the same. Respond with that which is more just, and behold: he who lives with you in enmity will become a truer friend. "Along this same line, a popular tradition handed on Islam from generation to generations tells of an incident where a believer once came to the prophet Mohammed with the request: "O Prophet, give me an outstanding advice that could be rightly applied in all situations of life!" To this request the Prophet answered: "Be not the slave to anger .... Do not wish an open confrontation with your enemy; rather crave always for peace from Allah." This shows that both Christianity and Islam extol peace and mutual resolution of conflicts [5]. Enugu is a state in southeastern Nigeria that was created in 1991 from part of the old Anambra State, with total population of 3,267,837 according to 2006 national census data. The Europeans first settled in the city of Enugu in 1909. The group of Europeans led by Albert Kitson in their quest for silver discovered coal in the Udi Ridge. Resulting from the first shipment of coal to Britain in 1914 mining activities increased in the area, bringing about a permanent cosmopolitan settlement supported by railway station foreign businesses began to move into Enugu in addition to local one already in existence. People from all part of Nigeria and beyond moved into Enugu in search of white man job. Consequently, Enugu began to experience multi religious conscience. Irrespective of the multi religious conscientiousness in Enugu they continued to believe that the fundamental objective of religion is peace. They promote peace using their different moral codes. Yet, the adherents of these religions instead of fighting for what will unite them allow religion as a means of onslaught. If this is the current situation in Nigeria, It therefore calls for a serious attention because of the many lapses among the adherents of these two religions. Is that what it meant when the chapters and verses of the scripture in Matt10:34-36, Luke12:49 announce that "Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth? No, I have come to divide people against each other-Son against Father, Daughter against Mother etc. "Do we take the words of the scripture and/Quran literally or do we have to put it in context? In Enugu State, the issue of religious crisis, insignificantly has been occurring till date. To be specific, its occurrence in Nimbo in Uzo- Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State speaks of volume, of the intention of herders' invasion. Presently Fulani herders' dominant crisis have precarious religious undertone because of their perceived aim of establishing a colony. The colony seems to be a yard stick for Islamizing the State which has led to so many killing. This killings initiated by the Fulani herdsmen is fast eating deep into the societal fabric in respect to the impact they make in ensuring conflict instead of peace. The consequence of this trend has, evidently, been crisis and instability. In an apparent dynamic of degeneration, the situation has metamorphosed from isolated skirmishes to systematic armed conflict involving deployment of sophisticated weaponry and strategy hidden in mosque [6].

Yet, situating this problem in the right context for instance: in April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016 there were series of attacks to the extent of burning down a Catholic Church in Enugu where about 140 Christian worshipers have so far been reportedly killed by some Fulani herdsmen at Nimbo in Uzo- Uwani Local Government Area of Enugu State [6]. Four months after herdsmen invaded Nimbo village in Enugu State, killing and maiming the villagers, another village in the same state was, attacked by, at least, 50 herdsmen leaving death and tears in their wake. The invaded village was Ndiagu, Attakwu, Akegbe-Ugwu in Nkanu-West Local Government Area of the state. Some of the victims include 26-year-old Seminarian, Lazarus Nwafor, on a year apostolic work, who was slaughtered and a six month pregnant woman whose stomach was ripped open. From the above observation, religious intolerance is a blind and fixated mental and psychological negative attitude towards religious belief and practices that are contrary to one's cherished beliefs and practices [8]. Such negative attitudes constantly manifest themselves in violent outburst that spill over the political and economic lives of the citizens. The inability to recognize and accommodate views and opinions of others is therefore, one of the major sources of religious crisis in Enugu State, Nigerian religious adherents, especially the Muslims and the Christians have demonstrated intolerant attitudes resulting to violence. Certainly, the problem is not with the belief system but with the believers. To this end, it is believed that evil thrives more where the good people are silent. It may be regrettable to say that most religious leaders and fathers are not living up the expectations, educating the followers of their religion on the true objectives of their religion and the influence it has on the people's peaceful co-existence, economic and educational development. Instead, they become instrument used by politicians to get at their followers for their self-gain. As a result of the foregoing, the researcher got motivated to examine religion as a panacea for ensuring peace in Nigeria with a focus on Islam and Christianity in Enugu State.

Three denominational Churches shall be considered for the purpose of the study: the Roman Catholic Church, African initiated churches and the Protestants. The Roman Catholic Church was brought into the soil of Enugu around 1889 under the apostolic prefecture of the Lower Niger, by Fr. Joseph Shanahan who later became a bishop. In 1908, coal was discovered in Enugu and the activities brought about church proliferation and Islam as well. Few mosques within Enugu town and Nsukka areas shall be considered as well. Islamic religion came into Enugu state over three hundred years ago through Nupe traders who first journey to Ibagwa Nkwo and Enugu Ezike both in Nsukka local Government area. According to [7] and [9] in their interview with Alfa Abubakar, a Nupe resident in Ibagwa Nkwo "a group of Hausa traders arrived at Ibagwa over three hundred years ago with the sole aim of trading." Unlike other parts of the country, Islam was introduced and propagated in Enugu through persuasion, job opportunities and absorption process using trade in their evangelical mission especially in some part of Enugu. According to [3], Enugu state is the Islamic capital of Ala Igbo with over 14 mosques in Nsukka area alone. This situation undoubtedly, led to compromise, peace for violence. The question is, of what benefit will it be to work together as brothers and sisters than to dialogue with guns, knives and bombs? These evil beliefs and practices have become a source of great worry to some scholars in Africa like [6], [4] and [10], who have written interesting works on religion but none have discussed it in contest of religion as a panacea for ensuring peace in Enugu, hence the birth of the topic under review which will be articulated as follows: definition of terms such as clarification of concepts, secondly, the theoretical framework was anchored on sensitivity theory; thirdly, the study shall focus on religion as a panacea for ensuring Peaceful Coexistence in Enugu State, Nigeria 2010-2016. This is followed by the discussion of findings, conclusion and recommendation.

#### Clarification of Concepts

**Religion:** This is a complex phenomenon. Over the years scholars have attempted to fashion a suitable definition of religion but none has been acclaimed to be universally acceptable. All attempts happened to fall short of one issue or another. We do not intend to involve in the definitional maze in this study as such we explore the etymology of religion from three Latin words vis-à-vis *Ligare* meaning to bind together, *Relegere* meaning to unite or link, and *Religion* meaning relationship. From this exploration, religion is a relationship that exists between human beings and Divine beings. Bouquet articulated it as "a fixed relationship between the human self and some non-human entity, the sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the absolute or simply, God" [11]. However, we consider religion in this study as human activities manifesting through beliefs and ritual practices. Here, we shall explain each of them below:

#### Christianity

Christianity is the second largest religion in Nigeria after Islam. The central tenet of Christianity is the belief in Jesus as the Son of God and the Messiah (Christ). Christians believe that Jesus, as the Messiah, was anointed by God as savior of humanity and hold that Jesus' coming was the fulfillment of messianic prophecies of the Old Testament. Christians are listed as comprising 40 percent of the population, with Muslims 50 percent and indigenous religions 10 percent. Christianity is the most advertised religion in Nigeria. It was introduced in Nigeria in the middle of the nineteenth century by missionaries from Britain. Christianity was one of the several things (education, technology, civilization and the like) introduced by the British colonialists. The missionaries came preaching the message of Christ, ministering to the people and healing the sick, performing miracles which pulled many crowd to them in the first place. Christianity started from the eastern part populated by the Igbo, there after it infiltrated the village councils and chiefs, who gave the colonialists lands to build local churches. Before the 80s, Christianity had spread to the southern part of the country, to the Yoruba and the middle belt (Benin). As at the year 2005, there were over 50 million Christians in Nigeria; we have the Protestant who strongly believe in the power of the Holy Ghost as well as the catholic, Baptist and Anglican churches.

#### Islam

This is one of the dominant religions in sub-Saharan Africa, including Nigeria, especially the northern part which accounts for one of the largest Muslim populations in Africa. Islam came to northern Nigeria as early as the eleventh century and was well established in major towns of the northern region by the sixteenth century, spreading into the countryside and towards the middle belt uplands. Like Christianity, Islam contains an ideology of gender and embodies assumptions about women. The most significant element of the Islamic ideology includes the extension of basic legal rights in marriage, divorce, and property. Under the Islamic law, widows are entitled to inherit at least one-eighth of the dead husband's property and land. This share is frequently 'managed' and then taken by the brother-in-law. Meanwhile, the root of the word Islam, *silm*, refers to "making peace, being in a mutually peaceful environment, greetings, rescue, safety, being secure, finding peace, reaching salvation and well-being or being far from danger, attaining goodness, comfort and favor, keeping away from troubles and disasters, submitting the self and obeying, respect, being far from wrong." The "submitting the self and obeying" here means "submitting to justice and righteousness in order to reach peace and safety and being in a peaceful environment by one's free will." In fact,

salaam and salaamat, mean "to reach salvation," and their rubai form (with four radical letters) salaam means "submitted, became Muslim, and made peace." "Islam" as either a noun or a verb with these meanings is mentioned in many verses in the Qur'an.1 [12]. From this perspective, Islam is "submission to God, accepting His authority as well as obeying His orders"; "one's total submission to God and serving only Him"; "embracing the messages of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and abiding by them." In this sense, a Muslim is one who is under the peaceful and safe shade of Islam. God wants a Muslim to live in a safe and peaceful environment and to make efforts for the spread and continuity of peace. Since Islam means living in a peaceful environment that emerges as a result of submission to God, the Qur'an asks that all humanity should embrace Islam, that is, peace, and reminds us to avoid following Satan. As stated in the verse, O you who believe! Come in full submission to God, all of you, (without allowing any discord among you due to worldly reasons), and do not follow in the footsteps of Satan, for indeed he is a manifest enemy to you (seeking to seduce you to rebel against God, with glittering promises (Qur'an, 2:208). Satan is the enemy of peace. This verse is followed by a reminder of God's All-Glorious with irresistible might if believers "stumble and fall back" from following God's way to realize peace and agreement. The purpose of Islam is well defined. In order to portray a fair image of Islam, we have to consider its divinely inspired purposes, which yield, as a result, a just worldly order. Applying preventive measures to ensure security of wealth, life, mind, religion, and reproduction, Islam aims to build a society in peace, serenity, friendship, collaboration, altruism, justice, and virtue. In Qur'an, all Muslims are brothers and sisters to each other and if a disagreement appears among them they make peace and correct it (Qur'an, 49:10). They help each other to avoid what God forbids and to observe their religious awareness at every stage in their life (Qur'an, 5:2); they carry out important tasks after shura, that is, consultation (Qur'an, 3:159; 42:38); and they always witness truthfully and are just even if it is against their close relatives (Qur'an, 4:135). Again, as mentioned in the Qur'an, a true Muslim follows the straight path. That means that he or she is faithful, honest, and just, calm, lives to perfectly observe his or her religion and in guidance of reason (Qur'an, 1:6-7; 11:112). Pursuing the straight path can be understood as being absolutely truthful and honest in all circumstances, as well as embracing a moderate way of life that encourages good relations with everyone. Living on the straight path is the most significant desire for any Muslim. Upon the revelation of the verse, Pursue, then, what is exactly right (in every matter of the Religion), as you are commanded (by God), and those who, along with you, have turned (to God with faith, repenting their former ways, let them do likewise); and do not rebel against the bounds of the Straight Path (O believers)! He indeed sees well all that you do (Qur'an, 11:112), the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said, "The chapter Hud has made me older (King, 2011). In this sense, the Companions commented on the verse, "There was no verse revealed to the Prophet Muhammad that is more powerful than this." Such a verse that so powerfully enjoins "what is right" should have the power to eradicate all kinds of violence and oppression, which are obviously not the right path to follow in social relations.

### Peace

Peace is one of the most core human values from ages past. The word "Peace" is gotten from Latin word "pax" meaning absence of violence. Today many definitions has been offered to convincingly drive its meaning home. Raymond Aron defines peace as the absence of war; while Lentz asserts that "a peaceful world is a warless world." "it is an aberration to simply define peace as the absence of war, violence or conflict. Albert Einstein asserts that 'Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order – in short, of government'. Peace is seen to be the state of calmness, harmonious coexistence and good understanding, tranquility in all sectors of governance. The definition of peace has been a contemporary issue for Philosophers and social leaders from abinitio. Ibanez observes:

Thomas Hobbes argues that the 'state of nature' was rampant with conflict and violence. In this original state, a great man could be murdered in his sleep or overwhelmed by great numbers. Life was solitary, poor, nasty, and brutish and shot. In order to escape this nasty life, men resolved to create a social contract in which each gave up his/her right to self-defense to a Leviathan, powerful force above all and to which all were subject, thus creating a more peaceful and orderly life.

In addition to the political theorist postulation above, the sociologically point of view, Ikejiani-Clark, opined that peace is a value that emanates from just human relationships which enhances social harmony, creativity and productivity and prevention of war. Ibeanu, also states that 'peace refers to a condition of social harmony in which there are no social antagonism.' Consequently, peace is a pleasant coexistence of people from different background and belief without antagonism from any of the groups or authority. Peace is an integral part of the Bible and Koran, a virtue need for the actualization of religious fundamental objective. To put this study in the right perspective is an invitation to anchor it on a theoretical framework.

### Theoretical Framework

From the moment problems are discovered, theories are therefore developed for a logical explanation of what is happening. Theory according to [4], helps the analyst to situate their narration of the conflict. This is why theory serves as a guide and compass for any articulated knowledge. Many scholars and academia have propounded different conflict situations depending on the school of thought to which they represent. In this undertaking, some theories are adopted to better our understanding and knowledge of religion as a panacea for ensuring peace in Enugu State, Nigeria: study of Islam and Christianity. In this study, we shall employ Sensitivity theory.

#### Sensitivity Theory

This is a comprehensive, psychological theory of religion. The theory emphasizes that people are attracted to religions due to felt needs. It suggests that there are 16 basic propensities in man that influence the psychological appeal of religious behaviour. These desires include: power, independence, curiosity, acceptance, order, saving, honor, idealism, social contact, family, status, vengeance, romance, eating, physical exercise, and tranquility. Steven Reiss, the author of this new theory says that:

These basic human needs—which include honor, idealism, curiosity and acceptance – can explain why certain people are attracted to religion; why human beings, God’s images express psychologically opposite qualities, and the relationship between personality and religious experiences [13], [14].

Reiss’ research suggests that the quest for independence is a key psychological desire that separates religious and non-religious people. In a study published in 2000, Reiss found that religious people expressed a strong desire for interdependence with others (mostly Christians), but those who are not religious, however, showed a stronger need to be self-reliant and independent. The study also showed that religious people valued honor more than non-religious people, which Reiss suggests as a reason many people embrace religion to show loyalty to parents and ancestors. According to Reiss, people embrace those aspects of religious imagery that express their strong psychological needs and deepest personal values. For him, “People who have a strong need for order should enjoy ritualized religious experiences, whereas those with a weak need for order may prefer more spontaneous expression of faith. Reiss emphasized that the theory addresses the psychology of religious experiences and has no implications for the validity or invalidity of religious beliefs.

Applying this theory to the study, it becomes significant base on the fact that it reveals that all human beings embrace religion for a number of reasons. Such that the theory makes all to be sensitive in motivating basic desires to seek peace with other religion and a practical approach of their adherents in ensuring peace wherever they found themselves.

#### Religion as a Panacea for ensuring Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria

The incessant conflict in the country has in so many ways undermined development in almost all sector of Nigerian spheres. These conflicts ranging from denial of basic needs of identified groups to unfounded ethnic killings and political supremacy are the canker worms eating deep into the fabrics of the states in Nigeria. How to correct this menace has been an issue of national concern. Peace building is a process of facilitating the establishment of peace and the effort to prevent reoccurrences of violence by addressing root causes of conflict through reconciliation and transformation. Most scholars believe that religion though good but have its dark sides. Most conflicts in the world is believed to be caused by religions. One will tend to ask if religion has taken over class struggle. Gerrie ter Haar submitted that “religion is neither inherently good nor bad for peace”. Religion is a potent factor in any society and cannot be over looked. Religion and man are like a coin with two faces which are inseparable by their nature. Rousseau, viewed human nature as basically good, thus he asserted that “man is born free and everywhere he is in chains”. He added that what corrupt human nature are social interactions. While Hobbes, summarized human; as naturally curial and brutal. The brutality of man is the reason why Marx asserts that religion is the “Opium of the people”. In addition to this, [11] stated that religion is the sigh of the exploitation, the cry of the oppressed in the capitalist system. On the contrary, [4] observed that “religion does not mean worshipping individuals as gods. It is irreligious to kill fellow human beings or destroy their property. Religion does not encourage confrontation, throwing stones and breaking windows or marching out on the streets with bows and arrows. The worship abhors looting of earned property of others. It is against religious injunctions to hate, envy, be jealous of, wicked to or cruel to other created beings”. The Holy Bible confirmed the above postulation in Matthew 5:39, Jesus Christ employ his followers to love one another, if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn your left cheek too. Again Christians were admonished in the scripture not to use sword no matter the circumstance, for “all who take the sword will die by the sword.” (Matthew 26:52). The core value of Christianity is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, humility and self-control. There is no law against such things as these. (Galatians: 22-23). Mohammed also

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advocated peace and allowed violence only in self-defense just as Christians did when they fought the Holy war in Jerusalem. Hebrews 12:14, make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord.

The Christian tradition has made significant contributions to world peace at a number of different levels [12]. Among these are public statements by Church leaders, programs of action at local and international levels, organizations dedicated to bringing about peace, courses of study, commemorative days etc. In recent decades, Church leaders have frequently made statements in support of peace. In some cases these statements have been specific appeals for peace in particular circumstances, however, on other occasions they have also published more comprehensive statements on the need for peace and the means of achieving it. For instance, Vatican II on justice and the promotion of peace Paul VI set up the Pontifical Commission of Justice and Peace on 6 January, 1967 by a *Motu Proprio Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam*. Two months later in the Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, the pope succinctly stated of the new body that “its name which is also its program is justice and peace” (Paul VI, 1967: 5). After a ten year experimental period, Paul VI gave the commission its definitive status with the *Motu Proprio Justitiam et Pacem* of 10 December 1976. In 1988, St. John Paul II changed its name from commission to Pontifical Council and reconfirmed its general outlines of work (John Paul II, 1988: 142). Among the objectives and mandates of the Council is the promotion of justice and peace in the world, in the light of the Gospel and of the social teaching of the Church. The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace reflects on a broad range of questions related to war, disarmament and the arms trade, international security and violence in its various and ever changing forms (like terrorism excessive nationalism e.t.c.). It also considers the question of the Church’s role in political systems. It is responsible for the promotion of the World Day of Peace.

More so, the teaching of Christianity which is guided by the dictates of the bible (word of God) has constantly encouraged the members to ensure peace and harmony in the society. This is in alignment with Islamic teachings. According to Islamic teachings, the purpose of human life is to live a good life, in obedience to the laws of Allah, having a good connection with Allah, as well as good dealings with people, thereby attaining true happiness in this world, and also preparing for the eternal life. The two analysis showcased that religion can become a tool for promoting peaceful coexistence. It also showed that the Christian and Moslem faith is a panacea for ensuring peace ensures stability, positive change, and unity, divine and human justice and gives hope to the downtrodden, the discouraged and the humble [13]. This functional impact of Christianity is recognized and valued in the society [14]. Christian leaders as noted above add more value to the impact because they have always publicly stood for societal peace and harmony and against violence [15]. It is now widely accepted that violent conflict is the major hindrance to the development of the African continent and Nigeria in particular. It inflicts human sufferings through death, destruction of livelihoods, constant displacement and insecurity [16]. Violent conflict disrupts the process of production, creates conditions for pillage of the country’s resources and diverts their application from development purposes to servicing war. Violent conflict is thus responsible for perpetuating misery and under development in the country-Nigeria and the continent at large [17]. The researcher observed that religion is an instrument for peaceful coexistence, just that religious leaders in Nigeria employed religion as a tool for capturing the seat of power. Peace is notably a universal phenomenon that everyone desires and wishes to enjoy endlessly. Traditions, cultures, religions and societies do have different prescriptions to attaining and enjoying peace. Whenever and wherever there is peace there tends to be development and longevity is enjoyed. To this end, Christianity and Islam which as one of the predominant religions in the world today teaches peace and encourages all adherents to the faiths to pursue peace and live peacefully with one another. The above statement now seems to be questionable with the rise of intra, inter and ethno-religious conflicts in the world. While most Arab and some European countries are faced with intra-religious conflicts, an African country like Nigeria is faced with both intra and inter-religious conflicts. Nigeria, which is popularly known as Africa’s most populous black nation with a population of now about 200 million people, with more than 250 ethnic groups has Christianity and Islam as its predominant religions, though there are still in existence other religions.

Furthermore, Christianity as a word, means followers of Christ or Christ like. Christians therefore are those who follow and act the teaching of Christ in all ways of life. One of the climaxes of Christianity or Christian virtue is peace. Christians are enjoined in the Bible to embrace and live peacefully with their neighbors’. The following scriptures confirm this: Depart from evil and do good; seek peace and pursue it (Psalm 34 vs 14). Blessed are the Peace makers for they shall be called the children of God (Matthew 5 vs 9). Let him eschew evil and do good; let him seek peace and ensue it (1 Peter 3 vs 11). Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall

see the Lord (Hebrews 12 vs 14). If possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. (Rom 12 vs 18). The word peace in Christianity is translated from the Hebrew word 'Shalom', which is a key word in the Bible and it's at the center of how God wants us to live on earth. One of the key things Jesus came to give humanity is Peace and expects us to live in peace as cited in the scriptural verses above. Peace was not only what Jesus taught but He also lived it, this in most cases is what scholars call pacifism, as Jesus never taught violence, even at his arrest by the Pharisees and one of his disciples struck the ears of the priest, Jesus rebuked the disciple and said that "those who live by the sword shall die by the sword" (Mathew 26:52, NKJV). In another place, Jesus taught the people not to retaliate any evil done to them as it used to be, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, if one should strike you on the right cheek, turn the left cheek (Mathew 5:38-39, NKJV) but now to always forgive those that offend them and he charged them to forgive their neighbors even seventy times seven (Matthew 18:22, KJV). With all these scriptural teachings of the church, Christians are supposed to live in peace and harmony in the society.

In Islam, the right to life is an absolute value: He who kills a soul unless it be (in legal punishment) for murder or for causing disorder and corruption on the earth will be as if he had killed all humankind; and he who saves a life will be as if he had saved the lives of all humankind (Qur'an 5:32). When the Messenger of God (peace be upon him) explained Islam's potential to contribute to safety and peace in society, he specified one goal in his time as the following: "A rider will travel from Sana'a (a city in Yemen) to Hadhramaut (a region in the southwest of the Arabian peninsula) fearing none but God, or a wolf as regards his sheep. If we consider the troubles due to the extreme violence Muslims which were exposed to both in the Median and Mecca periods, we can understand how meaningful was this message expressed by the Prophet. It does not include any desire for revenge against any person or any group; instead, it only expresses an ardent desire for a violence-free world for all. The Prophet commanded us to maintain social solidarity and cooperation, to open our hearts to our fellows, and to help one another at all times. He said, "Do not cut relations between each other! Do not turn your backs on each other! Do not grow hatred between each other! O God's servants! Become brothers and sisters! (King, 2011). The role of Islam in ensuring peace according to [18] is well captured in peace, reform, and virtuous deeds. The Arabic terms *Islah* (reform) and *salaam* (peace) are from the same root. *Islah* means one's reach of peace and serenity while leaving conflicts and deviations; in other words, it refers to leaving confusion by settling a dispute between two people or two sides. Good deeds are actions that are beneficial for people and society, as well as actions that are taken to establish peace and serenity. This concept not only includes offering worship and spending in a good cause but also smiling, behaving warmly to others, establishing friendships, pleasing people by kind words, exchanging greetings, having warm conversation, and controlling bad feelings such as pride, arrogance, anger, envy, animosity, hypocrisy, rancor, and burning ambition. Thus, essentially, virtuous deeds are acts that purify humankind of aggression and bring them to peace. In the Qur'an, it is recommended to cease disagreements by peace and not to commence further disputes, fights, confusion, and discord; in addition, people are asked to take a balanced approach and seek justice (Qur'an, 8:1; 49:9-10). It is forbidden to spoil peace and tranquility by corruption; there are penalties for those who do [19]. It is possible to apply the verse, Peace is better (Qur'an, 4:128) which was specifically revealed to eradicate disagreements between couples, to all kinds of human relations. Islam recommends a united and mutually helpful society, and this vision does not only refer to the level of nation, but includes international relations, too. In this sense, from an Islamic perspective, international law should take the establishment of peace as a foundation [20].

#### **Discussion on the Findings**

Considering the data analysis, some deductions can be made with respect to the extent to which religion serve as a panacea for ensuring peace in Enugu State, Nigeria. The inference drawn from the analysis, shows that religion serves as a panacea for ensuring peace in Enugu State Nigeria is to a high extent. The finding is in agreement with [4] who held that it is irreligious to kill fellow human beings or destroy their property. Religion does not encourage confrontation, throwing stones and breaking windows or marching out on the streets with bows and arrows. In addition, Bryan, in his work cited [21] noted that "In all 114 chapters," "there's not a single verse of holy Koran permits any Muslim to kill non-Muslims in general." This is at variance with the finding of [14] who stated that religion is the sign of the exploitation, the cry of the oppressed in the capitalist system. In confirmation of the above, Gerrie ter Haar submitted that "religion is neither inherently good nor bad for peace" [22].

#### **CONCLUSION**

Conclusively from the above analysis and interpretations done and the information from related literature, it implies that religion serves as a panacea for ensuring peace in Enugu State, Nigeria to a high extent

### RECOMMENDATION

At the end of the study, the following recommendations were made: Inter-religious dialogue for Peaceful co-existence should be encouraged by the government to organize periodic fora or programs to further sustain and entrench the already existing peaceful co-existence between the adherents of Christianity and Islam

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