

**THE GOSPEL AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA: A CASE STUDY OF THE FEDERAL
CAPITAL TERRITORY**

By

SYRENIUS DANGANA OKORIKO

University of Abuja (PhD Student)

Co-Authors

PROF. CHARLES OGUNDU NNAJI

PROF. ADEOLA KEHINDE

Abstract

This study checks how the Gospel can work as a practical tool for handling insecurity in Nigeria, with a special focus on the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) Abuja. The paper basically claims that insecurity in Abuja should not be seen only through military and political lenses because the reasons for violence are often linked to unemployment, corruption, social exclusion, moral decline and even institutions that are already too fragile. It uses a qualitative hermeneutical theological approach, so the work reads the biblical instruction on justice, peace, reconciliation and human dignity alongside the everyday socio-economic situation of insecurity in Abuja. It also draws from peer-reviewed work in African Christianity, public theology and peacebuilding. It tries to keep a close ear on what is going on in nearby satellite areas like Kubwa, Bwari, Gwagwalada, Nyanya, Kuje, and Lugbe, all those places seem to mirror the same pressures in different local forms. From the findings, Churches have quite a lot of potential to help with peacebuilding, especially through youth empowerment, advocacy, counseling, interfaith dialogue, moral re orientation, and community building. Furthermore, prosperity focused theology, the splitting up of Church structures, and low social involvement often slows down the impact of many Churches. The study concludes that long lasting peace in Abuja needs cooperation between religious institutions, government bodies, and civil society organizations. The Gospel, in the end, is both spiritual and social force, able to push justice, reconciliation, and broader national stability.

Keywords: *Faith based intervention, Gospel, Insecurity, Public Theology, Shalom*

Introduction

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology, but it also leans into a hermeneutical theological approach. Qualitative methods fit well here because the whole point is not really to churn out statistical measures. Instead, it tries to interpret meanings, moral obligations, and the lived social realities surrounding these things. The hermeneutical side is about reading biblical texts that speak to justice, peace, reconciliation, and the dignity of human beings. In particular, attention is given to passages like Amos 5:24, Micah 6:8, Matthew 5:9, Matthew 25:35–40 and Romans 13:1–7.

Nigeria has been stuck with persistent insecurity for the past two decades. Armed banditry, terrorism, kidnapping, cultism, communal violence, and ethno-religious conflict have been hitting both the villages and the bigger towns. At the beginning, it felt like the problem was mostly in places like the

North-East, mainly because of Boko Haram insurgency. Later though, violent crimes started spilling over into urban centers as well, even pushing into Abuja. The Federal Capital Territory itself was originally planned as a sort of neutral city, meant to symbolize peace and national togetherness, but now, because kidnapping has kept increasing and there are also highway attacks, youth criminality, and organized banditry, people are living with fear daily. In the same breath, confidence in state institutions has been visibly eroded (Adenike 13). Scholars, for example, usually insist that insecurity in Nigeria is tied closely to structural inequality, unemployment, corruption, political instability, and what they call moral decline (Ademiluka 298). In a lot of communities, there is also growing suspicion of political leadership, because citizens feel state institutions are either useless or corrupt. So military operations and policing, while important, only handle part of it, because insecurity also has social, ethical, and psychological faces.

In this whole setting, religion ends up holding a strategic position in Nigerian life. Christianity is still one of the most influential social systems in the country. Churches run schools, hospitals, welfare schemes, and counseling centers, and pastors or other religious leaders shape public sentiment and community morals. Because of that, the Church can really help with social change and peacebuilding. African theologians are more and more emphasizing that the Gospel should not be restricted to personal salvation only. Instead, biblical teachings about justice, reconciliation, compassion and peace give ethical principles that can really face corruption, violence, and this kind of social fragmentation (Marshall 122). So the Nigerian Church therefore has both pastoral and prophetic duties within society.

Aim and Objectives of the Research

Though Nigeria has a high level of religiosity, insecurity keeps getting worse in a lot of parts of the country. Abuja, which used to stand for steadiness and national unity, is now drawing more and more worry tied to kidnapping, violent robbery, unemployment, youth violence, and general social strain. In fact, many of the satellite communities inside the FCT do not have enough infrastructure, not enough education opportunities, limited healthcare facilities, and also hardly any real employment opportunities (Igbokwe et al 119). When things like that persist, people, especially the young, start feeling blocked, alienated, and more exposed to criminality. Another big concern is the gap between religious activity and actual social change. Sure, Churches keep expanding in numbers, but many congregations often lean heavily on prosperity messages, miracle sessions, and personal turning points. At the same time, they pay less attention to structural unfairness, and community-oriented development. As Ademiluka notes, Christian ethics has to move beyond ritual worship into practical social involvement (304). The Church clearly has real ability to help with peacebuilding; however, many Churches don't seem to have coordinated plans for handling conflicts, public advocacy, or socio-economic intervention. According to Nnaji (134-144) so, in the end the moral and theological resources of Christianity are still not being used as they should when it comes to dealing with insecurity in Abuja.

The focus is really on insecurity within the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. Attention is given to those satellite communities like Kubwa, Bwari, Nyanya, Gwagwalada, Lugbe, and Kuje, so the research does not drift too wide. The study looks at the role Christian Churches and Gospel principles play in peacebuilding and in social transformation. It relies mainly on secondary data, theological writings and documented case examples. **Gospel** is basically the Christian message; it centers on the teachings of Jesus Christ, but it is also really about salvation, justice, reconciliation, peace, and the value of every human person.

Insecurity, on the other hand, is that condition, where fear is common. It comes with violence, instability, and constant threats to human life and property, and even the broader social order starts slipping.

The aim of this study is to examine how the Gospel can function as a practical instrument for addressing insecurity in FCT Abuja. The objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the socio-economic and moral causes of insecurity in Abuja.
2. To examine biblical teachings relevant to peacebuilding and justice.
3. To evaluate the role of Churches in addressing insecurity in the FCT.
4. To analyze the relationship between faith-based intervention and secular security approaches.

Theological Framework of Justice, Shalom, and Human Dignity

Ademiluka, working on justice and righteousness in the Old Testament, basically argues that the biblical prophets were consistent in condemning corruption oppression, and social injustice (301). For him, Christian ethics should not stay at the level of sermons but must show up in a more active way when societies face crises, like insecurity, poverty, and inequality. Ani also talks about “Christo-peace” and that angle stresses that Christian peace is not only about the absence of violence but a broader, whole transformation (492). That view matches biblical ideas about reconciliation and social harmony and the view of another scholar (Ayoola 85). Adeola views religion like a philosophy of peace, not just doctrine, it really gives moral principles that can help bring social harmony and peaceful coexistence. He says religion supports peacebuilding, by shaping the inner character of people and also, nudging their behaviours in a direction that supports social order, and the collective well-being for everyone (45).

The Imago Dei doctrine says that every single human being is formed in the image of God, not in a “metaphorical” way or whatever, as a real sort of basic identity. In practice it serves as an anchor for the natural dignity and worth of each person, no matter what you are looking at, like ethnicity, religion, or economic standing. So, when you see violence, oppression, terrorism, and kidnapping happening, it

comes off like a plain breach of what God planned for humanity, in other words it is not just “unfortunate circumstances”. Biblical justice is not only about punishment. In the Scripture it also carries fairness, responsibility, safeguarding those who are exposed, and a more balanced distribution of resources too. The prophets, again and again, hit out against corruption and exploitation, pretty directly. Amos said, “Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24). That still feels pretty urgent today, in modern Nigeria, because corruption and unevenness can bring up insecurity in ways that are hard to dismiss entirely (Gofwan 33). Jesus Christ also thickened these moral ideas, through teachings that lean on compassion, reconciliation, and service toward people who have been pushed aside, quietly. In Matthew 25, Christ connects himself to the hungry the poor the sick and the imprisoned, and it really drags into view that social accountability believers are expected to practice (Alamu 7).

Shalom, which is more than just calmness or silence, is a whole-life form of peace with justice, harmony, and communal well-being. When insecurity shows up in Abuja, it often feels like relationships have simply crumbled between citizens between communities, and even between people and the institutions that are supposed to protect them. So, rebuilding shalom takes reconciliation, real trust-building, and social inclusion, not only prayers from a distance but practical steps. Another theological knot is Romans 13:1–7. Some religious leaders read this passage as needing unconditional submission to the government. Yet many scholars still contend that Christian ethics also allows prophetic critique when leaders keep doing injustice, or when they fail to defend citizens properly (Ademiluka 9). So, the Church has pastoral plus prophetic obligations, together, not as separate projects. Pastoral work is basically the care of people who suffer violence, (Adeola et al 102-116) by means of counseling, welfare support and everyday community closeness. Prophetic ministry is the part where the Church stands up against corruption, unfairness, and the misuse of power, even when it becomes awkward, or just plainly uncomfortable.

Economic inequality still sits right at the center of it all. In Abuja, you can find luxury estates and well-off neighborhoods, right beside poorer settlements where people lack basic services. Those gaps tend to harden anger, and push social exclusion among people who already feel left out. Churches inside Abuja have tried multiple responses, things like vocational training, scholarship offers, youth mentorship routines, counseling support and food distribution. Some Churches in Gwagwalada even run skill acquisition centers, where jobless youths learn tailoring, computer basics, catering and electrical installation. In some communities’ interfaith cooperation has also grown. There have been dialogue efforts involving pastors and imams in Bwari and Gwagwalada, and these have helped reduce mistrust when tensions flare. In that sense, these cases suggest religious institutions can actually support stronger social togetherness when they work collaboratively and not in isolation.

However, several challenges remain; a number of Churches keep away from wider social engagement, maybe because they fear political backlash, while others simply do not have enough money or organizational strength. Also, prosperity centered theology can quietly weaken long term commitment to structural fairness and durable peacebuilding.

The Justification of the Research

Traditional security theories emphasize the duty of the state to keep order and shield citizens. Social Contract Theory, usually linked with Thomas Hobbes, basically says that people give up some freedoms to the state, in return for security and steadiness. Still, the Nigerian experience shows the weak side of approaches that are only state-centered. Military operations by themselves cannot just “finish” insecurity, because violence often comes from poverty, unemployment, corruption, social exclusion, and a slow moral decline. Human Security Theory then widens what we mean by security— not only uniforms and military protection, but also economic steadiness, social support, and the dignity of persons.

The Gospel brings something a bit different too, because it stresses moral transformation alongside structural change. Christian ethics talk about both outside conditions and inside character formation. So Churches have some clear advantages in community mobilization, guidance, conflict mediation, and moral education. In practice, faith-based organizations often have more trust at the grassroots level than political institutions do. Religious leaders can slip into communities and groups that government agencies sometimes cannot reach easily. Through sermons, mentoring schemes, guidance sessions, and welfare aid, Churches tend to influence mindset and lower social alienation (Adeola et al. 256-265). Still, faith-based intervention has its own ceiling; a few Churches get tied up in partisan politics, so their moral authority gets a bit thin. Some others push prosperity messages more than social ethics, and they end up neglecting real community development, period.

For peacebuilding to actually work, Oyebanji and Oyunwola said, it has to be done together, Churches, mosques, government agencies, civil society groups, and learning institutions all in the same lane (24). Long term safety in Abuja depends not only on armed defense or guard rotations, but also on moral reawakening, economic inclusion, plus social fairness.

Recommendations

Religious leaders have to keep speaking up for good governance, accountability, and social justice. If the Church keeps challenging corruption and inequality, then it can remain relevant for tackling some of the deeper, structural causes fueling insecurity. In addition, Churches should not overlook people who have been harmed. They ought to offer counseling and psychosocial support for victims of violence and trauma. When local support systems are reinforced, those affected can start recovering and rejoin society, rather than being left behind, or forgotten.

Theological institutions should fold peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and public theology into ministerial training. This means future Church leaders are more ready for real social engagement, not only sermons in a narrow sense, but for actual responsibilities that show up outside the Church doors. Lastly, partnerships between Churches, government agencies, and civil society organizations should be pushed further. If digital media is used responsibly for peace education, and for public awareness, then these collaborations can strengthen sustainable peace and security in Abuja, over time.

Conclusion

Insecurity in Abuja seems to echo bigger troubles in governance, inequality, joblessness, corruption, and even social cohesion breaking apart across Nigerian life. Even if security agencies still matter a lot, leaning only on military answers just cannot fix it, not when the deeper moral plus socio economic roots of violence stay untouched. The Gospel still gives real ethical help here, like justice, reconciliation, compassion, and peacebuilding — stuff that reaches people, not only slogans or loud statements. Biblical teaching also nudges both inner change and public duty, not only “me and my faith”. So, in the end the Church has solid space to help with community development, lifting youth, interfaith conversation, and moral reawakening.

However, Churches should really move past passive spirituality and that prosperity centered theology, and step into something more active. Because faith-based institutions can turn into transformative players only when they mix their spiritual ministry with advocacy, fairness and, practical intervention (Adeola et al 28-37). At the end of it all, sustainable peace in Abuja, calls for collaboration across religious institutions, government agencies, civil society groups and the nearby communities too. So, the Gospel is not just a spiritual message it is also a working framework for pushing justice, healing between people and steadier national stability, even when things look messy.

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