In African States, which are multi-ethnic, with multiple religions and vast natural resources, social conflicts have reigned for decades. Religion and ethnicity are intricately interwoven in African conflicts. This book illustrates that in the past, religion has been used as a uniting factor. Therefore, what are the root causes of conflicts in these African States? In answering this question, we use Nigeria as a case study; we examine the Sharia-law, the Niger Delta, and the Boko-Haram conflicts amongst others. We argue that religion, ethnicity, natural resources, and culture are factors in Nigerian conflicts, but that the frustration of basic human needs (BHNs) is actually what is at the root of its conflicts. We examine Fr. Francis Libermann's religious peacebuilding "Project for the Blacks" (1846) whose virtue of humility and love was based on the satisfaction of BHNs and conclude that a similar project is likely to bring sustainable peace in Nigeria and elsewhere. This book is intended for students and practitioners of conflict resolution and anyone interested in how religion can help resolve conflict in the African States.

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Dedication

Christianity
Islam and
African Traditional Religion

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Glossary of Terms

ANC	African National Congress
ATR	African Traditional Religion
BHN	Basic Human Needs
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
Fr	Father
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
Gn	The book of Genesis from the Bible
HNT	Human Needs Theory
IFM	International Monetary Fund
LK	The Gospel of Luck
MK	The Gospel of Mark
MT	The Gospel of Matthew
ND	Notes et Ducuments (Notes and Documents, a private collection of notes and documents on the founding fathers of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit in the Roman Catholic Church)
PANA	Pan African News Agency
PSW	Problem-solving Workshop
Rom	The book of Romans in the Bible
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Introduction

> *What St Benedict is to Europe and Europeans, Fr. Francis Libermann is to Africa and Africans: their father in the Faith* (Augustijns, 1981, p. 32).[1]

These words of Monsignor Tchidimbo, former Archbishop of Conakry, Guinea, reflect my own sentiments towards Fr. Francis Libermann. I am a Nigerian and a, Roman Catholic priest of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit (Spiritans), which is the congregation Fr. Francis Libermann formed for the "Project for the Blacks" in the nineteenth century. In this project, Francis challenged the view that black people were lazy and barbaric; on the contrary, he argued, it is the slave social structures that are barbaric in nature. Furthermore, he maintained that black and white people are children of the same God and that black people have languages and culture of their own that should be respected. In my view, this religious project brought peace to black and white people in Nigeria, and the rest of Africa, during the colonial era. Prior to conducting this study, I was not in a position to critically evaluate the "Project for the Blacks". My research has led me to acknowledge that this project had both merits and weaknesses. Nevertheless, I continue to admire the project and Spiritans' works in Nigeria and the rest of Africa.

I choose to study Francis' project because it brought western education to Nigeria, as well as peace between black and white people

[1] Monsignor Tchidimbo, former Archbishop of Conakry, Guinea under the Government of Sekou-Touré suffered persecution for the Roman Catholic faith. He was held as a political prisoner for eight years in one of the most notorious prisons in Guinea. He delivered these words in a sermon on July 3, 1980, to the General Chapter of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit.

living there. This education helped Nigeria to gain independence from the British. I have benefited directly from this education. I also identify with Francis' experience of epilepsy, as well as his conversion from Judaism to Catholicism: I suffered from a humiliating illness in my youth and I converted to Catholicism from a religion native to Nigeria. Moreover, the Jewish community has also suffered from racism – the discrimination of one race against another for political, cultural and religious purposes. Finally, the suffering Francis became a humble, peaceful and tolerant person. In my view, his project succeeded because of his humility and peaceful attitude.

Hence, my interest in applying Francis' nineteenth century project to Nigeria in the twenty-first century should be evident. Under the rule of the missionaries and colonial masters prior to independence in 1960, Nigeria lived in relative peace, with less inter-religious and inter-ethnic—related violence than is the case today. However, following independence, Nigeria descended into a series of conflicts. During the country's 54 years of independence, it has been ruled by a military dictatorship for 28 years and by a civilian government for 26 years. The majority of 170 million Nigerians live below the poverty line, on an income of less than one US Dollar a day. This is despite Nigeria being the world's fifth largest exporter of crude oil. And yet, Christianity and Islam continue to grow in Nigeria, alongside growing numbers of inter-religious, inter-ethnic, and socioeconomic—related conflicts. As a concerned Nigerian, I wonder what can be done to allow peace and justice to be returned to Nigeria. What is the root of conflict in Nigeria?

Outline for the book: In trying to answer this question, and born from the desire for peace to return to Nigeria, this book attempts to identify key connections in religious faith for conflict resolution. Nigeria's religious makeup is approximately 45% Christians, 45% Muslims and 10% African

Traditional Religionists. Therefore, we argue in this book that finding a faith connection to conflict resolution in Nigeria may be a key to resolving conflict in the country.

The book is divided into six chapters. In Chapter One, we define what is meant by religion and conflict resolution. We then review conflict resolution theories to establish a theoretical framework for this book. The theoretical framework helps us to analyse the "Project for the Blacks", the subject of this book. Chapter Two provides a background study. We offer a brief review of Roman Catholic mission history and explore the historical background of Fr. Francis Libermann, with the aim of understanding the factors that informed his action. Chapter Three analyses Francis' religious programme for conflict resolution in the nineteenth century, the "Project for the Blacks", by using the theoretical framework developed in Chapter One for our analysis. The aim here is to build a foundation for our exploration of the connection between some religious virtues and conflict resolution. Chapter Four discusses the relationship between the religious virtues of humility and charity used by Francis in order to explain his work in conflict resolution. Here, the theories by John Paul Lederach in his work, *The Art and Soul of Building Peace,* help us analyse Francis' work. Chapter Five provides a brief analysis of five conflicts in Nigeria and argues for its root causes. We argue that while religion, ethnicity, natural resources, greed and grievances are factors to conflicts in Nigeria, the root causes of these conflicts are the frustration of basic human needs (BHNs) for the general populace of Nigerians living in poverty. Finally, in Chapter Six, the concluding chapter examines the lessons Francis' work provides regarding the ongoing conflicts in Nigeria, particularly concerning those occurring between Christian, Muslim, and African Traditional Religionist groups. The book concludes that a project similar to that of Francis' which seeks to satisfy the BHNs of the Black population in Africa and elsewhere,

organised via a bottom-up approach, rather than a top-down approach, would help bring peace to the inter-ethnic, inter-religious, inter-cultural, and socioeconomic—related conflicts in Nigeria.

Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

1.0 Introduction

Nigerians live among inter-ethnic, inter-religious, and socioeconomic—related conflicts that the existing systems of control cannot effectively address. We need to look for more comprehensive approaches towards peace-building and resolving these conflicts. In determining the source of these conflicts, two questions cannot be ignored: firstly, are social conflicts and violent behaviour due to inherent human aggressiveness; or are social conflicts and violent behaviour due to the unjust social structures imposed by those in power upon others (Burton, 1998, p. 1)? If humans are inherently violent, then we may just live with violence and perhaps the use of brutal force by individuals and groups, or the police and the military, are justified. However, if the unjust social structures stimulate violent behaviour, then we need to find approaches to reduce conflict in Nigeria by adjusting the unjust social structures and norms (ibid.). If we hold that both nature and social structures and norms lead to violence, we still need to find approaches for building peace and resolving conflicts in Nigeria. Thus, our question for this chapter on a theoretical framework for this book is, what are the roots of conflicts in the human society of Nigeria?

In answering this question, this chapter first defines specific terms that we use in this book: religion and conflict resolution. Following on from the definitions, the chapter is divided into five sections. Section one examines the Human Needs Theory (HNT) that argues that the frustration of basic human needs (BHNs) is the root of conflict in societies like Nigeria. Section two offers analysis of religion as the root cause of conflict. Section three provides a summary of natural resources as the root cause of conflict.

Section four discusses the clash of civilisation as the root cause of conflict. However, we argue that religion, ethnicity, resources, and culture are factors in the conflict in Nigeria, but the frustration of BHNs is actually what is at the root of its conflict. Finally, section five briefly studies post-colonial theory which helps us in this book to scrutinise the work of missionaries and religions, and ethnicity. These theories form the theoretical framework for our study of religion and conflict resolution: Fr. Francis Libermann's "Project for the Blacks" (1846) and its relevancy to twenty-first century Nigeria.

Definition of terms

This book would contend that any genuine **religion** must mean:

> *An acknowledgment of our bond or obligation as created beings to God, our Creator; a consequent return of duty and obedience; godliness, holiness, piety towards God; reverence towards him and to things sacred or consecrated to him[/her]; a strict and conscientious discharge or observance of our duties or obligations to each other, as fellow-creatures, or creatures of the same God* (Richardson, 1855, p. 1598).

This is the kind of religion that will bring peace to Nigeria: one that obliges its followers to have equal obligation to God and to their fellow human beings based on respect, fairness, justice, and equality, because we are all creatures of the same God.

Therefore, **conflict resolution,** this book argues, is characterised by a solution that is complete, acceptable, self-supporting, satisfactory, uncompromising, innovative, and un-coerced (Mitchell, 1990). It is *complete* because the issues in conflict are no longer part of the political agenda and/or cease to have any salience for the parties to the agreement; it

is *acceptable*, commonly, to all the parties to the conflict, not merely to one side, or to elite factions within the adversaries; and it is *self-supporting*, in the sense that there is no requisite for third-party sanctions (positive or negative) to implement an agreement. Therefore, it is *satisfactory* to all the parties because it is perceived as "fair" or "just" according to their value systems; it is *uncompromising*, in the sense that the terms are not based on sacrifice of unmet BHNs as part of a compromised, "half a loaf" solution; it is *innovative*, in that the solution affords some new and positive relationship between the parties; and it is *un-coerced,* in that the adversaries freely arrive at the solution themselves without any imposition by an authoritative outside agency (Mitchell, 1990). This kind of conflict resolution, we argue, is likely to bring sustainable peace in Nigeria.

1.1 Human need theory (HNT)

> *Aggressions and conflicts are the direct result of some institutions and social norms being incompatible with inherent human needs … aggressions and anti-social behaviours are stimulated by social circumstances. There are human limits to abilities to conform to such institutions and norms: the person is not wholly malleable. On the contrary, needs that are frustrated by institutions and norms require satisfaction. They will be pursued in one way or another* (Burton, 1998, p. 1).

In this quote, Burton (1998) responds to the source of conflicts such as the one that existed between Blacks and Whites during slavery (see Chapter Two) and those occurring in Nigeria over the implementation of Sharia law, Boko Haram, and the struggle in the Niger Delta (see Chapter Five). Burton (1998) argues against the notion that ascribed such conflicts to aggressiveness in physical acquisition and recommends that such conflicts

could be avoided by threat and deterrent strategies (see Morgenthau, 1948). In the Burton view, law, politics and sociology are based on the proposition that the individual must conform to legal norms; assuming that an individual could be coerced to conform and adjust to the requirements of social intuitions. Thus, sociologists and psychologists are greatly concerned with the individual being socialised into the norms of society and her/his adjustment to the social environment, respectively. Any failure is seen as abnormality (Burton, 1998, p. 2). From this perspective, violence used by individual and groups, intuitions and states in pursuit of power, law, and order is understood to be politics by other means, and that power-based negotiations are the rightful practical alternative to inter-group violence (see Morgenthau, 1985). Furthermore, an emphasis is placed on a "need for normative consensus, interest-based commercial and political bargaining, and the violent suppression of crime" (Wilson, 1998, as cited in Burton, 1998, p. 2). This argument does not ascribe to inherent needs as stimulating conflict. However, Burton (1998, p. 2) argues that there is high resistance to accepting that a factor such as inherent human needs are at the root cause of conflict in social analysis because it is thought to be vague, non-quantifiable and therefore not "scientific". It is also crucial to understand that Morgenthau (1948 and 1985) does not recognise the difference between "disputes" (over physical resources) and "conflict" (over BHNs and aspirations). Therefore, Morgenthau (1985) leads some of us to believe that all conflicts stem from inherent human aggressiveness.

That being said, violent behaviour is not inherent in human nature. The Seville Statement (1989)[2] proclaims that "violence is not human

[2] In the Seville Statement, five propositions are elaborated upon: (1) It is scientifically incorrect to say that we have inherited a tendency to make war from our animal ancestors; (2) It is scientifically incorrect to say that war or any other violent behaviour is genetically programmed into our human nature; (3) It is scientifically

nature". In this proclamation, 20 leading scientists from all over the world make it clear that violence is not genetic; it is a social construct.[3] Consequently, conflict resolution scholars like John Burton (1990), Marshall Rosenberg (2003) and the Chilean economist Manfred Max-Neef (1992) argue that the root cause of human conflicts such as indicated above can be found in the frustration of meeting BHNs. Rosenberg (2003, p. 3) states that violence in such situations is a tragic expression of unmet BHNs that are essential for survival. The economist Max-Neef (1992) indicates nine universal human needs by which we attain peaceful communities and human development in society. These needs are subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, creation, identity, leisure/idleness, freedom, and participation. These needs are not hierarchical but complementary in nature. He proposes a "Human Scale Development" for the development of society and the resolution of social conflicts such as presented in this book. This would be focused and based on the satisfaction of BHNs, leading to a growing level of self-reliance, and a holistic articulation of people with nature and technology; the State and social norms must take into consideration local activities, personal and social autonomy of civil society (Max-Neef, 1992). According to Max-Neef (1992), the satisfaction of the nine human needs in any society will bring peace and development to it.

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incorrect to say that in the course of human evolution there has been a selection for aggressive behaviour more than for other kinds of behaviour; (4) It is scientifically incorrect to say that humans have a "violent brain"; and (5) It is scientifically incorrect to say that war is caused by "instinct" or any single motivation (Adams, 1989).

[3] The Seville Statement was adopted on 16 November 1989 by UNESCO at its twenty-fifth session of its General Conference from the Seville Proclamation of 16 May 1986 by 20 scientists who met in Seville, Spain at the instant of the Spanish National Commission for UNESCO to discuss whether human violence is biological or a social construct.

However, Max-Neef (1992) distinguishes between needs and wants. Needs are few, finite, and classifiable and they cut across cultures. But the way needs are met may differ from culture to culture. Wants, on the other hand, are the strategic interests or positions that people hold. Wants are negotiable while needs are non-negotiable. Thus, in a conflict situation, people change their demands based on wants, but they are not likely to forgo their needs, which require satisfaction.

According to John Burton, basic human needs (BHNs) are as follows[4]:

- **Safety/security,** the need to have strong structures, predictabilities, stabilities, and freedom from fears and anxieties;
- **Belongingness/love,** the need for acceptance by others, and maintain strong personal relations with one's family, friends and identity groups;
- **Self-esteem,** the need that others recognise one as being strong, competent, capable and has the ability to influence his/her environment;
- **Personal fulfilment,** the need to achieve one's potential in personal development in life;
- **Identity,** the need to have a sense that one is strongly related to others in the world, and it is recognised as legitimate and equal with other identities;
- **Cultural security,** the need that one's language, cultural values, religion, ideas and concept are recognised by others in one's society;

[4] This set of human needs will be used from now in the book rather than the nine types enumerated by Max-Neef 1992. We use Burton's needs since we also use his system on how BHNs can be satisfied.

- **Freedom,** the need to be free from physical, political or civil restrictions and be allowed to make personal choices in all aspects of one's life;
- **Distributive justice,** the need that resources belonging to a group are fairly distributed to all members; and
- **Participation,** the need that one partakes in and influences civil society (Marker, 2003, p. 1).

These needs are different from interests that tend to be particular such as class interests in separating "members of societies into groupings, frequently in opposition to each other" (Burton, 1998, p. 1), and or individual interest in the accumulation of wealth, both of which can be bargained. However, needs, if frustrated by institutions or social norms will be pursued in one way or another regardless of consequences (ibid.). Indeed, if one negotiates away her/his own or other's BHNs, one is condemning one or others to a life unworthy of human beings (Galtung, 2004, p. 2). Hence, people may not be coerced or socialised into giving up their efforts to meet their unmet needs. Therefore, institutions must: give workers recognition as persons with identity and self-esteem if social and domestic violence is to be contained; give young people a role in society if streets gangs are to vanish; give ethnic minorities autonomous status if violence is to be avoided; and make decision-making non-adversarial if leadership roles are to be collaborative (Burton, 1998, p. 2). In his work, *Violence Explained – the Source of Conflict, Violence and Crime and their Provention,* Burton (1997) looks at how BHNs are often neglected, leading groups to use violence to claim their rights and satisfy their needs. Burton further argues that, "education and culture make parties manipulate the issues and dehumanise the other parties" (Burton, 1997, p. 32). Social problems are conceived as personal failings—unemployment and poverty viewed as lack of due intelligence and diligence or that social problem

stems from lack of social consciousness—a moral obligation to observe social norms (Burton, 1998, p. 3). Indeed, traditional notions of democracy assume that minorities will conform to discriminatory norms of the majority, but that individuals have limited tolerance, there are situations and conditions that will be intolerable. However, our institutions and social norms do not readily accept that people have inherent human needs that must be respected and satisfied which are at the root of conflict.

For Burton (1998), therefore, there are human needs that need to be satisfied in conflict resolution such that conflict control gives way to a process that seeks the source of conflict and circumstances leading to conflicts, in which case, we seek institutional change and adjustment rather than seek individual behaviour changes. This implies defining certain conflicts as problems to be resolved rather than situations that behaviours have to be controlled. Therefore, we need more bottom-up decision making in our societies by: encouraging local communities' consultation and activity; creating more collaborative initiatives between workers and industries; and creating a democracy that promotes dialogue with the people rather than debates among elected officials. Hence, leaders will be at the service of the people and not individuals who are vested with powers to control people (Burton, 2001). This implies that voters vote for candidates who are ready to dialogue and learn from their opponents rather than those who are ready to engage in "dog fights"; for example, Australians are encouraged to adopt a "dialogue" democracy rather than a "debate" democracy (Galtung, 2004, p. 57). Indeed, that "anti-social behaviour, violence and crime, sources of our insecurities, require society, not people, to be 'punished' by altering its institutions, and people to be rehabilitated in changed circumstances" (Burton, 2001, p. 4). Moreover, in order that we have a better future, more attention must be paid to childhood education in respect to conflict resolution by the satisfaction of human

needs, in contrast to the present, where "all children are educated within adversarial institutions, including schools and the family and, later in life, in politics, industry and global relations" (Burton, 2001, note 5). It is these institutional processes of socialisation that have to change. One approach that can be used for a conflict resolution based on the satisfaction of BHNs is problem-solving workshop (PSW).

Burton extensively develops and defends PSW as an approach that seeks the resolution of conflict based on problem-solving by deeply analytical means. That is, it supports parties to analyse their condition and redefine their relationships. In order that they resolve their conflict without power bargain or element of coercion (Burton, 1996, p. 40). The approach has two presuppositions. First, religious and ethnic groups in places like Nigeria will normally act in good faith and non-violent towards one another. The existence of social conflicts in a given society points to a common problem: the satisfaction of BHNs. Thus, once confronted with this evidence, fighting for common goals and values (the frustration of BHNs), people will agree to willingly form new relationships (resolve their conflict). Second, those who might want to continue to fight to protect their interest can be convinced that their victory may come at too great a cost and lead them into a situation where sooner or later they will prefer to give the other party much of what they need (Galtung, 2004, p. 161). On the basis of these two assumptions, a conflict analysis and resolution based on problem-solving by deeply analytical means makes sense.

1.1.1 Burton's approach to problem-solving workshop (PSW)

Burton (1986), in his work "the Procedures of Conflict Resolution" takes a PSW approach that points out that our cultures require us to attach high value to winning: in games we typically compete to win or lose, we form competitive relationships, personal and commercial, and we play win

or lose politics. However, he argues that whether winning in relation to interests and aspirations or as a goal in itself, “winning” has consequences for the loser that leads the loser to behave in ways that destroy the “gain” of victory. This “winning” produces intangibles in all relationships that ultimately off-set the gains of victory: intangibles such as response to humiliations, sense of insecurity, perception, and respect. As such our interests, values and needs require winning conflicts, yet winning has dangerous consequences (Burton, 1986, pp. 92–93). To avoid this dilemma, Burton (1986) suggests that we avoid settling conflicts that arise from situations of unmet needs based on power analyses.

Rather, Burton (1986, p. 93) suggests, that we develop an analytical process to arrive at “win-win solutions”. That is, arriving at agreements that give to all parties what they seek: the satisfaction of their BHNs. This requires a movement from power (P) analysis to cooperation (C) processes and from win (W)–lose (L) situations or lose-lose (L-L) conditions to win-win (W-W) resolutions. He illustrates this in a diagram, as given below.

Diagram 1.1

W 1: Where typical paternalistic decisions take place: usually a person or institution adjudicates for parties using some form of power analysis, as in courts of law. P	W 2: Where conflict outcomes produce "win-win solutions" for all parties. C
3: Where normally, we resolve social conflict; by power bargain or even war, with winners and losers or, perhaps all losers. W	4: Where games depict win or lose, but as in win-lose according to rules which make the outcome acceptable. L

In 1.1.1, what takes place is usually conflict settlement, where the primary concern is "power-bargaining" as may be exercised in courts of law focused on interests and in which case outcomes are implemented or enforced by a body: the police. In 1.1.3, we practice conflict "management" where bodies like governments (or the most powerful) seek to maintain the status quo to avoid escalation of conflict while maintaining control without giving away much power in order to contain, for example, violence, but without dealing with the underlying causes of the conflict. In 1.1.4, we practice this system in sports where usually a referee or a body adjudicate what is acceptable or not acceptable for a game to be won or lost. However, in 1.1.2, we should practice conflict resolution which is facilitated analytical problem-solving process that seeks self-sustaining outcomes—the satisfaction of the needs of all parties without coercion or external enforcement (Burton, 1997). Therefore, diagram 1.1 is ideal for use as an

educational tool during PSW (Burton, 1986, p. 107), but it can also be applied in general conflict resolution education to explain to parties in a conflict the dynamics of conflict resolution based on the satisfaction of human needs' approach. It is a means for finding "win–win" resolutions. Burton (1986, p. 95) accepts PSW as a term for want of a better one because these words have other meanings in English. Burton finds the term "problem-solving" useful because a problem in a relationship remains until after the "final settlement".[5] When the satisfaction of needs and interest for both parties takes place, we resolve problems. Similarly, he finds the word "workshop" useful because it suggests that all parties concerned have to get down to the analytical job of solving a problem: the satisfaction of BHNs. In this way, parties no-longer perceive themselves as enemies, but get interested in solving their common problem.

PSW uses third party facilitation as a methodology and brings together a high-level delegate of parties to a private, confidential and unofficial interaction. Its main purpose is to help parties understand each other and the needs that they have unmet that are at the root of their conflict. It presupposes that representatives of all parties in a conflict meet on a neutral ground, in an environment that enables them feel comfortable to analyse their situation of conflict whereby facilitators suggest how interactions may be carried out in regard to the conflict (Kelman, 1998). The group of neutral professional facilitators offer concepts (e.g. diagram 1.1) that might be useful in clarifying issues under discussion and enable the parties to do rigorous analysis of the structure of their conflict and if possible to resolve it. The facilitators help representatives not to fall into the trap of negotiation by bargaining in the conventional way of win-lose pattern by

[5] Settlement here means resolving disputes within a power framework of thought. Conflict resolution avoids this term because of the implication of bargaining (Burton, 1996, p. 41).

summarising, highlighting, seeking clarification, or pointing to similarities and differences between parties (Kelman, 1998). So, they analyse in a collaborative way to arrive at a common resolution to their problem – the frustration of BHNs.

Nonetheless, Burton (1986–1997) works assume benevolence on the part of the powerful for the success of a PSW approach. This approach assumes that people and leaderships have the decision-making ability to take charge of the present and the future rather than to leave developments to accidental or evolutionary power process. Burton (1997, p. 46) insists that even highly organised and powerful interest groups can be persuaded to look beyond their immediate interests, and enter into analytical-based decision-making calculated to satisfy present and future human needs rather than just immediate interests. It appears that Burton (1986) does not see the need to have a gender balance delegate to his PSW approach. Since Burton's (1986, p. 39) step two explains how to organise PSWs. He presents four rules for entry into a workshop, spells out how to approach constituted authorities and parties to a conflict, and how parties should be invited to send non-official (non-governmental) representatives as participants, but to send those who have easy access to decision makers. He does not insist on a gender balance delegate to a PSW, but in step three, in reference to gender—in rule fourteen—he finds it "necessary to have balanced viewpoints and perspectives represented on the panel, including gender, and where relevant, ethnic and class perspectives" (Burton, 1986, p. 44). Thus, he recommends gender balance for the panel, yet in all of the fifty-six rules, none mentions or advocates for a gender balance in the composition of parties to a workshop. This gender insensitivity forms part of the general or inherent insensitivity of the Human Needs Theory (HNT) on the subject of gender.

Perhaps, Burton (1997, p. 46) believes that males in a workshop will agree freely to recognise the equality between females and males. He assumes that men in a cultural context like Nigeria will suddenly give women the equality they have refused to grant them for centuries. We would contend differently, that the ontological reality as manifest in the way men are seen as superior and more important, and women are seen as inferior and unimportant in Nigeria requires us to insist on a gender balance delegate to PSW as a means of ensuring equity and equality between men and women in the PSW approach. We address this point in a future study of the HNT. Again, a question arises about the suitability of PSW in a conflict situation where power asymmetry and a different cultural context subsist. We shall now examine this question.

1.1.2 The usefulness of problem-solving workshop (PSW) approach

The PSW approach is recognised as one of the socio-psychological intergroup and international conflict resolution models with the implication for social change in both relationships and the structures of conflicting societies (Fisher, 2010, p. 145). PSWs seek to address the underlying causes of conflict to reach an agreement that is designed to address the satisfaction of BHNs for both sides, regardless of the power relationships between them (Rouhana, 2011, p. 294). Therefore, it could provide a resolution to a conflict that is complete, acceptable, self-supporting, satisfactory, uncompromising, innovative, and un-coerced (Mitchell, 1990). However, a question arises about its suitability in some conflicts. On the one hand, Rouhana (2011, pp. 294–295) argues that one would find it difficult to use PSW in conflicts where massive human rights violations, killings, ethnic cleansing, crimes against humanity, and war crimes have been committed. Fisher (2010) also offers criticisms about a PSW approach

that does not incorporate the challenges of power asymmetry and justice. He argues in favour of addressing this issue of asymmetric power in the PSW approach. Furthermore, Vayrynen (2001, p. 65) argues that a PSW, with its universalising tendencies and its refusal to discuss the cultural context of decision-making, means it can neither explain nor understand choices made in a particular conflict situation. Therefore, questions remain about the effectiveness of PSWs in different cultures, asymmetric power relationships and varied context situations.

On the other hand, over the past 50 years, the application of PSWs has shown to be effective (Burton, 1990; Fisher, 1997, 2005; Kelman, 1998; Lieberfold, 2005; Saunders, 1999, 2000). Lieberfeld (2005) reports that a series of PSWs held in an unofficial capacity between representatives of the African National Congress (ANC) and influential Afrikaners connected to the National Party government in the late 1990s clarified perspectives, changed perceptions, and built a working trust that transferred to the policy decisions and negotiations that initiated the peace process in South Africa. Moreover, Fisher (2005) presents a comparative case analysis of nine successful interventions using various forms of PSW approaches in escalated and destructive ethno-political conflicts that occurred in different regions over four decades. Additionally, Mitchell's (2009, p. 1) study of a PSW approach in South Asia, Africa, Latin America, and Europe in what he terms "persuading the lions", concludes that, the lions (the powerful) might be enabled to undertake a more realistic costing of the burdens of continuing with a conflict and see the benefit of alternative course of action.

Thus, in reply to some of the criticisms raised against the PSW approach, Fisher (2010, p. 157) contends that it has never been posited to be the equivalent of a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC), which attempts to ascertain the truth about past behaviours, make judgements on

human rights abuses, and determine penalties, reparations, and/or compensations. Fisher (2010, p. 146) acknowledges that some of these criticisms, such as power asymmetry, have some validity, but that the PSW approach embodies characteristics that enable it to address these challenges and to provide a useful avenue for social change towards greater equity and equality between parties.

Therefore, Burton elaborates a conflict resolution approach (PSW) that enables parties to a conflict to take the view of having shared goals namely the pursuit of the satisfaction of BHNs common to all. Thus, given a full understanding of their shared goals, and an appreciation of the environmental constraints of the two parties, they would arrive at realistic means, or perhaps something far more imaginative as a solution (Burton, 1990b, p. 324). Therefore, this approach offers us a big insight in the attempt to resolve social conflicts like the ones we are addressing in this book. Unfortunately, this approach offers little on the issue of gender balance in PSWs. It recommends an engendered panel, but remains silent about the same issue for the composition of parties to the workshop. Despite this limitation, though, the PSW offers us a central structure as an approach it seems, for articulating and conducting conflict analysis and resolution. Both Burton (1997) and Max-Neef (1992) contend that needs are universal and "generalize across cultures and across societal levels from the interpersonal and family to the international"; they are, therefore, satisfied at personal, group and international levels. Therefore, the needs theory applies to the life of Fr. Francis Libermann and his "Project for the Blacks". However, in general, HNT has advantages and disadvantages that should be kept in mind when applying the theory, seen in the following section.

1.1.3 Advantages of human needs theory

The Human Needs Theorists offer us a new approach to conflict resolution. They appeal to our common humanity, which appears to be universal, and provide a frame-work that can be applied to inter-personal, inter-religious, inter-ethnic, interstate and international conflicts. In addition the theory "recognises the existence of negotiable and non-negotiable issues. That is, human needs theorists understand that needs, unlike interests, cannot be traded, suppressed, or bargained for" (Sandra, 2003, p. 1). Hence, the approach makes a case for abandoning the methods of conflict resolution that do not take into account BHNs: "Interest-based negotiation models that view conflict in terms of win-lose or other consensuses-based solutions and conventional power models" (Burton, 1997, p. 35). Rather, the HNT supports collaborative and multifaceted problem-solving models, such as problem-solving workshops (PSW) that focus on analysing the root cause of conflicts and maintaining focus on fulfilling the unmet BHNs in the conflicts. Furthermore, the theorists "understand that although needs cannot be compromised, they can be addressed in a generally win-win or positive-sum way" (Burton, 1997). Nevertheless, the HNT leaves some unanswered questions.

1.1.4 Disadvantages of the human needs theory

Some difficulties arise with basic human needs (BHNs) approaches. For example, how do we know that the needs at a particular time are being met or unmet, so as to prevent a conflict? Are BHNs cultural or universal? The attempt to establish an objective basis for socially and politically salient needs in human biology or in unalterable "human nature" has been criticised as indefensibly "essentialist", de-contextualised, and a-historical (e.g., Avruch, 1999). Burton's (1997) and Max-Neef's (1992) attempt to answer critics by asserting that, while BHNs are universal, their

corresponding satisfiers (e.g. class, gender, and culture) are culturally determined. This distinction makes a radical separation between needs and satisfiers, that is, problematic; as concepts like identity and security are not independently existing "universals"; rather, they are ideas abstracted from a multiplicity of concrete satisfiers in concrete situations and context; and therefore, if their satisfiers are culture-bound, so, too, are the needs (Rubenstein, 2001, p. 4). Furthermore, parties to conflicts have interests as well as needs; HNT does not address the interests of concerned parties. In such cases, needs can be satisfied, but the conflict may continue. For example, the collapse in 2000–2001 of the Oslo-initiated Middle East "peace process" is a case in point. Palestinian and Israeli negotiators attempted for years in good faith to discover adequate satisfiers for their people's identity and security needs. However, they were working from an essentially secular perspective and neither side took into account the religious importance of Jerusalem and the Jewish settlements on the West Bank to such a degree that the process collapsed (Rubenstein, 2001, p. 5). Therefore, it is essential that we examine other theories about the sources of such conflicts that we are dealing with in situations like Nigeria.

1.2 Religion as the root cause of conflict

Some peace studies scholars identify religion as one of the root cause of conflict in certain cases. This is said to be true because religion: helps to mark social differences; has ideas and symbols that help constitute group identities; has practices that help construct community; has beliefs that can be politically salient; and it has institutions that are politically influential and provide structure to the boundary of people (Mitchell, 2006). Consequently, religion is perceived as central and at the root of conflicts with multiple factors such as ethnicity and inequality because it remains one of the central dimensions of social difference (Mitchell, 2006, p. 4).

Northern Ireland is cited as an example. In Northern Ireland, it is argued that "historically, to be a Protestant settler meant to occupy a more powerful position in society ... this is why the 'system of relationships' has resulted in a tendency towards communal division" (Stern, 2003, p. 103). In this case, religion, rather than other grievances is the root cause of the conflict.

Furthermore, it is argued that religion has been an agent of conflict throughout history. Religion has been associated with violence in the past, and it continues to be associated with violence in the contemporary world. For example, for "Muslims and Jews in the Middle East ... antiabortionists in the United States, and anti-cultists in a variety of nations ... Religion has often (maybe always) operated in close proximity with violence, either as the object of, or the motivator of violence" (Stern, 2003, p. 103). Therefore, in conflicts where religion is a factor, it is likely to be at the root of the conflict. However, in these examples cited, religious leaders are hardly the target of rebels which would show that religion is the root of the conflicts. It is rather political leaders and those in political authority or those coercive forces like the Army and the Police that become the target in these conflicts.

Nonetheless, another argument that identifies religion with conflicts suggests that religion is irrational. Juergensmeryer (2000, p. 243) in his book *Terror in the Mind of God* argued, "Religion gives spirit to public life and provides a beacon for moral order. At the same time it needs the temper of rationality and fair play that Enlightenment values give to civil society". How else can one explain suicide missions? How can one explain the acts of 9/11 in the USA? However, this argument is problematic as other peace studies scholars have questioned the notion that violence associated with religion as irrational. They argue that by paying so much attention to the apparent intolerance, dogmas, and socially disharmonious

aspects of religions, we are distracted from asking deeper, structural questions about violence in our "everyday" life and the involvement of human beings in the performance of such violence (Stern, 2003, p. 277). Thus, Stern states, "it must be recognised that multiple grievances play a role in religious base violence, such as non-state actors of Islamic faith" (Stern, 2003, p. 6). As such, religion-associated violence cannot simply be said to be irrational. We need to look at a deeper level to see the collaborating factors.

Analysing this theory, therefore, religion is a marker of identity and identity is one of the BHNs that can be frustrated, therefore leading people to violent conflicts. In this case, it is not religion that may be fundamental; it is the stolen—or lack of a recognised—identity, the lack of dignity that provokes conflict. This is therefore rational, and not irrational, action. Moreover, HNT refers to religion as a satisfier for the satisfaction of the human need of cultural security. As such, the HNT accommodates religion in its theorising about conflict. Additionally, we must wonder whether religious tones are used simply because it is easier to use religion as a common language with which to unite, to fight injustice, and discrimination, but we must also identify religious conflict for what it is. We must also seek to distinguish genuine religions as defined above—and argued in this book—one that recognises all human beings as creatures of God such that we are obliged to treat one another in a fair and just manner. Anything less than this is not genuine religion and, one would contend, that in cases where religion has been used, religious bodies must be involved in the conflict resolution process to take account of the religious factors. However, it should not be a distraction from finding out the real causes of a conflict.

From the HNT perspective, conflicts such as examined in this book are most likely a result of the frustration of BHN of distributive justice

rather than religion that is at the root of conflict. Issues concerning the BHN of distributive justice are at times argued to be an unequal distribution of profits made from natural resource in a given community in the theory of natural resources as the root of conflict that we will examine next.

1.3 Natural resources as the root cause of conflict

Some political scientists have argued that natural resources are the root cause of conflicts in places like Nigeria, Sierra Leone, and Liberia etc. where they are found. The resources cited are diamonds, gold, timber, rubber and oil. There are two different versions of the theory opposing each other.[6] One (Collier, 2000) argues that greed is the root cause of conflict or an economic agenda to benefit from natural resources found in a community. This argument asserts firstly, "domestic groups may engage in quasi-criminal activity to benefit from resources independent from the state" (Collier and Hoeffler, 2000 as cited in Humphrey, 2005, p. 511). Collier's 2000 study looked at the "proxies" used that can indicate a conflict is based on an economic agenda. First is greed: (1) the share of primary commodity exports in GDP since these are the most easily looted assets; (2) the proportion of young males between the ages of 15 and 24 in a society since most of those who join rebel movements are young men; and (3) the average number of years of education that the population has received as a proxy for employability and income earning opportunities as causes of rebellion and war. These are then compared with "grievance" "proxies": (1) ethnic or religious hatred; (2) economic inequality; (3) lack of political rights; and (4) government economic competence. The conclusion is that the results overwhelmingly point to the importance of

[6] See the greed versus grievance debate in Berdal and Malone, 2000.

economic agendas: greed as opposed to grievance (Collier, 2000a, and Collier, 2000b). Therefore, conflicts seen from this perspective are reduced to greed which is why rebels take up arms.

Secondly, that where there is a concentration of natural resources, dissatisfied groups may even believe that mounting the leadership of the State may be viable or prosperous thing to do (Berdal and Malone, 2000). The examples of these kinds of conflicts would be in the Niger Delta and Biafra in Nigeria and Chad and Katanga in Congo. In each case, destructive social conflicts were perceived as produced by a few manipulative leaders or expressively by the sheer existence of cultural or ideological differences (Rubenstein and Crocker, 1994). The third dimension to greed theory is the part played by outsiders who want to benefit from the natural resources. For example, the secessionist bid in Katanga in Congo was supported if not instigated by the Belgian firm Union Miniere du HauK Katanga. And there is good evidence that suggests the French oil corporation ELF took actions that led to an escalation of the conflict in the Republic of Congo (Berdal and Malone, 2000). Therefore, some of the conflicts examined in this book, like the Niger Delta (Chapter Five), arguably will appeal to this greed theory that rebels just want to benefit from the oil sales in the region such that a natural resource (oil) is at root this conflict.

However, a second version of the natural resource theory argues that it is "grievances" over the distribution of profit made from the natural resources that are the root cause of conflict and not greed. For example, "when natural resource wealth is seen as more unjustly distributed than other wealth-as has been claimed in Sierra Leone and Nigeria" (Berdal and Malone, 2000, pp. 511–512). In this case, it is the grievance that arises from the lack of benefits from the natural resources that inspire people to rise up against the State and not greed on the part of the rebels as those in favour of the greed theory claim. Furthermore, there are grievances over

"environmental conflict", for example, Homer-Dixon (1991 and 1994) examines the likelihood of: (1) international "simple scarcity" conflicts over water, forests, fishing, and agricultural land; (2) "group-identity" conflicts triggered by population movements; and (3) "deprivation" conflicts caused by relative depletion of economic resources to illustrate how profit made from these resources can cause conflicts. Nevertheless, those who argue for greed find that, "a flagrant grievance is to a rebel movement what an image is to a business" (Collier, 2007, p. 24). That is to say, the rebels just want to have a good publicity by implying they are aggrieved from lack of equal distribution of the natural resource. Their real motives are to lay hands on the natural resources and profit from them. Therefore, a conflict resolution based on the satisfaction of BHNs should not forget to attend to the issue of greed and grievances over profit made from communal resources to enable a complete resolution of the conflict. There is one more theory that is applicable to the types of conflict examined in this book, the Clash of Civilisation theory.

1.4 The clash of civilizations as the root cause of conflict

Huntington's "Clash of Civilisations" (1993; 1996) hypothesis has recently been revived in the wake of the 11 September 2001 catastrophe. It has been argued that the root cause of modern conflict is not political or economic but the clash of cultures. Huntington (1993, p. 22) in his work "The Clash of Civilizations" suggested that "the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economical. The great divisions among humankind and dominating source of conflict will be culture". He postulates:

> *The clash of civilisations will dominate global politics; Nation states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflict of global politics will*

> *occur between nations and groups of different civilisations. The fault lines between civilisations will be the battle lines of the future* (Huntington, 1993, p. 22).

Thus, following Huntington, western civilisation is at war with other civilisations from the Arab, African, and Asian worlds. Huntington (1993, pp. 23–24) defined civilisation to mean, "a cultural entity, villages, regions, ethnic groups, nationalities, religious groups, all have distinct cultures at different levels of cultural heterogeneity". The difference in these cultures is the root cause of modern conflicts; people want independence and self-determination.

Following the concept of cultural fault lines and ethnic awareness-civilisation, others have argued that this concept of clash of civilisation is essentially ethnic nationalism. Muller (2008, p. 21) in his work "Us and Them" calls this civilisation "the enduring power of ethnic nationalism". Muller (ibid.) argues that people think about their nation states in two ways:

> *[First,] all people who live within a country's borders are part of the nation, regardless of their ethnic, racial, or religious origins, [second, that] the core of the ethnonationalist idea is that nations are defined by a shared heritage, which usually includes a common language, a common faith, and a common ethnic ancestry.*

Therefore, ethno-nationalist groups experience inequality and lack of upward mobility and since they speak the same language, they decide to demand their own state (ibid.). The people want their own state because "they would be the masters, dominating politics, staffing the civil service, and controlling commerce" (ibid.). Therefore, conflict resolution in this

situation is based on the creation of more states or at least partitioning—allowing ethnic groups to have more power over their destiny.

However, other political scholars oppose this argument and argue that ethnic nationalism can only lead to the creation of more States, for example, in Nigeria we would need at least 250 States to satisfy the strong ethnic groups which appear unsustainable. Therefore, they contend that the root cause of ethnic conflict is bad State institutions. For example, Habyarimana, Humphreys, Posner and Weinstein (2008, p. 138) write that in Muller's argument about the role of ethnic nationalism breaking up European States, he:

> *[O]verlooks the peaceful consolidation that has resulted from the ability of diverse groups-the Alsatians, the Bretons, and the Provencals in France; the Finns and the Swedes in Finland; the Genoese, the Tuscans, and the Venetians in Italy-to live together. By failing to consider the conflicts that did not happen, Muller may have misunderstood the dynamics of those that did.*

In other ways, Muller does little analysis of the root causes of those conflicts that have led ethno-nationalist groups who break away from their former European States. Moreover, as to Muller's position that what drives ethnic nationalism is the "enduring propensities of the human spirit"—inherent inclination towards our kin. His critics demonstrate how studies show that people respond just as generously to the needs of others, as well as the needs of their own, when they know the needs of the other. Therefore, they conclude that political coalitions formed along ethnic lines are not necessary because people care more for their own, but simply because it may be easier to collaborate with their ethnic peers to achieve collective goals (Habyarimana, Humphreys, Posner, and Weinstein, 2008,

p. 139). Therefore, the problem is not people; it is the institutions of the State and the lack of justice that exists within the State. Habyarimana, Humphreys, Posner, and Weinstein (2008, p. 139) argue what people want is justice and peace. However, people may work along ethnic lines because they expect their kin to discriminate in their favour, but such reciprocity is a protection against being cheated rather than an "inner propensity of human spirit".

Therefore, what drives people to work with their ethnic kin is the belief that one is more likely to get fairness and justice in the distribution of wealth generated in the State by working with their ethnic kin. For these critics then the solution is improving State institutions so that there would be justice and fairness. People would no longer seek their own State. Hence, we would maintain that the theory on the Clash of Cultures is compatible with the HNT as it corresponds to the frustration of the BHN of distributive justice—the need that resources belonging to a group are fairly distributed to all members (Marker, 2003). Nonetheless, in multi-communal conflicts, this Clash of Cultures needs to be accounted for in conflicts such as the Boko Haram case in Nigeria (Chapter Five). Therefore, in applying the HNT for conflict resolution, one needs to account for the role of religion, natural resources, and cultural differences in multi-ethnic and multi-religious communities like Nigeria. The HNT and these other theories guide us in the study of Fr. Francis Libermann's "Project for the Blacks".

However, since Nigeria is a postcolonial country, we also need postcolonial theory in this endeavour, to which we now turn.

1.5 Post-colonial theory

> *Post-colonialism challenges and rejects hierarchal systems of power which enable or result in some people within a community or country having access to power, wealth and privilege, whilst others are disenfranchised and in effect treated as non-persons or non-subjects* (Pears, 2010, p. 134).

There is a set of theories, literary techniques, and approaches that subscribe to the term "post-colonialism". All of them emerged in the 1980s as particular methodologies concerned with understanding and analysing hierarchal power or rule and developing independence and challenging dependency. Post-colonialism's starting point is colonialism and imperialism and the effects they have on the people who were colonised. For example, these theorists point out that the Europeans romanticised colonialism as leading to democratic systems in the countries or places that were colonised and as producing societies with equity and justice. However, this did not happen in these States or nations, as Angie (2010, p. 134) writing on post-colonialism in her work *Doing Contextual Theology*, states:

> *In gaining liberation from the European colonisers the (now clearly) idealistic expectation that countries would move automatically to democratic systems of governance in which equality and justice were basic guiding factors simply did not happen. "Foreign" oppressors were often replaced with other oppressors in relatively unstable situations in which different tribal, ethnic or political groups would be constantly challenging if not engaging in military action*

> *against each other to secure power through coups and establishing dictatorships.*

For example, Great Britain colonised Nigeria from the 1900s to 1959. Nigeria gained independence in 1960 and became a republic in 1963, but fell to military dictatorship in 1966. In 1967, Nigeria went to civil war, which lasted until 1970. For more than 28 of the 54 years of Nigeria's independence, military dictators have ruled the country. Neither did Nigeria benefit much from civil leadership for the remaining 26 years. Despite being the fifth largest exporter of crude oil in the world, the majority of its 170 million people live in poverty, on an income of less than one US Dollar a day. And yet it appears its political leaders earn salaries that are much higher than that earned by the president of the United States, one of the richest nations in the world. This failure of leadership is the result of the colonial process which disarticulated community leadership with its own people in Nigeria. Moreover, the colonisers arrived not only as civilians; they also brought religious missionaries who undermined indigenous beliefs development, as well.

Therefore, from the perspective of religion, civilisation, the colonisers and the colonised, Robert (2003, p. 20), in his book *Post-colonialism: A Very Short Introduction* provides a helpful theorising, that post-colonialism:

> *Starts from the premise that those in the west, both within and outside the academy, should take such other knowledges, other perspectives, as seriously as those of the west… seeks to change the terms and values under which we all live. You can learn it anywhere if you want to. The only qualification you need to start is to make sure that you are looking at the world not from above, but from below.*

Thus, studying theology or religion and civil society for conflict resolution is not based on dogma or canons, but on the relationships that we have on the ground with other people. It is not based on the theory that Christianity or Islam is the true religion; or that Western nations are more civilised societies; or that people from other religions have to convert to Christianity or Islam. Thus, through the domination of one religion over another, other nations should look upon Western nations. It is about genuine religion which respects all human beings as equals who are created by God, and which therefore, seeks the well-being of one another in the practice of religion.

With respect to Christianity, Sugirtharajah (2003, pp. 19–23), in *Postcolonial Reconfigurations: An Alternative Way of Reading the Bible and Doing Theology*, suggests that key Biblical texts on the missionary journeys of Paul as in Acts 13–14; 15, 40–18, 22; 18, 22–21, 16 need postcolonial critique. These texts addressing non-Christians as heathens, helped in the understanding, planning, and organisation of the colonising missionaries in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This being the case, Sugirtharajah (2003, p. 23) argues the model, "supports the romanticised view of the civilised West taking Christianity to so-called heathen lands to civilise and enlighten them, for which, of course, they should be grateful". This is no longer tenable. Therefore, Christianity should incorporate a strong sense of multiple Christian identities and/or human subjectivity and should reject any hegemonic Christian notions of a global Christianity such that it should be challenging universalising tendencies in Christian scholarship (Pears, 2010, p. 164). In this sense, postcolonial theology asks, whether it is necessary for Christian missionaries to be anywhere in the world claiming that they are spreading the kingdom of God. This is especially pertinent where missionaries may be in alliance with the unjust political powers that control people's lives.

For example, on the subject of the subordination of women, Dube (2006, p. 154), in her article "Rahab Says Hello to Judith: A Decolonising Feminist Reading", writes on what the postcolonial feminist must do:

> *While a decolonising feminist biblical hermeneutics must critique both patriarchy and imperialism in the available world scriptures, it also needs to liberate itself from the bondage of patriarchal and imperial texts whose liberative power comes as crumbs that fall from the master's table.*

Consequently, postcolonial feminism insists that the liberation of women is not a matter of charity; rather it is the right of women to enjoy freedom as men can. Furthermore, postcolonial theology sees ethnicity as a child of racism—the discrimination of one race against another for the purpose of allocating resources and services. As Liew (2005, p. 151) in her study, "Margins and (Cutting-) Edges: On the (II) Legitimacy and Intersections of Race, Ethnicity, and (Post) Colonialism" concludes:

> *It should be clear … [race as in racism/ethnicity] have to do with the issue of knowledge and power ... not only the use of knowledge [and power] to exercise (racial and colonial) power; it also involves the (racial and colonial) power to limit access to knowledge.*

Hence, any religion that is aligned with political power frustrating the satisfaction of BHNs for its people is not genuine religion as argued for in this book. Therefore, we apply this understanding of post-colonialism to conflicts in Nigeria to show that ethnicity and religion serve the purpose of allocating power and services and to highlight how some ethnic and religious groups seek dominance in Nigeria. Postcolonial theology, according to Pears (2010, p. 165):

> *Calls on all people to examine, subvert and undermine all systems of dominance which watch over the realities of people's lives and subjectivity. All power differentials, whatever their origin and whatever systems underpin and perpetuate them, need to be challenged.*

Hence, we examine religions in Nigeria and invite them to action. As Mwaura (2009, p. 29), in her work "Human Identity and the Gospel of Reconciliation*:* Agenda for Mission Studies and Praxis in the 21st Century: An African Reflection", suggests:

> *[Religious groups] must be intrusive by seeking to intervene against societal and governmental practices that violate human dignity … be part of the decision making processes through lobbying and advocacy together with other people of good will especially in the Civil Society.*

This implies genuine religions must empower its followers to challenge unjust structures. For example, Christianity must be Christ like, who we recall on four different occasions after curing people, says to them, "Your faith has saved you". He says this to the woman with the haemorrhage (Mk 5, 34), the blind Bartimaeus (Mk 10, 52), the sinful woman (Lk 7, 50) and the foreign leper of the 10 lepers (Lk 17, 19). In all these cases, salvation means "shalom"—that is, creation and rightful relationships restored for these individuals. Jesus acknowledged that it is the action of the people that brings them salvation, empowering them. Christ is doing theology from below as opposed to theology from above. We should follow his example.

1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter on theoretical framework, we have examined the human needs theory (HNT), to answer its question on the source of conflict in a society like Nigeria, whose diagnoses on social conflicts is that institutions and social norms frustrate people's basic human needs (BHNs) leading to social conflict. Therefore, institutions and social norms need to change and adopt processes that are for the satisfaction of people's BHNs, otherwise people are not going to yield to social controls. As such, conflicts will remain unresolved in such cases. Nevertheless, the HNT does not deal sufficiently enough with other sources that can be contributing factors in social conflicts. Therefore, we examined other theories on the root causes of conflict, such as religions, greed, grievances, ethnicity and the clash of cultures. These theories, we argued, can be accommodated into conflict resolution based on the satisfaction of BHNs once acknowledged as contributing to a conflict. Notwithstanding, we argued that in themselves, these other factors are boundary markers or satisfiers—means by which people seek to satisfy their BHNs and not the root causes of social conflict. Additionally, we examined postcolonial theories because our book is concerned with a post-colonial society and it is examining a faith-based person—Fr. Francis Libermann who worked alongside colonial agents. Therefore, this chapter leads us to the next one, a background study, beginning with the historical Roman Catholic mission context which postcolonial theology invites us to critique and we see the context in which Fr. Francis Libermann presents his "Project for the Blacks".

Chapter Two: Background Study

2.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at the historical background of Fr. Francis Libermann whose "Project for the Blacks" in the nineteenth century addressed the conflict between black and white people. In doing so, we wish to understand how he acquired the virtues of humility, simplicity, gentleness, and charity that he used in his work with the black population. We want to see what lessons we can learn from his project and apply them to the conflicts in Nigeria. Therefore, we examine Francis's Jewish background, Jacob's (Francis') family background, the Christianisation of Jacob Libermann, why Jacob Libermann became a Christian, Lazarus Libermnn's reaction to Jacob's conversion, Francis (Jacob) Libermann's illness (Epilepsy), his invitation to a "Project for the Black" and Francis' acceptance of the "Project for the Blacks". Francis' project is a missionary one. Therefore, we will first present a brief historical review of the Roman Catholic Christian mission that gives a contextual background to Francis's project.

2.1 Background to the Roman Catholic Christian Mission

Postcolonial theology criticises Christian missions because it was part and parcel of spreading European civilisation: the conquests of other peoples, taking their lands and making them Christians because they were thought to be unbelievers. These forced conversions are historically exemplified by the Inquisition in the Catholic state of Spain, especially in its hostility to Jews and its suspicion of Jews who converted to Roman Catholicism. Muslims, too, had to be converted or face extermination (Stanley, 2009, p. 88). In the second phase, the Spanish State, as part of

Christendom, crossed over to the Indies, where they captured members of the indigenous population there and entered them into forced labour. Spain did this, in order to get rich while they also made the indigenous population convert to Christianity.

Spaniards debated the justification of these wars and in order to manage them, the doctrine of the Just War, founded in St Augustine, was revived. Roman Catholic canon lawyers wanted to "establish limits within which war could justifiably be waged and to penalise participants in wars that transgressed those limits" (Brundage, 1991, p. 73, as cited in Ruston, 2004, p. 72). These lawyers spelled out what justifiable wars were and how they should be conducted. These "were restricted to the correction of an injustice, including self-defence, while certain targets (e.g. non-combatants), weapons (e.g. crossbows) and times (e.g. Lent) were declared illegal" (Brundage, 1991, p. 76). This meant an unjust aggressor would forfeit the benefit of war: "the right of a ruler to make war against another, the right of defence against attack, the property rights and damages resulting from a war, the right to booty, and rights of immunity" (Ruston, 2004, p. 72). The debate moved to when and where one could wage war and take up people as slaves or war booty.

The debate centred around two arguments for waging war against non-Christians outside European States. One argument concerned waging war on non-religious groups. Ruston (2004, p. 72) writes about its roots:

> *Aristotelian humanists of the Renaissance, for whom the uncivilised, "barbarian" Indians were exactly the kind of people the philosopher had in mind when he made his remarks in the Politics on natural slaves. A Christian prince would be justified in subduing them by war and, for their own good, make them servants of natural masters.*

This argument helped justify the Spaniards' conquering the Indies and taking the Indians as slaves. The Spaniards were natural masters and the Indians natural slaves. From the HNT perspectives, the Indians were denied the basic human need (BHN) of identity to have a sense that they are strongly related to others and the world, and that it is recognised as legitimate and equal with other identities such as Europeans (Marker, 2003). Rather, Europeans argued that the Indian slaves should be grateful for being saved from eternal damnation.

A second, religious argument "came from the upholders of the universal temporal power of the pope, for whom the Spanish crown was the vehicle of God's historical purposes in suppressing sin and spreading Christian rule on earth" (Ruston, 2004, p. 72). According to this group, the pope was right in giving the newly discovered lands across the Atlantic to the Spanish King in 1493. This group argued that "since the coming of Christ his followers had exclusive rights to the exercise of power and jurisdiction on this earth" (Brundage, 1991, p. 122). And since the pope is the Vicar of Christ on earth, "Unbelievers were *de jure* and *de facto* subjects to the Church and had no just *dominium*, i.e. no independent rights to their lands or possessions" (Ruston, 2004, pp. 73–74). Thus, the whole world was under the control of the pope and he had the power to declare war on unbelievers. One finds evidence here that Christianity was part of the colonial apparatus for colonising other people as suggested by post-colonial theory, and perhaps was at the root of this conflict.

Moreover, two further views asserted the powers of the pope to declare war on unbelievers. One held that "unbelievers who do not recognise the dominion of the church may be lawfully invaded, according to the passage 'All power is given to me in heaven and earth' (Matt. 28:18)" (Brundage, 1991, p. 74). Therefore, war of this kind was not just

right but also holy, confirming that they were religious wars. The second view was related to Pope Innocent IV (1243–54):

> *Unbelievers do exercise true dominium, and they may not be attacked unless they have done some wrong. In the latter case the pope holds authority over them de jure, and war can be declared against them to regain territories once Christians, or because they commit sins against the natural law* (Ruston, p. 73).

A document called the *requerimiento,* which was based on this doctrine and authored by a famous Spanish lawyer, Juan Lopez Rubio, was to be read to the Indians before attacking them. Ruston (2004, pp. 74–75) writes that the document:

> *[B]egan with a brief history of the world, declaring that the entire human race, descended from the first couple and now divided into many nations, has been put by God under the care of St Peter "to be Lord and Superior of all the men in the world", that all should obey him, including Christians, Moors, Jews and people of every other belief; likewise his successors elected to the pontificate, "till the end of the world". One of these pontiffs (Alexander VI) gave the "islands and Tierra-firme" to the King and Queen of Spain and their successors, as attested in the documents, "which you can see if you wish".*

The Indians had time to examine and reflect on the document, leading to two choices: conversion or face war. To wit, "we shall do you all the mischief and damage that we can and it will be their [your] fault, not that of the Spaniards. A notary standing by, was then asked to give a signed account of the proceedings, as a witness" (Ruston, 2004, pp. 74–75). It is

arguable that greed and a clash of culture and religion were at the root of this conflict in order to plunder the natural resources—their land and hold people into slavery. Additionally, the Indians were denied the BHNs of identity and self-esteem. However, the system of justified war validated war against the Indians.

Nonetheless, not everybody in the church agreed with this doctrine. For example, Salamanca Francisco Vitoria, the Dominican theologian from Spain, in his work, *The Power of the Church* (1532) disputes those "who are so carried away by the solicitude and care for the papacy that they believe all kings and other temporal rulers to be no more than vicars or representatives of the Roman pontiff, mere ministers, as it were, of papal power" (Ruston, 2004, p. 74). Vitoria argues it is not true and states:

> *The pope has no dominion in the lands of the infidel, since he has power only within the Church … Unbelievers have true dominion, since the Apostle teaches that even the faithful must pay them tribute (Rm 13, 6). As for the theologians who claim that all temporal power derives from the pope in Rome, "I believe their argument to be no more than a wilful twisting of the evidence and made in obsequious flatter of the papacy". The pope "has no dominion … and therefore cannot give any"* (ibid.).

Vitoria based his theology on the creation story in Genesis that all things created by God are naturally good, which is also what is defined as genuine religion in this book. Moreover, man has a special place within creation: he is "*l'orbis princeps"*, made in the image of God. Thus "all men by natural law are equal and no one is master or superior to the other by natural law" (Vendemiati, 1989 (Moloney, 2010, p. 12)). Thus, the Native Americans had rights "as if they were natives of Seville" (ibid.). He was

very clear on the freedom of the person, stating that "Man was created in freedom. In the marvellous state of innocence no one was, in fact, master of the other and no one was slave of anyone" (ibid.). He rejected Aristotle's teaching on slavery by holding that, "Men are not born slaves, but free" (ibid). Nevertheless, given the time, Vitoria defended slavery based on positive human law, as "slaves are those who sell themselves for indebtedness or prisoners captured in a just war" (ibid.). Nonetheless, he went on to say, "it is not a total possession of the person by other people: it limits itself to a benefit of services" (ibid.). Consequently, Pope Paul III, on 29 May 1537, addressed an apostolic letter to the Cardinal Archbishop of Toleado under "the seal of the Fisherman" questioning slavery. Additionally, on 22 April 1639, Pope Urban VIII addressed another, more extended, letter to the collector *Jurium* of the Apostolic Chamber of Portugal.[7] These letters condemned the slave trade in the Native Americans. However, the slave trade in Africa was not condemned. At the height of the slave trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Roman Catholic Church adopted a tactic of silence regarding the plight of the black slave trade, while the slave trade in the American Indians was denounced. Instead, the Church was concerned with the conversion of African slaves to Christianity and it feared that the slaves would be sold to so-called heretics. From the HNT perspective, it is arguable that the African was denied two important BHNs, that is, identity and freedom—to

[7] In these letters, an especially severe reprimand is targeted at those that "would presume and to reduce in servitude Indians of west or south, to sell them, to buy them, to Exchange them, to give them, to separate them from their wives and children, to despoil their liberty in any manner whatsoever, to keep them in slavery; as also to counsel, under any pretext, to favour, to encourage and to co-operate with those that do these things, or to say and to teach that it is permitted, or to cooperate in any manner to what is indicted above" (Coulon, 1995 (Moloney, 2005, p. 4)).

be free from physical, political or civil restriction and to be allowed to make personal choices in all aspects of their life (Marker, 2003). This is the condition faced by black people in Africa and elsewhere blacks were held slaves, and it is the context in which Fr. Francis Libermann introduced his "Project for the Blacks". The next section analyses the historical background of Fr. Francis Libermann in order to ascertain his motives for the "Project for the Blacks".

2.2 Background of Francis Libermann

> *Would it not be injustice on God's part to choose only one people from the whole world, to enlighten them and reveal to them the true principles of religion, while leaving all the others in ignorance and idolatry? … From all this I come to the conclusion that what God requires of us is to recognise Him, to be just and humane* (ND, 1956, I, pp. 51–52).

This quote is fundamental to understanding the life and works of Fr. Francis Libermann (1802–1852) because it expresses his belief in God, his desire for justice, his belief in the equality of all peoples, and in the role of religion in achieving peace; what he calls "saving souls". This phrase really means the salvation of the person in the original sense, derived from the Latin word *salus*, that is, the well-being of the person, body and soul. We would argue that from the HNT perspective, it is belief in the satisfaction of BHNs. Since for Francis, God does not choose a particular people, but He loves all peoples and requires us to do the same—to love all peoples and work for their well-being. This is defined in this book as genuine religion (see definition of terms). The black race and the white race are brothers and sisters because we are all children (human beings) of God. In this way, we bring peace to the world. We see the same expression today in

a dialogue between the Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff and the Dalai Lama on what true religion is:

> Boff*: Your holiness, what is the best religion?*
>
> Dalai*: The best religion is the one that gets you closest to God. It is the one that makes you a better person.*[8]

Similarly, Fr. Francis Libermann concludes that "what God requires of us is to recognise Him, to be just and humane" (ND, 1956, I, pp. 51–52). In our consideration, this attitude is what led Francis to acquire the religious virtues of humility, simplicity, gentleness, and charity; virtues that are irrespective of any religion, be it Christian, Jewish, Muslim, or Buddhist. Francis, born a Jew by name Jacob Libermann, became a Christian and founded a congregation, the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary, which is dedicated to helping the indigenous population, "the abandoned" as he called them. He merged his congregation with the Congregation of the Holy Spirit which was already working with black people in the colonies—a decision that did not go down well with some of his members because some Holy Spirit members were known to collaborate with the colonialists and slave masters rather than with the black slaves.

So who was this man? What aspects of his personal background inspired him to work for people who were colonised? In the next section, we refer to Francis as Jacob Libermann, as at this stage of his life, he had not yet converted to Roman Catholicism.

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[8] A brief dialogue between a Brazilian theologian Leonardo Boff and the Dalai Lama, entitled "Your Religion is Not Important" can be accessed at: <http://www.authorstream.com/Presentation/KGR1125-397013-religion-important-spiritual-inspirational-ppt-powerpoint/>.

2.2.1 His Jewish background

In this section, we illustrate that when Jacob Libermann's basic human needs (BHNs) are met in the family, he remains faithful to Judaism, but when his BHNs become unmet, he converted to Christianity, under the influence of the philosopher Emile Rousseau and in a different social environment from that of Judaism. However, Jacob the Jew, Philosopher and Christian acquired the religious virtues of humility, simplicity, gentleness, and charity, by which he is personally transformed and meets his BHNs. He used these virtues in planning the "Project for the Blacks", which mostly focuses on the BHNs of the indigenous population in Africa. Jacob Libermann (1802–1852) lived 25 years as a Jew practicing Judaism, and 25 years as a Christian.

2.2.2 Jacob's family background

Jacob Libermann was born on 12 April 1802 to the family of Lazarus Libermann and Leah Haller. The couple married in 1788 and had five sons. They lived in the Jewish quarter of Saverne, where his father was a Rabbi for the local community. The French Revolution of 1789 brought with it the lifting of the restrictions on Jews in French society. With this liberty, Jacob's elder brother, Samson, left for studies in Mayence in 1815 to take on rabbinic studies, but later dropped out and, instead, chose medical studies. Samson graduated in 1820, got married in 1821 and was secretly baptised in the Roman Catholic Church in 1825. His father Lazarus Libermann reproached him for his conversion and disowned him when the news broke later that year. The reaction of Lazarus is understandable viewed from the context of the background to the Roman Catholic mission, how Christianity mistreated the Jews and was suspicious of Jews converted to Catholicism. How could a Rabbi find it easy to accept his son's conversion in this context? Therefore, he disowned Samson. Was this to

serve as a deterrent for the other children? If so, it did not work as, indeed, HNT theory claims, threats and deterrence do not work in situations of frustration of the satisfaction of BHNs (Burton, 1998). Rather, Lazarus Libermann made religion the root cause of conflict in his family by frustrating the BHNs of Jacob, as he began to miss his brother, pointing to one of the BHNs: love—to maintain strong personal relations with one's family (Marker, 2003). Disharmony began to reign in the family of Lazarus.

However, with Samson becoming a Christian, Lazarus Libermann pinned his hope on Jacob to succeed him as a Rabbi. Jacob dedicated himself to the study of the Torah, *Mishna,* and Talmud. He was forbidden to read anything other than the Bible. His father was his tutor until he was 22 years old. Jacob received good leadership and mentorship from his father and, as long as he lived with the family, he was fine and maintained his religion, in the sense of believing, trusting, and having confidence in himself, in other people, and in God. He maintained his fidelity to Judaism and he lived in some peace.

However, Jacob left home for Metz to attend a Talmudic school; he received a cold reception from those teachers to whom he had been entrusted by his father. Being shy and timid, Jacob felt deeply forsaken, but he encountered less hostility from the liberal Jews. The attitude of his teachers further frustrated his human need of love—the need to be loved by others in order to form a group identity. He lost some more sense of peace, adding to the absence of his brother Samson, now a Christian, and began to lose his faith in Judaism.

Jacob's shift to Christianity began with the study of the French language, which (along with German) the faithful Jew was not allowed to study. Experiencing hostility from his Talmudic teachers, Jacob sought help and friendship from Jews who had converted to Roman Catholicism.

This friendship was an act of peace-building for Jacob. With this contact, Jacob, who had criticised his brother Samson for converting to Christianity, started seeing things differently. He read the Hebrew translation of the Gospels, which deeply struck him, but he was put off by all the miracles Jesus worked (Burke, 1998). However, he enjoyed the works of the philosopher Emile Rousseau including "Profession of faith of the Vicar of Savoy", leading him in 1826, to write to Samson:

> *God gave us power to think. If one were to let the mind vegetate … to surrender blindly to the bonds of religion, how would such a one differ from the brute beasts? Religion would turn him into what a beast is by nature. The reason why I have been given this gift is so that I might use it* (Burke, 1998, p. 15).

While Jacob was defining genuine religion, we also see the influence of Rousseau on him, as Rousseau (Coulon, 2006 (Maloney, 2010, p. 23)) writes:

> *[T]he God whom I adore is not a God of darkness, he didn't endow me with understanding to forbid me the use of it ... if I use well the immediate faculties that God gives me, I will teach myself to know, to love him, to love his works, to want the good he wants, and fulfil for his pleasure all my duties on earth.*

Therefore, this writing is not original to Jacob; he is using Rousseau questioning the unexamined religion—Christianity and Judaism. For him, religion has to be examined by use of reason, so that it will make us better people. This use of reason and his experience of unmet BHNs, we argue in the book, leads Jacob (Francis) to design a religious project for black people that addresses their BHNs—recognising black people as a group

with a distinct identity, language, and culture that must be respected. A people to be loved as children of God as indeed Rousseau says: to fulfil God's pleasure on Earth. Nevertheless, for the time being, we examine Jacob's personal crisis that continued.

2.2.3 Christianisation of Jacob Libermann

The crisis created in Jacob in Metz, the unmet BHNs for safety—fear and anxiety, and freedom—free from physical restrictions and be allowed to make personal choices (Marker, 2003) led him to ask his father's permission to go to Paris to resolve his identity crisis, it seems. He moved to Paris where he met a Jew who had converted to Christianity: David Drach (1791–1865), son-in-law of the Grand-Rabbi of Paris, a key member of the Central Consistorial of Paris. Drach was an outstanding academic who was teaching Hebrew in the Seminary of St. Stanislaus. He was a Jew who became a Roman Catholic in 1823. His good relationship with Jacob was a form of satisfying his frustrated BHNs, thus becoming a Roman Catholic and eventually setting his eyes towards the priesthood. Drack arranged a place for Jacob to stay in the seminary. Jacob (ND, 1956, I, p. 65) narrates his experiences in the seminary which leads him to become a Roman Catholic:

> *The experience of deep loneliness in that room where a single skylight enlightened the day; the thought of being away from my family, from my friends and from my homeland, all this brought on a deep depression … It was then that I recalled the God of my fathers ... The Lord, who is near to all who call on Him from their hearts, heard my prayer ... Faith entered my heart and my mind ... I am truly astounded at the wonderful change that took place when the waters of Baptism flowed over my forehead.*

Jacob expressed the frustration of the human need of love: his "deep loneliness, being away from family, friends and home land" (ibid.). It is possible that his human need of identity is in doubt as well as learning French, a language different to Yiddish. He was changing his ideas from reading Rousseau and he is reading the New Testament of the Bible as opposed to the Talmud. It must have been traumatising for Jacob as he asked the question, who am I? And where am I? Thus, he decided to become a Christian in order for his unmet BHNs of identity, love, and cultural security to be met as he was exercising his human need of freedom. Christianity brought him peace because his friends and brothers were Christians.

Jacob Libermann was baptised as Francis Mary Paul Libermann on Christmas Eve, 1826 and was confirmed at Easter, the following year. He began to prepare for the priesthood for the diocese of Strasbourg and with the help of Mr. Drach, he was accepted into St. Sulpice Seminary. Nevertheless, one may question whether in doing so, Jacob Libermann was rejecting Judaism. This is an important question since we want to see his relevance to the situation in Nigeria where one may argue ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue are necessary conditions for the satisfaction of BHNs, leading to peace.

2.2.4 Why Jacob Libermann became a Christian

Francis rarely spoke of his Jewish background, which makes it difficult to find out his disposition towards Judaism. Nonetheless, his two comments in his work, "Commentary on the Gospel of Saint John" (1839) help us to examine his conversion. In a commentary regarding Judaism and Christianity, he (ND, 1956, p. 515) writes:

> *Basically there is only one shepherd, Our Lord. There cannot be any other true shepherd. In the minds of the Jews*

> *there was more than one shepherd as there was more than one fold. The prophets were seen to be shepherd for God had given them various laws. Thus, Moses was the shepherd of the Jews. The Gentiles were of the flock according to the Jews, being children of Noah. Noah was their shepherd. The Jews were the children of Abraham and of Moses and the Gentiles children of Noah. These denominations are still found even today in their books.*

When Francis writes, "[i]n the mind of the Jews" and "in their books", does it mean that by this point Francis no longer considered himself a Jew? Are Jewish books no longer his heritage? The language allows for the development of an "us and them" principle, an adversarial approach that does not help conflict resolution. We cannot conclude from this quote that he no longer considers himself a Jew, but it has raised the possibility. Nevertheless, he separated the two religions clearly, with Judaism as the old fold and Christianity as the new one. It seems the most important issue for Francis is the fact that the new fold has no distinctions and has only one shepherd. He (ND, 1956, p. 510) makes the point:

> *In the former Church represented by the Synagogue, generally speaking, there were no sheep that could come to it or be united with it. But Our Lord wished to establish a universal fold. He calls in all Gentiles and forms another fold. The new fold has its source in the first but now has its own existence and is not subject to what went before. The ancient fold was too small to embrace all the sheep and is terminated. The universality of the flock is now united in the fold that is formed by the Divine Shepherd Himself.*

This quote shows that Francis saw Judaism as something that was "terminated", finished, because it does not accommodate new sheep, i.e. people other than Jews. This new principle of Francis negated his former stand that all one needs is to be humane; one could be of any religion. Now, one needed Christianity and more than that, he seems to forget the hostility Christianity had towards Jews at the time. Therefore, Francis seemed to accept the hegemonic Christianity, as shown in the section on the background of the Roman Catholic mission, which led to servitude and not peace.

Nevertheless, this is Francis of 1839; he never worked to convert Jewish people in the second part of his life and rarely spoke about his Jewish background. This leaves us wondering about the converted Francis. Did he return to his former principles, which held that it does not matter which religion one belongs to? His godfather Drach worked to convert Jews to Christianity, but Francis never followed this line of action. Why then, did he work so hard to convert the indigenous population of Africa?

Perhaps, we can give Francis a benefit of the doubt and say that in the case of Judaism, he did not reject it completely, but in the case of the African population, he considered their belief systems to be unimportant. Therefore, given his time, he worked hard to convert them to the hegemonic Roman Catholic tradition. However, in the light of postcolonial theology, Francis is "looking at the world from above and not from below (Young, 2003, p. 20). He adopts a top-down system, rather than the bottom-up approach, as he put it, in his early life. Thus, Francis allied himself with an oppressive system and is not the best model for conflict resolution. We therefore cannot follow this approach of working for the conversion of others, instead of working for peace and justice. Francis' conversion presents difficulties for us today. Nevertheless, he was using his human need of freedom. And what would the reaction of his father be?

2.2.5 Lazarus Libermann's reaction to Jacob's conversion[9]:

Francis Libermann's father got the news of his conversion in early 1828; he wrote a "staggering letter which reproached him for his apostasy" (Coulon, 2006 (Maloney, 2010, p. 7)). Arguably, Francis's father took the view that his failure to adhere to Judaism was an abnormality (Morgenthau, 1985). However, Francis' replies, "but I am Christian" (Coulon, 2006

[9] What was happening in the Libermann family was widespread within the Jewish community. The Estates General's Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen in August 1789 gave Jews freedom and the Constitution of September 1790 restored full citizenship to the Jews in France. These steps made it possible for Jews to move out of the ghettos. It also meant that many abandoned the Torah, Talmud, and Jewish rites. Among those Jews who became Christians were David Drach, who helped Jacob in his journey towards priesthood; Edersheim, a Jewish academic, was ordained an Anglican priest; and Theodore Ratisbone (1802–1884) who was baptised in 1826, the same year as Jacob, and became a priest in 1830. However, Lazarus was a conservative Jew. In 1801 when Napoleon came to power in France, he convoked a Sanhedrin hoping that Jewish leaders would take the opportunity to integrate in French society. Lazarus Libermann was at the Grand Sanhedrin in Paris 1807. He was chosen as the Rabbi of Saverne to represent the Jews in their prefecture of Strasbourg. And he was among those Rabbis who stood their grounds and refused to join the majority of rabbis in carrying out the wish of Napoleon to integrate in French society. He and his minority vowed to continue in the old way. Nonetheless, the division among Jews made it possible for Napoleon to issue a decree that abolished the ghettos and he set up a consistory to appoint rabbis. Thus, the Jews were integrated officially into the French State. Lazarus did not accept this state of affairs, but his children did. His first five sons became Christians: Samson his eldest son in 1825, Jacob in 1826, David in 1837 and then Henoch and Samuel would follow later. It was only his daughter Esther who remained faithful to Judaism. The mother of these children died in April 1813 and Lazarus married again in June of the same year. He had two children from his second wife—Isaac and Sarah, both of whom remained faithful to Judaism. Isaac later became rabbi in the city of Nancy.

(Maloney, 2010, p. 7)). Francis does not see how being a Christian could be considered apostasy in Judaism. From the HNT perspectives, his father was frustrating his need of identity; therefore, his father's reproach caused pains to Francis, since he loved his family. Conversely, when Francis' brother Samson left the Jewish religion for the Christian faith, Francis (Amadeus, 1977, p. 25) reassured his brother of his continued love:

> *You seem to doubt my friendship for you since you have changed your religion. Even if I were most zealous for the synagogue, I could not stop being sincerely fond of my brothers. This attachment was bred in me from my infancy and has always been my delight and my happiness.*

Francis' "delight" and "happiness" lay in the fact that he was a Jew from birth, thus demonstrating his diverse background. Samson also remembered Francis' conversion as a "happy event. He (Francis) spoke of it in terms burning with charity and love" (Coulon, 2006 (Moloney, 2010, p. 6)). What was vital was the meeting of the unmet BHNs of love—maintaining strong personal relations with one's family and security, the need for stability and freedom from fear and anxiety, which Francis found in his brothers who were Christians. Francis acknowledged, "I liked my brothers a lot, and I suffered while foreseeing the isolation in which I was going to be with my father alone" (Coulon, 2006 (Moloney, 2010, p. 12)). The suffering of Francis from these unmet BHNs is perhaps what led him to develop a programme to address the BHNs of the black population in Africa, including freed slaves, by easing their suffering; this idea is further developed below. However, the peace that Christianity brought Francis disappeared soon, as he became sick.

2.2.6 Francis Libermann's illness—Epilepsy

In the seminary, Francis was called to the minor orders in December 1828, and the following year was ordained sub-deacon. However, on the eve of his sub-diaconate ordination he had an epileptic attack in the presence of his spiritual director. This meant he would receive no higher orders; because of his ill health he would remain at the level of sub-diaconate and not priesthood. Francis stayed in St. Sulpice until 1831, and during which time he had five epileptic attacks. He was then moved into the Junior Sulpician house at Issy near Paris, where he helped with bursary work for six years.

There, Francis won the approval of the students and the director, Fr. Mollivault, who recommended him to the Eudist Congregation. In July 1837 Francis joined the novitiate at Rennes with enthusiasm. But Francis did not get along well with the Superior of the Congregation, Fr. Louis de la Moriniere, and this generated many problems amongst the novices, with whom Francis worked. He continued to suffer, and his epilepsy returned. Francis (Burke, 1998, p. 19) entered into depression and wrote:

> *In sincere truth I'm a useless instrument in the Church of God. Here I find myself like a piece of decayed wood. I am like one paralysed who wants to move but cannot. Yes! I have projects, and great ones but all to no effect. All that I can hope for now is a Christian death.*

Francis' health grew worse. In February 1838, he had a major attack in the presence of the novices and is told to forget the priesthood. However, Francis' response was that he could not "re-enter the world" and that he hoped God will want to provide his fate (Ernoult and Coulon 2010 (Moloney, 2010, p. 9)). Francis was put off by the miracles of Jesus before his conversion. He was now looking for a miracle from the same God. He

was humbled and was acquiring the religious virtue of humility and love. Perhaps he recalled the story of the leper in Matthew 8, 1–4 in which Christ meets the human need of personal fulfilment, granting good health as demanded by the man with leprosy. “Lord, if you are willing you can cleanse me” (Mt 8, 2). And the Lord, “Jesus stretched out his hand and touches him saying, ‘I am willing. Be cleansed’” (Mt 8, 3). Just as the leper at that time was considered “unclean” and confined to solitude, condemned and separated from society and from religion, Francis also found himself alone. He was told to forget about ordination, on which the success of his personal fulfilment depended. However, just as the love and gentleness of Jesus, by touching and curing this leper from solitude and loneliness, restored him to his community. As Jesus was saying to him; his is not excluded and raising his human need of self-esteem; Jesus was not afraid of becoming unclean by touching him and he accepted him as a brother. Jesus is simple, loving, and gentle towards the leper and once Francis was ordained a priest and restored to his community and commitment, he acts with humility, simplicity, gentleness, and charity. Like Jesus, Francis demonstrates in his programme that black and white people are his brothers. Francis’ conflicts with people and sickness did not cause him to change religion again after becoming a Christian and soon a visit from two old friends would eventually change his life.

2.2.7 Invitation to a “Project for the Blacks”

In the summer of 1838, Francis received an old friend—Frederic Le Vavasseur[10], from St. Sulpice Seminary. Le Vavasseur was a Creole from

[10] Le Vavasseur was born in Reunion (then Bourbon) in 1811. His parents were rich landowners and had slaves to work in their farms. Like most children of the settlers, he was sent abroad for studies. He had problems with the life of a student and had a

the island of Bourbon in the Indian Ocean (Reunion). He spent some time with Francis and explained to him the condition of the slaves in the colonies. Le Vavasseur's family owned slaves in Bourbon. The evangelisation of the slaves was of upmost concern for Le Vavasseur; he worked with another Seminarian, Eugene Tisserant, on this issue.[11] At the beginning, Francis was involved as an advisor, because he doubted the work would succeed. However, during his summer holiday in 1839, Francis became more closely involved, through Maxime de la Bruniere, a seminarian and leader of the group called "*L'Oeuvre des Noirs*" ("Work for the Blacks"). He explained to Francis that African people were "in a state of misery, ignorance and of corruption" (Ernoult and Coulon 2010 (Moloney, 2010, p. 16)). They had BHNs to be met, but even at this point, Francis was not convinced of the viability of the project.

2.2.8 Francis's acceptance of the "Project for the Blacks"

Francis Libermann, while performing a Novena of the Apostles Simon and Jude on 28 October 1839, had a religious experience. He hinted to his friend Le Vavasseur: "The Good Lord gave me a little light which I cannot share with you for the present. I prefer to let the experience ripen before God, so that if it should please His Divine Goodness, and His Beloved Son, the little spark might become a bright light" (ND, 1956, I, p. 661). And as Burke (1998, p. 21) writes, "The 'little spark' developed quickly, and six

breakdown at the *Ecole Polyechnique*. He began to study law, but again his health failed. Then, to the annoyance of his family, he entered St Sulpice seminary.

[11] Tisserant, was born in Paris 1814. His father had been governor of a province in the island of Haiti. His mother was born in Haiti. The family had to leave Haiti when it became independent from France in 1804. His mother was a very pious woman and was devoted to helping the poor. Eugene was admitted to St Sulpice, but was discontinued because of failure in the examinations. He entered a Cistercian monastery, but soon left it. He was readmitted to St Sulpice in 1836.

weeks later Francis set out for Rome to do something for the slaves". He went to Rome with the seminarian Maxime de la Bruniere, a promising recruit for the project, but who abandoned Francis in Rome because things were not working out. Francis, however, did not give up. He wrote to his brother Samson, saying: "I may be laughed at, despised, and even persecuted. Don't be afraid, don't worry. I assure you that I am the happiest man in the world, because, having nothing, I have God" (ND, 1956, II, p. 301). Francis was again showing signs of humility, simplicity, gentleness, and love in his life—he was at peace with himself. A few days after, he wrote to his confidant, Father Carbon: "I could not resist the burning desire that kept nagging me all the time to do something for the glory of Our Lord. The decision was that I should leave. I left" (ND, 1956, I, 676). The decision was irreversible; he had to do something to address the BHNs of African people, to bring them peace.

Francis left Rennes on 1 December 1839 for Rome and two days later, Pope Gregory XVI issued the Apostolic Constitution, *In Supremo Apostolatus,* which condemned the slave trade and slavery. Francis arrived in Rome on 6 January and, with the help of Drach, saw the Pope the following February. The Pope encouraged him in his bid to found a Congregation dedicated to the cause of African people. However, he was made to understand that he needed to be a priest in order to begin a new congregation. Fortunately, the Coadjutor Bishop of Strasbourg agreed to ordain Francis, and on 13 September 1841, he was ordained to priesthood, which enabled him to found the new congregation, the Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary for the "Project for the Blacks". The religious project aimed to address the BHNs of African people who were said to be "in a state of misery, ignorance and corruption". It took the concerted efforts of Le Vavasseur, Eugene Tisserant, Maxime de la Brunierre, Fr. Carbon,

Drach, Pope Gregory XVI, and the Bishop who ordained Francis for this project to start. We now turn to this project.

Chapter Three: Francis Libermann's Religious Programme for Conflict Resolution

3.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a brief history of the conflict between the white Europeans and the native black African population in the nineteenth century. It then presents the French State response to this conflict in which the African population are seen as being cursed and evil by nature. Finally, it analyses Fr. Francis Libermann's response to the conflict, namely his "Project for the Blacks". This analysis applies the theoretical framework developed in Chapter One in the context of Roman Catholic mission history. This chapter ends with a concluding analysis of these subjects.

3.1 The conflict between white Europeans and the black African population

> *The "negroes" were suitable for slavery because they were a degraded species ... The myth of Ham was gradually grafted on anthropology of the "negro": savage and barbarous, cannibalistic, lazy, polygamous, prone to human sacrifices and with no taste whatsoever for freedom* (Hurbon, 1990, p. 96).

The image of the "negro" or black person—from this quote is the result of prejudices formed about the black person during the slave trade from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. How did this come about? Firstly, the myth of Ham in the Bible was applied to the black race as a race cursed by God and as such one that could be enslaved. This happened, as Hurbon (1990, p. 96) suggests, because "the slave trade presupposes a general accord within the European nations between the church, the state,

the nobility and public opinion". However, this was a general consensus of the white man's politics; therefore, his description of the black person was also only a consensus rather than a knowledge-based account. It was a flagrant frustration of the satisfaction of the basic human needs (BHNs) of identity, self-esteem, and participation for the black population. It was created to hold the black person in servitude and to colonise him or her.

Secondly, throughout the slave trade, planters who lived in isolated places feared hostility from slaves, and the sudden death of some of them would be put down "to slave malevolence" (Walvin, 2007, p. 118). The structures that maintained slavery did not allow the possibility of an understanding between slave masters and slaves. For example, the slave masters were:

> *In the act of branding slaves, changing their names, mixing the races, making them lose all kinship, in short producing among them a cultural amnesia from which they emerged zombies, living dead totally subjected to the caprices and humours of their masters* (Hurbon, 1990, p. 94).

This treatment left slaves with no security, culture, identity, language, and love or freedom. In fact, they lived with no cultural memory—they were the "living dead". Thus, the slaves learned to do what they were told, but not to over-work themselves, doing just what was necessary to escape punishment. "All came together to produce that slavish mentality and style which infuriated slave owners yet made life work a little more tolerable for the slaves" (Walvin, 2007, p. 118). The slave masters hated the slaves. The work practice "was from sunrise to sunset and was enforced by the discipline of the whips, between 50 to 200 strokes were the penalty for the least negligence" (Hurbon, 1990, p. 94). Indeed, the punishment for a lazy or rebellious slave was "to apply a red-hot iron to the tender parts of the

slave, to tie him to stakes so that insects gnawed him to death, to burn him alive, to chain him, to set dogs or snakes at his heels, to rape *negresses*, and many such tortures, served above all to express absolute domination" (Walvin, 2007, p. 118). This shows the absolute power of the white European over the black slave person in this period. How could human beings behave normally in these conditions? There was a human limit to conform to such cruel institution, the needs of identity, self-esteem, freedom, and others that were frustrated, and had to be pursued one way or another (Burton, 1998).

Therefore, these treatments led to violent slave revolts. For example, in the 1790s slaves revolted across the Caribbean: Grenada, St Vincent, St Lucia, Jamaica, and Haiti. The Haiti revolt was the only successful one; it thus sent a warning sign to slave owners and colonisers. However, these revolts were a direct result of the French Revolution of 1789 and its emphasis on "the rights of man". These rights enabled the slave revolt in *St Domingue* in Haiti from 1791–1804, leading to Haiti being the first black nation outside of Africa in 1804. Nevertheless, things worsened for the slaves, because the violence between black people and white people, slaves and freed slaves, and colonial and the imperial forces completely destroyed the economic and social structure in *St Domingue*.

In Haiti, the British took advantage of the French departure by invading Haiti, in an attempt to make it their own, but they failed. The British Army lost heavily in this battle and so fear arose across Europe and resulted in more hatred towards the black slaves, which was extended to the entirety of the black population everywhere in the world. White abolitionists, those who favoured the abolition of slavery, were accused of causing the slave revolts. The European fears can be summarised in the writing of Byran Edwards, a prominent planter and campaigner, in *A History of Santo Dimingo,* where he wrote that slaves would "murder their

masters and plant the tree of Liberty on their graves" (Jennings, 1997, p. 92). These fears led to the conclusion that black people were savage, barbarous, cannibalistic, lazy, polygamous, and prone to human sacrifice with no taste for freedom. This was the conflict between the white Europeans and black people all over the world. How was this conflict going to be resolved? In trying to resolve it, two questions could not be avoided: was the black person by nature violent, and did the social structures that neglected the human needs of black people lead them to violence? France's response was to treat black people as being violent by nature.

3.2 The French State response

The response of the French State was that black people were violent by nature. We shall not examine the response in detail, but give the essentials just to show how the two questions on the origins of violence give rise to different approaches in conflict resolution. The whole aim of the French State's response to this issue is outlined in a letter by the Minister of Justice and Worship to the Bishops of France on 3 December 1839:

> *The work of the suppression of slavery, for so long demanded and so vainly called for up to now, is finally about to be accomplished; but liberty would be only a disastrous present for this black population of 3,000,000 souls widespread in our colonies, if the inspiration of religion doesn't teach it how to regulate its usage* (Delisle, 1995 (Moloney, 2005, p. 8.)).

Basically, the French State called the French Roman Catholic Church to indoctrinate slaves about to be freed; the real aim of the French State was to regulate the liberty of slaves and liberated slave—the black person. Burton (1998) helps us to understand what was happening when he states

that there is “an assumption hidden in the moral belief of ‘social consciousness’: there are those who are by nature and perhaps culture, immoral or antisocial, but they can be educated or coerced to behave as expected” (Burton, 1998, p. 5). Certainly, the black person was believed to be by nature immoral, savage, lazy, and barbarous and had no taste for freedom. Thus, the view was that religion could indoctrinate him to change these anti-social behaviours.

Furthermore, to demonstrate completely the French State’s belief that black people were violent by nature, on 24 December 1839, the French State gave a ministerial instruction on the principles to govern a new catechism called for and was going to pay the Roman Catholic Church of France to produce it for black people only:

> *His Majesty, on my proposal, has authorised the making and printing of a special Catechism destined to make the religious truths accessible to slaves, in teaching them in style simple and appropriate to the nature of their ideas, and to portray it to them in a manner especially designed to combat and destroy prejudices that prevent blacks from understanding morality and the necessity of work* (Delisle, 1995, p. 5).

However, who had prejudices against the other? Was it not the white person? This was a plan for peace but peace, for the white people and not the black people. For the black person, the objective was clearly to make him to work for “his master”, the white person, and not about the satisfaction of his BHNs of security, self-esteem, identity, freedom, and others. As Delisle (ibid.) confirms, rather than the church disseminating its dogma, the French State awarded a winning text (1,500 F) that must be sent to the minister of Marine to be examined conjointly with Fr. (abbé)

Fourdinier, Superior of the Society of the Holy Spirit which was to serve and assure a smooth transition towards a post-slavery society, and to guarantee the maintenance of the black population in work. The response of the French State was not to address the unmet BHNs of black people.

This was the State response, but Francis Libermann did not accept it, because he could not see how it would bring peace to black people. Why did Francis reject this plan? This book argues that because he combined his experience of how his needs were frustrated and met, his religious virtues of humility, simplicity, gentleness and love in action, coupled with the influence of the philosophy of Emile Rousseau; all of which helped him to see things differently and make his plan unique. His experiences and virtues helped him to refuse to accept that "there are those who are by nature and perhaps culture, immoral or antisocial, but they can be educated or coerced to behave as expected" (Burton, 1998, p. 5). The exclusive tutorship of his father and the disowning of his brother Samson for becoming a Christian did not stop Francis from converting to Christianity. Therefore, Francis held that social structures instigated violence among the black people. Indeed, his view are similar to the HNT (Burton, 1998; Max-Neef, 1992), arguing that it is the institution of slavery that needed to stop its inhuman treatment of the blacks. We now turn to Fr. Francis Libermann's response in the "Project for the Blacks".

3.3 Francis Libermann's response: The "Project for the Blacks"

3.3.1 Conflict analysis

In August 1846, Francis Libermann addressed a Memorandum (ND, 1956, VIII, pp. 222–277) to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda Fide regarding the "Project for the Blacks". In this project, Francis addressed the conflict between the white Europeans and local, colonised populations. He

analysed the root cause of the conflict by first approaching the people involved and attending to their needs and feelings. He discussed the problems/issues, such as the differences between the white Europeans and the local black populations, and then commented on the process or structures by which the conflict came to be and how it could be resolved.

In his analysis, Francis deconstructed the notion that black people are a cursed race:

> *When we look at the condition of the black people anywhere in the world today, we may be tempted to think that they are cursed by God from the outset and oppressed beneath a burden of ignorance and suffering ... And yet, they are made in the image of God like all other people, and they are ready to welcome the gift of Faith that they have never known* (ND, 1956, VIII, p. 223).

Here, he attacked the myth of the son of Ham, who is said to be under a curse in the Bible, now taken to refer to the African black person. On the contrary, Francis asserted that black people are "made in the image of God like all other people". This is a faith-based augment for building peace; it is based on the creation stories of the Bible where God makes a deliberate decision: "Let us make man [and woman] in our image, in our likeness ... And God created human beings in his image; man and woman he created them" (Gn. 1, 26–27). This is the basis for equality of men and women, and people of all colours; it is also the basis for genuine religion argued for in this book, which also leads us to conceptualise human needs as being common to all human beings.

However, we cannot ignore the critique of postcolonial theology of European missionaries:

> *European "super powers" had colonised huge parts of the developing world and imposed not only political and economic control over those people colonised but also imposed cultural and religious belief systems. ... Indigenous peoples... came to invest in the belief systems and cultural ways of their colonisers* (Pears, 2010, p. 140).

For example, African beliefs that practiced equality of people, male and female, and the myth and practices associated with male and female divinities were destroyed by Christianity, as asserted by postcolonial theology. Indeed, Musa Dube (2002, p. 111) in "Postcoloniality, Feminist Spaces, and Religion," affirms:

> *[T]hat among the Igbo people of Nigeria, women used to enjoy certain economic and social privileges in terms of ownership of property and inheritance ... but the Christian church and the mission schools systematically condemned devotion to the goddess, such that the symbolic structures that bolstered women's self-esteem was shattered.*

So, what was the faith that the people have never known? As such, Francis' project was in alliance with the colonial master, as it maintained the oppression of black people and did not allow them to sustain their own indigenous systems of belief, and way of life satisfying the human need of cultural security.

Nevertheless, Francis (ND, 1956, VIII, pp. 225–226) contradicted the accusation that black people are barbaric by nature:

> *They are stupid, incompetent, heartless, thieves, incorrigible, corrupt and evil by nature, and so it is useless to try and do anything for them. But we cannot believe that*

so many people could be excluded in God's wisdom from the immense benefits of the Redemption.

Francis defended the black population from this inhuman argument by using the same principles with which he questioned God's choice of one religion over another in the case of Judaism and Christianity as we have seen above. Would it not be an injustice for God to choose one people and negate the others? After all, He made them in His image and likeness. Based on this evidence, Francis (ND, 1956, VIII, p. 225) invited the Catholic Church "to take a stand and bring the light of faith and the grace of salvation to bear on these movements that aim at bringing material benefits". This is salvation as in the original sense of the Latin word *salus*—the wellbeing of the person in body and soul—the satisfaction of BHNs. He was applying the same criteria he used in becoming a Christian, for it also applied to the indigenous colonised populations. Christianity helped him meet his BHNs and he believed that it should, therefore, meet their BHNs too. Francis then described what he believed those needs were.

The first is self-esteem: the need to be recognised by others as strong, competent, and capable to influence his/her society (Marker, 2003). Francis (ND, 1956, VIII, p. 227) states: "The blacks are not less intelligent than any other people; my missionaries from the Island of Bourbon and Guinea have told me that they have found a large number capable of doing classical studies successfully". He calls for the black person to be acknowledged as being competent and capable and not unintelligent, as assumed. He has evidence of their intelligence from his white missionaries.

Francis then addressed the need for cultural security for black people: the need to recognise their languages, traditions, cultural values, ideas, and concepts (Marker, 2003). He comments, "The people need to be taught in their own language" (ND, 1956, VIII, p. 227). We see the radical nature of his project since at that point; black people were in slavery—living in a

cultural amnesia as a result of the mixing of the races and the changing of slave names. Francis wanted all of that to change and he further added that black people are capable of personal development and of good self-esteem:

> *There are some among them with a high degree of intelligence that is above the ordinary ... Missionaries assure us that there are many with minds that are sharp and open and capable of development ... A black person who was a slave, who could not read or write or do arithmetic was found to be an excellent mechanic* (ND, 1956, VIII, p. 228).

He showed that a black person had the potential to reach personal fulfilment in all walks of life. What the black person needed was the satisfaction of his/her BHNs and s/he could attain this by good education and love:

> *When they are instructed and educated, when they are taught the principles of the Faith and taught to appreciate the things that the Europeans bring, when, moreover, they come to understand that Europeans are their brothers, that they are all children of the same God, when they are taught to love and serve God, then it will be seen that the people will change their behaviour* (ND, 1956, VIII, pp. 231–232).

According to Francis, the black population needed acceptance from others so that they could have personal ties to their families and, friends, and to be identified as a group, like white people.

However, the project avoided one evil and fell into another—that of alienating black people from their own culture. As Dube Shomanah comments,

> *The colonised are trained to yearn for the coloniser's places, religions, languages and cultures at large. This is the colonisation of the mind, for it alienates the colonised from their places and cultures, creating an immense identity crisis* (Pears, 2010, p. 149).

So while Francis tried to defend the capacity of the indigenous black population to achieve full human development, he saw this fulfilment in the European style, rather than through local cultures and civilisation. As such, he perceived that they failed to develop social institutions as they failed badly in governance and infrastructural developments; there were almost no indigenous industries.

Nevertheless, regarding the accusation that black people were lazy, Francis argued that the root cause of this was the lack of freedom and justice, and their ill treatment:

> *The people are forced by being beaten and by ill-treatment to work like animals. They get no respite and gain nothing from their efforts. From infancy they are brought up with a horror of work ... Work and slavery are synonymous. So too, are idleness and freedom. But when they are liberated from the burden lay upon them, when someone takes an interest in them and teaches them to be good Christians, then, they might work much more diligently than the Europeans do under the tropical sun* (ND VIII, p. 234).

The black colonised population were politically, physically, and civilly restrained and had no capacity to exercise choice in this system—denied the human need of freedom. In fact, it was the slave institution that needed to recognise blacks as persons with identity and self-esteem in order to stop their violence (Burton, 1998). Francis showed that, in present

conditions, nobody could blame them. People needed to participate in what was happening around them—satisfy their human need of participation—the need that one partakes in and influences civil society (Marker, 2003). They must have an active influence on their civil society.

On the other hand, why must it be Christianity that will make a good worker? The local black population could equally be good workers in the framework of their own beliefs. Hence, in this respect, he was again participating in the colonisation of the black people by insisting on the use of European religion and culture. Nevertheless, having deconstructed the conflict that the local black population was by nature violent, unintelligent, lazy, polygamous, and likely to thieve by pointing to the root causes of this conflict in their unmet BHNs, Francis then proposed the way forward: a conflict resolution process.

3.3.2 Conflict resolution proposal

His first proposal regarded education: "We shall found schools in every place we are established" (ND VIII, p. 224). He proposed central schools and houses in the missions; farming to insure the survival of the schools, with missionaries training good farmers; and, forming future priests, catechists, and teachers. He even asked that the catechists be able to receive Minor Orders, "to preside over the meetings of the faithful and the prayer meetings, to sing the office and to give instructions to the people" (ND VIII, pp. 244–247). The key to this was education, which would bring civilisation and allow the local people satisfy their BHNs and take control of their lives. As he stated:

> *Train famers, artisans of "arts and crafts"… bring to the African an improved civilisation, one which has as its foundation religion, science and work ... in order to little by little make them reach the state of no longer needing any*

> *help from missionaries in order to continue the task, otherwise these peoples will always remain in their childhood* (ND VIII, pp. 248–249).

This was commendable but why should education be only of a western nature? Moreover, the combination of Christianity with western civilisation confirmed that Christianity and colonisation are feeding from the same source, as Pears (2010, p. 159) affirms Christianity:

> *[P]layed important roles through the sending of missionaries, establishing churches and schools, and propagating ideas of cleanliness and hygiene: Christianisation and Westernisation became almost a synonymous process in the colonial period.*

Francis' project, by imposing Christianity and western civilisation, perpetuated the hegemonic Christianity and helped the hegemonic western civilisation maintain control over the indigenous civilisation. On the other hand, Francis was very keen on the formation of the Africans, lay and clerical; they are to be trained in the same colleges. As he (ND, 1956, VI, pp. 65–66) writes:

> *The knowledge of the lay person ought to be the same standard as that of the clergy ... The only difference between the two classes is that one will spread sacred the other profane knowledge ... Those who are to bring civilisation to Africa should have the same mind and the same objectives and live by the same principles as those who are to promote morals and learning. Otherwise, one will destroy what the other builds.*

Francis' religious project was that of salvation for the whole human being—body and soul—the satisfaction of BHNs. He did not see how one

could be good religiously and not be good in civil society. For him, the religious and the civil societies met in goodness and they were dependent on providing good wellbeing for society. This is a serious problem in the Nigerian society today, one that we will illustrate in Chapter Five.

Additionally, on 3 November 1844, Francis wrote a letter to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide, following the death of the first missionaries sent to Guinea, regarding what African priests could do for Africa. He (ND, 1956, VI, p. 393) argued that they:

> *Would accomplish considerable good and would soon gain the confidence of the tribes from which they will have come. They will have great facility in abolishing superstition and idolatry. They will better able than the European to destroy Mohammedanism in the many regions where it is established, and to fight against Protestantism.*

Here, one wonders about the fidelity of Francis to his principles of equality for people and religions. Why should one religion be destroying another? In this sense, he was creating a religious marker and arguably a root source of conflict among Africans (Mitchell, 2006). This is an example that we cannot follow, but we must follow the principles he sets in the equality of all peoples and religions.

Therefore, Francis made a second proposal regarding the structures of the church in colonised countries. He demanded that the church in Haiti should be given its autonomy—the satisfaction of the BHNs of identity, personal fulfilment and cultural security:

> *A civilised country should have a church which is properly organised like all other particular churches that together constitute the universal Church. When it has not got this position of respectability among other churches, it is not in*

a proper position. It is dependent and in disarray (ND, 1956, VIII, p. 335).

Haiti was an independent State, but its church was still dependent on the church of France. Francis suggested to Rome to appoint an indigenous Bishop and that Haiti should form a local church—a college of bishops like other local churches in the Roman Catholic Church. He proposes five bishoprics for Africa. The first of these was Senegambia, with a residence in Dakar. The second was Sierra Leone and Liberia, with a residence in Freetown. The third was River Cavally up to the river Volta, with a residence in Kumasi of the Ashanti Kingdom. The fourth was the Gulf of Benin, with a residence in Abomey, the capital of the kingdom of Dahomey, and the fifth was the gulf of Biafra with a residence in Gabon. However, Rome would only approve one: Guinea, with a residence in Dakar. Then he commented, "as soon as there is a certain number of native priests, one of them will be a member of the Bishop's Administrative Council" (ND, 1956, VIII, p. 353). Francis' reason to propose five bishops for Africa was so that Africa could also form a proper local church with a college of bishops and would not depend on the church of France. This was to facilitate addressing African problems without having to rely on France to make decisions. Furthermore, he saw the role of his congregation as one of mediation when problems arose between a bishop and a missionary, but that the bishops and not congregation would make the final decisions.

Francis was radical in the design of his project. On 19 November 1847, he wrote to his missionaries in the communities of Dakar and Gabon, a year after he sent his project proposal to Rome, saying:

Strip yourselves of Europe, its customs and spirit. Make yourselves black with the blacks in order to train them as they should be trained, not European-style but preserving

> *their own particular ways; be to them as servants to their masters in order to perfect and sanctify them and make them people of God* (ND, 1956, IX, p. 330).

This shows a remarkable change in the project because here, Francis insisted on doing things according to local customs. This meant training farmers in African agricultural methods, and forming artisans to perfect African arts and crafts. It also meant using African music in liturgies so that the local population could fully participate during ceremonies. This man was exceptional in his desire to bring peace to the local population. He saw the former slave as a master of the white missionary. This was why in 1848 the first seminary of the Holy Spirit Missionary in Dakar, with eight students, taught only Latin and Wolof—the local language of the people of Senegal. French was forbidden. Additionally, Francis accepted that "there is no doubt that the Africans also have their faults, just as the Europeans have theirs. They have their strong points too, like the Europeans have" (ND, 1956, IX, p. 361). The religious virtues of Francis were at work in his conflict resolution project. This is why he could see the good and bad in both the local population and the European population, rather than in just one of them as the French State saw things.

3.4 Concluding analysis

In this chapter, we saw how Francis, through his project, articulated the BHNs of the local, black population in their conflict with white people, but he did not address the issue of justice regarding their colonisation—the satisfaction of the human need of distributive justice. Black slavery occurred for commercial purposes. For example, "in 1788 Jamaica was the most prosperous of the English colonies with 256,000 slaves, while St Dominique was the greatest source of wealth for France with 405,828 slaves" (Hurbon, 1990, p. 93). Slavery was the means by which the

European gained his economic and political dominance. Money, wealth and profit were made on the backs of the African slaves. At the time Francis was writing, “Africa seemed devastatingly crippled, as one in four Africans were slaves” (Hurbon, 1990, p. 93). Slaves aged over 40 years old were rejected as being too old and of no use in the colonies. Thus, for more than three centuries, Africa existed without its young population who could work and develop its culture and agricultural methods. This was because its young people were sold into slavery. As such, there is a need to call for accountability on the part of the local chiefs and the white people who traded in slavery. Hence, a natural resource—human beings—was at the root of this conflict, and perhaps, greed was also part of why the Europeans colonised black Africa. Therefore, the black African had a case for restitution, but Francis did not address it, and in this regard, his project did not go far enough. There was a need for justice.

Nevertheless, Francis’ project is laudable for being the first to propose this approach. Moreover, by presenting his project to the Roman Catholic Church, he was putting the colonised population back on the world stage so that they can reclaim their rightful place. Millions of Africans have benefited from his educational programme and I am one of them. However, I need to unlearn the inadequacies of the Christian missionary work: the divisions among religions and dominations; the superiority of white people over black people; and the suppression of African belief and culture. These attitudes destroyed the development of indigenous systems in black civilisation.

However, the “Project for the Blacks” is unique for its time. His plan was radically different from what the French State proposed—brainwashing blacks to work for Europeans. Indeed, Francis was ahead of his time, and was surely using his religious virtues of humility, simplicity, gentleness, and charity, thanks to his ability for inner reflections, just as he

had done in his personal life. Only through his religious virtues was he enabled to come up with this project. Let us now turn to examine how he was able to use these religious virtues to develop the "Project for the Blacks", before looking at the lessons we can learn from his project at a personal level and regarding the current inter-ethnic, inter-religious, and socio-economic—related conflicts in Nigeria.

Chapter Four: Some key Religious Connections to Conflict Resolution

4.0 Introduction

> *People living in settings of deep-rooted conflict are faced with an extraordinary irony. Violence is known; peace is the mystery* (Lederach, 2005, p. 39).

The black, colonised population knew violence but peace was a mystery for them at the time of Fr. Francis Libermann. Therefore, this chapter focuses on how Francis used the religious virtues of humility and charity to unravel some of the mystery in his religious conflict resolution "Project for the Blacks", discussed in Chapter Three. These virtues aided Francis to argue against the presuppositions that black people are barbaric by nature. Rather, he believed that the unjust social structures were responsible for the worst of human nature in the local population—they were denied human needs. Francis used his virtues to build peace. However, we critique the project, using postcolonial theories to do so, in the concluding analysis of the chapter. Firstly, we examine the religious virtues of humility and charity in relation to Francis' work.

4.1 The virtue of humility

Conflict resolution as argued in Chapter One—finding a solution which is complete, acceptable, self-supporting, satisfactory, uncompromising, innovative, and un-coerced is a difficult task (Mitchell, 1990). Nevertheless, Francis believed that religious virtues helped in this task. This is what he calls apostolic holiness. For Francis, it is God's will that we use the virtue of humility to bring salvation to people, including

their welfare, leading to peace. As he instructs his missionaries on apostolic holiness:

> *I mean that it is God's Holy Will that we station ourselves in the midst of those people and lead a life that is entirely holy, that we take particular care to practice the priestly and religious virtues of humility, obedience, charity, gentleness, simplicity, a life of prayer and abnegation* (Fernadale, 19..?, p. 2).

"Those people" refers to both black and white people—the missionary peace builder must use the virtues for conflict resolution and bring peace in both populations. In his rule of 1842 concerning the relationship between the missionaries and the civil and military authorities, Francis also insists on humility: "Be humble and charitable and don't humble other people on any pretext whatsoever" (ND, 1956, IX, pp. 239–242). The missionaries, he states, should avoid adversarial methods in resolving conflict so as to preserve peace. Francis argues that by being humble, we soften the rigid mind, sweeten violent people, and reduce their pride, stating: "We must soften the rigidity of those men by our gentleness, sweeten their violence by our moderation, and reduce their pride by our humility" (Van de Putte and Collery, 1963, p. 222). In this way we build peace; this is a Christian method of being with others for the kingdom of God.

Francis uses humility in the original sense of the word as in the Latin word *humilis*, which comes from Latin word *humus*: ground, soil, earth. As such, humility means to stand firmly, with security and confidence. Moreover, *humus* is the nutritious part of the earth. It is the warmth and humidity that sprout the seeds, so humility nourishes us. It's in humility that we bring out our authentic values. It is where, as human beings, we realise our true capacity. Lederach (2005, p. 107) calls this the

"acknowledgment that I am a small part of something really big". With humility, we learn that we should not appear more than what we are; but we also know that we are more than what we appear to be. With humility, we know who we are or better still who we are in being. It requires knowing our virtues and our vices—it is the totality of our being.

Humility opens up a situation of conflict such that we acknowledge that the offender is more than what they are showing themselves to be by their anger. Therefore, Lederach (2005, p. 107) argues:

> *The essence of humility is found in the constancy of learning and adaptation. If I have the full truth, I have no need for further inquiry… Without humility, processes of change themselves cease to exist, for they become final, rigid, and complete.*

Humility helps us transmit the infinite and mysterious path of knowledge in us. We can build peace, as Lederach (2005, p. 106) further suggests, its core qualities are "respect and connectedness". Therefore, situations of conflict offer an interesting opportunity to know ourselves very deeply. It challenges us to explore the type and intensity of our reactions and capacities to transform ourselves into making peace. In this way, Francis uses the virtue of humility to interconnect his life experience, therefore meeting his own unmet BHNs when these BHNs were unmet. Similarly, his project addresses the BHNs of those who had been colonised.

Nevertheless, we know that the Latin word for humility, *lennep*, means to lower, or bring low; to subject, to bring or cast down; to submit or cause to submit; to subdue, to degrade. A slave "must know that his master is to govern absolutely and he is to obey implicitly … [Black people] had to feel that African ancestry tainted them, that their colour was a badge of degradation" (King, 1967, p. 39). Can black people understand humility as

Francis teaches it? Is Francis not suggesting that they continue to accept humiliation? This is not so for Francis no, because he insists on the eradication of the inferiority complex experienced by the indigenous population. For example, on 23 November1847 (ND, 1956, Complements, p. 292), he writes to Fr. Chevalier, the Director of the Seminary on how to teach young African people:

> *Get them to realise that they are free ... the idea of inferiority must be erased from their minds, because it increases natural weakness and lowers them in their own estimation … which is a very great evil.*

Francis is using the virtue of humility in the sense of *humus,* as we have seen. This opens us up to seek to understand more and make better use of our knowledge. Therefore, for Francis, humility is about mutual respect and connectedness to one another. In this way, it can build peace and create an environment for the development of love between black people and white people. The next section explores this idea through the virtue of charity.

4.2 The virtue of charity

> *That within the best of us, there is some evil, and within the worst of us, there is some good* (Carson and Holloran, 2000, p. 46).

Martin Luther King Jr., the renowned American black civil rights activist, used this quote to urge black people in America to love their white brothers. He reminds us that there is good and evil within each of us. This forms a basis for love or charity to grow among one and all. Similarly, Francis (ND, 1956, VII, p. 161) writes to Fr. Bessieux on 4 May 1845 on dealing with the French people:

> *Always be gentle, charitable and gracious with everybody. Act politely, kindly, and thoughtfully. You will see them commit very grave sins, are you to get angry? That would do no good at all. Imitate our Master who was gentle with sinners.*

This makes us recall the episode of Jesus' teaching in the Bible—Matthew 7, 1–3: "Do not judge, and you will not be judged; because the judgements you give are the judgements you will get ... Why do you observe the splinter in your brother's eye and never notice the great log in your own?" This reminds black and white people to accept each other without preconceptions, without previous conditions and without judgements. This charity promotes mutual transparency and total acceptance without pretension. This charity is similar to the necessary condition that HNT argues can enable parties in a conflict to come up with win-win or positive-sum resolutions at a problem-solving workshop (PSW). It is charity as from the Latin word *Carus,* which means precious, valuable; and therefore valued, highly prized, much esteemed, and much loved. Therefore, charity allows us to perceive the needs or sufferings of others; to desire to relieve them, to love our fellow creatures and to acts for their relief, or beneficence. In charity, we have the possibility to be better human beings by providing the needs of a suffering other.

The charitable way is how God acts, as Francis (ND, 1956, IX, pp. 248–249) writes to Fr. Le Berre on 9 August 1847, regarding those French men with no religion:

> *In general, you must love all men, no matter what their attitudes towards religious principles and towards you. Besides, you must leave them complete freedom to think and act as they wish … Never in the world has a man been able*

to force in any way either the conscience, or will, or minds of his fellow men. God did not do it, why should we?

God the all-powerful treats sinners in a gentle way, and peace and goodness cannot be imposed on anybody. Francis' teachings are in perfect line with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church in Vatican II: "Christian charity really extends to all men, without distinction of race, social condition or religion" (Vatican II, *Ad Gentes*, No. 12). Thus, charity as love means contributing to complete and to perfect, the being of ourselves, and the one with whom we encounter. Charity is love in the sense of the Greek word *agape,* as the Swedish theologian Anders Nygren wrote in his works *Agape and Eros* (1953): "*agape* is the most powerful creative force in the universe. Agape does not recognise value, but creates it. Agape loves and imparts value by loving" (Washington, 1986, p. 16). Moreover, we recognise that the love of our neighbour is based on the love of ourselves. The highest love that we can give is the one we have for ourselves. It is impossible to give more. In this case, we have to love ourselves first because we cannot give what we do not have. Francis had his own personal experience of learning to love himself through Christianity, thereby meeting some of his BHNs. He then applied this lesson in developing the "Project for the Blacks".

This is why Francis (ND, 1956, X, pp. 125–126) writes to Fr. Blanpin, a missionary in Bourbon, after the 1848 Revolution in France, which proclaimed the general freeing of slaves, saying:

You have a very important role to play at this time and, if you do it well, you will be making yourself helpful both to the Whites and to our poor Blacks … Recommend to them peace, gentleness, the forgiveness of injuries.

Charity, for Francis, means bringing peace to both black and white people. Arguably, it means finding a conflict resolution solution, which is complete, acceptable, self-supporting, satisfactory, uncompromising, innovative, and un-coerced (Mitchell, 1990). A resolution that arises from the forgiveness of injuries, what King (Carson, and Holloran, 2000, p. 20) referred to as:

> *[A]gape, a willingness to go to any length to restore community. It doesn't stop at the first mile, but it goes the second mile to restore community. It is a willingness to forgive, not seven times, but seventy times seven to restore community.*

This is not love as in the Greek word *eros* instinctual love, or filia, a mutual love. It is *agape*: "an overflowing love which is purely spontaneous, unmotivated, groundless, and creative. It is not set in motion by any quality or function of its object. It is the love of God operating the human heart" (Carson and Holloran, 2000, p. 19). This is a God-given gift, which we can ask for from God and we can allow it to operate in us; it is practicing genuine religion as argued in this book.

Francis is not always like this in his life, he acquires this gift of love from God through his life experience: through conflict in his family; with his Eudist Superior; and Talmud teachers; and while suffering from epilepsy. He gives testimony to this when he writes to Fr. Le Vavasseur (one of his friends who invited him to participate in the "Project for the Blacks") in 1850 on why he does not want to be forceful. The results, he says, are "stiffness, hardness, sometimes even violence" (ND, 1956, XII, p. 320). He goes on to say that "I gave proof enough of it during my seminary days; but I don't want to be an instrument of perdition for souls and destruction for the works of God" (ND, 1956, XII, pp. 320–21). Francis

affirms that his faith in God leads him to abandon being forceful; he has taken up charity—the love of self and others in all conditions. This is the basis and connection for his "Project for the Blacks". He believes that black people are also *carus*, i.e. precious and valuable, and as such deserves to be highly prized, much esteemed and much loved, just as white people are.

4.3 Concluding analysis

Francis' arguments for using the religious virtues of humility and charity are based on the idea that all human beings are both good and bad—we have common problems as human beings and can have common solutions. Therefore, we should not use force in trying to resolve our conflicts. This is especially important when it comes to dealing with the frustration of inherent human needs of freedom, love, and self-esteem. Nonetheless, where does that leave Francis in terms of the "just war" theory that we see in the section on the background to Roman Catholic mission, which is based on the sinful nature of men? This theory argues that "coercive violence may have a moral role in certain circumstances" (Appleby, 2004, p. 125). Francis does not treat this issue at length, but we do know that he is asked by a close friend, Fr. Gamon, about what he thought of the French Revolution in 1848. Francis replied: "I think that it was an act of God's justice acting against a decadent dynasty that had worked to establish its own power rather than the welfare of the people under its care" (ND, 1956, X, p. 144). Firstly, we see how the welfare of the people is always on the mind of Francis. Secondly, we can conclude with some accuracy that he is not against coercive violence in all circumstances. He feels that groups or the State may use it, though he does not advocate it.

Francis fits better in the "Nonviolent Action" strategy for seeking social change:

> *Nonviolent action refers to those methods of protest, non-cooperation and intervention in which the actionists, without employing physical violence, refuse to do certain things which they are expected, or required, to do; or do certain things which they are not expected, or are forbidden, to do* (Adam, 1969, p. 109).

Since nonviolent action takes place outside the political systems, we can say, with Francis, that people should be empowered to use nonviolent action to pursue social change. Under this approach, methods such as public speeches, social boycott, group or mass petitions, stay-at-home, protest strike, religious processions, marches, and many other nonviolent actions are used to pursue social change. Yet, nonviolent methods are more appropriate for short-term resistance to oppression; for the long term, we need a conflict resolution project that addresses the satisfaction of the human needs of people.

It is not hard to see how Francis comes to realise that the virtues of humility and love are the basis for conflict resolution. Why? Because he believes that Jesus is Christ the Messiah. Francis knows, as a student of the Talmud, he expects Christ. Jesus perhaps does not fulfil all the prophecies the Jews are expecting, for example, building the Third Temple (Ezekiel 37, 26–28), or gathering all Jews in the Land of Israel (Isaiah 43, 5–6), but for Francis he ushers in a new era of world peace, ending all hatred, oppression, suffering and curing disease (Isaiah 2, 4) and spreads the universal knowledge of the God of Israel in order to unite all of humanity (Zechariah 14, 9). Francis is a living witness; he experiences Christ in his life. Thus, Francis finds the Christ. What does the Christ teach? He teaches "Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart" (Mt 11, 29). It is Christ that let him become humble through his epilepsy. How is Christ gentle and humble in heart? He goes about curing

the sick, feeding the hungry, and freeing the captives. He incorporates those who are excluded in the society there by bringing peace to all those who come to believe in him. Christ meets the BHNs of people. Therefore, in order to learn from the Christ, Francis also needs to imitate Christ.

Moreover, Christ teaches in the Bible:

> *You have heard that it was said, "You shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy". But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father[Mother], for [s/]he makes [her/]his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust* (Mt 5, 43–45).

Christ meets the BHNs of both the good and the bad. By this, Christ rejects the mentality that creates divisions between neighbour and non-neighbour, between the good one and the evil one, between clean and unclean. Christ orders his followers to overcome divisions. He shows the source from which springs the novelty of the Kingdom. It is God our Father and Mother and we are brothers and sisters. Thus, Christ orders that we imitate this God: "Be perfect as your Heavenly [Mother]/Father is perfect" (Mt 5, 48). This is what Francis calls apostolic holiness.

Is Francis' project perfect for the local, black people? No, as postcolonial theory critics it:

> *European "super powers" had colonised huge parts of the developing world and imposed not only political and economic control over those people colonised but also imposed cultural and religious belief systems. As such … came to invest in the belief systems and cultural ways of their colonisers* (Pears, 2010, p. 140).

Do black and white people need Christianity in order to be humble? No, they could become equally humble through their own forms of being. Perhaps, there is no need for Francis to be part of a system of oppression. He should be true to his initial belief: that it does not matter which religion you belong to. What matters is that you are humane, a better person. The colonised people need help and partnership, but do not need to be subjected again to another oppressor. In so far as Francis' project presents Christian beliefs and morality as being superior to indigenous beliefs and morality, his project helps that of the coloniser and the two became synonymous for the colonised people. Again, the postcolonial theorist would question his project historically:

> *[W]hilst many liberation movements and liberation theories have started out with good intentions, especially in terms of understandings of power differentials, in some cases one oppressive regime has too often been replaced following a form of liberation by what eventually develops into another oppressive regime. In such case it is just a different group of people that are being oppressed* (Pears, 2010, p. 139).

This is what happens: African people move from the control of slave masters to colonisers and afterwards that of the new oppressor who arose from within the indigenous population. When will the cycle of violence stop and liberation and peace take place? Nigeria is a good example of this cycle of violence; it went from slavery, to colonialism for about seventy five years, after which it fell into military dictatorship and dysfunctional civilian governance fifty four years after gaining independence.

Nonetheless, we must agree that Francis' project brings peace among the local population and the white Europeans during colonialism. Nigerians live in relative peace with less inter-religious, inter-ethnic, and

socioeconomic—related conflicts than is found today. His project also makes it possible for Nigerians to be educated and they use this education to fight for independence, civilly, without resorting to violence. Francis' project deserves this credit. Moreover, we can use it to learn how a similar project may bring peace to Nigeria today. The next chapter reviews some conflicts in Nigeria, trying to find its root causes with the view to go on and use the religious virtues of humility and charity for a conflict resolution project in the aim of stopping the cycle of oppression. Our theoretical framework developed in Chapter One is used in this review.

Chapter Five: Nigeria, brief Review of some Conflicts and its Root Causes

5.0 Introduction

Nigeria is located on the West coast of Africa. It occupies an area of 923,768 km^2—roughly four times the size of Britain—with a population of 170 million, about 25 per cent of Africa's total population. There are 250 strong ethnic groups or nationalities and more than 300 distinct languages in Nigeria. The predominant ethnic groups are Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri in the North, Yoruba in the Southwest, and Igbo in the Southeast, while the South is predominated by the Ogonis and the Ijaws. In the middle belt, the Tiv and Brimo groups are predominant. In terms of religion, the population roughly comprises 45 per cent Muslims, 45 per cent Christians, and 10 per cent Africa Traditional Religion (ATR). However, many people practice two or more religions for convenience, especially when moving from Islam to ATR or Christianity to ATR. It is much more difficult for people to cross from Christianity to Islam or Islam to Christianity. The Muslim group is divided among the Sunni (the majority), Shi'a' and Ahmadiyya' forms of Islam. The Christian group includes Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), and many evangelical and Pentecostal Christians. There are also many indigenous Nigerian Christian churches. However, Nigeria is a civil nation, with 36 states and the state capital Abuja that form a Federal system. Nigeria has vast natural resources and it is the fifth largest exporter of crude oil in the world. The great diversity in Nigeria, with its natural resource, oil, means there are also many differences amongst the population and these differences sometimes turn into mortal conflicts.

According to Human Right Watch report (2010), "more than 13, 500 people died since 1999 in massacres in central Nigeria".[12] Multiple factors contribute to conflicts in Nigeria today: religious, ethnic, socio economic, geographical, and many more. However, religion and ethnicity remain the most important factors, because in Nigeria religion and ethnicity are bound to power relationships. Politics is based on what religion and which ethnic group one belongs to. Moreover, religion and ethnicity are also boundary indicators that produce the basis for "us" and "them" politics and also contribute to social segregation: Muslims and Christians, Yoruba, Igbo, Hausa-Fulani, and so on. We will examine five conflicts in Nigeria with the purpose of finding the root cause of the conflicts rather than simply framing them as religious or ethnic conflicts: (1), the implementation of Sharia law in Nigeria; (2), the Niger Delta conflict, led by the Ogoni and Ijaw people against the government of Nigeria over the control of oil in their land; (3), the Boko Haram conflict in Northern Nigeria where the aim of the fighting is to stop Western education or culture; (4), the African Traditional Religion (ATR) and the Pentecostal or revivalist churches "multiple crisis" on children's exorcism; and (5), Students' secret cults violence in Nigerian university campuses.

We examine these five conflicts in Nigeria with the sole purpose of understanding what the actors in the conflicts assert as the root cause of the conflict; we are not passing any judgments about them. Our focus is to discover the interests and basic human needs (BHNs) that are involved in these conflicts, so that the lessons we learned from Fr. Francis Libermann's project can help us in proposing multifaceted principles for conflict

[12] See Human Right Watch [Online] Available at: <http://www.hrw.org/en/news/2010/03/08/nigeria-investigate-massacre-step-patrols>.

resolution in these conflicts in the concluding chapter. The period covered is from 1999 to 2010, the fourth republic in Nigeria.

5.1 The implementation of Sharia law in Nigeria

The implementation of Sharia law in Nigeria has become a conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims – primarily Christians and ATR members. Oche (2003, p. 30) writes:

> *The root of religious violence in Nigeria in the fourth republic can be traced back to a campaign promise made by Ahmed Sani in 1999, the eventual governor of Zamafara State, Nigeria. In his campaign, he promised the people that if he was elected his government would "give the people the opportunity to practice their religion", and this would be facilitated by the Sharia law. He argued that the people were disillusioned with the rampant corruption of military rule, and frightened by the rising crime rates. The governor also promised that in the course of implanting Sharia law, the rights of Christian minorities and non-Muslims would be fully protected.*

On the face of it, Ahmed Sani wants a transformational political power relation—from a corrupt system to a non-corrupt system. He promises the people: to provide them their human need of security—the need for structures of stability, freedom from fear and anxiety, and cultural security; the acceptance of their religion, cultural values and concepts, and distributive justice: that resources belonging to them are fairly distributed among them (Marker, 2003). He invites the public to vote for him, give him power, after which he expresses that he will satisfy the needs of Muslim community by providing Sharia law, which will reduce crime and corruption. In this way, religion is the determining factor in power

relationships, as well as the boundary between the Muslims and non-Muslims. Thus, an adversarial system is set up: separating members of the State into groupings in opposition to each other (Burton, 1997), between "us" and "them", "we and they". What about the non-Muslims? Are they not entitled to meet these same BHNs as citizens of the State? Are they not affected by the military dictatorship? Is sharia law going to solve the problem of corruption in Nigeria? While the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI, 2013) ranks Nigeria 144 as the most corrupt country in the world, other sharia law-operating countries like Iran (144), Pakistan (127), Yemen (167), and Iraq (171) amongst the most corrupt countries in the world. So sharia law has not solved corruption in other sharia law-operating countries and perhaps will not solve corruption in Nigeria either. However, we see that Sani's intention is to get political power cheaply; it is a political strategy. He knows that the Muslim community forms the majority in the State, such that an appeal to them about their religion will get him easy votes.

However, this strategy is a divide-and-rule one; it excludes the non-Muslims, who also want to meet their BHNs, and in their needs, they fight for them, and so violence breaks out at times (Burton, 1998). This is because non-Muslims are denied their BHNs of security and cultural security; the human need of freedom—to be free from physical, political, civil, or religious restrictions and to be allowed to make personal choices in all aspects of one's life (Marker, 2003). The lack of freedom is evident in the prohibition of alcohol; segregation of the sexes in hotels, restaurants, buses and taxis; and teaching boys and girls separately irrespective of their faith—factors that generate conflict in the State (Harnischfeger, 2004, p 432). Sani argues that although sharia law affects both Christians and Muslims, it is good for the morale of both groups (Harnischfeger, 2004, p. 432). This is a religious argument that imposes one religion's practices on

others and we argue here that it falls short of genuine religion. Additionally, "the government pays the salaries of imams and funds their building of mosques, while the right of Christians to build churches is restricted" (Harnischfeger, 2004, p. 432), this too generates conflicts in the State. Therefore, the Christian and the ATR groups see this as an imposition and a denial of the human need of freedom. Therefore, any suggestion that this conflict is about religion as the root cause may be missing the root cause—the satisfaction of BHNs of distributive justice, security, cultural security, and freedom. Religion is used in this case as a boundary marker. However, the resolution of this conflict will have to take into account BHNs and religious factors. Let us now look at socio-economic conflict, exemplified by the Niger Delta conflict.

5.2 Niger Delta conflict

A prominent example of a socio-economic conflict in Nigeria is the Niger Delta Conflict. The Niger Delta people accuse the majority ethnic groups in Nigeria of using their oil to develop their own areas. Their "modest proposals" states:

> *We of the Delta Peoples Academy call on Nigerian socialists and their allies in struggle in Nigeria and worldwide to: Support without equivocation the struggles for resources ownership and control by the people of the Niger Delta; and Endorse the demand of the people of the Niger Delta for N150 Trillion ($1 Trillion) Reparation from the Federal Government and the oil multinationals for 35 years of the plunder and looting of oil and natural resources and the destruction of the environment* (Darah, 2003).

The Niger Delta conflict is led by the Ogoni and Ijaw people who express their needs in the form of self-determination, but one that requires

transformation of political power, when in fact they have their human need of distributive justice frustrated which is what has led to the call to control what is in their land, i.e. oil. However, the theory (Homer-Dixon, 1991 and 1994) on natural resources as the root cause of conflict can be applied in this case since oil sales—a natural resource—is at the root of the conflict. Hence, the people of the Niger Delta are arguing that they have a grievance over the distribution of proceeds from the sale of oil in their land. Nonetheless, others argue that this conflict is sustained by greedy leaders who have an economic agenda—to plunder State assets (Humphrey, 2005; Collier, 2007). This is why we have the Ogoni and Ijaw people expressing their needs in an economic and interest agenda—the separation of the Nigerian society into groupings of majority ethnic groups and minority ethnic group in opposition to each other (Burton, 1997). Indeed, it has been found that even conflicts like those that took place in the Great Lakes between "Hutu" and "Tutsi" were not pure ethnic conflicts. It was a mobilisation and organisation of ethnicity by "identity entrepreneurs" such as politicians, local leaders of associations, journalists, opinion leaders, or other politico-cultural brokers who used it for reaffirming social control and/or gaining access to State resources (Banegas, 2008, p. 5). So, it is hard to show that the Niger Delta conflict is ethnic in nature; just as in Rwanda, Burundi, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and the Caucasus, it has been found that ethnic identities "have histories", and are always fluid, multiple, contextual and relational so are ethnic identities in the Niger Delta multiple, with its history, context and relational (Banegas, 2008, p. 4). So any suggestion of the Niger Delta being one of Ibo, Hausa-Fulani, and Yoruba versus minority ethnic groups, as alleged by Ogoni and Ijaw, may miss the underlying cause.

We argue here that use of ethnicity in the Niger Delta conflict is a political strategy that enacts the "us and them," the "we and they" game;

they are using ethnicity as the boundary determinant for the conflict. As within the oil lands, there are also other minorities like the Urhobo, Ibibio, Eket, Annag, Ikwerre, Efik, Ogba, Isoko, Itshekiri, Edo, Andoni, Okirika, Kalabari, and others who are undermined in this struggle. Do they not deserve to have their human needs of distributive justice met? Here, the economic resources determine the power relationship. Since those in power are mostly elite from the majority ethnic groups but it also includes elite from Ogoni and Ijaw, who, along with the oil companies do not set up projects that can satisfy the BHNs, of all the people. Thus, the people of Niger Delta may have no choice but to fight for their human needs of distributive justice.

Additionally, considering the theory of natural resources as at the root of conflict, grievances over the mismanagement of proceeds from the sale of oil, in this case, is compatible with the human needs theory (HNT)—the frustration of the human need of distributive justice. Therefore, the resolution of the Niger Delta conflicts would have to take into account BHNs, grievances, and greed factors. There is calm in the Niger Delta for the moment, but there are important issues to be examined: are there financial deals with rebel leaders thereby halting violence temporary, but raising the possibilities of a resumption of violence; is there a disregard for necessary long-term structural reforms for the satisfaction of BHNs; and is this situation helping the incumbent elite to perpetuate their position and power, but destroying the legitimate aspirations to the satisfaction of BHNs of the majority (Guichaoua, 2012, p. 274). These issues are beyond the scope of this book, but are issues that a problem-solving workshop (PSW) over this conflict may have to treat. For now, let us turn to the Boko Haram conflict that can be at first sight called a clash of cultures—Western culture versus Nigerian culture.

5.3 The Boko Haram conflict

In what we can call a clash of cultures (Huntington, 1996), a group nick-named Boko Haram (Western Education is forbidden), led by a young man Mohammed Yusuf, and based in Maiduguri, the capital of Borno State, attacked police headquarters and killed both police and innocent people in four States in Northern Nigeria in 2009: Borno, Bauchi, Kano and Yobe. BBC (Africa, 2009) reported, "Boko Haram says it is fighting against Western education. It believes Nigeria's government is being corrupted by Western ideas and wants to see Islamic law imposed across Nigeria". Our analysis is that Boko Haram wants a transformation of political power relations expressed in an interest in the manner of Western education as the evil influence over political leaders in Nigeria. However, from the HNT perspective, the BHNs frustrated are those of distributive justice, security and cultural security. A scrutiny of the way Boko Haram operates shows that it is not against, *per se,* Western education or technology—it uses Western technology in the form of the internet—rather, it laments the perceived deterioration of morals unleashed by what it perceives as Western influence (Stroehlein, 2012). Therefore, Boko Haram wants a transformation of political power in order to meet their BHNs, but they want to achieve this by creating the "us and them", or a "we and they", separating the Nigerian society into two cultures in opposition to each other (Burton, 1997). For them, the corruption is not caused by Nigerians, *per se,* but by the Western education they receive and so their aim is to end Western education in Nigeria.

However, does the West or Western education condone corruption in Nigeria? Western countries like the US and the Britain as well as Western institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), all consider Nigeria a "state failure" because of its inability to use

the Nigerian oil wealth to transform Nigeria into a prosperous Nation. They recommend the "reconstruction of the state", "institutional development" and "good governance" in Nigeria (Banegas, 2008, p. 9). Therefore, the use of Western culture is for the purpose of a boundary determinant. Conversely, they call for Islamic law; why not call for African law? Is Islam not foreign to Nigeria? This is because Islam is determining the power relationship. This gives them power. As such, Boko Haram is a political organisation—Jama'atu Ahilis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (People Committed to the Propagation of the Prophet's Teaching and Jihad), hence, they advocate for sharia law in Nigeria (Stroehlein, 2012). However, it is sharia law to achieve the same BHNs as articulated in the "sharia law" case above. Lastly, Boko Haram is also a face for criminal groups who commit thuggery, bank robbery and attack political opponents (Stroehlein, 2012). However, Stroehlein (2012) argues that the source of uncontrolled violence is because 100 million Nigerians live in "absolute poverty" on less than one US Dollar a day while Nigerian leaders continue to plunder the country's oil wealth. Poor Nigerians are easy prey to those who want to carry out criminal activities and cause discontent in Nigeria. It is clear that the theory of natural resources as the root of conflict in Nigeria applies here, in this case, the greed aspect of it—the greedy Nigerian leaders. Therefore, we argue and conclude here that Boko Haram is a phenomenon that has arisen because of the frustration of BHNs for a majority of Nigerians in the North. Resolving this conflict requires the satisfaction of the BHNs of distributive justice and cultural security for the majority of northern Nigerians, but also attending to the issue of greedy Nigerians—corruption. Next we examine an example on cultism in the Nigerian universities, where life is no longer safe for most students especially women.

5.4 Cultism in Nigerian universities

This conflict uses traditional African methods and some methods imported from cults in the West, and it takes place in the higher institutions of learning. Since the 1980s, violence has been carried out by secret cults in Nigerian universities. These secret cults evolved from the pirate confraternity,[13] which was founded by Nigeria's Nobel Prize winning laureate of literature, Wole Soyinka, and others, during the 1960s. Jamiu (2008) writes:

> *Unlike the pirate confraternity that was founded on noble ideals, the modern day cult groups are founded by youths suffering from low self-esteem, [an] inferiority complex, [low] self-confidence and academic challenges.*

Most of the violence is meted out on helpless women:

> *Women are raped, forced into relationships, beauty pageants are taxed arbitrarily and refusal to pay would attract serious sanctions, any social event that does not get the approval of cult groups on campus would be disrupted*

[13] What is now bastardised as cultism has its root in the pirate confraternity founded by Professor Wole Soyinka and others in the 60s. The pirate confraternity was an adventurous organisation founded by a band of exuberant young men whose main agenda was noble. It was to demonstrate freedom and nationalism, which the youths believed the university environment bestowed on the students. They engaged in regular discussions and plans of action to make members become notable and respectable on campus. Members of the confraternity are champions of human rights, they formed a vanguard against colonialism, they engaged in charity work by visiting homes, giving a helping hand to the needy in the society and engaged in community development work. See: Jamiu, Hakeem (2008) "Nigeria: The Rising Wave of Cultism in Nigerian Universities," in *Daliy Independent,* Lagos [Online] Available at: <http://allafrica.com/stories/200811190110.html>.

while those who ignore them do so at their own peril (Jamiu, 2008).

Here, the main issue that affects the young men in the university that carry out this violence is low self-esteem. Self-esteem is a human need—the need that others recognise one as being strong, competent, capable, and has the ability to influence his/her environment (Marker, 2003). It means this human need is unmet in these young men. Therefore, this violence is ongoing; the above source is dated 2008. In 1999, Soyinka called for universities in Nigeria to be closed for two years so that the authorities could deal with this crisis. However, today it continues on campuses of higher institutions of learning. Analysing the conflict, we argue that the root cause is the fact that some BHNs are not being met, in particular those of self-esteem and identity. Through membership of these cults, these students aim to improve their status in the society, thereby meet these needs—by being seen to be somebody. In this case, the "us" and "them" identity comprises cult membership against non-members. By abusing non-members—women and students with a good academic performance—the cult student gains recognition in their society. It is imperative that the resolution of this conflict would require the satisfaction of these BHNs for the young men. The next section looks at the conflict between Pentecostal pastors, traditional healers, and children, who are accused of performing witchcraft.

5.5 Violence against children

According to the UNNICEF, children in Nigeria aged between eight and 14 are accused of performing witchcraft, as a result of which they "end up being attacked, burned, beaten, and sometimes killed" (PANA, 2010). The report says that the cause is "the rise in sub-Saharan Africa spurred on by urbanisation, poverty, conflict and fragmenting communities" (PANA,

2010). Those aiding and abetting this violence are the Pentecostal or revivalist churches and traditional healers. PANA (2010) reported:

> *Exploitative pastor-prophets claiming to be able to identify witches and offering exorcisms provide additional legitimisation for witchcraft accusations. Their lucrative vocation complements the work of traditional healers, who also fight against the malevolent forces of the "other world"… In a televised case in Nigeria, "Bishop" Sunday Ulup Ay in Akwa Ibom state in the southeast made a personal fortune through exorcisms, charging $261 per child.*

Thousands of children in Nigeria and other West African countries, including the Democratic Republic of Congo, are at risk of this accusation due to the rising cost of living and the traditional beliefs of the people. PANA (2010) further states, "Exorcism can include forcing children to fast; pouring petrol into children's eyes or ears, beatings and being forced to swallow various substances. Many confessions are extracted under duress or violence". The children at risk include orphans, street-children, albinos, the physical disabled or abnormal children such as those suffering from autism, aggressive or solitary temperamental children, those children who are unusually gifted, and those children who were born prematurely or in unusual positions, and twins (PANA, 2010). In this case, the root causes include the BHNs for security, i.e. the need to be free from fear and anxiety, and distributive justice, and poverty: people can no longer feed all the children given birth to, so children have become a target for witchcrafts. Previously, old people and women were accused of witchcraft, because those who accused them wanted to get rid of them because they could not or did not want to take care of them.

5.6 Concluding analysis

These five conflicts give us some insight into how Nigeria has entered into a wide variety of violent conflicts since its fourth republic in 1999, although the most prominent are the Niger Delta and the Boko Haram cases. We do not know when and how these conflicts will stop. Lederach (2005, p. 35) explains how this happens:

> *Cycles of violence are often driven by tenacious requirements to reduce complex history into dualistic polarities that attempt to both describe and contain social reality in artificial ways. People, communities, and most specifically choices about ways they will respond to situations and express views of conflict are forced into "either-or" categories: We are right. They are wrong ... We are liberators. They are oppressors ... You are with us or against us.*

This is what we have seen in the five conflicts: in the sharia law implementation case, we have Muslims versus non-Muslims; in the Niger Delta case, we have the perceived majority ethnic groups versus minority ethnic groups; in the Boko Haram case, we have the perceived Western education versus Islam; in the cultism case, we have cultist versus non-cultist in the universities; and in the violence against children, we have children versus parents. Perhaps the complex history of Nigeria contributes to artificial creation of these boundary indicators and dual expression of the frustration of BHNs. Before the establishment of this country, events such as the arrival of Islam in the twelfth century (Isaac, 2003), slave trade in the eighteenth century, Christianity and colonisation in the nineteenth century (Isaac, 2003), all contribute to these problems in present day Nigeria.

However, as our analysis of the examples above show, the two most important factors that have promoted violent conflicts are: the frustration of meeting the BHNs of distributive justice, security, cultural security, and identity; and the strategic expression of this frustration as an interest in transforming political power relations in order to control destiny and self-determination by separating the Nigerian society into groups and depicting them in opposition to each other. Obviously, the adversarial method used by those who want power or control is facilitated by religion and ethnicity, factors that are used as boundary determinants and as indicators in seeking to transform power relationships. However, it is a divide-and-rule technique and not one that is based on the satisfaction of BHNs. What needs to be done in order to build peace in Nigeria? In order to propose the approaches we need to take, let us first look at what lessons we have learned from the "Project for the Blacks", both the positive and negative lessons.

Chapter Six: Conclusions

6.0 Introduction

The purpose of this book is to find some key connections between religious faith and conflict resolution in Fr. Francis Libermann's work, "The Project for the Blacks". This followed from a spiritual retreat I did in February 2007 in Mexico City. The retreat focused on the life and works of the Venerable Fr. Francis Libermann. From the retreat, I learned that Fr. Francis Libermann was a man with the ability for internal reflection: the prompting of the Holy Spirit in his life. Moreover, he had a great disposition for, and docility before, God, which gave freedom to this kind of thinking—resolving conflict. Francis' attitude was summed up in his humility, simplicity, gentleness, and charity before God and human beings. Therefore, this concluding chapter focus on the principles that can help religious and ethnic relationship towards a conflict resolution for the satisfaction of basic human needs (BHNs) in Nigeria. It summarises the lessons learned from the "Project for the Blacks" and gives some constructive principles for conflict resolution in Nigeria as to conclusion for the book. We learned from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. (Myers and Enns, 2009, p. 49) that "there is some good in the worst of us and some evil in the best of us. When we discover this, we are less prone to hate our enemies". From this we ask, what is problematic in the best of Fr. Francis Libermann's project?

6.1 Concluding lessons from the "Project for the Blacks"

6.1.1 The problematic lessons

Firstly, Francis converted to Christianity. In doing so, he was "looking at the world from above and not from below", as postcolonial theology

proposes we do (Pears, 2010). By converting, he took on the hegemonic Christianity as the civilising religion. Francis also imposed Western civilisation on the indigenous population, but this was the civilisation of the colonisers. In doing so, Francis' project became almost synonymous with the colonial project. Moreover, by imposing Christianity as the only means by which the people could be saved, he also made the local population abandon their belief systems and cultural ways, thus following that of the colonisers.

Secondly, Francis insisted on the virtues of humility and love in dealing with the colonisers, which helped the project of the colonisers. It made it easy for them to go unchallenged in their abuse of power in their relationship with the local population, which they had colonised. Perhaps Francis' project also helped to sustain the notion that the white person was superior to the black person, thus supporting the process of domination of one group of people over another.

Thirdly, Francis' project did not call for justice for black people. He did not advocate a system that would bring to justice local chiefs and white colonial masters who were terrorising the local population. He did not call for the satisfaction of distributive justice—compensation or restitution for black people who were held in slavery for nearly 350 years. Nobody was held responsible for the evil of slavery, and the desire of the colonised to be compensated for the wrong done to them was not addressed in the project.

Finally, while Francis did not advocate that his missionaries should use adversarial methods with other religions, he suggested that black Roman Catholic priests should be able to destroy Protestantism and Islam. In this sense, the project supports the theory that religion can be at the root of conflict. This cannot be a way to promote peace; instead it may perpetuate adversity between religions, even when the coloniser is long gone from the black persons' land. In addition, the language he used when

addressing the non-religious French men and non-Christian blacks, for example by referring to them as “those people”, also set up the notion of “us” and “them”. He was separating people into groups in opposition to each other. Neither does this language help to promote peace; instead it may have perpetuated the adversarial approach that is now prevalent in the conflicts we have seen in Nigeria. Despite these disadvantages, positive lessons have emerged from this project, because it addresses some BHNs of the black population.

6.1.2 The positive lessons

We learned from the human needs theory (HNT) that basic human needs (BHNs) are essential to people’s survival and when these needs are unmet or frustrated, people may have no choice but to react, and they may react violently. Hence we cannot afford to ignore BHNs in peace-building and conflict resolution. HNT can be applied to inter-personal, inter-ethnic, inter-state, and international conflicts. We argued that this accounted for why Francis became a Christian: to meet his unmet BHNs of love, security, and identity in Christianity, since his three brothers were already Christians, his Mother was dead, and he did not like the idea of living alone with his father. Similarly, Francis argued that it was the social structures of slavery that made the local black population appear to be lazy, thievish, and barbaric, because these structures did not meet some of their BHNs. His project, therefore, addressed their human need of cultural security, as a people who have a language and culture of their own and insisted they should be educated in their own language.

Regarding the BHNs of security and identity, he asked Rome to create five bishoprics in West Africa alone and proposed to create a middle range group—catechists with minor orders, that was of clerical status, so that they could act between the priest and the people. This middle range group was a

necessary group for conflict resolution because they were to be more closely linked to the people and could act as intermediary between the elite and the people. However, this proposal was refused by Rome.

Concerning the human need for self-esteem—the need that others recognise blacks as being strong, competent, capable and have the ability to influence their environment (Marker, 2003)—he deconstructed prejudices held against black people, such as the belief that they were barbaric by nature, by showing that they were equally good in nature as white people and that both black and white people were all children of God; both were created by God. He insisted on helping black people to overcome the notion that they were inferior, saying "it is a grave sin to allow the notion to continue in minds of the Blacks" (ND, 1956, VII, p. 161). In this way, Francis' project subverted and undermined the system of superiority and inferiority between the two races. This was an example of the invitation we have from postcolonial theology that we should: "subvert and undermine all systems of dominance which watch over the realities of people's lives and subjectivity" (Pears, 2010, p. 165), as explored in the introduction to post-colonialism.

Moreover, Francis insisted on education and believed that education was the best way to bring social change, and not violence. This showed the influence on his thinking of the rationalist tradition of Enlightenment, as he was influenced by the philosopher Emile Rousseau. This philosophy helped Francis to articulate and analyse the situation faced by colonised people, which informed his design of his "Project for the Blacks".

The religious virtues of humility and charity underpinned Francis' project. It was these virtues that he acquired as a Jew and as a Christian, that led him to say to his missionaries,

> *Strip yourselves of Europe, its customs and spirit. Make yourselves black with the blacks in order to train them as*

> *they should be trained, not European-style but preserving their own particular ways; be to them as servants to their masters in order to perfect and sanctify them and make them people of God* (ND, 1956, IX, p. 330).

We have seen this in Chapter Four of this book. How could he have said that the former slave was now master to the white person? By using the Christian virtue as it showed itself in Christ, "Just so, the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt 20, 28).

So with humility, we learned that we should not appear more than what we are; but we also should know that we are more than what we appear to be. We need to know our virtues and our vices—the totality of our being. In addition, Francis used the virtue of charity, as in *carus,* the Latin meaning of the word, to show how precious and valuable black people were and deserve to be as highly prized, esteemed, and loved as white people were.

Drawing from these negative and positive lessons, we gathered from the "Project for the Blacks", we propose the following principles, which can help in designing a conflict resolution project in the context of the conflicts in Nigeria. We can only give principles, because we have learned to look at the world from below and not from above, all the more so as the HNT insists, that in applying the theory, the project should be built from bottom-up and not top-down.

6.2 Concluding Principles arising for conflict resolution in Nigeria

Multiple factors contribute to the current conflicts in Nigeria: using the human needs theory (HNT), we argued in the five conflicts examined above that the frustration of the meeting of unmet basic human needs

(BHNs) for 100 million Nigerians is the root of conflicts in Nigeria. The BHNs frustrated most are distributive justice, security, cultural security, self-esteem, and identity. Additionally, we argued that the frustration of these needs have been expressed as religious, ethnic, natural resource, and clash of cultures—related conflicts; hence, separating Nigerians into Muslims versus non-Muslims (sharia law conflict), majority ethnic groups versus minority ethnic groups (Niger Delta conflict), greedy leaders versus impoverished Nigerians (violence against children and cult violence against women), and Western culture versus Islamic culture (the Boko Haram conflict), set in opposition to each other. However, we reject that religions, ethnicity, cultures, and natural resources are the root causes of conflicts in Nigeria. They are satisfiers—means by which groups seek to satisfy their frustrated BHNs in Nigeria. The HNT elaboration of BHNs offers us neutral criteria by which religious and ethnic groups can measure what is required for peace in Nigeria without resorting to religious markers and ethnic boundary indicators. It also provides that greedy individuals can be shown that unless people's BHNs are met, their frustration is likely to lead to violent conflicts generating insecurity (a high cost for them) in order to change their perspective. Additionally, that in the clash of cultures, it can be demonstrated to each culture what it is seeking—the satisfaction of BHNs—a common problem to both cultures such that there is no need resorting to mutual exclusion or dehumanising politics against one another. Finally, the HNT offers us BHNs that those with grievances can point to and argue clearly as their BHNs are frustrated and they need to satisfy them.

Therefore, conflict resolution in Nigeria would have to seek ways of satisfying BHNs for Nigerians, but also taking into considerations religious and ethnic groupings, different cultures, natural resources, and greediness factors. Nonetheless, in proposing principles for a conflict resolution in

Nigeria, we focus on religion and ethnicity. Our choice is based on the fact that, as we have argued in the analysis of the five examples, religion and ethnicity were the predominant determinants of power relationships between politicians and the people. In addition, religion and ethnicity were also boundary indicators that helped create an "us" and "them" attitude leading to adversarial approaches to conflict resolution, rather than the "we" approach that leads to consensus. Additionally, we treat ethnicity in the context of religious experience, since our work is faith-based in suggesting our principles.

The first principle is to be clear on what religion is, that religious people have obligation to God and to human beings—creatures of the same God (Richardson, 1855, p. 1598). Therefore, religious groups in Nigeria should apply the virtue of humility in analysing how they evangelised their followers in Nigeria. They should ask the questions: (a) have they over emphasised the first part of religion: the "duty and obedience" to God and "to things sacred or consecrated to him"; and (b) do they tended to ignore the second part: "strict and conscientious discharge or observance of our duties or obligations to each other, as fellow-creatures, or creatures of the same God" (Richardson, 1855, p. 1598)? Perhaps we needed to equally insist on the latter part, as it is important for conflict resolution based on the satisfaction of BHNs. Given that we assume that there are 45% Christians, 45% Muslims, and 10% African Traditional Religionists in Nigeria, if Nigeria is a failed state (Banegas, 2008, p. 9) then perhaps Nigerian religions also are failed religions. Francis taught that the "knowledge of the lay person ought to be the same standard as that of the clergy" (ND, 1956, VI, pp. 65–66). This being the case, the failure of Nigerian political leaders may also be the failure of Nigerian religious leaders to evangelise them.

Consequently, the second principle is that the virtue of humility should help religious groups accept that, perhaps as a result of laying too

much emphasis on allegiance to God and ignoring our duties to our fellow human beings, religious leaders claim their powers are from God so they are accountable to God and not to the people. The consequence of this is that the civil leaders too, after being voted in, claim it is God that has given them power, therefore only God can remove them. They are not accountable to the people either. However, genuine religion as argued in this book, ascribes accountability to both God and human being—fellow creatures of the same God.

For these reasons, our five conflicts reviewed above suggested that some religious groups and the State were not concerned with meeting the BHNs of its people. Instead, they were concerned with how to get power and exercised this power on the people in whatever way they wished. These people who wanted religious or civil power brought adversarial approaches to problems, and got power easily from the dominant groups. However, it was a divide-and-rule strategy for power and not for service to the people. And since the people had unmet BHNs, they were drawn into violent conflicts.

Our third principle is, therefore, education. We have seen how Fr. Francis Libermann depended on education in his "Project for the Blacks". This principle needs to be divided in two parts. The first part is what John Paul Lederach calls "the power paradox: empowerment and interdependence" (Lederach, 1995, p. 21), in which empowerment helps the people to overcome the obstacle, thereby making it possible for them to move from "I cannot" to "I can". It means helping the people to defend themselves: helping them to be the actors. This empowerment involves interdependence—that is mutual dependence, since "I can" is only fully accomplished with "I need you" (Lederach, 1995, p. 21). That means helping the people to see that they need each other and they cannot do without the other. In this "we" attitude, we see that all of the 250 strong

ethnicities in Nigeria need each other. However, this alone cannot check the excessive power of leaders, a factor that necessitates the second part of the principle.

The second part of principle three is to use the power paradox to pursue the goal of post-colonialism (Mwaura, 2009 and Pears, 2010), which is to subvert and undermine all systems of dominance, all power differentials, whatever their origin and whatever systems underpin and perpetuate them. To achieve this, we must empower the people to use nonviolent action as a means of resistance, and thereby mediate unmet BHNs, instead of using violent methods. In Chapter Four, we saw that nonviolent action is a civilian-based method used to wage conflict through social, psychological, economic, and political means, without the threat or use of violence. Here, we are referring to nonviolent action based on principles according to which all religious groups in Nigeria will reject violence as a means for struggle or social change. A detailed account of these methods is beyond the scope of this book, but it is an area for further research in Nigeria. Namely, what nonviolent methods will be suitable in the case of Nigerian's conflicts? Francis would agree with this method, as it helps people to take control of their lives; his "Projects for the Blacks" was to make sure both religious and civil leaders were held accountable. Otherwise, as he puts it "one will destroy what the other builds (ND, 1956, VI pp. 65–66). The use of nonviolent methods is a promising approach that can help the people check the power of their leaders and make them accountable to them. The people have elected their leaders and they should be accountable to them.

6.3 Concluding proposals

We have analysed in this book that Nigeria is struggling with the questions "who am I?", "where am I?" and "where am I going?" This is

because there are various kinds of violent conflicts existing in present day Nigeria. However, the life of Fr. Francis Libermann which answered to these three questions showed the pathway to the kind of conflict resolution required in the Nigerian violent conflicts. The implementation of the three principles outlined above could help build peace in Nigeria. Given that Nigeria holds 25 per cent of Africa's population, any system that succeeds in Nigeria also has a good chance of being successful in other African countries. We hope that the religious groups in Nigeria will allow themselves to be led by the religious virtues of humility and charity so that they connect with the people in order to bring peace to Nigeria. What are the challenges Francis's project possesses for Nigeria? In answering this question, we remind ourselves of what Francis Libermann' "Project for the Blacks" stood for:

1. It changed the belief held by the Roman Catholic Church that, regarding the African people, the most important factor was their conversion to Catholicism, to that of establishing an indigenous Roman Catholic Church in Africa. Hence, religious groups in Nigeria work and change the notion that Nigeria is a failed state, because if Nigeria is a failed state, its religions are also failed religions, given that Nigeria is said to be 100% religious, so that Africa's most populous nation may achieve prosperity.
2. He deconstructed prejudiced views of black people that they were by nature savage and barbaric, and thus inferior to white people, showing that black people were equal to white people, as all were the children of God. Thus, Religious groups in Nigeria deconstruct the view of one religion being better than another and one ethnic group being superior or more important to another in Nigeria. Let religious groups organise Problem-solving Workshops (PSWs see Burton, 1986–87; Kelman, 1998) to bring together high level representatives

of parties to conflicts in Nigeria to engage in private, confidential, and unofficial interactions so as to facilitate an understanding of one another's perspectives and the frustrated needs at the root of each conflicts. This is where, perhaps, the new understanding will inform political debate and policies on the satisfaction of BHNs for the generality of Nigerians and the resolution of conflicts—a solution which will be complete, acceptable, self-supporting, satisfactory, uncompromising, innovative, and un-coerced (Mitchell, 1990).

3. Francis acknowledged the distinctive nature of the African people's language, arts and crafts, and agricultural methods; similarly, let religious groups help the acknowledgement of the distinctiveness of each of the 250 strong ethnic groups or nationalities and more than 300 languages in Nigeria so as to highly develop the indigenous systems of Nigeria.
4. For him, leadership meant being at the service of the people and problem solving, not command and control or quest for power through the method of divide-and-rule. In the same way, let all religions in Nigeria hold their members accountable in order to change this mentality of leadership for power to a leadership for service to the people in Nigeria.
5. For Francis, education is a means for social change—attending to both the spiritual and BHNs of the people. In Nigeria, education should attend to the people's needs rather than the needs of status and prestige in society.

Finally, let us, like Fr. Francis Libermann: "establish schools everywhere we go", establish peace education structures in the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, in churches and mosques, at home and in public places in Nigeria. Here, we can teach that our institutions and social norms practice three types of disputes resolution (see diagram 1.1).

Firstly, they practice dispute settlement, where the primary concern is "power-bargaining" as may be exercised in courts focused on interests in which case the police enforce outcomes. Secondly, they practice dispute "management" where bodies like governments (or the most powerful) seek to maintain the status quo to avoid escalation of conflict while maintain control without giving away much in order to contain, for example, violence, but without dealing with the underlying causes. Thirdly, in sports, there are referees, but also sports bodies that adjudicate what is acceptable or not acceptable for a game to be won or lost. However, there is a fourth type—conflict resolution that we need to learn and practice: we practice conflict resolution which is a facilitated analytical problem-solving process that seeks self-sustaining outcomes—the satisfaction of the BHNs of all parties without coercion or external enforcement (Burton, 1997). Therefore, let religious groups use the religious virtues of humility, simplicity, gentleness, and charity to build this project for a new Nigeria and Africa.[14] Finally, I am interested in carrying out an empirical future research to find out if, in fact, the frustration of BHNs is the root of religious, ethnic, clash of culture, and socio-economic conflicts in Nigeria and to find a bottom-up conflict resolution approach for conflict resolution in Nigeria. Moreover, I highlighted in Chapter One that HNT is gender blind or gender neutral in its elaboration of BHNs and the composition of delegates to PSW, but the ontological reality of Nigeria demands gender sensitivity in the HNT. Therefore, in a future empirical study, I shall attend to this questioning.[15]

[14] At a personal level Francis Libermann's methods helped me resolve a conflict in the parish in Mexico; the story is in Reflexivity.

[15] See my further research work, forthcoming: Agberagba, T. J., 2014. *Women's Peacebuilding Initiatives in the Benue Valley, Nigeria: Gender, Fundamental Human Needs and Conflict Resolution.* Germany: Lambert Academic Publishing.

Reflexivity

According to Bryman (2012, pp. 393–394), reflexivity entails a sensitivity to the researcher's cultural, political, and social context; in particular how one accounts for the power relationship with those one studies. In my case, my research subject Fr. Francis Libermann is higher in status than me—the researcher. I account for how this power differential affected me. Francis' attitude is summed up in his humility, simplicity, gentleness, and charity before God and human beings. This affected me greatly and helped me to resolve a long-standing conflict I had as pastor of a parish. I narrate the essentials of the story here.

The story in Mexico: I arrived in the Parish of Our Lady of Guadalupe in the city of Valles, Mexico on 25 March 2003; I was exactly one year in Mexico, as a missionary of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit from Nigeria, Africa. I was sent there to take over from the pastor who was going to a new mission. I was with him until November 2003 when I took over the parish. During my five month of apprenticeship, I saw many things that I would have liked to introduce in the parish. Firstly, I would have liked a parish council elected by the people in all the communities, because at that time the parish was run by one catechist in every community. I asked the pastor why this was the case and he answered "I do not want problems, so I choose my catechists and run the place with them. That makes life simple for me". I said to myself that I would rather have people who disagree with me than those who will always agree with me. Secondly, the catechism classes continued for one year. After First Holy Communion, most female children never returned to the Church until it was time to celebrate their fifteenth birthday, the age at which they pass from girlhood to womanhood. The boys came back for marriage, if they did

it in the church. I discovered this because, apart from the children in catechism classes, it was rare to see other children come to mass or church activities. So I said we need to extend the catechism programme to three years. In addition, instead of one catechist, I felt we needed to have at least two or more from every community. I was not the only person who wanted these changes; the pastoral programme for the dioceses had asked the pastors to carry out these reforms three years previously. Regarding catechism, the diocese had asked that it be extended to six years, but I thought it prudent to begin with three and then increasing it with time. But in order to carry out these changes, I had to communicate with the people.

Dialogue with the people: As soon as I took over as pastor, I set up a meeting of all the Extraordinary Eucharistic Ministers, leaders of all societies in the parish, the Catechists, and all people of goodwill. At this meeting, I presented and explained the diocese's pastoral plan regarding the parish council and catechism classes, and called for its implementation. The Catechists opposed it strongly; they were doing their best leading communities, when nobody was interested in doing it because there is no salary. This view was also echoed by other members of the assembly. Other issues discussed included the following: the need to introduce monthly masses in all the communities, as opposed to the practise of having mass only when requested by someone; and the need, therefore, to have a team of community leaders (about five persons) whose tasks would include preparing the chapel, as opposed to the old system in which the responsibility to prepare the chapel was that of the one who requested the mass. The people from the communities were happy at these proposals and they supported me on them. But they expressed their reservations regarding the possibility of getting five people to act as leaders, knowing how difficult it is to get just one person. They suggested that perhaps one family be given the work. But I objected to that proposal, arguing that others

would identify the church with just one family, rather than seeing the church as belonging to the whole community. However, we agreed to give it a trial period.

We worked out a programme of visiting the communities, having meetings and celebrations with all the members of each community. To facilitate this, we asked those present at the gathering to invite all their community members. After a long debate, we arrived at a ground rule for the election of leaders: we would hold the elections at the end of mass and until the leaders have been elected, nobody will go out. This was to make sure people did not leave after mass, leaving only a few to fulfil the task. We adhered to this ground rule when I visited every community; the celebrations lasted a long time—sometimes up to three hours. In any case, we succeeded in five people being elected from each community as members of the Christian Community Council. Two were coordinators, one male and the other female, one for evangelisation, another for liturgy, and the last one for hospitality—coordinating charity work for the community. We also worked hard to get at least two catechists in every community. This was a big relief for me because I was alone in the parish with 15 communities to oversee. Nevertheless, this created other problems in the parish.

The conflict: Most of the catechists who had been in charge of the communities refused to continue to teach. They disapproved the limiting of their role to only teaching catechism; more so, this was a form of disempowerment. Moreover, I said to the new community councils that everybody in the parish had a right to come and see me for their personal problems and that if they wanted a mass or a celebration, they (the people) would first have to inform the leaders in the communities, and then come to me; and that I shall, in consultation with them, decide what to do. Some of the leaders were not happy with this. They wanted to have more control

and felt that people should pass through them rather than come to me directly. In two communities, all the members of the community council resigned and I could not find new ones. Even in the communities where the councils ran, the communities were divided along the lines of the old catechist families and the new group of people working with me. I tried to resolve this conflict by visiting some of these families and talking with them and also by sending people to talk with them, but the conflict remained unresolved in some cases. Others showed little understanding of what I was doing. However, following the retreat in February 2007, the Christian virtue of humility as practiced by Libermann inspired me to action.

The Christian virtue of humility: With Francis' wisdom regarding humility, simplicity, and gentleness, my moral imagination came to light. We used to do house to house Evangelisation in all the communities during the Lenten Season, sharing the word of God with the people in their homes and blessing the houses. Then, we celebrated the Eucharist in the community chapel at the end. Providentially, this year, 2007, the people wanted us to do something relating to reconciliation and I saw the opportunity to seek reconciliation by addressing the problems that had resulted from the issue of catechists and the changes that had taken place in the parish since I arrived. I did not know what was going to happen, I was taking a risk.

At the Eucharistic celebration, during the time for penance, I knelt down and asked the people to forgive me saying:

> *I acted hastily in all the changes that took place in the parish. I did not take into consideration your history; you lived with the old system for at least ten years and I arrived here, took advantage of the diocesan policy and insisted on these changes because I did not like the system that was in place. I now know it*

took the priests of the dioceses 13 years to accept the plan and in most cases they did not work with you the people. Moreover, I did not show appreciation for the work of the catechists who not only worked for many years in this field, but also helped in running the communities. My actions undermined and rendered them redundant in the communities. Please forgive me and let us find some common grounds to work together.

The result was a mystery to me. The celebrations were well attended as people knew beforehand that I was going to say something on how to carryout reconciliation in the family. I repeated this in the 13 communities during the 40 days of Lent. This part of the celebration lasted about five minutes, but it was always the longest five minutes of the celebration. As I said before, I was taking a risk and did not know what was going to happen, but as the Bible says: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God" (Mt. 5, 9). At every celebration, peace began to reign in those parish communities I had this conflict.

Conflict resolution: I felt blessed. People came to me after the mass hugging me and crying with apologies. They felt they were the ones who should ask for forgiveness since they have seen the positive effects of the changes we made in the parish. Such positive effects include the fact that the children were being so well doctrinally groomed that they assumed the role of teaching their parents the Christian faith; and the fact that I attended to each community with great care, which was quite noticeable to them. With the event of that memorable day, the people resolved to work with me and they kept to their promise. Some of the old catechists came back while others, who were much older and could not assume the role anymore, sent their sons and daughters to join the group of catechists. At that time, I was struggling to finish work on the parish church and within a year the people made sure the project was completed. Nevertheless, some people did not

respond to my call and did not return to full participation in the Christian community life. But I reduced the conflict to a minimal level.

I left for my studies at University of Dublin, Trinity College in 2009. In the year 2010, on the 4 of April, my birthday, here in Dublin, I was surprised to receive a call from a group of 15 Catechists, who talked to and sang for me for about 35 minutes. I also received ten other calls from people in the parish. This was one of the traditions of the people that we welcomed into the Christian community, that is, we saw the birthday of any member of the church as an occasion to build unity in the parish; thus we visited and sang songs, especially the Mariachis, *Las Mañanitas,* the rising song at midnight. It was sung for me here in Dublin at one o'clock in the morning.

Conflict analysis: Looking back on the conflict, I can see my interest in establishing democratic structures in the parish and the need to have a parish community in which the people participated fully, along with my personal fear and anxiety that I might overwork myself because I was alone. On the other hand, the catechists had the interest of leading their communities, as well as the need to participate in running the communities. While I was not opposed to their participation, they wanted to do it alone and I disagreed with that, which led to the conflict of interest.

However, my approach was top-down and not bottom-up. It amount to doing theology from above and not from below, as postcolonial theology advocates. As I said in my apology, I did not know the history of the people. In Mexico, one party had ruled the country for seventy years; when I arrived, this system had been changed only four years before. The people were not used to democratic structures, since in the Catholic Church things also operated mostly in a top-down fashion. It took the priest 13 years to accept the plan. The people were not part of the planning so how could I expect them to accept it?

In any case, I now know that what resolved the conflict was my appeal to their BHNs of love and self-esteem: to be recognised by others as competent and having an impact on their environment. As long as this was not done, my private appeals did not work. They were publically disempowered and this needed to be resolved publically. Once I used the public approach it opened the door to reconciliation and to resolving the conflict.

But I could not have done this without the virtues of humility, simplicity, gentleness, and love. I needed these virtues to enable me to do what I did. They are some of the religious virtues connected to conflict resolution. I am now learning to do religion from below and not from above as a missionary. This is going to take some time, but I hope to do it with the help of God.

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