

Africa's Quest for Development and Peace: Lessons from *Fratelli Tutti*

Francis 'Kunle Adedara, PhD
SS. Peter and Paul Major Seminary
Bodija, Ibadan, Oyo State
fradedara@gmail.com

Abstract

The essay examines the subject of development in the human society and submits that there can be no true development without peace. No society can grow without the foundation of peace. It proposes further that justice is also a necessary factor in the quest for development. Thus, to development and peace, justice must be included in the vision of a society where growth is inseparable from political stability, egalitarianism and tranquillity of due order. The first part of the essay is devoted to examining the Theology of Peace, drawing from biblical insights on the concept of peace and giving a contemporary analysis of the theology of peace in questioning the social issues that are linked to the development of nations. It looks at the concept of development and its indices for peaceful co-existence among peoples and their welfare; and it explores the perspectives from which development can be sought on the African continent. The essay subsequently examines the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* of Pope Francis and draws lessons from it on how nations can work together for peace and the development of the human societies, especially in the poorer countries of the world in general and on the African continent in particular.

Keywords: Complexity Science, Development, Justice, Peace, Sustainable Well-being.

1. Introduction

As it is implicit in the topic of this essay, there can be no true quest for development where there is no peace. It means any human society questing for growth and development must always build on the foundation of peace. However, to complete the tripod on which any thriving society must rest, a third ingredient is always

necessary. Therefore, to development and peace, justice must be included in the vision of a society where growth is inseparable from political stability, egalitarianism and tranquillity of due order. The first part of this essay is devoted to examining the Theology of Peace, drawing from biblical insights on the concept of peace and giving a contemporary analysis of the theology of peace in questioning the social issues that are linked to the development of nations. The essay further looks at the concept of development and its indices for peaceful co-existence among peoples and their welfare. And it also explores the perspectives from which development can be sought on the African continent. The second part of this essay examines the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*¹ of Pope Francis and draws lessons from it on how nations can work together for peace and the development of the human societies, especially in the poorer countries of the world in general and on the African continent in particular.

To proceed with these objectives, this essay highlights Barder's analysis of *complexity science*, where the economy as a *complex adaptive system* is non-linear system. Its complexity is evident because an economy consists of a series of people, firms, products and institutions which interact with each other, each adapting to their changing circumstances as they do so. Therefore, there is no one-fix for all system. In this submission, development is not the sum of well-being of people in the economy; and it cannot be attained by making enough people in the economy better off. Thus, welfare of the people must be sustainable for all peoples. In this regard, development is a system-wide manifestation of the way that people, firms, technologies and institutions interact with each other within the economic, social and political system. It means development is the capacity of those systems to provide self-organizing complexity. This essay therefore shows that development is more than improvements in people's well-being: it

¹ *Fratelli tutti* (All Brothers) is the third encyclical of Pope Francis, subtitled "On Fraternity and Social Friendship". In the document, Pope Francis states that the way the COVID-19 pandemic was managed by the world countries has shown a failure in global cooperation. The encyclical calls for more human fraternity and solidarity, and it is a plea to reject wars.

also means the capacity of the economic and social system to provide the circumstances for continued well-being of the people. It argues that any quest for development on the African continent must take note of such complex adaptive system, where the programme of development is built on the sustainable self-organizing complexity that is indigenous to the social and economic terrains of the African continent.

The essay also makes the case that there can be no true peace without justice. This underscores the fact that economic progress in itself is insufficient; there is need for sustainable social progress. If development is only targeted at the economic well-being of a section of the society, then there can be no equitable distribution of resources so as to guarantee social progress of all peoples. Without such just order, there can be no peace for human co-existence and societal development. Therefore, development is authentic, complete and integral if it promotes the good of the whole person, of every human being, and of the society as a whole. Authentic development interlocks with true peace. With this understanding of development, the essay highlights and draws lessons from the encyclical of Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* (On Fraternity and Social Friendship).

2. Theology of Peace, Biblical Insights and Contemporary Social Issues

In her essay on Peace, Judith Dwyer gives a contemporary theological analysis of peace; and she makes a compelling case that such analysis must include a wide range of issues. Firstly, she says that the analysis “incorporates biblical insights, ethical norms such as justice, the contributions of the social sciences, empirical data, and an assessment of the signs of the time.”² She says further: “It necessarily inspects the argument that deterrence provides a “peace of a sort,” the call for disarmament, and the church’s insistence on the centrality of justice as the foundation of true

² Judith A. Dwyer, “Peace” in *The New Dictionary of Theology*, edited by Joseph A. Komonchak, Mary Collins, Dermot A. Lane (Bangalore: Theological Publications in India, 1999), 748.

peace in an interdependent world.”³ And, finally, she says the analysis “includes some practical ideas for advancing peace and suggests some initial steps which will lead to the development of a theology of peace.”⁴ What Dwyer proposes in her analysis of a theology of peace indicates that it concerns, first and foremost, human relation to God, in whom there is true peace, and in whom peace coincides with justice. And secondly, that it means issues of peace in the human society, and especially peaceful coexistence among human beings, must be rooted in its relatedness to God who gives peace and establishes the right order. This means peace is the same as justice in God, because in both instances there is bestowal of perfection. Concerning peace, God bestows perfection by removing something;⁵ and concerning justice, he bestows perfection on things in due proportion. Therefore, peace among men must always include these two senses of peace and justice. In other words, for there to be true peace among men, there must be removal of all desires contrary to tranquillity of order,⁶ and each person must be given his due.⁷

A Christian theology of peace, which necessarily includes biblical insights, shows that the scriptures are foundational to its proper understanding. Dwyer proposes that, given the complexity of the scriptures, three key factors are important for any study of the Old Testament and New Testament contributions to the topic of peace. The first factor is in relation to how the term “peace” has been understood in different ways at various times and in various contexts. In this, she highlights three notions of peace. In the first instance, “peace implies a right relationship with God, which entails forgiveness, reconciliation, and union.”⁸ The second involves an eschatological notion of peace, which entails “a final, full realization of God’s salvation when all creation will be made whole.”⁹ This second notion hints at the fullness of perfection that

³ Dwyer, “Peace”, 748.

⁴ Dwyer, “Peace”, 748.

⁵ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* II-II, q.29, a.2.

⁶ Cf. St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei*, xix.13.

⁷ Cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, q.21, a.3.

⁸ Dwyer, “Peace”, 749.

⁹ Dwyer, “Peace”, 749.

is attained in full communion with the God of peace. Thus, God is the peace of all creation, in whom they attain their goal, and find true rest.¹⁰ Even when these notions of peace predominate in the scriptures, there are other meanings of peace, such as an individual's sense of well-being, or cessation of armed hostilities. Peace, understood in this way, underscores the global economic and political cooperation that nations seek in their relations and in the alliances they seek to build.

The second key factor that Dwyer proposes for understanding the concept of peace in the scriptures is the consideration of the different historical situations of the biblical times. She says: "the scriptures reflect many varied historical situations, all different from our own. An awareness of this factor guards against a too facile application of biblical teachings to our own social and political arenas."¹¹ In this regard, it should be noted that it is not every historical antecedent in the Bible that is applicable to issues of conflicts and resolutions in the contemporary world. This is, however, without prejudice to the teaching, in the tradition of the Christian faith, that the word of God is alive, and that it is relevant for every time. Thus, a proper contextual interpretation of every biblical text is always necessary, so that it can be applied suitably to the unique situation of every age and time. The third key factor for understanding the meaning of peace in the scriptures that Dwyer proposes is in connection with absence of any specific treatise on peace. She says, "the scriptures, which speak primarily of God's intervention in history, contain no specific treatise on peace."¹² Because of such absence, therefore, the topic of peace "must be seen in light of the overall focus of the scriptures, namely,

¹⁰ Rest in this context implies, on the one hand, a cessation of all tribulations, alienations and hostilities that separate man from God, and that separate man from man; and, on the other hand, rest indicates the satisfaction of desire of all creation that is only fully attainable in God. Such satisfaction of desire involves the right order of all things to God.

¹¹ Dwyer, "Peace", 749.

¹² Dwyer, "Peace", 749.

God's intervention in human affairs and our response to the divine initiative."¹³

The image of God that is generally presented in the Old Testament is that of a warrior. However, this image was gradually transformed, particularly after the experience of the exile. Thus, the Old Testament "understands peace in light of Israel's relation to God, and therefore as a gift from God and as the fruit of God's saving activity."¹⁴ It focuses primarily on the unity and harmony of the community, and the restoration of right order among all peoples and within all of God's creation. This right order is the justice with which God established all things, so that all of creation is properly ordered to God. Such understanding shows the intrinsic link between peace and justice. The relationship by which the people were rightly ordered to God, and by which they recognized him as their God, was grounded in and expressed by a covenantal union in which God promised to be present to the people, saving them and leading them to freedom. The people, on their part, made a commitment to be faithful and obedient to God (cf. Leviticus 26:3-16). Peace is a special characteristic of this covenant (cf. Ezekiel 37:26); and it is built upon justice and fidelity to God's law, as the prophets Jeremiah, Isaiah and Ezekiel clearly remind us (cf. Jeremiah 6:14; 8:10-12; Isaiah 48:18; Ezekiel 13:16). In the contemporary society, this understanding of peace, as it is intrinsically linked to justice, must be recovered if there is to be any meaningful pursuit of peace and development. In other words, peace comes from right order between human beings and God, and right order among all peoples; and where such right order exists, people work for harmonious co-existence, and for social, economic and political development. Where God is the common object of love of all peoples, he intervenes to sustain their common good.

In its eschatological understanding, despite the fact that war and injustice continued in the post-exilic era, peace involves God's promise of a final salvation involving all peoples and all creation,

¹³ Dwyer, "Peace", 749. Cf. National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response* (Washington, D.C: United States Catholic Conference, 1983), C.P. #27-29.

¹⁴ Dwyer, "Peace", 749.

an ultimate reign of peace. This was an integral part of the hope of the Old Testament. In the New Testament, the ultimate reign of peace was fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the Messiah. He is the one through whom all things in heaven and on earth were reconciled to God, when he made peace by his death on the cross (Colossians 1:19-20). The words and actions of Christ indicate that forgiveness and love characterize God's reign (cf. Matthew 5:33-48; 6:14-15; Luke 6:27-38); but they cost him his life. In the same way, for there to be true peace among peoples, and in human societies, there must be forgiveness and love. This too will bring about death. In other words, people must be ready to "die to self", to "give up" their anger and grievances, and to "let go" of certain interests, so that there can be peace for the common good and common interest of all peoples and all human societies.

In articulating a theology of peace in the contemporary world, one needs to consider the factor of eschatological tension. In other words, while it is the case that God sustains every human society and all creation; and while it is true that the grace of the kingdom of God is already present, it is equally true that the fullness of God's reign has not yet been realized.¹⁵ The Catholic social teaching recognizes that such eschatological tension marks contemporary life. We find in Dwyer a good summary of what this tension means, and how the Church draws a message of hope from it. She explains:

Within this context, the church situates its treatment of peace and war; short of the fullness of the kingdom, peace is possible but neither permanent nor total in a world marred by the presence of sin within the human heart. A true peace, which is always more than the absence of war, flourishes in a social

¹⁵ We find a reference to such unrealized perfection of all things in the teaching on Divine Providence in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, where it says, "Creation has its own goodness and proper perfection, but it did not spring forth complete from the hands of the Creator. The Universe was created "in a state of journeying" (*in statu viae*) toward an ultimate perfection yet to be attained, to which God has destined it. We call "divine providence" the disposition by which God guides his creation toward this perfection" (CCC 302).

order which is founded on truth, built on justice, enlivened by love and refined in freedom.¹⁶

This means that in the midst of social and political strife in the contemporary world, and especially on the African continent, peace is possible. The Christian faith sustains this hope. However, there is always strong emphasis on the necessary indices for peace. Therefore, it is impossible to talk of true peace where there is no truth, justice, love and freedom. These are important criteria for speaking about quest for peace on the African continent. The quest for true peace underlies the Church's teaching on just war, deterrence, disarmament, and global development, all of which are complicated aspects of speaking about peace and war. However, where the Church mediates in such matters of conflicts, especially those arising from factors of injustice, economic deprivation, and social marginalization, it is always with the view to restore the right order. Restoration of right order is two-dimensional: right order to God, who is the reference of all perfections; and right order among peoples and nations, which must be based on God as the goal of true peace on earth. Consequently, every quest for peace and development must always be in relation to God, in whom all find peace, and through whom all peoples live in peace with one another.

3. Peace and Development of Peoples and Nations

We discussed in the section above that peace is intrinsic to development, and we concluded on the terms of peace and development. Before we engage in a more specific discussion of peace and development, as it relates to development of peoples and nations, it is important to examine what development means. To discuss this section of the essay, I took the liberty to look at different definitions of the term "development". The obvious first place to look at is the Cambridge Dictionary, where it says development is "the process in which someone or something grows

¹⁶ Dwyer, "Peace", 750. Cf. the treatment of this issue in John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, 37.

or changes and become more advanced.”¹⁷ Under this term, it also lists development as the “organized increase of a country’s industry and wealth.” Merriam-Webster Dictionary gives a similar definition, where it says development is “the act or process of growing or causing something to grow or become larger or more advanced.”¹⁸ This second definition nuances the first by showing that development is not just a random and passive thing; rather, it is a conscious act intended for specific goals. There must therefore be real actors who drive development. The overall entries under the term “development” show that it implies growth and advancement; it indicates a positive projection that underscores improvement in infrastructures and welfare of the peoples. If this is the case, then a discussion of the quest for development on the African continent must necessarily include a discussion of infrastructural development and welfare of the people.

To examine how this understanding of development plays out in the lives of people in real time and situation, I also consulted the researches and works on the site of “Centre for Global Development”. I find particularly interesting, a commentary and analysis on “development” by Owen Barder, a former Vice President and Director of Centre for Global Development Europe.¹⁹ To the question “What is development?” Barder’s analysis looks at how the understanding of the term has shifted, based on how people’s lives are impacted. For example, he notes that the Nobel prize-winning economist, Amartya Sen,²⁰ has twice changed our

¹⁷ Cambridge English Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/development> (Accessed on the 15th of January 2021).

¹⁸ Merriam-Webster Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/development> (Accessed on the 15th of January 2021).

¹⁹ In this section, I am drawing from Owen Barder’s analysis (cf. “What is Development?” <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/what-development> (Accessed 15/2/2021) that looks at the implications of complexity theory for development. It draws on an online lecture based on his Kapuscinski Lecture in May 2012 which was sponsored by UNDP and the EU. In this analysis, Barder explains how complexity science, which is belatedly getting more attention from mainstream economists, gives a new perspective to the meaning of ‘development’.

²⁰ While this section deals with Barder’s analysis of how the meaning of development has shifted, the conclusion is that the view of Amartya Sen that development must be judged by its impact on people, not merely by changes to

thinking about what we mean by development. Prior to the 1980's, traditional welfare economics had focused on incomes as the main measure of well-being. But Sen's work in the 1980's showed that poverty involved a wider range of deprivations in health, education and living standards which were not captured by income alone. "His '*capabilities approach*' led to introduction of the United Nations (UN) Human Development Index, and subsequently the Multidimensional Poverty Index, both of which aim to measure development in this broader sense."²¹ It shows that, in addition to the factor of income, deprivations in health, education and living standards are factors in development and well-being of people. However, Sen introduced another factor in 1999 with his argument that *freedoms* constitute not only the means but the ends in development. Barder remarks that "Sen's view is now widely accepted: development must be judged by its impact on people, not only by changes in their income but more general in terms of their choices, capabilities and freedoms; and we should be concerned about the distribution of these improvements, not just the simple average for a society."²² In other words, development must include variety of choices that are available to the people; the people's capacity to choose; and their freedom to choose. Moreover, this must be realizable for the people, not merely proposed ideals for a society.

However, Barder contends that to define development as improvements in people's well-being does not do justice to what the terms means to most of us.

Development also carries a connotation of lasting change. Providing a person with a bed net or a water pump can often be an excellent, cost-effective way to improve her well-being, but if the improvement goes away when we stop providing the bed net or water pump, we would not normally describe that as development. This suggests that development consists of

their income but more in terms of their choices, capabilities and freedoms, is widely accepted. For more in-depth study of the subject, See Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

²¹ See Owen Barder, "What is Development?" <https://www.cgdev.org/blog/what-development> (Accessed on the 15th of February 2021).

²² Barder, "What is Development?"

more than improvements in the well-being of citizens, even broadly defined: it also conveys something about the capacity of economic, political and social systems to provide the circumstances for that well-being on a sustainable, long-term basis.²³

Barder makes a compelling argument here, because development involves such capacity building and enabling environment that can sustain the well-being of people. Such vision of development seeks to build institutions and social systems, and not just to build people for specific periods of time. However, he notes that mainstream economics has had difficulty in explaining how economic and social systems evolve to create the kind of capacity that is advocated here. Of particular note is how economic models have struggled to explain why some countries have experienced rapid economic growth while others have not. Drawing analogy and some lessons from *complexity science*, Barder says that the problems in working in development are complicated in the sense that making progress involves tackling lots of different problems. He remarks further that to say the economy is a *complex adaptive system* implies something specific about its dynamic properties. By 'complex adaptive system', he means a non-linear system. Complexity of the system is evident because an "economy consists of a series of people, firms, products and institutions which interact with each other, each adapting to their changing circumstances as they do so."²⁴

According to Barder, "One of the key lessons from complexity theory is that complex adaptive system can have system-wide properties which do not correspond to the properties of individual components."²⁵ In simple terms, there is no one-fix for all system. He makes the case that development is an emergent property of the economic and social system; and from this he draws the following conclusion:

Development is not the sum of well-being of people in the economy and we cannot bring it about simply by making

²³ Barder, "What is Development?"

²⁴ Barder, "What is Development?"

²⁵ Barder, "What is Development?"

enough people in the economy better off. Development is instead a system-wide manifestation of the way that people, firms, technologies and institutions interact with each other within the economic, social and political system. Specifically, development is the capacity of those systems to provide self-organizing complexity. Self-organizing complexity in an adaptive system is never designed or deliberately built: it comes about from a process of adaptation and evolution. It follows that if we want to accelerate and shape development, we should focus especially on how the environment can be made most conducive for self-organizing complexity to evolve.²⁶

All of this shows that development is more than improvements in people's well-being: it also means the capacity of the economic and social system to provide the circumstances for that continued well-being. This makes development sustainable. Any quest for development on the African continent must take note of such complex adaptive system, where the programme of development is built on the sustainable self-organizing complexity that is indigenous to the social and economic terrains of the African continent; without undue comparison to Europe and North America; but not without exploring all the avenues for economic cooperation with Europe and North America. This has important implication for countries within Africa, wishing to put their economy and society onto a path of faster and sustainable development, and also for outside countries who want to help that process.

In the previous section, we saw that there can be no true peace without justice. So far, in this section, we have tried to understand the meaning of development and the perspectives from which it can be sought in Africa. It is clear that development from the perspectives of economic growth and social well-being must be aimed at the sustainable well-being of the people. Paul VI, in his encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, On the Development of Peoples, issued in 1967, was among the first to draw the world's attention to the fact that economic progress in itself is insufficient, that it

²⁶ Barder, "What is Development?"

demands social progress.²⁷ He insisted that development must be integral, that is, the development of every person and of the whole person.²⁸ However, we can only truly work for the well-being of people where there is peace. Since the issuing of Pope Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio*, Catholic social teaching has emphasized the interlocking nature of authentic development and true peace. Authentic development is a complete and integral development which promotes the good of the whole person, of every human being, and of the society as a whole. Such development eliminates excessive economic, social, and cultural inequities, thereby providing a solid foundation upon which humanity can construct true peace. This insight for peace and development has been developed by subsequent papal encyclicals and annual "Word Day of Peace" messages. Central to the messages is the insistence that God has bestowed a precious dignity upon each human being, and that grounded in this human nature are certain basic rights, the denial of which thwarts individual human fulfilment and the well-being of society as a whole.

For there to be true peace built on justice for the thriving of any human society, the inalienable rights of peoples and nations must be respected by all. These include rights to the fulfilment of material needs (such as food, clothing, shelter); rights to fundamental human needs of health and education; guarantee of fundamental freedoms; and the protection of relationships that are essential to participation in the life of society and in the committee of nations. In his 1987 "World Day of Peace" message, Pope John Paul II explicitly cited certain contemporary practices which prevent human solidarity and development: a xenophobia which closes nations in on themselves; ideologies which foster racial hatred or religious intolerance, and unjust or arbitrary border closings which separate families.²⁹ To all of these, the Holy Father offered effective solidarity as antidote.

²⁷ See Paul VI, Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, On the Development of Peoples (issued in 1967), 35

²⁸ See Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*, 14-21

²⁹ See John Paul II, *Development and Solidarity: Two Keys to Peace* (Message for the Celebration of World Day of Peace, 1 January 1987), n. 4.

For if the essential note of solidarity is to be found in the radical equality of all men and women, then any and every policy that contradicts the basic dignity and human rights of any person or group of persons is a policy that is to be rejected. On the contrary, policies and programmes that build open and honest relationships among peoples, that forge just alliances, that unite people in honourable cooperation, are to be fostered. Such initiatives do not ignore the real linguistic, racial, religious, social or cultural differences among peoples; nor do they deny the great difficulties in overcoming long-standing divisions and injustice. But they do give pride of place to the elements that unite, however small they may appear to be.³⁰

He says further that the spirit of solidarity is a spirit that is open to dialogue. It finds its roots in truth, and it needs truth to develop. Therefore, for there to be development of peoples, nations must show solidarity with one another. On the international level, development includes the elimination of such problems as North-South inequalities, especially in the area of technology, the external debt of the developing countries, the rise of insurgency and counterinsurgency, warfare, and global terrorism.

Catholic social teaching emphasizes that the human community is interconnected and interdependent. Such interconnectedness is necessarily built on peace. Peace is a value without frontiers; therefore, it cannot be established in a just and lasting fashion except through broader cooperation at the regional, continental, and international levels. In another sense, interconnectedness and solidarity is not merely focused on economic cooperation and political alliances; rather, it is aimed at fostering real human solidarity. Reflecting on commitment to solidarity in the field of development, John Paul II says, "the first and most basic truth is that *development is a question of people*. People are the *subjects* of true development, and the *aim* of true development is people. The integral development of people is the goal and measure of all development projects."³¹ He says further that the fact that people

³⁰ John Paul II, *Development and Solidarity*, n. 4.

³¹ John Paul II, *Development and Solidarity*, n. 6.

are at the centre of development is a consequence of the oneness of the human family. People must be the focus of all that is done to improve the conditions of life. Therefore, the focus on the quest for development, whether by countries in Africa, or by countries outside of Africa which are involved in that process, must be the people and their well-being. All economic policies and rules of political alliances must serve this objective. The sense of the oneness of the human family must always prevail. In his encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis draws our attention once again to the oneness of the human family. What are some of the lessons that we can draw from it for development and peace?

4. Peace and Development: Lessons from *Fratelli Tutti*

In *Fratelli Tutti*, fraternity and social friendship are the ways Pope Francis says we can build a better, more just and peaceful world, with the contribution of all people and institutions. For this effort to yield the desired fruits, there must be emphatic 'no' to war and to globalized indifference. The key question that the encyclical is intended to answer is framed thus: "What are the great ideals but also the tangible ways to advance for those who wish to build a more just and fraternal world in their ordinary relationships, in social life, politics and institutions?"³² He describes it as a "Social Encyclical",³³ because it aims to promote a universal aspiration toward fraternity and social friendship. Pope Francis reveals that the Covid-19 pandemic "unexpectedly erupted" as he was writing this letter. In a way, this has helped to shape the conversation and the intention. The global health emergency has helped to demonstrate that "no one can face life in isolation" and that the time has truly come to "dream, then, as a single human family" in which we are all brothers and sisters.³⁴

³² Isabella Piro, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-10/fratelli-tutti-pope-fraternity-social-friendship-short-summary.html> (Accessed 10th December 2021).

³³ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 6.

³⁴ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 8.

The encyclical comprises eight chapters.³⁵ In chapter one, titled “Dark Clouds over a Closed World”, the document reflects on the many distortions of the contemporary era: the manipulation and deformation of concepts such as democracy, freedom, justice; the loss of the meaning of the social community and history; selfishness and indifference toward the common good; the prevalence of a market logic based on profit and the culture of waste; unemployment, racism, poverty; the disparity of rights and its aberrations such as slavery, trafficking, women subjugated and then forced to abort, organ trafficking.³⁶ Thus, the section highlights global problems that call for global action. The second chapter, “A Stranger on the Road”, presents the example and image of the “Good Samaritan”. In it, the Pope emphasizes that, in an unhealthy society that turns its back on suffering, and that is “illiterate” in caring for the frail and vulnerable,³⁷ we are all called – just like the Good Samaritan – to become neighbours to others,³⁸ overcoming prejudices, personal interests, historic and cultural barriers. It says further that we are all co-responsible in creating the society that is able to include, integrate and lift up those who have fallen or are suffering.³⁹ According to the Holy Father, love builds bridges and “we were made for love”.⁴⁰ He exhorts Christians to recognize Christ in the face of every excluded person.⁴¹ Chapter three, which is titled “Envisaging and Engendering an Open world”, talks about the capacity to love according to “a universal dimension”.⁴² In this chapter, Pope Francis exhorts us to go “outside’ the self” in order to find “a fuller existence in another”⁴³ opening ourselves up to the other according to the dynamism of charity which makes us tend toward “universal

³⁵ For the following summary, I am indebted to Isabella Piro, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-10/fratelli-tutti-pope-fraternity-social-friendship-short-summary.html> (Accessed 10th December 2021).

³⁶ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 10-24.

³⁷ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 64-65.

³⁸ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 81.

³⁹ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 77.

⁴⁰ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 88.

⁴¹ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 85.

⁴² Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 83.

⁴³ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 88.

fulfilment".⁴⁴ He says that the right to live with dignity cannot be denied to anyone. And since rights have no borders, no one can remain excluded, regardless of where they are born.⁴⁵ In this perspective, the Pontiff also calls us to consider "an ethics of international relations",⁴⁶ because every country also belongs to foreigners and the goods of the territory cannot be denied to those who are in need and come from another place. The encyclical also places specific emphasis on the issue of foreign debt: subject to the principle that it must be paid, it says it is hoped, nonetheless, that this does not compromise the growth and subsistence of the poorest countries,⁴⁷ particularly on the continent of Africa.

Chapter four of the encyclical deals with the theme of migration, where it stresses that migrants are to be welcomed, protected, supported and integrated. It, however, affirms that unnecessary migration needs to be avoided by creating concrete opportunities to live with dignity in the countries of origin. What is needed above all, the document says, is global governance, an international collaboration for migration which implements long-term planning, going beyond single emergencies, on behalf of the supportive development of all peoples.⁴⁸ The theme of chapter five is "A better kind of politics", which represents one of the most valuable forms of charity because it is placed at the service of the common good,⁴⁹ and recognizes the importance of people, understood as an open category, available for discussion and dialogue.⁵⁰ The document says that the task of politics is to find solution to all that attacks fundamental human rights, such as social exclusion; the marketing of organs, tissues, weapons and drugs; sexual exploitation; slave labour; terrorism and organized crime. It underscores that the politics we need is a politics centred on human dignity and not subjected to finance because "the marketplace, by itself, cannot resolve every problem": the "havoc"

⁴⁴ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 95.

⁴⁵ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 121.

⁴⁶ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 126.

⁴⁷ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 126.

⁴⁸ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 129-132.

⁴⁹ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 180.

⁵⁰ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 160.

wreaked by financial speculation has demonstrated this.⁵¹ And in calling for the reform of the United Nations (UN), the document says the UN must promote the force of law rather than the law of force.⁵² Chapter six calls for dialogue and friendship in society, showing the concept of life as the “art of encounter” with everyone, even with the world’s peripheries and with original peoples, because “each of us can learn something from others. No one is useless and no one is expendable”.⁵³ The value and promotion of peace is reflected upon in chapter seven of the document. It says peace is connected to truth, justice and mercy. It is “proactive” and aims at forming a society based on service to others and on the pursuit of reconciliation and mutual development.⁵⁴ Thus, peace is an “art” that involves and regards everyone and in which each one must do his or her part in “a never-ending task”.⁵⁵ Chapter eight focuses on “Religions at the service of fraternity in our world” and emphasizes that terrorism is not due to religion but to erroneous interpretations of religious texts, as well as “policies linked to hunger, poverty, injustice, oppression”.⁵⁶ A journey of peace among religions is possible and it is therefore necessary to guarantee religious freedom as a fundamental human right for all believers.⁵⁷ Religion is vital to the development of any society, as is the case with Nigeria, but where there is corruption of religion, there are grave consequences for instability and underdevelopment.

The teachings in the different chapters of this document highlight the vision of a common humanity, where no one is excluded, but where all work for the common good and the welfare of all. With such vision, development and peace in the human society are not only possible but will be greatly achieved. In the opening words of the Encyclical Letter, the Holy Father references St. Francis of Assisi as a true model of peace, fraternal and social friendship. His reference to St. Francis is not simply on

⁵¹ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 168.

⁵² Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 173-175.

⁵³ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 215.

⁵⁴ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 227-229.

⁵⁵ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 227-232.

⁵⁶ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 282-283.

⁵⁷ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 279.

the basis of the popular prayer for peace composed by this saint; rather, he draws our attention to the more profound teaching of St. Francis that all peoples are indeed brothers. The words *Fratelli Tutti* – literally meaning “all brothers” (which can be rendered, “you all are brothers”) – comes from an admonition of St. Francis to his Franciscan brothers and sisters. Drawing on the fundamentals of this principle, Pope Francis offers great insights into the life and teaching of St. Francis. In the opening words of the encyclical, Pope Francis writes:

With these words [*Fratelli Tutti*], Saint Francis of Assisi addressed his brothers and sisters and proposed to them a way of life marked by the flavour of the Gospel. Of the counsels Francis offered, I would like to select the one in which he calls for a love that transcends the barriers of geography and distance, and declares blessed all those who love their brothers “as much when he is far away from him as when he is with him.” In his simple and direct way, Saint Francis expressed the essence of a fraternal openness that allows us to acknowledge, appreciate and love each person, regardless of physical proximity, regardless of where he or she was born or lives.⁵⁸

What Pope Francis highlights here shows that the teaching of St. Francis underscores the fact that the quest for peace and development must be built on the love that transcends all social, cultural, and geographical barriers. Where these barriers exist, there can be no peace, and certainly, there can be no development. Therefore, *Fratelli Tutti* exhorts that all human actions should be inspired by the understanding that we are part of a universal fraternity: that we are called to solidarity, encounter and gratuitousness.

One big lesson that can be immediately learnt from *Fratelli Tutti* is, though it is correct to say the stability of any human society is on the tripod of *development*, *peace*, and *justice*, the essence and foundation of such societal stability is *love*. If love does not permeate the growth and development of the society, every

⁵⁸ Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, 1. For the citation within, see St. Francis of Assisi, *Admonitions*, 25. English translation in Francis of Assisi: Early Documents, vol. 1 New York, London, Manila (1999), 136.

attempt in that process becomes a self-limiting one. Where each person works only for his own benefits, and where people work for sectional interests, there can be no room for growth beyond the purview and capacity of an individual and a section of the society. And where each society is closed in on itself, the possibilities for attaining the greatest potentials and the highest goals for the whole of humanity are lost. If, however, love transcends all self-limiting barriers of disordered self-love, nepotistic tendencies, and blind nationalism, then all people will be guided and motivated by a common object of love, namely, love of God, which translates to love of others because of God. If everyone works by this common object of love, there will be development and true peace in the society, since all will live by the vision of the common goal of destiny. This is the agenda for development that we need to pursue, first, in Nigeria, where almost every sphere of our lives is coloured by sectionalism, tribal self-interests and political rat race. Nigeria wields so much influence in the political and economic terrains of Africa. There can therefore be no quest for development and peace on the Continent of Africa that should not include Nigeria as a major stakeholder sitting at the table. However, to be able to take the required giant strides in this regard, Nigeria must first of all learn to conquer, in her own social and political terrains, the barriers of self-limiting interests, and must embrace love that transcends these barriers as the nucleus of development and peace.

5. Conclusion

This essay showed that there can be no growth and stability in any human society if it is not built on the tripod of *development*, *peace*, and *justice*. The dimensions of fraternity and social friendship that *Fratelli Tutti* introduces to the conversations emphasize that a more just and peaceful world can only be built on the vision of true humanity; and to attain that goal, love must transcend all barriers that separate peoples. Moreover, the quest for stability and development of any society cannot neglect the truth. The document says that peace is connected to truth, justice and mercy. This essay therefore concludes by proposing that any quest for development and peace in any society, especially on the African

continent, must always include two major factors that *Fratelli Tutti* highlights. First, the barriers against peaceful co-existence and development will be removed if love transcends those barriers. All peoples must work to overcome prejudices, personal interests, historic and cultural barriers. On the second note, virtues are mutually inclusive and do not work against each other. Therefore, any quest for peace must also always include service to truth. It is for this reason that the encyclical insists that peace is connected to truth, justice and mercy. Where there is truth, there is justice. This allows for pursuit of mutual development and reconciliation. It follows that the quest for development must be animated by love and truth: in the mutual workings of “truth of love” and “love of truth”. Thus, development and true peace flourish in a social order that is founded on truth, built on justice, and enlivened by love.