



Conflict and Reconciliation: A Leadership Burden for Peace Unity and Development in Africa

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Abstract: In Africa, conflicts and Crises are products of bitterness and anger for some good reasons of injustice. while some are as a result of ignorance, illiteracy, acts of terrorism and criminality. In some cases, conflicts and crises come as a result of agitations by angry youths due to bad governance. For instance, several sources of Conflicts and crises are largely on bad political will of politicians in power to deliver true dividend of democracy to the people in Africa. No job opportunities for the youths, poor health care facilities to take care of the citizens, bad educational systems, poor road networks and poor economic policies that can improve the lives of the masses. Worse of it is the high standard of corruption that the political leaders are looting the monies and resources that are mean for the development of the people. This article seeks to address the current ill treatments given to innocent citizens in Africa, and to suggest the way Forward on how the bad narratives of the African bitter experiences of dehumanization, neglects and abandonments will stop, with the hope that all over the continent, there will change for good, for the African people to see a better Africa in the nearest future. So many poor innocent citizens in Africa are dying daily due to lack of care for many decades now.

Keywords: Conflicts, Crises, Reconciliation, Leadership, Burden, Peace, Unity and Development.

1. INTRODUCTION

There are so many conflicts and crises in the world at large and Africa in particular. Therefore, the unity, peace and development of so many countries in the world are affected in one way or the other most especially in Africa. For instance, were recorded such conflicts and crises in Nigeria, Somalia, Liberia, Sierra-Leone, Sudan Rwanda, just to mention but a few. In these crises and conflicts humans lives and properties are destroyed in millions. There is serious need, most especially in Africa where these crises and conflicts are rampant. A Theology of reconciliation be made to settle these crises under an emergency situation. These crises and conflict often came through diabolical ideologies in Religion, politics, ethnicity, social interest and economic interest and so on.

Tokunboh Adeyemo (2006:1027), asserts that:

Conflict is inevitable in an ongoing relationship, whether at home, at work in business, Nationally or internationally. It arises whenever some incompatibility between opinions and principles results in serious disagreement or argument. At its worst it escalates in prolonged armed struggle. But conflicts do not only arise between people. We also experience conflict within ourselves, when we go through an inward personal struggle restlessness of the soul. The pressures of the external and internal conflicts are often made worse by what we could call foreign intervention. We face not only human adversaries and our own selves, but also spiritual foes (Col. 2:1, Phil 1:30, 1 Thesis. 2:2, Eph. 6:12, Heb 12:1).

African society is faced with several conflicts that are either internal, external personal or spiritual between individuals and people across the African continent as raised by Tokunboh. These conflicts are global and need global approach to tackle them. There is serious need to focus on African conflicts and an attempt to provide some reconciliation measures to tackle immediate conflicts confronting the entire continent currently.

Conflict: Longman (1995:285), defines, Conflict as, “a state of disagreement or argument between people, groups and countries etc.” I define conflict as clash or dispute between two or more persons for some reasons known or unknown.

Reconciliation: Encarta (2009), defines reconciliation, “as renewing of friendly relationship between disputing people or groups.” Reconciliation could be defined reconciliation as settlement of disagreement between two or more people.

Resolution: Sulaiman (2001:7), note that, “Process of resolving something such as problem or dispute.” I look at resolution as a methodology for solving crises or conflicts.

2. BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF CONFLICTS

Since the fall of man in Gen 3. Conflict started between God and man (Gen 3:10). Conflict between Cain and Abel (4:8) Lamech and his wives (4:23). Conflict between Miriam Aaron and Moses (Num 12:1-2). Conflict between Israel and Philistines (1 Samuel 28:1). Conflict between the herdsmen of Abraham and Lot (Gen 13:1-18). People may have conflict with one another Gen. 26:20-22. Israelites had conflict with Moses because of water (Exodus 17:2). Conflict in heaven (Rev. 12:7). The Bible relates many cases and situations of conflicts among believers and non-believers. Jesus told his disciples that their situations would always be full of conflicts (Matthew 10:34-39). Believing in Jesus often leads to conflicts with the family or outside the family. As Christians, we have unique moral and spiritual values and goals, that set us apart from others which is subject to conflicts.

3. CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

Africa has had several shares of conflicts in various ways and areas of its existence, such conflicts are ethnic, religious, social and political in nature. Conflict occurs at the family level, congregations, organization, within a particular Nation or between Nations. Sulaiman (2001:7), says, “conflict have resulted in fighting and wars at various levels. Since people are different, they have unique ways of arriving at a given goal. They may also be based on assumption about what they think of each other’s intentions.”

I reason with Sulaiman that, people reason differently on situations, while living together in communities and Nations. The approaches to situations are also different hence conflicts are rampant in the human society; most especially in Africa. The family life is full of conflicts, Danfulani Kore (2012:13), asserts that: “the single young people indicated dangerous social factors that run marriages, spiritual weakness, interference by relatives and in-laws, wrong concept of marriage, sexual immorality, weak leadership by the husband and economic weakness.”

I concur with Kore that there are a lot of wrong concepts in the family that destroyed marriage relationships. There are several conflicts in Nigeria and the African continent. Danfulani and Ayo in their book youth Restiveness present the following reports of conflicts in Nigeria (2012:315-316), they say:

An extensive investigation has revealed that more than over 100,000 Christians Muslims have been killed in various religious riots in the country between 1977 and 2010, a space of 33 years. When Nigeria’s Fourth Republic kicked off between May 29th 1999 and 2007 14,000 people were massacred in various religious crises, with 3 million people displaced and turned into refugees according to international crisis group; working with United Nations. The international body New York based Human Rights watch insisted that on the average about 11, 500 people are killed annually in various acts of religious terrorism in the religiously volatile region. The North records over 1000 religious crisis annually, leading to the death of several people. This did not include frequent minor clashes between Borno Fulani cattle rearers and other crop producing farmers in some parts of the North. Cases of bitter conflict over grazing rights are rampant. That an average of three peoples lose their lives weekly in related conflicts. Between 1999 and 2004, Nigeria recorded 47 ethno- religious conflicts, and 140 of such conflicts in the country was listed as presented by Professor J. Elaigwu at a conflict management program in Jos, Plateau State.

I align with Danfulani and Ayo, that the facts they raised, cannot be denied. Similar crisis took place in Liberia, Congo Sierra-Leone, Sudan, Yugoslavia, Burundi Rwanda, Cameroon, South Africa. Chad, Tanzania and Uganda. Microsoft ware Encarta (2009), reveals that, “Political instability

persisted in several countries and appeared in a few others. The Anyanya separatist movement Southern Sudan continued unabated, and did the fighting in Chad. Treason trails were held in Sierra-Leone and Tanzania. In Uganda, present Milton Obute was convicted and sentenced. In the Republic of Congo, an attempt coup was attempted and thwarted.”There is no doubt that there are several conflicts issues in the world in general and Africa in particular.

4. CAUSES OF CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

Conflicts as mentioned above can occur as a result of incompatibility between two persons or parties, due to different interest in terms of goals and conditions. We should note here that not all conflicts do result to physical problems. However, factors that cause conflicts may be differences in worldviews, religion, emotion, ethnicity, culture, political affiliation social statues, power struggle or lack of proper communication.

Sulaiman suggests some sources of conflicts as:

- i. Scarcity of resources and exploitation
- ii. Value of goal differences
- iii. Subjugations or oppression
- iv. Suppression of interest
- v. Dictatorship
- vi. People feelings, relationships, emotions and perceptions on some issues
- vii. Process: The way decisions are made and implemented
- viii. Problems: Different interest, values, distribution of resources etc.
- ix. Jealousy. (Miriam and Aaron, Num. 12:1-2)
- x. Difference of opinions.

Some signs and symptoms of conflicts affecting people are:

1. Physical symptom- burn out
2. Psychological symptom stress reactions
3. Relational behavior- lack of forgiveness
4. Spiritual: unresolved conflict kills someone spiritually

Those that are influenced by conflict or rooted in it, are seen be:

1. Uneasy or difficult people
2. Discontent people
3. Lack manner of dialogue and respect
4. Increase in crime and criminality
5. Lack of respect for leadership
6. Expression of grievance or grievances
7. Loss of confidence in a system structure
8. Unforgiveness
9. Petition writers
10. Hot talks exchanges in meetings and media

5. CONFLICT RESOLUTION, RECONCILIATION AND MANAGEMENT

When conflicts are not well handled and properly managed, they can seriously damage relationship, divide a Nation or Nations as it is in Africa. It can destroy an organization and demoralize the

members of the organization. Therefore, conflict resolution, reconciliation and management are necessary when conflict arises. In resolving a conflict. Tokunboh suggests that the following questions be considered:

1. What are we agreeing or disagreeing about?
2. Why are we agreeing or disagreeing? And
3. How can we get past this and move forward. He also suggested that the following principles be followed in conflict reconciliation, resolution and management.
 - i. **Honest communication:** About what fuels the conflict. Telling Lies many complicate and fuel more problems.
 - ii. **Getting beneath Surface Issues:** The motives of the people and their beliefs
 - iii. **Negotiation:** Situation where neither of the party insists on being the winner.
 - iv. **External Intervention:** In most cases conflict parties found it difficult to communicate to each other. They need a neutral party to intervene.
 - v. **Divine Intervention:** Spiritual influence from God can resolve dispute or conflict

In settling conflict, advocates must understand the basis of the conflicts and the basic principles for resolving it.

1. Mediator must not be judgmental, quick to give blame
2. Give room for fair hearing
3. Stop repressing the conflict effects
4. Avoid confrontation (self-centeredness that has no room for dialogue).
5. Encourage honesty, stop pretending
6. Avoid compromise (peace at any price)
7. Encourage integrative communication (No hidden agenda)
8. Avoid manipulation, management system to be well laid out to all parties
9. A mediator must be competent
10. A mediator must be neutral
11. Mediator must be a committed dedicated and devoted personality of integrity
12. A mediator must command respect and trust

6. RECONCILIATION THEOLOGY

We have to look at the environment in and around in the context of peace, unity and development every day. What is it that keeps us together, and what is it that makes us to grow religiously, politically, socially and economically. Our environment must be peaceful for us to achieve all these basic things that make human beings flourish, often times quest for political power, religious identity, social status ethnic recognition, corruption is clearly seen as reason for conflicts and crises in Africa and beyond. We must come to terms with the reality that killings and all kinds of destructions are wrong, immoral and sinful, and there are consequences for such actions and activities. "Thou shall not kill" (Exod. 20:13). There should be clear understanding of the people's worldviews and how they relate to things and issues in the various communities for one to really deal with their problems and programs for reconciliation to take place. There should be peace building relationships between leaders of various communities and their subjects at all times. Peace building committee will be helpful to bring together aggrieved persons to see reason for peace that is a need for every community to assist together without hurting or harming themselves. People should be ready to forgive and accept each other and let go of past offences.

Dialogue

We must seek for the understanding, justice patience, tolerance and forgiveness from each other in times of conflicts and crises at all times. There is no right way of doing a wrong people in many cases resulted to crises and conflicts because they seek for justice, but they were denied of it. They seek for their fundamental rights, but were not given to them. Some have the strong feeling that they are oppressed, dehumanized, rejected, abandoned and enslaved in one way or the other. We need to address at these feelings in all our communities. We must identify those who are aggrieved and angry. We must listen to those who are complaining in one way or the other. We must understand God consider those who are vulnerable to ills of the society and provide solutions to those who are wounded due to one form of attack or the other.

Justice

Where there is no justice, there will be no peace. Where there is not peace there will be unity. Where there is no unity, there will be no development. We should note that, there is not alternative to peace. You cannot use anything to replace peace “seek for peace and ensure it” (1 Peter 3:11) people who are looking for justice, when it given to them, they will be peaceful and happy. Religious, political traditional leaders, and stakeholders have great roles to play in keeping the people peaceful through transformational leadership roles they demonstrate always. All these leaders must understand the plights of the masses at any given time; by providing them with their basic social needs. By so doing crises and conflicts may stop or reduce. The average African is looking for survival and not necessary to be very rich, provide means of survival for an average African man, that is his basic need. In every community, there are rich and poor. But obviously every person needs the concept of survival.

Security

Every community needs security for such a community to exist. Without security, any community can suffer loses of lives and properties. Long time insecurity can make a community lost it existence and identity. God made every community to exist under the sun, on the surface of the earth. It will be out of God’s will and plan to humanity for any community to cease existing because of crises, conflicts act of terrorism or criminality. Where are suffering from the activities of terrorism in Nigeria, most especially in North Eastern Nigeria. We are facing such activities of terrorists on the African continent and some other parts of the world. Government of every country, most especially in Africa, must wake up to confront insecurity situation headlong. In the North Eastern Nigeria, people are suffering from the deadly activities of Islamic state of west African province (ISWAP) Boko Haram, Bandits, Fulani Herdsmen, kidnappers, unknown gunmen and persecution of Christians. Government must stop all these negative barbaric activities through security agents through peace enforcement without and form of political religious and ethnic interests of politicians, religious leaders and traditional leaders and their subjects to hinder peace process for unity and development of the people generally.

7. DEALING WITH IGNORANCE AND ILLITERACY

Some youths out of illiteracy and ignorance, are used as agents of terrorism. They have little or no knowledge of the value of lives and property in society. Therefore some wicked people for their selfish interests, brain-wash them with dangerous and harmful ideologies through religious, politics or ethnicity to be elements of violence and destructions of people and property with impurity without the mental moral and spiritual understanding of the consequence of what they are doing to innocent citizens and to themselves, youth generally in Africa should have serious orientation and enlightenments on the danger and consequence of such acts violence in the society. There should be deliberate teachings on peace and conflict resolutions that will bring awareness and enlightenment to the ignorance youths. When one is out to kill, can also be killed. Let them have the worldview to go on the way of non-violence and embrace peace, with the focus of peace building that can lead to development of the society and destruction of it.

Political, religious, traditional and stakeholders, should endeavor to check all acts of conflicts and crises to stop them at the ideological stage, before breaking in open violence, crises and conflicts. Discovering acts of crises at the ideological formation levels, can better be managed, than when they are at the violence or war level, people need to live and flourish in every community.

8. SOCIAL SECURITY

There should be social security scheme to take care of the vulnerable in the society, most especially the widows, orphans and the fatherless, who in most cases are victims, due to acts of insecurity. In some many African countries, there are no social security scheme to cater for the widows, orphans and the fatherless in the society. All these categories of persons lack basic social amenities such as, accommodations, food, clothing school fees and so on, they also lack social and economic support for them to stay out of hardship and to take care of themselves. The government should empower them with some skills and financial support for them to be self-reliance and self-dependence. These set of persons did not need charity only, but empowerment through the government and other organization for them to live as better people in society.

9. DEALING WITH POVERTY IN AFRICA

Africa is a very rich continent and but Africans are hardworking people some many African lack the basic knowledge to be made rich on the continent that is already rich with so many minerals' resources available the African soil. But due to ignorance, illiteracy, long time crises and high corruption of political leaders, most African citizens are poor. Poverty is a serious problem in African and should be addressed urgently. Apart from people dying daily due to crises, so many are also dying due to poverty. So many don't have money for hospital bills and cannot have access to medications. Some are displaced due to wars, so they cannot do anything meaningful for livelihood. Dealing with corruption of political leaders and insecurity are key to the recovery of African from poverty. With good government economic policies and empowerment of masses with good government hospital and skillful programmes for the youths, and women, poverty will be reduced on the African continent.

Lack Jobs

Youth restiveness is rampant in African due to lack of jobs for the youths. There are millions of youths graduating from universities every year in Africa without jobs for them to engage themselves and have livelihood. Thus, situation is a big burden in Africa, when the youths do not have what to do legitimately, they do anything that come their way. Some joined terrorist in the activities, some in drugs taking Arm robbers and some many atrocities due to lack of jobs. Government of every country in Africa should deliberately provide means of creating job opportunity for the youths to engage themselves for productivity, profitability and accountability.

Peace

African lack adequate peace for development on the continent. Government should fashion a means and ways of maintaining peace on the continent. The following measures should be taken in checkmating peace on the continent.

1. Religious ideologies that are dangerous to peace and unity of every country in Africa.
2. To checkmate the interference of other countries within the global with terrorist ideologies and sponsorship
3. To checkmate other countries and individual with interior motives to sabotage to peace of the continent for their selfish political and economic reasons by encouraging and fueling crises in Africa in order to sell arms and ammunitions.
4. Checkmate immigrants from one African country to other, to discover those who are a machinery of terrorism.
5. The use of technology of intercept communications that is a threat to the security and peace of any African country.
6. Security agents without any act of compromise should intercept illegal arms and ammunitions going into any country in Africa.
7. Check politicians and other individuals who for their selfish reasons sponsor terrorism and prosecute them accordingly.

10. BEEN ALONE WITH GOD IS A NECESSITY FOR RECONCILIATION

Being alone with God is one of the biblical foundations for effective and fruitful pastoral ministry. One can say that to be alone with God is also to be in tune with him. The man who is in tune with God waits upon the Lord. The dictionary offers four definitions on wait, these are; “To stay where you are or delay doing something until somebody/something comes or something happens. To hope or watch for something to happen, especially for a long time. To be ready for somebody to have or use. To be left to be dealt with at a later time because it is not urgent.”(Oxford Advance learners Dictionary, 8th edition 2010:1668)

The above definitions are very relevant to the subject matter. The man who waits upon the Lord is patient and he may wait for long time so that he will relate with God. He is ready to be dealt with as he waits upon the Lord. The man who waits upon the Lord does not only communion with him but he receives messages from God. This is the man who wrestles with God. The Complete Christian Dictionary states that, “Communion is a religious or spiritual fellowship.” (Complete Christian Dictionary for homes, school and offices, 2002:121). Hence, to be alone with God, to wait upon the Lord, and to communion with God is an act of spiritual fellowship that exists within the worshiper and the Lord. The pastor who has been regenerated and called, always fellowship with God as he spends time with him.

The act of being alone with God is the key that opens the gate of heaven. All the ministers of the Lord in biblical history are people who spend time with God. One who is truly a believer cherishes the act of being alone with God, thus it is rich and rewarding. Abram was called by God. He left his pagan world to communion with the Lord as he waited upon the Lord and had deep relationship with him, the Lord transformed him. His name was changed from Abram to Abraham meaning father of many nations. His relationship and faith with God, positively affected his spouse, Sarai. His wife also experiences dramatic changes; hence she had spiritual transformation and growth. Her name Sarai was changed to Sarah’s mother of many nations. Despite her weakness; the Bible portrays Sarah as a mother of faith and a mother to all other women who believe in the word. They are advice to emulate her faith and how she related well with her husband. Abraham the father of faith is called a friend of God, since he was always in tune with God. Abraham listens to God and receives messages from God. Abraham believed and put his faith in action. He is justified by faith. Abraham is a source of blessing or salvation to the entire world as a man who was always in tune with God. (Gen. 11:26-27).

Abraham trusted the Lord, communion with God, becomes a friend of the Lord and he is the descendent of the Lord Jesus Christ. This means that one who receives God’s calling by faith and always wait upon the Lord will not only be strengthen but such a person will truly be a friend of God and his life will affect others positively.

In the same vein, another biblical example is Jacob the man who wrestles with God (Gen. 32:22-32). This passage is of great significance to this subject matter. Jacob is called the man who wrestles with God and men. In the passage he sends his family across while he spent the night alone. Consequently, in this special night some man came to Jacob and they spent the whole night wrestling Jacob is not defeated. Prior to their departure, Jacob discovers that his wrestling is not just with mere human being, thus he pleads for enquiring for the credential of the man. Jacob name is transformed to Israel as he is blessed by the Lord. Considering the above, the man of God who desires to be blessed and wishes good for his congregation must always spend time with the Lord. In other words, wrestling with the Lord is not an option but mandatory to all believers especially pastors in the 21st Century. What does it mean to wrestle with the Lord? It refers to searching the word of God, meditation on the word of God, communion with God, allowing God to deal with one and receiving Gods messages. The man who wrestles with God is always transform and enjoys doing the will of God.

In the same vein, another prominent man of God who spends time with the Lord is Moses. Moses was not only called by God but he had the assurance of his calling as seen previously. Moses was considered to be the humblest man before God at his own time. The prophet remains great in the history of Israel. The secret of his greatness and wonders being performed is nothing but being alone with God. It is clear that the entire Bible is inspired. The doctrine of inspiration teaches that God endowed his spirit in man to write His word in human culture but the word of God (2 Tim. 3:16).

However, the Decalogue by Moses is very unique. What is the uniqueness of the Decalogue? It is unique because Decalogue is divinely written on tablet by Yahweh himself. This is the evidence and dividend of Moses communion with God.

There is no iota of doubt that the more one spent time with the Lord the more he listens, transforms and receive from God. Moses is a practical example for the man of God spent forty days and forty nights on Mount Sinai relating with his God. This was a very critical period hence it was a time of deep relationship with his God. Indeed, no one can tell what happened on Mount Sinai between Moses and God. Although biblical information are revealed, the Bible teaches that not everything is reveal. Deep things, mysterious things are hidden. For the Bible says, "The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law." (Deuteronomy 29:29 NIV). Similarly, Apostle John writes, "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:30-33)

Considering the above quotation, it reveals that God permits his will that are of great significance for the salvation of man to be written. The secret or mysterious things that are hidden belong to God. Hence, it is possible that not all things or dialogue that existed between Yahweh and Moses on Mount Sinai is revealed. However, the truth remains that the communion which existed with the man Moses and his God is not only fruitful but it lives forever. It is clear that the Pentateuch is associated to Moses. This is certain that it is one of the dividend of his relationship with God. The Lord Yahweh reveals the creation account to Moses. Genesis began when no man existed but only God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It is mysterious that Moses presents a perfect account of the beginning as he received this information from the Triune God.

Thus, the Decalogue which becomes the ethics or the rules that guide the relationship between Israel and Yahweh. This Decalogue is a guide to promote healthy relationship between man and man (Exod. 20:1f). Moses desires to know God more and more even though he had known him. When the Lord ask him to continue with the journey as he leads God's people to the promise land. Moses pleaded with God to reveal himself more to him. The Lord passes by and Moses saw his back. In other words, Moses experiences the glorious presence of God and he receives the assurance that Yahweh was with him. This promoted his faith and vision to take Gods people to the promise land. When Moses returns from Mount Sinai, his face was cover with the glory of the Lord, to the extent that the Israelites were almost running away from him (Exod. 2:1).

Interpreting the above, the pastor who commune with the Lord desires to relate with him more and more. The more one knows the Lord the more he desires to know him. The Lord reveals himself to those that are meek and sincere. The Lord gives his message to one who will declare it faithfully and undiluted. When one spends much time with the lord one understands the will of God better. The mystery of the Lord is revealed only to those in the spirit. In this 21st Century, many pastors are carried away by so many festivities. This could be religious, cultural and social. Thus, they lack time to communion with the Lord. David in their relationship with God. Saul persists in disobeying God while David's heart is always towards doing the will of God. Saul disobeyed God by sparing the life of the King of the philistines.

He is chosen to be a shepherd of the flock of God for he is always in tune with God, and has a thirsty heart for the Lord. Jeremiah has it that, "*Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding* (Jeremiah 3:15). Also Isaiah writes, "*Who says of Cyrus, 'He is my shepherd and will accomplish all that I please; he will say of Jerusalem, 'Let it be rebuilt,' and of the temple, 'Let its foundations be laid.'*"(Isaiah 44:28).

In view of the proceeded, it is clear that David remains a model to all shepherd or leaders and a type of the expected good shepherd. Jeremiah specifically predicts the coming good shepherd. This good shepherd will come from the descendant of David. No wonder, the good shepherd is the Lord Jesus Christ as discuss in this book (Jn. 10:10). Consequently, there is no element of doubt that David is a man who does not only communion with God but he enquires from the Lord before he implements his leadership or decision. This is vivid as declares in 1 Samuel 23:1-4.

The above verse clearly reveals that David is a man of prayer to know the will of God and God always listens to him. In another development, 1 Samuel 30:8 declares that, "And David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?" "Pursue them," he answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue." This means that David always seeks to differentiate that which is the will of God from that which is his own taught. When he finds out he obeys it. This does not mean that David is perfect rather he is a holy man of God who desires to live righteous life and to do only the will of God. His weakness also portrays that he is a man after Gods heart, since he truly confesses. According to 1 Samuel 12:1-31, David was tempted, he lusted after Beersheba Uriah's wife and committed adultery with her. In other for him to hide such grievous sin, he invited Uriah to come home, as Uriah came, he advised him, if possible, to go and spent the night or sleep with his wife at home. Uriah who was also God fearing, thus did not want to defile the law of Israel whereby no one should sleep with his wife at the time of war rather they are to be devoted to God and face their enemies.

In this grievous sin of King David, Beersheba became pregnant, thus she intimidates David of the fruit of their act. David still loves her, thus he tactically plan and Uriah was killed during the war. After the death of Uriah, David took the widow as his wife. All this that happens to David is an act of flesh and proofed his humanity. The Lord was not happy with this grievous sin, even though in the flesh David could not see that he had sin. Consequently, the Lord sent Prophet Nathan to cancel and rebuke David of his sin. Prophet Nathan obeyed the Lord, as he went, he approaches and spoke to David in parable. The prophet uses the parable of a rich man and the poor man. The rich man has ten sheep while the poor man has only one. Consequently, the rich man has a visitor and he approached the poor man, unfortunately he receives the only but one sheep of the poor man as he slaughters it to his visitor. Prophet Nathan asked David for the consequences of such act. Hence, before the prophet finish David responded that such a person deserves death and the prophet courageously told him that he is the one, for all that he has done.

The man who is always in communion with God always appears naked before the Lord. Nakedness is a sign of shame. Thus, when man fall, he was running from the presence of God because he was naked and it meant that he had sin. Therefore, the fact remains that nakedness is a sign of shame in which someone has sin.

From the above, the filthy cloth of Joshua is a sign of dirtiness. Also, his nakedness is a sign of sin. Hence, the angel removes his dirty cloth and cloth him with a white garment. This portrays that he is now clean and holy before the Lord. The Devil who is not only his accuser, but the accuser of all believers is defeated. Therefore, he cannot accuse the man of God. Justification and salvation are the grace of God. Those who truly consider themselves naked are being clothed by the Lord Jesus Christ. Consequently, David is one of such humble people of God. When David was rebuke by Prophet Nathan, he genuinely repented and confessed his sin before the Lord. Psalm 51 is a fruit of his repentance. David declares himself as a total sinner who was conceive right from his mother's womb a sinner and a man who is completely sinful in his life. Thus, he repented within his heart and confesses his wickedness before the Lord. David in turn received the mercy of God and was forgiven.

This qualifies David as a man after Gods heart, since he has neither pretense nor hypocritical life. This means that David always appears naked before the Lord, symbolically he sees himself before the Lord as a total sinner even though saved by the grace of God. Similarly, Psalm 21:6 says, "surely you have granted him eternal blessings and made him glad with the joy of your presence."

In view of the above quotations, David communion with God he cherishes to be in the presence of God. When one is in the presence of God, the Lord reveals his mysteries to him. No wonder, Psalm 23 is a testimony of such relationship. The Psalmist wonders why the wicked are progressing but the righteous are in troubles or they face difficulties, as he enters the house of God, and he relates with God. The Lord answers all his questions. The end of the wicked is destruction though they prosper, but such prosperity is momentary. Therefore, the pastor is to always be in tune with God, relate with God, and spend time with the Lord. Every called pastor is to communion with God; seek the will of God in all his endeavours, personal life, family life and church affairs. The pastor is to depend on the leadership of the Holy Spirit who will grand him divine guidance in the administration, management and proclamation of the word. No pastor who ignores privacy with God will ever succeed especially in this 21st century that is full of criminality and all other social vices. David is a model to all believers

and Christian leaders. The shepherd of God's people communion with God, listen to him, appears naked before him, permits God to deal with him and always confesses his sin where necessary. He is always humble and adores God as the only Holy one, while he is sinful before the Lord. However, for the mercy of God he is considered righteous, a man after God's heart. The pastor who ignores iniquities and sin within him, such a person cannot be effective nor can he be used by God (1 Jn. 1:8-9). There are many other men of God who have great regard for being alone with God and the Bible reveals such people as effective and fruitful in their ministry. They listen to God, understand his voice, understand his will, and follow his instruction (Isa. 6:1-13, Jer. 1:4-19).

Consequently, Jesus Christ the good shepherd and a divine being has great honour towards being alone with God his father. The Lord Jesus spends time with his father before the selection and recruitment of the twelve disciples. In other words, he begins the ministry through solitary devotion. This is very clear in the gospels as stated in Mark 1:35, "The next morning Jesus awoke long before day break and went out alone into the wilderness to pray."³¹ Mark further says, "They left by boat for a quieter spot." (Mk.6:32). Luke states that, "Early the next morning Jesus went out into the wilderness. The crowd searched everywhere for him, and when they finally found him, they begged him not to leave them." (Luke 4:42). In the same vein, Matthew 14:13 declares, "As soon as Jesus heard the news. He went off by himself in a boat to a remote area to be alone. But the crowd heard where he was headed and followed by land from many villages."

Reflecting on these biblical passages, the Lord Jesus before he begins his ministry, as he continues in the ministry and in all situations, he spends time with the father he alone. The Lord Jesus often escapes from the crowd or even his disciples to a very quiet place or solitary where he communes with the triune God. Despite the fact that he is the son of God but he was incarnated, that is taken the human nature in order to save mankind. Hence, he needed the comfort and the strength that comes from the father in order to help him overcome human weakness. This is not to say that Jesus was weak as a human being but being in human form he needed divine consolation.

In view of the preceding, any true believer especially a pastor always needs to be alone with God in privacy. This requires self-discipline, privacy, and spiritual discipline. At times, the members of the church may not be happy if they don't meet him for festivities or any other ministry, but if the pastor neglects personal communion with God, he has missed almost everything needed for fruitful ministry. Since the Lord Jesus who is equally God himself, but he cultivates time and always chooses solitary to commune with his Father. Then who are we mere human beings even though saved by grace. This teaches believers to always discipline themselves, cultivate the time no matter their tight schedule or so many programs. Also, believers especially Christian leaders are advised to always spend time with God in a quiet place. It could be in the night, early in the morning, in the afternoon, or in the evening. It depends on one program but considering our culture and festivities it is advisable for one to spend time with God in the night or very early in the morning.

More so, before the arrest and crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, he had a very serious and long time as he communes with the Father, seeking for the will of God to be fulfilled in his life. Humanly, the cup, pain, agony, and suffering before the Lord was too heavy for him to carry, hence he needed the grace and encouragement of God the Father for him to bear it (Matt. 26:36-46). At Gethsemane Jesus spent almost the whole night praying prior to his arrest and crucifixion. This became necessary for him to bear the cross and fulfill the will of God. On the other hand, the disciples were weak and spent almost the whole night sleeping instead of praying.

In the light of the above, the necessity of being alone with God cannot be over-emphasized. Indeed, all the disciples that were used by God in a higher degree were people who always spend time with the Lord. He has great experience with him and God uses such people greatly. For example, Peter, James and John were greatly used by God probably because of their night vigil at the transfiguration on the high mountain (Matt. 17:1-13). The Apostle Paul after his conversion spends time with the Lord as he found his solitary place in Arabia (Gal. 1:8-24). This is not to be misinterpreted as if salvation is by human effort; rather it is the grace of God as stated in Ephesians 2:8-9, "God saved you by his special favour when you believe. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it."

Considering the above verses, it is certain that salvation is neither by human works nor effort. No one can earn salvation by human hard work but it is completely the grace of God in Christ Jesus. However, the believer is saved for good works as Paul further says, “For we are God master piece. He has created us new in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”(Eph.2:10). Following this quotation, the believer is not to be lazy in pursuing spiritual things, for good work is the fruit of his salvation which is by grace. Hence, the pastor is to determine to always receive from God to shepherd Gods flock. As Paul declares in 2Timothy 2:15, “Work hard so God can approve you. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth.” This portrays that the minister of the word must not only discipline himself in academic exercise but the spiritual is more important. This enhances the ministry, even though everything is a grace of God since God first search for man.

When one lives according to God’s will, both spiritual and material needs will be supply to him as apostle Paul writes, “*And my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.*”(Phi. 4:19). This is an encouragement to believers who lean on God. They do not only believe in God but are doers of his will, especially in terms of hospitality. In the light of the forgone, the 21st century pastor who is truly called is to redouble his effort towards striving hard not only to know God but to do his will. He is to be committed in his communion with God as he devoted his time to the Lord in solitary place. This could be his house, the church, the desert, or any avenue that is quite and convenient for him to be in rapport with his God. This is necessary for the pastor to know the will of God concerning his life and God’s people. They appear like sheep but they are not. They claim the voice and the will of God but only to scatter the flock of God. Therefore, the need for the pastor to differentiate the true voice cannot be overemphasized. No wonder, first and foremost is for the pastor to always be alone with God. This will enable him to enquire from God and to guide the sheep well. This is the most prominent way that God communicates to man today. Thus, the pastor who desires to hear the voice of God and to know his will and differentiate it from that of the enemy, he must spend and devote his time as he meditates on the word of God and listens to the Lord. The Bible is not only the standard but the final authority that reveals the voice and the will of God. Interpreting these quotations, it implies that the Bible being the word of God cannot be compromise with any other book of wisdom. Therefore, the encouragement is for believers specifically pastors to be committed to the studying of the word of God to understand God’s will. Similarly, God speaks to his people through the Holy Spirit as Fitzpatrick writes, “The inner witness is one of the major ways God guides us. Romans 8:16 says of this: “the Spirit itself (Himself) beareth WITNESS with our spirit, that we are the children of God. God speaks through the Holy Spirit. He uses the inner witness as well as the inner voice (Rom. 8:9 & 16). God speaks in a gentle way, small still voice but un-contradictory to the word of God. In other words, when the Holy Spirit speaks to the man of God, he doesn’t ever oppose the biblical teaching.

However, the Holy Spirit confirms the revealed will of God which is from the scripture. There are so many people who claim that God have spoken to them through visions, dreams and other mystical ways. For example, there has been a rumour that there is a lady who ever existed in the world as man but when she dies, she went to heaven and the Lord spoke to him about the ills of the world, such as; wearing of ear rings, necklaces and other dresses that they are against God’s word. It is told that this man was send back into the world to be born as a woman. Hence, this lady claimed that God has send her to warn Christian ladies against such wears, if they listen and obey, they will enter heaven but if they disobey the will enter hell. This false teaching confused even some believers; such teaching are not only hyraces but hypocritical since it is anti-biblical teaching. As in the story of Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man pleaded for someone to be sent back to witness to his brothers but it is clear that if they could not listen to Moses, the prophets and the law they cannot repent even if someone return from the dead (Lk. 16:19-31). More so, the Bible teaches that it is appointed for man to die once, after that judgment (Heb. 9:27).

11. CONCLUSION

Theological approach to conflict resolution, reconciliation and management is the best approach to be adopted. In Col. 1:20-22. Paul speaks about reconciliation of the entire universe, while in Ephesians 2:16 he speaks of the reconciliation between the Jews and the Gentiles at the human level. Such a reconciliation comes from God through Jesus Christ. Christ put an end to human hostilities and

divisions by creating a new humanity. Many Christian Nations are living at peace because of the fact that a Christian should not be at conflict with his neighbours. Paul used the gospel to settle many social disputes in the church and the society. Christians today should be peace makers as “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God” (Matthew 5:9).

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Citation: Bishop Emmanuel Morris PhD. "Conflict and Reconciliation: A Leadership Burden for Peace Unity and Development in Africa" *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*, vol 4, no. 8, 2017, pp. 75-86. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0408010>.

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