Published by

British Journal of Contemporary Research

BEXFORD PUBLISHING

Conflict Resolution Strategies In Genesis 16:7-14: An Implication For Peaceful Co-existence In Nigeria

Original Research Article | Volume 1 | Issue 6 | 2026 | Article Number: 078

Accepted: 03 November 2026 | Published: 10 November 2026 | ISSN: 2979-8582 (Online)

Crossref : **https://doi.org/10.67693/BJCR-7JYD4BUV**

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Abstract

Conflict is a normal occurrence in any relationship. It could be an opportunity for growth when positively handled and resolved. It could be personal, domestic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup, intra-group or communal life. Nigeria's modern-day conflicts are multi-facetted leading to unprecedented loss of lives and properties. It emanated from several personal, socio-cultural, natural and climatic conditions. The contemporary Nigerian nation is experiencing increased violence due to the spread of small arms despite efforts to find long-term solutions and promote peaceful coexistence. This study, therefore, provides a Biblical panacea to stem this tide and secure peaceful environment. This is hoped to secure peace throughout the nation as an avenue to meaningful development. It adopts a literary and historical research method as well as a textual analysis using African Biblical Hermeneutics (ABH) to probe the content, structure and implications of Genesis 16:7–14. It uses various characteristics from the African cultural perspectives: Afro-centric biblical interpretation method against the common Euro-centric hermeneutical approach. Findings reveal that God has empathy for the downtrodden and suffering and willing to rescue them. God wants His people to trust Him for their peace. Biblical principles, when employed can encourage collaboration and trust between parties in conflict. Communication, respect for one another, and understanding are important in settling conflict amicably. Biblical principles like injustice, inequality, and resource management can help to address and resolve conflict. Long-term, viable solutions can be found by addressing these fundamental problems. The study concluded that people must accept responsibility for their actions, and properly account for them. This reduces the possibility of future disputes and fosters environment of peace. Biblical lessons instill optimism and fortitude, inspiring people and societies to be considerate and strive for amicable solutions. This optimistic perspective is essential for conquering obstacles and creating a peaceful community.

Keywords: Conflict Resolution, Biblical Hermeneutics, Peaceful Coexistence, Farmer-Herder Conflicts, Nigeria, Religious Mediation

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Introduction

Conflict is a normal occurrence in any relationship, it is a catalyst. It could be an opportunity for growth when positively handled and resolved. It could be personal, domestic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, intergroup, intra-group or communal life. Nigeria's modern-day conflicts are multi-facetted leading to unprecedented loss of lives and properties. It emanated from several natural and climatic conditions and clash of interests. The contemporary Nigerian nation is experiencing increased violence due to emanating conflicting views on socio-cultural issues, the spread of small arms despite efforts to find long-term solutions and promote peaceful coexistence (Chidi et al, 2023). This study, therefore, provides a Biblical panacea to stem this tide and secure peaceful environment. This is hoped to secure peace throughout the nation as an avenue to meaningful development.

According to Roudgar (2021), conflict, anywhere in the World has been as old as man. However, the rate it has attained in recent times in Nigeria is unprecedented. Individuals have become more aggressive than before. The family circle relationship has become fragmented than before. Individuals have grown more violent against each other and one another. the various groups in the Nigerian society are not spared Today there are unprecedented number of trade associations, professional bodies including both religious and secular establishments, courtesy of conflict of interest Obasi (2026).

In the immediate past, families, groups and various communities have co-existed through mutual agreement, tolerance on the usage of their commonwealth. Land use has been handled amicably with the consent of local authorities and farming communities, peaceful relationships have been maintained.

The primary causes of conflict hinged on economic factors like competitions over arable land and water resources. This happens because as the population grows and urbanization expands, the availability of these resources diminishes (Gounden, 2018, Godwin, 2024). For example, environmental changes, such as desertification and global warming, have forced herders to move southward into areas traditionally used for farming (Gounden, 2018). Farmers also have been forced to abandon mutual agreements that have existed and encroached on grazing routes. Also, many ancestral lands have been traded for money by relations without any recourse to the community jointly owning that property.

Methodology

The study adopts a literary and historical research method as well as a textual analysis using African Biblical Hermeneutics (ABH) to probe the content, structure and implications of Genesis 16:7–14. It uses various characteristics from the African cultural perspectives: Afro-centric biblical interpretation method against the common Euro-centric hermeneutical approach.

Conflict In Nigeria

During the pre-colonial era, the Burti system was used to manage the movement of herders and prevent conflicts. This system involved mutual agreements on migration routes and grazing areas, ensuring that herders and farmers could coexist peacefully. Herders and farmers engaged in symbiotic relationships, exchanging goods such as milk for cereal grains. This mutual dependence helped maintain harmony between the two groups (Jooji, 2020).

The British colonial administration introduced a new system of land use management and conflict resolution, which often undermined the traditional systems. The colonial policies favoured privatization and land ownership, disrupting the balance between herders and farmers. Some Fulani groups established the Ruga system, where an elected official regulated grazing activities and resolved conflicts within and between herder and farming communities (Jooji, 2020).

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The collapse of the burti system around the 1970s, due to increasing claims of ownership by farmers along cattle migration paths, led to more frequent conflicts. In recent decades, various efforts have been made to manage the conflict, including government interventions, peace-building initiatives, and community-based approaches. However, these efforts have had mixed success due to the complexities of the issues involved (Gounden, 2018).

Thousands of people have died as a result of these conflicts. The violence has led to significant loss of life and property. Many communities have been displaced, leading to a humanitarian crisis with thousands of internally displaced persons (IDPs) living in camps (Gounden, 2018; Okonkwo & Akanji (2025)). The conflicts disrupt agricultural activities, leading to food insecurity and economic instability in affected regions (Gounden, 2018). Understanding the complex interplay of historical, economic, environmental, and social factors is crucial for developing effective strategies to resolve these conflicts and promote lasting peace in Nigeria.

Conflict in Nigeria, has also taken on dangerous religious dimensions, exacerbating the amount of violence facing the nation. Ousmane & Ozden (2020) affirmed that ethno-religious unrests bring about nepotism, favoritism, and corruption in the Nigerian political and administrative system. Therefore, undermining the efforts of the political and bureaucratic administrators, leading to political and administrative underdevelopment, which in turn have adverse effects on the socio-economic arrangements.

The contemporary call for Jihad, the resuscitation of Traditional Religious Practices and the Multiplicity of Christian Churches has gone a long way to promote religious animosity among once peaceful people in the land which accommodated people of divergent religious orientation. Buhari et al (2024) concluded that early interactions between ATR, Christianity, and Islam were initially harmonious, characterized by cultural and religious syncretism. However, the early nineteenth century marked a significant shift with the rise of Islamic reformists, leading to a fusion of religion and politics and subsequent religious conflicts.

Also, the political architecture of the Nation which involved the judiciary, legislative and executive arms have contributed in no small measure to the violent conflict the nation is currently experiencing. according to Jombo and Fagbadebo (2023) frictions between political actors across the executive-legislative divide portend serious implications and consequences for the smooth running of government business in Nigeria, as well as the stability of the nation's democratic process. this in essence have a negative impact on political leadership which should have being a rallying point for the nation's development.

The legislative arm which is responsible for providing constitutional legislation is at comatose in providing the legal framework for the nation. This underscores the position of Okonkwo, & Akanji (2025) who asserted that there is the nation currently operates a reactive security measures but needs to move towards preventive, inclusive, and context-sensitive approaches, offering a coherent framework and evidence-based recommendations for governance reform, peace building, and strengthening democratic resilience.

The judiciary arm could be said to be jaundiced making it unable to effectively prosecute offenders, thereby discouraging perpetration of these heinous crimes against humanity. Ananti et al (2024) affirmed the judicial system in Nigeria plagued with outdated judicial incapability which need reforms to enhance judicial independence, efficiency, and accessibility. As it operates currently, the judicial institution seems disconnected from the people making it unapproachable to the average citizen. instead being hope for them, it has become a drain of their hope.

The executive arm of government as important as it is to the common man, is already tied-up in corruption making executing people oriented economic and social policies a 'wild-goose chase'. While investigating the relationship between political corruption and socio-economic development in Nigeria, Ezeudu (2023)

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identified that there are key indicators of socio-economic development indicating that political corruption negatively impacts GDP growth, while education expenditure and infrastructure investment have positive effects. Therefore it concluded that there is the need to address corruption, increase investments in education and infrastructure, and implement anti-corruption measures to foster sustainable development in Nigeria.

Conflict Resolution

Several conflict resolution strategies have to be put in place. These efforts play crucial role in maintaining peace and stability in Nigeria. Effective conflict resolution helps to prevent the escalation of disputes into violent confrontations. Thereby, saving lives and properties with a high propensity to reduce injuries (Abdulkabir and Joseph, 2023). Addressing grievances and fostering understanding between conflicting parties promotes social harmony and peaceful coexistence among diverse ethnic and religious groups (Orhero, 2020). Resolving conflicts ensures that socio-economic activities, such as farming, trading and interpersonal interactions, can continue without disruption. This stability is essential for economic growth and social development (Abdulkabir and Joseph, 2023).

Effective conflict resolution mechanisms enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of governance structures. When people see that conflicts are managed fairly, they are more likely to trust and support their leaders (Abdulkabir and Joseph, 2023). Conflict resolution helps to prevent displacement, which can lead to humanitarian crises. Keeping people in their homes and communities is vital for economic viability and social stability (Abdulkabir and Joseph, 2023). Communities with effective conflict resolution mechanisms are more resilient and better able to handle future disputes. This resilience contributes to long-term peace and stability (Orhero, 2020). Peaceful environments attract investment and development projects.

Conflict resolution creates conducive atmosphere for development initiatives, and improving infrastructure, education, and healthcare (Abdulkabir and Joseph, 2023). Addressing and resolving conflict the nation can work towards greater unity and cohesion. This unity is essential for national progress and stability (Orhero, 2020). This study premised conflict resolution on Biblical principles some of which are exhibited in this passage being considered.

The Place of the Bible

Biblical principles offer timeless wisdom and guidance that can be highly relevant in contemporary conflict resolution. Biblical teachings emphasize the importance of peace and reconciliation. For instance, Matthew 5:9 states, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God." This principle encourages individuals to seek and promote peace in their relationships and communities (Topical Bible, 2024).

Forgiveness is a cornerstone of biblical conflict resolution. Colossians 3:13 instructs, "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you." Forgiveness helps to break the cycle of resentment and opens the door to healing and restoration (topical bible, 2024).

Approaching conflicts with humility and gentleness is essential for resolution. Ephesians 4:2-3 advises, "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace." These attitudes foster understanding and reconciliation (Topical Bible, 2024).

Jesus provides a clear process for addressing conflicts in Matthew 18:15-17: "If your brother or sister sins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over." This passage emphasizes the importance of addressing issues directly and privately before involving others

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(Digital Bible, 2024). Effective communication is vital in resolving conflicts. Ephesians 4:15 encourages believers to "speak the truth in love." This principle involves being honest and transparent while maintaining a loving and respectful tone, ensuring that the truth is conveyed without causing unnecessary harm (Topical Bible, 2024).

The Bible emphasizes justice and fairness in resolving disputes. Micah 6:8 states, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." This principle encourages fair and just treatment of all parties involved[2]. Biblical principles foster trust and cooperation among conflicting parties. By encouraging open communication, mutual respect, and understanding, these principles help to build a foundation for lasting peace and cooperation (Digital Bible, 2024).

The story of Hagar and the angel of the Lord is a profound narrative found in Genesis 16:7-14. It highlights themes of divine intervention, compassion, and the fulfilment of promises. The story is set within the broader narrative of Abram (later Abraham) and Sarai (later Sarah). Sarai, unable to bear children, gives her Egyptian maidservant Hagar to Abram as a wife to bear a child on her behalf (Bible Hub, 2024). When Hagar conceives, tensions rise between her and Sarai. Sarai treats Hagar harshly, leading Hagar to flee into the wilderness (Bible Hub, 2024).

The angel of the Lord finds Hagar by a spring of water in the desert, on the road to Shur. This encounter is significant as it marks the first appearance of the angel of the Lord in the biblical narrative (Bible Gateway, 2024). The angel addresses Hagar by name, acknowledging her as "Hagar, servant of Sarai," and inquires about her situation: "Where have you come from, and where are you going?" (Genesis 16:8). This question invites Hagar to reflect on her circumstances and future (Bible Gateway, 2024). The angel instructs Hagar to return to Sarai and submit to her authority, a directive that underscores the importance of obedience and humility (Bible Gateway, 2024).

Despite the difficult circumstances, the angel provides Hagar with a promise of hope and blessing: "I will greatly multiply your offspring so that they will be too numerous to count" (Genesis 16:10). This promise parallels the covenantal blessings given to Abram, indicating that Hagar's offspring will also play a significant role in God's plan (Bible Gateway, 2024).

The angel reveals the destiny of Hagar's unborn son, Ishmael, whose name means "God hears." The prophecy states: "He will be a wild donkey of a man; his hand will be against everyone, and everyone's hand against him, and he will live in hostility toward all his brothers" (Genesis 16:12). This description foreshadows the future character and challenges of Ishmael and his descendants (Bible Gateway, 2024).

In response to this divine encounter, Hagar acknowledges the presence and care of God by naming the Lord who spoke to her, "You are the God who sees me," for she said, "I have now seen the One who sees me" (Genesis 16:13). This declaration highlights Hagar's recognition of God's omniscience and compassion, even in her marginalized state (Bible Gateway, 2024). The well where the angel found Hagar is named Beer Lahai Roi, meaning "well of the Living One who sees me." This name commemorates the divine encounter and Hagar's experience of God's care (Bible Gateway, 2024). The narrative of the angel of the Lord finding Hagar is rich with theological implications. It demonstrates God's concern for the oppressed and marginalized, as well as His faithfulness to His promises (Bible Hub, 2024).

The encounter emphasizes the personal nature of God's interactions with individuals, regardless of their social status or ethnicity. Hagar's account serves as a testament to God's providence and the unfolding of His redemptive plan through unexpected and often challenging circumstances (Bible Hub, 2024).

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Conflict Resolution Principles from Genesis 16:7-14

The passage of Genesis 16:7-14, which narrates the encounter between Hagar and the angel of the Lord, offers several valuable principles for conflict resolution. The angel of the Lord acknowledges Hagar's distress and her situation by addressing her directly: "Hagar, servant of Sarai, where have you come from, and where are you going?" (Genesis 16:8). This recognition of her plight is the first step in addressing the conflict. In modern conflict resolution, it is crucial to acknowledge the existence of the conflict and the grievances of all parties involved. This validation helps to create an environment where individuals feel heard and understood, laying the groundwork for constructive dialogue.

The angel provides Hagar with guidance, instructing her to return to Sarai and submit to her authority (Genesis 16:9). This divine intervention offers a clear path forward for Hagar. Seeking guidance from a higher authority or mediator can be beneficial in resolving conflicts. In contemporary settings, this could involve religious leaders, community elders, or professional mediators who can provide impartial advice and facilitate resolution.

The angel promises Hagar that her descendants will be numerous, offering her hope and a future: "I will increase your descendants so much that they will be too numerous to count" (Genesis 16:10). This promise provides a solution to Hagar's immediate distress by giving her a vision of a positive future. Providing practical and hopeful solutions is essential in conflict resolution. This could involve developing sustainable practices, resource management strategies, or creating agreements that address the needs and concerns of all parties involved.

Hagar is instructed to return and submit to Sarai, emphasizing the importance of obedience to divine instructions (Genesis 16:9). Her willingness to follow this guidance reflects her trust in God's plan. Encouraging obedience to agreed-upon resolutions and fostering trust in the process is vital for successful conflict resolution. This involves ensuring that all parties are committed to the terms of the agreement and trust that the resolution will be beneficial in the long run.

These principles foster trust and cooperation among conflicting parties, creating a foundation for lasting peace and understanding. By acknowledging grievances and providing equitable solutions, these principles promote fairness and justice, which are essential for sustainable conflict resolution. Offering hope and a vision for the future helps individuals and communities to remain resilient and committed to the resolution process. The principles derived from Genesis 16:7-14 provide valuable insights for addressing and resolving conflicts in a manner that promotes peace, fairness, and cooperation. They emphasize the importance of acknowledgement guidance, practical solutions, and trust in the resolution process.

Acknowledgement of Conflict

The conflict in Genesis 16:7 arises from the strained relationship between Hagar, Sarai (later Sarah), and Abram (later Abraham). Sarai, unable to bear children, gives her Egyptian maidservant Hagar to Abram as a surrogate to conceive a child. This was a common practice in ancient Near Eastern cultures to ensure an heir (Alice, 2024). Once Hagar becomes pregnant, tensions escalate between her and Sarai. Hagar's new status as the mother of Abram's child leads to feelings of contempt towards Sarai, and Sarai responds with harsh treatment[2]. The mistreatment by Sarai becomes unbearable for Hagar, leading her to flee into the wilderness. This act of fleeing signifies the depth of the conflict and Hagar's desperation (Alice, 2024).

The conflict is rooted in the power dynamics between Sarai and Hagar. As Sarai's maidservant, Hagar is in a subordinate position. However, her pregnancy shifts the dynamics, causing tension and jealousy. Hagar's pregnancy leads her to look down on Sarai, which in turn provokes Sarai's jealousy and harsh treatment. This cycle of contempt and mistreatment exacerbates the conflict (Alice, 2024).

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Sarai's harsh treatment of Hagar is a significant aspect of the conflict. It reflects the emotional and physical suffering that Hagar endures, prompting her to flee for her safety and dignity. Hagar's decision to flee into the wilderness highlights her desperation and the severity of the conflict. The wilderness represents a place of danger and uncertainty, yet Hagar prefers it over the oppressive environment with Sarai. In Genesis 16:7, the angel of the Lord finds Hagar by a spring in the desert. This divine encounter signifies God's recognition of Hagar's suffering and His intervention in the conflict. The angel provides Hagar with guidance to return to Sarai and submit to her authority, along with a promise of numerous descendants. This intervention offers a path towards resolution and hope for Hagar's future.

The conflict identified in Genesis 16:7 underscores the importance of recognizing and addressing suffering. God's intervention demonstrates His awareness and concern for those in distress. The guidance provided by the angel highlights the need for obedience and trust in divine plans as a path to resolving conflicts. It emphasizes that even in difficult situations; there is hope and a future. The conflict in Genesis 16:7 involves power dynamics, jealousy, mistreatment, and suffering. The divine intervention by the angel of the Lord provides recognition of Hagar's plight and offers guidance and hope for resolution.

The conflict between Hagar and Sarai in Genesis 16:7 can be related to the grievances of both farmers and herders in Nigeria in several ways. Both situations involve underlying issues of power dynamics, resource competition, and the need for recognition and resolution of conflicts (Ajiye, 2020).

The conflict between Hagar and Sarai involves a shift in power dynamics. Hagar's pregnancy elevates her status, leading to jealousy and harsh treatment from Sarai. Similarly, the conflict between farmers and herders in Nigeria involves power dynamics over land use. Farmers and herders both rely on land for their livelihoods, leading to competition and tension. The herders' need for grazing land often clashes with the farmers' need for arable land (Nnaji, Ma, and Renwick, 2022).

The conflict arises from the competition for Abram's attention and the desire for an heir. Hagar's pregnancy creates tension as it threatens Sarai's position. In Nigeria, the primary cause of conflict is competition over arable land and water resources. As the population grows and environmental changes occur, the availability of these resources diminishes, leading to disputes.

The angel of the Lord acknowledges Hagar's suffering and provides guidance and a promise of hope. This recognition is crucial for addressing her distress. Recognizing the grievances of both farmers and herders is essential for conflict resolution. Acknowledging their suffering and the challenges they face can pave the way for constructive dialogue and solutions.

The angel provides Hagar with guidance to return to Sarai and submit to her authority, along with a promise of numerous descendants. This intervention offers a path towards resolution and hope for Hagar's future. Effective conflict resolution mechanisms for farmers and herders in Nigeria involve providing practical solutions, such as establishing grazing reserves, implementing sustainable land management practices, and promoting dialogue between communities (Mawoli, and Adamu, 2019).

Hagar's obedience to the angel's instruction and her trust in God's promise is crucial for resolving the conflict and ensuring her future. Encouraging obedience to agreed-upon resolutions and fostering trust in the process is vital for successful conflict resolution between farmers and herders. This involves ensuring that all parties are committed to the terms of the agreement and trust that the resolution will be beneficial in the long run.

Just as the angel's intervention built trust and provided hope for Hagar, recognizing and addressing the grievances of both farmers and herders can build trust and cooperation between the two groups by providing equitable solutions and ensuring fair treatment for both farmers and herders can promote fairness

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and justice, which are essential for sustainable conflict resolution. Offering hope and a vision for the future helps individuals and communities to remain resilient and committed to the resolution process. The conflict between Hagar and Sarai in Genesis 16:7 provides valuable insights into the importance of recognizing grievances, addressing power dynamics, and providing practical solutions. These principles can be applied to the farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria to promote peace and stability (Mawoli, and Adamu, 2019).

Significance of Divine Guidance and Intervention in Nigeria's Conflict

Divine guidance and intervention can play a crucial role in addressing and resolving the farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria. It provides a moral and ethical framework for resolving conflicts. Religious teachings emphasize values such as justice, compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation, which are essential for peaceful coexistence. By adhering to these values, conflicting parties can work towards fair and just solutions that address the root causes of the conflict and promote long-term peace (Adichie, 2021).

Religious leaders and institutions can act as mediators, leveraging their moral authority and influence to foster trust and cooperation between farmers and herders[1]. Divine guidance encourages open and honest dialogue, helping to bridge the gap between conflicting parties and promote mutual understanding[1]. Divine intervention offers spiritual support and hope to those affected by the conflict. This support can help individuals and communities remain resilient and committed to the resolution process (Ajiye, 2020). Religious teachings can inspire individuals to adopt positive behaviours and attitudes, promoting peace and harmony in their communities (Ajiye, 2020).

Divine guidance often emphasizes a holistic approach to conflict resolution, addressing not only the immediate issues but also the underlying causes such as injustice, inequality, and lack of resources. By focusing on the root causes, divine intervention can help to develop sustainable solutions that prevent future conflicts and promote long-term stability (Ajiye, 2020).

Religious teachings emphasize accountability and responsibility, urging individuals to take ownership of their actions and seek forgiveness when necessary. This emphasis on accountability helps to create a culture where individuals are more likely to act responsibly and work towards peaceful resolutions (Ajiye, 2020).

In a multi-religious country like Nigeria, interfaith dialogue can be a powerful tool for conflict resolution. By bringing together religious leaders from different faiths, it is possible to foster mutual respect and understanding, promoting peace and reconciliation (Adichie, 2021). Integrating traditional and civil society groups with religious movements can enhance the effectiveness of faith-based mediation, ensuring that all stakeholders are involved in the resolution process (Adichie, 2021).

Divine guidance and intervention provide a moral and ethical framework, build trust and cooperation, offer hope and resilience, address root causes, and promote accountability and responsibility. These elements are crucial for resolving the farmer-herder conflicts in Nigeria and achieving lasting peace and stability.

Seeking Divine Guidance in Resolving Conflicts (Genesis 16:9)

In Genesis 16:9, the angel of the Lord instructs Hagar to return to her mistress Sarai and submit to her authority. This directive is a clear example of seeking and receiving divine guidance amid conflict. "Then the angel of the Lord told her, 'Go back to your mistress and submit to her.'" (Genesis 16:9). This instruction comes after the angel acknowledges Hagar's distress and promises her numerous descendants. The angel's appearance and guidance represent a divine intervention in Hagar's life, providing her with a clear path forward in a difficult situation.

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Seeking divine guidance provides clarity and direction in resolving conflicts. God's wisdom transcends human understanding, offering solutions that may not be immediately apparent. In Hagar's case, the angel's instruction to return and submit to Sarai provides a clear path forward, helping her navigate the complexities of her situation. Seeking divine guidance requires faith and obedience. Trusting in God's plan, even when it is challenging, demonstrates a deep reliance on His wisdom and sovereignty. Hagar's willingness to follow the angel's instruction reflects her trust in God's promise and plan for her future.

Divine guidance offers reassurance and peace, even amid conflict. Knowing that God is involved and providing direction can alleviate anxiety and fear. The angel's promise of numerous descendants reassures Hagar, giving her hope and a sense of purpose despite her difficult circumstances. Divine guidance provides a moral and ethical framework for making righteous decisions. It encourages actions that align with God's principles of justice, compassion, and reconciliation. By following the angel's instruction, Hagar aligns her actions with God's will, promoting ethical conduct and peaceful resolution.

Seeking divine guidance provides strength and resilience to face challenges. God's support empowers individuals to persevere and remain steadfast in their commitments. The divine encounter strengthens Hagar, enabling her to return to Sarai with renewed courage and hope.

In contemporary conflict resolution, seeking divine guidance can involve prayer, reflection, and seeking wisdom from religious texts and leaders. This spiritual practice can provide clarity, direction, and peace. Religious leaders and institutions can play a crucial role in mediating conflicts, offering divine guidance and promoting ethical and just solutions. Encouraging trust in divine plans and obedience to ethical principles can foster a culture of accountability and cooperation, essential for resolving conflicts. Seeking divine guidance in resolving conflicts, as illustrated in Genesis 16:9, provides clarity, direction, reassurance, and a moral framework. It fosters trust, strength, and resilience, offering valuable lessons for contemporary conflict resolution.

Incorporating religious leaders and faith-based mediation

Incorporating religious leaders and faith-based mediation can significantly assist in resolving conflicts in Nigeria, including the ongoing farmer-herder conflicts. Religious leaders can promote values such as justice, compassion, forgiveness, and reconciliation, which are essential for peaceful coexistence (Mercy Corps, 2016). These values provide a moral and ethical framework for resolving conflicts. Religious leaders often hold significant influence and authority within their communities. Their guidance can encourage individuals to adopt peaceful and ethical behaviours, reducing the likelihood of conflict.

Religious leaders can act as mediators, leveraging their moral authority to foster trust and cooperation between conflicting parties (Omotosho, 2014). Their involvement can help bridge the gap between farmers and herders, promoting mutual understanding and respect. Engaging in interfaith dialogue can bring together leaders from different religious backgrounds to work collaboratively on conflict resolution. This approach can help to build trust and cooperation across religious and ethnic divides (Omotosho, 2014).

Religious leaders can offer spiritual support and hope to those affected by conflicts. This support can help individuals and communities to remain resilient and committed to the resolution process (Abdullahi, and Schraml, 2023). Religious teachings can inspire individuals to adopt positive behaviours and attitudes, promoting peace and harmony in their communities (Abdullahi, and Schraml, 2023). Faith-based mediation often emphasizes a holistic approach to conflict resolution, addressing not only the immediate issues but also the underlying causes such as injustice, inequality, and lack of resources (Orebiyi, (2016). By focusing on the root causes, religious leaders can help to develop sustainable solutions that prevent future conflicts and promote long-term stability (Orebiyi, 2016).

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Religious teachings emphasize accountability and responsibility, urging individuals to take ownership of their actions and seek forgiveness when necessary. This emphasis on accountability helps to create a culture where individuals are more likely to act responsibly and work towards peaceful resolutions (Orebiyi, 2016).

Integrating traditional and civil society groups with religious movements can enhance the effectiveness of faith-based mediation, ensuring that all stakeholders are involved in the resolution process (Mercy Corps, 2016). Religious leaders can also be involved in educational programs that promote peace-building and conflict-resolution skills among community members (Omotosho, 2014).

Incorporating religious leaders and faith-based mediation in conflict resolution efforts in Nigeria can provide moral and ethical guidance, build trust and cooperation, offer hope and resilience, address root causes, and promote accountability and responsibility. These elements are crucial for achieving lasting peace and stability in the region.

Addressing and resolving conflicts in Nigeria requires a multifaceted approach that incorporates various strategies and stakeholders.

1. Dialogue and Mediation

   Promoting dialogue between conflicting parties is essential. Community-based dialogue platforms can facilitate open communication, helping to bridge gaps and foster mutual understanding[2]. Religious leaders can play a crucial role in mediating conflicts. Their moral authority and influence can encourage conflicting parties to seek peaceful resolutions and adhere to ethical principles (Policy Brief: February 2020).

2. Legal and Policy Frameworks

   Enhancing the legal and policy frameworks to address land use and resource management can help prevent conflicts. Clear and enforceable laws regarding land ownership and grazing rights are crucial[1]. Effective implementation of policies that promote equitable resource distribution and protect the rights of all parties involved is necessary for sustainable conflict resolution (Anarado, 2017).

3. Economic Empowerment

   Providing economic opportunities and livelihood support to both farmers and herders can reduce competition over resources. Initiatives such as vocational training, microfinance, and agricultural support programs can help improve economic stability (Policy Brief: February 2020). Engaging youth and women in economic activities and peace-building efforts can enhance community resilience and reduce the likelihood of conflict.

4. Resource Management

   Implementing sustainable land and water management practices can help mitigate resource-related conflicts. This includes promoting crop rotation, water conservation, and sustainable grazing techniques[1]. Establishing designated grazing reserves and corridors can help manage the movement of herders and reduce clashes with farmers (Anarado, 2017).

5. Security and Protection

   Strengthening community policing and security measures can help prevent violence and protect vulnerable populations. This involves training local security personnel and enhancing their capacity to respond to conflicts[2]. Developing early warning systems to detect and respond to potential

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conflicts can help prevent escalation. Community-based monitoring and reporting mechanisms are essential for timely intervention (Policy Brief: February 2020).

6. Education and Awareness

   Providing education and training on conflict resolution and peacebuilding can empower communities to manage disputes effectively. This includes workshops, seminars, and school programs[2]. Raising awareness about the importance of peaceful coexistence and the benefits of conflict resolution can change attitudes and behaviours, promoting a culture of peace (Policy Brief: February 2020).

Findings

God has empathy for the downtrodden and suffering and He is willing to rescue them. Therefore, the Nigerian government, as a representative of God among the people in the country, especially the less privileged must be considerate in policy making and taken care of in policy execution. This affords them the opportunity to live as real citizen when their rights and privileges were secured in their own land despite their status there upon.

God wants His people to trust Him for their peace. The onus of this is also on the government and her numerous agencies in providing peaceful atmosphere for every citizen. Day to day activities must be carried out with the full assurance of relative peace of mind.

Communication, respect for one another, and understanding are important in settling conflict amicably. As clearly indicated in the text being considered for this study, the import of mutual respect can never be overemphasized. Since everyone has right to existence under the constitution, individuals should live and let live.

Biblical principles like injustice, inequality, and resource management can help to address and resolve conflict.

Long-term, viable solutions can be found by addressing these fundamental problems. What the nation needs is long-term and viable solutions and this can only be engendered by taking cognizance of the problems on ground and holistically addressing them, not to shy away from them.

Recommendations

i. Encouraging collaboration between different religious and ethnic groups can foster unity and reduce tensions. Rallying points could be created during national days to bring together various religious groups in beneficial activities to allow everyone collaborate and communicate.
ii. Interfaith dialogue and joint community projects can build trust and cooperation. Fora for dialogue should be arranged for various religious grouping to express themselves and discuss commonalities and create opportunity for expressing individual perculiarity and through allow everyone a proper understanding of the other and foster relationships.
iii. Collaboration between government agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and international partners can enhance the effectiveness of conflict resolution efforts. These partnerships can provide resources, expertise, and support for various initiatives.
iv. Strengthening legal and policy frameworks provides very crucial ingredients needed as supporting means for economic empowerment.
v. Implementing sustainable resource management practices. This is long overdue. It affords the opportunity to generate appropriate revenue from natural resources abounding in every geo-political zones of the country without allowing exploiters take an influence over

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commonwealth.

vi. Enhancing security and protection. At this point members of the Nigerian society can become united as a people to jointly see to the security of the nation by providing 'our own security network'. This becomes necessary since people now see themselves as co-owners of the resources as against 'government property' before.

vii. Providing education and awareness. Majority challenge in the security situation in Nigeria is ignorance through mis-information or wrong information. If and when education and awareness come in they will librated and the much needed peaceful life attained.

Conclusion

The study concluded that people must be made to accept responsibility for their actions, and properly account for them through the establishment of a responsible and responding government. This reduces the possibility of future disputes and fosters environment of peace. Biblical lessons instill optimism and fortitude, inspiring people and societies to be considerate and strive for amicable solutions. This optimistic perspective is essential for conquering obstacles and creating a peaceful community.

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