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Topic: Community Policing and Peace Building in Nigeria

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1 Introduction

In a multi-cultural, multi-religious and secular Nigeria, Community Policing and Peace Building are an urgent imperative. God is a God of love, a God of Peace; and a God of Order. God desires that humanity governs itself in an orderly manner. Orderliness should be the hallmark of every society. However, this is not the case right now in Nigeria. The Nigeria of today is far from what one could describe as an orderly and peaceful society. Community policing and peace building may well be part of the answer if well implemented. Community policing and peace building should be about grassroots mobilization and participation. It should be designed to achieve the goal of establishing the rule of law, crime prevention and control. Such grassroot participation should also lead to holistic development for the good of the community and nation. Peace and development go hand in hand especially when governance is spiced with social justice and marinated with rule of law. Community Policing could be achieved when the process is devoid of underhanded activities and political manipulation. The overall intent should be promoting sustainable peace, through creating a deep sense of ownership and narrowing power distances within the community between those in authority (the governors) and the governed.

Ultimately, the big idea of community policing and peace building is to help the local police perform their duties with a high sense of motivation and professionalism when they are actively supported by those they seek to sever in the community. The community is the life-wire of any nation. There can be no nation without community. Communities make a nation; a nation does not make a community. The nation should serve the community and not the community finding itself in perpetual servitude to the “almighty” nation. The over-centralization of power and security control at the centre as the case presently is today in Nigeria is largely counter-productive. Grassroots development should be at the heart of community mobilization when pursuing community policing. Economically vibrant and peaceful communities breathe a fresh air of peace and progress for the nation. Harassed communities signal a dysfunctional State system. When multiple communities are constantly being violated through bad governance and violence, as we see today in Nigeria, this invariably signals the end of a nation if nothing is done to arrest this trend. Nigeria, especially the northern part, is today at a crossroads. We are at the verge of losing our communities and the internal cohesion needed towards attaining nationhood if the constant deadly attacks on our communities remain unabated.

The reality of attaining true nationhood in Nigeria is becoming a mirage in our dear country today. Why should this still be the case, 58 years after Independence and 104 years since the 1914 Amalgamation of the Southern and Northern Protectorates which gave birth to present-day Nigeria? Different parts of our communities are hurting as a result of violent conflicts and economic under-development. The Niger-Delta has experienced the raping of her communities through economic exploitation, social neglect and environmental degradation. The Middle belt is similarly at that point today especially through the unjust violent attack on its communities. The failure of the central government to govern with a clear sense of direction through protecting lives and properties in the vital area of community policing and peace building is largely responsible for some of these sad developments. How do we place reports which suggests that 30,000 policemen and women were mobilized to oversee the governorship elections of Ekiti State and another 40,000 security personnel mobilized towards the recent September gubernatorial elections in Osun State? The fundamental question on my mind remains: how many such policemen and security agencies were ever mobilized to bring about the containment of Boko Haram insurgency in the North East? How many has the government similarly deployed to the Middlebelt States (North Central) and to Zamfara State and parts of the North West where violent attacks occur almost daily? Citizens are killed in their thousands, yet the security agencies and government appear helpless, or are engaged in a criminal culture of silence and inaction.

Allowing the killings to continue has the sad disadvantage of breeding, recruiting and growing more lawless minds who are becoming radicalized with anger and are ready to call the bluff of the Military and Police. What could possibly be responsible for these socio-political realities of our gradual slide to anarchy? The fundamental threats to peace, security and development in Nigeria is not largely because of the ethnic, sectional, and religious contestations which manifest in the forms of violent conflicts sectarianism, terrorism, grand/petty corruption, banditry, rustling, kidnapping and criminality generally. Indeed, the greatest challenge and threat is the inability or failure of the Nigerian state to effectively manage its competing religious, ethnic, sectional, and regional interests. Without doubt, the national question is not a recent one. The national question has been part of our historical reality. This same question confronted the colonial authority in different forms and shapes which resulted in policy, structural, and constitutional somersaults; whether as reforms, amendments, enactments etc. Undeniably, the Military's encroachment into the country's political space was occasioned by the need to address the centrifugal forces that continued to retard and impede Nigeria's growth and development especially the formation of a formidable front for socio-cultural cohesion, socio-economic development, equity, equality, justice, solidarity, togetherness and trust. Sadly, not much has changed even with the Military's intrusion and departure from active governance. Successive civilian administration since 1999 till date are not faring any better either in addressing these concerns.

Beyond the colonialists, the post-independent Nigerian state has continued to grapple with the manifestation of the hydra-headed issue of our national question, which is the problem of defining our national interest and the contours of national security, national identity and our "Nigerianness." That the country is still not cohesive after more than a century of its existence as a nation state is not only worrisome, but reflective of the extent this problem has remained and the task ahead of the citizens and the leadership.

Community Policing brings to fore the broad context of the relationship between the Nigerian community and the security agents, particularly the Nigeria Police Force. This relationship has been characterised by high level of distrust, tension, fear, brutality, apprehension, suspicion, misrepresentation and disrespect. The perception across communities in Nigeria is that the security agents especially the police are not so friendly because the civilians perceived that they are being looked on by the Police with contempt and disregard. Perhaps the feeling is mutual. This has affected the level of cooperation that citizens have given to the police and by extension other security and law enforcement agents.

When the police is perceived to be representing the interests of those in power at the centre or the powerful in society, things get complicated even further. President Umaru Yar'adua spent a short time in power before his death but his emphasis on respecting the rule of law could have addressed this concern. No one should be above the law. The police should never be allowed to become a law unto themselves and so also those in power. This is the starting point for effective community policing.

2 Conceptual Framework

2.1 What is Community Policing?

Recognising the need to provide a more democratic, community-oriented policing approach for the citizens of Nigeria, former President Olusegun Obasanjo launched the Nigeria Policing Project on 27th April 2004 to introduce Community Policing into selected pilot Police Divisions in the country. The aim of Community Policing was outlined to: Provide an atmosphere in which the police and law-abiding citizens can work in partnership to:

- i. Solve problems;
- ii. Share resources;
- iii. Prevent crime;
- iv. Promote inter-agency collaboration;
- v. Bring offenders to justice;
- vi. Reduce conflict; and
- vii. Improve the overall quality of community life.

Community Policing is founded on the democratic principle that the police are entrusted by their fellow citizens to protect their fundamental rights to liberty, equality and justice under the law. To fulfil this privileged role, the police must be an incarnational part of the communities they live in and serve. Moreover, this positive police-community relationship, based on mutual trust and respect, encourages community members to accept their own share of security responsibility for the overall quality of life in their neighbourhood. Community policing should be strategically oriented to nurture a strong partnership that is centred on collaborative efforts between the police and members of the public with a view to protecting lives and properties at the neighbourhood level. This is a method of policing that requires the Nigeria Police Force to reshape their forces into becoming community change agents as they work with the citizens to reduce crime in their neighbourhoods.

Problem-solving oriented policing, on the other hand, is a proactive form of policing; de-emphasis responding to crimes after it occurs. Rather it helps the police to identify and respond to potential problems before they occur. This can only happen with the active co-operation of those who live in the community. Therefore, the end-result of co-operation with the police benefits the community and nation in the long-run. The art of community policing and problem-solving oriented policing are complimentary, and none of these approaches can succeed in policing the community without the assistance and cooperation of the public. Community policing entails a systematic involvement and inclusion of credible community leaders, local guards, vigilante groups, able-bodied civilian youths, and traditional rulers and local chiefs into the conventional police subsystem for achieving far-reaching success in crime prevention and control at the grassroots.

2.2 What is Peacebuilding?

The bible shows from the book of James chapter 3 from verses 13-18, that God cares about peace and admonished us to apply wisdom, humility and considerateness in relating and promoting peace with our neighbours. Christians do not live in isolated Islands from the rest of the world. No! They live in the real world and interact with their fellow human beings in society daily. Christians live with neighbours, some of who are Muslims, Traditional African religionists, Animists, Atheists, etc. They bible enjoins Christians to live in peace with all of them. Beyond seeking to live in peace with their neighbours, Jesus Christ in Mathew 5:9 says: ***‘Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons [daughters] of God.’*** Without doubt and ambiguity, Jesus introduced the radical element of peace making or making the peace. Peace making needs to be done in the context of justice. The world today is not just talking about the concept of peace as an abstract but peace, within the context of social justice. Therefore, just peace-making is predicated on this reality: there can be no peace without justice and there can be no development without peace and reconciliation. This is because peace does suggest the absence of conflict. The power structure mindset which tries to create a narrative that there can only be justice when peace reigns is fraud. Forced peace by means of coercion can never be enforced; no matter the amount of military might employed. Sustainable peace is only possible through the process of negotiations. This is where justice is factored in and comes first before peace. Peace is more internal than physical. Excerpts from the book *Interfaith Just Peacemaking* edited by Susan Brooks Thistlethwaite says: *“Just Peacemaking necessitates not only the participation of individual peacemakers, but also the combine efforts of peacemakers communities. These groups and associations provide a framework for the development of individuals who work for increased cooperation and peacemaking action in the world.”*

In addition, also, Boutrous Boutrous-Ghali, a former United Nations General Secretary observes that peacebuilding is “. . . a new approach which emphasizes that in order to achieve lasting peace, the effort to prevent, control and resolve conflicts must include action to address the underlying economic, social, cultural, humanitarian and political roots of conflict and to strengthen the foundations for development.” Indeed, peacebuilding is aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict to build social relationships and State structures capable of sustaining peace through building stable institutions. Peace building therefore has a lot to do with the transformation of individuals’ attitudes, behaviors, and values, to the extent that the interruption of the supply of materials which supports war, diminish institutional structures and processes which sustains divided societies.

The bible also in Romans 13:3-5 admonishes Christians to respect constituted authority by encouraging citizens to shun wrongdoings and focus on doing what is right. Suggesting clearly that this is not just to avoid “*punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.*” Therefore, on one hand, even though religious leaders have key roles to play in helping their members to obey the laws of their nations and working to promote peaceful co-existence among its different constituents. The government on the other hand should work to stop the flow of money which funds and fuels crimes, violence, along with other resources that support war combatants. This is where the concept of Community policing and Peace building invites religious leaders to join hands in mobilizing critical stakeholders in their communities to work against crime, violence and war. Community policing requires working to change the public’s attitude of intolerance and prejudice through reducing violence between combatants, by addressing and changing the attitudes of followers and the elites so that in the end all can see peace to be in their interests. Consequently, peacebuilding should be integrative in accommodating the critical roles of state and non-state actors and other international stakeholders. Peacebuilding has the broad potential to create the needed atmosphere for the coordination of new and existing resources for the purposes of conflict prevention, management and resolution. Both Community Policing and Peace Building should also aim at combatting poverty, creating economic empowerment, socio-cultural cohesion, and institutional reform and restructuring.

3 The Case for Community Policing and Peace Building in Nigeria

3.1 Community Partnership is Urgently Needed Today

There is lack of intelligence sharing between the police and the citizens; and also between the different security agencies. There are gaps between ideas and narratives when compared with the facts and reality on ground. Communities are rendered more vulnerable because of the absence of community policing. When villages are attacked, and they try to defend themselves, they get arrested. Ironically, the attackers are “allowed” to escape as we hear, and sometimes (though unverified) - that they are even escorted to safety. Such perceptions could be corrected with the active presence of a functional community policing.

3.2 Problem-Solving

In a paper presented at the International Conference of Social Science and Law-Africa (ICSS-Africa), Nigerian Turkish Nile University (NTNU): **An Overview of Community Policing in Nigeria** by Dr. Bello Ibrahim, Sociology Department, Bayero University Kano, along with Magaji Saleh and Ibrahim Mukhtar, Sociology Department, Federal University Dutse Jigawa State, define problem solving as: “The process of engaging in proactive and systematic examination of identified problems to develop and rigorously evaluate effective responses. Problem solving is a new way of policing to address not only the causes of crime but all quality of life issues in the community.”

They identified four (4) steps to problem-solving which are categorised as follows:

- i. Identifying the problems.
- ii. Analysing the problem.
- iii. Identifying other alternative solutions to solving the analysed problem.
- iv. Then implementing /assessing responses to the problems as addressed.

Community Policing is largely about solving the multi-faceted problems of the community and country. One of the reasons for the Police Community Relations Committee (PCRC) of 1984, according to Uche Mike Chukwuma, in his book: *Community Policing in Nigeria: Myth or Reality* was:

“To create [a] forum and opportunities for members of the public to interact with the Police with a view to solving Community problems etc.”

3.3 Organizational Transformation

The Nigeria Police as an institution and security outfit needs to be transformed. Vigilante groups such as the Boys' and Girls' Brigade could also be transformed to enhance community policing and relations with the civil society. They could be used as bridges between the Police and the citizens. There is need to create agreeable structures to facilitate this partnership. Reason? So, the police can get reliable intelligence for early warning and rapid response. In traditional African societies, community policing was part and parcel of the society in ancient Africa. For instance, no stranger entered a community without the people and the local Chiefs being informed. Let me illustrate with this fact: when the first suicide car bomb targeting a Church exploded in Jos in February 2012, the Churches started organizing their security every Sunday during Church services. Sometimes, the youth (Boys Brigade) combine efforts with the Police by working together to provide security for people during Church services. Part of their work is to identify strangers coming to the Church premises and prevent cars from entering the premises by mounting road blocks by piling log of woods loaded with sharp nails to puncture tyres of unwelcomed intruders; especially suicide bombers. This has helped immensely and, in a way, also makes a case for Community Policing.

3.4 Community Safety and Security

There is need for the government to demonstrate the political will to initiate and implement a content-specific security framework which ensures the safety and physical security of all communities across the nation. Content-specific security framework here means: the need to produce a clear blueprint which guides and regulates the operations of such security outfits. Community policing and defence is critical in guaranteeing this content-specific security framework. The appeal is for the government to strengthen and reinvigorate various State security outfits such as Plateau State's Operation Rainbow and similar outfits in other States across Nigeria. Government needs to empower them to go beyond their present status of information gathering and intelligence sharing; and get them to provide practical community defence.

As a way of enhancing community policing and defence, there is also need to create the mechanisms for the formation of clusters of community vigilantes and defence volunteers around legionnaires, retired police, immigration, customs, and prison officers domicile in the local communities across Nigeria.

The daunting challenge of community defence demands all critical stakeholders to intentionally fashion out an elaborate Community Policing scheme which also takes into cognisance the possibilities of abuses and misconceptions with a view to forestall such. Whenever people are empowered with the responsibility of community policing and defence, the necessary structural and internal checks and balances must also be put in place, to make such security outfits serve the community instead of harming our collective security as a nation. Leaving our communities completely exposed and vulnerable due to inadequate security manpower is unacceptable.

3.5 Examples of Peace Initiatives in Partnership with Security Agencies

3.5.1 *The Gideon & Funmi Para-Mallam Peace Foundation* – This Foundation oversees the activities of the Citizen Monitoring Group (CMG).

On July 22nd, the CMG showcased an example of partnership for peace and community policing which took place in Kafanchan, among Stakeholders in Southern Kaduna, Kaduna State. It was tagged Peace Gathering carried out in partnership with the Army's Special Task Force (STF)' Operation Save Haven, which brought together the Police, Traditional rulers, Youths, Women groups, Intellectuals, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) clergy as well as the Jama'atu Nasirl Islam (JNI), NGOs and others. The Foundation successfully held the largest ever Southern Kaduna Peace Gathering which brought together 540 stakeholders for peace. Those in attendance resolved to work for peace and unite against violence in their communities. The Army (STF) and Police similarly pledged ensure enforcement of agreements reached.

This led to major stability which significantly reduced violence in Southern Kaduna, except for a minor incident which occurred the very next day, Sunday evening, July 23rd when a family was attacked, and I was only the phone to the STF Commander who sent his men to work with the Police to restore the peace. Subsequently, through God's intervention, the next five months (from August- December 22nd), Southern Kaduna witnessed no major attacks until December 23rd, 2017. On that day, an attack took place on Christmas Eve with tragic casualties and this continued until early January 1st, 2018 – which also led to killing of a traditional ruler and wife. We have continued to work with community leaders to forestall some attacks. Community leaders sometimes call me and in turn, I contact the STF and the Police to proactively stop such attacks. This has helped in some ways on a regular basis.

3.5.2 The Kagoro Model

On March 17th, 2018 in Kafanchan, we held a feedback meeting with stakeholders in Southern Kaduna as the third large follow-up. These consisted of Traditional rulers, CAN, JNI, Youth and Women groups. Also present were representatives of the Army (STF), Police and a member of the Kaduna State Government Peace Commission. During this meeting, we provided feedback and received reports on what has been happening on the ground. One of the stakeholders, the Wazirin Kagoro who represented the respected Chief of Kagoro shared what I call the Kagoro Model which shows that Community Policing and Peace Building works. Kagoro Chieftdom is a shining example because they devised a means of how community policing should be. What the community devised is a means of sanctioning Fulanis who destroy farm crops and similarly sanctioning farmers who attack cows because of their farm produce. The community leaders jointly work in partnership with police to settle such disputes to the satisfaction of both sides. This has to some extent helped to maintain community security and peace.

3.5.3 Effective Community Policing: The British Example

In August, from 6th – 11th August 2011, riots broke out in different cities across the United Kingdom, particularly hit were London, Birmingham, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Bristol and several other areas. The then Prime Minister, David Cameron cut short his vacation outside Britain and returned to his country to provide on-the-spot leadership. This helped bring the crises to an end. Cameron achieved this through insisting on using law and order to deal with the criminality aspect of the riots, especially those who took advantage of such situations to loot shops. He adopted a Community Policing strategy to reach out to Community leaders to appeal for calm and to practically through the Police, met with stakeholders in each community before normalcy returned. Without sounding paternalistic towards the British, I believe we need to see more intentionality on the part of our leaders in the way they address our security situation today. There is need for clear leadership in this area, which appears missing right now. The President of Nigeria, the Army, Police and other security agencies need to act more decisively to bring these killings to an end. The international community does not understand why these killings are persisting in a context where we have a Government, the Military and the Police in place. Many foreign nationals including our own citizens are asking: are the present security challenges beyond us.

A Case Study of Two Local Communities and Community Policing:

In addition to the above are two stories which highlight the connection between community policing and peace building. This calls for combined efforts on the part of the peacemaker and the peacemaker community to sit and provide practical steps to achieve peace through a conscious effort to protect the community. Depending on what the action goals are, when peace is needed in a community shattered by violence, the quest for calmness only comes in taking intentional steps which sometimes results in peace. This means intentional collaboration between the government security agencies and the people at the grassroot level. Whatever steps taken to bring about peace and its sustainability, intentional grassroots mobilize effort and participation remain important. I would like to share two community policing and Peace Building stories from Gora and Ankung in Kaduna State in 2000; and Jos, Plateau State, September 30th, 2017.

Gora and Ankung in December 2000

Gora and Ankung are villages in Jaba Local Government Area of Kaduna State, Nigeria. The villages are within 3 kilometres of trekking distance across some small streams between them. As is the case with most villages in the rural communities, healthy and sometimes unhealthy rivalry exists between them. The Gora Youth were invited by their counterparts in Ankung for an end of year celebration friendly football match. It went well as cheers, jeers, clapping and dancing charged the atmosphere. At the end of the match, Gora won, suddenly the friendly atmosphere turned into a riot scene. The Ankung guys didn't like the fact that they lost on their own turf. A fight broke out, missiles were thrown freely in all directions and one landed on the head of the son of the Ankung village head. He was bleeding profusely, seeing this, the people retreated to their homes with Gora boys fleeing back to their village. In the car of the elder son of Ankung village head the matter was reported to the Police in Kwoi. The next day, the Police came in the car of the senior brother of the wounded guy, to arrest the culprit, who obviously was a Gora youth. When they arrived the compound of the Gora village head to ask for the young man to be produced for arrest, word soon went round. Gora youths regrouped, surrounded the policeman, the car and its owner. Not only did they resist arrest, they threatened to beat up the occupants and burn the car and its owner. There was obvious resistance to any form of arrest as voices kept rising and shouting no Gora youth will be arrested.

Fortunately, I was home for Christmas that year. The pandemonium attracted my attention, so I went to the scene and conferred with the village head, the policeman and the elder brother of the wounded youth. I then appealed to the angry youths to calm them down and stressed the need for them not to take the laws into their hands. They listened. I went back to appeal and requested the police to go back to the Police station without an arrest but promised to bring the boy responsible for throwing the missile which hit the boy's head, leading to the bleeding. Fortunately, the Police left. I called the leaders of the youth and they identified the youth by name. Much later, after tempers cooled down, I drove the boy to the Police station and sought for a peaceful resolution to the matter. As God would allow this, the Police and the family of the wounded boy agreed. The next day, I drove the wounded boy and his father to Jankwano Hospital, Jos, a journey of two hours. The boy underwent x-rays and fortunately the cut in the head did not go too deep to cause any major health concerns. I paid for the medical bills and we returned to the village. Case closed! Confidence and peace was restored between the two Communities which became a celebrated case and a reference point on the need for both parties to work together for peaceful co-existence whenever there is a breakdown of law and order. Community Policing and Peace Building works, if we are sincere and honest in searching for the right questions and answers to our challenges as a nation.

Jos, Plateau State - September 30th, 2017

On June 6th, 2017 a group of Arewa youths issued an ultimatum asking Igbos also citizens of Nigeria, to relocate from the North within three months with expiration date set as 1st October 2017. They also urged Northerners (Arewas) in the South-East to return home to the North. Their ultimatum could lead to unpredictable events especially when one thought of the pogrom in which many Igbos killed in the North in 1966. The events then snowballed into what sadly led to Nigeria's first civil war which lasted for three years, 1967-1970. Thus, their ultimatum could trigger chain reactions and this led to so much unease and apprehension across the country. While people were still trying to figure out what may happen as the dateline drew close, crises broke out in Bauchi road around the University of Jos on the third week of September. Some Muslim youths started attacking passers-by, cars, shattering glasses and stabbing people. They burnt down a car belonging to a University of Jos Professor who was just returning from a prayer meeting with some students. Some of us were contacted through SOS calls, to help evacuate some students of the University who were ran to the bush and now trapped in bushes around. I immediately contacted the Police, the Military and the Governor of Plateau State who connected me to his Chief Security Officer. Thankfully, those students in the nearby bushes were eventually evacuated to safer places within the city.

Intelligence information pick out during this particular crisis suggested that Jos would be used as a flash-point to start attacking Igbos because the October 1st dateline was around the corner. Fortunately, the riot was controlled by the combine efforts of the Police, Special Task Force, religious leaders in the State and a timely intervention by the Governor of Plateau State – Barrister Simon Bako Lalong. The Governor immediately announced a curfew and restricted the movement of people around the affected area and certain parts of the city.

Christian religious leaders held a crucial meeting of the Heads of Church Denomination Forum on the Plateau, inviting to join were also were other Christian leaders. Present were the Catholic Archbishop of Jos, ECWA and COCIN Presidents, the Anglican Bishop of Jos was represented, CAN Plateau State Chairman and others with me as the Secretary of Forum. The meeting took some decisions and delegated leaders from CAN and the Heads of Church Denomination Forum to meet immediately with some leaders of the Jama'atu Nasiril Islam (JNI) at the Jos central Mosque. We met in the Central Mosque, deliberated on the need to work together to keep the peace among our followers and stressed the need for peaceful coexistence so that Jos and Plateau State is not turned into a hot bed of sectarian and ethno-religious violence and also the spark plugs to actualize the October 1st dateline threat from the Arewa Youths. The Muslim leaders were happy with the initiative and the decisions reached during the meeting at their man Mosque. We also agreed and showed commitment to ensure that the decisions reached will be implemented and enforced by both sides.

Christian leaders then proceeded to meet with the Igbo Community leaders in Jos, to assure them that the Church will do her best to ensure that the safety of their lives and properties. The forum of Igbo Christian leaders met and I was personally there to address and encourage them. I appealed to them to tell their people not to move out of Jos, but to stay on and be law abiding and as well as promote peaceful interactions with others. On behalf of the Church leaders, I assured them that the Church on the Plateau of which they were a part of, is committed to do all it could to make sure they do not become targets of any ethno-religious attacks.

A few days later, Church leaders met at the CAN State Secretariat in Jos and declared September 30th as a day of fasting and prayer for peace - not just for Plateau State but Nigeria and to ask God to avert all planned trouble the next day, October 1st in view of the threat of violence based on the dateline. The prayer and fasting was to hold throughout the whole State at different Local Government Areas. I was asked to Chair the planning.

The meeting also decided to appeal to all shop owners and leaders of the various ethnic associations such as the Igbos, the Yorubas and those from the South-South to close shops. Gladly, this was complied with. On the 30th of September, prayers were offered all over the State for the peace of the State and nation. The prayer and fasting for Jos North local Government held at ECWA Headquarters Church. While we were in that prayer meeting at the ECWA Headquarters, three hours into the prayer meeting, while I was kneeling down, someone tapped me and said whispered that there was sign of violence in town and he invited me to step out for more details. He then briefed me and I did four things: first, I offered a silent prayer to the God and asked for his divine intervention. Second, I immediately called the STF Commander but couldn't reach him, I then called the Police Intelligence Officer and reported what I had just heard and described the location where the violence erupted. He in turn reached out to the Police Commissioner. Third, I called the Chief Security Officer of JNI, alerting him of the security situation in Jos town and the exact location where this was happening and urged him to do all he could to calm things down from his end. He promised me he would, and he physically went there and met the Muslim youths at Chorbe junction who were coming from Kwararafa, side of town where Muslim inhabitants were in the majority. Jos by now and still is basically a balkanized city into Christians and Muslim dominated settlements. We are still working to discourage this development. Lastly, I sent a young man with a background in security matters to go into the commercial area of town – the Main Street – Ahmadu Bello Way and observe if life was normal or abnormal and to confirm what was happening. By now, the youths had broken into one shop and started looting the shop and chasing people but before they could go any further, they were restrained, and the situation was brought under control with the joint help of the Police and the JNI Security Officer who responded promptly to my call. This was how a major crisis was averted in the City of Jos on the 30th of September 2019. This also shows that community policing as a tool for peace building, works best through collaborative efforts of different stakeholders at the grassroots level.

4 The Prospects of Community Policing for Peacebuilding

The architecture of community policing and peace building is predicated on reaching out to the grassroots. Grassroots mobilization is an active ingredient in peace building. The process is likened to building a house which provides security and shelter, but first the builder must start with laying the foundation and building down, to establish deep roots first before building up! When the foundation has been well-laid, to commence the building structure by laying a block by block formation is now ready to build-up.

Mobilizing the grassroots is the foundation to sustainable peace building. When crimes are committed, investigations are usually carried out by going to the crime scene to ask questions. This is what one may call building down. The people at the grassroots are the ones answering those questions. Those answers, if given truthfully, usually provide the leads to unravelling and resolving the crimes (building up). For Community Policing to succeed, it will require training and empowering these locals. This way, policing moves closer to the people and making the response time to crime less cumbersome. The investigation duration will also be shortened. Consequently, community policing through adopting proactive measures will result more in crime prevention as against crime prosecution. Therefore, the concept of building down is critical in crime prevention especially if the evidence gathered helps in a successful prosecution.

The framework for the inclusion and harnessing of relevant resources toward crime prevention should strategically include eliminating social, economic, political and cultural factors that lead to violent conflicts. This works best when community policing incorporates the vital components of peace building at the grassroots. However, it could be said that community policing may not integrate all the key issues embedded in peacebuilding since it appears to deal more with physical security. However, physical security, within the broad context of human security covers the protection of both the state and citizens. An effective community policing strategy in the end will result in community peace building and defense. This will benefit both the state and citizens, including the police itself, as their work will be made easier. This if done also, has the added effect of motivation and image redemption for the police. Policing in this way, will now become more proactive than reactive as the case is with traditional policing. Provision of vital information could lead to actions taken to prevent, eliminate and address threats to physical harm.

Indeed, Community Policing deals with freedom from fear, but it does not address freedom from want. It is peacebuilding that seeks to address the concerns of both “freedom from fear and want.” These are categorized within the two conceptions of: conventional security and human security respectively. For instance, the increasing attacks by terrorists on farms, farmlands and farmers across communities in the Middlebelt and other parts of Nigeria will naturally jeopardize Nigeria’s commitment to food security. The same can be said of the Boko Haram attacks in the North East. Therefore, community policing needs to be broadened to incorporate the wider implications of peacebuilding. The ripple effects of not guaranteeing freedom from fear and want are only better imagined.

We are all witnesses to the vicious cycle of destruction occasioned by the threats of insecurity in the Niger Delta as the rights to health, environment, food, life, education, peace, development are threatened because of the combined violent activities of the state and the militants.

Interestingly, the component of peacebuilding which deals with the control and resolution of conflict and community policing are critical in providing the platform for harnessing the various capacities and resources available within the community. This helps us achieve the said objective of addressing freedom from fear and want more realistically. Within this context, the efforts of the Vigilante Group of Nigeria (VGN) Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) across communities in the North East, Boys' and Girls' Brigades from the Christians and the First Aider of Jama'atu Nasril Islam and Fityanul Islam of Nigeria for the Muslims, Traditional rulers, Religious leaders, Youth and Women leaders and vigilantes of other ethnic nationalities, are worth incorporating into the community policing and peace building teams. This MUST be harnessed to benefit all in the community. A deep sense of exclusion by some in the community creates disharmony in the short run and conflicts in the long run. There is need for strategic inclusiveness of all the groups in the community. These groups have been relied upon in the past and in some instances now by the Nigeria Police Force and other relevant security and law enforcement agencies for information gathering, conflict resolution, information dissemination, confident and trust building. Their advice and vigilance needs to be maximized now. If Nigeria is to achieve the aspirations of the United Nations in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), efforts should be geared towards the realization of the objective of peacebuilding to guarantee freedom from fear and want for the citizens. Nigeria, as a frontline state in the United Nations should put in place mechanisms for harnessing and integrating resources and capacities, including community policing and Just Peacemaking approach. This is helpful not just in the area of physical security; but also for security.

5 The Need for Grassroots Mobilization for Community Policing and Peace Building: A Christian Perspective

Duane K. Friesen says: *“Just Peacemaking requires groups of citizens who take initiative and encourage government to do the same.”*

In the mist of all kinds of social vices, religious organisations that are closer to the people at the grassroots are very important in transforming the community.

This means helping the community to be deliberate, disciplined and focused agents of peace building. They need to be nurtured and sustained to prevent re-occurrence of violence as part of the peace building efforts. Why is this important? The grassroots have always been the trigger points of violence and also the worst hit in the history of crises in this nation. Neglecting the grassroots always contributes in impacting the peace processes negatively and thereby making it difficult to achieve and sustain the peace.

“A brief sampling of a few case studies from the Christian tradition shows how important the practice of nurturing grassroots groups has been in contributing positively to peacemaking among Christians, and also how Christians are overtaken by the force of violence when the practice of encouraging grassroots peacemaking groups are neglected.”

With this understanding, religious organisations must be encouraged by the government, the Police and international peace agencies to do a thorough groundwork of informing, moulding and reorienting their followers in the various communities to work for peace in partnership with the drive to establishing community policing.

“Religious groups can be valuable leaders in the development of grassroots organisations and initiatives. As faith communities share stories of compassion and peacemaking, they help to cultivate in their followers a commitment to just action, cooperation, and solidarity with the oppressed. Just Peacemaking depends on groups like grassroots organisations that empower people to live out their commitments to peace and justice through sustainable cooperative action, particularly when the impulse to choose violence as a solution is so prevalent throughout the world.”

6 Recommendations

To this end, the presentation recommends as follows:

- i. That relevant security and law enforcement agencies in the country, especially the Nigeria Police Force, should work hard and earn the confidence and trust of the citizens through deliberate efforts and commitment to the statutory responsibilities of protecting lives and properties which clearly benefits the community and not just the government. The interest of the Community should be elated above the interest of government.

- ii. That relevant security and law enforcement agencies, such as the Police should be properly and adequately EQUIPPED to guarantee the safety of lives and properties within their communities. This should be given a priority.
- iii. There is also the need to train and re-train Police officers on a regular basis. The men and women of these institutions should be professionally up to date in handling the day-to-day duties of policing in a way that encourages the communities to collaborate with them based on their competencies and not through coercion and compulsion.
- iv. There is need for security agencies, especially the Police to be involved in the provision of community services and collaborating with the citizens towards community development. This will entail responding to community needs in order to cement and strengthen the true spirit of trust by identification. This means identifying with the community in very practical ways.
- v. The Police should work to ensure that the communities and citizens are loved and trusted by them, instead of the prevailing atmosphere of suspicion and Police brutality, which hinders the free flow of communication. The current perception of the Police as being corrupt and only interest in mounting road blocks to collect N20, N50 or more needs to be corrected.
- vi. The creation of State Police is a vital necessity if the vision of community policing and peace building is to be taken seriously in the context of our security challenges today as a nation.
- vii. The process of appointing the Inspector General of Police should include the National Assembly rather than just the President and the Police Council.

7 Conclusion

The main thesis of Community Policing and Peace Building is that beyond fighting crime and violence in the community, it is meet critical to identify, analyse and establish the underlying factors that led to community violence in the first place. This is where the rubber meets the road in the philosophy of community policing and peace building, in my opinion.

Community policing in most developed countries so far, remains the best viable option they have adopted in policing their citizens. This however cannot be said is the case in most developing countries in Africa, especially Nigeria. Here, policing is still being practiced on the premise of political elite-centred security where the Police is seen and sometimes acts to protect and serve the interests of the government of the day and the favoured elites.

The police institution and senior officers are subject to constant political manipulation by politicians both in and out of government. By implication, what we therefore see is less community policing and more political manipulation of the Police especially the central government. He who pays the piper dictates the tune, so goes the saying. This reality needs to be factored in and corrected as we promote Community Policing and Peace Building in Nigeria.

Community policing is partly inspired by the biblical narrative, which shows that God has constantly wrestled with the children of Israel. This led Him to challenge them thus: ***“Come now, let us reason together,”*** says the Lord (Isaiah 1:18). If God calls us to reason together with Him, the Police should engage with the community as a positive creative approach. Another example of how grassroots mobilization can be effective as seen in the Bible, was when Jesus called his twelve disciples. He did so by going to the community where they were located and called them: some of whom were fishermen, tax collectors and the likes. Except in the case of one Medical Doctor, Luke and He build them all into one team of twelve. The impact of this act has gone, far beyond the grassroots, where it all started (Luke 5:1-11, 27-32, Mark 3: 13-19).

This paper provides the template for the interrogation of the two conceptions namely: community policing and peacebuilding. While peacebuilding would be confused with checking the incidences of physical harm, it actually goes beyond that to include such actions that are aimed at the prevention, control and resolution of conflicts. Ultimately, this should address the economic, social, cultural, humanitarian and political causes of conflict and as well strengthen the foundations for development. On the other hand, community policing deals with facilitation of a holistic and integrative framework for harnessing community resources and on the other hand also possesses the capacities to address threats to physical security (harm) and freedom from fear. Freedom from want is not within the purview of community policing, but it is within the broader purview of peacebuilding. Therefore, it is argued that while community policing falls within the contours of peacebuilding, peacebuilding is broader than community policing. Both concepts should be harnessed.

Pursing the two-fold concepts of community policing and peace building will profit this nation both in the short and long run. It is my hope that NIPSS, will use the research-based outcomes of this year's (2018) Senior Executive Course 40 theme: *"Strengthening Internal Security Framework and Community Policing in Nigeria: Models, Policy Opinions and Strategies,"* will transform the Police institution.

I pray that the Nigerian Policeman and woman will themselves help the Nigerian public to change their public perception of the Police and get the respect they badly need and deserve. I sincerely pray your efforts will not be boxed away and forgotten in some file cabinet in Aso Rock Villa's strong room in the Presidency. It is my prayer also that when your recommendations are implemented, effective community policing should hopefully result in our communities becoming co-producers of JUSTICE with the quest for sustainable peace in Nigeria.

Once again thank you for inviting me. God bless Nigeria.

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