

# **RELIGION AND PEACEMAKING IN SIERRA LEONE**

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## **STATEMENT:**

This research was undertaken under the auspices of the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David and was submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of PhD in the Faculty of Humanities and Performing Arts to the University of Wales: Trinity Saint David.

**SEPTEMBER 2016**

## Declaration

This work has not previously been accepted as a whole or in part for any degree and has not been concurrently submitted for any degree.

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## Statement 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote(s). Other sources are acknowledged by footnote giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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## **Abstract:**

This thesis concerns religion as a peacemaking tool in Sierra Leone. The vast majority of people in Sierra Leone consider themselves to be Christians, Muslims and / or adherents of African Traditional Religion (ATR). This thesis examines the role of religious leaders and religious communities in the peacemaking process during and after the Sierra Leone Civil War from 1991 - 2002. In previous studies about violence and religion, the role of religion in the peacemaking process has often been neglected, particularly in studies about the African continent. This study aims to fill this gap.

The research is based on theoretical approaches in the field of religion and violence and religion and peace, as well as a qualitative and an empirical study in Sierra Leone comprising participant observation, interviews and data collected from archives. The thesis develops the praxis of peace based on the Sierra Leone context. It argues that since independence from Britain in 1961, subsequent governments have woefully marginalised religion.

The thesis demonstrates that Christian leaders, churches, and ecumenical organisations were resources that contributed to peacemaking in Sierra Leone. Christians and their leaders influenced by ATR also led and supported the works of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Sierra Leone (TRCSL) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). Christians provided leadership for truth-telling and reconciliation, relief, advocacy for peace, and confidence-building as peacemakers in action. By combining a theoretical discussion of Girard, Juergensmeyer, Schmidt, Huntington, Bowie, Johnston and others with the qualitative and empirical case study of Sierra Leone, the research adds new dimensions to the general academic debate on religion and violence, as well as religion and peacemaking, with respect to the clash of civilisations, faith-based diplomacy and other theories on religion and violence, and religion and peacemaking, in Sierra Leone.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my great-grandfather Chief Moibawo Lukulay, an Islamic scholar and businessman from Bontiwo, Lugbu Chiefdom, Bo District. I also dedicate this work to my beloved grandfather Junisa Mohamed Bangura, a Muslim and a businessman from Bontiwo, Lugbu Chiefdom, Bo District. You both loved me but God loves you most. Thank you for the love you showed me before God took you to the final resting place.

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Warm thanks go to my Director of Studies, Professor Bettina Schmidt, as well as to my second supervisor, Dr Jenny Read-Heimerdinger. I will remain forever indebted to them for supervising me so professionally and for their efforts and patience to see me through the writing of this work. Indeed, the time I spent with them has been very rewarding for my personal, academic and reflective growth. Without their care, academic prowess, critical and constructive comments and diligent proofreading, it would have been extremely difficult for me to fulfil the requirements of this work. I also want to thank Professor Rob Warner, my very first supervisor (2007 - 2008), as well as Dr Mark Beaumont of Birmingham Christian College (2006 - 2009), my second supervisor, for sharing knowledge with me particularly during the writing of this thesis. I thank them for all their comments and questions and for helping me to come forward with a clearer research question and structure for this work.

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Joseph Gaima Lukulay Moiba, London, United Kingdom, 8 September 2016.

## List of Abbreviations

<b>AACC</b>	All Africa Conference of Churches
<b>ADDO</b>	Arch-Diocesan Development Office
<b>ADRA</b>	Adventist Development and Rehabilitation Agency
<b>APC</b>	All Peoples Congress
<b>ATR</b>	African Traditional Religion
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AFRC</b>	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
<b>CAW</b>	Children Associated with War
<b>CCF</b>	Christian Children's Fund
<b>CCSL</b>	Council of Churches Sierra Leone
<b>CR</b>	Commander of Rokel
<b>CRS</b>	Catholic Relief Services
<b>DDR</b>	Demobilisation, Decentralisation and Rehabilitation
<b>EATWOT</b>	Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians
<b>ECOMOG</b>	Economic Community Military Observer Group
<b>EFSL</b>	Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone
<b>EPF</b>	Ecumenical Peace Forum
<b>FBC</b>	Fourah Bay College
<b>FAWE</b>	Forum of African Women's Educationists
<b>GSL</b>	Government of Sierra Leone
<b>ICTR</b>	International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
<b>ICTY</b>	International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia
<b>IMATT</b>	International Military Advisory and Training Team
<b>INGO</b>	International Non-Governmental Organisation
<b>IRCSL</b>	Inter-Religious Council Sierra Leone
<b>KRL</b>	Kristendom, Religion og Livssynsorientasjon (Christianity, Religions and Life orientation studies)
<b>MCSL</b>	Methodist Church Sierra Leone
<b>NPFL</b>	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
<b>NPRC</b>	National Provisional Ruling Council
<b>PMDC</b>	Peoples Movement for Democratic Change
<b>PPU1&amp;2</b>	Praktisk Pedagogisk Utdanning 1 og 2 (Practical Pedagogical Education Levels 1 and 2)
<b>PTE</b>	Praktisk teologisk Eksamen (Practical Theological Education)
<b>RUFSL</b>	Revolutionary United Front Sierra Leone
<b>RC</b>	Roman Catholic Church
<b>SCSL</b>	Special Court for Sierra Leone
<b>SDA</b>	Seventh Day Adventist
<b>SLG</b>	Sierra Leone Government
<b>SLPP</b>	Sierra Leone Peoples Party
<b>TRCSL</b>	Truth and Reconciliation Commission Sierra Leone
<b>UBC</b>	United Brethren in Christ
<b>UMC</b>	United Methodist Church
<b>UNAMSIL</b>	United Nations Military in Sierra Leone
<b>WCC</b>	World Council of Churches
<b>WCRP</b>	World Council of Religions for Peace

# CHAPTER 1 RELIGION AND PEACEMAKING IN SIERRA LEONE

## 1.0 Introduction

This thesis is about religion and peacemaking, with specific reference to Sierra Leone. There are between sixteen and twenty ethnic groups in Sierra Leone,<sup>1</sup> and the three main religions are Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion (ATR),<sup>2</sup> (Parrinder, 1969, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1978). All these ethnic and religious groups were adversely affected by the civil war (1991 - 2002), during which thousands of Sierra Leoneans were killed and tens of thousands became refugees internally and internationally<sup>3</sup>, and the entire infrastructure of the country collapsed (Harris, 2013; Hirsch, 2001; Mitton, 2015; Ojukutu-Macauley and Rashid, 2013). The literature portrays the UN as the main factor in peacekeeping (Olonisakin, 2008; Kumar, 2010), aided by local initiatives (Bio, n. d.; Kandeh, 1992, 1996, 2003, 2004; Turay, 2005). These regional and local initiatives included the West African nations, through the Economic Community Military Observer group (ECOMOG), religious bodies and the general citizenry who also focused on advocacy, relief, faith-based diplomacy and peacekeeping.<sup>4</sup> After two failed peace agreements<sup>5</sup>, a third peace agreement was reached in July 1999, though it was not until early April 2001 that the Revolutionary United Front Sierra Leone (RUFSL) declared the end of the war, and minor hostilities continued until 2002. In the negative peace<sup>6</sup> that emerged, Sierra Leone held presidential and parliamentary elections in May 2002 (Harris, 2013, p. 119). Since then, religious bodies, such as the Council of Churches Sierra Leone (CCSL) and the Inter-

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1 These ethnic groups include: Bullom, Fula, Galina, Gola, Kissi, Kono, Kru, Krim, Krio, Kuranko, Lebanese, Loko, Limba, Madingo, Mende, Sherbro, Susu, Tehmne. Vai, Yalunka.

2 An overview of ATR is presented in this chapter and Chapter Three of this thesis.

3 See Chapter Three of this thesis.

4 See Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven of this thesis.

5 Abidjan peace agreement, November 1996 and Conakry peace agreement, October 1997

6 By “negative peace” I mean the absence of war or physical violence. However, “positive peace” is not merely the absence of war, but also the existence of justice and established structures meant to both protect the application of justice in society and to defend it at all levels.

religious Council Sierra Leone (IRCSL), as well as the Methodist Church Sierra Leone (MCSL) and other individual Christian leaders, churches, mosques and leaders of ATR,<sup>7</sup> have continued to play an important role in peacemaking<sup>8</sup> and fostering the peace that was achieved (Moiba, 2005/ 2006; Savage and Rahall, 2003, p. 37ff). Due to the word limitations for this thesis, I shall focus specifically on Christian leaders, notably MCSL, CCSL and IRCSL, the TRCSL and its Chairman Bishop Joseph Christian Humper and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), looking at how they acted as peacemakers in action in Sierra Leone. The thesis will also add valuable material on ATR as a peacemaking tool in Sierra Leone, which informed both Christians and Muslims, (John, 2003; Moiba, 2005/ 2006; Olupona, 2014). My interest in religion and peacemaking as a Ph.D topic is personal, both for my own academic growth and personal reflection. I now turn to the exploration of the research questions and hypothesis.

### **1.1 The Research Questions and the Hypothesis**

This thesis addresses the following research questions: How did Christians contribute to peacemaking during and after the civil war in Sierra Leone? How did they relate to Muslims in these efforts? What are the dominant forms of Islam in Sierra Leone? Is the Islamic influence mainly Wahabi from Saudi Arabia or Egypt, or have the South-east Asian (Sufi) conservative, fundamentalist Deobandi sects made inroads into the country? How does the makeup of groups affect attitudes to political Islam, and was this an issue in the peace process? What other trends are associated with Islam in Sierra Leone? Were both Christians and Muslims influenced by ATR in their peacemaking efforts? How was the relationship between the SCSL and the TRCSL? What role did these two transitional justice systems play in the peacemaking efforts in Sierra Leone? In addressing these questions, certain concrete examples will be given of the actual situations in which the churches and mosques were engaged, in relation to their role during and after the war in Sierra Leone. This was investigated and a clear position emerged. However, this does not mean that the thesis position cannot be applied to other contexts. This may be done with certain amendments and variations with regard to those things that are unique,<sup>9</sup> special and specific in those new contexts as the case may be.

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<sup>7</sup> I use the singular, just like one might use the singular for Christianity and Islam, even though there are varied types and denominations in these two world religions.

<sup>8</sup> They started this peacemaking role as early as 1991.

The hypothesis for this Ph.D thesis is that religion is a potent force for peacemaking and that religious identities have contributed to preventing or abating war and bloodshed in concrete situations.<sup>10</sup> In cases where war breaks out, they have contributed immensely to peacemaking. This is a view based on a case study from one of modern history's most bloody wars: the Sierra Leone Civil War (Mitton, 2015; Gberie, 2005). To provide some context, Chapter 3 of the thesis presents on the situation in Sierra Leone before and after 1989, focussing on the history of the country. Drawing on an accumulation of sources, the hypothesis is that religion, specifically in Sierra Leone, was a powerful tool or resource in peacemaking. It may, however, appear that this hypothesis is one-sided, particularly when taking into consideration some of the realities around the world in which religions seem to be involved in conflict motivated by opposing claims on truth. Huntington (2002), Juergensmeyer (2002) and others make this argument. On the other hand, it is important to note that though dialogue between religions should not have an unrealistic character, religious dialogue remains a better option than religious confrontation. This was evident in the Sierra Leone situation, and will be documented and explored further in later chapters in this thesis.<sup>11</sup> Hypothetically speaking, if the various religious bodies in Sierra Leone had taken a line of action other than dialogue towards mediation between adversaries, advocacy for peace, and resolution of the conflict, then the war in Sierra Leone would not have come to an end as soon.<sup>12</sup> The reason for this claim is that wars continue to be fought in other parts of Africa, particularly where religious adherents seem to be in confrontation rather than in dialogue (Lederach, 2000).<sup>13</sup>

The contribution of religion to economic welfare is also paramount for peacemaking and reconciliation (Dommen, 2014). In Sierra Leone, where a significant part of the population receives its welfare support from churches and mosques, it was of paramount importance to put all these resources together in the interests of peace. This created a real opportunity for peace. As I discovered in the case study for my Candidatus

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9 See subtitle "Sierra Leone as a unique Example?" in section 1.6 of this chapter.

10 The hypothesis and theories on peacemaking will be further discussed in section 1.4 in this chapter.

11 See Chapters Four through Seven of this thesis.

12 See Chapter Six of this thesis.

13 See the examples of Somalia, Sudan and Egypt, where Islamic forces are in conflict with either each other or with other forces in these countries.

Theologiae degree (MA), carried out in 2005 and 2006 (Moiba, 2005/2006),<sup>14</sup> the religious bodies in Sierra Leone travelled in and out of the country to engage the various parties that were involved in the conflict; they explored the possibility of preventing more conflict and enabled opposing fighting forces to see reasons to cease hostilities (interview with Mr. Kemoore Salia, April 2006).<sup>15</sup> These efforts were explored further as the research proceeded at the Ph.D level, and results are documented in this thesis.

Furthermore, there was a return to religion after the country deteriorated into a period of crisis. This statement is made with the backdrop of three assumptions in social science research, that as societies modernise, religion loses significance in the public space (secularisation), and that there is a wide dispute over whether secularisation is empirically verifiable and whether religion will eventually disappear from the public space or not. The second issue of the debate has to do with the definition of religion, i.e. whether religion lies within the private sphere or whether it is of a cultural dimension. The third debate is that of the relationship between religion and violence (Deneulin, and Bano, 2009, pp. 52ff). Indeed much of the evidence in this thesis implies that religion is a powerful force in peacemaking and that the web between religion and violence can be attributed to politics and economic interests of individuals, countries and communities. Based on prior research,<sup>16</sup> I discovered that the CCSL and the IRCSL played important roles both during and after the conflict.<sup>17</sup> By engaging in peace and civic education, and making use of internal and external resources, the CCSL and IRCSL demonstrated that religion was paramount in bringing about peace (Bio, n. d.; Koroma, 2001; Turay, 2005). Religious bodies engaged in relief, advocated for peace, trained peace workers, educated the masses, demonstrated accountability, and communication skills and used their financial resources for peace (interview with Mr. Kemoore Salia, April 2006; Turay, 2005).<sup>18</sup> The religious leaders from both Islam and Christianity not only supported the work for peace but were personally committed to peacemaking in several

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14 A few pages of this report were written for fieldwork at the University of Oslo, which means that I did some research before I was formally admitted for the Ph.D research.

15 See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

16 That is an unpublished research (14 - 15 page report), carried out for term papers at University of Oslo in 2005/ 2006 before being admitted to the Ph.D in 2007, by the University of Wales, Lampeter, now University of Wales Trinity Saint David.

17 See Chapter Six of this thesis.

18 See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

ways, including playing an advocacy role, as well as providing refugees with relief items.<sup>19</sup>

Existing literature maintains that religion is a source of conflict, but at the same time, it is a resource for peace.<sup>20</sup> Religion is therefore not only a dangerous factor but also an important factor in peacemaking. The CCSL and the IRCSL were both silent on political matters before 1991 (Harris, 2013) due to the marginalisation of religion in politics in Sierra Leone. According to Olupona (2014, p. 2), “religion is not a separate mode unto itself but is instead a varied and diverse set of components touching upon every aspect of life” in Africa. Since religion was marginalised in Sierra Leone even when it is expected to touch on every aspect of life, it re-emerged to take its place during and after the war. Churches were outspoken against the behaviour of rebels who maimed innocent civilians and burned houses and destroyed properties. The CCSL and the IRCSL used both internal and external means to end the conflict,<sup>21</sup> and during the peace talks, all parties respected the role of the CCSL and the IRCSL as moral guarantors to ensure adherence to the peace agreement signed on 7th of July 1999 (Mr. Kemoore Salia, April 2006; Olonisakin, 2008).<sup>22</sup>

Sponsored by Christian Aid UK, peace, and civic education projects were conducted all over the country and championed by the writer as well as the MCSL,<sup>23</sup> the heads of the CCSL, IRCSL, and the TRCSL.<sup>24</sup> It can be argued, therefore, that religion played an outstanding role both in opposing the conflict, violence and in bringing about peace in Sierra Leone. There are several examples in the work of David Little (2007) of religious leaders and organisations as peacemakers in action, which are recounted extensively in this thesis. For instance, economic solidarity between both groups can be observed in the use of resources to hold lectures, seminars and similar events in the interest of peacemaking. I saw this sort of collaboration in the programme organised by the

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19 See Chapter Four, Five and Eight of this thesis.

20 See Chapter Two of this thesis.

21 See Chapter Six of this thesis.

22 See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

23 I was Regional Supervisor for this project in the Eastern part of Sierra Leone from 1999 to 2000.

24 See Chapter Eight of this thesis.

Ecumenical Peace Forum (EPF),<sup>25</sup> and it is against this background that I now present the aims and objectives of this thesis.

## **1.2 Aims and Objectives of the Study**

As I reflected on the possibility of doing this research at the Ph.D level, the goal was to design a good case study and to collect, present and analyse data, and bring the case study to closure by writing a compelling thesis on whether or not Christian religious leaders, denominations, ecumenical bodies, the TRCSL, and the SLSC contributed to peacemaking in Sierra Leone between 1961 and 2015. I also conducted research to determine the extent and the effects of the involvement of Christian religious leaders (Lay leaders, Bishops and Priests), such as in the SCSL and TRCSL in peacemaking. In other words, the main aim was thus to examine the role of religion, focusing specifically on Christianity, in peacemaking in Sierra Leone before and after 1989. Specific focus was placed on the role of individual Christian leaders, MCSL, and notably the role of ATR as a common factor among the warring factions and among the church members in their peacemaking efforts. The aim was to fill the gap in studies about violence and religion where the role of religion was neglected, with particular reference to Sierra Leone.

The objective was to document the peacemaking role of Christian religious leaders, churches, ecumenical bodies, the TRCSL and the SCSL in the various chapters of this thesis. This objective has contributed to answering the research questions with an evaluation of the role of religion in the peace process in Sierra Leone, which leads to the conclusion in the final chapter.<sup>26</sup> On another note, this thesis draws attention to the growing importance of the expansion of Christianity and Islam in Africa (Jenkins, 2002), thereby contributing to the wider debate on the idea of faith-based diplomacy, which holds that religious resources are a powerful force for peacemaking (Rasmussen, 1980, 1997). This was developed into the thesis position, in which religious leaders, churches, ecumenical bodies, the TRCSL and the SCSL played specific roles in peacemaking (Harris, 2013, pp. 137 - 139). This hypothesis does not necessarily resolve the problem of generalisation, and I reflect on this in the subsequent subsection.

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<sup>25</sup>This was a forum formed and championed by the IRCSL in Sierra Leone for the purpose of peacemaking.

<sup>26</sup> See Chapter Nine of this thesis.



### 1.3 The Problem of Generalisation

Generalisation refers to the use of data and information from one context and their application to all other contexts, without necessarily taking into consideration the specificity of varied contexts. Huntington (2002, pp. 102ff) and other scholars emphasise the potential of religion to foment conflict, neglecting the possibilities for a religious role in dialogue, diapraxis and peacemaking and “the praxis of peace”. Though Huntington (2002) and other scholars, such as Boersma (2004), Juergensmeyer (2003), and Avalos (2005, 2007), take the religious issue in conflict seriously, they have not necessarily considered the all-important role of religion as a resource for peace (Huntington, 2002, p. 20). Furthermore, whereas the differences within Christianity are clearly stated and analysed, Huntington seems to have presented a formidable and united Islamic religion as if there were no internal conflicts or schisms. This view of Huntington creates a major problem of generalisation, as discussed in detail by Russett, Oneal and Cox (2000, pp. 583 - 608) in the *Journal of Peace Research*. As I have discovered in Africa and other parts of the world, there are various Islamic groups and denominations such as the Shias, the Sunnis, the Muhammedans, the Ahmadiya and other Islamic mystic groups. Recently, there has been a tendency for various militant groups to emerge within Islam, which reject officially recognised religious leaders and societies if they do not agree with them.

Though Jenkins (2002) takes the growth of Christianity in the Southern Hemisphere seriously, from a theological viewpoint, he seems to have exaggerated the syncretic nature of churches in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. As Bowie suggests, “all religions and cultures reflect contact with each other, and even the most conservative regimes change over time” (Bowie, 2006, p. 238). Jenkins' views on syncretism can be related to how, as he rightly admits, Christianity, which has its roots in the near-East, was stronger in Asia and North Africa than in Europe in the first thousand years of its existence (Jenkins, 2002, p. 15ff), yet took hold of many cultures from the West when it became the dominant religion there. It is obvious from history that Christianity has gone through crises many times over the centuries, particularly in western Europe (Lindberg, 1996, p. 24ff). Yet the history of Christianity in Latin America, as well as many parts of Africa and Asia, differs strongly from that of Europe, beginning with its imposition as a religion of conquest, and including the practice of disguising the perpetuation of indigenous spiritual beliefs within Christian religious structures (Bowie, 2006). This is a

clear example of the problem of generalisation. As Jenkins (2002), Oluṣona (2014) and Parrinder (1977) point out, both Christianity and Islam have gained from recent demographic trends, but Huntington emphasises the external differences in Islam but not the internal differences in Islam (Huntington, 2000, pp. 174 - 179), and he does not highlight the important role of theology as an internal critic of religion in the world. Jenkins' pessimistic view of Christianity in the West is another generalisation. Based on this, one needs to think carefully regarding how to generalise or not to generalise at all, except where the evidence for doing so is overwhelming.

Considering the growth of Christianity and Islam in Sierra Leone and the specific characteristics of those religions in the country, one wonders whether Sierra Leone is a unique example with regard to religion and peacemaking.<sup>27</sup> I will therefore proceed with a discussion of the hypothesis and theories on peacemaking

## **1.4 Hypothesis and Theories on Peacemaking**

The hypothesis developed into the thesis position<sup>28</sup> in this work is that religion (i.e. Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion) can be a powerful force in peacemaking. Furthermore, this thesis addresses a specific context through qualitative and empirical studies in Sierra Leone and contributes to the academic debate on the role of religion in peacemaking. This is based on the presentation of theories developed by Huntington (2002), Bowie (2006), Johnston and Cox, (2003), Harpviken and Røislien (2005), and others. The thesis hypothesis that religion was a resource for peace in Sierra Leone also serves as a base for the argument that religion is a powerful resource for peace, along with specific case examples from that country. In the Sierra Leonean context, religion (see Bowie, 2006, pp. 18 - 25, for a detailed definition of religion) played a major role in bringing about the end of the conflict that tormented the populace for more than a decade,<sup>29</sup> although Avalos, Huntington, Juergensmeyer and other

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<sup>27</sup> This uniqueness of the Sierra Leone religious context will be discussed in section 1.6 of this thesis.

<sup>28</sup> "The thesis position," as used in this thesis, is that Christian leaders and organisations were peacemakers in action, even though they were woefully marginalised as irrelevant in politics before 1989. The Christian leaders achieved this role through cooperating and collaborating with Muslims and practicing religious tolerance, and both groups of religious adherents were also jointly influenced by ATR, particularly its ceremonies of adoring ancestors, its militants, and the efforts of its traditional leaders and priests for peace and unity in Sierra Leone.

scholars may argue otherwise.<sup>30</sup> For example, Huntington's (2002) theory presupposes that religion serves as a basic identity factor in the post-Cold War era and that the religious identity of Christians and Muslims is the biggest threat to world peace. However, his view does not point to religion's potential as a peacemaking tool. The fieldwork undertaken as research for this thesis shows that potential.

In 2006, there were certain incidents that occurred in relation to the caricature cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad,<sup>31</sup> which, with the encouragement of certain individuals, resulted in a wide range of violent protests around the world. In spite of those protests, such as the burning of the Norwegian and Danish flags in certain countries, these incidents make a case for relevant research on the topic of religion and peacemaking and the all-important issue of dialogue and diapraxis. Another motivating factor is the experience of religious harmony, which has been enjoyed in my country of origin, Sierra Leone, where I was appointed Regional Supervisor for Peace and Civic education by the Revd. late Christian V. A. Peacock, former president of the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone. As Rashid and O'Brien (2003), and Sillah (1994) point out, Sierra Leone has had a uniquely peaceful relationship between adherents of Islam and Christianity since colonial days.

Much of the evidence implies that in Sierra Leone, Muslims and Christians worked amicably together, especially in an organised form,<sup>32</sup> to achieve their common goals of peace for common human existence and the common good, (Turay, 2005; Leirvik, 2006; Moiba, 2005/2006; Rashid and O'Brien, 2003, Sillah, 1994). This phenomenon has been verified by both my personal experiences in the country and a case study I initially conducted in 2005 and then repeated in 2006, and again from 2007 to 2015. There are, however, certain difficulties involved in such research, and these are outlined above in section 1.3 of this chapter and will be further outlined in Chapter Two of this thesis. In that regard, I will further define the concept of peace in religions, elucidating the notions of peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding, and describing the concerns of

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29 By "religion," I mean Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. This thesis does not engage in a definition of what religion is or what it is not, but the thesis addresses what these religions do with regards to peacemaking in Sierra Leone.

30 See Chapter Three of this thesis.

31 This was the case especially in Scandinavian media, 2006 - 2007.

32 See Chapter Six of this thesis.

peace education. What does religion, especially the Christian religion, teach about peace? Here, I shall present an understanding of what the pursuit of peace means from the Christian perspective, as well as those of Islam and indigenous African religion. The reason for this discussion is that religions have played a significant role in bringing peace (negative peace)<sup>33</sup> to Sierra Leone. However, although religions have played this peacemaking role in Sierra Leone in the past, it is difficult to argue that they can play the same role in the future because people change and situations are never static (Harris, 2013; Mitton, 2015).

The starting point, however, has to be my personal experience, which will give a crucial background to the thesis. Scholars suggest that beginning with one's personal experience is crucial when one looks for an *emic* perspective in a case study with the following approach (Hunt, 1987, 1992; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; 2006, pp. 485- 499; 2013).

## 1.5 Approach to the Thesis

My approach to the topic of religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone derives from my interest and experience both as a theologian and teacher, as well as Regional Supervisor for Peace and Civic Education in the eastern part of Sierra Leone (1998 - 2000). I served in these roles both before and after I was evacuated to Norway because of the violence I was exposed to.<sup>34</sup> Thus my approach is to test and verify personal experience through scientific and empirical research. I will focus mainly on negative peace, as in Sierra Leone since positive peace which I experienced in Norway is farfetched in Sierra Leone. The reason why I use the term “peacemaking” and not “peacebuilding”, since peacebuilding is much more appropriate for the Norwegian context, while peacemaking suits the Sierra Leonean context.<sup>35</sup> This is based on historical and current conditions (e.g. relative wealth) that Sierra Leone is doomed to suffer in any comparisons with peace initiatives in a stable, wealthy, western democracy like Norway (Harris, 2013).

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<sup>33</sup> This will be further explained below.

<sup>34</sup> More details on this are found in Chapter Three.

<sup>35</sup> These terminologies are defined in this chapter, Section 1.9.

I am a Sierra Leonean, hailing from a family made up of both Muslims and Christians.<sup>36</sup> This statement emphasises the importance of distinguishing between ethnic and religious groups in Sierra Leone. We have always worked together in peace even though we belong to different religions. Beginning with one's own experience has validity because it is possible to learn from both the past and present experience that one gains over time. It also facilitates the development of insights and *emic* interpretations not readily available to those who lack these experiences (Mitton, 2013, pp. 22 - 25). Therefore my approach to the topic of this thesis is, to begin with, my experience. Beginning with ourselves, our beliefs and an "inside out" approach (Kelly, 1955) influences the development of implicit theories about human affairs, even though we are often unaware of doing so (Bowie, 2006, pp. 5, 8, and 89). Like Freud, Rogers, and Skinner, we are theorists too, and we have formulated beliefs based on our experiences (though some of these experiences are never verified) (Hunt, 1987; 1992, p. 4). I have, however, worked to verify my experience through the multiple uses of sources for data collection and have ensured that my experiences are validated and reliable, due to concerns of reflexivity.<sup>37</sup> As a way of addressing possible subjectivism and bias, some conscious efforts were made with regards to reflexivity, as a strategy of avoiding being a "fly on the wall" but a thinking researcher in the qualitative research and empirical process.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, based on research conducted in 2005 - 2006 under the auspices of the University of Oslo, I explored the hypothesis that religion has the potential for making peace, with specific reference to Sierra Leone. The hypothesis is based on the welfare contributions that religious bodies provide in Sierra Leone.<sup>39</sup>

Before I began this work, however, I wondered about the reasons for being displaced from Sierra Leone (2000 - 2002) and was curious to know how religious bodies in Sierra Leone tackled the crisis before, during and after the war. Based on my experiences in Sierra Leone and Norway, I developed worldviews on positive as well as negative peace, drawing also on Galtung's (1996; 2003) reflections on the same subject matter. My stay in Norway (2000 to 2010) and Galtung's influence on me greatly

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36 As I grew up in Sierra Leone, I saw my family members, who were either Muslims or Christians, practice ATR in addition to their "missionary faith".

37 See Chapter Two of this thesis.

38 See Chapter Two of this thesis.

39 See Chapters Four and Five of this thesis.

shaped my view of peace, and though this does not necessarily resolve the problem of generalisation, it can reflect a unique religious context in Sierra Leone, an issue that is explored more in depth below.

## **1.6 Sierra Leone as a Unique Example?**

The situation in Sierra Leone with regard to religion is probably unique, based on its exemplary religious tolerance when compared with other countries in West Africa (Rashid and O'Brien, 2003). Adherents of the two main "mission" religions in Sierra Leone can simultaneously belong to Islam or Christianity, as the case might be, and participate in ATR practices, especially in its peacemaking activities and its focus on unity. The President of Sierra Leone between 1997 and 2007, Alhaji Dr Amad Tejan Kabbah, a Muslim, often referred to the unique religious situation in Sierra Leone.<sup>40</sup> Though there is religious tolerance in Sierra Leone, the country is still struggling to achieve political tolerance (Harris, 2013, pp. 47 - 188).<sup>41</sup> The periods before and after 1989 saw a marginalisation of religion by political leaders in Sierra Leone, who thought that religion had no place in the public sphere and was therefore irrelevant in political matters (Harris, 2013), even though religious prayers are often offered at political meetings. During conversations with the Minority Leader in the Sierra Leonean Parliament in January 2011,<sup>42</sup> it was recognised that some Christians and Muslims even claimed that politics is the "business of Satan".

In my personal opinion, it is difficult to argue that religion continues to play the same role it played during and after the war in developing Sierra Leone. I argue that because religion, especially Christianity, has traditionally provided welfare assistance to the people in terms of jobs, schools, hospitals, and clinics, it was easier for religious leaders and organisations to contribute to peacemaking during and after the war. Religious tolerance, which was much more difficult to achieve, seems to have been successful in Sierra Leone and made a positive contribution to political life and people's attitudes (interviews with Mr Kemoore Salia, April 2006; Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007; Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, July 2007).<sup>43</sup> I thus argue that this probably made the Sierra Leone

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<sup>40</sup> See Chapter Six of this thesis.

<sup>41</sup> See Chapters Three and Nine of this thesis.

<sup>42</sup> Conversations with the minority leader of the Sierra Leonean Parliament, January 2011.

context unique, when compared to other parts of the world especially in other African and Asian countries. So what was the context of this research and how accessible was it for me as a researcher?

## **1.7 Context and Accessibility of the Study**

As a Sierra Leonean, I have first-hand experience with the country's context and its history in general, as well as first-hand access to stakeholders. My hypothesis is that religion has played an important role in maintaining peace in Sierra Leone. In the existing literature (Fyle, 1962, 1979; 1981; Alie, 1990; Reno, 1995; Conteh-Morgan and Dixon-Fyle, 1999; and others),<sup>44</sup> this has not been adequately researched with specific reference to Sierra Leone, a complex society in which the role of religions and their institutions cannot be underestimated, a similar issue suggested and elucidated on by other scholars (Turay, 2005; Leirvik, 2006; Sillah, 1994; Stålsett and Leirvik, 2004). The contextual background of Sierra Leone and the history of the civil war will be presented in detail in Chapter Three. However, the focus of this thesis is on the role that Christian leaders and organisations played as peacemakers in action. Furthermore, considering that the TRCSL and the SCSL are the main transitional justice systems serving as peacemaking tools, any work on peacemaking in Sierra Leone should address these groups.<sup>45</sup> For this reason, the last two chapters of the thesis, before the concluding chapter, focus on these two transitional justice systems.

As a researcher, I am aware that residents and citizens of the Republic of Sierra Leone lived through a major crisis during the civil war, which was one of the world's most brutal conflicts of modern times (Mitton, 2015). Various scholars have suggested different reasons from the war, which spilled over from neighbouring Liberia into Sierra Leone in 1991, and officially concluded on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1999 with the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord. Nevertheless there were still clashes and violations of the cease-fire up until 2002 when all factions were disarmed (Mitton, 2015, p. 6; Olonisakin, 2008; Ojukutu-Macauley and Rashid, 2013, p. 46).

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<sup>43</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>44</sup> See Chapter Two of this thesis.

<sup>45</sup> See Chapters Seven and Eight of this thesis.

Scholars have given distinct reasons for the war, ranging from those who attributed it to greed and grievance (Reno, 1995; Richards, 1996; Berdal and Malone, 2000; Fearon, 2005; Lujala, Gleditsch, and Gilmore, 2005; Collier, Hoeffler, and Rohner, 2009), to those who maintain the war was caused by the exclusion and marginalisation of the youth (Abdullah, 1998, and others). Other scholars link the conflict to the nature of pre-war politics, pointing to the undemocratic politics of the APC regimes, which in turn led to state collapse (Bardal and Malone 2000; Keen, 2005; Bates, 2008; Gberie, 2005; Harris, 2013, pp. 63ff; Richards, 2005a & b; Mitton, 2015). A few scholars have also argued for the failure of the system and a transfer of insurgency from neighbouring Liberia due to the support that National Patriotic front of Liberia (NPFL) gave to the Sierra Leonean rebels (Olonisakin, 2008; Hirsch, 2001). According to this view, the rebel leader in Liberia at the time, Charles Taylor, was probably dissatisfied with the government of Sierra Leone, which provided air and military bases for West African regional forces, and with the Economic Community Observer Military Observer Group (ECOMOG), which was given the responsibility for peacekeeping in Liberia.

In contemporary West African history, we repeatedly see young military soldiers of lower ranks finding their way to power through military coups, (Barrows, 1976, pp 128, 229; Kandeh, 1992a, p. 94; Harris, 2013, pp. 47 - 62).<sup>46</sup> Examples of this were in Liberia in the 1980s, Mali in the 1970s, and Gambia in the 1990s, (Abramowitz, 2014; Harris, 2013; Kandeh, 1996). This phenomenon contradicts the traditional manner of achieving governmental power, which has usually been based on age and experience. According to Pedersen (1996), many young military soldiers who come to governmental power through military coups are political radicals, often lacking a clear ideology, but presenting a programme that is mainly aimed at attacking corruption and nepotism in the state organs. This development can be seen from a cultural perspective as a kind of “youth riot” and resistance to the status quo.<sup>47</sup> These kinds of military coups have taken place in the Republic of Sierra Leone, and details of the coups are presented in chapter three of this thesis.<sup>48</sup>

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46 See the Appendices of this thesis.

47 See the Appendices of this thesis.

48 See also Appendix 10 of this thesis.



Sierra Leoneans themselves have come to determine that the underlying problem leading to the war was the compromise of moral and ethical values that had characterised society before 1991, whereby violence became more likely as a result of secularisation or post-secularisation and the marginalisation of religion and ethics in politics (Turay, 2005, Gberie, 2005, Moiba, 2005/ 2006). It is this violence that Mitton (2015, p. 35), seeks to give a rational explanation when he argues that:

A general understanding of the rational actor used here stems from its use in literature addressing Sierra Leone: the rational actor is an individual making cost-benefit calculations of self-interest in the performance of violence.

As he argues against other scholars (Richards, 1996, p. xvi; Keen, 2005; Peters, 2011, p. 154), who saw the violence in Sierra Leone as irrational and brutal and barbaric, Mitton (2015, p. 1) seeks to “to shed much needed light on the causes and shaping forces of extreme violence”. Thus I argue that the violence perpetrated during the war can be characterised as both rational and irrational because even the perpetrators of violence in all factions behaved in ways that were counter-productive in the long term but “enjoyable” to the perpetrators of the violence that ensued during the war. This issue of extreme violence or atrocities was frequently raised and condemned by the clergy in the churches and the mosques during their worship services on Sundays and Fridays respectively (interviews with Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis and Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007). The church was both voluntarily silent and disenfranchised regarding political issues, thereby enabling “bad politicians” to ravage the country and exploit its wealth and resources (Abraham, 2003; Hirsch, 2001, pp. 24 - 31; Kandeh, 1992a, 1996; Keen, 2005). However, the advent of the war led to the emergent awareness by the general citizenry in Sierra Leone <sup>49</sup> that there should be a return to morality or to religious ethics, notably religious peacemaking in politics. I interviewed Revd. Moses Khanu (July 2007) <sup>50</sup> and according to him:

The Christian leaders played a very significant role compared to the politicians. This is so because if one has to be really realistic, it is the politicians who muddied the water and it was the Christians who came along to make sure that the water is crystal clear! Also by helping, because if it were not for those organisations, I wonder what would have

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49 See Chapter Seven of this thesis.

50 See Appendix 1a of this thesis. This and all interviewees’ statements are given verbatim.

happened because the politicians see themselves as being chased by the rebels. The Christians had confidence, some good confidence with the warring factions, because they saw them as people who provided assistance for them.

My argument is that this confidence from the religious leaders was probably due to their own role in maintaining and preserving religious tolerance over the years due to a unique religious structure which in my view had been well managed before and after 1989, and to this I now turn.

### **1.7.1 Religious Structure of Sierra Leone**

Sierra Leone's religious composition is complex. Though the CIA Facts Book<sup>51</sup> maintains that Sierra Leone's population is 10% Christian, 30% ATR, and 60% Muslim (CIA online), this statistical report is probably based on out-dated information from the 1960's, when Sierra Leone was still under British colonial control. It is probable that at least 40% of the nation is Christian and 55% of the population is Muslim, where as 5 % practice only ATR. Bio, a former head of state and opposition politician and researcher at Bradford university, however, suggests that Muslims constitute 60% of the country's population (Bio, n. d., p. 6), probably relying on the statistics from the CIA facts book mentioned above. Yet, both Muslims and Christians are not only commonly influenced in daily life by ATR institutions such as *Poro*, *Wunday*, *Bondo* or *Sande* and *Gbogii*, but were also influenced by them in peacemaking, through their specialised arms of *Kamajors*, *Gbintiis*, *Tamaboros*, *Donsos* and *Due* (Fanthorpe, 2007; John, 2003: 35 - 46; Revd. Mark Ngobeh, July 2011).<sup>52</sup> Though there are, as of now, hardly any reliable statistics, the above stated demographic conjecture arises from the rapid growth of the Christian religion in Sierra Leone, especially after independence in 1961, and that both Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone actively participate in traditional religious activities.<sup>53</sup> Thorough research is required into the actual percentage of Muslims and Christians in Sierra Leone, as well as their geographic distribution. However, there is

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51 <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/sl.html>. [Accessed 23 July 2016].

52 I had a privileged conversation as a colleague, the Methodist Minister in Sierra Leone on religion and peacemaking Bo. Revd. Mark Ngobeh, was Chairman of the Bo/ Kenema District of the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone, with vast experience in the West, South and East of the Country.

53 I was a participant observer before and after the war, as a Methodist Minister & Regional Supervisor for peace and civic education in Bo city, Freetown, Kailahun, Kenema, Kono and other places from 1989 through 2011.

empirical evidence to show that there are probably more Christians in the Western part of Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone (Fashole-Luke, Gray, Hastings and Tasié, 1978, pp. 18ff), whereas Muslims predominate in the rest of Sierra Leone.<sup>54</sup> However, there is a group of about 5% of the Population who, as heads or leaders of the various secret societies are most probably non members of Islam and Christian religions (personal observations, 1984 to 2015).

On the other hand, the Christian context in Sierra Leone can be characterised as multi-denominational, including Roman Catholics, Evangelicals, Pentecostals and others. For example, other mainline churches include the Methodist, Baptist, Anglican, United Methodist, Countess of Huntingdon Connexion, West African Methodist and others, and their ministers are trained at the Sierra Leone Theological College and Church Training Centre<sup>55</sup> and the Jui Bible College, now the Evangelical College of Theology. Roman Catholic priests are trained at the St. Paul Major Seminary in Freetown, where studies are based on continuous reflection in several academic subjects, including philosophy, Greek, and Hebrew. Other subjects offered at the Sierra Leone Theological College include critical studies of the Bible, biblical exegesis, contextual theology and much more, with an emphasis on theology from below, the offshoot of liberation theology. This is known as African Christian Theology, an offshoot of liberation theology and the Evangelical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) declaration is central to doing theology in the third world.<sup>56</sup> Bowie (2011, pp. 67 - 92) draws more attention to this issue in her work on the inculturation debate that is ongoing, in *Studies in world Christianity Volume 21, Issue 1*<sup>57</sup>. African Christian theologians base their theologising on the cultures and traditions prevalent in Africa before it was polluted by western Missionaries, who lacked scholarly training (Olupona 2014, p x). However, in the recent past, scholars like Bowie, have given an informed contribution to the inculturation debate in Africa, by giving a nuanced analysis to the issue, and looking at some of the ways in which inculturation is being defined and at what have come to be regarded as

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54 Based on my personal observations of the number of churches in Freetown when compared with the rest of the country.

55 Now College of Theology and Management and Church Training Centre, Freetown.

56 Third world theologians in this declaration maintained that they will no longer do theology based on the theological categories of non third world theologians but shall do theology contextually, taking their own experience in the “talk about God” and “thinking about God”, seriously.

57 More on this debate in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

early experiments in inculturation and whether they were well received or finally rejected by church authorities and local Christians. As much of the evidence suggest Christians in Sierra Leone, seem to have gradually in-cooperated their faith with ATR, even in the study of biblical criticism (lectures and conversations with Revd. Dr Sydney Cooper, vice principal, Sierra Leone Theological College and Church Training Centre, Freetown 1994 - 1997 and 2010 - 11).

In addition, biblical criticism is a significant activity for these churches. The curriculum at The Sierra Leone Theological College and the evangelical College of Theology, both accredited by the University of Sierra Leone, is similar to the studies within Catholic seminaries in Sierra Leone, where priestly candidates complete both a bachelor's degree in philosophy and bachelor's degree in sacred theology. In the curriculum for the sacred theology degree, biblical criticism is also a significant theme among Catholic priestly students and normally follows after four years of study in Western and African philosophy.

The Pentecostal denominations focus on what can be characterised as a literary interpretation of the texts as well as church history. This means that any attempt to study the Bible critically, as done in the mainline churches, is generally discouraged (John, 2003). For example, the Flaming Church and the Winners' Chapel, which focus on miracles and wishful thinking, teach both members and ministers to adhere to the literal interpretation of the Bible, with little or no regard for contextual theology, historical theology or biblical criticisms. There is also a new group of Pentecostals, mainly from Nigeria, that do not prioritise any formal study apart from Bible schools, where the emphasis is mainly on literal interpretations of the Bible. There is also a focus on materialism, and preachers maintain that material success is a sign of true born-again faith. Some of these preachers engage in liberal re-interpretations of the Bible and display a tendency to "read between the lines" and often emphasise "winning a battle with unknown or known forces", reading the Bible allegorically and are often accused of taking it out of context.<sup>58</sup>

Thus, the Christian context of Sierra Leone can be characterised as full of tension, cooperation, tolerance and ecumenism and it was well managed through common adherence to ATR by Muslims and Christians in Sierra Leone (Moiba, 2005/ 2006;

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<sup>58</sup> Personal experience in Sierra Leone in several villages and cities between 1991 - 2015.

Parratt, 1991: pp. 6 - 7, 36, 33-34, 133ff; Turay, 2005). However, there are ministers or Pastors who think that any attempt to study the Bible critically is anti-Christ and must be avoided, whereas others, particularly in the mainline churches, think such action to be the best alternative available, considering historical theology and how the Christian tradition has developed over the years (Fashole-Luke, 1974; Sawyerr, 1968 a). This Christian context is exemplified by the presence of two Christian ecumenical organisations in Sierra Leone (CCSL and EFSL) as well as two major Churches, the Catholic Church and, of late, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints from the United States, which are neither members of the Council of Churches Sierra Leone (CCSL) nor the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone (EFSL). It is in this context that I live and work, which brings me to the issue of the concept of peace in religions, on which I shall elaborate below.

## **1.8 The Concept of Peace in Religions**

In this section, I aim to provide an overview of some elements of textual and contemporary references to peace that form part of the backdrop against which adherents of religions discussed in this thesis think about peace and/ or how they are expected to put it into practice. Due to word limitations, these views will only be briefly presented, yet these overviews will nonetheless shed light on inherent religious views on peace.

There are many misconceptions regarding the concept of peace, the most generally held being that peace is simply the converse of war, whether in a structuralist or functionalist fashion (Childress and Macquarrie, 1986, pp. 460 - 461; Ibeanu, 2009, p. 3f). However, peace, religiously perceived, is many things, ranging from negative peace to positive peace, which is more than the absence of war. Peace is the existence of tranquillity, the absence of direct violence, the maintenance of justice, fair play, the provision of human welfare needs, such as education, health, a decent income, and the establishment of strong institutions that prevent structural violence. The argument is that peace is also a condition of healthy relationships that contribute to a tranquil environment, both for animate and inanimate existence (Galtung, 2003). From the perspective of Saint Augustine in the *City of God* (Bentenson, 2003; Pollmann, 2007), peace is seen as a never-ending struggle to ensure that problems of animate and inanimate existence are solved by means other than brutal, chaotic and unreasonable violence. Scholars suggests that peace is an integral part of peacemaking because peace can exist even when there is

war or conflict. But even in the absence of war, there can be no peace in a situation where structural violence exists (Galtung, 2003; Ibeanu, 2009, p. 3ff). Additionally, violence from war can extend to times of so-called peace and create further violence if proper institutions are not established to prevent a war of violent conflict. The violence that will derive from this lack of established structure to prevent violence may serve to elevate the status of the perpetrators of violence (Mitton, 2015). In his research, Galtung (2003) suggests that peacekeeping takes place when war escalates and a third party or parties intervene either by use of force or through diplomatic means. The role of local initiatives is also central, and while the UN may be the most common peacekeeping force, such local initiatives cannot be overlooked (Bio, n. d.; Turay, 2005). This phase of peacekeeping is normally followed by peacemaking when both state and non-state players act as a third party, working towards the cessation of hostilities and also the creation of the conditions necessary for peaceful (negative peace) conflict resolution and conflict transformation through the use of force, as practiced by ATR fighters, also known as civil defence forces, in Sierra Leone.

Much of the evidence suggests that through non-violent means, as practiced by Churches and religious leaders, Revd. Dr Martin Luther King Jr. in the USA, along with other religious leaders across the world used non-violent means to make peace (Rott, 1995, pp. 477 - 479). I will soon define peacekeeping, peacemaking, peace education and eventually peacebuilding.<sup>59</sup> Though this thesis mainly focuses on Christian peacemaking, let us first examine the concept of peace in Islam.

### **1.8.1 The Concept of Peace in Islam**

The purpose of this section is to present the various Islamic groupings in Sierra Leone, some modernist Muslims and what they represent, as well as the characteristics of Islam in Sierra Leone. This will be followed by what is expected of Muslims in Sierra Leone with regards to reconciliation, peace, and dialogue, both from the Qur'an and from Islamic reconciliation and praxis of peace in Sierra Leone.

Much of the evidence shows that there are various Islamic groupings in Sierra Leone, including the Wahabi (locally known as "Amakia"), the Ahmadiya and the Shia Muslims. The version of Sufi Islam present in Sierra Leone is found among all three

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<sup>59</sup> See section 1.9 of this chapter.

groupings named above. Scholars of Islam in Sierra Leone remind us that in recent times, it was reported in media circles that the Southeast Asian conservative fundamentalist Deobandi sects have tried to make inroads within Sierra Leone but without success (Foulah, 2006: ii; Rashid, 2011; Moiba, 2006). Reports indicated that in response to the attempt by the Deobandi influencing politics in the country, the former president of Sierra Leone, Alhaji Dr Amad Tejan Kabbah, himself a Sunni Muslim Wahabi or Amakia Muslim, banned the organisation in eastern Freetown. Research suggests that the makeup of Sierra Leonean Islamic groups is such that they are politically tolerant, perhaps also because of the educational system in Sierra Leone has encouraged Christians and Muslims to live, work and learn together for a very long period of time since 1808 when Sierra Leone was declared a British Crown Colony (Rashid and O'Brien, 2003; Goddard, 1925, pp. 31 - 45; Hirsch, 2001; Keen, 2005). This was done by promoting religious tolerance in the schools' curriculum. This cordial relationship served as a resource for peace during the peace process in Sierra Leone (Sillah, 1994; Turay, 2005).

Research suggests that in our world today, Islamic modernists have taken varied positions with regards to peacemaking in general (Shepard, 2009). According to Esposito (2016), these Islamic modernists includes the academic and philosopher Tariq Ramadan, who draws a sharp distinction between obligations to God and worship (for example, prayer, fasting for Ramadan) and laws that govern social human affairs (marriage, divorce, inheritance, contracts, bank interests, and mortgages), Amr Khaled another example of a modernist Muslim, who is believed to be the first Islamic television evangelist whose goal is to spread a renaissance of Islam (*Nahda*). Esposito suggests that Amr Khaled contextualises Islam and preaches religion's role in both the Islamic world and the west. Also, Ali Gomaa, an Islamic Jurist; Mustapha Ceric, strong believer and promoter of Rousseau's social contract; Heba Raouf; Fethulla Gulen; and the Hizmet movement have all influenced the Sierra Leonean Muslim groups, which are credited for their unprecedented religious tolerance (Rashid and O'Brien, 2003; Esposito, Oxford Islamic Studies Online, 2016).<sup>60</sup> According to the above source, other modernists Muslims worth mentioning include Sheik Yusuf Qaradawi, who offers a

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<sup>60</sup>[http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/Home.html?url=%2Fapp%3Fservice%3Dexternalpagemet%26method%3Dview%26page%3DHome&failReason=Error+reason%3A+err\\_userpass\\_none%2Berr\\_ip\\_badcred%2Berr\\_athens\\_none%2Berr\\_shib\\_none%2Berr\\_referrer\\_badcred%2Berr\\_libcard\\_none](http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/Public/Home.html?url=%2Fapp%3Fservice%3Dexternalpagemet%26method%3Dview%26page%3DHome&failReason=Error+reason%3A+err_userpass_none%2Berr_ip_badcred%2Berr_athens_none%2Berr_shib_none%2Berr_referrer_badcred%2Berr_libcard_none). [Accessed July 2016].

reformist view of Islam, and believes that everything is acceptable in Islam except those against God's commands in the Qur'an. However, in 1995, he is on record to have issued a *fatwa* justifying attacks in Israel and stating that suicide bombing was necessary and; Amina Wadud, the daughter of a Baptist Minister, converted to Islam. When Amina Wadud converted to Islam, Esposito reminds us that she became the first Muslim woman to lead the prayer. It is further maintained that she supports what is called "gender jihad", and argues that prejudices against women are not based on the Qur'an, but attributable to misguided interpretations (Oxford Islamic studies online, 2016). These individuals and groups mentioned are significant due to their wide audiences and the respect they enjoy in the Islamic world as well as in non-Islamic world both because of their perceived educational background and eloquence in propagating their ideas mentioned above. The views they express may be, in my view, important for the maintenance of peace, Gender issues, and common human existence because of their wide range of influence in many Countries including Sierra Leone.

According to my observations in Sierra Leone, the Islamic groups have some internal differences among and between themselves, but due to the influence of modern Muslims mentioned above as well as the IRC SL and their access to Christian education, they are unprecedentedly tolerant. Also, Muslims have been able to manage their internal differences through collective membership of the IRC SL and the common adherence to ATR practices in the country (Turay, 2005).

Drawing on the works of Rashid (2011), Sillah (1994) and Shepard (2009), and from my observations, the relationship between the various Islamic groups in the country has not been problematic. Much of the evidence shows that political Islam was not a problem at all in the peace process. All the various Muslim groups are either part of the Supreme Islamic Council and/or the Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone (Bio, n. d. p. 6). These groups also agreed on views with regards common human existence and peacemaking. Thus, much of the evidence implies that political Islam did not disrupt the peacemaking praxis during or after the war. According to Rashid (2011), a Sierra Leonean and history professor at Vassar College:

Muslims have been active in the politics of Sierra Leone since independence. Although for its first 35 years the leadership was composed of Christians, this was not a great source of tension. Religion seems not to be a flash point in Sierra Leone; neither religion nor ethnicities were significant factors in the extreme violence that characterised the recent civil war in Sierra Leone. Attempts in the 1980s



and 1990s to introduce Salafist ideas have not met with much success among Sierra Leoneans, who put a premium on religious tolerance.<sup>61</sup>

Scholars acknowledge the growth of global religious fundamentalism, which has had a severely negative impact on the peaceful co-existence of people of different faiths in multi-religious communities (Juergensmeyer, 2003; Sillah, 1994; Sesay, 2006, pp. 2-11; Shepard, 2009). Yet, if one judges the peaceful messages in the Qur'an, peace is said to be a paramount concern in Islam. Scholars maintain that the meaning of the word "Islam" is "surrender" or "submission" (to God) and is derived from the word *salaam*, meaning "peace" (Sillah, 1994; Sesay, 2006, p. 11; Shepard, 2009, pp. 1 - 9). According to Islamic scholars such as Esposito (2016), Irani (2000), Khan (2005), Sanneh (1997), and Sesay (2006), the Qur'an contains peaceful messages and encourages its adherents to work for harmony (Esposito, 2016; Leirvik, 2006; Khan, 2005). According to the Qur'an (Sura 109):

Say: you disbelievers, I do not worship that which you worship, nor do you worship that which I worship. And I will not worship that which you have been worshipping nor will you worship that I worship. To you your religion and to me mine.

Scholars have argued that this quotation advocates mutual understanding and tolerance of religions (Rashid, 2011; Sillah, 1994; Sesay, 2006). However, research shows that *Muftis*, according to Islamic standards, can declare *fatwa* (Shepard, 2009, p. 133 - 137) and Muslims can engage in *jihad* when this religious order is given to do so. Christianity as a religion is not a pacifist religion, and many Christian leaders have advocated, and would still advocate a war on a national level according to circumstances, and are expected to take to arms and defend themselves when attacked. Much of the evidence shows that when Muslims meet they greet each other by saying, "Peace be upon you." Scholars argue that in Islam, peace is not only the absence of war but the presence of faithfulness to God; it also involves practising the five pillars of Islam: faith in God and Mohammad as His messenger, five daily prayers, fasting during Ramadan, pilgrimage to Mecca, and alms-giving of at least 2.5% of one's income. According to Alhaji Saeed Kaloko, "In general, Islam is considered to be a religion of peace, goodwill, mutual understanding and good faith", a view also held by many Muslims and Christians in Sierra Leone and around the world (Rashid, 2011, Sillah, 1994; Anono, 2006, p. 8; Sadik, 2014).

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61 <http://www.bu.edu/wara/islamic-diversity-sierra-leone/>. [Accessed July 2016].

Even though Islamic radicalism is experienced today and widely reported in media circles around the world, drawing on the work of Sadik (2014), it can be argued that Prophet Muhammad used several approaches and methods of conflict resolution among Muslims and between non-Muslim communities. Sadik, drawing on social science methods of peacemaking and recorded narratives of the issues of peacemaking employed by the Prophet, argues that the approaches, methods and principles of the Prophet in resolving conflicts included good intentions and relations, patience, forgiveness, brotherhood, avoidance (withdrawal), dialogue, diplomacy, reconciliation (*sulh*), treaties, mediation, arbitration and coercion, which offered effective solutions at his time, and which can be replicated today for conflicts in Muslim communities.

Much of the evidence indicates that in Sierra Leone, Muslims used these peacemaking methods and principles of the Prophet, and promoted them on a daily basis. Commenting on Islam in Sierra Leone Rashid (2011) also maintained:

Sierra Leone is predominately Muslim, but it is not an Islamic state. While Sierra Leone has a large and diverse Muslim population, it remains decidedly secular in its government, which puts great stock in cultivating religious amity, with government events often opened with readings from both the Qur'an and the Bible.<sup>62</sup>

According to Islamic scholars, in Islam, the path of reconciliation is often followed in order to achieve peace. Reconciliation and forgiveness are explored in the Qur'an and in Islamic practice. These are linked with rituals relating to *sulh*, or settlement, and *musalaha*, or reconciliation (Irani, 2000). *Sulh*, according to Irani, is a ritual that consists of three stages, which incorporates *musalaha*. He maintains that in the first stage, the families of the victim and offender choose respected mediators (*muslihs*). In the process, they publicly acknowledge that the crime was committed. He further maintains that the second stage is the reconciliation, or *musalaha* itself. Here, the mediators work to produce a pardon and a settlement, in the process of which the honour and dignity of both parties must be upheld and restored. Considering that a large group of the community is involved, it is important that both parties retain respect within the community, even while a crime is acknowledged. In the third stage, a public ritual is held, which brings the community together as the main guarantor of forgiveness. Irani further outlines that the public ceremony of *suhl* includes four major stages: the act of reconciliation; the parties shaking hands under the supervision of the

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<sup>62</sup> <http://www.bu.edu/wara/islamic-diversity-sierra-leone/>. [Accessed, July 2016].

mediators; the family of the offender visiting the home of the victim to drink a cup of bitter coffee; and, finally, the offender's family hosting a meal. The ritual of *suhl* does not necessarily emphasise either the victim or the offender's role in initiating the process but does highlight using a third party to help facilitate the process. In this way, *Suhl* as a ritual provides for the maintenance of peace and the honour and respect of the whole community.

Sadik, in his Ph.D thesis, argues that peaceful messages are also an integral part of the Qur'an (Sadik, 2014). A good example from Sura XIX is "They will not there hear any vain discourse, but only salutations of peace: and they will have therein sustenance, morning and evening." Even though this process might seem naive in a period that is bedevilled by Islamic fanatic groups who cause mayhem around the world, reconciliation is what is expected of Muslims in a bid to settle conflicts. In Sierra Leone, this kind of reconciliation was prevalent among the majority Muslim population. As Bio (n. d. p. 6) observed:

The Supreme Islamic Council (SIC) of Sierra Leone representing the Country's Muslims who constitute 60 percent of the country's population instructed local preachers to local Muslims clerics that they should consistently drive home the need for a negotiated end to the war.

Thus this thesis argues that this, and the previous examples show that Islam did indeed have a role in the peacemaking process in Sierra Leone, both through practice and in theory by collaborating with Christians. As Bio (n. d. p. 6) puts it: "The Council of Churches, Sierra Leone, through its secretary, Alimamy P. Koroma, collaborated with SIC [Supreme Islamic Council] on propagating the need for a negotiated end to the conflict". Thus much of the evidence show that political Islam was not a problem in the peacemaking that religious leaders and organisations were engaged in. However, the Christian example is more important because it is the focus of this thesis and the Christian message is more consistent with peace in modern times. Therefore, I will now explore the concept of peace in Christianity, the focus of this thesis.

### **1.8.2 The Concept of Peace in Christianity**

In this section, I aim to present what is expected of Christians as peacemakers based on their Holy book and particularly the teachings of Jesus, who's words recorded in the Bible are held in high esteem by them, even though the interpretations might vary from person to person, denomination to denomination, or from context to context. However,

the following presentations point to how Christians in Sierra Leone perceived biblical records vis-a-vis peace.<sup>63</sup> I will begin with a general statement, review biblical texts on peace and make analyses of people who practice Christianity with regards to peacemaking. Even though this might be judged differently from person to person, the following paragraphs will shed light on what is expected of Christian countries, organisations and individuals with regards to peacemaking.

For example, in an address to the UN on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October, 1965, Pope John Paul stated: “No more war, war never again” (Heff, 2010). Furthermore, Pope John Paul II is on record as having said that: “There is no peace without justice” (Revd. Fr. Peter Konteh, CARITAS Sierra Leone, July 2010).<sup>64</sup>

Research shows that even though the UK and the USA see themselves as “Christian” Countries, and the war in Iraq (among other recent participations in conflict), was waged by them and their allies, there is nowhere in the Bible where Jesus recommends war. In my view, Jesus recommends what can be termed “peace by peaceful means”(Galtung, 1996, 2003) and “faith-based diplomacy”(Johnston and Cox, 2003). However, the “Just war” theory has greatly influenced Christian countries both in the past and in recent times (Childress and Macquarrie, 1986, pp. 328 - 329).

Over the years, Christianity has transformed its view of making peace and promoting the “just war” theory (Elshtain, 1992). However, historically speaking, many Christians refused to enlist into the Roman Imperial army. The 5<sup>th</sup>-century theory of Saint Augustine evolved new variations of how Christians interpret the “just war theory”, which claim that people should keep peace at all costs and the right to go to war must meet several criteria of a “just cause”, including comparative justice, competent authority, right intention, probability of success, last resort, and proportionality. Even though just war theory can be traced leading back to Saint Augustine of Hippo, as a concept, it has transformed itself greatly in our post-modern world. There are now more sophisticated weapons, such as nuclear weapons, Hel MD photon cannon, laser weapon systems, experimental EM rail guns, assault rifles, and chemical weapons, and the international laws governing warfare have changed drastically, making war and peace

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<sup>63</sup> See also Chapter Four of this thesis on the use of the Bible and the Qur’an, by Religious Leaders in Sierra Leone.

<sup>64</sup> A privileged discussion.

issues more complex. However, Christians all over the world are expected to be peacemakers in action, drawing on both biblical texts mentioned here and the official positions of mainline churches around the world, including in Sierra Leone (Childress and Macquarrie, 1986, pp 460 - 461). Even though one might seem naive in holding these views, because of the complexities of warfare and weaponry, in a recent statement published on the 28 June 2016 by WCC on “Religion and Violence”, it is acknowledged that:

...The Ecumenical Call to Just Peace acknowledged that Christians have often been complicit in systems of violence, injustice, militarism, racism, sexism, casteism, intolerance and discrimination, but that they seek forgiveness and transformation. It also appealed to governments and other groups to stop using religion as a pretext for the justification of violence. At the 10th WCC Assembly, Busan, 2013, WCC member churches committed themselves to moving together on a ‘Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace’. The assembly adopted a statement on "The Way of Just Peace" in which this way was described as "a journey into God’s purpose for all humanity and all creation" rooted in the hope of spiritual transformation....<sup>65</sup>.

At its recent central committee meeting in Trondheim Norway, from the 22 to 28 June 2016, WCC further elaborated on the need for peace and justice in the world under various themes including religious tolerance, dialogue, and peace by peaceful means. Thus I argue that in Christianity, the concept of peace is closely connected with that of justice. This is evident in Catholic as well as Protestant teachings not only in Sierra Leone but also in other parts of the world.

Theologians argue that the Old Testament(OT) presents God as requiring people to act justly and to practice loving mercy, even though some OT stories can be characterised as violent or terror from modern perspectives.<sup>66</sup> However, it can be argued that Jesus or the promised Messiah is often referred to as the “Prince of Peace”: one who brings peace; one willing to give himself for the sins of the world, who gave His life so that others could be saved according to the Old Testament book of Isaiah. According to Isaiah 9:6: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” In Genesis 1: 27, it is recorded that God

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<sup>65</sup><https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/central-committee/2016/statement-on-religion-and-violence>. [Accessed July 2016].

<sup>66</sup> All biblical quotations in this thesis are from the New King James version, except where otherwise indicated.

created humankind in his own image. So for peace to be positive, the dignity of the human being, made in the likeness of God, should be recognised, protected and defended. According to the Bible, being made in the image and likeness of God implies a relationship of love with God the Father, with the poor, and with the powerless (Jeremiah, 22: 3-4). Scholars assert that the Christian concept of peace thus hinges on the concept that without justice, there will be no peace (Desjardins, 1997). In fact, the Christian “just war” theory also hinges on this (Elshtain, 1992, p 4 - 7, 9ff, 15, 17, 19-20, 38, 45, 64, 81, 85- 86, 91-92, 94, 96, 99- 100, 169, 213, 236, 319; Childress and Macquarrie, 1986). Yet, according to Saint Augustine’s perspective, it is only when war is necessary to defend God-given rights that Christians should engage in such conflicts (Bettenson, 1972, p. 216, 2003). As recorded in Job 31 and Proverbs 23: 24, when people act justly, then there will be peace. Furthermore, in the book of Isaiah we see that:

Their webs will not become garments, nor will they cover themselves with their works; their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths, the way of peace they have not known; they know nothing of the way of peace and there is no justice in their ways; they have made themselves crooked paths; whoever takes that way shall not know peace (Isaiah 58: 6 - 8).

In the Old Testament, the concept of justice is presented in Psalm 14; Psalm 85: 10-11 and Psalm 89; for example, “Righteousness and justice are the foundations of your throne; mercy and truth go before your face” (Psalm 89: 14).

The New Testament records that Jesus said “...I have come that they may have life and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10: 10). My argument is that this kind of peace/life can only come with the existence of structures meant to defend and promote mankind and God-given rights, and working for those rights is a demand on the Church’s mission because of the Beatitudes, or the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5, 6 and 7. Christians in Sierra Leone thus perceived peacemaking as encompassing justice and that peace must be practical. This is recorded in Matthew 5: 16, which states “Let your Light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven.” It must be performed, and not only thought of or preached about in the pulpit. Human beings with intellect and will, have the right to freedom of thought, freedom of movement, freedom of religion and worship, political freedom and freedom from arrest without fair trial.

Furthermore, according to some New Testament scholars, a fundamental pillar to Christian peacemaking, those who seek peace as Christians have often interpreted the scripture using a peaceful method to interpret the words of Jesus: “Those who live by the sword, will die by the sword” (Mathew 26: 56). These scholars argue that in the New Testament, Jesus emphasises the importance of justice and peace (Desjardins, 1997; and others). Christian theologians argue that Jesus exposed the wickedness and injustice of the social and political systems of his time through his life, death, and resurrection. It is argued that in the Beatitudes, the message of peace becomes synonymous with the identity of a Christian, a necessary characteristic of those who believe in Christ. In the gospel of Matthew for example, Christians are blessed, and are Sons of God if they are peacemakers: “Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called Sons of God” (Mathew 5: 9). Thus a peacemaker, from a Christian perspective, is someone who loves peace, especially positive peace, and works to make that peace a reality. Furthermore, a Christian view of peace emphasises rights and obligations. However, Avalos (2007), argue that biblical scholarship was an apologetic enterprise, which had as an aim to provide the illusion that the bible was still culturally and morally superior authority. I take exceptions to because of the crucial role theology and biblical studies can play as internal critique of religion and in their role in peacemaking, when legitimately pursued, as evident in subsequent chapters of this thesis and in Sierra Leone.

In sum, because God created man in His image and likeness, everyone deserves the right to the fruits of the earth. In other words, people’s welfare and the provision of basic necessities and defence should be a priority for Christians, similar to the concept of *shalom* (peace) in Jewish culture. This concept of *shalom* refers to a holistic peace, where there is abundance, plenty of food, the right to justice, to life, to freedom, to work, shelter, clothing, and personal possessions.

In other words, for human beings to be protected and their God-given privileges to be availed of, there must be well-established structures. This is why the Christian concept of peace deals with both rights and obligations. A salient feature of Jesus’ teaching is that it focuses on the kingdom of God both now and in the future. However, for this focus to be completed in the future, Christians must contribute to it in the here and now. The kingdom of God is already present through the Church and Christians, but it is not yet completely here. It will be completed in the future, but in the present time, it will come about through advocacy, truth-telling, truth-seeking, the provision of relief,

healing, preaching, justice, education and the goal of establishing positive peace (Neufeldt, 2002, pp. 26ff; Childress and Macquarrie, 1986).<sup>67</sup>

Even though violence is sometimes deemed necessary by Christian political authorities as well as theologians for the sake of negative or positive peace, nowhere in the Christian message does Jesus preach that people should go to war. Rather, the message is to avoid all forms of violence and resort to non-violent action, as demonstrated in Matthew 26: 52. New Testament scholars argue that Christ's view is that all other forms of conflict resolution must be used to avoid war, even if it means risking or sacrificing one's life. Christians over the years have, however, defended the "just war" theory of Saint Augustine, though its biblical basis might be questionable because nowhere in the Bible does Jesus support war for any reason whatsoever. Alternatively, the Revd. Dr Martin Luther King used non-violent methods, particularly non-violent resistance to oppressive laws, in the interest of liberating African Americans in the USA, and he, too, was very successful in promoting justice and peace in a Christian fashion.

Thus I argue that even though the church is primarily a religious body, it cannot in good conscience be silent on political, social or other important issues. It must be seen practising not only its priestly and pastoral roles, but also its prophetic role. My argument is that the Christian faith can not only be characterised as knowledge about God, or trusting in God, but also as an action for the poor and the oppressed. Much of the evidence suggests that, as Christians sought to make peace in Sierra Leone during and after the war (1991 - 2002), this vision motivated the peacemaking role of the Christian organisations and leaders, influenced by ATR, more details of which are presented below.

### **1.8.3 The Concept of Peace in African Traditional Religion**

In this section, I will describe the Concept of *Ubuntu*, the characteristics of ATR, Ancestor worship and secret societies in general. This will be followed by a presentation of secret societies in Sierra Leone and then an explanation of what their role was in peacemaking in Sierra Leone, in relation to the concept of *ubuntu*, ATR, ancestor

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<sup>67</sup> The arguments for these views will be presented in subsequent chapters, especially chapters Four through Nine.



veneration and their specialised arms of Kamajor, Gbintii, Tamaboro and other civil defence forces.

In ATR, ‘peace’ is connected with the concept of unity and humanity, which are found in the word *ubuntu*, a Nguni Bantu word encompassing essential virtues of compassion and humanity. *Ubuntu* encompasses “human kindness” or “humanness”, which can be translated to mean “humanity towards others” (Battle, 1997, p. 4ff). In its philosophical use, *ubuntu* denotes the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all mankind (Battle, 1997). Scholarship of the concept *ubuntu* has come associated *ubuntu* with humanist philosophies that permeate the South African society, especially propagated in Africanisation (translated to majority rule), the process these countries went through during the 1980s and 1990s when they were engaged in conflict. The word and its notion was popularised by Desmond Tutu, an Anglican Priest, who led the TRC of Southern Africa after the period of apartheid (Battle, 1997). Historically, the word *ubuntu*, appeared in South African literature as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Scholars suggests that the concept *Ubuntu* covered teachings on human nature, human kindness, humanness, virtue, goodness, hospitality, good neighbourliness and peace, (Battle, 1997, p. 4 - 6). The research shows that *Ubuntu* as a concept was also propagated by several world leaders including Nelson Mandela, Barack Obama and several others to mean hospitality and human kindness. The concept of *ubuntu* can also involve socialism and “goodness” (Tutu and Tutu, 2010). Scholars assert that it is the society and not the individual that gives humans their humanity through socialisation. Eventhough it is debated, in Africa, to be human is derived from being a part of one’s ethnic group or community. Desmond Tutu argues that it is this belongingness and common human existence (with *Ubuntu*) that makes the difference in human affairs. He asserts that a person is a person when he or she relates to and with other persons in a hospitable way, because one's humanity is through a recognition of the other. The concept *Ubuntu* thus has the characteristic of an extrovert community, a kind of praxis for the other person. Scholars argue that with *ubuntu*, there is a sincere warmth with which people practicing *ubuntu* treat others in the community. This overt display of hospitality and humanitarianism is not only aesthetical but encourages the creation of spontaneous communities that are cooperative (Hord and Lee, 1995). Some scholars argue that the result of this cooperation within the community or communities result in harmony and transcends everything and provides functional importance to the value of warmth. Tutu and Tutu (2000) assert that warmth in the community will then guard against

instrumentalist relationships in favour of humanitarian relationships. The redistribution of wealth and sharing resources is a fundamental aspect of *ubuntu*. According to Battle, with *ubuntu*, peoples' skills and competencies are valued and they are not isolated but live as a community where everyone's skills and competencies are valued, and there is mutual support that can help people grow within a given community. He argues that the idea is that man is born without form and that it is society that is responsible for moulding man into what he or she should become, and as a result, if some people become non-conformists, it is the society that is to blame and because of that responsibility, the community should always seek to redeem the non-conformist through redemption policies (Battle, 1997).

The critique against the concept of *ubuntu*, however, is that not all human beings are the same, so it is difficult and even impossible to let "one size fit all" in a community. Scholars argue, however, that as a peacemaking and humanitarian terminology and concept, *ubuntu* emphasises taking care of others: "I am what I am because we are" (Battle, 1997; Tutu and Tutu 2010) or "I am because we are" (Hord and Lee, 1995). In addition, they assert that *ubuntu* is in contrast to vengeance, and it dictates that a high value be conferred on the human being, that the dignity of humans be maintained, and there should be a shift from confrontation to mediation and conciliation, which dictates good attitudes, shared human concern, the establishment of harmony between people in conflict and that such harmony should restore the dignity of the plaintiff without destroying the defendant (Tutu and Tutu, 2010). In short *ubuntu* is a loaded terminology encompassing human welfare such as social justice and human rights for a peaceful society and for peacemaking and "goodness" (Tutu and Tutu, 2010).

The term *ubuntu* also has many variations in other parts of Africa, including Sierra Leone (Ibeanu, 2009, p. 26) where, for example, it exists as *goyila* among the Mendes. *Goyila*, or "unity", is the main priority of Mende secret societies<sup>68</sup> as a part of ATR. Scholars suggest that ATR in Africa employs the *ubuntu* way of making peace. However with some exceptions to *ubuntu* I propose that this concept can be characterised as *goyila* among the Mendes of Sierra Leone. The main exception been in *goyila*, peacemakers can make use of force in situations where the general peace of the community is perceived as threatened. My observations show that the concept is passed

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68 See below.

from generation to generation through oral traditions during initiations, with songs, stories, proverbs, etc, encouraging communities to respect the dictates of secret societies for peace, and promoting peace and reconciliation through militancy for self-defence, as was the case in Sierra Leone (Fanthorpe, 2007; Gberie, 2005; Gittins, 1987; Idowu in Mbiti, 2010; Moiba, 2006), which demonstrates that it is part of ATR, and its characteristics are presented below.

Scholars of ATR assert that the characteristics of traditional African Religion is complex and varied both in Sierra Leone and other parts of Africa (Olupona, 2014; Parrinder, 1962, 1969; Mbiti, 1993). In the words of Mbiti (1993), while people in Africa have particular ways of expressing religious life, there are many similar features that make it meaningful to speak collectively of African religion, albeit in the absence of uniformity or centralised institutions. In my view, however, the ATR in Sierra Leone, especially among the Mendes, seems to be more pervasive in human affairs such as peacemaking (John, 2003; Wilson, 1971). This is evident from its collective influence on both Christians and Muslims (John, 2003, pp. 35 - 46; Moiba, 2005/ 2006, Turay, 2005).

Scholars maintain that ATR is an oral traditional religion which entails the belief in a Supreme Being, gods, ancestors, spirit beings, sacred authority, religious ceremonies, festivals, rituals, sacred arts and traditional “medicines” or *Hallie* in Mende, also called secret societies (Fanthorpe, 2007; Mitchell, 1977; Olupona, 2014). Research in ATR implies that adherents of ATR practice divination, and believe in impersonal (mystical) powers which include life force, vital force, life essence and dynamism. The source of such power is mostly only known to experts, and outsiders are excluded from knowing the sources of such powers until they are initiated into one or the other secret society. These mystical powers in ATR can be attributed to objects of “medicines” or secret societies. The durability, potency, and maintenance of such powers vary from object to object and from “medicine” to “medicine” (Gittins, 1987; Little, 1965; Mbiti, 1993; Olupona, 2014).

Researchers maintain that the durability and manifestations of such powers and their use are closely related to the practices of medicine men and women, diviners, seers, and priests, who make use of objects, plants, animals, medicine, magic, charms, amulets as means of either prevention, healing, reconciliation, peacemaking and harmony in the community. Some ATR specialists maintain and believe that mysterious powers

embedded in plants, objects, and animals, can be extracted and used for specific purposes (Mitchell, 1977; Olupona, 2014).

According to Mitchell, these mystical powers can be sent to specific destinations through the use of highly specialised spiritual means for an intended evil or good (Mitchell, 1977, pp. 53- 72). In the same light, Olupona suggests that such powers can also be contagious by making contact with the objects that carry them (Olupona, 2014, pp. 38ff).

Furthermore according to Olupona and Mitchell, adherents of ATR also believe in the Supreme Being. ATR involves a hierarchy of the other world with the Supreme Being at the helm of the spiritual world, followed by the deities, objects embodied spirits, ancestors, and human beings, in that order (Olupona, 2014, pp. 20ff; Mitchell, 1977, pp. 23ff).

As I mentioned above, Olupona also asserts that these beliefs are transmitted from one generation to another through oral tradition and initiation (Olupona, 2014, p. 5). Many scholars also argue that ATR has many channels of communicating peace and reconciliation messages through traditional values, myths, and indigenous views, world views, rituals, secret societies, and civil defence forces in times of war and or peace, (Mbiti, 1969, 1970; Olupona 2014). Thus much of the evidence indicate that these are the kinds of views and mythology that permeate African societies as a whole, with few exceptions. As Bowie (2006, p. 297) indicates:

urban myths play on or reflect people's fears, often fear of change, new technology, or encounters with strangers. They may well have a basis in fact. Just as Sierra Leonean politicians and elites, and the experience of the slave trade may be mediated by the image of the witch....

In my experience and based on empirical observations, myths are central in coping with social reality in Sierra Leone in terms of war and peace, and for that sake all areas of human affairs. The aims of myths in Sierra Leone are to offer explanations for the past, present and future for a harmonious society. In Christianity and Islam, ATR myths persist to play a role in society by making Jesus the supra ancestor of all ancestors in Christianity, and the Prophet Mohamed also perceived by some Muslims as playing such a role (interview with Rev Moses Khanu and Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, July, 2007). In addition, mythology in religions can be characterised as intrinsically peaceful when practiced for common human existence, even though we should not overlook that ATR, for example, can also be a cause of violence when the violence is legitimised by

the community or by secret societies as a mechanism of self-defence (Fanthorpe, 2007; Mbiti, 2010; Moiba, 2006). We see this in the case of Sierra Leone, with regards to the role played by specialised arms of secret societies. On the other hand, ethnic groups, such as the Mende, emphasised the role of ancestors, as symbols of power, within the community (Sawyerr, 1968 b). The Mendes incorporate both the living and the dead, through the concept and practice of ancestral veneration to inform their notions of community harmony, called *ndilei* or peace, and *ngoyila* or unity in Mende. (Parratt, 1997, p. 15; Sawyerr, 1968 b; pp. 54, 90, 97, 110f, 141ff, 171 - 2; Wilson, 1971). Thus ancestral veneration to the Mendes can be perceived as a force for peacemaking, and this is discussed below, showing the connection between the secret societies and ancestral veneration in ATR.

Based on my experience and validated in archives and scholarly works on on ATR (Mbiti, 1975; Olupona 2014; Parrinder, 1969; Sawyerr, 1968 b; Wilson, 1971; and others), as well as by my interviewees in Sierra Leone, the concept of peace is connected with the role played by the ancestors and the gods or spirits in the community of the living. Among the Mendes of Sierra Leone, peace can only exist when the traditional rites and secret societies perform their roles in the community. These secret societies must follow the traditions of the ancestors and ensure that younger generations become initiates in order to continue maintaining peace and unity in a given community (Wilson, 1971).

Scholars suggest that the ATR belief in ancestors is crucial to peacemaking as a phenomenon and as a practice because of its significance in influencing both Christians and Muslims for societal harmony, which may be similar to the concept of *ubuntu* described above (Ferme, 2001, pp. 4, 74, 182, 205 - 206). Ancestor worship as a practice in, and of, secret societies, is a religious activity based on the belief that deceased family members have continued existence as the “living dead”, and that the living dead or ancestors have the power and influence to look after the family here on earth, take an interest in the affairs of the world and have the capacity and ability to influence the present as well as the future of the living (Ferme, 2001, pp. 205). In other words, those who have passed away have beneficial influence on those on earth and as a result the living make sacrifices to both the gods and to the ancestors. Bowie (2006, p. 13), commenting on the pouring of libations on the graves of Ancestors, propounds that: “Ancestor worship was therefore at the root of every religion”. In a similar light, Olupona (2014, p. 28) suggests that, “ancestral tradition, the veneration of deceased

parents and forbearers, constitute a key aspect in African religions.” He further maintains that “the living and the ancestors depend upon one another for survival.... In contrast, the Kono, of Sierra Leone believe that the ancestors’ world contains greater beauty and prosperity than the human one” (Olupona, 2014, p. 29).

For one to become an ancestor one must have died a “good death”, a death not characterised by, for example, violence but by peace or what is known in *ubuntu* as human-ness or as restoration to community (Harris, 2013, p. 137; Olupona, 2014, p. 31). Thus scholars argue that in this kind of peace or human-ness, the role of the ancestors or the “living dead” is central (Wilson, 1971). Those living on earth can only have peace when they live in harmony with each other, all the spirits that control the various forces of life, but more so when they venerate and placate the Ancestors (Olupona, 2014, pp. 28 - 33). The Ancestors seem to be important for all aspects of life among African ethnic groups. According to Alexis Kagama, the living man is happier than the departed because he is alive, but the departed are more powerful (Kagama, 1971). They are powerful to make peace and help in family and communal harmony. Since ancestors are considered to be influential in human affairs in most African societies, especially for harmony and peace, festivals are held to commemorate ancestors, and prayers are offered to ancestors for all aspects of life, for the attention of the Supreme Being. The ancestors thus become intermediaries between the living and the Supreme Being, who is so uplifted that he should not be approached directly (Parratt, 1997, p 46ff). In other words, ancestors serve as intermediaries between the living and the Supreme Being, since ancestors are seen as closer to God than the living (Gittins, 1987; Idowu, 1973, p. 184; Mitchell, 1977; Olupona, 2014). Scholarship on ancestor worship and/or veneration has advanced several explanations of this phenomenon as a way of deconstructing the concept of ancestral worship. The Mendes, call placating the ancestors *lehini*. This placating of ancestors and spirits of nature in Sierra Leone can take various forms in various places, including during the secret societies initiation ceremonies, as well as in the specialised alms of secret societies, the Kamajor, the Gbintii, and the Tamaboro societies that existed during and after the war in Sierra Leone. Ancestral veneration, an ATR phenomenon and practice is also an important part of secret societies, presented above. But how did secret societies, as part of ATR with its practice of ancestral worship and other ritual practices, contribute to war and peacemaking in Sierra Leone?

Secret societies are ancient and cultural organisations in West Africa and other regions of Africa that specialise in canalising and controlling powers in the spirit world. These powers can be both positive or negative. The powers controlled by secret societies are often captured in masks and other forms of “medicine,” which were also referred to as “fetishes” in earlier literature on secret societies in West Africa. The powers can be said to be moral and controllable through a process of socialisation, in which special forces or organisations or persons are recruited and initiated to provide these specialised services (Fanthorpe, 2007).

Scholars writing on secret societies or “medicine” in Sierra Leone often emphasise the educational and socialisation role they performed for and in the community (Jedrej, 1976, pp. 247 - 57; Jackson, 1977; Richards, 2005 b, pp 377 - 402; Little, 1965, pp. 349- 65). In the words of Kennet Little:

... the more powerful medicines might be compared to electrical batteries of high voltage. They are charged with energy, and so it is risky for an inept or unauthorised person to tamper with them, even to go anywhere near them. A medicine has to be tended and nurtured as carefully as a child, and part of the technique consists of talking to it in a certain way every day. The more powerful the medicine the more harm it is likely to cause, but it is also capable of greater benefits for all concerned, hence the need for proper qualified people to look after it (Little, 1965, pp. 349 - 65).

The secret societies in Sierra Leone have specialised institutions actually known as *Hallie* or “Medicine” in the local usage by Mende and Loko ethnic groups. *Sande* “medicine” or secret society is for women and *Poro* “medicine” or secret society is for men, (Muana, 1997, pp. 77 - 100). Membership of secret societies is by initiation, which is always held in an isolated or a specially demarcated area or bush (Sawyerr, 1968 b, p. 23). The initiation, which is by induction of members, can vary according to the region in which the society exists. Initiation involves rituals and initiates are not expected to share the “secrets of the medicines”, with non-initiates. Much of the evidence implies that the concerns of the “medicine” or secret society are for the protection of the community and that non-initiates are not expected to even come close to the vicinity of the secret society bush or demarcated areas of initiation or risk the possibility of being initiated forcefully if they violate this rule. During the initiation ceremonies, the secret societies can exercise curfew on the village(s) or section(s) in which the society is initiating members. This authority cannot be challenged even by the central government in Sierra Leone but can be challenged through the Local customary law officer, a special

legal person appointed by the central government to mediate between secret societies and the central government's implementation of the rule of law. Literature on secret societies have argued that they are a misnomer since even non-members are expected to play a role when the medicine dictates they should do so. For example, making loud sounds when passing by the society bush or vicinity where boys or girls are been initiated (Fanthorpe, 2007; Little, 1965; Richards, 2005 b).

It is as a result of this that many scholars have described them as "Sodalities" or "cult associations", however, the use of the word "society" in Sierra Leone has a connotation in the Sierra Leonean English and local lingua franca: Kriol, to mean specifically an association performing rituals. As a result of this, I will be using "secret society" or "medicine" to refer to institutions such as the *Kamarjor*, *Tamaboro*, *Gbintii*, etc, which were specialised arms of secret societies in Sierra Leone. According to Fanthorpe (2007 p. 2):

Specialised societies like the Kamajors and Due are sub sets of a general ritual division of the sexes. In every locality, there is a leading men's and women's society supervising rites of passage into adulthood....The primary purpose of the men's and women's societies is to produce fully socialised human beings. The basic idea here is that people are no less [fewer] repositories of spiritual power than the "medicines", the dead ancestors and the wild creatures of the bush....

Even though many of the initiates in these secret societies were Christians or Muslims, and their Christian and Muslim faiths seemed to be marginalised once they were trained in their specific roles as peacemakers in action through the specialised bodies of secret societies know as *Kamajors*, *Gbintiis*, *Tamaboros*, and *Donsos*, I argue that they still remained Christians and Muslims since they are not expected to denounce those faiths. Historically speaking, secret societies in Sierra Leone have always engaged in warfare and politics whenever called upon or when they deem it necessary to do so. This is especially so for the male societies like the Poro, Wunday and their specialised arms, the Kamajor, the Tamaboro, Gbintii, and others (Little, 1965; Muana, 1997, pp. 77 - 100). According to Fanthorpe (2007, pp. ii - 1):

secret societies are ancient cultural institutions in the Upper Guinea Coast of West Africa and their primary purpose is to regulate sexual identity and social conduct.... Their primary purpose is to canalize and control powers of the spirit world, many of which are captured in masks and other special artefacts, ("medicines", also known as "fetishes" in earlier literature).



The Hut tax war, 1898, in Sierra Leone also saw the role of the secret societies in peacemaking as well as in warfare or violence (Mitton, 2015, pp. 228 - 229). It was this same kind of role that the *Kamajors*, *Gbintiis*, *Tamaboros* and other specialised secret society arms played in peacemaking during the war. In Sierra Leone there are clear distinctions between that which was brought by the Europeans and that which was originally African especially, among the Mendes who refer to them as *Puu hindei* (of European origin) and *Mende/ kondi hindei* (of Mende or native origin). *Mende/ Kondi hindei* refers to local affairs or culture and *puu hindei* refers to the European or foreign affairs or culture, which is often seen as corrupting the traditional Mende realities. An interesting similar example of the above point is also found among the Temnes, which Bowie (2006, p. 295) characterises as historical events and experiences which become mythologised and ritualised, drawing on oral tradition to explain different kinds of phenomena, such as the slave trade and technology, from their collective experiences. The point made here is that the Sierra Leonean people, with few exceptions, remain loyal to “traditional” practices in all spheres of life including law, politics, warfare and religion, whether they are Christians or Muslims, as elucidated by Irene Marfoh John (2003, pp. 35 - 46). Therefore, they can freely practice the new religious realities of Islam and Christianity but yet remain loyal to their traditional practices in all spheres of life. The main exception to this practice of contextualisation of “missionary faiths”<sup>69</sup> in Sierra Leone are some Creoles in Freetown as well as some Evangelical churches discussed above <sup>70</sup> (John, 2003). Thus the secret societies in Sierra Leone are powerful forces in all spheres of the Sierra Leonean life as they enforce their social roles that transcend all facets of life (Fanthorpe, 2007; Olupona, 2014).

As described above, secret societies are fundamental war and peacemaking resources in Sierra Leone (Fanthorpe, 2007; Rashid, 2011). Gittins (1987), explains that individuals are made to invest their emotions in objects impregnated with protective or aggressive spiritual powers, as was the case with the *Kamajors*, traditional Mende hunters. The traditional Mende hunters or *Kamajors* are part of the complex system of secret society in Sierra Leone but were a specialised group meant for a specific purpose of making peace through the use of force and depended heavily on traditional “medicines” and ancestors in Sierra Leone (Muana, 1997).

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<sup>69</sup> Islam and Christianity.

<sup>70</sup> See the religious structure in Sierra Leone in this thesis.

The human person or body, therefore, has a dual aspect. As Bowie (2006, p. 1), puts it:

Anthropology claims to be an inclusive discipline, with *anthropos*, “human kind”, as its object of study. The natural sciences, philosophy, history, theology, classical studies, and even jurisprudence have all been called upon in order to throw light on this exploration of human beings in all their complexity.

Based on my observations, I argue that, it is this kind of complexity and dualism that the Mendes practice in their ancestral worship for accommodation, peace, blessings, death due to war, childbearing, relationship to individuals and relationship to *Ngewo* or the Supreme Being, (Gittins, 1987, pp. 13 - 14, 84, 71, 96, 64, 80, 57; Sawyerr, 1968 b, 1970). The relevance of the above points to this thesis is that according to the Mendes of Sierra Leone, it is only when an even relationship is established between and among the various deities and the living communities that peace can be achieved. This relationship is maintained through veneration, ritual, mythological stories, consultation and placating of God/ *Ngewo*, spirits and ancestors (Gittins, 1987; Sawyerr, 1968 b, 1970).

*Ngewo* is paramount for the Mendes and it is believed that He answers prayers for peace and all forms of social need described above. Generally speaking, throughout the African continent, prayers are said for peace among the various ethnic groups. The relevance of the following examples in other parts of Africa is not to demonstrate the complexities of ATR in Africa regarding peacemaking, but that these complexities are very similar to each other regarding peacemaking in Sierra Leone. For example, the Wapokomo people of Kenya make invocations for peace, rain and health (Mbiti, 1993), and similar prayers are said among the Mendes of Sierra Leone (Sawyerr, 1970). According to Idowu (1913 - 1993), the Yoruba of Nigeria make covenants for peace. In the ethical system of the Yoruba, covenants play an important role, whereby the whole of person-to-person, divinity-to-person relations have their bases largely in covenants. The covenant is also a ritual, a sort of eco-peace, as the Yoruba word for peace is *imule*, which literally means “drinking from the Earth together”. The Cola nut is also employed in the covenant (Mbiti, 2010). Furthermore, in Yoruba practice of ATR, according to Mbiti, “there is a wide variety of things for which these prayers are made.... Man prays for harmony with nature (trees, rivers, animals and the earth)” (Mbiti, 1975, pp. 16 - 18). In addition to covenants and spoken prayers, scholars have also identified other areas of peacemaking or peace in ATR, including actions of animal sacrifice for peace, and this can be characterised as violence against the victims for sacrifice, namely the

animal or living organism involved (Girard, 1977; Bowie, 2006; Schmidt, 2011). At an oral level, the use of proverbs and other actions for peace spreads the myth of the society and this is transmitted from generation to generation (Gittins, 1987; Mbiti, 2010; Mitchell, 1977; Sawyerr, 1970) as described below.

The combatants in the specialised secret societies arms in Sierra Leone, were accountable to a chief priest, who initiated them and gave them perceived magical powers to be bullet-proof and otherwise invincible, (conversations with Mamma Munda, Chief priest of the *Kamajor* society, 2011 to 2015).<sup>71</sup> Thus secret societies remain a very important, albeit unspoken, organisation in all spheres of life in Sierra Leone. But how do the secret societies relate to the ancestors? The chief priest of the secret societies, the traditional fighter and civil defence forces invoked the spirits of the living dead, beginning with the most recently passed away (Gittins, 1987; Olupona, 2014). They invoke these spirits as they perform ceremonies for peace and harmony, as well as when they go into battle to protect their communities. Practitioners of ATR with its secret societies, see different powers in the world: These powers differ among categories; divine and human; animal and plant; good and evil. Powers act upon one another, for man is a social being, as maintained by the concept of *ubuntu* discussed above, and he also lives in a vital relationship with the natural world (Bowie, 2006, pp. 105 - 168; Parrinder, 1969, p. 26).

The Mendes, for example, understand the spirit agents as closer to *Ngewo*, or God, than humans inasmuch as they have spiritual powers greater than humans and closer to those possessed by God, and it is for this reason that human beings invoke the ancestral spirits for peace during ceremonies (Wilson, 1971; Parrinder, 1969; Sawyerr, Shorter, 1975), where rituals are performed for various reasons including societal harmony. As elucidated by Bowie (2006, p. 168), “rituals attempt to enact and deal with the most central and basic dilemmas of human existence- continuity and stability, growth and fertility, mortality and immortality or transcendence... rituals are fundamental to human culture...”

Scholars propound that the recent civil war in Sierra Leone saw a new context in the relationship between the secret societies and the civil defence forces in their bid to address the crisis in the country. For example, Fanthorpe carried out an interview with a

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71 Conversation with Mamma Munda, Chief Priest of the *Kamajor* society in Bo from 2011 to 2015.

chief in April 2003, and it was uncovered that the chief had contacted a *Poro* secret society to recruit and train a loyal force of local defence fighters called the *Kamajors* engaged with rituals in their role of “performance”. According to Fanthorpe, early government attempts at coordinating these local forces were unsuccessful, and this was not a common strategy employed by local chiefs. In the pre-colonial era, many chiefs and rulers were noted secret society leaders, and they surrounded themselves with ritual sanctions, using that authority to convert settlers and captives of war into loyalists (Fanthorpe, 2007, p. 11).

As mentioned above, peace is synonymous with unity in ATR “medicines”, where ancestral rituals are performed. Unity with the ancestors, unity with the spirits, and unity in the various secret societies is, therefore, important for peaceful coexistence in communities. Yet, in the event of war, the specialised arms of secret societies can use violence or weaponry to resist the enemy. The *Kamajors*, *Gbintiis*, *Tamaboros*, and others, engaged in dialogue in towns and also in rural areas, particularly on critical issues and when there was an impending danger, they defended their localities against intruders. The secret societies had the last say, even superseding the chiefs in cases where there was a dispute and the candidates were required to settle their differences. The societies serve as the highest courts of justice in the traditional settings in Sierra Leone. The *Donsos*, *Kapras*, *Gbintii*, *Kamajors*, and other traditional fighters were involved in both peacekeeping and peacemaking through monitoring and enforcing agreements, rituals, and using force when necessary.

In my interview with Mr. Olu Alghali, a CARITAS director in Freetown, he stated:

The traditional organisations like the *Kamajors* and the *Gbintii* also got involved in the fighting. Their own expectations were that they had enough spiritual power to kind of beat up the rebels. You will never believe but a lot of people believed that they played a role, using their fetish<sup>72</sup> psychologically. A lot of people in the country thought that those people can use their magical power to stop or end the war. But practically it did not happen. And a lot of them lost their lives. It was a national kind of thing. People had lost confidence in the military. They fought on the side of the government. Not much was known about them [specialised arms of secret societies]. They really did not play any significant role. The fact is that most of the fighters were members of secret societies. Their own role was in fact fighting, being part of the war

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72 He is referring here to the “Medicines” or the secret societies.

machine. Like the Bondo society, it has nothing to account for (interview with Mr. Olu Alghali, July 2006).<sup>73</sup>

Even though Olu Alghali seems to contradict himself in the above statement, he suggests that ATR leaders, community councillors, chiefs and high priests were actively involved in the struggle for peace, together with various fighters who emerged during the course of the war, and most of them were either Christians or Muslims. However, throughout the war, the country experienced “the revenge of God” and a de-secularisation, or re-sacralisation (Berger, 2001).

Do all these findings make Sierra Leone a unique example, especially regarding the role of *ubuntu* in ATR, with secret societies, their specialised organs, and ancestral worship? One can say that considering the evidence on the ground, this is a possibility, especially with the emergence of various ATR bodies like the *Kamajors*, *Kapras*, *Gbintiis*, *Donsos*, and *Tamaboros*, who seemed to influence both Christians and Muslims in their pursuit of peace. Fanthorpe (2007, p. 5) indicates that: “while the secret societies are undoubtedly ancient, scholars have long argued that they gained special prominence in religious, political and economic life on the Upper Guinea Coast as a result of early European contact”. Scholars have observed that any attempt to look low or bring disrepute on these secret societies can attract a serious or sometimes violent response. According to Fanthorpe (2007, p. 13):

In May 2006, the eastern regional representative of the newly launched National League of Islamic Organizations of Sierra Leone claimed 420 Poro “converts” to Islam in his area and the subsequent burning of 51 Poro bushes. With the stake thus raised, Poro society members in Pendembu town in Kailahun District were reported to have stormed a mosque where sermons had been preached against the society. Several people were reported injured and some members of the congregation were forcefully initiated.

Among the Poro members who stormed the mosque were both Christians and Muslims (interview with Revd. Augustine Lassie, Methodist Minister, Pendembu, July, 2007). Based on the above stated point about some Christians and Muslims joining forces with ATR bodies who were actively involved in the use of force for peacemaking and peacekeeping, Christian peacemaking did not take a leadership role in the use of force but in the use of faith-based diplomacy, especially through Christian organisations. Unlike Christian peacemaking, which seems not to have been actively involved in the

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<sup>73</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

use of force for peacekeeping and peacemaking, these ATR bodies actively got involved in the use of force to pursue the goals of peacekeeping and peacemaking, as some Muslims and Christians joined forces with them to fight in the war.<sup>74</sup> Such forces were seen as militia groups, characterised by a certain level of command structure and a strong belief in mystical powers for the restoration of peace in Sierra Leone (interview with Councillor Alpha Bah, July 2007).<sup>75</sup> The Kamajors were particularly active towards the end of the war, when many believed that they helped force the rebel forces in Sierra Leone sign the peace accord (interviews with Jalloh, Janneh, Rogers, Alghali, July 2007).<sup>76</sup>

The RUFSL, which also contained both Christians and Muslims, also had mystical fighters among them, who gave military orders on what to do with the ATR fighters even though they were defeated during several battles during the war (Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>77</sup> According to Revd. Moses Khanu, the ATR was represented in the various secret societies, and fighters engaged in practices that were not necessarily religious (Harris, 2013, pp. 99, 105 – 6, 136, 146, 171). These practices, he maintained, were followed by *Kamajors* from the Mende ethnic group, who claimed mystical powers and played a very prominent role in counteracting the RUFSL and defending vulnerable civilians (Harris, 2013, pp. 97 - 99). In this light, Revd. Moses Khanu states:

But if we take it for convenience that we want to put it under the cluster of traditional religion, one could say that the Tamaboros from Koinadugu district, because of the mystical means they were using, are traditional practice. So they were the first militia group that rose up to fight alongside the government troops. But when they killed their leader, I think it was at the end of 1994 when they disintegrated. The Kono developed their own, the Donsos, literally meaning Hunter. The Temnes in the north, particularly Tonkolili and Bomballi, they developed what they called the Gbintii, Kapras, again Kapra means Hunter. Gbintii means, it does not mean Hunter, Gbintii means, a traditional cliché meaning “it’s too much”, “you have gone beyond the mark”- that is the word Gbintii. The Temne word meaning it’s too much [laughs]. So we

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74 See Chapter Four of this thesis.

75 See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

76 See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

77 See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

are not going to take it any longer [...] (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>78</sup>

I, therefore argue that it is possible to speak of a complex process of simultaneous relativisation, which means that everything might be relative according to its context within religion. This was seen through the incorporation of ATR, Islam, and Christianity into various factions in the crisis. The Civil Defence Forces (CDF), which formed part of ATR, used secret traditional tools and symbols, some derived from native plants, as well as Islamic symbols and talismans, as protection against bullets in the war.

The ATR adherents' leaders in the *Tamaboroh*, *Kapras*, *Gbintiis*, *Kamajors*, from the *Poro*, *Wunday*, and *Gbogii* not only engaged in negotiations but also took up arms to fight for the territorial integrity of Sierra Leone. They did this in addition to the use of traditional prayers for protection, their bravery in war and the spreading of rumours of their invisibility and supernatural powers gained through special revelation and inspiration, usually claimed to have been acquired through dreams. Some of their religious leaders included Kamoh Lahai Bangura, a high priest<sup>79</sup> of the *Kamajors*, Kamoh Alie Sesay, an initiator, and Mohamed Mansaray, also an initiator. Colonel M. S. Dumbuya was the commander of the *Tamaboroh* in the northern part of Sierra Leone

In summary, this thesis argues that there are strong and powerful religious resources pursuing peace<sup>80</sup> and that religious personnel and religious leaders took an active part in faith-based diplomacy, advocacy, relief and spiritual activities. These areas are commonly influenced by ATR, mainly through individual Christians and Muslims. Interviewees maintained that African Traditional Religion (ATR), in which the philosophy "I am because we are...", (Cheatham, 1990, pp. 373 - 393; Hord and Lee, 1995; Oladipo, 2004, pp. 355 - 361) and the force of being (Gbadegesin, 1999, pp. 549 - 550) is central and played a major role in peacemaking (Mr. Kemoore Salia, April 2006; Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007; Mr. Alpha Bah, July 2007).<sup>81</sup> I argue that this role included promoting the concepts of *ubuntu*, atonement, and reconciliation, which the Sierra Leone secret societies like *Poro*, *Bondo*, *Wunday*, *Gborgii* and others continued

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78 See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

79 A high priest in the Kamajor Society is responsible for initiating members into the society, and gives them license to go into battle or to the war front.

80 See Chapter Four of this thesis.

81 See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

to defend during the war through the *Kapras*, *Kamajors*, *Gbintiis*, and *Tamaboros*. In my interview with Jalloh, a student activist at FBC, University of Sierra Leone, he maintained: (July 2007) <sup>82</sup>

ATR, unlike the Christians and Muslims, provided a defence mechanism. For the southern province, they had the *Kamajors* who protected the region and in the Northern Province the *Donsos* and the *Tamaboros* who protected their own regions. These were people who believed in these traditional practices by protecting themselves through the use of local medicines. They protected themselves and their villages where they lived.

Similarly, Janneh, a university student in Political Science, when I interviewed her in a focus group, asserts.<sup>83</sup>

Well, the other groups which they also formed were the *Kapras* and the *Gbintiis* which were also used to pursue this war. The traditional groups also helped to find other solutions for the war to come to an end so that everybody can return to their various areas.<sup>84</sup>

These views of Jalloh, to which Janneh concurred, were confirmed by other Christian <sup>85</sup> and Muslim <sup>86</sup> leaders during the fieldwork I carried out in 2006, and from 2007 until 2011. These ATR bodies were not only engaged in the negotiations, they also actively used force to end the war, often believing that they were endowed with supernatural powers as protective measures against bullets and weapons.

According to Bo City Councillor, Mr. Alpha Bah:

Well, the traditional religion also played a very important role because these were talking to people and even in traditional places. They bring people together explaining to them what some of the problems affecting us are, and what the solutions to these problems are so that we can preach peace to our people. [...] They [traditional practitioners] were fighting but as least at the end of the day, they must come to oneness. The *Kamajors* and the *Gbintiis* were traditional fighters - they came purposely to fight for their motherland when the rebels took over or entered into the country, destroying lives and properties of people, they think that it is time for them to team up together to thrash out these rebels

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<sup>82</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>83</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>84</sup> The focus group interview was with Mr. Jalloh, Miss Janneh, and Miss Rogers, July 2007.

<sup>85</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis.

<sup>86</sup> See Appendices of this thesis.



so that the country can become peaceful and violence free (interview with Councillor Alpha Bah, July 2007).<sup>87</sup>

It is against this background that I will now define key terms relating to this thesis. These terms are “peacekeeping”, “peacemaking”, “peace education” and “peacebuilding”, and are often misunderstood, conflated or wrongly defined. A deeper understanding of these terms will clarify issues that might be raised with regards to this study.

## **1.9 Definitions of Key Terms**

Under this subheading, I will begin by presenting and discussing peacekeeping, peacemaking, peacebuilding and peace education, in that order because of the logical sequence in the act of peace.

### **1.9.1 Peacekeeping**

Peacekeeping is a reactive type of activity or activities that may involve the use of force to make peace. Peacekeeping may be carried out by a third-party military force with the aim of separating the armed forces in a war or conflict and working to bring about negotiation. The goal is to maintain a ceasefire in the case of physical violence or war.

In Sierra Leone, many groups were involved in peacekeeping, including the ECOMOG, military forces, UN military forces (Olonisakin, 2008), and even ATR fighters (Muana, 1997), who considered themselves to be peacekeepers for their respective communities. Unlike Christian peacemakers, who may take a less ambiguous position on the use of weapons in peacemaking, ATR specialised forces (the Kamajors, Gbintii, Kapras, Tamaboros, and others), used weapons in both their peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts. They were engaged in traditional indigenous practices, but also actively involved in warfare, using and combining traditional hunting methods of warfare as well as making use of guns and machetes. They were mostly recruits from villages and cities, but their main recruitment process involved the use of mystical methods. As a way of equipping the traditional fighters as peacekeepers, the high priest would perform secret ceremonies as a way of initiating volunteers or conscripts. Once the conscripts or volunteers went through some sort of training and initiation, they were then declared by the high priest to be invincible, possessing supernatural powers for warfare. This was

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<sup>87</sup> See Appendices 1a of this thesis.

firmly accepted by the recruits themselves, who believed that their bodies were now protected against any weapon. In short, after the recruitment of the young boys into the ATR specialised forces, they declared themselves to be more capable of engaging in the war because they were now beyond the reach of weapons such as guns. Whether their claim of invincibility to weapons is true or not is debatable and there were many who thought that it was not true, but I witnessed many such declarations. (Muana, 1997; Richards, 2005 b).

### **1.9.2 Peacemaking**

Peacemaking is a practical activity, or *praxis*, aimed at transforming conflict through working towards creating an equitable power relation, robust to such a degree that it will forestall conflicts in the future. This kind of praxis often includes the establishment of an agreement on humanitarian, legal, ethical and moral decisions in a state, a community or among/between previously hostile groups or individuals who previously used inappropriate or violent responses vis-à-vis conflict, incompatibility, dispute or disagreements. Peacemakers will then see the achievement of full resolution or reconciliation among the adversaries so that there can be a conflict transformation and mutual understanding among the parties. This can be achieved through the creation, support of, and cooperation with restorative justice systems. Chapters 7 and 8 in this thesis discuss these forms of cooperation with restorative justice systems, while Chapter 8 examines retributive justice, and Chapters 4, 5 and 6 focus on transformative justice, relief, power of grouping and advocacy. It should also be noted that peacemaking is distinct from pacifism, non-violent protests, and civil disobedience, even in cases when they may be practiced by the same people. The traditional fighters discussed in this thesis practiced peacemaking, but reports suggest that they were armed (Please refer to chapters 1 and 3 for more information). Peacemaking in traditional societies has also included rituals, discussed above, as well as national and international players (Heff, 2010; Mbiti, 2010; Pankhurst, 2003).

Thus, the word ‘peacemaking’ in this thesis refers to the activities of those agents, agencies, instruments, capabilities and abilities of religious leaders, denominations, ecumenical bodies, the TRCSL, the SCSL and religious adherents to bring tranquillity to Sierra Leone, both during and after the war. It refers to “a way of life” geared towards ending hostilities and helping displaced people, engaging in ecumenical activities, and leading and supporting transitional bodies like the TRCSL and the SCSL. It refers to

those activities undertaken both consciously and unconsciously that contributed not only to the journey which led to the signing of the Lomé peace accord but also to the provision of people's welfare, based on the Christian concepts of peace and justice, discussed above. Theologically, peacemaking may derive from a notion in Bettenson's *The City of God* (2003), that mankind from the beginning of creation fell from grace and that there should be a conscious effort to restore the dignity of man through the efforts of the Christian church. In this, the life, death and the resurrection of Christ must be followed as a model by churches in their peacemaking efforts. These views of Saint Augustine seem to be supported by both Rousseau and Hobbes (Sabine and Thorson, 1980, pp. 533 - 537). Peacemaking is reactionary, and can involve state as well as non-state groups like religious leaders, as in the case of Sierra Leone. Thus, peacemaking as a way of life arises when individuals and communities make the link between the personal and the political. So, in effect, peacemaking is not only the absence of war but the existence of truth-telling, justice, reconciliation and development efforts. However, the peace that was established in Sierra Leone is still negative, since structures that enhance positive peace according to Galtung (1990, pp. 3 - 27), have yet to be created and strengthened. Thus there is a need for peace education for the purposes of peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. Peace education provides alternatives to the violent resolution of conflict, as we will see in the following section.

### **1.9.3 Peace Education**

Peace education refers to the type of knowledge that explores alternatives to war and violence, making connections with issues of human justice, development, and ecological balance. Through peace education, one is able to learn the differences between negative peace and positive peace. One also studies the various types of conflict, presents solutions for conflict resolution, and develops creative ways of solving the conflict. This is so because conflict, whether interpersonal, intra-personal, inter-communal or intra-communal, can be either positive or negative. In peace education, it is important to look at African traditional religion and its methods of making peace, especially in Sierra Leone. Peace education also includes peacemaking, both negative peace and, eventually, positive peace. This supports conflict resolution from the grass-roots level to the macro-level and thus has the potential to transform a society and all its members. Peace education supports conflict resolution at all levels and encourages the transformation of conflict within individuals and institutions, whether secular or religious. In Sierra Leone, there was a willingness on the part of the religions personnel,

including the laity, both men and women, imams, ministers of religion, and priests, as well as Islamic and Christian theologians, to work towards the formation of an Inter-Religious Council that again contributed actively to bring the war to an end.<sup>88</sup> They used their educational potential to spread a message of peace through dialogue. For example, a Peace and Conflict Studies program was introduced at the Sierra Leone Theological College, as well as other Christian Colleges and in the University of Sierra Leone (conversations with Revd. Augustine Massaquoi, Lecturer at both Colleges, April 2006). Furthermore, contrary to views discussed by Avalos and Juergensmeyer, the religious leaders in Sierra Leone, both lay and clergy, demonstrated that they were accountable to the populace by making it clear that they had to teach peace, preach peace and engage in dialogue with people and bodies with conflicting views, both within their ranks and among those outside, such as the RUFSL and the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) (interview with Alhaji Dr Mohammed Tunis, July 2007).<sup>89</sup>

Furthermore, the churches and mosques used every opportunity to talk together publicly in a spirit of goodwill for the sake of peace (Mr. Kemoore Salia, April 2006).<sup>90</sup> This was done not because there were no differences between them<sup>91</sup>, but because they held much in common, such as their common human existence and the need to use all their resources to foster peace and dialogue through mediation and negotiation (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).<sup>92</sup> There are many theories of dialogue, some critical and others less so. However, the fact remains that dialogue, or the action of meeting and talking together, yielded results in the Sierra Leonean case study (Turay, 2005).<sup>93</sup>

Thus, it is possible to argue that the Sierra Leone case is unique, particularly when considering how all the religious bodies came together to foster peace in that country.

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88 See Chapter Six of this thesis.

89 See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

90 See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

91 See the Religious structure of Sierra Leone in this chapter.

92 See Appendix 1 of this thesis.

93 Personal observations in Bo, Kenema, Kailahun, Segbwema, Daru, Kono, and other parts of Sierra Leone, 1991ff.

The situation in Sierra Leone shows that in a situation where one has a real choice between working for peace in an active way or engaging in confrontation, it is better for the interests of all to use every religious potential for peace (Johnston and Cox, 2003). This is a possibility that has existed in several contexts (Little, 2007), and became a reality in the Sierra Leonean case.<sup>94</sup> It is thus important to recognise the religious potential of peacemaking, that is to say, the potential influence of religious leaders and adherents of all faiths and beliefs, politicians of different religions, as well as Christian education and institutions promoting education for peace. There are examples in recent history wherein religious organisations and individuals have been vital in ensuring that issues that might lead to war were resolved amicably.<sup>95</sup> Religious leaders like Bishop Joseph Christian Humper, Mr. Alimamy Koroma, Revd. Christian V. A. Peacock, Bishop George Biguzzi,<sup>96</sup> Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Bishop Peter Price, the Chair of Conciliation Resources, and many more religious leaders are credited for the role they played in peacemaking. There are cases in which religious bodies and institutions have contributed to bringing the conflict to an end (Little., 2007). Peace education was carried out at village and community levels; peace education facilities were found in schools and colleges; and peace education was also created at the national level with Christian, Islamic, and ATR communities through Christian religious leaders, the MCSL, IRCSL, the Supreme Islamic Council of Sierra Leone (SICSL) and CCSL.<sup>97</sup>

In the area of education, theological institutions, as well as other educational institutions owned by these religious bodies, promoted the supremacy of peace throughout the conflict period. Secret societies also promoted peace in their educational establishments, as they are meant to be schools for young boys and girls before they enter adulthood. The Sierra Leone Theological College and Church Training Centre, jointly owned by MCSL, the UMC, the Anglican Diocese of Freetown and Makeni, along with the Anglican Diocese of Bo started peace studies for this same purpose. ATR studies are the main focus of study at the Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, headed by Dr Memunatu Pratt, Sierra Leone Theological College, referred to above.<sup>98</sup>

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94 See also Chapter Nine of this thesis.

95 See, for example, Chapters Four through Eight of this thesis.

96 See Chapter Four of this thesis for a detailed analysis on this individual.

97 I will document some of these activities in the later chapters of this thesis.

98 See Chapter Seven of this thesis.

Furthermore, accountability to religious adherence on the part of religious leaders was also advocated.<sup>99</sup> This, coupled with the role of communication and dialogue<sup>100</sup> amongst and between religious adherents, led to the use of the economic resources of the various religions and religious bodies for peacemaking (interview with Mr. Kemoore Salia, April 2006).<sup>101</sup> The ATR in Sierra Leone is the custodian of the land through the Paramount chiefs, who are also answerable to the secret societies, and the secret societies are accountable to the ancestors. It is only when this chain is maintained that peace can prevail and peacebuilding will continue to take place, and this is often emphasised through peace education in Sierra Leone as a peacebuilding mechanism.

#### **1.9.4 Peacebuilding**

The peace that can be built is a goal in itself. However, it is important to note that peacebuilding is a widely used term that is often given different meanings. It can refer to the maintenance of structures already established from the peacemaking process. Peacebuilding can also mean the strengthening of systems that maintain, promote and secure the human rights of people. It is a proactive process and activity that does not wait until conflict escalates before action is taken. Peace builders act not only to prevent conflicts but also to establish strong human rights and just systems, as well as other forms of the rule of law. Thus, in the efforts of building peace, people need to be educated regarding the sources and causes of conflict that normally lead to violence.

The Christian concept of peace is a multifaceted process in the never-ending struggle to transform violence (Lederach, 2000, pp. 3 - 71). It implies not only the absence of war but also involves the presence of economic justice, social justice, political justice and justice in religion, as I experienced in Norway. Positive peace is present in Norway because of its structures that defend and secure basic human rights. Comparatively, in Sierra Leone, one can only talk of peacemaking, since the structures that must be present for positive peace to exist have not yet been built and/or made more functional in the country. This addresses the point made earlier about Sierra Leone's disadvantage in such a comparison. Many writers have made important distinctions between negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace is the mere absence of war and active

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99 See Chapter Four of this thesis.

100 See Chapter Six of this thesis.

101 See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

violence, while positive peace refers not only to the absence of war but also to the existence of structures that defend and promote people's welfare and justice (Galtung, 1990; Ibeanu, 2009; Miller, 2007). On the one hand, negative peace is the mere absence of large-scale physical violence and the absence of the conditions of war. Nevertheless, there is structural violence, marginalisation or social exclusion and injustice. On the other hand, positive peace encompasses all aspects of the good society that we might envisage for ourselves – universal human rights, economic well-being, ecological balance, political and religious tolerance, and freedom.

Whereas the majority of Norwegian citizens enjoy these rights, or some of these, the majority of residents in Sierra Leone lack positive peace. This observation led me to explore religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone as the main focus of this thesis. I selected this topic because it is more appropriate to speak of peacemaking, rather than peacebuilding, in a context where there is only negative peace. Therefore, there is still a need to make positive and active peace in Sierra Leone, especially because there is so little political tolerance. Politicians can learn from the religious tolerance<sup>102</sup> that exists between Muslims and Christians and within ATR.

In sum, there are various forms of intervention for peace, and these include peacekeeping and peacemaking, which are reactive, as well as peace education and peace building, which are proactive. Peacekeeping involves the use of force or other means by a third party or third parties to end hostilities. Peacemaking consists of those interventions designed to end hostilities (direct violence) and which can be brought about by diplomatic, political and military means if necessary. The church's peacemaking efforts in Sierra Leone were reactionary rather than proactive. However, the churches, unlike ATR forces in Sierra Leone, did not engage in the use of weapons to make peace. This leads me to a presentation of the thesis chapters overview.

### **1.10 Thesis Chapters Overview**

This chapter serves an introductory function, which includes the thesis' brief introduction, research questions and hypothesis, followed by the aims and objectives, and a discussion on generalisation, the hypothesis and theories on peacemaking, approach to the thesis, discussion of the uniqueness of the Sierra Leone social and religious context, the context and accessibility of the study, the concept of peace in

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<sup>102</sup> See Chapters Four, Five, Six and the Conclusion of this thesis.

religions and a definition of key terms in the study, and ends with this overview of the thesis.

To aid in answering the research questions scientifically and reliably, the second chapter deals with the methodology and materials, including the literature review and reflects on the question of whether religion is inherently violent or peaceful. A qualitative method was used in this investigation, with interviews as primary materials and literature as secondary materials. Triangulation was used as a strategy for data collection to ensure the verifiability and reliability of the work. The work was validated both internally and externally, through participant observation, comparing the case study I conducted in 2005/2006 to other case studies in 2007 - 2015, which I also conducted, as well as specifically contextualising the research through empirical studies in Sierra Leone, and a presentation of how the thesis is valid and reliable as an empirical research, based on Yin's suggested tests for this purpose.

In Chapter 3, the historical context is presented. This deals mainly with the colonial and modern history of Sierra Leone before and after 1989. How and why did the war come about? The war in Sierra Leone, in which terror was deployed by the insurgents as a means of gaining social, political and military control, claimed the lives of thousands of Sierra Leoneans. It is estimated that more than 70 thousand people lost their lives in the conflict that was promoted by frustrated Sierra Leoneans and actively supported by Charles Taylor, the president of neighbouring Liberia.<sup>103</sup> The declared reason for revolt was frustration at the neo-colonial, one-party dictatorship that governed Sierra Leone since the 1970s (Harris, 2013, pp. 61 - 80). Both the periods before and following 1989 were overwhelmed by forces that unleashed this frustration, thereby leading to the conflict, (Harris, 2013, pp. 33 - 60).

Chapter 4 deals with Christian leaders as peacemakers in action. Four examples of the role of Christian leaders are presented: Mr. Alimammy Koroma; The Most Revd. Bishop George Biguzzi; The Revd. Christian V. A. Peacock; and The Revd. Moses Khanu. The chapter also deals with these leaders' use of the Qur'an and Bible in peacemaking, as well as "the power of grouping."<sup>104</sup> Chapter 5 examines the role of the

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103 TRCSL Report 2004, Volumes 1, 2,3a and b.

104 This will be further explained in Chapter Four of this thesis.



Christian denominations, especially the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone. Chapter 6 focuses on the Council of Churches Sierra Leone (CCSL) and the Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) and their role in peacemaking in the country. Drawing on the efforts of the CCSL and IRCSL, Chapter 7 deals with the role of TRCSL under the leadership of Bishop Joseph Christian Humper and his role in coordinating restorative justice activities in peacemaking (Harris, 2013, pp. 137 - 139). This is followed by the efforts of the SCSL and Christian peacemaking in Sierra Leone in Chapter 8. The ninth chapter concludes that though religion can be a cause of conflict, against the background of the war in Sierra Leone, it is also demonstrably a resource for peace, both through individual Christians cooperating with Muslims and through influence by ATR. In the conclusion, I address such issues as the religious factor, the political failure, religious tolerance and the praxis of peace, considering what has been achieved in Sierra Leone and this thesis, and what has yet to be studied, as well as the academic and social significance of the study. To answer the research questions and achieve the aims and objectives of this work, various materials, and co-operative methods were used, which will be described in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 2 MATERIAL AND METHODS

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the development of this thesis. Ever since I began theological studies in the early 1990s, I have been very interested in ecumenism, multi-faith dialogue and peacemaking. It is against this background that the literature review in this chapter will focus on the general literature on religion and violence, religion and peace, and religion and peacemaking. I also aim to present and discuss the data and findings of this thesis by starting with my experience, in view of what Hunt describes (Hunt, 1987, p. 105ff). According to Hunt, we often say that we learn from experience (Hunt, 1991, p. 9ff), and I have had much relevant experience in Sierra Leone before, during and after the collection of data for this thesis. In such cases, the use of “I” in academic writing is justified because one’s experience is central to the research (Brown, 1996).

The structure of this chapter is as follows. The literature review will cover issues of religion and violence as well as religion and peace, with a reflection on whether religion is inherently violent or inherently peaceful and whether faith-based diplomacy or clash of civilisations makes a difference in peacemaking. However, the literature on religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone is still nascent, and this thesis will fill that gap. The methodology will also be presented, starting with a description of the empirical study, how and why interviewees were chosen, and their contexts, as well as interviewees’ presentation and understanding of events and processes. The chapter closes with a discussion of the validity and reliability of the research and the research process, which further leads to the results presented in subsequent chapters.

During fieldwork visits in September 2006 and July 2007 and my stay in Sierra Leone up to 2015, I was able to develop a case study protocol and carry out an in-depth case study, which helped me to develop a database <sup>105</sup> and a case study chain of evidence.<sup>106</sup> As I went into the field to conduct research concerning my hypothesis and the research questions, I planned where I should visit in Sierra Leone, who I should interview, how long this process would take and some of the questions that should be directed to the three categories of people from whom I wished to gather information. I selected the three categories, the first of which included key participants or Christian and Muslim

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105 See Appendices of this thesis.

106 See Appendices of this thesis.

leaders who were actively involved in peacemaking activities during the war in Sierra Leone, such as Revd. Moses Khanu, Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, Bishop George Biguzzi, Mr. Alpha Bah, Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, Mr. Kemoore Salia and many more. The second category included ordinary Sierra Leoneans, with the criteria that they were in Sierra Leone during and after the war years, and experienced, in one way or another, the events that unfolded in the country. The third category of informants were non-Sierra Leoneans who were resident in Sierra Leone and were either actively involved in the events that unfolded, as in the case of Bishop George Biguzzi of the Makeni Diocese, or were not directly involved in the activities of war or peacemaking but were still resident in Sierra Leone during the war.<sup>107</sup>

I also ensured that female voices were among those interviewed. Since it was initially difficult to interview women because most tended to avoid strangers, I decided to conduct interviews with focus groups. I then noticed that it became easier to get women involved as key informants, as in the case of Mrs. Eburn James-Dekan, the first female general secretary of the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone. Other female interviewees were university staff or attended university or college in Sierra Leone, such as Miss Muloma Rogers and Dr Memunatu Pratt, who was head of the Peace and Conflict Studies Department at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone. The reason I chose these various categories was to get their views on the hypothesis and the semi-structured interview questions.<sup>108</sup> These types of questions were chosen because they helped in deciphering the truth of the events that unfolded in Sierra Leone during and after the war. The questions were also chosen so that the respondents could give a clearer picture of the events as they unfolded in Sierra Leone. Interviewees were also engaged in a way that made them more relaxed as they responded to the questions. In this way, the questions helped in answering the research questions so that the views expressed could be validated further through “member checking”<sup>109</sup> and triangulation.

I carried out semi-structured interviews with both key informants and other interviewees by recording interviews on a cassette player I had bought from a local shop in Lampeter.

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<sup>107</sup> See Appendix 2 of this thesis for a comprehensive list of all three categories mentioned here.

<sup>108</sup> Some of the questions posed to the interviewees are in Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>109</sup> “Member checking” refers to the process of cross checking the information contained in the transcribed interviews with interviewees as a way of ascertaining that the contents corresponded with what they meant when I interviewed them.

Interviews were later listened to and transcribed on my computer in a Word document. The cassettes and notes are now in my library in Bo City. I also included some of the notes in the appendices of this thesis. During the interviews, notes were taken about important observations and statements gathered during my fieldwork and empirical studies. After transcribing the interviews, another field visit was undertaken to crosscheck the type-written interviews with the interviewees. With the permission of the interviewees, I crosschecked information received from one source with other sources, and the websites considered are also included in the appendices in this thesis. This member checking was meant to validate and ascertain the reliability and credibility of information received, taking into consideration that human memory may be flawed at times, and people may misremember things that did not happen in the past. In addition, I crosschecked my information and material gathered with several other sources, which can be seen in Appendices 1b and c in this thesis.

The use of triangulation in social science research has both advantages and disadvantages. It is advantageous due to the use of multiple sources in data collection, which in turn helps to validate the collected data. However, triangulation may also be misunderstood by some natural scientists as a weak method because it is not experimental. This stereotypical manner of looking at triangulation is unfortunate because of its advantages.<sup>110</sup> Thus there is a strong case for legitimacy and validity of the hypothesis and the chain of evidence for the thesis. These are based on the methods and strategies used in this case study to conclude a position in this thesis, especially when reflexivity was central in the entire process of research.

The process of collecting the data and the development of the chain of evidence culminated in the identification of various case study categories. Among them were: individual Christians and Christian leaders; the Council of Churches Sierra Leone; the Inter Religious Council of Sierra Leone; the Methodist Churches and other churches of Sierra Leone; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Sierra Leone Special Court. As more than 45 interviewees confirmed to varying degrees, including sometimes in very strong terms, among the numerous players<sup>111</sup> in the peacemaking process in Sierra Leone, individual Christians and Christian leaders played a pivotal

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110This will be further explored in this chapter.

111 Such as the UN, AU, EU, ECOWAS, Civil Society Groups in Sierra Leone and the United Kingdom.

role. The interviewees who considered themselves Muslims, namely Alhaji Dr Mohamed Hassin Tunis, Mr. Alpha Brima Bah, Mr. Taky Jalloh, Mr. Muloma Janneh, Mr. Umaro Koroma, Mrs. Yeayea Conteh, Sheik Mohamed Kargbo, Sheik Mohamed Turay and Mr. Issa Koroma,<sup>112</sup> also confirmed that Church leaders in Sierra Leone served as peacemakers. One of them said:

Basically, I am not a Christian; whatever view I am giving to you that's what the Christians played during the conflict. This is an outsider's view because I am not a Christian by faith. But looking at it from the point of view of the role played by the Christians under their various organisations or branches as you may want to call it, basically, the Catholic relief services, known as CRS, is one of the organisations some of us actually knew played a very pivotal role in terms of the provision of relief materials for people who were trapped behind rebel lines, some who were internally displaced. They provided relief items, food, housing materials, etc. (Interview with Umaru Koroma, July 2007)<sup>113</sup>

The interviews conducted can be validated<sup>114</sup>, and engaging with secondary literature and applying it to this thesis will provide further evidence of the credibility of the study.

## 2.1 Literature Review

This review addresses religion and violence and religion and peace. However, it is important to note that literature on religion, violence and peacemaking in Sierra Leone is nascent. Furthermore, due to word constraints for a Ph.D thesis (80,000 to 100,000 words), I will only provide brief summaries of the literature in this subfield, along with my views, which will eventually expand the literature and the debate not only on religion and violence, but also specifically on religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone. The general views of Huntington (2002), Johnston and Cox, (2003) and other scholars writing on religion and violence, both in general and in specific contexts, will be presented, discussed and applied in this thesis. This review also considers Christian-Muslim relations in general and in Sierra Leone in particular. Scholarly work on religion and violence is well documented in the recently published *Blackwell Companion to Religion and Violence*, (Murphy, (ed.) 2011). Many scholars have made remarkable contributions to the academic study of religion and violence, such as Girard (1972/77), Beier (2006), Boersma (2004), Bowie (2000, 2006), Bruce (1986), Bruce

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112 See Appendices 1 of this thesis.

113 See Appendix 2 of this thesis.

114 More details on triangulation as a method and its validated results are presented in subsections 2.2 and 2.3, respectively, in this chapter.

(2005), Cobban (2005), Delicata (2009), De Vries (2002), Drewermann (2006), Ellens (2004), Ellies (1997), Gaddis (2005), Galtung (2003), Hall et al. (2000), Holmes (2005), Johnston and Cox (2003), Juergensmeyer (2003), Lefebure (2000), Little (2007), Murphy (ed.) (2011), Røislien (2005), Schmidt (2011), Stein (2002), Velasco (2005), and Wessinger (2000a, 2000b).

As noted above, literature on the specific issue of the thesis - religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone, with ATR influencing both Christians and Muslims - remains basic. It is against this background that general literature on religion and violence is reviewed, beginning with Girard (1972/77), Galtung (2003), Juergensmeyer (2003), Schmidt (2011), Leirvik (2004) and others. Girard's work on religion and violence, published in the 1970s, has been generally accepted as pioneering work in this subfield. Girard's contribution focuses on how ritualised violence functions in a positive way for society. He reflects on the "mimetic desire" and its relevance for religion, and shows how this satisfies an inherent need for removing aggression in humanity, in which violence becomes the basis for judgement on whether or not ritualised acts of violence provide a way to displace aggression (Stein, 2002, p.103). Though Girard wrote in French, his work was later translated into English. Girard's book *Violence and the Sacred* (Girard, 1977), a translation of *La violence et le sacré*, Galtung's (2003), *Peace by Peaceful means*<sup>115</sup>, Murphy, (2011), *Anthropological Perspectives of Religion and Violence* and Juergensmeyer's (2003) *Terror in the mind of God: The global rise of religious violence* are impressive studies in religion and violence. Girard sees violence as a necessary part of religion that provides for the satisfaction of "mimetic desire". His key word is "sacrifice", where violence in religion is considered to service atonement. Schmidt and Schröder, (2001) however contests this perspective on the relationship between religion and violence when they maintain:

One must guard against essentialising notions of the legitimacy of violence which may rather be described as a legitimate use of force in a specific context. The tricky question is how the context can be specified, if at all. In practice, the notion of legitimacy of violence is highly contestable....On the other hand, particularly the close relation between religion and violence (cf Girard, 1977), from female circumcision to human sacrifice, has always challenged our relativist tolerance and our modern understanding of violence as meaningful action (Schmidt and Schröder 2001, p. 8).

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115 The work was published in 1972 in French but translated into English in 1977.

In another vein, Juergensmeyer (2003) points to a “cosmic war” in religious violence, which he demonstrates with five case studies, in which he also reflects on “terror in the mind of God”.

The works of Girard, Galtung, Juergensmeyer and Murphy, et al., can be characterised as classics in the field of religion and violence, whereas the work of Schmidt is a sound reflection on the anthropological perspective on religion and violence. Leirvik’s work focuses more on the religious aspects of the power of religion, and the positive role of religion is given more space in the debate on religion and violence. However, Juergensmeyer’s research shows another side of “the web between religion and violence,” reflecting and focussing on how religion is transcendental in the minds of those adherents who are willing to carry out violence in the name of religion, and how such religious adherents consider the act of violence to be legitimate. In contrast, Schmidt (2011) makes clear that just because violence is inflicted by a legitimate body or is legitimised by its adherents does not make it less violent or painful. In a similar light as Schmidt and Leirvik, maintains the positive role of religion as a therapeutic and or useful resource for peace and healing. In the same vein, Abramowitz (2014) presents another case for NGOs including religious bodies in Liberia engaged in trauma healing and counselling in neighbouring Liberia. The positive role of faith-based leaders and organisations is often overlooked or given little space by scholars on religion and violence. Galtung focusses on “peace by peaceful means”. He distinguishes between three kinds of violence, which are relevant to our understanding of peace and the conditions that create an atmosphere of “unpeacefulness” or “peacelessness.” He maintains these types are important for our understanding of the concept of peace: “direct violence”, i.e., physical, emotional and psychological violence; “structural violence”, i.e., deliberate policies and structures that may cause human suffering, harm and death; and “cultural violence”, i.e., cultural norms and practices that create discrimination, injustice and human suffering. Galtung also broadens the definition of peace, elucidating two dimensions: “negative peace”, or the absence of direct violence, war, fear and conflict at individual, regional and international levels; and “positive peace”, meaning the existence of just structures, equal relationships, justice and inner peace at the personal level.

The positive role of religion is further expanded by Johnston and Cox (2003) and Little (2007), who document the contributions made by religious bodies across the world in

peacemaking and as peacemakers in action. Their reflections and contributions not only support this thesis but also highlight the power of religious organisations. For example, Little (2007), maintains that in the Sierra Leone peace process, Mr. Alimamy Koroma, a Baptist and the former secretary general of the Council of Churches Sierra Leone (CCSL), contributed immensely to peacemaking. In the same light, Johnston and Cox (2003) argue for the use of “faith-based diplomacy” as an addition to foreign policy approaches to peacemaking. It was this additional approach of faith-based diplomacy in which Christian leaders, churches, the Inter Religious Council Sierra Leone (IRCSL), the Council of Churches Sierra Leone (CCSL), <sup>116</sup> Bishop Humper and the TRCSL <sup>117</sup> were engaged to promote peace in Sierra Leone during and after the war.

In the post-modern world, there has been a resurgence of religion in the social sphere, which creates an identity issue (Harpviken and Røislien, 2005, pp. 9 - 10, 19 - 21). In *The Clash of Civilizations*, Huntington (2002, p. 20) asserts that “culture and cultural identities, which at the broadest level are civilisation identities, are shaping the patterns of cohesion, disintegration, and conflict in the post-Cold War world”. Huntington also directly discusses the relationship between Islamic and other civilisations, with a focus on what he terms the fault lines between Islamic and Western, Islamic and African, Islamic and Slavish-Orthodox and Islamic and Hindu civilisations (Huntington, 2002, p.102ff). Huntington maintains that, “[i]n this new world the most pervasive, important, and dangerous conflicts will not be between social classes, rich and poor, or other economically defined groups, but between peoples belonging to different cultural identities. The revitalisation of religion throughout much of the world is reinforcing these cultural differences”, (Huntington, 2002, p. 28ff). Irrespective of this, Huntington seems to underestimate that Africa has always had its own cultural identity, and is now emerging as a force with which to be reckoned on the international social/political/economic stage. However, this identity has long been, in one way or another, defined by foreigners, who did not have the ability to adequately depict or explain the African reality (Ngugi, 1986; Olupona, 2014).

With regard to Christianity, and in contrast to Huntington (2002) <sup>118</sup> there is an increase in numbers of African Christians. In contrast to Huntington, for example, Jenkins (2002,

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116 Chapter Six of this thesis.

117 Chapter Seven of this thesis.



pp. 2 - 3), quoting from *World Christian Encyclopaedia*, maintains that the number of Christians in Africa grew from 10 million in the 1900s to about 360 million in 2002. These figures point to one of the core points of this thesis: religions and their institutions cannot be forgotten or underestimated in the big picture, particularly in peacemaking and ethics in politics (Moiba, 2005/ 2006).

The relevance and exploitation of religious resources is a route whereby one can reach the grass-roots people in Sierra Leone. Huntington (2002), unlike Jenkins (2002, p. 13ff), did not take the growth of “African-type” Christianity (Sawyers, 1968 a, 1970, Fashole- Luke, 1978), or Islam in Africa, seriously. This gap is filled by this thesis. Another major characteristic that Huntington (2002) explores is the relationship between Christianity and other religions, and the potential as well as the reality of religious conflict. The potential of the relationship is short-term peace, whereas the realities point to long-term conflict. This characteristic suggests the growing place of religion in conflict and political violence. Huntington’s thesis is that Christianity and Islam seem to be the major players in political issues and that this should be taken seriously. The background for his analysis, he says, is not speculative but a reality (Huntington, 2002, pp.163 - 192).

Huntington views religion as a powerful threat to world peace after the Cold War. However, Russett and Oneal and Cox refute this notion, declaring: “We conclude, however, that the ‘Clash of Civilisations’ perspective is mistaken about the past, selectively interprets current events, and does not offer a sound guide to the future. Civilisation differences add little to existing realist and liberal explanations of violent interstate conflict” (Russett, Oneal and Cox., 2000, pp. 584 - 585). They allay our fears by discussing and comparing events and evidence from 1950 through 1992. On the other hand, according to Huntington this threat must be checked to create world order, and he states that religion is “possibly the most profound difference that can exist between people” (Huntington, 2002, p. 254).

However, this thesis supports Johnston and Cox, (2003) in proposing that although religion is in many cases part of on-going conflicts in the world, it is also clear that religion has had a significant role in peacemaking, as Harpviken and Røislien (2005) have indicated. In the same light, Johnston and Cox, (2003), maintain that faith-based

diplomacy speaks to the hearts and minds of the general population. This in itself is a powerful force for peacemaking that must be exploited fully (Stålset and Leirvik, 2004).

In addition, religious peacemakers, in the views of Little (2007) and Harpviken and Røislien (2005), have a good track record in peacemaking due to their perceived impartiality, openness and multi-level organisation, as was evident in Sierra Leone.<sup>119</sup> Although peacemaking engagements may result in physical threats to religious leaders as well as to adherents and conflicting parties, politicians may also become a threat to religious organisations as a whole, for example through a tightening of state control and division of labour in politics (Harpviken and Røislien, 2005, p. 4). However, faith-based diplomacy is clearly a path that is worth pursuing. This kind of diplomacy, which has been previously neglected by *Realpolitik*, must not be ignored or disregarded in our era because of its potential for peace (Johnston and Cox, 2003, pp. 3 - 27).

The notion that there has been a return of religion in international and national politics has been adequately addressed in the twenty-first century (Beyer, 2004; Johnston and Sampson, 1996; Little, 2007; Stålset and Leirvik, 2004). The issue of the resurgence of religion in politics and other public issues is, however, ambiguous and full of tension. When this is addressed, it means that religion remains globally important in various ways. The public seem to be turning their attention to religion, and there is great interest in the role of religion in politics, also because of the theology of peace. This is evident even in the media, and not least in academic political research. There is evidence of such interest at the national political level in countries such as the United States of America, United Kingdom, Nigeria, Japan, China, Indonesia, India, Egypt, France and Canada, among others (Beyer 2004), and also in Sierra Leone (Little, 2007).

What, then, can we say regarding whether religion is a source of conflict and violence? This question has been addressed by Huntington (2002), Küng (1986), Juergensmeyer (2000) and many others (Murphy (ed.), 2011). Küng asserts that the “most fanatical and cruellest political struggles are those that have been coloured, inspired, and legitimised by religion” (Küng, 1986, p. 442). I take exception to this view because of evidence that some major wars, like the first and second world wars, cannot be characterised as religious. However, Huntington also maintains that there is a global shift from a bipolar ideological conflict pattern<sup>120</sup> to one that seems multi-polar and built more on cultural

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119 See Chapters Four through Eight of this thesis.

differences, whereby religion becomes the most decisive cultural identity maker. However, in my view, many of the wars nominally fought in the name of religion are often politically and or economically motivated, the competition for resources and power by opposing parties and religions. According to Juergensmeyer, religious fanatics perceive identity issues as a struggle between good and evil, i.e., between God and Satan. When the struggles of these religious fanatics become critical, individual action may become decisive in winning the war (Juergensmeyer, 2003, p. 161). The real political, social and ethnic conflict becomes an expression of the ultimate conflict when violence is seen as a defence of basic identity and dignity. There is no place for losing the battle and thus losing one's identity. This leads to a situation in which the struggle becomes sacralised and makes compromise impossible. Furthermore, Juergensmeyer states, "this inescapable scenario of hostility does not end until the mythology is redirected, or until one side or the other has been destroyed" (Juergensmeyer, 2003, p. 164). It is this role of redirecting the mythology of religion that was played by ATR serving as a binding led or common factor between the Christians and Muslims making peace in Sierra Leone.<sup>121</sup> Olupona (2014, p. 5) suggests for example that "[t]he flexibility characterising African religious traditions stems in part, from the reliance on oral as opposed to written narratives, whose purported timelessness grants them authority". It is this timelessness of ATR, adopted by both Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone, as well as their converging together and respecting each other, that promoted religious tolerance and peacemaking in Sierra Leone.<sup>122</sup> The stories and myths of the Kamajor, Gbintiis, Tamaboros, acting as civil defence forces, and ATR agents were fully recognised by major religious stakeholders on both sides of the faith communities in Sierra Leone. As many Christians and Muslims are members of one or the other secret society, As Kenneth Little remarked:

... the more powerful medicines might be compared to electric batteries of high voltage. They are charged with energy, and so it is risky for an inept or unauthorized person to tamper with them, even to go anywhere near them. A medicine has to be tended and nurtured as carefully as a child, and part of the technique consists of talking to it in a certain way every day. The more powerful the medicine, the more harm it is likely to cause, but it is also capable of greater benefits for all concerned, hence

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120 The Cold War, 1940 to 1989.

121 See subsequent chapters of this thesis.

122 See Chapter Six of this thesis.

the need for properly qualified people to look after it (Little, 1965, pp. 349 - 365).<sup>123</sup>

The initiates of the Kamajors, Gbintiis (including both Christians and Muslims) and other secret society agents were seen or expected to look at themselves as specially qualified to carry out the role of peacemaking through various means and as such initiates trained themselves to abstain from doing certain things. As Fanthorp (2007, p. 2) points out: “Specialised societies like the Kamajors and Due are sub-sets of a general ritual division of the sexes... to produce fully socialise human beings”. This socialisation takes the same form for both Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone. Since the teachings of ATR in Sierra Leone are mainly through oral tradition, their position on various aspects of human life are mainly flexible and can easily be adapted to different situations and different times.

It is against this background that I argue for the need for a theology of peace, as well as an internal critique of religion in order for it to be a resource for peace. This issue, among others, is elaborated in the works of Johnston and Sampson,(1996) Johnston and Cox, (2003), Desjardins (1997), Little (2004), Harpviken and Røislien (2005), Stålset and Leirvik(2004) and Schmidt (2011). In my view, the use of theology is an important tool to emphasise the need for both negative and positive peace, which according to Christian teachings, based on New Testament beliefs and Biblical precepts (Desjardins,1997), is crucial. This was empirically proven in Sierra Leone based on its atmosphere of Christian and non Christian religious tolerance. (Moiba, 2006; Rashid, 2011; Turay, 2005;)

Literature on Islam in Sierra Leone also maintains this exemplary religious tolerance between Christians and Muslims. However even though literature on Christian/ Muslim relations in Sierra Leone maintains that Muslims have been active in Sierra Leonean politics over the years, adherents of these religions had always been tolerant and collaborated with each other for the common human existence and peace (Rashid, 2011; Sillah, 1994; Turay, 2005 and others).

The reasons for this remained basic. It is against this background that this research contributes to the existing literature on the subject matter by suggesting that it is the common influence of ATR that can be credited for this exemplary religious tolerance.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> This quotation is also cited in Chapter One of this thesis.

This point refutes the claim of Olupona (2014), who maintain that ATR is marginalised in Africa and that religious intolerance is on the rise in Africa. Even though the literature on ATR is developed, it has yet to incorporate this point. As Olupona points out, “indeed, religion in Africa remains the pulse of the private and public spheres” (Olupona, 2014: 2). Olupona went on to make significant points about ancestors, African myths and cosmology, spirits, the Supreme Being, divination, sacred authority, ceremonies, festivals and rituals, sacred arts and ritual performances, as well as the presentation of Christianity and Islam, but fell short of linking the cordial relationship between Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone due to ATR influencing both religious groups.<sup>125</sup> As Olupona (2014, p. 23), rightly suggests:

The Supreme God looms large in many narratives and myths that convey the nature of African cosmologies, though not in the same way as in Islam and Christianity, which now dominate African worldviews and social life. Nevertheless, in their African forms, these two monotheistic traditions borrow heavily from indigenous traditions they have encountered....

Thus the literature on religion and peace, as well as on religion and violence, can be characterised as relevant for promoting the kind of research involved in this thesis, which examines religion and peacemaking in a context of unique religious tolerance that demonstrates the positive role of religion (Schmidt, 2011). The literature also shows the ambivalent meanings of religion and violence. This ambivalence also applies to literature on the Christian religion and peacemaking in particular, which is the focus of this thesis. This ambivalence can also be seen in the role of secret societies in war and peacemaking as elucidated above.

It may also be sound to argue that religion can also do, and is currently doing, many pleasant things in the world today, taking into consideration the works of WCC, WCRP, CARITAS and CRS, to name but a few religious charities that are not necessarily “toxic charities”.

Thus, according to Schmidt (2011), Bruce maintains that there are two opposing factions among scholars studying religion and violence. On one side, scholars construct a theory of international relations around the supposed differences between religions

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124 See Chapters Four through Nine of this thesis.

125 See Chapters Four through Nine of this thesis.

and their propensity to cluster in increasingly antagonistic civilisations (Bruce, 2005, p. 6). On the other side, scholars suggest that almost any attribution of social and political effects to religious traditions is both inappropriate and an additional form of oppression (Bruce, 2005, p. 6). I can also identify a third category of scholars studying religion. This category includes all those scholars who do not belong to either of the above groups, because they propose and reflect on the fact that religion can be both a cause of conflict and a resource for peace, and that this positive aspect of religion must be given more space in the debate on religion and violence. These scholars include Johnston and Cox, (2003), Schmidt (2011), Little (2007), Harpviken and Røislien (2005), Staalset and Leirvik (2004) and many more. Referring to Huntington (2002) and Said (1991), Schmidt makes this point explicitly (Schmidt, 2011, p.72).

In the schools of thought represented by Juergensmeyer (2003), Huntington (2002) and others, scholars assume that religion and violence are always in close proximity and that this proximity seems to be absolute. Juergensmeyer maintains that there is a “cosmic war” in the minds of some religious adherents represented in his case studies. Unlike Girard (1977) and his concept of “sacrifice”, for Juergensmeyer, the image of “cosmic war” informs the different expressions of religious terrorism today. Christian militants in the western world, Messianic Zionists in the Middle East, Islamic radicals around the world, Sikh guerrilla cells and members of Aum Shinrikyo, an offshoot of Japanese Buddhism, are all presented in Juergensmeyer’s case studies as evidence for the terror that is supposedly in the “mind of God.”

However, authors from the school of thought represented by Girard and Juergensmeyer suggest that sacrifice and terror, respectively, inform religious adherents’ view of reality, which leads to violence. Their examples are relevant to their viewpoints. However, they are not in agreement on the issues around the “web of religion and violence”, as will be demonstrated in this review. Girard sees the positive role of “ritualised violence” as a means of expressing aggression through sacrifice. It is important to note that, as Schmidt (2011) points out, “The anthropological approach to religion and violence does not aim to romanticise religion or violence.” As we know from past and present experience, religion can create boundaries by dividing communities into two groups – believers and nonbelievers – and this division can create violence. Notwithstanding, Velasco (2005, p.115), maintains a view of religion as “a resource used in settings where the main causes of events are of a geostrategic, economic, or political nature”. This

same point is elaborated on by Schmidt in the *Anthropological perspective of Religion and Violence* (Schmidt, 2011, p.72).

In effect, various scholars maintain that religion and violence are identical. This identification can either be positive (sacrifice) (Girard, 1972) or negative (terror), as in the five cases presented by Juergensmeyer (2003), which centre on Revd. Mike Bray (anti-abortionist), Baruch Goldstein (at war with Arabs), Mahmud Abouhalima (who denounced perceived terrorism practised by western societies through immorality and corruption), and Sikh leader Sant Jamail Singh Bhindra (martyred in 1984). Bhindra used the tradition of both mythical and historical images of ancient warriors and glorious battles to inspire guerrilla activity and open violence against the followers of the Shoko Asahara in the Aum Shinrikyo movement, who were also committed to acts of calculated violence (Juergensmeyer, 2003).

However, this thesis will show how religion supported peacemaking in Sierra Leone during the civil war in the 1990s and after. There are also considerable examples of religious peacemakers (Little, 2007) in Africa, Asia, the USA, Australia and other places (Smock, 2002). Among these are Father Alex Reid, “the man who walked on the streets”, and Revd. Dr Roy Magee in Northern Ireland; Revd. Jesse Jackson in the USA; Imam Mohammad Ashafa and Pastor James Wuye in Nigeria, bringing Muslims and Christians together; and the non-violent Deputy Minister of Defence in South Africa, Nozizwe Madlaler Routledge, not forgetting Quakers, who go far beyond peacemaking.

Tony Blair, former Prime Minister of Great Britain, is recorded as saying: “Just because man is bad, it does not mean that God is not good” (Elliot, 2008, p. 26). This thesis also argues that religion can be used as a resource for peacemaking, even in the light of the long history of religious violence both in text <sup>126</sup> and in praxis, according to scholars such as Juergensmeyer (2003), Huntington (2002), Beier (2006), Boersma (2004), Ellens (2007), Gaddis (2005), Holmes (2005), Delicata (2009), Marrinan (1973, p.114), Moloney and Pollak (1986, p.138), Cook (1996), Ellis (1997), Girard (1977), Hall et al., (2000), Huntington (1997), Hoffman (1998), Lefebure (2000), Robbins et al., (1997), Smith (1990), Wessinger (2000 a, 2000 b), and Wink (1984, 1986, 1992), as discussed above. Thus, one can argue for the relevance of the theology of peace based on the praxis of peace in many contexts, including Sierra Leone. The reason for this argument

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126 The Qur'an and the Bible.

is that religion touches the issue of people's identity, and when *properly* or legitimately used, it can contribute to peacemaking and non-violence (Cobban, 2005; Leirvik, 2002; Little, 2007). This was the case in Sierra Leone, where religion became one of the most effective peacemaking tools. Christians and other religious institutions were involved in advocacy, relief, job creation, civic education and the provision of leadership for reconciliation, peace and healing, through the TRCSL, CCSL, IRCSL, Christian denominations, Christian leaders and by supporting the work of the Sierra Leone Special Court, which was one of the transitional justice bodies that, though secular and legal means, contributed to peacemaking in Sierra Leone.<sup>127</sup>

Based on the interviews conducted and other fieldwork data collected, there is evidence to show that religion is not only inherently violent, but inherently peaceful.<sup>128</sup> Thus, I argue in line with the view of Leirvik and other scholars like Schmidt, who see the positive role of religion in healing, as a coping mechanism and for peacemaking. Religion is not the only reason for violence in events where religion may justify violence or is said to cause violence, because other political, economic and/or ethnic factors can also be present in such cases.<sup>129</sup>

Furthermore, Johnston and Cox argue for the power of religion in peacemaking through faith-based diplomacy and religion, as the missing dimension of statecraft, a view which was supported by Jimmy Carter, former President of the USA. Much of the evidence shows that faith-based diplomacy, while conceptually new to the field of international relations, is a form of "track two" (unofficial) diplomacy that integrates the dynamics of religious faith with the conduct of international peacemaking. As such, it is more about reconciliation than conflict resolution. The peace that is pursued is not the mere absence of conflict, but rather a restoration of healthy and respectful relationships between the parties. While faith-based intermediaries believe that diplomacy and the international system should be morally grounded (as do many secularists), they also understand the need for pragmatism in their pursuit of reconciliation (Johnston and Cox, 2003, p. 15).

Faith-based diplomacy (Johnston and Cox, 2003, pp. 11 - 29) can be described as the opposite of Huntington's analysis of the current world situation and the religious factor

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127 See Chapters Four through Eight of this thesis.

128 See Chapters Four through Eight of this thesis.

129 See Chapter Three of this thesis.



involved. Johnston and Cox assert that religions are capable of preventing conflict, negotiating and contributing positively to peace, though this may seem not to be the case at times, particularly when religions are part of on-going conflicts. With respect to the concrete situations mentioned by these and other scholars, there are also religious bodies and personnel involved in these peace activities, some of whom have lost their lives in their efforts to negotiate peace. However, Johnston and Cox, (2003) argue that extreme secularisation theories, which dominated the Cold War period and have persisted after 1989, are no longer adequate for accomplishing peace alone. Religions, through their faith-based diplomacy, must be consulted and used effectively in situations where those religions are themselves not as participants in the conflict.

In the situations in which religions are part and parcel of conflict, however, Johnston Sampson (1996) and Johnston and Cox, ( 2003) advocate that faith-based diplomacy may still be relevant in a number of ways. Within Christianity, theology is used as an internal critic of religion in order for religion to be a resource for peace. Christian theology can emphasise the need for peace from the background of the New Testament, as elucidated by Desjardins (1997). Furthermore, literature on religion and violence points to the fact that religion is not only a source of conflict, but also a resource for peace and reconciliation (Johnston and Cox, 2003).

Moreover, faith-based diplomacy has its foundation in the historical associations between religion and conflict and peace, but it is often the conflict aspect that makes headlines and attracts the attention of the public as a whole. It is against this background that the theory of faith-based diplomacy maintains that religion has great potential as a promoter of peace, although it is a hard fact that there is much contemporary religiously motivated violence (Johnston and Cox, 2003, p. 233).

Nevertheless, faith-based diplomacy speaks to the heart, mind and spirit of the combatant – to those things that they hold most dear, not simply to the intellectual or material issues that dominate the practice of politics. This theory of faith-based diplomacy combines the material, or *realpolitik*, with the spiritual. Johnston and Sampson (1996) and Johnston and Cox, (2003, pp. 33ff, 76ff, 91ff, 102ff, etc.), provide many examples of how this theory of the potential of religion in peacemaking does not in any way rule out the traditional methods of diplomacy. They advocate that it must be recognised that there is a missing dimension of statecraft (Johnston and Sampson, 1996), which must be included in diplomacy, i.e. the role of religion. The traditional

methods are important, but they are often insufficient to establish a lasting peace. For example, they have failed in the Middle East, despite the Camp David, Oslo and Sharm el Sheik agreements. It is against this background that this theory calls to attention the fact that diplomacy must be approached holistically, and should not overlook the hearts and minds of people; diplomacy at the grassroots level makes peace permanent.

Thus, faith-based diplomacy capitalises on the reconciling aspects of religious faiths. This is what some have called the “true face of religion”, a process of forgiveness and reconciliation. Military action alone will not be adequate for the task, nor will our normal reactive mind-sets to world events serve us well. It is therefore maintained that religion is a powerful force in people’s lives and a strong basis for many societies around the world (Johnston and Sampson, 1996).

Consequently, faith-based diplomacy is a strategy that must be exploited in the interests of reconciliation, peace (Johnston and Cox 2003) and non-violence. As a strategy, it blends religious insights and influences with the practice of international (and national) politics for peaceful purposes, taking concrete steps to inspire religious activities in more helpful directions. In this regard, Smith maintains that the surest way to the hearts and minds of a people is through their faith and religion (Smith in Johnston, 2003). Thus, faith-based diplomacy is a religion’s political contribution to reconciliation and peace.

There are many scriptural resources that could be used in faith-based diplomacy and brought to bear in ameliorating conflict and healing old wounds. For example, there are Qur’anic teachings on conciliation, justice, arbitration and commitment in a moral community as elucidated in Chapter One and Chapter Four of this thesis. However, the question is still raised as to what extent conflicts between Muslims and non-Muslims can be peacefully resolved through resorting to the *sharia*, or Islamic law, and conversely, in which areas the *sharia* poses an obstacle to such resolution. Faith-based diplomacy turns on precisely such questions. However, faith-based diplomacy’s relevance to actual conflicts in today’s world depends on how strongly the combatants hold to their underlying convictions, as well as third-party mediators such as the United States. First, faith-based diplomacy makes sense when religion is seen to be a genuine, and in some cases, decisive factor in the conflict, rather than a dispensable sidebar, artefact or instrument of propaganda. The second point is conditioned upon the truth of the first. Whereas religion is a determining or supporting factor in conflict, faith-based

diplomacy can make a difference if religion is simultaneously a way of life, an intellectual heritage and a social tradition, all of which are constantly being contested and reinterpreted. This, in my view, is a very eloquent and important point, especially taking into consideration ATR and its flexibility on issues of myth and religious truth claims. Faith-based diplomacy can also play an important role in certain conflicts in which there is no religious involvement, normally in a third-party mediating capacity (Dulles in Johnston 2003, pp. 239 - 239).

According to Nadia Delicata (2005), the primordial nature of finite existence chisels human experience: life and death, creativity and destruction, the contemporary and perpetual. The public debate about religion and violence ultimately speaks to this tension between the deep human desire to transcend life and, simultaneously, the uncontrollable drive to violate and dampen it (Delicata, 2005, p.13). It is this tension that is presented and discussed in this literature review, but with specific focus on the positive and healing aspects of religion, (Abramowitz, 2014; Schmidt, 2011). Furthermore, the argument of this thesis is that there is a need to devote more intellectual and practical space to the positive role of religion in academic literature because it seems to have been overlooked for far too long, especially in Sierra Leone.

Many scholars, for example those in the six books reviewed by Delicata, present these human dilemmas. Each of the studies offers a scholarly consideration from varied backgrounds, including ethical, rhetorical, psychological, theological, philosophical, existential and hermeneutical perspectives. These works of Drewermann (2006), Boersma (2004), De Vries (2002), Ellens (2007), Gaddis (2005), Holmes (2005) and Delicata (2005), discussed above, point to this complexity. Drewermann, for example, points to the theology of violence in which violence is interpreted positively, a position similar to Girard. This positive interpretation of violence can be characterised as legitimising violence for the good of salvation. However, it can be argued that although violence as represented in, for example, the cross of Jesus, was interpreted positively, this symbol likely does not condone or recommend violence, but actually, according to Christian theology, exposes violence and provides freedom for Christians, which is interpreted in theology as the peace of God that passes all understandings. It is this kind of internal peace that the theology of peace advocates. This is contrary to the position of Boersma (2004), whose work *Violence, Hospitality, and The Cross: Reappropriating the Atonement Tradition*, seeks to present violence as a redemptive symbol of divine hospitality. Boersma perceives hospitality and violence as inseparable, just as they must

coexist in God (Delicata, 2005, p. 4). While this may be the case in certain circumstances, it is my view that Christian theology presents God as suffering in the world amidst the poor, an act that is temporal until violence and evil are finally defeated at the Parousia, or the second coming of Christ. The introspective, peaceful nature of the Divine also deserves more space in this debate. Boersma rejects the idea of violence as inherently negative, asserting that “it can serve the common good” within which the grace of hospitality can flourish in a world tarnished by evil (Boersma, 2004, in Delicata 2004, p. 4). However, Levinas and Derrida point to the impossibility and contradiction of absolute hospitality. Similarly, Boersma (2004), continues the long tradition of *just war* formally begun by St. Augustine by stressing that some acts of violence are in fact morally obligatory, and even benevolent and compassionate. It was this type of violence that was lacking in the peacemaking efforts of Christian leaders and organisations in Sierra Leone. However, ATR forces filled that gap by taking up arms, as was presented in Chapter One of this thesis and as will be discussed in Chapter Three of this thesis. This also leads me to the question of the existence of what is called “God’s wrath”. Can God be angry or violent? Is atonement a necessary evil on the part of the Son obeying the Father? It is these questions that Boersma (2004) seeks to answer. His study belongs to the wider Christian tradition, which through several centuries has emphasised the relationship between a master and disciple, a hero and an initiator, a slave and his owner. However, there are various schools of thought that have reviewed this kind of thinking, such as the theology of peace, which emphasises non-violent acts in peacemaking.

A paper prepared by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), which advises the Norwegian government on peace issues, maintains that religion has peacemaking potential around the world. This work was termed a “state-of-the-art paper”,<sup>130</sup> written for the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as part of a project called “Mapping the Terrain: The Role of Religion in Diplomacy and Peacemaking.” PRIO proposes that renewed attention be paid to the potential of religion in peacemaking. In summary, the paper maintains, among other things, that religion has a track record in peacemaking, yet in conflicts that are caused by religion, the working conditions for such

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130 A paper submitted to the Norwegian government on the power of religion in peacemaking by PRIO, Oslo, 2006.

peacemaking become more difficult, especially when the religious groups appear unreceptive to conciliation.

This thesis also maintains the importance of the economic aspects of religion, asserting that since religion is part of the larger society, it is shaped by and has an effect on cultural, economic and political factors (Bowie, 2006; Dommen, 2014). It is therefore important to engage religious bodies in peacemaking processes when conflicts arise, because the silence of religious organisations and religious leaders is not in the interests of peacemaking. It is against this background that this thesis posits a need for diplomatic initiatives that strengthen the emphasis of religious dimensions in the context of peacemaking. This presumes knowledge-building, capacity development and, ultimately, a new level of religious awareness in peacemaking and in politics (Harpviken and Røislien, 2005, p.1; Johnston and Sampson, 1996; Johnston and Cox, 2003). This leads me to a review of what makes a difference in peacemaking, whether it is a clash of civilisations or faith-based diplomacy, and whether religion is inherently violent or peaceful.

## **2.2 Is religion inherently violent or peaceful?**

Considering the three schools of thought identified in the debate on religion and violence, the question can be posed as to whether religion is inherently violent or peaceful. Various scholarly works have endeavoured to answer this question by appealing to the historicity of religious violence, emphasising that there is a web between religion and violence (Avalos, 2005, 2007) or asserting religion as a powerful force for peace (Stålsett and Leirvik.,(eds) 2004). These include Huntington's (2002) "clash of civilizations," the "faith-based diplomacy" of Johnston and Cox, (2003), the role of religion in peacemaking in Harpviken and Røislien (2005), among others. I argue that all of these theories have their strengths and weaknesses. This is due to a realistic view of faith-based diplomacy and the track record of religion in peacemaking (Little, 2007, pp. 294 - 295). It is thus important to note that theories on religion and violence recognise the power of religions and the positive role they can play even though they can also be a cause of conflict.

We must not forget that the secularisation theory that prevailed during the Cold War has not only tried to make religion redundant (Bruce, 2002; Pals, 1996, pp. 54ff, 88ff, 124ff), but has also declared that theology and religion are irrelevant (Audi, 1999, p. 700). This has not been the case, as we are still witnessing the important role of

theology and religion in the lives of common people. It can be argued that Religion is not to be seen as the enemy of peace, but rather as the alternative to extreme materialism and corruption because of its emphasis on spirituality (Johnston and Sampson, 1996; Johnston and Cox, 2003).

In relation to the above, I argue that religion and faith-based diplomacy, along with the positions taken in this thesis, are practical positions from which our world must be perceived and made peaceful, not as an alternative to political diplomacy, but as a powerful force to be exploited in the interest of peaceful co-existence between people. The peace that is achieved through reaching the hearts and minds of the “grassroots people” is sure to have a value that cannot be abandoned. This was the case in Sierra Leone, where churches, mosques and theological institutions prioritised the language of peace above the religious language of absolutism adopted by fanatics. For example, there were many internal factors which led the CCSL and IRCSL to play significant roles during the conflict. Among these were: a) the role of religious leaders; b) symbolic actions; c) the use of first and second languages in sermons and negotiations in favour of peace; d) the use of infrastructural resources as peacemaking tools; e) the use of educational resources for peace; f) membership resources in favour of peace and g) peace and civic education projects.

I also assert that the potential of Christianity and Islam as resources for peace and dialogue seems to have been underestimated, even in the twenty-first century (Avalos, 2005; Avalos, 2015). There have been various peace missions undertaken by religious bodies and institutions.<sup>131</sup> Even the holy books of the various religious faiths, which Jenkins describes as living side by side, are only relevant in the maintenance of peace. For example, I have previously noted the emphasis in biblical texts, especially in the New Testament <sup>132</sup>, on how Christians should be or are expected to be children of peace, a view also suggested by Desjardins (1997) as he argues that peace is given a central place in the New Testament (Desjardins, (1997). Some of the conflicts in the countries named, such as Sierra Leone, Kenya, and Liberia, have little to do with religion directly, but are mainly concerned with politics and economics. For instance, some politicians

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131 See, for example, a recent statement by WCC on its website accessed in July, 2016.

132 See Chapter One of this thesis.

have used Islam in the north of Sierra Leone in order to gain political power for themselves, and the same might apply to other regions.

The theory is that religion is a potent force for peacemaking and that religious identities have contributed to preventing and abating war, and in cases where conflict has erupted, religious identities have contributed immensely to making peace. Religion, as exemplified in the Sierra Leone context, can be a potent tool and resource in peacemaking. It may appear that this view is one-sided, taking into consideration some of the realities around the world in which religions seem to be involved in conflict as a result of their different claims on truth (Huntington, 2002). On the other hand, it is important to note that though dialogue between religions should not be based on unrealistic expectations it remains that religious dialogue is preferable to religious confrontation in situations in which one has to choose between war and peace. This is certainly evident in Sierra Leone. I am of the view that if the various religious bodies in Sierra Leone had taken a line of action other than dialogue towards a common interest (peace), then the war in Sierra Leone would not have come to an end so soon. The reason for this claim is the ongoing continuation of wars in other parts of Africa, where religious adherents seem to be in confrontation rather than in dialogue (Lederach, 2000).

In Sierra Leone, there was willingness on the part of the religions personnel – imams and priests, as well as Islamic and Christian theologians, commonly influenced by traditional African tenets of peacemaking – to work towards the formation of an inter-religious council that contributed to bringing the war to an end <sup>133</sup>. They used their educational capacity to spread a message of peace through dialogue, showing that they were accountable to the populace in terms of ethics and morality, which is generally lacking in politics in Sierra Leone. Religious leaders made it clear that they preferred peace and tolerance to war and political intolerance, and they engaged in dialogue with forces with conflicting views. <sup>134</sup>

Furthermore, churches and mosques used every opportunity to talk together publicly in a spirit of goodwill for the sake of peace. This was done not because they had no differences, but because they had things in common. One such thing was the need to use

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133 See Chapter Six of this thesis.

134 Personal experience as a participant observer since 1991 in many towns, cities and villages in Sierra Leone.

all their resources for peacemaking and dialogue through negotiation and mediation. There are many theories of dialogue, some critical and others less so. However, it is clear that dialogue – in this sense, the possibility of talking together – led to results in Sierra Leone. On the other hand, it is possible to argue that considering that all religious bodies came together for peacemaking in Sierra Leone, this does not necessarily mean that the same can occur in all parts of the world. Though this may not be the case, it is still possible to argue that in a situation in which there is a real choice between working for peace in an active way, as in the case of Sierra Leone, or engaging in confrontation, it is better and in the interests of all to use all religious capacities for peace (Johnston and Cox., 2003). These capacities are a real possibility and a reality, as in the Sierra Leonean case (interviews, 2005, 2006 through 2011) and in many other cases around the world (Cobban, 2005; Little, 2007).

The economic influence of religion is also paramount. In the Sierra Leonean situation, in which the majority of the population received most of its welfare from the churches<sup>135</sup> and the mosques, it was of great importance to put all these resources together in the interests of peace. When this was done, there was a real possibility for peace. As I discovered during this research, religious bodies in Sierra Leone travelled both within and outside the country to engage with the various parties that were involved in the conflict. There was economic solidarity between both groups, as they used communal resources to hold lectures, seminars and other meetings in the interest of peace. One such programme was held by the Ecumenical Peace Forum.<sup>136</sup> In this manner, this thesis supports the argument that it is necessary to have people living side by side, engaging in dialogue, recognising each other's traditions and entering into dialogue without the aim of converting the other person. This leads me to the methodology which will be described below.

### **2.3 Methodology**

A case study method was used for this thesis with triangulation as a data collection strategy. This thesis depends largely on empirical material gathered over a period of time through interviews and personal recollection, rather than on secondary material; though there is a dearth of such materials dealing with the subject matter, this is a

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135 Conference documents of the Methodist Church Sierra Leone and the UMC 2000ff.

136 Under the CCSL 2000ff.



methodological problem that I acknowledge freely. The research has been very challenging, but also encouraging due to the progress made in choosing the research topic, engaging in theoretical work and conducting at least three periods of fieldwork in which interviews were conducted, documents collected, member checking carried out and a case study report written. I remained in the field doing research and observing events in the country as they unfolded.

In addressing the research questions, an investigative approach was used, beginning with a survey of the literature on religion and violence and continuing with the views of the people who were most available to me. Accounts of what happened were gathered, and I tried to find clues as to what really transpired in Sierra Leone vis-à-vis my research topic. I then attempted to unearth the true picture of the conflict and the role of Christians and Muslims therein, with ATR on the periphery. I tried to deconstruct, defictionalise and work towards building a “true” story of the events that unfolded both before and after 1989.

Textbooks on social science methods indicate that qualitative data can often be confusing and poorly organised. I went through the data trying to decipher the facts. Were the interviewees telling the truth? Were they only trying to impress me or were they genuine in their statements? With regard to fieldwork, textbooks normally move from general statements such as “how to go about it” to some form of *ex post facto* ways in which to do this (Coffey and Paul, 1996, p. 92ff). The investigation of religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone involved this kind of “rummaging process” described by McCracken (1988, p. 19). My initial contacts were identified as informants, but as the research progressed, I identified more people to talk to, not only as a way of receiving information and confirming facts, but also as a means of understanding their reality and comparing it with my own experiences in Sierra Leone and Norway. Interviewees suggested other people with whom they might want me to talk. Many of the interviewees responded positively and guided me in the data collection process in terms of who had central roles in the events that ensued during and after the war with regard to peacemaking.

As a participant observer, I had direct experience with the various actors, and I compared my views with those of the interviewees who made suggestions about who to engage with, as recommended by other researchers (Hamersley and Atkinson, 1996, p. 133ff). The danger with this is that the people who are considered central figures in the

drama may tend to direct the research in a particular direction. Although I always interviewed the person or persons most immediately accessible, either as informants or as actors, I avoided being misled into engaging in several formal and informal conversations and observations in order to avoid both bias and being an apologist for the role of religion in peacemaking without scientific evidence. I even engaged a lawyer, Mr. Omar Paran Tarawali, who claimed to be a “Goddist,” meaning that he had no specific religion but believed in God. I also interviewed people at random and engaged in focus group interviews in order to test the views expressed by respondents and to include female voices. Muslims were asked to comment on the views of Christians, and vice versa. In other words, there was a saturation of the data collected any time new information emerged. I posed varied questions to the interviewees, mostly interviewing them on more than one occasion, within the same month.<sup>137</sup>

The interview process itself began in 2005, when I was engaged in writing a paper for the University of Oslo on the role of the Council of Churches Sierra Leone and the Inter Religious Council Sierra Leone in violence and in peace. I later continued with the data collection in 2006/2007, when I was formally researching for this thesis, first with Birmingham Christian College and then with the University of Wales Lampeter, which later became the University of Wales Trinity Saint David. I looked at the transcribed interviews and identified where respondents provided similar and conflicting information on the events that unfolded in Sierra Leone before and after 1989. These formed part of the evidence for this thesis position, alongside my own experience as a participant observer and other documents and secondary literature specifically on Sierra Leone, though these are still nascent.

I examined the data from interviews, archives, newspapers and Internet sites, and the nature and structure of the data, and then separated the data into parts, which gave the thesis chapters. This activity led to the understanding I have of the data, namely that it points to religion being a potent force for peacemaking in Sierra Leone during and after 1989.

In all, over fifty interviews were conducted at various times between 2005 and 2011. The last person to be interviewed was Bishop Joseph Christian Humper, who was a major informant and actor. Respondents, as well as other stakeholders, were asked to

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<sup>137</sup> See, for example, Appendix 1a of this thesis.

read and comment on the transcribed interviews. After that process, I engaged many students of theology and religion at the Sierra Leone Theological College in Freetown to read and comment on the transcribed interviews. As I carried out this “member checking”, I was able not only to ascertain facts from the data but also to confirm my own experiences of the issues investigated.

In addition to theoretical data, a number of other written materials were consulted. These included conference documents of the Methodist Church Sierra Leone, church newsletters, minutes of meetings, press releases and the three volumes of the TRCSL reports, as well as the reports from the Special Court for Sierra Leone published on the official web pages of the court. I have included some of these in the Appendices.

As I interviewed people, I remained accessible and accepting of their views, which helped them to feel relaxed. I often travelled with them in order to get an unbiased picture of the situation as it transpired in various parts of Sierra Leone. Whenever I had only partial knowledge and experience of the issues, I took the time to explain them carefully to the respondents in order to achieve some reflexivity, as a way of minimising bias in the interview process both from my side and that of the interviewees' subjectivity. Some of the interviewees had the opportunity to express their personal opinions on what actually transpired, whereas others were simply asked to confirm or disprove the opinions of the actors. I acted therefore both as a naïve and a critical social scientist researcher in order to achieve the aims, objectives and goals of the research. This manner of working may not comply with McCracken's strategy and normative assertion that worldviews are “elicited in as unobtrusive, non-directive manner as possible” (McCracken, 1988, p. 21); however, it was the best available method to achieve the aims of this thesis. This is so because triangulation, the rationale for using several sources of evidence, is probably better than experiments in laboratories for this kind of social research and study.

In my earlier interviews, I was mainly interested in seeking information. This gave the interviewees the role of informants and not necessarily of actors. The interview guides were open-ended, and I could ask other questions relevant to the process in order to get a fair view of the situation in Sierra Leone before and after 1989. As the research progressed over the years, I became interested in the congruence of the information received as well as the incongruence of the interviewees' opinions on what transpired in

Sierra Leone with regard to my research question and hypothesis.<sup>138</sup> I focussed on obtaining more information from central actors as the interviews progressed. The information gained from earlier respondents was used to prepare new questions for interviewees in a semi-structured fashion. In each case, the interview was unique and focussed. Thus the various informants and actors, as well as non-actors were consulted in this research. I tried to work like a detective, as Marcus describes in the introduction to a collection of Dashiell Hammett's detective novels, whereby the detective's role is to bring forward a "reality", "to deconstruct, decompose, deplot and defictionalise that "reality", and then construct or reconstruct out of it a true fiction, i.e., what "really happened"(Marcus, 1974, p. xix). There was an empirical aspect in my qualitative research, as will be described below.

### **2.3.1 Empirical and Qualitative Research**

Drawing on standard textbooks such as Yin (2003), McCracken (1988), Creswell (1998), Hammersley and Aitkinson, (1996) and others, in social science methodology, as well as the presentations of the materials and or literature presented above, a substantial part of any Ph.D is data collection and evidence - based writing. This section of the thesis will focus on these activities, and on the associated achievements, difficulties and challenges, as well as what was done to overcome obstacles for this empirical and qualitative study. The substantial difficulties included, but were not limited to, enduring sickness before and during the period of reporting and experiencing a theft in Birmingham on 17 September 2009 and subsequent financial difficulties and challenges, partly due to the Ebola crises in Sierra Leone. I made efforts to overcome these problems and engaged research assistants to help me with much of the research work and member checking.

The interviews and member checking continued from July 2009 until March 2010, as well as during the whole of 2011 to 2015, when I was permanently resident in Sierra Leone. The interview questions were mainly semi-structured. The semi-structured interviews had many advantages in a context like Sierra Leone, where conscious efforts were made to prevent informants and actors from telling me what they wanted me to hear by applying a mixed method of interviews and consulting other sources of

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138 See Chapter One of this thesis.

information and my own experience. Triangulation was helpful in validating the research and data collection. These activities – empirical research and interviews – helped me to achieve my aims and objectives<sup>139</sup> and answer the research question. In summary, I was in Sierra Leone for at least 60 months conducting interviews, holding conversations with informants and actors, member checking, making observations and writing up and reviewing the data.

I analysed the case studies, documents and archival records, conducted short interviews, made direct observations and participated in the process, both in my capacity as a researcher and as a Methodist minister of the Sierra Leone Conference. The reason for using multiple sources of evidence in data collection and analysis was to ensure that the information collected was reliable (Yin, 2003). This triangulation was the rationale for using multiple sources of evidence in the empirical research, review and write-up between 2006 and 2015. In this case study, many different sources of evidence were used, including my experiences as a Methodist minister and former regional supervisor for peace and civic education in eastern Sierra Leone. Other sources include empirical evidence, historical documents (including the three volumes of the TRCSL report), historical material, field visits and research, including semi-structured interviews with over fifty respondents. These were divided into three categories, including key informants, ordinary Sierra Leoneans and non-Sierra Leonean actors. There was also an extensive period of participant observations, involving personal diaries, note takings, ministerial meetings and conferences of the Methodist Church Sierra Leone, administrators' personal files, newspapers, news articles and secondary material/literature, all triangulating the same set of research questions.

For this kind of empirical research, the use of a case study as a method and triangulation as a strategy for data collection is more effective than other research strategies, such as experiments, surveys, or histories or oral traditions in thoroughness, reliability and validity. Notwithstanding, the case study as an empirical method has been stereotyped as a weak approach among social science methods. This stereotype, according to Yin, began in the twentieth century and has continued well into the twenty-first. Yet, this stereotype case studies may be unfounded when using triangulation as a strategy for data collection. This strategy made my research rigorous, with its research questions,

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139 See Chapter One of this thesis.

case study design, data collection, data analysis and establishment of a case study category and documenting these in this thesis.

Triangulation allowed me to address the broader range of oral traditions, interviewees' attitudes and their behaviours. This helped to converge lines of inquiry that can be much more convincing and accurate than experiments through the four types of triangulation discussed by Patton (Patton, 1987, 1990). These four types of triangulation are: 1) data triangulation (of sources); 2) investigation triangulation (among different evaluators); 3) theory triangulation (of perspectives on the same data) and 4) methodological triangulation (of method). I conducted these activities beginning in the pre-data collection period, and continuing through the fieldwork and data collection and the write-up and review periods, which contributed greatly to the credibility and validity of the research.<sup>140</sup> In summary, formal procedures were followed, which were intended to make the process as explicit as possible so that the final results and the data collection reflect a concern for constructive validity and reliability, and so that the thesis is worthy of further reflection on and analysis of the debates and results.

Thus, the evidence presented is based on the convergence of information from multiple sources that led to the formation of this thesis, including the case study notes, documents, secondary materials and narratives deriving from interviewees and focus groups.

### **2.3.2 Discussion of the choice of interviewees**

Drawing on the views expressed above, the interviewees were chosen based on whether they had been in Sierra Leone before, during and after the war. The age groups were determined beginning with those who were 12 years or older when the war started in 1991, to those who were either active in what has been going on in the country since independence or have been personally affected by the events that unfolded before, during and after the war. I also asked respondents for their own views as to whom they thought I might interview, to which nearly all interviewees responded. Some asked that I choose notable people who were directly involved in the events that unfolded before and after the war, whereas others mentioned specific names like Bishop Joseph Christian Humper, Bishop George Biguzzi, President Christian V. A. Peacock and Mr.

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<sup>140</sup> See subsection 2.4 in this chapter.

Alimamy Koroma. Revd. Moses Khanu specifically recommended the TRCSL reports. I transcribed interviews from the tape recorders I used in the fieldwork and contacted respondents between August and November 2007 to read and comment on what I had transcribed.

I usually met with my interviewees for at least 30 minutes each, and most times more than once. In addition, I had more extensive interviews with Revd. Moses Khanu (Baptist minister), Alhaji Dr. Mohamed Tunis (Muslim), Mr. Alpha Bah (Muslim), Pastor Gbla (lecturer and Baptist minister), Revd. Sam Joe Ellie (UBC minister), Mr. Olu Alghali (practicing Catholic), Mr. Umaro Koroma (Muslim), Bishop Biguzzi (Catholic bishop), Bishop Humper (UMC bishop) and the focus group at FBC. From February to June 2007, I continued to study the primary material I had collected in 2005/2006 and wrote the hypothesis, arguments and findings from the literature on religion and violence.

Some of the informants and actors were interviewed several times, some on several different days and at different times and occasions. I adopted a friendly tone with both my informants and the actors in order to obtain more information, and this strategy appeared to be successful. The research context was Sierra Leone, where I endeavoured to speak with all ethnic, religious and non-religious groups. After one of the fieldwork trips in July 2007, I developed a research database (August - December 2007) and included material from previous fieldwork. The database included documents, transcriptions of interviews from a cross-section of Sierra Leoneans (over 50 people), speeches and archival records that were studied and used as the basis for the thesis. Among the documents collected and studied are: the Abidjan Peace Accord; the Lomé Peace Accord; the TRCSL report; <sup>141</sup> conference documents from MCSL and other churches; internet resources<sup>142</sup> from the UN Special Court for Sierra Leone; diaries; artefacts and newspaper articles. A case study chain of evidence was also maintained and a case study analysis was conducted.

After July 2007, I returned to Europe, studied the material while in Norway, transcribed the first set of interviews, and compared these with previous data collected in 2005/2006. This transcription was carried out from August 2007 until March 2008. I

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<sup>141</sup> 2000 pages and is divided into three volumes, with one of the volumes in two binds.

<sup>142</sup> See Appendix 1c of this thesis.

returned to the UK in April 2008, and took advantage of a course in thesis writing and writing for publication at the University of Birmingham staff development unit. The workshop was led by Prof. Philip Hills, from the Centre for Research into Human Communication and Learning at the University of Cambridge. I later presented the transcribed data, case study chain of evidence <sup>143</sup> and categorisation of data that formed the draft thesis chapters to research supervisors for their comments and suggestions before another fieldwork visit to Sierra Leone in October and November 2008, the purpose of which was mainly to conduct “member checking.”<sup>144</sup>

I conducted more interviews, member checking and observations in another fieldwork period from August 2009 to March 2010, contacting interviewees from the UK in August 2009 before travelling to Sierra Leone in September 2009. I remained in Sierra Leone until 2010, which, as I explained at the beginning of this chapter, facilitated obtaining the evidence for the thesis, maintaining a conscious attitude for triangulation, overcoming difficulties and reducing biases in data collection and analysis. The University in Freetown was contacted through the then-head of the department of Philosophy and Religious Studies and the head of Peace and Conflict Studies at FBC, Dr Leopold Foulah and Dr Memunatu Pratt, respectively. My earlier research assistants were re-engaged during this period. and new research assistants were engaged as the workload of data collection, analysis and writing the case study report expanded further.

As a categorisation of the primary material was developed, I prepared a case study report from categories such as: (1) the role of the Council of Churches in peacemaking; (2) the role of the Inter-religious Council in peacemaking; (3) the role of religious leaders in peacemaking; (4) religious texts, traditions and contexts in peacemaking; (5) the Catholic Church and peacemaking in Sierra Leone; (6) Methodists as peacemakers in Sierra Leone and (7) some major Christian individuals as peacemakers in action. These included the Rt. Revd. C.V.A. Peacock, the Rt. Revd. Christian Joseph Humper, Revd. Moses Khanu and other Christian leaders. These categories for the data that derive from the above work form the basis of the thesis chapters, and further work on this Ph.D topic. <sup>145</sup>

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143 See Appendices 1a through 10.

144 This involved giving the respondents the opportunity to read the transcribed interviews and take a position on the tenability of the texts from them and others.

145 See Appendices 1a, b, c, and 2 through 10 of this thesis.



### **2.3.2.1 The Context of the Interviewees**

As noted above, all my interviewees were either resident in Sierra Leone or were Sierra Leoneans who had experienced the war or were personally involved in it.<sup>146</sup> Some were interviewed merely as informants, whereas others were interviewed as actors.<sup>147</sup> I have experience as a researcher in Sierra Leone, Norway and the UK. Based on my experience in Sierra Leone as a participant observer, I interviewed mostly Christians and Muslims, some of whom were also affiliated with ATR, especially as members of the secret societies. There was only one person who declared himself a “Goddist”.<sup>148</sup> I interviewed mainly men, as it was difficult to find female interviewees. However, with the permission of the interviewees, I balanced this issue by engaging female respondents in a focus group interview at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, in Freetown, as well as giving them the transcribed interviews to read and comment on at the Sierra Leone Theological Hall and Church Training Centre (SLTH&CTC)<sup>149</sup>. I have included some of the transcribed interviews in the appendices as well as a complete list of those interviewed, showing their religion and some other relevant information.

### **2.3.2.2 Discussion of interviewees’ presentations and understanding of the interview process**

As I approached this topic, I wondered whether information from interviews was to be seen as facts that could be gleaned and perhaps supported by triangulation. Was I interested in a dialogical approach? The methodology of this work is triangulation, or the use of multiple sources of data or evidence. Extensive interviews were carried out with over 50 people, a cross-section of Sierra Leoneans, over a period of time (in September and October 2006, July 2007 to 2009 and in subsequent field visits from 2010 until December 2011). I also conducted many in-depth and key informant interviews,<sup>150</sup> and collected and reviewed a variety of documents and archival material;

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146 See Appendix 2 of this thesis.

147 See Appendix 9 of this thesis.

148 He was also mentioned above.

149 Now College of Theology and Management and Church Training Centre, which was accredited by the University of Sierra Leone.

some of these are included in the Appendices. Furthermore, I was able to observe the situation in Sierra Leone by travelling extensively in the country, during which I was accompanied by research assistants and a driver over a long period of time. Thus, this work relied on multiple sources of evidence.<sup>151</sup> It is this process that I refer to as triangulation in this thesis.

However, the problems that advocacy and a “praxis of peace” can present for a serious researcher are rooted in militant Islam and the inability of either end of a religious divide to communicate and participate in dialogue. Another problem might be my status as a native of Sierra Leone; however, this may also be a strength, as a more localised perspective helps me to deconstruct and uncover what “really happened”. Informants and interviewees might hide or shy away from the difficulties involved (Mitton, 2015, pp 23- 32), when Christians and Muslims come together in dialogue, as there is always an undercurrent of the ATR concepts of atonement (Olupona, 2014; Mbiti, 1975). I know that many Christian and Muslim leaders are members of secret societies, which has influenced them in many ways. This is also related to be an insider perspective and it can give me an emic perspective of the issues discussed in this thesis because of the first hand experiences I possess. This emic advantage was for example unavailable and to Mat Utas when he did his Ph.D research in neighbouring Liberia as he comments:

As part of the task, we spent five days in Southern Liberia undertaking close to 100 taped, semi-structured interviews with young people, many ex-combatants. This compared with four months in the Palace [a place where ex-combatants were squatting] where I had not gathered a single taped interview. In retrospect I can see that the taped interview material I collected in Southern Liberia was almost entirely a wasted effort, mainly because every interviewee complied with one of the pre-set frames of victimhood. To tape any interviews in the Palace would have been out of the question as their life realms were just too insecure. Such seems to be the case in most Liberian postwar settings and indeed among ex-combatants worldwide, who will not directly discuss issues involving their war crimes with just any outsider (Utas, 2003, p. 81).

Another issue that could have hindered the research might be my own subjectivity with regard to other religions of which I am not a member. Am I able to conduct thorough research without prejudice? I think that my efforts appear to have succeeded as I discuss Islam and ATR with great respect and objectivity. In order to avoid bias and reduce the

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150 See the introductory chapter of this thesis.

151 See the Appendices of this thesis.

risk of writing about what did not actually happen in Sierra Leone, I always cross-checked my information with informants, actors, experts at universities, students at the Sierra Leone Theological College in Freetown as well as literature and theories that do not support my view. I worked to validate my data and engaged in a dialogical approach. The validation process relied on research using triangulations, indicated above. This helped to minimise my bias as well as the danger of being misinformed by both informants and actors, as indicated below.

## **2.4 Validation and reliability of the research**

Before I started the case study, I defined and continuously redefined the problems and issues to be studied, and developed my case study design. Since my case study is based on Christians and their institutions in collaboration with Muslims, with both groups influenced by ATR in peacemaking, the studies are not only practical but also cross-checked based on the documents from these organisations over a period of time and internet resources on the subject matter, as well as books on Sierra Leone.

To ensure the quality of this study, I consistently followed the four tests described by Yin (2003). The first test is concerned with increasing the construct validity (Yin 2003, pp. 34-36). To do this, I have used multiple sources of evidence, which Yin (2003, p. 97ff), also describes as data triangulation, which secures a broader perspective on the case study. The most important sources I used in the case study are my interviews with over 50 people and documents from the CCSL, IRCSL, MCSL (such as conference documents from the period 1999 - 2015) and the TRCSL. Furthermore, I conducted short interviews lasting 30 minutes to one hour with key informants and actors from the CCSL, IRCSL and MCSL. I also carried out further conversations with grassroots people in Segbwema, Bo and Freetown, as well as leaders of the CCSL, IRCSL and MCSL. In addition, I actively used the internet to confirm the information that I gleaned from the other sources. I did this to make the results of my case study controllable for others. Another tactic to increase the construct validity is to establish a chain of evidence. To enable independent readers to control my results, I have included documents in the Appendices to that effect. Yet another tactic with the same aim is to have key informants and actors review a draft of the case study report. I also carried out member checking, that is, asking the respondents to read my transcribed interviews and confirm or correct what I had recorded as their views.

The second test is concerned with increasing the internal validity (Yin, 2003, p. 36). The case studies that were conducted in 2005 - 2006 were intended for a much more limited paper of fifteen pages or so. However, the case study from 2007 to 2015 is much more detailed and comprehensive. Thus, this thesis focusses more on the theoretical and practical issues of the potential of religion for peacemaking, with some concrete examples from the case study to highlight the “praxis of peace”. The theories from other works, presented in this Chapter will function as a control measure for the internal validity of this research. The theories include “faith-based diplomacy”, “peace by peaceful means”, “the power of faiths”, “anthropological perspectives on religion and violence” and other theories on peace, such as “peacemakers in action” by David Little and colleagues, (2007) and “Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft” by Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, (1996), and other scholars.

The third test is concerned with increasing external validity, (Yin, 2003). According to Yin, establishing external validity is a significant obstacle in performing case studies, as single cases generally do not provide a sufficient basis for generalising (Yin, 2003, p. 37). To meet this requirement, the issues in this thesis on Johnston’s faith-based diplomacy and its applications in Kashmir (Embree, 2003, p. 33ff), Sri Lanka (Seneviratne, 2003, p. 76ff), the Middle East (Gopin, 2003, p. 91ff), Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo (Steele, 2003, p. 124ff), Sudan (Nyang and Johnston, 2003, p. 210ff) and Norway point to this possibility. Furthermore, it is now generally accepted that religions have the potential for conflict resolution and peacemaking (Sadik, 2014). Christianity, Islam and ATR all exhibit this capability (El Fadl, 2003, p. 178ff), and concrete examples presented as a “praxis of peace” are documented in this thesis. The works of Schmidt, Little, Johnston and others are not necessarily evidence for generalisation, but are examples of contexts other than Sierra Leone that have seen similar peacemaking efforts as those evaluated in this thesis. The use of these studies and the development of the argument in this thesis can be seen as theory triangulation (Yin, 2003, p. 99), which may also contribute to overcoming one-sidedness or bias in the conclusions of this thesis. Relating the case study to more than one theoretical perspective may lead to the possibility of generalising the results of the thesis.

The fourth test is concerned with increasing reliability (Yin, 2003, pp. 37 - 39). On the one hand, a researcher who visits Sierra Leone (particularly Bo, Makeni, Kenema, Freetown, Segbwema and other towns), conducts interviews with leaders of the CCSL, IRCSL, MCSL and TRCSL using the same questions on the role of religion in

peacemaking, and reads the same documents and Internet sites, may come to the same conclusion as I did in this case that religion was a potent resource in peacemaking. On the other hand, it may be difficult for an independent researcher to get the same access to information, documents and personnel as I enjoyed, but if they succeed in doing that, they will still come to the same conclusion as in this thesis. In other words, the difficulty in accessing data does not rule out the possibility that another researcher, having utilised the same theoretical background and research methods, will come to the same conclusion, namely that religion has potential in peacemaking, and that potential was used in the peacemaking process in Sierra Leone during and after the war. It is against this background that I will briefly, in the next chapter, look at the descent of Sierra Leone into civil war.

## **CHAPTER 3 SIERRA LEONE'S DESCENT INTO CIVIL WAR**

### **3.0 Introduction: Sierra Leone Before and After 1989**

This chapter is concerned with the factors that led to Sierra Leone's civil war, and presents events from 1961 to 1989, from 1989 to December 1997 and from 1998 to 2002. Following this is an account of events that led to the end of the war. In addition, this chapter addresses atrocities that were committed against civilians from 1989 to 2002, as well as the role of ATR in peacemaking in Sierra Leone. It subsequently describes the post-conflict ethnic and political situation in the country, leading to the summary and conclusion of the chapter.

In studying the history of Sierra Leone, the end of the Cold War is taken as a significant reference point because of prevailing circumstances in Sierra Leone just before and after this took place. The end of the Cold War in 1989 saw the start of a new world dispensation, marked by a shift in the focus of politics from bi-polar to multi-polar, though this is highly contested by many scholars (e.g., Russett, Oneal and Cox, 2000). The end of the Cold War also saw the collapse of many African states, including Liberia and Sierra Leone in West Africa, where wars broke out in 1989 and 1991, respectively (Harris, 2013; Mitton, 2015; Utas, 2003).

### **3.1 The Factors That Led to the War**

There were many factors that contributed to the war in Sierra Leone. These included political, social and economic issues that bedevilled the country both before and after 1989 (Fyfe, 1990; Reno, 1995; Richards, 1996; Ojukutu-Macauley and Rashid, 2013; TRCSL Report, 2004, Volumes 1, 2 and 3a and b ;). These factors are presented in detail in the following sub-sections.

#### **3.1.1 Events from 1961 to March 1989**

On April 27, 1961 Sierra Leone became an independent state within the British Commonwealth (Ojukutu-Macauley and Rashid, 2013, p. 21). The first years of independence were prosperous. Mineral resources (iron ore and diamonds) brought in substantial revenue, which was used for development, particularly education. Christian denominations had opened several schools, which educated most Sierra Leoneans, whether Muslims, ATR adherents or Christians. Diamond mining had enriched Sierra

Leone since the 1930s, and these resources were used to promote quality education (Zack-Williams, in Thomas-Emeagwali, 1992, pp. 101 - 128). Education was at its highest point, and the country was regarded as the “Athens of West Africa” due to its role in educating people from other parts of West Africa at the Fourah Bay College.<sup>152</sup> Njala University College was founded in the early 1960s and joined in 1967 with Fourah Bay College to make up the University of Sierra Leone. Conditions began to deteriorate after Sierra Leone’s first prime minister and “father of the nation”, Sir Milton Margai, died in 1964, and he was, amidst controversies, succeeded by his brother, Sir Albert Margai.<sup>153</sup> Soon afterwards, Sierra Leone was bedevilled by a series of military coups, the first of which was led by Brigadier Lansana and Sam Hinga Norman because there was no clear winner in the 1967 general elections. Brigadier Juxon Smith led a counter-coup that overthrew Brigadier Lansana and then declared martial law. In 1968, junior and non-commissioned military officers mutinied and imprisoned their senior officers. They called Siaka Stevens, who had earlier been deposed by Brigadier Lansana’s coup, from exile in Guinea and reinstalled him as head of a civilian government (Keen, 2005, pp. 8 - 10ff; TRCSL report, 2004, volume 3a).

Upon his return to Sierra Leone, President Siaka Stevens created an atmosphere of political intolerance, mortgaged the country to foreign business interests, encouraged corruption and undermined the state machinery, (Bardal and Malone, 2000; Bates, 2008; 1997; Gberie, 2005; Richards, 2006 a & b; Keen, 2012). He moved quickly to make the country a republic in 1971 and installed himself as the first executive president. President Stevens undermined and wiped out the multi-party system, (Harris, 2013). In 1978, he imposed a one-party constitution and declared the APC the sole recognised party. The government of President Stevens regularly imposed states of emergency and executed political opponents (Fyfe, 62, 79, 81; Harris, 2013; TRC report, 2004, Volume 3a).<sup>154</sup> The frequent student protests and strikes during his reign are one indication of the growing public dissatisfaction, yet Stevens pronounced himself president for life. When he was too old and sick to rule, he retired in 1985 and handed power to the head of the military, Major General Joseph Saidu Momoh.

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<sup>152</sup> Fourah Bay College in Freetown, which is now part of the University of Sierra Leone, was established by the Church Missionary Society, UK.

<sup>153</sup> <http://search.eb.com/eb/topic?idxStructId=364551&typeId=13>. [Accessed 5 March 2007].

The period between 1985 and 1991 was marked by economic decline and political instability due to widespread corruption and bad governance, leading to state collapse. Major general J. S. Momoh admitted that he had failed the nation and declared a state of economic emergency (Harris, 2013, pp. 65, 68, 70, 79, 90). Following the civil war in neighbouring Liberia, a former corporal of the Sierra Leone army invaded the Country with his Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUFSL) rebels in 1991. The RUFSL wanted to overthrow the elected APC government at the time and they participated in increasing the violence by attacking soft targets and highways in Sierra Leone (Mitton, 2015, pp. 4, 5, 6, 11, 12 - 14, 16, 17, etc). The RUFSL was active in the entire country, employing tactics of guerrilla warfare, which grossly affected the movement of civilians and goods. Most of the RUFSL fighters were youths. In this light, Abdullah (1998), proposes that the war was constituted of youth riots which came about as a result of their exclusion from mainstream politics. The RUFSL, exploiting this situation, argued that the resources of the country were not evenly distributed and as such they were fighting to put an end to this situation and to improve the well-being of the entire citizenry (Elbadawi and Sambanis, 2000). However, the actions of the RUFSL were contrary to their claims as they also became involved in looting and participated in extreme violence which often targeted civilians (Harris, 2013; Keen, 2005).

As noted above, Major General J. S. Momoh emerged as the sole candidate in the 1985 presidential elections (Harris, 2013, p. 77). Widespread corruption continued, and economic decline accelerated under his rule (Fyfe, 1962, 1979, 1981; Koroma, 1996). In the fateful year of 1987, President Momoh declared a state of economic emergency and accepted that he had failed the nation. Before doing so however, the security of the diamond fields was left in the hands of non-governmental organisations. This is important because the country's economy depended heavily on the mining of diamonds. Since most of the country's budget was financed through diamonds and other minerals this led to major setbacks in governance as the APC government was not paying government workers their salaries in time, especially teachers, due to greed and grievance (Abraham, 2003; Bardal and Malone, 2000; Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner, 2009; Fearon, 2005; Lujala, Gledish, Gilmore 2005; Richards, 1996; Reno, 1995). This led to further instability in the country (United Nations Security Council, seventh report of the Secretary General on the United Nations observer mission in Sierra Leone/1999/836, July 30, 1999). Yet, President Momoh did not resign as Head of State.



Through all this, religious bodies had been kept silent and marginalised in politics. They were said to have nothing to do with politics, as Sierra Leonean politicians viewed their role as a “profane business” in the bid to marginalise morals and ethical behaviour in governance (Abraham, 2003; Moiba, 2005/ 2006). Thus, political failure, corruption and the marginalisation of religious morals and ethics in public affairs and governance were the prevailing circumstances from 1964 until 1989. The rebel forces of the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUFSL) would have a relatively easy task in mounting their insurgency because there was little resistance from the corrupt and weak state structures – including the army, which not only failed to stop the RUFSL but partly ended up joining them (Harris, 2013; Olonisakin, 2008; Gberie, 2005).

### **3.1.2 Events from April 1989 to 1997**

President Joseph Saidu Momoh appeared to keep a firm grip on power after Vice President Francis Minah was executed for treason in 1989. Minah was accused of treason and he was tried and executed, despite continuing to maintain his innocence. This helped Momoh retain power as he, through the execution of his Vice President, sent a wave of fear into the south-easterners, who were traditional opponents of the Momoh APC government, (Harris, 2013; Keen, 2005, p.14ff). In some ways, President Momoh could be regarded as a reformer because he responded to internal tensions, which had to do with south-easterners in the APC government pressing for a multi party constitution, and external pressure, by hurriedly re-introducing a multi-party constitution in September 1991. The gesture was ineffective however, appearing to be too little, too late, and/or was simply over-shadowed by the deterioration in the security situation because by 1991 the country had become ripe for the advent of one of modern history’s worst wars (Hirsch, 2001; Keen, 2005, p.34ff; Olonisakin, 2008).

In March 1991, former Army Corporal Foday Sankoh and his RUFSL began a military campaign against President Momoh, capturing towns on the border with Liberia (Keen, 2005, p. 9; Olonisakin, 2008). The RUFSL claimed that they wanted to unseat the APC government under President Momoh because of corruption, nepotism and misrule. Additionally, the APC government had become extremely unpopular by 1991, especially in the east and south, where the war began (Hirsch, 2001; Mitton, 2015).

From its seat in Freetown, Sierra Leone’s capital city, the APC government responded to the rebel attack in Bomaru village in the eastern district of Kailahun by dispatching the

army to resist and flush out the RUFSL rebels (Gberie, 2005; Harris, 2013). The government's army pursued the war until it became evident that the guerrilla tactics of the rebels were proving superior to the poorly trained and ill-equipped army officers and infantry, who failed to curtail and flush out the RUFSL fighters. Preparations for general elections were underway when in April 1992, Captain Valentine Esegbo Melvin Strasser and other disgruntled soldiers from the war front mutinied and deposed President Momoh. Momoh, failed to curtail the war and defeat the rebels and in 1992 coup plotters established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), which continued to pursue the war with the RUFSL. These soldiers from the war front took control of State House, the seat of the government in Freetown, created a cabinet and named its chairman, Captain Valentine E.M. Strasser, as Head of State. Strasser cited the failure of President Momoh's government to deal with the rebels as the main reason for the coup. Yet, after four years of military rule, the NPRC also failed to conclude the war, mainly due to divisions in the army and the continued marginalisation of religious leaders and their role in national development with regards to ethics, tolerance and moral behaviour while in governance. The NPRC Coup in April 1992, led by Captain Strasser as stated above, was also incapable of protecting rutile and diamond mining in the Bonth and Kono districts, respectively, both of which provided the country with much needed resources (Gberie, 2005; Hirsch, 2001; Keen, 2005; Olonisakin, 2008).

Strasser and his government based in Freetown continued to pursue the war with the RUFSL. In 1992, after many successful raids and battles throughout the entire country, the NPRC government successfully drove the rebels further back into eastern Sierra Leone. However, in 1993, the NPRC declared a unilateral cease-fire because they felt confident of their triumphant defeat of the RUFSL since the NPRC took power in 1992. This unilateral cease-fire allowed the rebels to regroup and launch fresh attacks on civilians. The RUFSL rebels re-took various towns and villages, even though the NPRC junta had hired a private military force from South Africa to help them pursue the war.<sup>155</sup> The religious leaders were woefully marginalised and their call for moderation went unheeded when the NPRC summarily executed 26 alleged coup plotters in December 1992. Four alleged mercenaries, said to be planning a coup, were detained in 1993. The situation deteriorated further in 1993 due to infighting within the NPRC

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<sup>155</sup> [http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/executive\\_outcomes.htm](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/executive_outcomes.htm). [Accessed November 2011].

because of the greed for power among the young soldiers. The coup and the infighting among the coup leaders raised fears that the country would be unable to maintain its relative stability in 1993.<sup>156</sup> More confusion set in as Strasser dismissed Lt. Solomon Musa from the position of Vice Chairman and Head of Government on the 5<sup>th</sup> July, 1993 for, according to rumours, using repressive measures to deal with civil servants and for harbouring ambitions to become Head of State. Lt. Musa sought refuge in the Nigerian embassy in Freetown and was later granted asylum in Britain. He was replaced by Lt. Julius Maada Bio as Vice Chairman and Defence Minister in the NPRC government. Bio was also a member of the Supreme Council of State, (Harris, 2013; Olonisakin, 2008).<sup>157</sup> The Sierra Rutile titanium mines, which provided more than 50% of the country's foreign exchange earnings and were also the country's largest private sector employer, fell to the rebels in 1995 (Keen, 2005, p. 54; Olonisakin, 2008), and the diamond-rich Kono and Tongo areas were also taken in 1995, (Olonisakin, 2008, p. 15).<sup>158</sup> Furthermore, Strasser was overthrown in a palace coup in 1996, which was led by Captain Julius Maada Bio. Bio conducted general and presidential elections a few months after he seized power in a bloodless palace coup and handed over the country to a former UN civil servant, Alhaji Dr Amad Tejan Kabbah of the SLPP who was declared winner of the 1996 elections in the midst of controversy (Hirsch, 2001; Keen, 2005; Olonisakin, 2008).

Tejan Kabbah's election was full of controversy as the opponent, Dr Kerefa Smart, claimed that the elections were rigged and that James Jonah, the then National Electoral Commissioner, a friend of Kabbah, had favoured his former colleague at the UN and for political appointment in Kabbah's government. James Jonah was indeed appointed as a minister after Kabbah took power in 1996 (Gberie, 2005; Hirsch, 2001; Keen, 2005; Olonisakin, 2008).

Kwame Nkrumah argued that it is not the duty of the military to rule or govern because the military has no political mandate. Furthermore, when he was overthrown in a military coup on the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 1966, he stated that if the military takes power, it

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<sup>156</sup> "Sierra Leone." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2007. Encyclopædia Britannica Online <<http://search.eb.com/eb/article-55344>. [Accessed 5 Mar 2007].

<sup>157</sup> <http://standardtimespress.org/?p=86>. [Accessed 10 October 2011].

<sup>158</sup> I observed these events in 1992 through 1999, when I worked as a Methodist Minister and regional supervisor for peace and civic education in eastern Sierra Leone.

must immediately hand over power to a civilian government with a political mandate. It was against this background that, under intense local and international pressure, Strasser, before being overthrown by a palace coup, announced plans for the first multiparty elections since 1967. However, there were controversies about his age and ability to stand in presidential elections. Julius Maada Bio deposed Strasser on the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, 1996, and subsequently conducted multiparty elections. He handed over power to President Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who was elected president in February 1996, but Bio handed power over to him on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March 1996 (Gberie 2005; Hirsch, 2001; Keen. 2005; Olonisakin 2008).

Following his inauguration as president in 1996, Alhaji Dr Amad Tejan Kabbah signed a peace accord with the RUFSL rebels in 1996 in Abidjan, known as the Abidjan Peace Accord. The role of religious leaders became more visible during this period, as they helped facilitate the entire process through the IRC SL (Turay, 2005; Olonisakin, 2008).

Charles Taylor, the leader of the rebel force, the National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL), and later president of the Republic of Liberia, systematically supported the RUFSL, which helped Taylor's forces to vandalise and loot diamonds from Sierra Leone (Olonisakin, 2008: 10ff). The argument is often presented that the RUFSL essentially granted a de facto invitation to Charles Taylor's NPFL to invade the country, in defiance of legal norms usually governing relations between sovereign states and other entities, in retaliation against Sierra Leone for providing an operational base for the West African peacekeeping force, called the Economic Community Military Observer Group (ECOMOG) (Olonisakin, 2008, p. 11; Doxtader and Villa-Vicencio, 2003, p. 39).

The RUFSL continued the war by destroying lives and property throughout Sierra Leone, employing guerrilla tactics to attack mostly civilian vehicles on highways all over the country. Thus the Abidjan Peace Accord did not hold, and Kabbah's SLPP government was itself overthrown by junior army officers on May 25, 1997<sup>159</sup>, (Keen, 2005, p. 1ff; Olonisakin, 2008). The coup began with the storming of the capital's highest security prison and the release of 600 prisoners, many of them dissident soldiers. The dissidents declared themselves the Armed Forces Revolution Council (AFRC), led by Sgt. Alfred Abu Sankoh (alias "Zagollo"), who declared an immediate

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<sup>159</sup> See Appendix 10 of this thesis.

unilateral cease-fire, (Olonisakin, 2008, p. 136). Sankoh invited the RUFSL, now based in Kailahun in the eastern part of the country, to join his *junta*, based in Freetown, to form a government, an invitation that RUFSL accepted coming out to major cities in Sierra Leone including Freetown.<sup>160</sup> This AFRC-staged coup was condemned by the entire civilian population as well as the international community.<sup>161</sup> Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who had been in Pademba Road Prison, was released by the AFRC plotters, and he declared himself Head of State and announced the abolition of the constitution and a ban on political parties (Keen, 2005, p. 1ff; Olonisakin 2008, pp. 4, 21, 22, 39, 55, 56, 69n5, 123, 138). However the West Side Boys, as they were called, did not support Koroma as head of the AFRC. They regrouped in the Okra Hills outside Freetown until they captured a British soldier who was on regular patrol. The British force in Freetown mounted an operation that saw the release of their captured soldier. By this time, UNAMSIL was now fully active in Sierra Leone and engaged the rebels (Keen, 2005, pp. 240, 243, 254, 259, 261 - 7; Olonisakin, 2008). These events signalled the end of the war.<sup>162</sup>

### **3.1.3 Events from 1998 to 2002: The End of the War**

The process of ending the war lasted about four years. Many peace agreements were signed and violated until the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord and eventually the Abuja Peace Agreement. In 1998, the AFRC/RUFSL government, which was under severe pressure from both the citizens of Sierra Leone and the international community to hand power back to the deposed president who had fled to neighbouring Guinea, could not maintain stability in the country, and was faced with several international sanctions. The AFRC/RUFSL-led government was declared by the international community to be an illegal government, and was given an ultimatum to hand power back to the SLPP government led by Alhaji Dr Amad Tejan Kabbah, which it refused (Olonisakin, 2008, p. 21). Despite sanctions from the UN and other governments, the AFRC/ RUFSL government and its allies continued to commit untold atrocities against civilians until they were removed from power by the Nigerian-led ECOMOG forces and

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<sup>160</sup> See Appendix 10 of this thesis.

<sup>161</sup> See Appendix 10 of this thesis.

<sup>162</sup> Sierra Leone." Encyclopædia Britannica. 2007. Encyclopædia Britannica Online. <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-55344>. [Accessed 5 March. 200].

the British Army, thereby returning to power the Kabbah-led SLPP government from Conakry in Guinea to Freetown in 1999 (Harris, 2013; Kumar, 2010; Olonisakin, 2008).

Upon the return to power of the SLPP-led government of Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah the AFRC and the RUFSL, now under the control of Major Johny Paul Koroma and the notorious RUFSL commander Joseph Sam Bockarie (alias “Mosquito”), continued their military tactics of guerrilla warfare from the bushes and forests in Sierra Leone. The RUFSL was based in the Kailahun district, whereas the former AFRC soldiers re-grouped, called themselves the West Side Boys and continued the war from the Okra Hills, north of Freetown (Harris, 2013; Hirsch, 2001).

Due to efforts by the United Nations, West African nations, religious bodies<sup>163</sup> and the general citizenry, there was a peace agreement signed in 1999. Vice President Solomon Berewa led the government delegation to the Lomé peace talks in 1999. According to media reports in Sierra Leone, the talks were successful. President Kabbah signed the Lomé Peace Accord with the RUFSL. The Lomé Peace Accord was signed in May 1999 between the RUFSL and President Kabbah following the peace talks in Lomé, the capital of Togo, and it was a major step towards bringing the war to an end. The ceasefire was greeted with cautious optimism throughout Sierra Leone (Keen, 2005, pp. 7, 66n19, 230, 249, 251 - 266).

In November 1999, UN peacekeeping troops arrived in Sierra Leone to police the peace agreement, but the RUFSL attacked and abducted 50 peacekeepers, and later several hundreds more.<sup>164</sup> In March 2000, UN troops began to peacefully deploy for the first time in rebel-held areas, followed later by the British-trained Sierra Leone Army in the same areas. From 2000 onwards, the United Nations and the government of Sierra Leone demobilised, disarmed and reintegrated around 45,000 ex-fighters. Tens of thousands of refugees returned from Liberia and Guinea, and hundreds of thousands of internally displaced persons resettled in their communities (Kumar, 2010; Olonisakin, 2008). The standoff continued and worsened when in May 2000 the RUFSL closed in on Freetown. However, the situation was salvaged when about 800 British paratroopers were sent to Freetown to evacuate British citizens and help secure the airport for UN peacekeepers. The people of Sierra Leone rejoiced when the news broke that the rebel

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<sup>163</sup> See Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven of this thesis.

<sup>164</sup> TRCSL report , 2004, volume 3a.

leader Foday Sankoh had been arrested in Nigeria and would be brought to Freetown. However, in August 2000, 11 British soldiers were taken hostage by the renegade rebel militia group the West Side Boys, who were hiding in the Okra Hills outside Freetown, terrorising the civilian traffic between Freetown and the rest of the country. In September 2000, the British forces mounted Operation Barras to rescue the remaining UK hostages held by the West Side Boys, freeing hundreds of captives and completely destroying the rebel bases behind the River Rokel. This weakened the RUFSL/AFRC forces and signalled the end of the war, as religious leaders continued to press for peace (Keen, 2005, pp. 4, 222, 229, 230, 232-5).<sup>165</sup>

Religious leaders, through the World Council of Religion for Peace (WCRP), raised funds, and took contact with all the factions and negotiated peace. These efforts turned out to be fruitful when the government of President Kabbah and the RUFSL/AFRC agreed to a cease-fire, after the British soldiers captured the RUFSL/AFRC/West Side Boys and pushed them further out. A two-pronged approach was used to end the war: a diplomatic/dialogue approach, including faith-based diplomacy; and a military approach led by UN forces and allies, especially the British and Nigerian forces, who defeated the notorious West Side Boys.<sup>166</sup> In the end, it was the UN, with backing from a British and Nigerian military intervention that restored the elected government of President Amad Tejan Kabbah, elected in 1996, who had fled to neighbouring Guinea because of the AFRC coup in 1997 (Gberie, 2005; Olonisakin, 2008).

The war came to an end in 2002 after a combination of the methods of faith-based diplomacy by the CCSL and IRCSL, supported by AACC, Norwegian Church AID, WCRP, ECOWAS and the UN, and military campaigns championed by British forces and the UN, ECOMOG and other ATR defence forces, such as the Tamaboros, Kamajors, and Gbintiis. These efforts forced the RUFSL and its allies to sign a peace accord in Lomé, but the RUFSL did not declare the end of the war until late 2001. This was then followed by a process of disarmament through a demobilisation, decentralisation and rehabilitation (DDR) programme and other transitional justice systems (Kumar, 2010; Olonisakin, 2008).

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<sup>165</sup> TRCSL report, 2004, volume 3a.

<sup>166</sup> TRCSL report, 2004, volume 3a.

After the war ended, a South African-style Truth and Reconciliation Commission was set up to investigate the causes of the war (Olonisakin, 2008, pp.120, 132n37, 139). It made a number of recommendations, while the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) tried the persons who bore the greatest responsibility for war crimes (Olonisakin, 2008, pp. 40, 78, 114, 118 - 121, 132n34, 132n39, 139 - 140). The UN backed the government of President Kabbah in the setting up of the SCSL. The most high-profile of the indicted included: President Charles Taylor of Liberia, who was found guilty and sentenced to 50 years in prison with hard labour; Corporal Foday S. Sankoh, who died in custody; Sam Hinga Norman, who died in prison during his appeal in 2007; and Major Johnny Paul Koroma, who escaped just as he was about to be arrested. No one knows his current whereabouts. Thus, after 11 years of violent atrocities, the failure of successive Heads of State and the involvement of foreign troops and mercenaries, the war ended with support from ECOMOG, the UN and British troops. Civil militias (CDF) from the ATR were instrumental in the recapture of Freetown and other important locations from the RUFSL and AFRC allies (Olonisakin, 2008).

During the war, thousands of Sierra Leoneans were killed and tens of thousands became refugees. It is generally accepted that the number of war casualties cannot be known with any certainty. However, it is estimated that over 70,000 people lost their lives and several hundred thousand more were displaced, maimed, amputated or rendered incapacitated by the brutal tactics of the fighting forces, which included the army, the RUFSL, the Civil Defence Forces (CDF) <sup>167</sup> and Charles Taylor's rebel forces from neighbouring Liberia. The entire infrastructure of the country collapsed (Gberie 2005; Hirsch 2001; Kumar 2010; Olonisakin 2008), and the entire population experienced untold atrocities as described below (Keen, 2005, pp. 230 - 35).

### **3.2 Atrocities Committed Against Civilians from 1989 to 2002**

As mentioned above, the year 1989 saw the signing of the death sentence by the Supreme Court and the president's approval of the execution of Vice President Francis Mishek Minah of Sierra Leone, who was accused of committing treason. He was eventually killed by hanging (Fithen, 1999, p. 158; Keen, 2005, p. 33). The players involved in carrying out the physical violence that took place in Sierra Leone committed untold atrocities against civilians and political opponents in several ways, including the

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<sup>167</sup> See Chapter One of this thesis



creation of terror in the minds of civilians through political reprisals like treason as well as amputations (Mitton, 2015, pp. 31 - 2, 57, 127 - 41, 173 - 4). It can be said that, given the RUFSL's atrocities committed against civilians, they were probably one of the most brutal, disorganised and chaotic rebel groups in West Africa (Keen, 2005: 2 - 5, 36, 39 - 45, 57, 60, 76 - 80, 128, 154, 219, 227, 230 - 5, 291 - 5, 299; Kumar, 2010). The RUFSL fighters – under Morris Kallon, Gabriel Massaquoi, Sam Bockarie, Augustine Gbao and their leaders and supporters, including Foday Sankoh and Charles Taylor, the former Liberian president – maimed the hands of civilians, killed innocent children, carried out rape and murder and seized the property of ordinary citizens as war tactics (Kumar, 2010; TRC Report, Volume 3a).

The war machinery and activities of the RUFSL can be called terrorism, even though some scholars have given a rational explanation to the violence in Sierra Leone (Mitton, 2015, pp. 59 - 111). The RUFSL fighters terrorised ordinary and innocent civilians by attacking highways, vehicles, villages and towns and often setting houses and vehicles on fire as a further measure of instilling fear among the civilians. The RUFSL also recruited/conscripted children, drugging them with heroin, cocaine, marijuana and other hard drugs, and instructing them to carry out untold crimes against civilians. The result of these RUFSL atrocities was the displacement of Sierra Leoneans within and without the country. Thousands of Sierra Leoneans became not only internally displaced but refugees in neighbouring countries, or in the case of the few lucky ones, in the UK or other parts of Europe and the US. A population of traumatised people was created in the sub region (Abramowitz, 2014; Gberie, 2005; Keen, 2005).

The terrorist tactics of the RUFSL were sometimes used not only by the army, but also by the NPRC and particularly the AFRC, as well as the ECOMOG soldiers. I was, for example, arrested by the ECOMOG soldiers in January 1999, together with staff of the International Committee of the Red Cross, and was brutally and violently manhandled. The use of violence by all factions in the war caused a whole nation to be traumatised, and the effects of this can still be seen on women, men, young people and children in the country (Mitton, 2014, pp. 3 - 6, 9, 11, 21, 33-34, 46, 62, 113, 127 - 41, 167, 190ff; interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

Religious bodies, especially Christian churches, had trauma-healing programs for war-affected civilians in Sierra Leone. These included MCSL trauma healing programmes and similar programmes provided by Caritas (a Catholic relief, development and social service organisation) and others (Abramowitz, 2014, pp. 24, 27, 26, 37, 40 - 41, 98 - 99, 87 - 88, 123, 163 - 64, 24 - 25). Though religion was largely marginalised in politics before and during the war (Keen, 2005 pp. 61 - 62), the religious leaders and organisations, including the CCSL, IRC SL, CARITAS, ADRA, MCSL, and Bishop Humper's TRCSL, were visible in providing leadership, advocating peace and offering relief and various forms of healing programmes. There was also the moral support provided by the special court, in which the ATR fighters and leaders of the AFRC and RUFSL were tried.<sup>169</sup> The centrality of ATR combatants serving in the specialised secret society specialised forces of Kamajors, Kapras, Gbintiis and the role of Christian leaders, churches, ecumenical bodies and Tamaboros was paramount in many ways.

### **3.3 The Role of Religion during the War in Sierra Leone: 1989 to 2002**

As a way of avoiding repetition, the main evidence for this sub-section will be presented in Chapters Four through Eight in this thesis. The purpose of this section is therefore to make some general statements based on personal experience and a small amount of work I performed at the University of Oslo in 2005/2006 on the following topics: *Conflict and Peace in Sierra Leone: The Role of the Council of Churches and the Inter Religious Council Sierra Leone* (2005); and *The Potential of Religion To Foster Peace: A Sierra Leonean Perspective* (2006).

Sierra Leone is a secular nation where religious freedoms are guaranteed by the constitution. However, the positive role of religion and religious tolerance was neglected in politics, especially before the war (See 1991 Constitution of Sierra Leone in TRCSL Report, volume 3a). The religious bodies were reactive during the war, an action that can be characterised as peacemaking, as defined in Chapter One of this thesis, especially since they are tolerant in religious and social matters. The politicians said, or requested the nation to say, Christian and Muslim prayers for peace. Many of the combatants employed talismans and performed sacrifices, ceremonies and other traditional religious practices that were believed to possess powers that could protect them from bullets or keep them out of harm's way,<sup>170</sup> especially on the battlefield

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<sup>169</sup> See Appendix 6 of this thesis.

(Kandeh, 1992a and b, 1996; Moiba, 2005/ 2006). The pro-government civil militia from ATR forces, first the Tamaboros and later the Kamajors, were known for openly displaying talismans, speaking about their powers and observing sophisticated taboos. The traditional Tamaboro fighters, who joined in the struggle for peace, were a small group of Kuranko African traditional priests and hunters from the Koinadugu district in Sierra Leone. The other group of ATR fighters were the Kamajors from the southern and eastern parts of Sierra Leone. The numerical strength of the Kamajors reached tens of thousands of traditional African hunters and priests. They were mostly young men from the rural communities which had been destroyed by rebels, who volunteered to be initiated by traditional priests. The Kamajors, who were loyal to Deputy Defence Minister Sam Hinga Norman, rescued their communities from RUFSL/AFRC rebels and helped ECOMOG restore the elected government of President Kabbah in 1999 (Keen, 2005, pp. 15, 19 - 20, 24, 136, 137).

The fact that most Sierra Leonean families have both Christian and Muslim members points to the amazing religious tolerance enjoyed in Sierra Leone, in which both Muslims and Christians were commonly informed by the peacemaking practices<sup>171</sup> of the African traditional religions, as represented by the Tamaboros, Kamajors, Gbintiis, Donsos and others (Keen, 2005, pp. 90 - 91, 95, 113, 129, 132, 139 - 140; TRC Report, 2004 volume 3a). Additionally, at the macro level, the leaders of the CCSL, the IRCSL, the MCSL and other churches formally or informally developed the confidence needed to promote peace, and they were able to work together on peace initiatives, missions and negotiations (interview with Alhaji Dr. Mohammed Tunis, July 2007). The religious bodies in Sierra Leone engaged in faith-based diplomacy by working with their counterparts in neighbouring countries, who in turn met with Charles Taylor, president of Liberia, to help end the war (interview with Mr. Kemoore Salia, April 2006). The peacemaking activities of Christian leaders and organisations, and especially individuals within them, were influenced by the role of ATR in peacemaking.

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<sup>170</sup> More details of this will be presented in the sub-section on ATR in sub-section 3.4ff of this chapter.

<sup>171</sup> Supportive evidence and references on these points are presented in detail in Chapter Six of this thesis.

### 3.4 The Role of African Traditional Religion in Peacemaking

As mentioned earlier, there are three main religions in Sierra Leone. However, Christian and Muslim adherents are mainly united by their membership in ATR, primarily as individuals. Secret societies, like Poro, Wunday, Gbangbani, Gbogii, Bondo, Sande and others, unite the grass-roots people (Fanthorpe, 2007; conversations with Revd. Koroma, June 2011). In addition to the role played by Muslims and Christians in the peacemaking efforts in Sierra Leone, I am particularly interested in the unique role of ATR in influencing both Christian and Muslim peacemakers during and after the war. According to Pastor Gbla:

Traditional and religious leaders had meeting together and negotiated with the RUF rebels for peace though they did not have external support to engage in relief, take a peaceful option the traditional leaders had started the CDF, though they might not be solely characterised as religion, they had political connections with the SLPP government at the time, which was a splinter group from the RUF due to leadership struggle in Mongaray where Hinga Norman lost to Foday. Supporters of Norman, the Kamajors, joined the government instead and resisted the RUF. They were really known to one another, Kamajors on the other hand claimed that they had their powers given to them depending entirely on the traditional sorcerer. They used juju, they used traditional herbs to arm themselves and protect themselves, got from dreams, herbs and which could save the fighters from AK47s. The traditional leaders actually participated in persuading the rebels since they had part of their powers from traditional beliefs which made them convincing regarding their appeal for peace (interview with Pastor Gbla, July 2007).<sup>172</sup>

Gbla, in the above statement, narrates the role of the Kamajors and other ATR fighters under the umbrella of what was referred to as the Civil Defence Force (CDF) in the war and peace process. The *Kamajors*, *Tamaboros* and other traditional fighters, considered in this thesis as part of ATR/ secret societies specialised arms, did not only use negotiation to bring about peace, but also took up arms to defend themselves, often with the use of traditional herbs and Islamic talismans made by Muslim sophists. There were also other groups involved in ATR. These will be presented later, as we discuss the concept of peace according to ATR.

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<sup>172</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

### **3.4.1 The Role of African Traditional Religion as a Common Factor among the Warring Factions, and among the Church Members trying to bring about Peace**

As observed in the events that unfolded in Sierra Leone before, during and after the war, most of the main participants and their religious adherents were members of the ATR secret societies, who emphasised bringing all the warring factions together to make peace. John Mbiti makes the point that while Christianity and Islam have impacted Africa, ATR is still very present, mainly in the background of these other religions, generating an on-going and sometimes silent dialogue with them (Mbiti, 2010; Olupona, 2014). There are many Christians and Muslims who are members of, for example, the Poro and the Wunday secret societies, and who were also active peacekeepers and peacemakers (Fanthorpe, 2007). The Christian leaders presented in this thesis, according to my observations, were either members of the secret societies in Sierra Leone or sympathetic to them. For example, the Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, Alhaji Dr. Mohamed Tunis, Revd. Moses Khanu, the Rt. Revd. Bishop Humper and Mr. Alimamy Koroma, among others, are no exception to this, and they were also active peacemakers.<sup>173</sup> Members of the secret societies in Sierra Leone are expected not only to be loyal to the secret society in terms of peace-making and working for unity, but are also expected to meet up in the secret society's meeting areas when called upon to do so, especially when important decisions are to be made (Idowu, 1962; Little, 1965).

In the case of the election of a chieftain, for example the Dambala Chiefdom in the Bo district, the Wunday secret society or medicine was instrumental in the decision process, particularly when there was a fracas between the candidates. The Revd. Bob Kandeh was a candidate for the Paramount Chief (PC) position in the chiefdom, but there was a misunderstanding between him and the individual who was eventually elected as Paramount Chief of Selenga Chiefdom, Bo District. This was because, while the election was proceeding, Revd. Bob Kandeh reacted by physically assaulting his opponent. The Wunday society was immediately summoned, and all its members met there to make peace. However, since Revd. Kandeh was not a Wunday secret society member, he could not enter the Wunday meeting place. The Wunday society meeting led to the election of the current PC in the Chiefdom, because the society has the power to make decisions in the interest of peace (conversations with P. C. Desmond Kargobai,

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<sup>173</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis.

August 2011). In fact, when asked whether ATR is taking over Islam and Christianity, Pastor Gbla maintained:

Yes, definitely when you look at it in depth it's that, but overtly no [laughs] because when people want power they go to the traditional leader and then they perform all the rites to get what they want. Any power struggle in Africa, everywhere even in Sierra Leone in addition to that, the peacemaking role of religion was also probably taken traditionally. The Christian leaders said that we cannot make peace only using Christianity and Islam you will fail because there is that powerful secret tradition. So when they were added, they were able to persuade their other practitioners about the need for peace rather than violence (interview with Pastor Gbla, July 2007).<sup>174</sup>

There are also many examples in which those who were recruited to make peace, such as those in the specialised secret society arms of Kamajor, Gbintii, Tamaboro, Kapra, Donso, were expected to be members of one or another of the main secret societies of Poro, Wunday, Gbogii, Worjeh, Hunting etc; otherwise, they were not trusted to make peace. Peacemaking in ATR is like a covenant (Idowu, 1962). The peacemaking and decision-making of the societies cannot be differentiated. Even the members of the various warring factions who were summoned by the secret societies had to honour the invitation to make decisions and finally allow peace to prevail, which they could not violate for fear of severe punishment. When that failed, the various societies equipped themselves to take up arms and fight the rebels.

As far as my own observations warrant, the secret societies preached the idea of unity, and this was particularly useful in the struggle for peace. In Sierra Leone, there were many initiations, particularly of young boys and girls, into the Poro, Wunday and Bondo, and these were a force to be reckoned with in peacemaking. The young boys were initiated and challenged to obey the dictates of the secret societies for peace and unity. The young girls were also initiated in the Bondo society as agents of peace and unity among women. It is difficult to find a Paramount Chief in Sierra Leone who does not belong to one of Sierra Leone's secret societies, or who does not believe in the societies' dictates of unity and peace. These societies were not only peacemaking instruments, but also places to settle disputes, as indicated in the Dambala example stated above. There were many such gatherings which, according to many insiders, were very effective in the final pursuit of peace and unity in Sierra Leone.

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<sup>174</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

Seen as schools, these secret societies not only inform Christians and Muslims, but also teach young boys and girls to be loyal to their community, to fight for their community and to maintain law and order in their community (Little, 1965). This is enacted through covenants, poems, rituals, but also as prayers (Mbiti, 1975), and with some militancy whereby young initiates can fight to defend the peace and unity dictated by the secret society.<sup>175</sup> In return, these young initiates take oaths and make promises that they will always abide by the dictates of the secret societies for the maintenance of peace and unity in their various environments (Idowu, 1975).

This kind of peace and unity education proved very fruitful in the peacemaking efforts carried out by both Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone. In fact, it was only members of these societies that were given the opportunity to engage in the struggle for peace, through dialogue, prayers (Shorter, 1975), reconciliation (Shenk, 1983) or the use of force, when a peacemaking meeting was called. Both Christians and Muslims, according to my observations and confirmed by interviewees during the empirical studies, took an active part in Sierra Leonean secret societies, before, during and after the war. These societies were also used as mechanisms of community defence.

### **3.4.2 African Traditional Religion as a Mechanism of Community Defence in Sierra Leone**

In a focus group interview in Freetown, Jalloh<sup>176</sup> and other interviews, it was maintained that ATR, unlike Christians and Muslims, provided a mechanism of community defence, whereby the Kamajors protected the Southern Province and Kenema and Kailahun Districts, the Donsos protected parts of the Eastern Province, especially the Kono District and the Tamaboros protected their own regions in the Northern Province. These groups all believed in adhering to traditional practices by protecting themselves through the use of local “medicines”. (interview with Muloma Jalloh, July, 2007).<sup>177</sup> Furthermore, observing the situation in these regions reconfirmed my thinking that the influence of the ATR groups was very pervasive, not only through the use of militancy but also through the use of proverbs and songs for peace (Stan,

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<sup>175</sup> Participant observation, in 1985 at our initiation ceremony at Batiama Village as well as during the war years.

<sup>176</sup> Jalloh was a female student of Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone and a Muslim by religion. She was interviewed in a focus group interview.

<sup>177</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

1996). No one is expected to disobey the dictates of the Poro and the Wunday in peacemaking for example, or in working to unite the people (Little, 1965). Initiates and members were thus expected to defend their various territories from the rebels. According to Umaro Koroma:

This is something that would not be easily said. Because we are not actually informed as Sierra Leoneans as what people refer to as traditional religion. Putting it into perspective I want to say that the role played by the Sierra Leone militia, the local militias in this country very much to our traditional religious practices that is the formation of the CDF movement- the Kamajors which later became known as the CDF. The beginnings of this movement actually could be traced to traditional practices. For instance to start with the Kamajors in the east and the south, they relied heavily on their societies- their traditional society. The traditional society is a kind of religion to our people in the provinces. They initiated people and they have beliefs and practices they held on to very strongly. Like for instance, once you are a member of the Kamajors Society and you believe in what the Kamajors were doing you like being invincible to bullets and any other forms of attacks from the enemy. This was the same spirit that was among the Gbintiis in the north, particularly in Port Loko. The Tamaboroh in Kabala, the Donsos in Kono etc., they all came together later and they were organised in what they called the Civil Defence Forces. And this group was very much instrumental in bringing this war to an end (interview with Umaro Koroma, July 2007).<sup>178</sup>

Though Koroma might be construed as contradicting himself in the above statement, the point is still made that the issue is a complex one, especially when one is expected not to speak about the details of happenings in secret society forests. However, the societies were not only a mechanism of community defence in Sierra Leone, but also functioned at spiritual or mystical levels, and to this I now turn.

### **3.4.3 African Traditional Religion as Spiritual Protection during the War**

The traditional fighters protected themselves and their villages in response to war and rebels who burnt their houses and looted their property, and perceived ATR as providing spiritual protection as they pursued the war. According to Janneh:

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<sup>178</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.



Well, the other groups which they also formed were the Kapras and the Gbintii which were also used to pursue this war. The traditional groups also helped to find other solutions for the war to come to an end so that everybody could return to their various areas (interview with Janneh, July 2007).<sup>179</sup>

Though the marginalisation of ATR in Nigeria is often reported and commented on by scholars (Beyer, 2003, p. 27; Olupona, 2014), the situation in Sierra Leone is different. Those who want to vie for positions of trust in Sierra Leonean societies or communities are not easily accepted if they are not members of any of the secret societies, such as the Poro, Wunday, Sande, Bondo, Gbogii and others. However, Christians and Muslims dominate the religious atmosphere in the country, though ATR still has some underlying influence on both Christians and Muslims in the practice of their religion. During the peace negotiations in Lomé in 1999, which were attended by Christian and Muslim leaders, it was when negotiation seemed to be impossible that those present reminded each other about their traditional African concepts of atonement and peace - a spiritual bond that unites people and dictates peace, even if it is negative peace (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>180</sup> This kind of negative peace can be seen in Sierra Leone, as demonstrated in the post-conflict ethnic and political situation in Sierra Leone.

### **3.5 Post-Conflict Ethnic and Political Situation in Sierra Leone**

In January 2002, President Kabbah declared that the 11-year-old civil conflict was over. After this, many peace efforts were undertaken, though they have not yet achieved positive peace. The efforts undertaken were expanded, as described by Revd. Moses Khanu:

So after the war ended in 2002, the government passed an act which legalised the TRC. And the TRC actually started about the end of 2002 [and the beginning of] 2003. It accomplished its activities and produced four-volume report[s]. Also the special court was established, you know to try those who committed the greatest atrocities against humanity. And a number of activities were also conducted in terms of workshops, sensitisations, explaining the Lomé Peace Accord to people, to the community. First of all it went through parliament which ratified it and then a number of organisations replicated and went into various

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<sup>179</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>180</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

communities to share the spirit of the Lomé peace agreement. A number of other activities were conducted to keep the peace (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July, 2007).<sup>181</sup>

According to my observations however, the post-conflict political and ethnic situation in Sierra Leone remained unchanged from what it was before the conflict. This included the existence of marginalisation of ethics and religious morals in the behaviour of politicians, nepotism, sectionalism and extreme poverty and weak state organs. These factors that led to the war were still prevalent in Sierra Leone after the war (Kumar, 2010). The main exception was that the TRCSL and the SCSL managed their mandate well, to the satisfaction of the majority of Sierra Leoneans and the international community (Pratt, 2007). However, as presented in detail in Chapter 7 of this thesis,<sup>182</sup> the findings and recommendations of these bodies, except for the Special Court, seem not to have been implemented at the time of this writing.

Sierra Leone is one of the poorest countries in the world,<sup>183</sup> ranking 180 out of 187 countries on the Human Development Index.<sup>184</sup> The World Bank estimates that about 70% of the population lives on less than \$1.25 a day,<sup>185</sup> that life expectancy is 47 years and that GNI per capita is \$340.<sup>186</sup> UNICEF data shows that Sierra Leone suffers the highest maternal mortality,<sup>187</sup> infant mortality,<sup>188</sup> low birth weight (10%), and under-five mortality<sup>189</sup> rates in the world.<sup>190</sup> The most recent demographic and health survey estimates that one out of every four deaths of women of child-bearing age occurs due to maternal health problems and that one out of every 11 children born in Sierra Leone

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<sup>181</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>182</sup> See Appendix 5 of this thesis.

<sup>183</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/general-john-holmes-is-battling-to-rebuild-sierra-leone-15-years-after-a-daring-rescue-10493171.html>. [Accessed 16 September 2015].

<sup>184</sup> UNDP, 2011.

<sup>185</sup> World Bank, 2007.

<sup>186</sup> World Bank, 2010.

<sup>187</sup> 857 per 100,000 live births.

<sup>188</sup> 128 per 1,000 live births.

<sup>189</sup> 217 per 1,000 live births.

<sup>190</sup> UNICEF, 2011.

dies before their fifth birthday.<sup>191</sup> Over 70% of women believe that it is justifiable for husbands to beat their wives,<sup>192</sup> buttressing the high prevalence of domestic violence and other forms of sexual and gender-based violence in the country. Women are subjected to female genital mutilation (FGM) (Fanthorpe, 2007), and other harmful traditional practices, early marriage and other forms of gender-discriminatory beliefs and practices. Sixty-five percent of farmers are women, who mainly work as unpaid labourers,<sup>193</sup> having no secure access to farmland, and only about 5% of female farmers have access to extensions or land for farming.<sup>194</sup>

Corruption continues to take place, as do political intolerance and, most painfully, tribalism and nepotism, which bedevilled the country well before the war (Harris, 2013). However, since 2002, Sierra Leone has been able to conduct at least three elections. The first two elections (1996 and 2002) were won by the SLPP and its presidential candidate Alhaji Dr. Amad Tejan Kabbah, who governed first from 1996 to 2002, then again from 2002 to 2007. In 2007, the other political party, the APC, won the elections under the leadership of Mr. Ernest Bai Koroma, a former insurance broker. The APC ruled during the years when it was expected that the recommendations of the TRCSL would be implemented in full. However, according to my observations, this has not yet been achieved (Harris, 2013).

The ethnic and political situation in Sierra Leone has not changed drastically compared with the period before the war, and people still vote according to region and tribe (Kandeh, 1992a). In the 2007 elections, the majority of the people in the south and east of the country voted for the SLPP, whereas people in the north and parts of the west voted for the APC. Ethnicity is still a major factor in Sierra Leone as well. The northern part of the country voted for the current president, Ernest Bai Koroma, who hails from that region, and the southern and the eastern parts of the country voted for the candidates of the SLPP and the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), Solomon Berewa and Charles Margai respectively, who represented those zones (Harris, 2013, pp. 121 - 123).<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> USAID, WHO funded.

<sup>192</sup> UNICEF, 2011.

<sup>193</sup> Statistics Sierra Leone, 2004.

<sup>194</sup> FAO, 2007.

At the time of writing, the nation's economy is one of the worst in the world, with massive unemployment, poor wages and salaries for the minority in employment and high inflation rates in the prices of essential goods and services. Foreign investment in the country is not adequate enough to restore the national economy to a standard that will improve the lives of Sierra Leoneans, and the government's revenue collection is not enough to run the affairs of the state. Consequently, the government is to a large extent dependent on donors. The war has left Sierra Leoneans with a heightened awareness of the country's situation, and they cannot pretend not to see it. It can be argued that the war divided Sierra Leoneans, while the politicians who created the pitfalls that culminated in war have not been wise enough to see how they can best narrow the gap. As a result of the war, there have been allegations and counter-allegations of corruption at the local, regional and national levels. Politicians have not made adequate use of the enormous religious respect that the faith-based institutions and religious leaders enjoy in Sierra Leone. In this regard, the Revd. Moses Khanu states:

Everybody respects religious leaders except if a religious leader says he does not want to be respected. These are people who occupy very prominent and key positions in society. They are supposed to be the conscience of the people. They are the pact makers of the community. People respect them and one would believe that because of the present situation, they would have been a little bit more proactive in terms of narrowing some of the divide that had been created (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007) <sup>196</sup>

The general population continues to experience widespread deprivation and poverty, with girls and women being the hardest hit, especially in the provinces. In such a situation, the rights and welfare of women and vulnerable girls are being violated, because the social and economic means to address these rights and welfare issues are far from being met by parents and communities. The mass movement of women and girls from villages and smaller towns to the provincial cities is a result of socio-cultural control, exploitation, deprivation of education and economic opportunities in these rural communities. This has culminated in a greatly increased number of street girls, and consequently a high rate of crime, traumatised, prostitution and drug abuse (Kaplan,

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<sup>195</sup> Presidential and parliamentary results published by the then National Electoral Commissioner, Dr Christiana Thorp, 2002.

<sup>196</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

1994). In an attempt to alleviate the level of suffering and dependency, especially among women and girls in the country, the government<sup>197</sup> is investing in civil society groups to continue educating women and girls about their rights and the need for self-reliance, which will bring about economic and social change in their communities.

According to Mr. Kemoore Salia:

Much has happened, much from the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2002 when the president declared that *the war don don*, meaning the war has ended, a number of things have happened: 1) the demobilisation and disarmament and demobilisation and the reintegration of ex combatants took place even before that time and it kind of heightened up. About an estimated figure of 46 thousand were disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated...DDR...The third aspect, which is the reintegration, did not quite succeed. There were kind of crash programmes, trainings given to these ex-combatants; some of them did not make quite good use of it. They lapsed back into crime; they lapsed back into diamond mining, went back into the ghettos (interview with Mr Kemoore Salia, April, 2006).<sup>198</sup>

Though the religious bodies are well represented, providing for the welfare needs of the people, they remain somewhat marginalised in the political landscape. There is still a dominant view that politics is “Satan’s business”, and that religious leaders must not be seen to be meddling in or with it. This is unfortunate considering that religion played a major role in the development of the country for peace and in fighting corruption, nepotism, political intolerance and poverty.

The TRCSL, headed by Bishop Joseph Christian Humper of the United Methodist Church, reported that the war had been caused by decades of dictatorships, corruption, human rights abuses, violence and exclusion (Pratt, 2007), and by a marginalisation of religion and moral ethics in the political arena (TRC Report, 2004, Volumes 1, 2 and 3a and 3b).

Drawing on the reports of the TRCSL and judgements meted out by the SCSL, the various factions were made accountable for their actions during the war. This leads us to their fate. The leaders of the various factions were tried before the UN-backed SCSL, an account of which is presented in detail in Chapter 8. However, the general fighting forces received amnesty. The RUFSL, AFRC leaders and former Liberian rebel leader

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<sup>197</sup> Sierra Leone national budget 2003/ 2004.

<sup>198</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

and later president Charles Taylor were tried by the SCSL, as they were considered to have borne the greatest responsibility for the war in Sierra Leone.<sup>199</sup> The NPRC members were not tried before the court, though some of the Kamajor leaders were tried, also outlined in Chapter 8. This leads me to the summary and conclusion of this chapter.

### **3.6 Summary and Conclusion**

To conclude, Sierra Leone, before and after 1989 can be characterised as having both challenges and opportunities, not only for negative peace, which was achieved with the signing of the peace accord, demobilisation, reintegration and the resettlement of displaced people and refugees, but also for positive peace. Some of the problems that led to the war have been clearly presented in this chapter, including political intolerance, corruption, military coups, nepotism and many more. The events from 1961 through 2002 were presented. There were several problems and challenges that kept reoccurring throughout the years, namely several coups and counter-coups, as well as recurring youth marginalisation, religions and ethical/ moral marginalisation, corruption and nepotism. These challenges and problems were not addressed by the political leaders, who did not act in the interests of the civilian population, and this culminated in war in 1991.

The RUFSL claimed that it was fighting to save the people from APC misrule and corruption, yet, the insurgency was characterised by terror attacks on civilians, including widespread amputations, decapitations and other atrocities meted out to innocent non-combatants, especially the rural poor.<sup>200</sup> This had the twin effect of making the population flee; thus making looting easier and terrifying others into submission (Gberie, 2005).

Furthermore, during this period, religious leaders and the religious tolerance they promoted and facilitated were either marginalised or not allowed to impress ethical and moral stances into politics, since politicians saw their profession and practice as an evil sphere. The perception of politics as “Satan’s business” created a society in which social deprivation and marginalisation was rife, which culminated in war (Harris, 2013).

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<sup>199</sup> See also Appendices 1a, 5, 6 & 7 of this thesis.

<sup>200</sup> An account of these atrocities against civilians is presented in sub-section 3.2 of this chapter.

The advent of war, tested religious tolerance in Sierra Leone. Religious tolerance was demonstrated through, for example, the establishment of the IRC SL, which in turn helped in the peacemaking efforts, as atrocities were being committed against the civilian population from 1989 to 2002. Even before this period, thousands perished and were left marginalised. In addition, the country can be described as still struggling to create and build an identity and to establish strong institutions to further democracy, peace, development and the welfare of its citizens. Drawing on the work of Galtung (1996) on negative and positive peace, one can identify a country experiencing only negative peace.<sup>201</sup> Although certain things have been achieved with regard to peacemaking, which have led to the attainment of negative peace, there is still more to be accomplished in order for that negative peace to be transformed into positive peace. Many of Sierra Leone's rulers have not helped the country to achieve the kind of progress and potential that its huge mineral and other resources can provide. There has been a lack of morality and ethics in the practice of state power.<sup>202</sup>

The natural resources of the country were plundered by a few privileged politicians and elites, whose sole aim was to give hand-outs during elections to gain citizens' votes and be re-elected, only to continue their draconian activities, such as corruption, nepotism and bad management, and their policies of exclusion and marginalisation of the poor and of religion, with its emphasis on ethics and morality. Since independence in 1961, civilians have been held hostage by politicians. They are bribed to vote for politicians who end up being corrupt and politically intolerant. Neither politicians nor the military, which has seized power over and over again, have been successful in governing the country ethically and morally. Politicians have engaged in self-aggrandisement and robbed the citizens of their human rights to share in the wealth of the country. The military have, several times following independence, disrupted the normal transition of power and created chaos, and at one point in history even joined an ill-trained rebel force under the guise of the AFRC and called it "the people's army" (Harris, 2013, pp. 106, 129, 133, 135).<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> See Chapter One of this Thesis.

<sup>202</sup> TRCSL report, 2004.

<sup>203</sup> See Appendix 10 of this thesis.

Leaders have not translated the religious tolerance achieved in Sierra Leone into political tolerance so that the whole country can benefit from the ideal of dialogue and tolerance. The various political parties are still regionally and ethnically based, a situation that has not yet been addressed to allow people to vote for policies instead of according to their ethnic affiliation. The two transitional justice systems in Sierra Leone created after the war are not given sufficient space to function.<sup>204</sup> Specifically, within the TRCSL, an oversight committee, which was supposed to be formed in order to ensure that the TRCSL's recommendations were fully implemented as a corrective measure for the prevention of war, has still not been established. Christians and Muslims seem not to have learned from the past, and are not ensuring that there is a prophetic movement<sup>205</sup> active in the corridors of the State House. The CCSL and IRCSL are not yet proactive in preventing war, encouraging tolerance, resisting all forms of corruption and nepotism and supporting the creation of, and sponsoring, strong institutions for the maintenance of human rights and human dignity in line with the Christian concept of peace.<sup>206</sup>

Religious leaders are still active in peacemaking roles as they were during active hostilities in Sierra Leone. They appear to be involved in education and spiritual activities as well as making statements and being engaged in election monitoring and health work, but they have been less active in ensuring that a TRCSL committee is established in order to monitor the implementation of the TRCSL's recommendations. Although a Human Rights Commission was set up, it is not yet financially independent, which is necessary if it is to carry out its functions effectively.<sup>207</sup>

Poverty is very prevalent in rural areas and farmers are the most over-represented among the poor. The fact that about 65% of farmers are women leads to the conclusion that female farmers are the poorest of the poor.<sup>208</sup> Nearly 40% of children, mainly village girls, do not have access to schools, and about 50% of girls are married before

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<sup>204</sup> See Chapter Eight of this thesis.

<sup>205</sup> The role of the church is priestly, pastoral and prophetic. The church carries out its priestly and pastoral functions, but if it does not emphasise and perform its prophetic role, the possibility of the country deteriorating into another war is eminent.

<sup>206</sup> As defined in Chapter One of this thesis.

<sup>207</sup> Interview with one of the Commission's staff members, who asked to be anonymous.

<sup>208</sup> Statistics Sierra Leone, 2004.



the age of 18. Asked about the role of the church in gender empowerment, Revd. Moses Khanu explains:

Well if we talk about empowerment, it depends on from what angle you look at it. Originally one could say yes the Christians, Christianity allowed the girl child to be educated. For me, that is a very fundamental empowerment. Unlike Islam wherein they are allowed to learn a little bit just to enable them to pray, and then they quit. And so one could say yes. But again in terms of core leadership, it was quite a little bit of marginalisation. They allowed them to play all kinds of the part but when it comes to prominent leadership, then they are kind [bypassed] of shifted, even in Christianity. But of late, maybe in the latter part of the last century, we have seen a lot of development wherein women are being ordained; women are playing a very prominent role in social work and in religious work (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>209</sup>

After the war, the SCSL tried prominent people involved in the conflict (Chapter 8), and other stakeholders' efforts for peace were complemented by faith-based diplomats, including religious leaders (Chapter 4), Christian denominations (Chapter 5), the CCSL and IRCSL (Chapter 6), Bishop Humper and the TRCSL (Chapter 7). The concluding chapter (Chapter 9) argued for the role of religion as positive through the praxis of peace and religious tolerance and respect and that politicians were responsible for the war due to their perceived view of their act as "Satan's business".

During the civil war, Christianity, Islam and ATR were relevant in peacemaking. Sierra Leoneans are a very religious people, and perceive God as a peacemaker. Most Sierra Leoneans are Muslim or Christian, but they still practice their traditional religious ceremonies or infuse their traditional beliefs into Islam and Christianity. President Momoh, Vice President Berewa, Chairman Strasser, Chairman Bio, President Ernest Bai Koroma and First Lady Patricia Kabbah were all Christians, while President Kabbah and other prominent officials in the government were Muslims. During the war, prayers for peace were often prescribed by politicians or combatants. Christian and Muslim leaders preached sermons on peace (interview with Mr Olu Alghali, July 2007).<sup>210</sup> It is still common practice for Sierra Leonean politicians to visit or send messages of friendship to churches and mosques. Nonetheless, where policy issues and morality

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<sup>209</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>210</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

have been concerned, religion and its moral ethics and tolerance has been highly marginalised. However, based on research evidence, Christian leaders, both as individuals and as groups, were peacemakers in action during and after the war, and details of this are presented in the following chapter.

## **CHAPTER 4 CHRISTIAN LEADERS AS PEACEMAKERS IN ACTION**

### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter addresses the role of Christian leaders as peacemakers in action in Sierra Leone during and after the civil war. The leaders presented in this chapter constitute only a few examples of the hundreds of Christian leaders, priests, ministers and laity who played important roles in the peacemaking efforts carried out by religious leaders in Sierra Leone. This presentation of evidence aims to use the cases of these few individuals to illustrate the focus of the thesis: Christian leaders and organisations as peacemakers in action in Sierra Leone. The first step is to “map the terrain”, and then to continue with short summaries of the work Christian leaders performed.

In today’s so-called secularised world, religion is often seen as declining and/or unimportant, (Avalos, 2007; Bruce, 2001, 2005; Jenkins, 2001). Some scholars and researchers point to a more nuanced point of view on the subject matter as they point to the importance of religion in the modern or post-modern world (Schmidt, 2011; Bowie, 2006). Avalos even went to the extreme by suggesting an end to, for example, biblical studies and presenting a negative picture of Jesus (Avalos, 2007; 2015). I take exceptions to these views because religion might even be more vulnerable to extremists and fundamentalists, to not have an internal critical study of religion supplied by critical/ historical studies of the holy books and religious tradition. This is because of the power of faiths in building peoples identities elucidated on by many scholars and researchers (Johnston and Cox, 2003; Johnston and Sampson, 1996; Leirvik, 2007). If those holy books were not studied by academics, they might be misinterpreted and sometimes in the most extreme cases, taken out of context, as was done in some churches in Sierra Leone mentioned in above. The same may also be said of the influence exerted by religious leaders. In a situation where religious leaders who may be peacemakers are left out in tract two diplomacy, there might be the tendency of wars, like the one in Sierra Leone, not coming to an end too soon. This is because much of the evidence suggests that secularisation (referred to as “Satan business” in Sierra Leone) in the politics of Sierra Leone led to the war. In this kind of secularisation, there was marginalisation of religion and ethics in politics. Corruption and an extreme materialism was prevalent among the politicians. (Harris, 2013; TRC report, 2004). According to Childress and Macquarrie:

Derived from the Latin word *saeculum* (world), the term “secularisation” was first used to refer to property from the church to the civil princes by the Treaty of Westphalia (1648). It now denotes the process by which religion loses some or all of its authority, power, and dominance. The contemporary debate about secularisation involves conceptual, empirical, explanatory, and normative questions: what does secularisation mean, has it been occurring, how can it be explained, and how should it be evaluated? (Childress and Macquarrie, 1967, p. 568ff).

Much of the empirical evidence on the relationship between religion and violence also points to other aspects that may be involved in such a debate. However, I argue that the inherent peaceful nature of religion especially in Sierra Leone has been documented, and the same is done by David Little, Douglas Johnston and many other scholars. Scholars such as Little, Bowie, Leirvik, Johnston and many others give a nuanced analyses of religion, violence, culture and secularisation in the modern world. They describe, for example, the positive role of religion, even though they admit that religion can be a powerful force in conflicts. The argument is that even if societies become more “modern” and technologically developed, religion can still play an important role in the public sphere and such a positive role can be recognised and effectively utilised for its benefits in the world today.

Eventhough it is claimed in several scholarly works that the secularisation thesis is not the whole truth, the debate still continues especially on the issue of whether religion is identical to violence. Much of the evidence in this thesis suggests that religion is by no means disappearing in the modern or post-modern world especially in the African continent. Leirvik and other scholars have also argued that religion is still a powerful force in the modern world, taking into consideration the attention given to religion by the media on issues of religious extremism. However, it is often the negative role of religion that appears in the news headlines. Those who claim to be secularists often point to the violence that is sometimes carried out in the name of religion (Avalos, 2007, vol 1, issue 1). Little (2007) asks why some of the so-called secularised scholars overlook the important place of religion and religious leaders as peacemaking resources, especially on the African continent. I argue that, Contrary to the often over-emphasised theories of religion as intrinsically violent and as “...The opium of the people” (Marx, 1843/ 44, 1922, 1977, pp. 9 - 25), after examining the evidence <sup>211</sup> from the relevant

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<sup>211</sup> See Appendices of this thesis.

literature and the case study,<sup>212</sup> it is reasonable to conclude that church leaders and other Christian organisations, in partnership with Muslims and with both groups influenced by ATR, were peacemakers in practice<sup>213</sup> and from experience<sup>214</sup> during and after the Sierra Leone civil war from 1991 - 2002.<sup>215</sup> In Sierra Leone, Christian leaders were peacemakers in action through their various efforts in peacemaking, reconciliation and ecumenism, both as individuals and as groups, which I now present in more detail below.

#### **4.1 Christian Religious Leaders as Peacemakers in Sierra Leone**

As indicated by those interviewed for this thesis as well as in other documents,<sup>216</sup> the efficacy of church leaders in peacemaking in Sierra Leone was a concrete reality. There were several Christian leaders who were not only active in making peace in Sierra Leone, but also risked their lives in those peacemaking efforts.

All of the Church leaders, (The Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, the Revd. Moses Khanu, the Revd. John Bockarie, the Rt. Revd. Joseph Christian Humper, Pastor Aske Bee Alfred Gbla and others).<sup>217</sup> with whom I spoke provided clear and substantial information about their activities and those of other Christian leaders as peacemakers in Sierra Leone during and after the civil war.<sup>218</sup> They pointed to Bishop Joseph Christian Humper of the United Methodist Church Sierra Leone, the head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Sierra Leone (TRCSL),<sup>219</sup> which was set up to find the causes of the war and foster reconciliation through truth-telling as a Christian peacemaker. The TRCSL,

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<sup>212</sup> See list of interviewees for 2006 and 2007 - 2011 in the Appendices, and secondary literature.

<sup>213</sup> Through advocacy, provision of leadership for peace negotiations, mediation and reconciliation.

<sup>214</sup> Religious experience of the Sierra Leone context, where the relationship between the two main religions, Christianity and Islam, is very cordial, a view widely held by most (if not all) Sierra Leoneans.

<sup>215</sup> The peace agreement was in 1999. However, the war was not officially declared over until early 2002, leading to the TRCSL sittings after parliamentary and executive approvals.

<sup>216</sup> See Appendices of this thesis.

<sup>217</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>218</sup> Mr. Osman Paran Tarawally and Mr. Lamin Kaloko, a traditionalist, who claimed to have supernatural powers.

<sup>219</sup> This is confirmed after examining documents from the TRCSL and the TRCSL report. <http://www.sierra-leone.org/TRCDocuments.html>. [Accessed 2 July 2015]. An entire chapter of this thesis is dedicated to the TRCSL.

under the leadership of Bishop Humper, completed its activities and presented a 2,000-page report for the consideration of all Sierra Leoneans. A Children's version was also compiled for school children, on the advice of Bishop Humper.<sup>220</sup> Thus, in the person of Bishop Joseph Christian Humper, we see the general leadership role played by Christian leaders during and after the civil war. During sessions in September 2006 and particularly in July 2007, and subsequently in fieldwork, the interviewees constantly referred to the various priests and other religious leaders as peacemakers, in the public sphere as well as their local churches. In this light, Mr. Umaro Koroma stated:

And the TRC say the lack of the implementation of its recommendations has been perceived by many Sierra Leoneans as a landmark for peace in this country. And this organisation was headed by no less a person but a bishop, a Christian. J.C. Humper of the United Methodist Church was actually able to bring all warring factions together, bring a lot of people, both perpetrators and victims, together. People came and confessed what they did. Victims actually accepted apologies from the perpetrators and they were able to reconcile. As I speak to you now if you move around the country to do an interview about the reconciliation process, a lot of people will tell you that we have accepted people in our community because the TRC actually told us to accept people, told us to forgive and forget. This was actually led by somebody who was a bishop, who used lots of his religious background to calm people down, to be able to simmer down the seeming anger that was going about in the country at the end of the conflict. So in no uncertain terms religion has been very much instrumental in our post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction (interview with Mr Umaro Koroma, law student at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, July 2007).<sup>221</sup>

This view was common among Muslims, atheists, African traditionalists and Christians of many denominations, as well as a European who had lived most of his life in West Africa as a businessman (Mr. Richard J.M. Ratcliffe, a director of a diamond mining company in Sierra Leone and Liberia).<sup>222</sup> The Chief Imam of Southern Sierra Leone, Alhaji Dr. Mohamed Hassin Tunis, confirmed these efforts when he was interviewed on the role of Christians during the war. He stated:

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<sup>220</sup> <http://www.sierra-leone.org/TRCDocuments.html>. [Accessed 1 July 2015].

<sup>221</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>222</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

They [Christian leaders] spoke to each other in the churches so that they will find a way together, in public, and I know mostly the things they did in public: to ensure that the war comes to an end. They used to talk to Christians, those that are Christians, to talk to other Christians to ensure that the war comes to an end. Even myself, I experienced many such occasions. That is what the Christians used to do (interview with Alhaji Dr. Mohamed Hassin Tunis, Chief Imam, Southern Province Sierra Leone, July 2007).<sup>223</sup>

According to the interviews with the Chief Imam, there is evidence to support the claim that Christian leaders in Sierra Leone were a catalyst for making peace. This was also apparent in the views of over fifty interviewees, including church leaders, Muslims, church-going Christians,<sup>224</sup> non-church-going Christians<sup>225</sup> and those who belong to traditional religions. This applies also to Mr Omar Paran Tarawally, who considered himself a Goddist<sup>226</sup>:

The religions worked for peace. They made representations to the RUF, spoke with them and got them on board. They routed the RUF out of the jungle [and brought them] to the towns and the villages. The Methodists and the Catholics used some part of their financial resources to help refugees and the internally displaced. Religion in Sierra Leone is a peacemaking tool in Sierra Leone. No matter which religion one belongs to one attends the service of others. Intermarriages, political affiliations in Sierra Leone [are common]. At present, the President [is a] Muslim and the vice president, [a] Christian. This is no law but a practice (interview with Mr. Omar Paran Tarawally, LLB, Deputy National Secretary-General of the “Peoples Movement For Democratic Change”, the third largest political party in the 2007 parliamentary and presidential election in Sierra Leone, July 2007).<sup>227</sup>

Mr. Tarawally’s views were echoed both internally<sup>228</sup> and externally<sup>229</sup> through evidence gathered during field visits to Sierra Leone in September 2006 and July 2007

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<sup>223</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>224</sup> This is a category of Christians who considered themselves regular church-goers.

<sup>225</sup> This is a category of Christians who considered themselves baptised and confirmed, but not regular church-goers.

<sup>226</sup> That is, he is neither Christian nor Muslim but believes in God.

<sup>227</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>228</sup> By Christians and church leaders.

and subsequent fieldwork. There is evidence from church documents<sup>230</sup> confirming Mr. Tarawally's views, as well as newspaper<sup>231</sup> articles and my observations during my work as a researcher, Methodist minister and as Regional Supervisor for Peace and Civic Education in the eastern part of Sierra Leone (1999 - 2000), which was seriously ravaged by the civil war. The following are some other Christian leaders who played important roles in peacemaking in Sierra Leone.

#### **4.1.1 Mr. Alimamy Koroma: Secretary General of the Council of Churches**

Mr. Alimamy Koroma<sup>232</sup> was one of numerous Sierra Leonean Christian leaders who made an impact on the lives of ordinary Sierra Leoneans during the war. He was also instrumental in the formation of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone. As the Secretary General of the Council of Churches (CCSL), which is the biggest ecumenical organisation of mainline churches in Sierra Leone established in 1924, during the war, he played a vital role in the provision of relief to displaced people and the implementation of the Council's decisions, (Little, 2007, p. 286ff). According to David Little (2007), organisations such as Alimamy Koroma's Inter-Religious Council were critical in maintaining the commitment to peace, dialogue and reconciliation throughout Sierra Leone's recovery. For Koroma and Sierra Leone, there is only one true goal: "to write our history and say never again, concerning the atrocities that occurred during the conflict" (Little, 2007, p. 298).

Mr. Alimamy Koroma, after being the Secretary-General of the Council of Churches before, during and after the war in Sierra Leone, was later appointed as a Minister of Works and served in the APC government (2007 – 2013). He is currently Sierra Leone's Ambassador in China (2015 - ). He was replaced as Secretary General of the CCSL by Mr. Kemoore Salia, who I interviewed in 2006 and in 2008 and with whom I was subsequently in continuous dialogue through social media. Salia collaborated with

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<sup>229</sup> By non-Christians, as well as a non-believer in other religions, though he claim to believe in God.

<sup>230</sup> For example, conference documents from the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone from 1999, 2000, 2001, etc. and a special Department of Development report 2005.

<sup>231</sup> For the People, Concord Times, The Democrat, Awoko News Paper, Independent Observer, Sierra News, The New Citizen, The Exclusive, Spark Voice, Awareness Times, Standard Times and others.

<sup>232</sup> Mr. Alimamy Koroma is a Baptist.



Koroma in the formation of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, which played a decisive role in peacemaking during the war (Little, 2007, pp. 278 - 301).

According to Little (2007) and Salia, Koroma became a Baptist worker and joined the CCSL in the year of his conversion. There, he immediately established himself, initially serving in the development department before quickly moving up the ranks and becoming its Secretary-General ten years later. It was during those ten years that war broke out in neighbouring Liberia. Refugees poured into Sierra Leone, often stopping for help at churches. Koroma's CCSL provided relief to the Liberian refugees (Little, 2007, p. 287).

Koroma is widely believed to be the primary figure behind the reconciliatory and capacity-building activities undertaken by the CCSL and later by the IRC SL. Though he was not alone in the provision of relief to displaced Liberians and later to displaced Sierra Leonean people, Koroma's leadership through various agencies,<sup>233</sup> both as a Christian and as head of the CCSL, played an important role in making peace through the provision of leadership, dialogue and faith-based diplomacy with the warring factions and others (Little, 2007, p. 286ff). Koroma also collaborated with other clergy, such as the Catholic bishop of Makeni in northern Sierra Leone, George Biguzzi, who also played a very significant reconciliatory role.

#### **4.1.2 The Most Revd. George Biguzzi: Catholic Bishop of Makeni Diocese**

Bishop George Biguzzi<sup>234</sup> is Italian by nationality, but served as bishop of northern Sierra Leone for quite a long time, including during the war years. He was a member of the IRC SL and regularly attended its meetings. The Bishop contacted the rebels during the war years as a way of building confidence, lobbying for a ceasefire and disarmament, and also contributed to peacemaking as a participant in the negotiations leading to the peace agreement. Bishop Biguzzi had contacts with the World Council of Religion and Peace as well as with Norway, and obtained financial support for the peace process in Sierra Leone. As Bishop, he continued to live in his diocese even when it was

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<sup>233</sup> The Council of Churches Sierra Leone, relief and rehabilitation department; Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone.

<sup>234</sup> The following information is based on interviews from over fifty Sierra Leoneans and the Bishop himself, who either confirmed what has been said about him or corrected some over-emphasised issues or views about his role in the peace process in Sierra Leone.

overrun by the rebels. He saw that as his primary responsibility, and he risked his life and provided relief for the rebels during the war (interview with Bishop Biguzzi, March 2009).<sup>235</sup>

As a Catholic or Christian leader, Bishop Biguzzi was neutral in some ways and on certain issues. He worked for healing and reconciliation. He stayed in his diocese, thereby risking being misunderstood by all factions in the war. Many observers did not understand why the primate went to Makeni, risking his life and reputation. He, however, maintained that his role as Bishop was to encourage healing and reconciliation. He said later, when the war came to an end, that he had worked for a deeper healing through the TRCSL.

Commenting on the special court of Sierra Leone, which was set up after the war to try suspects of war crimes committed during the war, Bishop Biguzzi said that everything that helped people to change and reconcile was paramount to him (interview with Bishop Biguzzi, March 2009).<sup>236</sup> Bishop Biguzzi worked with the UN soldiers and with Gibril Massaquoi, one of the rebel commanders of the RUFSL. The Bishop met with the rebels to help disarm them and help them see how religious leaders like him could make a difference. He held talks with stakeholders, although there was some distrust in certain quarters due to the role he played as a mediator with all parties involved in the conflict. The role he played in confidence-building helped to move the process forward.

According to Mr. Olu Alghali:

....although at one stage the archbishop of Freetown and Bo was abducted [laughs], but they were so scared they could not do anything to him and they just released him and then he came back and told us that “I have met these boys”, like the other one in Makeni as well, Bishop Biguzzi. And at some stage because of his close ties, not close ties as per se [literally] because of his interaction with both parties, he was being considered to be a supervisor [laughs] of the rebels but the rebels were located in his official bishopric. So he had to really talk to them and his contribution was very good and important in terms of getting peace (interview with Mr Olu Alghali, July 2007).<sup>237</sup>

Bishop Biguzzi reported that the rebels surrendered their weapons to the UN due to those efforts. The Bishop ensured that the fighting factions came together for talks, and

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<sup>235</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>236</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>237</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

he was personally involved in the exchange of prisoners of war. He described how Colonel Maxwell Kobi handed over the prisoners of war to him as a primate. Bishop Biguzzi divided the prisoners into three camps while he was implementing the exchange, and then handed them to both factions at the international airport in Lungi. Some people advised the Bishop against doing this, but he did it anyway. The government, according to Bishop Biguzzi, did not trust the Red Cross due to unfounded claims that the Red Cross secretly supported the rebels. Thus, they needed a neutral person, and he filled that role (interview with Bishop Biguzzi, March 2009).<sup>238</sup>

Furthermore, the IRC SL, of which Bishop Biguzzi was an active member, organised a day of prayer that started with common prayers. The theme was reconciliation, and they read passages on peace and reconciliation from the Bible and the Qur'an. According to the Bishop, "Holy books brought us together". The Bishop expressed that he was "...afraid the next elections in 2012 will not be peaceful" (interview with Bishop Biguzzi, March 2009).<sup>239</sup> He further stated that "religious leaders have to be in tune with each other and with God", a view that was exemplified in IRC SL in Sierra Leone during the war. "The Bishop has to take risks and you will be the beneficiary for peace," he concluded. Bishop George Biguzzi also collaborated with other Church leaders even though most of the work he did was unique since he was famous for willingly residing in his Diocese where it was deemed risky to reside during the war. Among the other church leaders he worked with was Revd. Christian V A Peacock of MCSL and IRC SL.

#### **4.1.3 The Revd Christian V. A. Peacock: President of the Methodist Church**

The Revd. Christian V. A. Peacock was the President of the Methodist Conference of Sierra Leone during the war. His efforts in helping bring peace to Sierra Leone were not only through advocacy for peace and the provision of relief to displaced people, but he also risked his life by making himself visible as a peacemaker in action. This clergyman, like others, presented himself as a Christian who cared not only for the Christians who were displaced, but for all Sierra Leoneans and Liberian refugees. Revd. Peacock often risked his life to go to the provinces to carry out his pastoral role, including the provision of leadership, contribution to relief efforts, faith-based

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<sup>238</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>239</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

diplomacy and the preaching of sermons to end the war. I personally witnessed these activities, as I was appointed by him as regional supervisor for peace and civic education in eastern Sierra Leone. Revd. C. V. A. Peacock engaged with the CCSL member churches to bring about the end of the war. He helped to institute the national day of prayer for the end of the war and was instrumental in the formation of the IRCSL, and especially in the peace efforts of the Methodist Church Sierra Leone. As President of the Methodist Church of Sierra Leone, Revd. C. V. A. Peacock championed the establishment of the church's relief department, which provided relief and other material help to the refugees from Liberia and later to internally displaced Sierra Leoneans, as well as Sierra Leonean refugees in Guinea. The war in Liberia began in 1989 and led to the flight of tens of thousands of Liberians to Sierra Leone. A similar displacement occurred before the start of the Sierra Leone Civil War in 1991, when many Sierra Leoneans fled to Guinea. Most of those interviewed during my fieldwork in Sierra Leone often referred to the work done by the Methodist Church Sierra Leone under the leadership of Revd. Peacock as a peacemaker in action. Hence it can be argued that religious leaders' visibility in peacemaking effort was a deciding factor for peace in the country.

In his sermons, Revd. C. V. A. Peacock often challenged the warring factions to make peace. Though the following statement does not specifically refer to Revd. C. V. A. Peacock, it is important to note that he was no exception to what Mr. Olu Alghali observed. According to him:

Preaching peace became a kind of obsession for imams, ministers and priests. I think it was a common practice among all religious leaders, during church services, during mosque services. They called on the people to desist from killing people and come to the round table and dialogue and see how we can find peace. They asked for divine intervention. It came to a time when both religions believed that it was only God that could stop the war (interview with Mr Olu Alghali, July 2007).<sup>240</sup>

Revd. C. V. A. Peacock collaborated with colleagues in the United Methodist Church, which Bishop Humper led during the war years.

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<sup>240</sup> See Appendix 1 of this thesis.

#### **4.1.4 The Rt. Revd. Dr. Joseph Christian Humper: Bishop of the UMC Sierra Leone**

The Rt. Revd. Dr Joseph Christian Humper, head of the United Methodist Church (UMC) in Sierra Leone, was instrumental in the peace efforts during and after the civil war. He headed the TRCSL and was active in raising funds for the relief efforts of the CCSL and the IRCSL. His efforts cannot be underestimated, and most interviewees during my fieldwork referred specifically to the role he played for peace during and after the war. As a bishop, he was also actively involved in spiritual activities, such as organising prayers for peace. Furthermore, according to Mr. Olu Alghali:

We are known to have done, as far as Christians are concerned, played a positive role in trying to help people to find a peaceful manner in which people sat down together and talked in order to end the war. One area I believe the Christian religion played a good role was in the area of prayers. We had a lot of churches that prayed asking God to intervene (interview with Mr Olu Alghali, July 2007).<sup>241</sup>

These views were further supported by other documents and interviews. For example, according to Pastor Alfred Gbla of Milton Margai College of Education and Technology, Head of the Sierra Leonean Languages Department and Lecturer in Religious and Moral Education:

The role the Christians played in the peacemaking ... was very high. There are three basic things that were done during the crisis: one was a call to religious revival, wherein the whole nation was called upon to pray for peace and tranquillity and the speedy end of the war. The second thing that was done was to form what we call the Inter-Religious Council, which was comprised of Christianity, Islam and traditional practices practitioners. These organisations, together with the Christian organisations, combined in not only talking, praying but even meeting the rebels in the bush. One of the rebel(s) [groups] took control of Okra Hill. These bodies, the Christians and the inter-religious bodies consisting of all the religious practices in Sierra Leone, that went and met these men in the bush [and tried to convince them] to come out for peace. That was what they did. It was also the same body that met with Foday Sankoh [urging him] to make peace [with the government]. They talked about peace. It was also the religious leaders that went with the government delegation then to make the Lomé peace accords both 1 and 2. So here you can see the role Christianity both in spiritual, political and otherwise during the war. And after they achieved [this], the third greatest thing that the Christian religion did was to continue with relief work. Almost all churches in Sierra Leone [were] involved in relief and

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<sup>241</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

development work - supplying food items, supplying developmental tools for work and all the rest of it. The Christian church did contribute and up till now [July 2007] developmental projects are on[-going]. If you go to the UMC they have a developmental desk officer, you go to CCSL there is a developmental desk officer, Seventh Day Adventists they have ADRA – Adventist Development and Relief Agency, you go to of course the Anglicans they have their own development officer, Methodists ... this was and is still going on as I am talking about it. They provide food for the people, shelter, [and] medical treatment – free of course. These are some of the things the church [churches] has done during the war and they are still doing [them] even as I am talking today (interview with Pastor Alfred Gbla, July 2007).<sup>242</sup>

In a speech the former president of Sierra Leone, Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, in Amman during a gathering for the World Conference on Religion for Peace, stated:

In 1996 the people of Sierra Leone took an historic decision at a National Consultative Conference, through their representatives from some sixty-nine religious, civic, and other organisations, including the Muslim Congress, the Council of Churches, the Teachers and Motor Drivers Unions, Farmers and Petty Traders Associations, as well as groups of refugees and internally displaced camps....This coalition of the various religious communities in the country has emerged as a credible and respected facilitator of the peace process. And here I would like to pay tribute to the IRCSL, and its international partner, the WCRP, for the important role which the IRCSL played in promoting dialogue among the parties to the conflict, before the peace talks, and for being an active observer of the talks leading to the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement. I understand that members of the IRCSL delegation to the peace talks in Lomé, Christians, and Muslims, led prayers before and at the end of every plenary meeting. When the IRCSL left Lomé for a short while, members of the Government and rebel delegations took turns to pray at the beginning and end of plenary meetings (Keynote address by the former president of Sierra Leone, Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah to the plenary of the VII the World Assembly of the World Conference on Religion for Peace(WCRP), Amman, Jordan, 28 November 1999).

Bishop Humper's role in spreading religious tolerance was a clear example of what Pastor Gbla and President Kabbah referred to in the above quotes. Many other observers, including directors (interviewee, Mr Alghali, country director of a non-governmental organisation in Sierra Leone)<sup>243</sup> and managers of NGOs (interviewee, Mr. Samson Lahai, hotel manager, Sir Milton Hotel, Bo Sierra Leone)<sup>244</sup> heads of churches (interviewee, Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, Former General Superintendent of The

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<sup>242</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>243</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>244</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

United Brethren in Christ Church, now pastor of UBC Church in Wellington/ Kissi, Freetown),<sup>245</sup> imams (interviewee, Sheik Mohamed Kargbo, Islamic clergy, Wellington, Freetown, interviewed in September 2006)<sup>246</sup> teachers, (interviewees, Mr. Alpha Brima Bah and Mr Peter Bona),<sup>247</sup> students (interviewees, Mr Umaro Koroma, FBC, Mr Taky Jalloh, FBC, Miss Sabatu Mariama Rogers, FBC, Mr Muloma Janneh, FBC, etc),<sup>248</sup> business owners, (interviewee, Mr. Richard J.M. Ratcliffe, July 2007)<sup>249</sup> ministers, priests, (interviewee, Pastor Alfred Gbla, Revd. Moses Khanu and others; September 2006, July 2007),<sup>250</sup> and other people from all walks of life (interviewee, Revd. John Bockarie, Mr Tommy Alie, Mr Tommy Tucker, July 2007),<sup>251</sup> have shared the same views with me during research trips to Sierra Leone in September 2006, July 2007 and subsequent fieldwork.<sup>252</sup> Furthermore, it can be argued that the head of the United Methodist Church played a leading role in the TRCSL because of his religious credentials and the respect religious leaders have built up over the years through the achievement of religious tolerance and provision of the welfare for the common Sierra Leonean.

In the words of Mr. Umaro Koroma:

Religion has played a very much active role because they have been involved in the reconciliation process. Mind you this is a post-conflict situation and we were going about building the peace more in 2002 and are very serious issues. And the only institution that has the capacity to ensure that we have everlasting peace is that of religion. There are people, both Muslims and Christians, still continuing in their prayers for peace in this country. They are continuing their preaching to their congregation(s) both to be law-abiding and peaceful. One very serious Christian personality in the person of Bishop J.C. Humber was appointed to serve as the Chairman of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (interview with Mr Umaru Koroma, July 2007).<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>246</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>247</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>248</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>249</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>250</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>251</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>252</sup> See some of the transcribed interviews in the Appendices of this thesis.

Bishop Humper was singled out by all of my interviewees as a major contributor to peacemaking in Sierra Leone.<sup>254</sup> Like other heads of churches, he worked closely with Revd. Moses Khanu, head of the Baptist Convention Sierra Leone, who later served as Human Rights Commissioner.

#### **4.1.5 The Revd. Moses Khanu: Human Rights Commissioner, Sierra Leone**

The Revd. Moses Khanu was among the leaders of the IRCSL who was actively involved in the advocacy role of the CCSL/IRCSL.<sup>255</sup> He was part of the TRCSL and various delegations to both the Sierra Leone government and the rebels, representing the CCSL/IRCSL. Revd. Khanu had earlier served in the Baptist Convention in Sierra Leone as head of the Evangelical Fellowship of Sierra Leone (EFSL), the CCSL as its president and the IRCSL as its co-chairman (conversations with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>256</sup> He was among the Christian leaders whom interviewees specifically mentioned as playing a very important role in the peacemaking that led to the Lomé Peace Agreement, which subsequently led to the cessation of hostilities, the disarmament of the ex-combatants and the re-integration of the former rebels and other civil militia, such as the Kamajors, into wider society. This was confirmed in an interview with Mr Samson Lahai, a hotel director and businessman in Bo, southern Sierra Leone, who said:

Well, the religious leaders actually were getting (sic) around people, the factions of the war like the Kamajors, the rebels, the soldiers, and bringing them together, even in fact bringing the police involved into it and other civil services and organisations to make sure that we have peace. That's just the role that they were gearing towards (interview with Mr Samson Lahai, July 2007).<sup>257</sup>

Revd. Moses Khanu, commenting on the above recalled:

One could say that I was in the middle of it all because of the then-capacity I held, as president of the Council of Churches, an ecumenical

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<sup>253</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>254</sup> Lomé Peace Accord Part Two, Article VIII.

<sup>255</sup> IRCSL, documents.

<sup>256</sup> Conversations with Revd. Moses Khanu, July, 2007.

<sup>257</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.



movement in Sierra Leone. Then I was also co-chairman, an equivalent [of] for a president, for the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, which represents the two main religions in Sierra Leone, the Muslims and the Christians. So because of that occupation, that position, I provided leadership for both organisations, to broker peace; meeting the government and the RUF (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>258</sup>

The above mentioned efforts were not exercised in isolation without engaging in joint actions as religious groups in peacemaking.

## **4.2 The Power of Grouping**

Though the Christian leaders acted as individuals in their peacemaking efforts, it is also important to examine their role in making peace as a group. Christian religious leaders and non Christian religious leaders had meetings in Freetown under the auspices of the CCSL, and they were in agreement on what it was that united them: peace. In the various theological institutions, both Islamic and Christian, it was a priority among scholars to share knowledge with students and all others interested in peace as opposed to war and violence. The theological institutions also served as internal critics within their own societies in any situation in which some elements wanted to trigger confrontations between different religions.<sup>259</sup> As a result of my own work and the work of CCSL, for example, Peace and Reconciliation Studies were introduced at SLTC and at Fourah Bay College at the University of Sierra Leone immediately after the war. The studies were aimed at developing Christian leaders as community workers and lay workers in peace initiatives.

All these factors contributed to dialogue, and ultimately to the attainment and maintenance of peace. In dialogue, participants must be aware of the need for judgements to be suspended. There must be a release of desire for a specific outcome; there must be an inquiry into and an examination of underlying assumptions. Additionally, encouraging authenticity, maintaining a slow pace with silence between speakers and listening deeply to the self and others are paramount in religious conversation, as well as the search for collective meaning. (Leirvik, 2006). Religious leaders serve as opinion leaders in their respective communities, which means that people adhere to and respect their views and opinions on social and religious matters.

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<sup>258</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>259</sup> Prior research was conducted at the University of Oslo on this same concept but for only for twelve to fifteen pages, in 2005/ 2006.

This gives such leaders the chance to influence members in a manner that Huntington (2002) seems to overlook. As opinion leaders, religious leaders are also instruments of peace.<sup>260</sup> They are not expected to go to war but are often regarded as moral guarantors acting on behalf of their various groups (Olonisakin, 2008: pp. 35 and 161).

Religious leaders contributed to peacemaking in many ways. First, the leaders took an active part in ensuring the end of hostilities. Furthermore, they advocated “dialogue for peace” and mobilised themselves as imams, pastors, ministers, priests and lay leaders, (Interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007). Religious leaders also organised traditional rulers, military police, women’s groups, students and the press in joint efforts (Olonisakin, 2008, pp. 35 - 36). They worked with the United Nations through the United Nations Military Observer Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL), and undertook international lobbying, including visits to Conakry, Guinea to meet the United Nations Observer Mission (UNOM), which was operating its efforts for Sierra Leone from the neighbouring country (Olonisakin, 2008, p. 35f). Religious leaders also met with the British High Commissioner and UNDP to persuade expatriates from the UN not to abandon the country. They visited the government of Guinea to thank them for hosting the government and people of Sierra Leone as refugees, and they sent out a clear message there and in Liberia that Sierra Leonean religious leaders were against the use of violence to solve problems (interviews with Revd. Moses Khanu and Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).<sup>261</sup>

The religious leaders also met with President Charles Taylor of Liberia and made their position clear on the issue of violence. They held meetings with Sierra Leonean President Alhaji Dr Amad Tejan Kabbah, and were allowed by Nigerian authorities to meet the then-leader of the RUFSL, Foday Saybana Sankoh, though he was at the time under house arrest in Nigeria (Olonisakin, 2008, p. 136), and made their views on non-violence known to these entities as well. Religious leaders championed the use of radio contacts with the RUFSL/AFRC fighters in the jungle and established potential for negotiation. They negotiated the release of abducted children, visited the RUFSL base and gave strategic humanitarian assistance. They also dismantled former combatants, a possible new rebel faction of Benguema at Mammy Yoko Hotel. To facilitate the Lomé

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<sup>260</sup> Interviewees mainly agreed with this. Secondary literature and other sources, such as internet resources confirm this.

<sup>261</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis..

Peace Agreement, religious leaders visited the RUFSL during preparations and during the dialogue with the government. After Lomé, the religious leaders distributed the peace agreement, especially to the RUFSL and the AFRC in the jungle. Individually as well as collectively, the leaders undertook a comprehensive explanation of the agreement and established a citizen's fund for disarmament in partnership with the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, former head of the CCSL and Baptist Church, now working as Human Rights Commissioner, Sierra Leone).<sup>262</sup> The religious leaders discussed above also made use of holy books to underscore their views about peacemaking through reference to the peaceful words found in the Qur'an and the Bible.

### **4.3 Religious Leaders' Use of the Bible and the Qur'an in Peacemaking**

Depending on their audience, Christian leaders referred to passages from both the Bible and the Qur'an. Revd. Moses Khanu, former head of the Baptist Convention Sierra Leone, observed:

They (the Bible and Qur'an) are [peaceful books]. If we could look a little bit to [laughs] you find certain texts, and let me start with the Bible, the Old Testament, it's like a portion where God was very vehement, and he doesn't (sic) tolerate nonsense. You do nonsense today, he hits you today. That was the time some people say God was putting on small trousers, you know for action. And today he puts on long trousers; the time of tolerance and time of faith. There are certain portions where God was saying if somebody does this to you, do this to him. But when the New Testament came, the whole concept changed, the spirit of tolerance, the spirit of grace, the spirit of forgiveness, where Jesus used to say if your brother does you this, forgive him this. So the best option is to forgive. Unlike in Islam, and this is following them. When the prophet was propagating Islam in those early days, again, it was warfare, he had to brutalise, and he had to cause people to accept Islam. Even here in Sierra Leone in 1930 when Nadara Kontofili came from the republic of Guinea in the north of Sierra Leone in Kambia District, where he had served the colonial masters, it was again, a number of churches were burned, and he told the people to rebel against the colonial administration, not to pay taxes. A number of people were killed and if it were today they would call it genocide and a crime against humanity. And so it happened that way. So the need to go back to reread the text because today what we see, even in the Qur'an it is there, where the prophet says if you have problems, go to the people of the book, and he was referring to the Jews and Christians. Even on the route to Mecca, there were churches but when Islam came, in my research, like you can

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<sup>262</sup>.See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

say Egypt was a Christian nation, in all of North Africa one could say. But when Islam came they put the church underground. The only church that survived was the Coptic Church. Unfortunately, they don't have a New Testament. That is why it's producing militants today and causing a world problem (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>263</sup>

This quote does not portray the Qur'an as an instrument of peacemaking, but there are many peacemaking texts<sup>264</sup> in the Qur'an itself, as well as others that discourage forced conversion.<sup>265</sup> These texts, particularly the so-called "non-violent ones," may often be seen as belonging to the past, with nothing to contribute to the current Sierra Leonean religious and social context. However, this context is seen by both Muslims and Christians as cordial, tolerant and non-violent, and especially exemplary with regard to peacemaking and non-violence. Many of my interviewees confirmed what Mr. Olu Alghali shared with me in July 2007, when he said:

Well this [speaking about the relationship between Christians and Muslims] is amazing, really in this part of the world it's amazing when you see both religions under the umbrella of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone comprising the imams, the reverends, and the bishops, would sit together, they would pray together, they would talk together, would dialogue and they would move together to places to meet with the fighters with the RUF particularly to find ways of sorting out this mess [talking about the war in Sierra Leone 1991- 2002] (interview with Mr Olu Alghali, July 2007).<sup>266</sup>

The Chief Imam of the southern part of Sierra Leone, Alhaji Dr. Mohamed Tunis, added his voice to this when he confirmed that:

They [talking about Christians and Muslims] have no ill feelings between them. Especially the good Christians and especially the good Muslims. Wherever we meet, we always show that we are worshipping the same person. Who is this person? It's the almighty God. Whether you are going to the church or to the mosque we have to have it at the back of our minds that we have one God. Also, the Bible and the Qur'an were passed on to the prophets. The Qur'an was passed on to Prophet Mohammed; the Bible was passed on to the Prophet Issa [Jesus]. So we used to remind religious people about this and we are still reminding

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<sup>263</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>264</sup> These peaceful texts are presented in chapter one of this thesis, as well as how this perceived division is managed to achieve religious tolerance.

<sup>265</sup> See Sura 19 in the Qur'an.

<sup>266</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

them about this. These two people are Prophets who left us messages which must be followed. So we still remind them about this.<sup>267</sup>

It is against this background that I propose that religious texts – in both the Qur’an and the Bible – are still relevant to modern, post-modern and future readers, in contrast to what Avalos advocates (Avalos, 2005, 2007). In answering a question about how Christians and Muslims relate to the Bible and the Qur’an in Sierra Leone in personal as well as social matters, Mr. Edward Kamara stated:

Well, we are entitled to use our own opinion. As far as I am concerned, I am a Christian, I don’t know if you are a Muslim<sup>268</sup> but for me, I am a Christian, you understand. I will definitely marry a Muslim if I fall in love with one. The reason for this is not because she is a Muslim, but because of some perceived qualities, like being a good wife, definitely, I will marry her (interview with Mr Edward Kamara, July 2007).<sup>269</sup>

There were several interviewees who stressed a similar point: that religious texts, both the Qur’an and the Bible, were used as peacemaking resources. For example, Edward Kamara and others held that Biblical and Qur’anic texts must be interpreted in light of human existence and humanity’s ability for peacemaking. As I argue, when religion is used “properly”, by which I mean peacefully and legitimately, it becomes a powerful resource for peacemaking. The documents and interviews provide evidence that is contrary to what Avalos claims in his book *Fighting Words: The Origins of Religious Violence* and his article “The Letter Killeth” (Avalos, 2007, p. 1). He claims that religious texts are used to inspire violence by appealing to their divine authority and sanction. Contrary to his findings, I found that the Bible and the Qur’an were quoted by priests and imams in Sierra Leone in order to enhance peace, especially during the civil war. They preached peace in places of worship and organised national prayers and readings of religious texts for the same purpose.

These views were echoed by a lawyer who described himself as neither a Christian nor a Muslim, who observed that religion in Sierra Leone is a peacemaking tool in the country. “No matter which religion one belongs to one attends the service of others. Inter-marriages, political affiliations in Sierra Leone. At present, the President [is a]

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<sup>267</sup> Several of the 50 or more interviewees made this point.

<sup>268</sup> He was referring to me as a researcher.

<sup>269</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis..

Muslim, and Vice president [is a] Christian; this is no law but a practice” (interview with Mr Omar Param Tarawali, July 2007).<sup>270</sup>

The following quoted statement was posed to the Chief Imam in southern Sierra Leone: “The president of Sierra Leone said once that ‘if there is nothing else Sierra Leoneans can export, we must export the religious tolerance that our people have maintained during and after the war.’ ”<sup>271</sup> On this point, I agree with him, based on my experiences in Sierra Leone as well as on empirical research, though theological and political contexts might be different from country to country. In addressing this statement, the Chief Imam maintained:

Well, I believe that! That is a strong message; because even for me I started working for an Islamic organisation, called Muslim World League at the United Nations. I worked there for up to 30 years! So my main responsibilities were to travel around the world – there are very few places where I have not visited in the world. So the Christians and the Muslims were my concern during those work-travels around the world. So I discovered that the view of President Kabbah is true, based on my experiences during those travels around the world (interview with Alhaji Dr Mohammed Hasin Tunis, July 2007).<sup>272</sup>

#### **4.4 Summary and Conclusion**

Given the information presented above, one can conclude that as perceived by both Sierra Leoneans and independent observers, religious tolerance in Sierra Leone is second to nowhere else in the world. This situation helped religious leaders in their reconciliatory role during and after the war. There were many Christian leaders who played significant roles in Sierra Leoneans’ efforts to bring the 11 - year war to an end. These Christian leaders engaged in various peacemaking activities both as individuals and as a group. The tools they used in their activities included holy books as well as their multi - level organisations, which span the entire country. There is hardly any town or village in Sierra Leone without a church or a mosque, which became very useful for peacemaking led by Christian leaders in collaboration with Muslim leaders.

However, religious leaders’ activities were not without risks at both the group and individual levels. They risked their lives and the lives of their families as they engaged the warring factions in the cities, villages and jungles and impressed on them the need

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<sup>270</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>271</sup> President Alhaji Dr. Amad Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone 1996 - 2007.

<sup>272</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

to end the war. These religious leaders, including the examples discussed in this chapter, served not only as advocates of peace but were also engaged in giving people food and basic necessities, as well as engaging in spiritual activities such as praying and singing peace songs in churches. Engaging each other in dialogue in order to end the war, they exhibited profound religious tolerance and willingness to use their multi-level organisations and stability and the respect they had earned from the people to make a difference in the search for peace. In other words, when the politicians destroyed the state, the religious leaders came on board to fix it, due to their religious potential, abilities, capabilities and the respect in which they were held in Sierra Leonean society.

The religious leaders took the initiative in the TRCSL, encouraging people to confess their sins and the atrocities they committed, and the victims had a real opportunity to forgive the perpetrators of violence against them. The TRCSL itself was headed by the Bishop of the United Methodist Church, Revd. Dr Christian Joseph Humper. He and many imams, ministers and other religious leaders and organisations, such as the Council of Churches Sierra Leone (CCSL) and the Inter-Religious Council Sierra Leone (IRCSL), were pointed out by the interviewees as major contributors to peacemaking in Sierra Leone.

Thus, one can argue that though the academic debate on religion and violence often overemphasises the negative role of religion in society vis-a-vis violence (Avalos, 2005, 2007; Delicata, 2005, p. 13), there is evidence that when religions leaders tolerate each other and build confidence among the populations they serve, this will engender respect, which they can in turn use for peaceful common human existence and reconciliation. The Christian leaders acted both as individuals, as presented in this chapter, as well in their various denominations, as will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5 CHRISTIAN DENOMINATIONS AS PEACEMAKERS IN ACTION

### 5.0 Introduction

This chapter examines churches and their role in peacemaking during the civil war in Sierra Leone, with a particular focus on the work of the Methodist Church Sierra Leone (MCSL).<sup>273</sup> From the qualitative and empirical research conducted through interviews. (Interviews with over fifty Sierra Leonean Christians and Muslims: Mr. Alghali; Revd. Moses Khanu; Revd. John Bockarie; Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis; Mr. Taky Jalloh; Miss Seibatu Mariama Rogers; Miss Muloma Janneh; Pastor Alfred Gbla; Mr. Alpha Brima Bah; Mr. James T. Koroma, etc., July 2007)<sup>274</sup> and conversations,<sup>275</sup> observations and other documents, it became obvious that the MCSL was one of the significant players in the peacemaking role of churches during and after the war (interviews with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007; Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, July 2007; Mr. Kemoore Salia, April 2009).<sup>276</sup> As a Methodist minister with over twenty years of service, I also have first-hand information on the role of the MCSL in peacemaking.

Various churches in Sierra Leone played important roles in relief, dialogue, advocacy, peacemaking and civic education during and after the war. The interviewees, both Christians and non-Christians, commented on the positive roles played by Christians from different denominations in the peacemaking process in Sierra Leone, including the Catholic Church, the MCSL, the United Methodist Church Sierra Leone, the Seventh Day Adventist Church and the Anglican Church. Many independent observers confirmed that these Christian denominations were very visibly working for peace. These observers included both Muslims and Christians in Sierra Leone who were actively involved in peacemaking, those who were not necessarily active in the peacemaking efforts, yet had remained in the country, and non-Sierra Leonean nationals who stayed in the country during the war, such as Bishop Biguzzi, an Italian national,

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<sup>273</sup> <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/methodist-church-sierra-leone>. [Accessed 22 September 2015].

<sup>274</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>275</sup> See list of interviewees in Appendix 2 of this thesis.

<sup>276</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.



and many others I interviewed at various times and places during my fieldwork from 2007 through 2011, (Alghali, Bah, Jalloh, Kanneh, Rogers, Gbla, Koroma, Ellie, Gaba, Khanu, Kallay, Tarawali, Bona, Lahai, Tunis, Janneh, Korma, Kamara, Ratckiffe, Salia, Kaloko, Conteh, Kargbo, Turay, Koroma, Tucker, Bockarie, Alie, Kamara, Tunis, Deen, Macarthy, Bhonafa, Vandy, Dakowa, Missa, Saffa, Humper, Alie, Panda, Kamara, Yoko, Davis, Juma, Tarawali, Tucker, Juana, Bockarie, Panda, Juma, Junis, Anderson, Wai, Biguzzi, Pratt and others).<sup>277</sup> The advocacy roles played by Christian denominations were also mentioned by Mr. Kemoore Salia, Secretary-General of the Council of Churches Sierra Leone (CCSL) (interview with Mr. Kemoore Salia, April 2006).<sup>278</sup> This chapter will also give brief presentations of a few other churches, such as the UMC, the Roman Catholic Church and the Anglican Dioceses of Freetown and Bo. However, due to the length limitations of a Ph.D thesis,<sup>279</sup> and also because the MCSL is a prominent church in Sierra Leone that hosts the CCSL, the role of Christian denominations in this chapter is documented and discussed mainly through the work of the MCSL.

To get a clearer understanding of the subject of this chapter I reviewed the context of the research presented in subsection 1.7 of Chapter 1 of this thesis. Based on the data collected through triangulation before and during the write-up period<sup>280</sup> between 2005 and 2015, some of which are included in the Appendices, I have developed a framework of the peacemaking roles of Christian denominations in Sierra Leone that may not necessarily be applicable to other contexts, but can add value to the role of religious as a resource for peace. These peacemaking role-players include, but are not limited to, religious personnel and Christian denominations. Christian denominations such as MCSL in eastern, southern and western Sierra Leone, the UMC throughout all of Sierra Leone and the four Sierra Leonean Catholic dioceses were engaged in peace education, preaching in favour of accountability, communicating and dialoguing with each other through ecumenical councils, and using their economic resources to provide displaced people with food, shelter and medicine.<sup>281</sup> Their purpose was to work for the Christian

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<sup>277</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>278</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>279</sup> Between 80,000-100,000 words.

<sup>280</sup> See Chapter Three of this thesis.

<sup>281</sup> The context in which these churches operated is presented in Chapter One of this thesis.

concept of holistic peace, in which peace represents not only the absence of war, but denotes the provision of people's basic needs and working for their human rights and for justice.<sup>282</sup> Though individual Christian and Muslim peacemakers were influenced by ATR tenets of the veneration of common ancestors' belief in the spirit world and sacrificing both to appease the spirits and ancestors and to maintain peace, the denominations operated on another level (Olowola, 1993), and the Methodist Church was no exception.

### **5.1 The Methodist Church Sierra Leone (MCSL)**

The first official Methodist missionaries arrived in Sierra Leone on 12 November 1811<sup>283</sup> and established Methodist Nova Scotian services, followed by the Maroon Chapel, which joined the Methodist connection. St Augustine's Methodist Church was built in 1907 in the middle of Bo, which is now the second largest city in Sierra Leone. The Methodist Church began its tribal or provincial missions in 1877, when the first catechist was sent to Bonthe Island and then to Mokelleh, 50 miles from Bonthe, (Olson, 1969, pp. 87 - 93). The Church's origins in Sierra Leone were not peaceful, but marked by conflicts between the Creoles, British and Irish, and later the Mendes, Kissy, Bullom and Sherbros, (Olson 1969, p. 97 - 101). This "unpeaceful" beginning was such that many Methodist missionaries from the UK lost their lives. Some were captured in Tikonko in the southern Sierra Leone Bo District and buried alive during the Hut Tax war in 1898, and their mass grave can still be found in that town. There were also conflicts between the descendants of freed slaves and the British and Irish missionaries (Fyfe, 1981; Harris, 2013).

Despite early challenges, the MCSL evolved to be an agent of peacemaking before and after 1989. The Methodist Church was part of the British Methodist Church until 1967, when it became an autonomous church with one conference and two synods, which later expanded into three synods and one conference as the official church administrative bodies. As an autonomous church, MCSL dominated Christian-led activities in the eastern and western parts of Sierra Leone.

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<sup>282</sup> See Chapter One of this thesis.

<sup>283</sup> Although freed slaves who were Methodists were already in Freetown by 1792.

In September 1998, I held conversations with the President of the MCSL Conference (1995 - 1998), Revd. Christian V. A. Peacock, in Segbwema in eastern Sierra Leone when he came to ordain me as a minister on probation in circuit, and with the Development Desk Secretary (1997 - 2007), Mr. Joseph Danema, during his visit to my circuit. The conversations show that in 1998, the MCSL had a peace and civic education programme charged with educating grassroots Sierra Leoneans about peace as well as engaging with the warring factions for the cessation of hostilities and peacemaking. After that I was appointed to lead the project in the eastern part of the country, where the war started and where the most destruction took place during the crisis. In fact, the RUFSL had its headquarters in the headquarters of Kailahun District, eastern Sierra Leone, which had hundreds of Methodist village churches and schools. However, this Methodist Church peace and civic education project was implemented throughout the country with the aim of sensitising and building confidence in the ex-combatants and the civil populace to accept peace and accept one another as brothers and sisters, so that they could willingly participate in the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Rehabilitation (DDR) programme (Kumar, 2010; Olonisakin, 2008).<sup>284</sup>

Among the various activities the MCSL undertook was a project in 1999 that ran in nine villages in the eastern region.<sup>285</sup> In this project, they used teaching methods such as drama and role-play, and held seminars such as sensitisation programmes to encourage the disarming of the various warring factions.<sup>286</sup> One of the many roles played by the MCSL, its leaders and its adherents in the peacemaking process focussed on relief efforts. When the war broke out in 1991, it first had an impact in the Kailahun Political District in eastern Sierra Leone, which was almost completely dominated by the MCSL as the major Christian denomination.<sup>287</sup> As a result, most of the displaced people from that area were Methodists or coming from areas with a significant Methodist presence.<sup>288</sup> Some of the refugees were displaced to neighbouring Guinea, while others were

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<sup>284</sup> Conversations with the president of the MCSL Conference.

<sup>285</sup> As regional supervisor for peace and civic education, I led this project in eastern Sierra Leone.

<sup>286</sup> Methodist Church Sierra Leone Conference Document report from the Development secretary, 1998 - 2011, accessible at MCSL headquarters in Freetown.

<sup>287</sup> For example, my circuit had over 40 churches with each church having an active congregation of at least 100 members. I was also part of the Nixon Memorial Methodist Hospital, the largest hospital in the district at the time.

displaced to other parts of Sierra Leone.<sup>289</sup> The MCSL, under the leadership of the Revd. Christian V. A. Peacock, formed a relief department that channelled relief to these people, supplying food items and clothing and helping with the resettlement of internally displaced Sierra Leoneans. These activities are evident in a comment made by Mr Peter Bona when he said:

Even I can remember Reverend Christian V. A. Peacock was one of those who was working hard for the war to come to an end, just within the course of these activities, Reverend Christian V. A. Peacock<sup>290</sup> had to pass away. Reverend Christian V. A. Peacock together with many other religious leaders was working hard so that peace is re-established in this country. Therefore they persisted to act interreligious to ensure that peace is returned to this country (interview with Mr Peter Bona, July 2007).<sup>291</sup>

Other roles the MCSL played included advocacy, peace and civic education, peace education, and spiritual activities and dialogue. Commenting on the role of the MCSL, the Revd. John Bockarie, chairman of the Bo/Kenema district, MCSL, said:

Well Methodists as I know, we, before the war we were talking to the people about peace and during the war we were talking about peace and after the war we were talking about peace. We are peacemakers. We gathered the men and the women and the children. We talked to them how to go about so that peace can be maintained. We are all human beings. We meet people in the towns and in the villages. There is a difference between people in the villages and people in the towns. The people in the villages prefer meeting on Fridays or perhaps in the evenings. But the people in the towns, you can meet them during the day time. But what we do, we ask them to come in groups of men and women sometimes with their children and so we will meet with them and begin to talk to them, putting God first, so after prayers we talk to them as human beings, we have to be friendly with one another, because if you have somebody in mind that he is more than you or you are more than that person, that peace cannot be made, unless you treat yourself together as one. And those who feel perhaps they are rich; it is difficult to approach them. But when we come together we ask that all of us are one in that particular meeting; nobody is superior to the other. So when we speak about superiority we tell the people that we are all one. And what

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<sup>288</sup> I was appointed Regional Supervisor for Peace and Civic Education in the eastern part of Sierra Leone during the war.

<sup>289</sup> Methodist Church Sierra Leone Conference Document 2001, Working Paper AC35/WP 10C, which can be accessed from MCSL headquarters on 4 George Street in Freetown.

<sup>290</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis.

<sup>291</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

we are seeking after is to see that God's will is done and to do God's will; you don't have to see yourself big. The moment you think you are big, you are condemning, and the people will feel condemned. They will not work very much as you want. So we say that we are all one and we think together and we bring peace together. Even when somebody does you wrong you have to take it as if he has done it by mistake. And if you treat people in that way, you will be making peace. But when somebody does you something which is wrong and you take it very high, maybe he will be afraid of you. And so we try to make let the people feel free that we are all one so we will begin and when we begin that then we are showing them the way to peace (interview with Revd. John Bockarie, July 2007).<sup>292</sup>

The meetings and conversations referred to here were, in most cases, conducted at the expense of the Methodist Church, which means that the Church used its economic potential for reconciliation rather than to promote violence. I had the opportunity to be actively involved in the dialogue, meaning that I was a participant-observer of the events that unfolded during and after the crises and can provide first-hand information about the key informants, which is listed in the appendices. These views were confirmed by other interviewees who were non-Christians; for example, Mr. Umaro Koroma and Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis (interview with Mr. Umaro Koroma, July 2007).<sup>293</sup>

Based on my personal experience, I regard the peace and civic education project sponsored by Christian Aid UK and implemented by the MCSL as a success because of its outcome. The aim of the project was achieved, namely to sensitise and build confidence in the ex-combatants and the civil populace to appreciate the DDR programme. Commenting on the DDR programme, Kumar, who had earlier served as a UN peacekeeper in southern Sierra Leone, maintained:

The DDR process was overseen by National Committee for Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (NCDDR) which had the goal of establishing lasting sustainable peace.... The actual process of disarmament involved public announcements and dissemination of information of the disarmament process in the local area. This was done through public meetings, the involvement of community leaders, and the media, especially local radio stations. This built awareness and consensus in the community.... The combatants were also enthusiastic and looked forward to the process. This could be seen in events in Bo Town during disarmament in 2001... The combatants arrived in large

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<sup>292</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>293</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

numbers from the area and the surrounding hinterland enthusiastic about the disarmament process.... They wholeheartedly participate (Kumar, 2010, p. 311ff).

Kumar further asserted that the ex-combatants were demobilised and reintegrated in their communities after the disarmament, (Kumar, 2010, p. 312ff). The MCSL's peace and civic education project was actively involved in demobilisation and the reintegration process that followed disarmament. Thousands of combatants were disarmed, demobilised and reintegrated into their Sierra Leonean communities.

The religious dimension of the war cannot be underestimated, since both warring factions used religious ATR symbols as protection against their perceived enemies. The TRCSL was headed by one of the bishops of the constituent churches of the CCSL, the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL)<sup>294</sup> and the United Methodist Church Sierra Leone Conference (UMC). As leading member of the IRCSL, the Rev. Moses Khanu, stated<sup>295</sup>:

The IRCSL, which the Methodist Church Sierra Leone was part of, was actively engaged in the negotiations that led to the Lomé peace agreement. Priests, imams and other religious personnel travelled around the world, in an effort to lobby and negotiate peace in Sierra Leone (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July, 2007).

The above evidence points to the present status quo: peace was achieved and has now lasted for several years. Christians and Muslims continue to inter-marry. The MCSL actively promoted religious tolerance, as it employed a minister literate in Arabic, Revd. John Loum, to be particularly responsible for Muslim-Christian relations. This promotion of religious tolerance was widely expressed in interviewees' statements during my fieldwork.

The MCSL, as well as the Catholic Church, the UMC and other denominations, used recreational activities such as football to get the factions together with the civil populace, which means that they promoted reconciliation at all levels and with varied methods. In addition, they visited villages to sensitise the victims and the perpetrators of the war to reconcile with each other. Through collaboration with the DDR teams, the National Commission for Disarmament, Rehabilitation and Reintegration, the National Awareness Raising Programme and other bodies, their activities at the DDR camps

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<sup>294</sup> See Chapter Six of this thesis.

<sup>295</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

increased the chances of reconciliation. The expected results of these activities were: (1) the increased participation of ex-combatants in the DDR programme, which aimed to disarm former combatants and reintegrate them into Sierra Leonean society; (2) the speedy disarmament of ex-combatants and (3) the creation of an atmosphere of peaceful co-existence. The beneficiaries, who received financial remunerations and skill training from NCDDR (Kumar, 2010, p. 312), as well as MCSL peace and civic education projects, comprised the Civil Defence Force Sierra Leone, the civil populace, the RUFSL (Kumar, 2010, p. 312), the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, the Sierra Leone army, the government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations Observer Missions in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) (Moiba, 2005/ 2006).

The peace and civic education programmes run by the MCSL continued until 2009, and had varying focuses as the situation in Sierra Leone evolved, such as contributing to disarmament and later ensuring that former fighters and enemies lived together in harmony. The programmes' focus in 2009 - 2011 was on rehabilitation and reconstruction, active peacemaking and development.<sup>296</sup> The MCSL contributed significantly to the end of the war through its work in partnership with Christian Aid UK in this peace and civic education project. The project appointed supervisors in all regions of Sierra Leone, where they operated to ensure that reconciliation workshops were held and peace negotiations and the education of the civil population were carried out. They promoted activities such as sensitisation campaigns, football matches, plays and meetings with the local people within their own environment. The successes of these activities were evaluated through the responses of the participants after the completion of the activities (Moiba, 1999). The evaluation focussed on how willing the various participants were regarding forgiveness, taking part in the DDR programme (Kumar, 2010) and participating in transitional justice systems (Hancock and Zeren, 2010).

Music was also used to promote peace, not only through peace songs in the Methodist Church, but also in other locations, such as the marketplaces and local court venues where people regularly gathered. Music helped people, both combatants and victims, to come together and relax in a cordial atmosphere. The musicians also created a common platform for all involved in the crisis to engage in dialogue. The money the musicians

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<sup>296</sup> Project reports from MCSL and from reports from Conference documents in 2003.

made was used to promote this kind of musical activity of reconciliation. Pastor Alfred Gbla, head of Sierra Leonean languages in Milton Margai College of Education and Technology in Freetown, commented:

Even in the area of music, it was the religious musicians that made money, Alpha Bassie, this [...] Donald and Ara. They were the ones who made money- singing praising God, appealing to God to help and bring the peace; appealing to people to come nearer to God because you can die at any time. There was a serious religious revival, unlike what is happening now, after the war the churches are no more full as it used to be (interview with Pastor Alfred Gbla, July 2007).<sup>297</sup>

The musicians' messages also addressed why people should be peaceful. Although the texts of the music played for peace were not necessarily theologically sound, the vast majority of people in Sierra Leone seemed to enjoy the rhythms of the peace songs promoted by the MCSL and other peacemaking bodies in Sierra Leone. Music was also central in spiritual activities in the promotion of peace, which I examine below.

### **5. 1.1 Christian Spiritual Activities and Dialogue**

In addition to the visibility of Christians, ATR adherents and Muslims in peacemaking, advocacy, dialogue, relief effort and educational activities, churches in Sierra Leone were also engaged in spiritual<sup>298</sup> activities such as prayer, (interview with Pastor Gbla, July 2007)<sup>299</sup> church services, fasting and reading and publishing inter-faith documents.<sup>300</sup> As the Revd. John S. Bockarie points out, the Methodist Church encouraged its teachers in the more than 100 schools it owns in Sierra Leone to teach peace as well as to train children to be peace ambassadors. He maintained:

the Methodist Schools I think here in the Bo District, we have about fifteen, the main schools although the government is trying to let schools be on their own. In the past, we had fifteen schools now we may have maybe twenty or more. And in Kenema we have about nine. I don't know about Kailahun/Kono now. But I think we have about fifty or so in the Kailahun District. We have peace education teachers. Of course, we expect every teacher to teach about peace.<sup>301</sup> And we have been telling

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<sup>297</sup> Interview with Pastor Alfred Gbla, July 2007.

<sup>298</sup> See the speech of President Amad Tejan Kabbah to the WCRP in Amman, which shows the peaceful co-existence of religions in Sierra Leone.

<sup>299</sup> Interview with Pastor Gbla, July 2007.

<sup>300</sup> E.g., the interreligious publications, 2006, CCSL Freetown.



them that unless we encourage the children to be talking to them about peace, they will grow up knowing not what actually we mean by peace. And so they have been teaching them about peace (interview with Revd. John Bockarie, July, 2007).<sup>302</sup>

Like the MCSL, many churches prayed for peace during and after the war, (interview with Bishop George Biguzzi, March 2009).<sup>303</sup> The prayers held for peace were perceived as a petition made to God pertaining to peace, with the thousands of prayers rising from people's hearts and minds to God. They were not trying to force God to make peace, but rather to show humility towards a supreme being whom they thought was almighty. Prayers were also said in silence during many occasions when people gathered for peacemaking, and churches facilitated dialogical initiatives to pray for peace. At an ecumenical meeting in Freetown in the early years of the war, Revd. Christian V. A. Peacock offered the following prayers:

Oh God our help in ages past, our help in times to come, help our country to see peace at this very difficult time in our country's history. Use us as religious leaders to be instruments of peace, as you always used the prophets of old to deliver your people. Help us as a Church and as an ecumenical council to prioritise peace and tranquillity for our beloved country, Sierra Leone.<sup>304</sup>

The MCSL also engaged in religious accountability, which means that they followed the teachings of Christ in the Beatitudes (Matthew Chapters 5, 6 and 7) and co-operated with other Methodists,<sup>305</sup> Pentecostals, United Methodists and other churches<sup>306</sup> in carrying out these activities. According to the World Council of Churches (WCC), of which MCSL became a member in 1967, the Methodist Church in Sierra Leone has a membership of 50,000 distributed among 244 congregations and 85 pastors. Furthermore, according to the WCC's publication on MCSL:

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<sup>301</sup> See also the interviews with Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, Mr. Alpha Brima Bah, Mr. Umaro Koroma, Mr. Taky Jalloh, Miss. Muloma Janneh and Miss Seibatu Rogers, in Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>302</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>303</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>304</sup> A prayer by Revd. Christian V. A. Peacock at the opening of the CCSL meeting in peacemaking, May 1991.

<sup>305</sup> Countess of Huntingdon Connection, West African Methodist Church and UBC.

<sup>306</sup> Anglican Diocese of Freetown, The Anglican Diocese of Bo, Lutheran Church, African Methodist Episcopal, The American Wesleyan Church, The Seventh day Adventist Church, The Nigerian Baptist Convention, Assemblies of God Church and the Roman Catholic Church.

The church continues to manage many primary schools and 14 secondary schools. It also participates in the national adult literacy programme. The MCSL is greatly concerned about unemployment problems, heavy migration to urban areas and the consequent growth of slums, and the urgent need for low-cost housing, safe water supply and sanitation. It runs a programme on HIV/AIDS in three regions - Freetown, South and East. The church maintains the Nixon Memorial Methodist Hospital with financial aid from the Methodist Church in Great Britain. The hospital runs a nurses' training programme in cooperation with the Roman Catholic hospital and a community health project. The MCSL has opened a new community centre for youth empowerment and the promotion of the fight against HIV/AIDS. It is intended to build such centres in other urban areas in the country.<sup>307</sup>

This is a clear indication of the privilege of the MCSL. The question of privilege, on which Revd. Sam Joe Ellie<sup>308</sup> has commented, is also addressed in an article by Velasco (2005) reflecting on theoretical ideas on religion and violence. Velasco (2005) argues that based on historical examples from the Hispanic world, violence is not at all a necessary part of religion. However, commenting on identity, power, privilege and difference, Velasco (2005) asserts that “religion as a sign of identity can allow for a systematic and religiously correct resource for violence, religious legitimising of power and violence that goes along with its practice, due to privilege, and finally difference.” He maintains that multi-religiosity tends to be integrated in view of a global frame of cohabitation, which means that world religions cohabit in various contexts. These contexts must become stronger from the search for a consensus necessarily based on religiocentric and ethnocentric stances; if such reconciliation is not sought, then violence between religions becomes the order of the day, and the tendency towards local as well as international disorder becomes more probable.

As exemplified in the deed of foundation for the MCSL as well as other churches in Sierra Leone, all religions seem to view themselves as ethical defenders, a view elaborated on by Leirvik (2002). The Methodist, Anglican, Catholic and non-mainline denominations, i.e., churches of African descent and Pentecostals, were no exception to perceiving themselves as ethical guarantors for society (interview with Alhaji Dr Mohammed Hasin Tunis, July 2007).<sup>309</sup> This ethical dimension makes it possible to

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<sup>307</sup> <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/methodist-church-sierra-leone>. [Accessed 22 September 2015].

<sup>308</sup> See the attached Appendices of this thesis.

<sup>309</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

argue that religions may take the responsibility to be accountable to their adherents. Drawing on this concept, differences and misunderstandings are always sure to prevail if (and only if) we do not resort to dialogue. In a dialogical situation, all parties can be in agreement to disagree, but at the same time be willing to work together for the common human interest. Communication is one of the extremely valuable resources (interview with Mr. Alghali, Mr. Jalloh, Mr. Janneh, Miss Rogers, and others, July 2007)<sup>310</sup> on which the religions and religious organisations such as the CCSL, IRCSL,<sup>311</sup> and MCSL were greatly focussed during and after the war. According to the WCC:

Through the joint theological hall and a lay training centre the church continues to prepare its members for the ongoing mission and outreach of the Christian community in Sierra Leone. The Bunumbu Press, which has been responsible for all Christian literacy work and publication, was destroyed during the war. Progress is being made to revive the work. This programme still continues to serve all the churches in Sierra Leone.<sup>312</sup>

On the other hand, individual Methodists were influenced by ATR and also engaged with both Muslims and other Christians in Sierra Leone for dialogue, which led to cooperation and working together to foster peace. For example, the Methodist minister Revd. Amara Kpagoi joined the Kamajor society in Kenema, in the Eastern Political District of Sierra Leone, and actively became involved in their fighting activities in the District. When asked by the MCSL Conference to explain himself, as this was perceived as a non-Methodist act, he simply remarked that he did it “to defend his family from cruel rebels and disloyal government soldiers” (address by Revd. Amara Kpagoi, during the bi-ennial Conference of the Methodist Church Sierra Leone, 2000).

The co-operation between Revd. Kpagoi and the Kamajor society led to an agreement to be in disagreement between himself and the MCSL, but at the same time, his actions were focussed on those issues that unite and on which the various parties are sure to be in agreement at all times. One such point is the benefit of peace, which can be achieved through dialogue. Dialogue has always been part of human interaction.

Once religions come together in an attempt to dialogue on a solution, the possibility of resolving conflict becomes unavoidable, as is evidenced in Sierra Leonean society.<sup>313</sup> In

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<sup>310</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>311</sup> See Chapter Six of this thesis.

<sup>312</sup> <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/methodist-church-sierra-leone>. [Accessed 23 September 2015].

religious dialogue, one therefore needs to recognise the power of collective leadership, i.e., cooperation between bishops to act as a group, whereby every religion is seen to have the potential to foster peace. This reality was identified in field research from 2006 through 2011, where it was obvious that both Muslims and Christians saw each other as possible resources for peace rather than as obstacles (interviews with Bishop George Biguzzi March 2009 and Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, July 2007).<sup>314</sup> Thus, as documented in Chapter 6 in this thesis, it is only dialogue that can make the difference in both ecumenism and religious tolerance. This includes certain kinds of dialogue that are non-verbal,<sup>315</sup> such as visiting each other's worship places during services and taking full part in the rituals of different religions. It is also important to stress that dialogue is not something peculiar to one religion (Leirvik, 2006, pp. 100 -110); rather, all religions have the ability to dialogue (interview with Alhaji Dr Mohammed Hasin Tunis, July 2007).

While the possibility of dialogue may arise from the commonality of Abraham as an ancestor to Islam, Judaism and Christianity, (Leirvik, 2000, p. 13), the situation in Sierra Leone seems to be completely different (interview with Mr Kemoore Salia, April, 2006 and August, 2008). Religious differences are only absolute, or intolerant, if and when they resist dialogue for interreligious activities; for example, prayer at an ecumenical level, and as the data demonstrate, this was not the case in Sierra Leone. The ethical claims of the religions were seen as presenting an opportunity for dialogue, (interview with Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, July 2007).<sup>316</sup> Christian churches in Sierra Leone appealed to the parts of the New Testament<sup>317</sup> that advocate peace (IRCSL, 2006). In New Testament writings which include a hundred direct references to the term 'peace' itself, suggesting the importance of communication for peacemaking. For example, Christians are called "children of God" when they make peace. Additionally, both Islam and Christianity are "mission" religions. "Mission" here means that both religions have the goal of converting others into their own religion, which can be done

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<sup>313</sup> More details on how the dialogued was organised, under whose leadership and with what authority are also presented in Chapters Four, Six, Seven and Eight of this thesis.

<sup>314</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>315</sup> Lectures at Christ the King College Bo, May 1990.

<sup>316</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>317</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis..

both in one's own country and in other countries. Though this might seem confrontational because of the absolute truth claims of these "mission" religions, it may also be seen as a possibility for peace in the sense that "mission" can be transformed into dialogue and communication, during which there can be a discussion about differences and the possibilities of working for common interests.<sup>318</sup> According to Victoria Saffa, the "New Cultural Consul of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Sierra Leone, Sheik Dr Mohammad Marefat, has described Sierra Leone as the most peaceful nation in the context of religious tolerance".<sup>319</sup> The MCSL is particularly active in promoting this aspect of mission, as indicated by the role played by its ministers and especially Revd. John Loun and Revd. Christian V. A. Peacock, presented in Chapter 4 of this thesis. The MCSL is also very active in the work of the Council of Churches; the CCSL offices, located in the Methodist premises on Richmond Grounds on Kingharman Road in Freetown, were used to provide relief, advocacy and facilities for peacemaking meetings during the war. These meetings saw detailed discussions on peace, disarmament, demobilisation and the reintegration of ex-combatants.

At the beginning of the DDR activities (Kumar, 2010, p. 313), the CCSL and the IRCSL moderators asked the Council executive to convene the two Sierra Leonean delegations in separate meetings in order to facilitate consensus on preconditions for negotiation as well as its procedural framework. It was also agreed that the Council would facilitate joint and exclusive "All-Sierra Leone" meetings in which all religious groups were represented between the delegations (interview with Mr Kemoore Salia, July 2007).<sup>320</sup> The IRCSL also functioned as an informal and neutral channel between the delegations. According to Revd. Moses Khanu, the IRCSL, at the time headed by Methodist primates, was always in the corridors of the peacemaking venue in Togo. They were not formally represented as part of the peace talks, but were present as observers. In so doing, the Council, under Methodist leadership, was able to provide safe and reliable lines of communication that facilitated positions of compromise. There were difficult stages during the negotiations when it seemed that consensus would not be achieved,

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<sup>318</sup> See Chapter Six of this thesis for more concrete details.

<sup>319</sup> <http://slconcordtimes.com/iranian-cultural-consul-commends-sierra-leones-religious-tolerance>. [Accessed 23 September 2015].

<sup>320</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

and it was often because of the Council's guidance and its leadership that agreement was reached after an impasse (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>321</sup>

Many observers from both Sierra Leone and the international community have credited the IRCSL with creating a climate conducive to negotiation, (Moiba, 2005/ 2006, Humper, TRCSL report, 2004, Hirsch, 2001, Sillah, 1994, Adebayo, 2002, and Turay, 2005). In this regard, Turay maintains that "among the numerous players involved in the Lomé peace agreement, the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRC SL) stands out as the most highly visible and effective nongovernmental bridge-builder between the warring factions".<sup>322</sup> Because of the efforts of the MCSL, the United Methodist Church and other denominations, the councils were able to make many initiatives for peace. In early February 1999, the Council initiated a process of dialogue to build support for peace. It held numerous meetings, including with the president of Sierra Leone, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah; the rebel leader of RUFSL, Corporal Foday Sankoh; the leaders of neighbouring African states; representatives of the United Nations and foreign diplomats; and field commanders behind rebel lines (interview with Mr Kemoore Salia, August 2008).<sup>323</sup> All these meetings were financed by Council funds, though they received economic aid from various international church organisations, including the AACC, WCC, WCFRP, the Methodist Church in Britain, the Methodist Church in Ireland, the UMC USA and others.

### **5.1.2 The Economy of Christian Denominations and Peacemaking**

Over 150 years have passed since the first permanent Protestant missionary work began in Sierra Leone in 1811. According to Olson (1967, p. 7), "during those years, hundreds of missionaries have given their lives, millions of dollars have been spent, and countless hours of prayer have been poured out that people of Sierra Leone might be reconciled...". These comments, which prefaced Olsen's research on the history of church activities in Sierra Leone up to 1969, have also proven to be true for the period following 1969, when the MCSL has actively used billions of Leones in its peacemaking efforts.

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<sup>321</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>322</sup> <http://www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/society.shtml>. [Accessed 14 April 2006].

<sup>323</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

As demonstrated in subsequent chapters in this thesis, in Sierra Leone, the use of economic resources by the MCSL, the United Methodist Church and other churches to achieve and maintain peace was visible for all to see. Both on individual bases and as inter-religious bodies, churches implemented projects with the aim of bringing about the end of hostilities.<sup>324</sup> The MCSL Tikonko Agricultural Extension Centre (TAEC) still helps to create jobs for people and train them in new skills, as well as to equip subsistence farmers. While TAEC is now at its lowest point as a result of the war and lack of funding, there are plans for reviving the institution to continue to provide both skills and jobs for Sierra Leoneans. Furthermore, the development arm of the Methodist Church Sierra Leone manages two projects in the south and east, helping communities to develop suitable food security programmes. Plans are on the way to rehabilitate the Kailahun Community Development Project, the Pendembu Women's Project and the Kissy Mission Integrated Project.<sup>325</sup> As Peter Bona stressed in an interview in July 2007, during the civil war, the MCSL and other Christian denominations utilised various institutions and personnel, such as the their advocacy offices, religious ministers and presidents of the Conference or heads of church, to enhance the peace process through dialogue and paying visits to the rebel and government forces to negotiate peace.

However, the MCSL was itself a victim of the war in several ways. The Church lost hundreds of members and many of its parsonages and buildings especially in Kailahun District in eastern Sierra Leone where I served as a Methodist Minister between 1997 and 2000. The parsonage where I stayed in Kailahun was bombed and the Nixon Memorial Methodist Hospital in my Circuit lost many buildings, which were either set on fire by the RUFSL rebels or bombed by peacekeeping forces ECOMOG. The hoses for the Medical doctors and the hostel for the nursing students were, for example, totally destroyed.

According to my observations and reports from church documents, the external figures who gave contributions to the Methodist Church Sierra Leone and other churches included the MCSL's partner bodies, like the Methodist Church Great Britain, the Methodist Church Ireland and Christian Aid UK. Furthermore, the CCSL and the IRCSL have other contacts supporting its work, such as the World Council of Churches

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<sup>324</sup> <http://www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/abbrev.shtml>. [Accessed 8 April 2009].

<sup>325</sup> <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/methodist-church-sierra-leone>. [Accessed 23 September 2015].

and their denominational sister churches in the UK, USA and other African countries, especially the All African Council of Churches (AACC), with headquarters in Kenya. These allies came to the aid of the Methodists, Anglicans and Catholics, as well as the CCSL and IRCSL, providing both economic and moral support. Such contributions from abroad helped with the running of projects for peacemaking, peace building, dialogue, reconciliation and relief. According to Jalloh:

The Methodist Church as a religious body in Sierra Leone played a very great role – they provided humanitarian relief in the form of NGO organisations. They helped in establishing camps for the displaced and coordinated with other organisations like FAWE in establishing trauma centres (interview with Jaky Jalloh, July 2007).<sup>326</sup>

The churches also used their economy to conduct trauma healing, in a relatively organised society than the situation faced by the local NGOs in neighbouring Liberia, engaged in trauma healing (Abramowitz, 2014). According to Kumar:

The reintegration process is largely invisible compared to the disarmament and demobilisation process. It is a process of individual ex-combatants returning to the community and attempting to assimilate as useful citizens. One of the visible signs was the increased presence of NGOs and other grassroots level organisations involved in training and skill development. This process was supervised by the NCDDR and prominent NGOs like the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ). Besides their direct work, these organisations also supported smaller NGOs and organisations in their work of assisting reintegration. These efforts depended on the funds provided by donors and other agencies involved in the peace (Kumar, 2010, p. 314).

I was personally involved in workshops conducted by the Methodist Church Development Department to train us as trauma healers. After those workshops, we were sent into the communities, and I implemented trauma-healing activities such as counselling and prayers throughout my stay in Sierra Leone. Furthermore, according to Seibatu Rogers:

Christians contributed by providing relief for displaced people and refugees from Liberia. The CCF, you know that it is the Christian Children's Fund; children were greatly affected by the war. This was one of those bodies that helped children in this country during the war (interview with Miss Seibatu Rogers, July 2007).

In the same light, according to Muloma Janneh, "They, Sierra Leonean churches, established organisations like CRS – Catholic Relief Services [...] to help children.

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<sup>326</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.



They also established displaced camps and resettlement for the displaced people as well” (interview with Miss Seibatu Rogers, July 2007).<sup>327</sup> Such views were further confirmed through the examination of written documents from the MCSL, UMC, RC, CCSL, IRCSL and other churches in Sierra Leone.<sup>328</sup> The churches also gave out “microcredit” to displaced people in the camps and in the villages and towns. Revd. Sam Joe Ellie described this system:

Then again the Inter-Religious Council alongside with CCSL, they worked on this micro project. We discovered that the refugees and the displaced in the camps, we were not too sure how long they were going to stay, and how they were able to get their living and those things they would get. So we worked on [that] as Christians to provide micro-credit projects for them; we would go and then count on the family members and if you have got [a family was] up to eight, we would provide them with a heavy sum of money, and it’s good that wherever they stayed, they were kind of in the bush with land around them, some were not very far from the cities, they would come out into the city and buy those things that they would go, things like soap making, and then some agricultural work, we introduced that to them and anytime we were introducing we should get somebody who was a Christian and an able preacher and then we worked alongside with them. Whilst they were doing it the priest would be there and preach more that of peace. Everything we did there was in favour of peace to return to this country, even to get those refugees, displaced to be saved. The refugees were, of course, involved in these skill training (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).<sup>329</sup>

These economic activities were sponsored by the WCRP of the UN (Kumar, 2010) and several other international humanitarian organisations. I am however, reluctant to declare the Methodist Church as the sole protagonist in these peacemaking efforts, yet it is clear that this organisation was among the major actors in the campaign for peace. This is so not only because it hosted the CCSL and IRCSL, which played a considerable role in peacemaking and dialogue, but also because of its visibility in the provision of relief, engaging in dialogue and advocacy in various parts of the country.<sup>330</sup> This role is evident in comments made during interviews with Mr. Peter Bona and Revd. John Bockarie, as highlighted above. There were also numerous churches involved in peacemaking in Sierra Leone.

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<sup>327</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>328</sup> Unpublished Conference documents and development reports from these churches which I accessed.

<sup>329</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>330</sup> <http://www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/society.shtml>. [Accessed 14 April 2006].

### 5.3 Other Christian Denominations as Peacemakers

The Methodist Church was not the only denomination involved in the peacemaking roles presented above. On a more general level, documents, along with my experience as a participant-observer and empirical data show that there were numerous Christian denominations on record as having played a substantial role in peacemaking both during and after the civil war. These churches include, but are not limited to, the UMC, the Anglican Dioceses Bo and Freetown, the Roman Catholic Mission's Makeni and Kenema Dioceses and the Archdioceses of Freetown and Bo, as well as the Seventh-day Adventist Church through its Adventist Development Rehabilitation Agency (ADRA).<sup>331</sup> It was these same Christian bodies that met with Foday Sankoh, urging him to make peace with the government, amidst the religious structure of Sierra Leone. described in Chapter 1, subsection 1.7.1 of this thesis.

According to Olson, "... since missionary work began in Sierra Leone in 1811... that land symbolised the end of the inhuman slave trade and was, therefore, chosen as the first mission field in Africa by protestant mission boards"(Olson, 1969, p.7). There are more Christian denominations in Sierra Leone today than during the timeframe Olson examines. Nevertheless, his argument that Sierra Leone has been difficult to convert to Christianity despite the countless efforts by Christian missionaries can be characterised as true due to the low number of Christians in Sierra Leone, compared with, for example, Ghana, whose first missionaries came from Sierra Leone (Olson, 1969, p. 204).<sup>332</sup>

Though Christianity is not a dominant religion in Sierra Leone based on the number of its adherents, it has greatly influenced the majority of Sierra Leoneans through its provision of education and other welfare for the common people. This means that the church is a major institution that has achieved high respect in Sierra Leonean communities.

The Catholic Church was among the visible institutions involved in peacemaking during and after the civil war. Though it is not a member of the Council of Churches in Sierra

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<sup>331</sup> Observations and conversations conducted with stakeholders, both Christians and Muslims, during the research period.

<sup>332</sup> This reference to Olson is the most recent book on Church history in Sierra Leone, and this thesis expands further on his work.

Leone, it had an active role in the IRCSL. Apart from its inter-religious role, Catholic leaders made a significant contribution to the disarmament process championed by the bishop of Makeni when he exchanged prisoners of war. The Catholic Church had the Catholic Relief Services, CARITAS, CAW, local congregations and parishes across the country pray for peace and became involved in providing relief items to refugees and displaced people at various camps in Sierra Leone. When involved in relief, advocacy, and the provision of leadership and peacemaking, they were inspired by Jesus' social teaching that Christians must be peacemakers. The Bishops of Makeni and Kenema, as well as the Archbishop of Bo and Freetown are all on record as having made statements and appeals for the end of the war. Bishop Biguzzi of Makeni, northern Sierra Leone informed me that he personally made an appeal on 14 April 1994 (conversations with Bishop Biguzzi March 2009),<sup>333</sup> in the last paragraph of which he maintained that nobody wants war, but nobody seems able (or willing) to stop it. (A Speech delivered by Bishop Biguzzi in April, 1994).<sup>334</sup> According to Mr. Olu Alghali:

The Catholic mission undertook programmes sponsored by CARITAS. The St John Hospital in Makeni and in fact there is another one being built again in Makeni by the Catholic Mission. The religious organisations complement the efforts of government. They are depending on aid, something that will not last forever. Catholic Mission in Sierra Leone set up what they called "Children associated with the War", CAW for short. CAW led by Revd. Fr. Theophilus Momoh, played a major role in terms of getting the children who were involved in the war to get help (interview with Mr Olu Alghali, July 2007).<sup>335</sup>

## 5.4 Summary and Conclusion

The focus of this chapter has been on Christian denominations as peacemakers in action, as exemplified by the MCSL. Thousands of Christian groups and individuals in churches turned out to be peacemakers in action during and after the war, including the Revd. Christian V. A. Peacock, who was highly active in faith-based diplomacy for peacemaking before his death in 1998. The churches' manner of peacemaking in Sierra Leone was both "religious"<sup>336</sup> and "non-religious" in nature, and Christian

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<sup>333</sup> Accessed in a conversation with Bishop George Biguzzi, March 2009.

<sup>334</sup> Accessed in a conversation with Bishop George Biguzzi, March 2009.

<sup>335</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>336</sup> Religion refers to things done by faith groups, whereas non-religious refers to actions that are track-two or diplomatic in nature.

denominations like the MCSL, the Catholic Church, the SDA Church, United Brethren in Christ and others cared for the internally displaced Sierra Leoneans, irrespective of their faith, through the provision of relief and counselling and trauma healing like in neighbouring Liberia (Abramowitz, 2014).

The evidence demonstrates that there was a wide range of activities carried out by faith-based organisations and Christian individuals acting on behalf of their denominations as well as acting on their own behalf. There were intra-denominational as well as inter-denominational actions for peace, as well as interfaith and intra-faith actions and dialogue and the strengthening of transitional justice through truth-telling and forgiveness mediated by the TRCSL. The Methodist Church and other churches also supported the work of the TRCSL and the Special Court of Sierra Leone.

The peacemaking role of the MCSL, the United Methodist Church, the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations was very prominent for all Sierra Leoneans and other observers to see. These activities included advocacy for peace, relief, capacity building, peace education and accountability for peace and development. The Christian denominations organised health work and set up educational institutions to promote peace and other development work across the entire country, as presented in Chapters Six and Seven.

Considering the religious tolerance achieved in Sierra Leone, the openness and multi-level organisation of the Christian denominations gave people the necessary trust for their peacemaking activities to be effective. The only obstacle to full co-operation was the absence of the Catholic Church from membership in the CCSL. However, the Catholic Church met other churches through its membership in the IRCSL. Additionally, I observed that many members of the Catholic Church and the other Christian denominations often belonged to the same ATR societies. In the Kamajors, Gbintiis, Kapras, Gbangbaniis, Jollays, Bubu and Lantern ditto, both Christians and Muslims could be members of these specialised arms of secret societies.

Christian denominations were more or less united on the issue of peace, not only through the activities of the CCSL, but also as individual churches through the spiritual activities of public prayers and the preaching of sermons in the interest of peace (Bio, n. d.), <sup>337</sup> as well as public acts of resistance to violence and aggressive attitudes. The

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<sup>337</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis.

MCSL was not only a visible actor in the peacemaking efforts, it was a major player in the struggle for religious tolerance, as it had a minister, Revd. John Loun, who was versed in Islamic studies and was responsible specifically for inter-religious relations. He travelled throughout Sierra Leone promoting inter-religious as well as inter-denominational peacemaking efforts, especially before the war.

Consequently, one can conclude that without the intervention of the Christian denominations in the country, the war might have festered for far longer. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the different denominations complemented each other's efforts throughout the peacemaking process. For example, the Catholics focussed on children involved in or affected by the war and on other war victims, and also continued to provide the manpower for the exchange of prisoners, as carried out by Bishop Biguzzi,<sup>338</sup> and for the supply of food and other relief items to victims of war through the CRS and CARITAS. The Methodists focussed on relief, peace and civic education and hosting the CCSL and the IRC SL at their Richmond Grounds compound on Kingharman road in Western Freetown.

The Seventh Day Adventist Church also had Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) engaged in large-scale relief activities. The UMC, the Anglicans, and other Christian denominations demonstrated their care for both victims and perpetrators of the war as they engaged in trauma healing activities and peace education and ecumenism. The grassroots strength of the Christian denominations helped immensely in peacemaking, as they have a large following in the entire country. The churches have been, and continue to be regular providers of education and empowerment, building trust both between themselves and in the communities they serve in Sierra Leone. Without these Christian denominations, it would have been very difficult for the war to come to an end, or for the internally displaced people and refugees from Liberia to find temporary residence, most having become homeless due to the large-scale burning of houses by rebels.

Based on my observations, however, the role of the Christian denominations was grossly affected because of the challenge the denominations encountered particularly as the church buildings became victims of the war. Many Methodist schools and parsonages were burnt down or totally destroyed. The denominations not only acted as

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<sup>338</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis.

individual churches, but also worked inter-religiously and ecumenically, The peacemaking activities of the Christian denominations were often achieved amidst conditions in which they themselves became homeless or rootless, particularly as the church buildings became victims of war, and many Methodist schools and parsonages were burnt down or totally destroyed. Yet, the denominations not only acted as individual churches, but also worked inter-religiously and ecumenically, as I examine in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 6 THE COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND THE INTER-RELIGIOUS COUNCIL AS PEACEMAKERS IN ACTION

### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter addresses the role of the Council of Churches Sierra Leone (CCSL) and the Inter-Religious Council Sierra Leone (IRCSL) in society before, during and after the conflict. The war started in 1991 and was officially concluded on 7 July 1999, although there continued to be violations of the ceasefire until 2002. Among the issues addressed in the peace agreement were disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration of the ex-combatants and the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Sierra Leone (TRCSL)<sup>339</sup> and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). The CCSL and the IRCSL were actively engaged in the social, economic, religious and political aspects of the country during this time (personal experience and Koroma, 2001, p. 67).<sup>340</sup>

In an address to Catholic bishops from Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea in the Vatican, Pope John Paul II remarked:

During my visit to West Africa in February last year [1991], I was deeply struck by the level of reciprocal respect between Christians and Muslims. This mutual openness gives rise to that ‘dialogue of everyday life’ which makes it possible for citizens of the same country truly to support each other in serving the common good (Koroma, 2001, p. 69).

The CCSL and the IRCSL and their leaders were moral institutions, and they became moral guarantors for the peace accord. These religious bodies were engaged in programmes and projects geared towards making and sustaining peace (Little, 2007, pp. 296 - 297). They were elevated to this role through the statutes of the Lomé Peace Accord (Olonisakin, 2008, p. 35; Lomé Peace Agreement, art. VIII, UN Doc. S/1999/777).

The peace declarations of the religious leaders of the CCSL and the IRCSL were crucial for peacemaking in Sierra Leone, since most Sierra Leoneans considered themselves adherents of either the member churches of the CCSL or of the various religions that

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<sup>339</sup> See Chapter Seven in this these.

<sup>340</sup> Personal experience and see Appendices of this thesis.

were members of the IRCSL (interview with Koroma, July 2007).<sup>341</sup> Among other organisations, the CCSL and the IRCSL, under Mr. Alimamy Koroma and Rt. Revd. Dr. Christian Humper, respectively, initiated various schemes to enhance and maintain the peace that had been achieved. The formation of an “Advocacy Desk” (an office established to advocate for peace) in the CCSL and most of its constituent churches (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007),<sup>342</sup> was a practical approach to achieving the end of the war and maintaining the peace. The CCSL was actively involved not only in the provision of relief and medical supplies, but also in advocacy through its “Advocacy Desk,” inter-religious co-operation for peacemaking (Little 2007, p. 286 - 301) and dialogue (interviews with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie; Mr Umaru Koroma; Pastor Alfred Gbla; Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, July 2007),<sup>343</sup> as indicated by Mr. Abdul Gaba:

As far as I am concerned the relationship between Muslims and Christians is cordial because really they cooperate. I am a Muslim but my wife is a Christian. Well, we live happily. I allow her to go to church on Sundays and I go to pray on Fridays. She invites me to her church and I honour the invitation and I invite her to my mosque and she also honours the invitation. Well for the children, like the boy child he is learning Arabic because both I and my wife allow them to do that. But on Sundays, their mother takes them to church to worship. We teach them about both major religions in Sierra Leone so that they can make their own choice once they are adults (interview with Mr. Abdul Gaba, August 2009).<sup>344</sup>

The IRCSL functioned as a facilitator between the government and the rebels (Little 2007, p. 294; Olonisakin, 2008, p. 35), and their work was recognised by numerous individuals, as well as by both national and international organisations. The US ambassador to Sierra Leone at the time, Joseph Melrose, observed that “the Inter-Religious Council raised concerns of the average Sierra Leonean. When things looked bad in the negotiations, they kept the dialogue going” (Little, 2007, p. 294). Inter-religious respect has been the common experience of people at all levels in Sierra Leonean communities, villages, towns and cities, and even within families, who often

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<sup>341</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>342</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>343</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>344</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.



have relatives of different religious connections and practices (Lapma, 1999).<sup>345</sup> Concerning the IRC SL, according to Revd. Moses Khanu, “collectively, under the Council of Churches, they played a very significant role, by providing on a daily basis, basic supplies, for the displaced communities and also the Liberian refugees” (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>346</sup>

The CCSL was founded in 1924, and currently has 19 full members and 28 affiliate members.<sup>347</sup> The IRC SL was formed through an initiative of the CCSL (Little, 2007, p. 78) on 1 April 1997. Its current membership includes Protestants, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals and indigenous churches, such as the Church of the Lord Aladura, the Salvation Army in Bo, and other churches of African origin. The Islamic faith groups include the Sierra Leone Muslim Congress, the Supreme Islamic Council, the Council of Imams, the Federation of Islamic Organizations, the Sierra Leone Missionary Union and the Federation of Muslim Women in Sierra Leone. Together, these institutions played a very important role in bringing the ten-year-old armed conflict to an end (Little 2007, pp.78 - 98), by encouraging both the government of Sierra Leone (GSL) and the Revolutionary United Front of Sierra Leone (RUFSL) to negotiate a way out of the conflict (Moiba, 2005/2006).

The CCSL and the IRC SL were engaged in “track two”<sup>348</sup> diplomacy (Little, 2007, p.179) during and after the war. Both organisations are part of the World Council of Religion for Peace (WCRP). Under its General Secretaries, Alimamy Koroma and later Kemoore Salia, the CCSL engaged in relief and rehabilitation projects during the war, namely through a department established during the war to assist Liberian refugees and internally displaced people (Little, 2007, p. 287).

The activities of these ecumenical bodies are well known in Sierra Leone (Little, 2007, p. 290; also interviews with Bishop George Biguzzi, March 2009; Alhaji Dr. Mohamed Tunis, Mr. Umaro Koroma, July 2007).<sup>349</sup> and include education, health, pastoral care,

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<sup>345</sup> <http://search.csmonitor.com/durable/1999/12/23/p11sl.htm>. [Accessed 24 August 2004].

<sup>346</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>347</sup> The Roman Catholic Church is not a member of the CCSL and EFSL in Sierra Leone.

<sup>348</sup> Informal.

<sup>349</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

dialogue and advocacy, relief and other welfare projects.<sup>350</sup> According to Revd. Sam Joe Ellie:

The Council of Churches again ordered that every mission and every conference set up an advocacy desk. And this was done to every member Church of the Council of Churches. They set up an advocacy desk, peace was preached from the pulpit, in the Sunday schools and the communities and then people even volunteered to go out to the bush to talk with the rebels. When the rebel war was intensified, another step of which the Council of Churches took off which I am a member, for all the churches in this country, we pleaded with the government, and selected certain areas where we could have camps for refugees and even our people, because even before other people came out to our country, our people were displaced. We went to the government and asked that we have displaced camps because our people, the towns were burned down and people had no places to stay, except in the camps. The Council of Churches which involves Christians in this country helped to give us money to see that camps were open for displaced people in our country (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).<sup>351</sup>

This shows how the Council of Churches had direct communication with the other churches in the country, as well as the general Muslim population, which culminated in the formation of the IRCSL. The churches were asked to establish departments in their various headquarters so that they could collectively and individually work for peace. The CCSL helped in raising funds for the various programmes of its constituent churches (conversations with Mr Kemoore Salia, April 2006 and 2009).<sup>352</sup>

There are few examples of interreligious hostility in modern Sierra Leone. In 2002, two events challenged religious leaders' complacency regarding Christian-Muslim relations in the country. According to Rt. Revd. Tom J. Barnett, bishop of the Lutheran Church in Sierra Leone:

The first of two events [.....] was in the year 2002 when H. E. Alhaji Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, President of the Republic of Sierra Leone, had cause to ban a cassette recording by a Muslim which was deemed to be offensive and derogatory of Christianity. Three years after that ban, the religious community was shocked when some militant Muslim attempted to set fire to a church building in the east end of Freetown after a misunderstanding with an employee of the church (Foulah 2006, p. ii).

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<sup>350</sup> Speech by a former vice president of the Methodist Conference Sierra Leone, 8 - 15 May 2003, during the church's 36<sup>th</sup> annual conference.

<sup>351</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>352</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

The violence perpetrated by the war combatants (Mitton, 2015) was addressed by the CCSL and the IRCSL. As Secretary-General of both organisations, Alimamy Koroma decided to tackle the war itself and not just respond to its menace through relief (Little, 2007, p. 288). Regarding this, Revd. Sam Joe Ellie maintained:

That was depending on how much we had; relief of every kind, used clothing, medicine and even we tried to get people come from other countries, like MSF (Medicines sans Frontiers), that was responsible for the medication of the people, The Red Cross, that went to the bush to the rebels; Christian Aid, they provided food, they provided clothing and they provided building materials, to build up these refugee camps all around, zinc and whatever you may need to get their place of stay put up. Their food and their welfare, they were provided securities in the camps where they were; and we had even mercy ships that came out; these were giving out written materials, and then they also were providing Bibles out to even the rebels out in the bush (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).<sup>353</sup>

Through frequent representations and requests to influential people in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Togo to help negotiate peace, these bodies were able to exert enormous influence within a relatively short time. The IRCSL and the CCSL launched a campaign to raise awareness among the civilian population, including members of parliament, traditional chiefs, news media, youth and students in tertiary institutions regarding the real consequences of the war on the lives of Sierra Leoneans (Little, 2007, p. 288).

The role of the CCSL and the IRCSL in peacemaking is evident, and was demonstrated especially through interfaith activities, which are a powerful tool for peacemaking.<sup>354</sup> Thus, the attitudes of the people of Sierra Leone towards other people's religions was their greatest resource. Religious tolerance, religious respect and religious neutrality were central tenets in the peacemaking efforts of the CCSL and the IRCSL. Even those who were not religious had respect for religious ecumenical organisations and their role in the peacemaking efforts (Little, 2007, p. 290).

The key to the religious leaders' ability to influence the making of peace and social recovery in Sierra Leone was their reputation for neutrality or impartiality. As quoted earlier, Bishop Biguzzi said: "Oh how helpful it was to be seen as neutral in the war"

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<sup>353</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>354</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

(interview with Bishop George Biguzzi, March 2009).<sup>355</sup> The next section will address this policy of neutrality adopted and practiced by the CCSL and the IRCSL.

## 6.1 The Policy of Neutrality

Though it is almost impossible to be neutral when one is ethically and morally minded, in this case, the term refers to the concept of impartiality. The CCSL and IRCSL's policy of neutrality was very useful in demonstrating to the fighting factions that their aim was to work in the interest of peace, and not to side with one particular faction in the war. Its priorities were to avoid bias and build confidence in all parties involved. CCSL and IRCSL confidence-building measures included, but were not limited to, frequent visits to the various warring factions and international groups, contact with the UN and carrying out functions in the name of peace, as advised by their contacts (Olonisakin, 2008, p. 35).

According to Thomas Mark Turay (2005), "Among the numerous players, the Inter-Religious Council stands out as the most highly visible and effective non-governmental bridge builder."<sup>356</sup> The Bishop of Makeni was very active in the IRCSL and he maintained that he was neutral in his activities in IRCSL. The Bishop of Makeni greatly valued neutrality, as he indicated to me in a conversation in March 2009 (interview with Bishop George Biguzzi, March 2009).<sup>357</sup> In the book, *Peacemakers in Action*, Mr. Alimamy Koroma stated in an interview that the CCSL and IRCSL were neutral in their visits to the rebels in the bush, the government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and other stakeholders in Sierra Leone (Little, 2007).<sup>358</sup> The CCSL and the IRCSL gave advice to both the government and the rebels. The President was advised to listen more carefully to the voice of the rebels (Little, 2007). Due to the impartiality, transparency and accountability of the CCSL and the IRCSL, the rebels invited the IRCSL to a face-to-face meeting in the rebel stronghold in the bush. The invitation was accepted after the IRCSL consulted with the President and the government, who approved the meeting, suggesting that the CCSL and the IRCSL had been able to build up confidence among

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<sup>355</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>356</sup> In "Civil society and peace building: the role of the Interreligious Council of Sierra Leone," Accord: <http://www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/society.shtml>. [Accessed April 2006].

<sup>357</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

the fighting factions (Little, 2007, p. 293). Revd. Moses Khanu, referring to the role played by Sierra Leonean churches, stated that:

Well, it is a very wide and big role if you take it by its compartments, and compartment here means the various denominations, not only focusing on the ecumenical movement which is the Christian Council. But if you take the Catholics, they even have a secretariat in almost every district headquarter town or region from which they played a very significant role in terms of caring for the displaced communities, providing some subsistence for them and some other medical aspects (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>359</sup>

After gaining the confidence of the fighting factions and the civil populace about their impartiality/neutrality, the CCSL and the IRCSL contacted the rebels and government leaders. Another important role of the CCSL and the IRCSL was their visibility in Sierra Leone during times when other national and international stakeholders could no longer act openly. After the 25 May 1997 coup,<sup>360</sup> many civil servants either left the country or went into hiding. The CCSL and the IRCSL did not support the coup, which disrupted most of the peacemaking processes that were underway. Their policy of neutrality did not change, even when the Secretaries-General of the CCSL and the IRCSL were arrested and other church leaders were either put under duress or arrested.<sup>361</sup> This policy was very challenging, and there were some differences with regard to methods within the IRCSL, though these were resolved. For instance, the CCSL differed from the IRCSL in wanting to lead protest marches (Little, 2007, p. 289). In the chaos that emerged after the coup, the CCSL and the IRCSL were actively involved in the negotiations for the peaceful return of the president (conversations with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie and Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007). After the return of President Kabbah and the demise of the AFRC coup leaders, the CCSL and the IRCSL were increasingly visible in mediating peace talks that eventually led to the Lomé Peace Accord in 1999, and eventually the Abuja Accord. According to Kumar (2010, p. 210):

The process of negotiation and arrival at sustainable peace was tortuous and lasted for 4 years from 1996 to 2000. It involved repeated efforts, recurrent violation of agreements, and resumption of hostilities before peace was finally arrived at. The agreements signed were the Abidjan Peace accord (1996), Conakry peace plan (1999), Lomé Peace agreement

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<sup>359</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>360</sup> See Chapter Three of this thesis for more detail, as well as the Appendix 10 .

<sup>361</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis.

(1999) and Abuja agreement (2000). Peace agreements provide the framework for progress towards peace and mandated duties of different actors.

The ecumenical councils in Sierra Leone were major actors throughout this tortuous period of peacemaking, as they were present and active at these meetings through the presence of Islamic and Christian clergy (interviews with Revd. Moses Khanu and Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, July 2007; Olonisakin, 2008).<sup>362</sup> The CCSL organised an interfaith consultation and conference in Freetown on peace, security and reconciliation from 24 – 25 April 2001, which also attracted religious leaders from Guinea. Other important participants were IRCSL members, with the support of their partner organisations, including the World Council of Churches, the World Council of Religion for Peace (Little, 2007, p. 286), the All-Africa Conference of Churches and the Council of Churches in West Africa. The conference was officially opened by the president of Sierra Leone at the time, His Excellency Alhaji Dr. Amad Tejan Kabbah. The CCSL, in collaboration with others, decided that within two weeks six delegates nominated at the conference would visit Presidents Kabbah (Sierra Leone), Taylor (Liberia) and Conteh (Guinea),<sup>363</sup> specifically to inform them about the concerns of the conference. The delegates agreed that for peace, security and reconciliation to be achieved in the region, it was essential that the three Heads of State of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea, should meet at a roundtable conference (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).<sup>364</sup> After the conference, CCSL and IRCSL delegates were also mandated to educate and mobilise the populace and to publish the communiqué from the conference (interview with Mr Kemoore Salia, April 2006).<sup>365</sup>

The findings of the conference report indicated that some Christian student teachers<sup>366</sup> in non-Christian schools were discouraged or prevented from using teaching material contained in the national Religious and Moral Education syllabus, especially in the capital city. Muslim student teachers were reported to have suffered the same fate in

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<sup>362</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>363</sup> Taylor was convicted for crimes against humanity and sentenced for 50 years and imprisoned in Britain.

<sup>364</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>365</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>366</sup> These were teachers undertaking in-service training.

some Christian schools in other towns. Due to these unfortunate incidents, the IRCSL began its *Inter-Religious Publications*, in 2006, aimed at strengthening the peace and religious tolerance already achieved in Sierra Leone. These publications contained contributions by renowned Muslim and Christian scholars, ministers and priests. (Davies, 2006 and Foulah, 2006).

The CCSL and the IRCSL had to pay a price for their high visibility. For example, in January 1999, several members of the IRCSL were attacked, seemingly because of their neutrality, their policy of nonviolence and their desire for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. As they promoted peace by peaceful means, they risked their lives and the lives of their families, who were not in any way secure. For example, when Bishop Biguzzi exchanged prisoners of war while residing in his diocese during the time it was overrun by rebels, he risked both his life and reputation. The arrests of the CCSL Secretary-General and other church leaders were well known in Sierra Leone; however, these events did not thwart religious leaders in their efforts for peace, and their peacemaking role intensified despite the consequences and the circumstances. They remained in the country throughout the conflict; it is therefore not surprising that the UN's permanent representative, Francis Okelo, recognised the role of the religious organisations and encouraged them to begin the conversation that helped to reinstate the dialogue between President Kabbah and the rebel leader Foday Sankoh (Little, 2007, p. 292). These contacts resulted in the signing of the various agreements mentioned above.

This was a very difficult time in Sierra Leone as the churches carried out their peace and civic education projects. Yet, the ecumenical movement strengthened the role of its constituent churches and Christian leaders, and also played its own unique role in advocating peace in Sierra Leone through faith-based diplomacy (Little, 2007, p. 278ff).

### **6.1.1 The CCSL and IRCSL's Faith-based Diplomacy**

The CCSL and IRCSL implemented reconciliation projects through dialogue and training workshops for the groups engaged in the crisis.<sup>367</sup> The IRCSL, for example, broadcast radio programmes to facilitate the signing of the peace agreements. Before the war, the CCSL was engaged in education, health, human resource development

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<sup>367</sup> There were the rebels, the government soldiers, the civil defence forces, Kamajors, Gbintiis, Tamaboroh, etc.

initiatives, youth leadership development, vocational training and evangelism. During the war, both the CCSL and the IRCSL were engaged in humanitarian assistance. The CCSL was among the first and leading organisations to provide humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons nationwide. For example, in January 1999, when almost all international NGOs had left the country, the CCSL handled the humanitarian crisis in Freetown (interviews with Revd. Moses Khanu, Mr. Osman Paran Tarawally, focus group at FBC, Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).<sup>368</sup>

The CCSL and the IRCSL undertook limited development activities. When member churches of the CCSL took the initiative and established the IRCSL, they were able to monitor elections and supervised civil and voter education on the polling day in 1996. They organised information sharing and advised the political leadership on national issues. The CCSL and the IRCSL met with the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) and denounced the coup, thus building confidence in the civilian population despite all the pressure and threats.

In spite of all the obstacles they faced, the CCSL and the IRCSL advocated a “dialogue for peace”, and in the search for peace, they mobilised imams, pastors, lay leaders, paramount chiefs, military police, women’s groups, students and the press. In Sierra Leone, they met with the British High Commissioner and the United Nations Development Programme to plead with them not to abandon the country. They also initiated ambassadorial visits to the government of Guinea to thank them for hosting the government and people of Sierra Leone as refugees, and went to Liberia and met with President Charles Taylor as part of their peacemaking agenda for the Mano River region. They held meetings with President Kabbah and the RUFSL leader Foday S. Sankoh, who was then jailed in Nigeria, and made radio contact with the RUFSL/AFRC fighters in the bush (interview with Bishop George Biguzzi, March 2009).<sup>369</sup> The CCSL and IRCSL also negotiated the release of abducted children and other prisoners of war, visited the RUFSL base and provided strategic humanitarian assistance,<sup>370</sup> and helped in dismantling a potential rebel faction after a meeting at Mammy Yoko Hotel with the

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<sup>368</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>369</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>370</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.



Benguema ex-combatants and the West Side Boys (conversations with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).

The IRC SL also functioned as an informal and neutral channel between the delegations at the Lomé peace talks in 1999. In so doing, the Council was able to provide safe and reliable lines of communication that facilitated positions of compromise. There were difficult stages during the negotiations when it seemed that consensus would not be reached, and it was often because of the Council's guidance and leadership that the issues were resolved and both parties asked to go back to the negotiating table. Many observers (interviewees, Francis Okelo, the UN representative in Sierra Leone during the wars, Church archives, etc).<sup>371</sup> both from within Sierra Leone and from the international community, have given credit to the IRC SL for creating a climate conducive to negotiation. In early February 1999, the Councils initiated a process of dialogue to build support for peace. They held numerous meetings with Sierra Leonean President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the rebel leader Corporal Foday S. Sankoh, the leaders of neighbouring African states, representatives of the United Nations and foreign diplomats, as well as field commanders behind rebel lines (conversations with Mr Kemoore Salia, April, 2006). These dialogue meetings led to the Lomé Peace Accord in July 1999, and subsequently to the Abuja agreement in 2000. Religious leaders from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone also gathered for another interfaith consultation on peace, security and reconciliation in Freetown, Sierra Leone in 2001 to deliberate on how to proceed with action for peace and the popularisation of the Lomé Peace Accord through the power of negotiation. To ensure the success of the Lomé Peace Accord and the Abuja agreement, they visited the RUF SL during their initial preparations to travel out of Sierra Leone for those peace talks. Furthermore, the CCSL and the IRC SL maintained a constant dialogue with the government. After the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord, they distributed the peace agreement to the RUF SL and the AFRC fighters in the bush. They explained the Lomé Peace Accord and established a citizens' fund for disarmament in partnership with the National Commission for Democracy and Human Rights.<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>371</sup> See Appendices of this thesis.

<sup>372</sup> <http://www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/peace.shtml>. [Accessed 27 April 2006].

The period between 1999 and 2002 was a period of high profile for the CCSL and the IRCSL, who worked endlessly in order to ensure that the accords were successful – which they turned out to be, due to these groups’ persistent role in peacemaking in action. The conflict came to an end in 2002, with the RUFSL formally declaring the end of the war, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was formed.<sup>373</sup> Interviewees confirmed that the CCSL and the IRCSL were active in the peacemaking process. Commenting on the role of the CCSL in peacemaking, Revd. Sam Joe Ellie maintained:

They were also privileged at some point and tried to hear the word of God and then to hear about peace. They played a great role in ensuring that even the rebels that came they were killing human beings even their very types from the same country and they all belong to the same soil (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007)<sup>374</sup>

These views are confirmed by my observations, as well as archives, interviewees and transcribed interviews, demonstrating the power of negotiation for the signing of the Lomé Peace Accord, details of which are presented below.<sup>375</sup>

### **6.1.1.1 The Power of Negotiation and the Lomé Peace Accord**

Among the issues addressed in the Lomé Peace Accord in 1999 were the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of the ex-combatants, as well as the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Sierra Leone (TRCSL) (Harris, 2013, p. 137ff) and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) (Mitton, 2015, pp. 6, 70, 189; Government of Sierra Leone, 1999). The CCSL and the IRCSL were the moral guarantors for the peace that had been achieved, and were engaged in programmes and projects in all chiefdoms in the country to sustain the peace. Their preaching and sermons were important in maintaining peace because both factions were members of either one religious body or the other (Bio, n. d. ; Moiba, 2005/ 2006). They educated their various congregations about the Lomé Peace Accord and subsequent agreements, and encouraged them to work together so that it would not fail, as the Abidjan Peace Accord had. This faith-based act was lauded by all parties in Sierra Leone, according to

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<sup>373</sup> See Chapter Seven of this thesis.

<sup>374</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>375</sup> See list of interviewees, interviewed in April 2006 , July 2007, August 2009 through March 2010.

my interviewees. A large majority of interviewees who knew about the activities of the CCSL agreed with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, who said:

The CCSL also, after, when we saw that the rebel war actually was getting to a height, even though we have done all the above things, we decided that every conference sends three representatives and we had a little over 40 to 45 that formed the delegation to the President of this country that was after he had returned back from Guinea. We spoke out our position statement that we are not in favour of the war and all we could do as a church was to see that this war come to an end. That the President and the UN put forward all means and strategies apart from the UN and ECOMOG that were here to fight, that other mechanism be put in place to ensure that this war comes to an end. And that we were against it and that we had no way for it to be seen encouraged. We had written our position statement and that was handed over to the government. And we saw that something was done about it. We had other delegations of CCSL members that went over to Liberia they went and spoke with the other Council of Churches members in that country, to see how we can all work, because we saw that the war came out from Liberia into our own country Sierra Leone so we decided to see if we can go and get and talk with our Christian brothers there and start negotiations for peace, would come out with some help to get peace in this country. And bring the war to an end (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).

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#### **6.1.1.2 The CCSL and the IRCSL in Faith-based Diplomacy**

Christian churches <sup>377</sup>, the Council of Churches were actively engaged in what can be called faith-based diplomacy by bringing the conflicting parties together. With the formation of the IRCSL, its interreligious nature created a real opportunity for peace, and together with the Council of Churches, it later became a very important player in the faith-based diplomacy that followed until the war came to an end (Little, 2007, p. 294 - 295). On this faith diplomacy issue, the Revd. Sam Joe Ellie recounted:

We saw after we have met the government, we see some discrimination in terms of this religion, most of which had their own understanding about the war and they had their own way they wanted to handle this war. And so at that point, we decided to form an organization to be the Inter-Religious Council. The Inter-Religious Council now includes the evangelicals, the Muslims of all types, Catholics as long as it is religion. We were able to get an organization in which everybody [meaning all religions in Sierra Leone] was involved. And then we formed an

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<sup>376</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>377</sup> See Chapter Five of this thesis.

executive and then we opened up a desk, where people are working and they are paid, only to see that all religions in this country work together to see that this war comes to an end and we were able and up to this time we are talking we have the Inter-Religious Council fast on the face of the clock. So with that, we talked to the government again and because we are missions, we are Christians, we almost every mission had talks with their own boards, and their own boards support to send in relief (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).<sup>378</sup>

After the war, schools began to accept and respect students from all walks of life. Inter-marriage was not frowned upon, but often actively encouraged, as family members accepted and respected each other's religious choices (Little, 2007, p. 278). This atmosphere of tolerance was a result of the peacemaking diplomacy efforts that had permeated Sierra Leone society before, during and after the civil war. Thus, one can conclude that the Council of Churches and other inter-religious institutions were active peacemakers. Activities like prayers, fasting, (interview with Bishop Biguzzi, March 2009)<sup>379</sup> interfaith dialogue, (Smock, 2002, pp. 61 - 89), advocacy, (interview with Mr. Kemoore Salia, April 2006)<sup>380</sup> relief, leadership for the TRCSL and the economy were all mentioned by the 46 interviewees as peacemaking efforts during and after the war (interviews with many Sierra Leoneans, both Christians and Muslims).<sup>381</sup>

The provision of active religious leadership,<sup>382</sup> such as running workshops and other projects and activities aimed at bringing about peace and reconciliation, was crucial both to the process of ending the war and to the transitional justice systems established by the peace agreements. The CCSL and the IRCSL were responsible for the day-to-day running of the TRCSL, with the aim of reconciling the people of Sierra Leone after the war. The role of religion in the struggle for justice was seen in the parts played by religious leaders and the religious bodies, which had permanent representatives at the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL). In addition, the Chairman of the TRCSL was a bishop from one of the constituent churches.<sup>383</sup> The role of the CCSL and the IRCSL in

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<sup>378</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>379</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>380</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>381</sup> See Appendix 2 of this thesis.

<sup>382</sup> See Chapter Six of this thesis.

development was also paramount in the lives of ordinary Sierra Leoneans. According to Revd. Moses Khanu:

For the Council of Churches, they catered for both the internally displaced and the other displaced; the refugees who originally came from Liberia and resided in some parts of the country. They provided shelter, they provided food and medicines. But when the war hit a greater part of the country in Sierra Leone, the various denominations like the Baptists, the Methodists, Anglicans, well not so much the Anglicans may be through CCSL, other denominations, the Wesleyans, the UBC, played a very significant role as individual denominations (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>384</sup>

After the CCSL and the IRCSL had succeeded in their peacemaking efforts through confidence-building, neutrality and faith-based diplomacy, they organised experience-sharing sessions every two weeks in Sierra Leone. These sessions were conducted at their headquarters in the Methodist Compound at Kingharman Road in Freetown, and involved reflections on and discussions about the peace process and the way forward.

All the information points to the conclusion that Christians and Christian organisations, ecumenical organisations and inter-faith organisations like the CCSL and the IRCSL were highly involved in the peacemaking process in Sierra Leone. The question that is often raised, especially by observers who are concerned about political intolerance in Sierra Leone, is whether it is possible to translate this religious tolerance into the national politics of Sierra Leone.<sup>385</sup> Politicians have marginalised religion in the past. In the period immediately following independence in 1961 and up until now, politicians have not only been intolerant of each other (Harris, 2013), but seem to hold the opinion that politics in Sierra Leone is a “satanic business”.<sup>386</sup> Following independence, political leaders had a clear intention that religion had to be separated from politics, and during the period from 1989 to 1991, religion was still estranged in political matters in Sierra Leone, as it had become a predominantly secularised country. This attitude led to the marginalisation of religion, morality and ethics in society until the beginning of the

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<sup>383</sup> See the TRCSL report.

<sup>384</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>385</sup> See Chapter Two of this thesis.

<sup>386</sup> Conversation with the minority leader, late Honorable Momoh Pujeh in the Sierra Leone parliament, 2010.

war in 1991. I argue that the silence of the churches and the CCSL was due to fear of the military and the ruling powers, who created instability in the country (Harris, 2013, pp. 4 - 139). In my view, this silence and the marginalisation of ethics and religious moral in politics and policy implementations, allowed the nation of Sierra Leone to descend into war.

However, churches took an active part in the efforts to secure peace in the war period and in the post-conflict Sierra Leone, and are currently engaged in projects which are meant to consolidate the peace achieved. The reasons for this transformation of the church's role are explored in chapter five of this thesis, where it is maintained that there was resurgence of religion in societies and that the church have always retained its importance in the social sphere, even when marginalised by politicians, and that the people and the Sierra Leonean society, helped elevate the churches when politicians had failed to maintain stability.<sup>387</sup> It was the churches that came back and helped bring the peace that is now enjoyed in Sierra Leone (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).<sup>388</sup> Though this peace is a negative peace, and not yet a positive peace, religion has indeed returned to significance in Sierra Leone. I argue that the return of religion contributed to ensuring peace. The use of religious language and symbols led to confidence-building. Religious literature and communication led to a broad-based willingness to work for peace and forgiveness. Religious contacts led to confidence-building and the financing of the various projects undertaken by the CCSL and the IRCSL to care for the poor and the marginalised in Sierra Leone.

Religion is now making not only a silent return, as claimed by some theoreticians (Beyer, 2004; Leirvik, 2004 and others) on religion and violence or religion and peace, but an active resurgence, as seen in the works of the CCSL and the IRCSL and other Christian individuals and churches. Religion can help to bring psychological healing to the victims of violence (Abramowitz, 2014). Though this does not change history, it heals wounds and helps the victims to move beyond the violence. Thus, religion can be both a source of war and violence and a resource for peace, as this thesis argues. This aspect of religion and peacemaking deserves more attention from the academic world, since literature and research in this area is still minimal. Cobban (2005) provides

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<sup>387</sup> See Chapters Four, Five, Seven and Eight of this thesis.

<sup>388</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

examples of religious violence in Asia and compares them with a type of religious tolerance in the African continent. Bruce (2005) traces the role of religion and violence in Ireland, and seems to vindicate Revd. Dr Ian Paisley's behaviours during a period of religious intolerance there. Velasco (2005), on the other hand, identifies factors that link religion and violence, including identity, power, privilege and difference. Nevertheless, this thesis highlights the positive function of religion in the case of Sierra Leone.

Some of the warring factions used Islamic and/or other talismans, which the fighters thought had magical powers. These symbols were widely promoted by the various fighters or faction. The CCSL declared the activities of the rebels and the use of those Islamic symbols unwarranted, and they organised inter-religious prayers (interview with Bishop Biguzzi, March 2009).<sup>389</sup> The CCSL and the IRCSL, recognising the crucial role of religion in the conflict and embarking on a massive campaign to bring about the end of the war, gained further respect in the country. They used their contacts, money, influence and common background of African Traditional Religion to influence the parties to work for the cessation of hostilities. Another reason for religion taking an active part in ensuring the end of hostilities was the growing awareness among the politicians and militants that there was a resurgence of religion in civil society, and that the religious leaders in the CCSL and the IRCSL were stakeholders in rebuilding the country. (Little, 2007, p. 278)

The role of the CCSL and the IRCSL can be addressed from both internal and external viewpoints. There were many internal factors that led the CCSL and the IRCSL to play significant roles during and after the conflict. Among these were: a) the role of religious leaders; b) symbolic actions; c) the use of first and second languages in sermons and negotiations; d) infrastructural resources; e) educational resources; f) membership resources; g) peace and civic education projects and h) the underlying factor of African Traditional Religion (ATR) as a basis for the spread of ideas of atonement and forgiveness.<sup>390</sup> According to Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, he recalled:

Yes, when the war started in 1991, I was a member of what we call the Council of Churches here in Sierra Leone. Upon the hearing of the war, the Council of Churches of which I am a member ordered all the Churches all over the country to set up prayer bands. We were asked to

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<sup>389</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>390</sup> See Chapter One of this thesis.

pray so that this war will not get over the lives and properties of the people of this country. That was the first thing the Council of Churches ordered us to do, and that was done almost in every Church. And in fact, that was the start of this ecumenism. We introduced this working together, whether you are an evangelical, you are a Catholic and those Aladura they encouraged all of us to get into one thinking and then get together for the peace of this country (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).<sup>391</sup> Furthermore, the church should, therefore, carry out its pastoral, prophetic, pedagogical and psychological roles in the post-war Sierra Leone (interview with Omar Param Tarawally, July 2007).<sup>392</sup>

Pastorally speaking, the church should no longer be silent when situations take a wrong direction or are about to do so. The prophetic role of the church should also be emphasised; that is, the church's duty to speak out about injustice and oppression despite opposition. If the CCSL and the IRCSL do not fulfil their prophetic roles, the country is in danger of deteriorating into conflict once again. Pastors, priests, teachers and other church workers should no longer leave decision-making in the hands of a few politicians. The church must be seen as a force to be reckoned with on issues of nation-building through its activities in education, development, spirituality and medical work. Other lessons learned are that our schools must include peace studies and anti-violence studies in the curriculum. The use of violence to solve problems should be discouraged. Finally, the war has taught Sierra Leoneans the bitter lesson that violence is not a solution to any problem; rather, problems should be solved through dialogue and negotiation, and churches should not be silent when things go wrong. The CCSL and the IRCSL can carry out pastoral, prophetic, priestly, psychological and pedagogical roles to maintain peace and stability.

Leopold Foulah<sup>393</sup>, former head of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, and now Dean, Faculty of Arts, at the Fourah Bay College University of Sierra Leone, examines this concept in his article in the *Journal of Philosophy and Religious Studies*:

The Scriptures spoke reconciliation but above all He made the people see it through types, drama, and acts. It is, therefore, the responsibility of this government, the church, and every citizen not only to write and talk

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<sup>391</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>392</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>393</sup> He graduated with a Ph.D in Biblical Studies (NT) from the University of Leeds, UK.



reconciliation but to typologize, dramatize and actualize it in daily deeds so that the offender and the offended can live harmoniously again and make this country a haven of rest for all. Another classical passage that epitomizes reconciliation is the story of the prodigal son in Luke chapter 15. The Father initiates reconciliation through love; the Prodigal Son accepts reconciliation through repentance; the servants worked for reconciliation through duty. But the elder brother tried to hamper reconciliation through pessimism and hate (Foulah, 2006, p.11).

In Sierra Leone, an official end to the civil war that had plagued the country since 1991 was declared on January 5, 2002, marked by a symbolic weapons-burning ceremony in Freetown at which more than 45,000 rebels belonging to the RUFSL turned in their weapons. With the declaration of peace, the United Nations Security Council lifted the ban on the trade in rough diamonds from Sierra Leone, removing this restriction on the nation's economic recovery by engaging in peace and civic education, making use of internal and external resources, the CCSL and the IRCSL demonstrated that the religious factor was paramount in bringing about peace. In another light, J. C. Humper,<sup>394</sup> the chair of the TRCSL and the Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Sierra Leone, stated in his first address:

Your Excellency, the President, Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and High Commissioners present, Honourable Ministers, Members of Parliament, Chiefs and other dignitaries present, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen. On behalf of my colleagues and myself, I wish to express our appreciation to the President, the International community and the people of Sierra Leone for appointing us to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The road to today has been a long one. The Lomé Peace Accord envisaged that the Commission would be set up within 30 days of the signing of the Agreement. All over the country, the scars of the conflict are refusing to heal. The indomitable spirit of our people is enabling them to come to grips with the physical reconstruction that is required to rebuild their lives. The social and psychological reconstruction has been less successful. The question many people are asking is, why? Why were we visited with the conflict? Why were civilians the objects of attack rather than opposing armed forces? Why were our women and children made objects of pleasure and abuse in the course of the war? Why were our buildings and other infrastructure deliberately and systematically targeted? What happened to our loved ones who are yet to return home even now that the war has ended? People need answers to these questions. Even if the loved ones were killed in the course of the war, the families and relatives need to know, so that at the least, they can give them a decent burial. These are no mean expectations. But our people are entitled to these explanations and more.

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<sup>394</sup> See his biography in Chapter Four of this thesis.

It is only by grappling with these issues that we can chart an acceptable road map for the future and say, "Never Again". Thank you and God bless (address by Bishop Joseph Christian Humper, July 2002).

The above speech clearly demonstrates the effect the conflict had on the country and the Churches and ecumenical organisations carried out activities relevant for peace. Revd. Sam Joe Ellie described some of their activities:

When that was done, another step that the Christians in this country did [took] was since we were now talking about camps all over the country, we were now to encourage Conferences and members to open up Churches in camps. This was done all over the country. Where ever we had a refugee camp for displaced people, you could count on five [to] six churches of different denominations. A lot of these were there not only to preach for the salvation of the people in the camp, they were doing it also to preach peace so that that could also reach out even the people in the bush, that is the rebels, for the war [to come to an end] in this country. We see that they were able, even as we know that even in these refugees' camps it happened that some rebels came around, they came around as spies and these were the people that took the news to their colleagues in the bush. So that they will come and then do any havoc so that they will come and get on the people and kill them. They were also privileged at some point and tried to hear the word of God and then to hear about peace. They played a great role in ensuring that even the rebels that came they were killing human beings even their very types from the same country and they all belong to the same soil (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).<sup>395</sup>

These activities, as we have seen above, were carried out both in the country and abroad, and I discuss international missions in more detail below.

## **6.2 Religious Faith-based Diplomats on International Missions**

As noted earlier in this chapter, the peacemaking efforts of the CCSL and the IRCSL also included efforts to involve the Presidents of Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia faith-based diplomatic delegations from the CCSL and IRCSL went to the Presidents of Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia in April 2001. In their action plan, the delegates agreed to effective debriefing of the respective Heads of State within two weeks, the appointment of delegations to visit the three Heads of State - Presidents Kabbah, Taylor and Conteh – within a month of 25 April, 2001 and a follow-up meeting to be held at

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<sup>395</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

the invitation of the Guinean delegation in Conakry in the Republic of Guinea.<sup>396</sup> The action plan was to engage the various players in the war as well as to visit the three heads of state in the Mano River Union.<sup>397</sup> These delegations were comprised of religious leaders who were willing to sacrifice their security for the general good of all the people. They were able to perform these duties with help from, among others, the AACC, WCRP and the WCC.

When the war began in 1991, there followed a de-secularisation, or re-sacralisation, of society in Sierra Leone that evolved throughout the period of hostilities, though it is more correct to speak of a complex process of simultaneous relativisation and revitalisation of religion. Revd. Sam Joe Ellie recalled:

We had other delegations of CCSL members that went over to Liberia they went and spoke with the other Council of Churches members in that country, to see how we can all work, because we saw that the war came out from Liberia into our own country Sierra Leone so we decided to see if we can go and get and talk with our Christian brothers there and start negotiations for peace, would come out with some help to get peace in this country. And bring the war to an end (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).<sup>398</sup>

This was evident in the use of various factions made up of both Muslims and Christians in the crisis. As noted above, all the warring factions, including the civil defence forces, used Islamic symbols as protective talismans in the war,<sup>399</sup> which conveyed a sense of invincibility that augmented their ferocity and recklessness in combat. The use of talismans was significant since many church leaders probably connected it to the cruelty taking place during the war. In other words this action practice of using talismans was abjured by the churches, perhaps because of the violent implications it gave to religion, which they perceived as a vehicle for peace. As I continued to observe the ensuing situation in Sierra Leone, it was clear that the churches were outspoken against the cruel and violent behaviour of the rebels and some soldiers, who killed and maimed innocent

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<sup>396</sup> <http://www.ccslfreetown.org/irc.htm>. [Accessed 14 April 2006].

<sup>397</sup> The Mano River Union comprised Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia.

<sup>398</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>399</sup> See Chapter Three of this thesis for more detail on this point.

civilians, burnt houses and destroyed property (Mitton, 2015). This leads me to the summary and conclusions of this chapter.

### **6.3 Summary and Conclusions**

This chapter demonstrates the importance of the CCSL and the IRCSL as they engaged in faith-based diplomacy as an elaboration of the ‘two-track diplomacy’ theory proposed by Johnston and Cox (2003). I argued in this chapter that ‘two-track’ diplomacy was not lacking in the roles played by the CCSL and the IRCSL, as clearly demonstrated in the preceding sections, and also illustrated in an interview with a member of the CCSL and the IRCSL who had earlier functioned as head of the UBC (interview with Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007).

The CCSL and the IRCSL used both internal and external factors to end the conflict. During the progression towards peace, all parties were expected to observe the peace agreement signed on 7<sup>th</sup> July 1999 and Abuja Peace agreement in 2000. With the help of these bodies and the UN, the process that led to the cessation of hostilities, gradually became a reality (Olonisakin, 2008). The CCSL and the IRCSL served as moral guarantors to ensure that the peace agreement signed on 7 July 1999 was respected and pursued. These bodies, through their faith-based diplomacy, worked assiduously with the UN British Forces and ECOMOG to ensure that the war finally ceased. It is important to conclude that the groupings of the various religious bodies, not only between Christians and Christians or between Muslims and Muslims, but between the different faiths, created a powerful force for the peace negotiations and the cessation of hostilities.

These bodies also drew on external support and resources through the World Council of Religion for Peace to help end the war. The CCSL and the IRCSL worked with similar organisations in neighbouring Liberia and Guinea to strengthen the role of ecumenical organisations for peacemaking in the Mano River Union area of West Africa, that is, in Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Liberia. In summary, acting as individual religions and/or churches helped to salvage the situation, but by acting collectively, these two ecumenical bodies strengthened their role in peacemaking and negotiations even further. Thus, there is power in organisation and grouping for the implementation of faith-based diplomacy for the purposes of peace and development. This dimension must not be neglected in the discussion of peacemaking, since it touches on the identities of people and communities. Because of the trust that people have in them: their grassroots support

and multi-level infrastructures in bringing people together for peace, this is a dimension from which politicians can learn.

In addition, since political tolerance has still not been achieved in Sierra Leone, politicians can learn from the religious leaders so that they too can practice tolerance at all levels. This conclusion is drawn from the notion that religious tolerance is much more difficult to achieve than political tolerance, so once that is accomplished, it can be recommended to be practised at all levels to ensure a better future for the country. One can therefore say that religion played an outstanding role both in the conflict and in bringing about peace in Sierra Leone. Religious resources as a way forward for peace are therefore paramount and should not be sidelined.

Various Christian missions were asked to send their representatives to the refugee camps in order to see that the people had what they needed to survive and provide trauma healing, counselling and support. They distributed Bibles and other religious materials to refugees, and were seen engaging in relief as well as advocacy for peace.

When a communiqué issued on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 1999, which was on the verge of unleashing protests from the Freetown press, people wanted a ceasefire and dialogue but from a favourable military position. Okelo<sup>400</sup> retreated and for some time followed the lead of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL) who prevailed on Sankoh and Kabbah to demonstrate some mutual trust to endorse reviving the peace process.

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Thus, the role of religious faith-based diplomats was not only essential, but relevant, crucial and timely for the cessation of hostilities and the formation and success of the transitional justice systems created in Sierra Leone after the war. These bodies strengthened the role of the Special Court in line with the Christian concept of peacemaking, as described in the introductory chapter of this thesis, in which peacemaking is seen as more than the mere absence of war: it is actively involved in providing people their needs and ensuring that human rights and justice are not only supported but defended. This role was played Bishop J. C. Humper as Chairman of the TRCSL, a major transitional justice body established in Sierra Leone after the war, details of this is presented in the subsequent chapter.

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<sup>400</sup> Francis Okelo, from Uganda was UN special envoy in Sierra Leone, who replaced Berhanu Dinka of Ethiopia, in September, 1997.

<sup>401</sup> <http://www.c-r.org/accord/s-leone/accord9/peace.shtml>. [Accessed 14 April 2006].

## **CHAPTER 7 THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION AND BISHOP HUMPER AS PEACEMAKERS IN ACTION**

### **7.0 Introduction**

This chapter examines the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Sierra Leone (TRCSL) and its Christian leadership. The TRCSL was established on 5 July 2002, with public hearings scheduled to begin in October 2002. According to the TRCSL reports, insufficient funding delayed the hearings until late November 2002, but the government remained committed to the Commission. Both victims and perpetrators were involved in the public hearings and in the process of reconciliation (TRCSL Report 2004). The TRCSL paid special attention to children, and its report included a children's version of the events in order to inform and prepare children for Sierra Leone's future without war (Ojukutu-Macauley and Rashid, 2013, pp. 9, 47, 49; TRCSL Report 2004). This chapter will look at the Commission itself as a peacemaking tool. The leadership role played by the Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Sierra Leone demonstrates the importance of using religion and religious leaders as resources for peace and reconciliation. Most of the individuals I spoke with during the course of my fieldwork recognised the importance of this role, but they also pointed to the respect that Sierra Leoneans hold for religious leaders in general. In addition, even though the literature on the TRCSL is still nascent, I was able to consult the Chairman himself, as well as other stakeholders who were either working with the Commission or had knowledge of its operations. These interviews provided the valuable material upon which this chapter is based.

The chapter will cover the creation, purpose, report and hearings of the TRCSL, as well as an evaluation of the role of Bishop Humper, a Christian primate who led the entire process of truth telling and reconciliation.

### **7.1 Creation and Purpose of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

The Sierra Leone Parliament in the year 2002 called for the TRCSL to create “an impartial, historical record of the conflict,” and to “address impunity; respond to the needs of victims; promote healing and reconciliation, and prevent a repetition of the violations and abuses suffered” (Keen, 2005, pp. 258, 281, 302 - 3; TRCSL report 2004). The TRCSL gave victims, perpetrators and people affected by the atrocities

perpetrated during the civil war the opportunity to tell their stories and reflect on what happened to them between 1991 and 2002. Their statements were revealed in a “truth telling” way, in which victims and perpetrators were expected to air their views either in public or in private, depending on the interview circumstances. This kind of TRC is different from other TRCs during which the truth is sought and not necessarily told, for example the Guatemala TRC. During the Sierra Leone TRC, many victims wanted the outside world and other Sierra Leoneans to hear what they suffered, and the Commission gave them the opportunity to be heard (Olonisakin, 2008, pp. 120, 132n37, 139; TRCSL Report 2004).

The TRCSL was established to determine the causes of the war. It was able to influence the Sierra Leonean community and contribute to reconciliation. According to Alimamy P. Koroma:

WCC General Secretary in 2001, Konrad Raiser once said without the intentional attempt to create a space where the stories of humiliation and suffering can be told, where the truth can emerge and collective remembrance is restored, the search for justice (retributive justice) will continue to divide the community rather than re-establish relationships and contribute to a process of healing. (Koroma in Little, 2007, p. 101)

President Alhaji Dr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah was at the inauguration of the Commission on 5 July 2002 (TRCSL Report 2004) and appeared before the TRCSL in August 2003. He claimed to have had no say in the controversial activities of the ATR civil militias, the specialised secret society arms<sup>402</sup> that supported his government during the ten-year civil war. Sam Hinga Norman, the man who was more directly in charge of Kabbah’s ATR Civil Defence Forces, was indicted by the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL)<sup>403</sup> for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The British Prime Minister Tony Blair remarked that Kabbah should have been indicted as well.

The TRCSL analysed the information it gathered from victims, perpetrators and witnesses, and also conducted its own research. The Commission did the following to achieve its objectives: 1) it undertook investigations into and researched key events, causes, patterns of atrocities and responsible parties and 2) it held sessions (or hearings) at national, regional and district levels for the victims and perpetrators of the events and

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<sup>402</sup> See Chapters One and Three of this thesis

<sup>403</sup> See Chapter Eight of this thesis.

also for other interested parties. Some of these hearings were public and organized with assistance from traditional and religious leaders. During these sessions, a large number of people gave statements to the Commission. Nonetheless, the chairman lamented the lack of response from Sierra Leoneans living outside Sierra Leone, even though the TRCSL provided them with the opportunity to respond via a webpage online (Sierra Leone Web online).

The Commission also collaborated with human rights groups and other civil society groups to publicise its work and to assist in its statement-taking and reconciliation processes. Furthermore, the Commission asked traditional and religious leaders to help, as they had helped to resolve local conflicts arising from abuses during the war. The religious bodies were also asked to facilitate healing and reconciliation processes that the TRCSL was supposed to promote through its “truth telling” activities and mandate. Such bodies included the Campaign for Good Governance, the National Forum for Human Rights and the Inter- Religious Council, (TRCSL Report 2004).

Bishop Humper of the United Methodist Church in Sierra Leone, as leader of the TRCSL, was fundamental to its success. Unlike the MCSL,<sup>404</sup> which is mainly in the eastern and western parts of Sierra Leone, the United Methodist Church (UMC) is spread across the country, with the exception of Methodist-dominated areas such as Kailahun District. Even before the establishment of the TRCSL, the UMC carried out important peacemaking activities by itself as well as through its various bodies, such as the Refugee Department and “Operation Classroom.” The UMC also coordinated activities with the CCSL and the IRCSL.<sup>405</sup> Within the TRCSL and other archives, there is extensive documentation of the UMC Bishop’s role in the TRCSL and in these ecumenical bodies,<sup>406</sup> as well as in disarmament, the truth-telling process after the war and resettlement, and especially in truth telling, advocacy, reconciliation, justice, relief and education. Interviewees either mentioned or attested to this unique role played by Bishop Humper of the UMC.<sup>407</sup>

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<sup>404</sup> See Chapter Five of this thesis.

<sup>405</sup> See Chapter Six of this thesis.

<sup>406</sup> Bishop Humper served in the CCSL as President and the IRCSL as co-chairman.

<sup>407</sup> See Chapter Five of this thesis.



Regarding the role of the TRCSL, Bishop Humper viewed it as a “forum for restorative justice [that] deals with the entire populace of the country, whereas the Special Court is there to hold accountable those who bear the greatest responsibilities in the eleven year civil conflict” (interview with Bishop J. C. Humper 2011). The Special Court was set up to work with a few people, as I will explain in the following chapter, whereas the TRCSL dealt with the entire populace (Harris, 2013, p. 119, 133, 137 - 9), though some schools of thought argue that the context of the South African TRC was better than the TRCSL, particularly due to the wider access that South Africans had to their commission. In Sierra Leone, access to television was hard to come by, even though the TRCSL activities were broadcast on TV. However, I still argue that the TRCSL enhanced reconciliation in Sierra Leone because of the involvement of religious leaders. These reconciliation and peacemaking activities may be characterised as “just peacemaking”<sup>408</sup>, which refers to the allocation of justice to both the victims and the perpetrators of abuses in a holistic and restorative manner (Harris, 2013, p. 137; Humper 2011).

Though the TRCSL was not a commission with the legal responsibility to punish perpetrators, it had the legal and moral authority necessary to perform its role to promote healing and reconciliation. The Commission was also a kind of coping mechanism similar to the coping mechanism of religion presented by Schmidt (2011). Schmidt maintained that religious resources can be used for victims and traumatised people to cope with the difficulties and challenges they face especially from imagined violence. This kind of violence can stay with people for a very long time if they are not given a possibility of talking to somebody about them. This was just what the TRCSL provided (Mitton, 2015, pp. 18, 94, 104, 164, 165, 229, 231, 265). Even though the TRCSL was not a religious body as such, among its members were religious leaders who fully supported reconciliation and truth telling, which helped victims and perpetrators to talk through their experiences and activities during the war respectively. In the same line of argument, Mr. Olu Alghali expressed gratitude for the commission: “Some of us are very grateful for the role of the TRCSL as well as Bishop Humper and his team, and I know religious organisations for ending the war and ensuring that there is peace” (interview with Mr Olu Alghali, July 2007). I agree with these sentiments expressed by Alghali both because of the activities I was personally responsible for with

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<sup>408</sup> See Chapter One of this thesis.

regards peacemaking and those pursued by other religious leaders and presented in Chapter Four in this thesis. This was a general view of people in Sierra Leone after the war. People were very appreciative of the role played by faith-based diplomats' in not only the TRCSL but also in the provision of relief and mediations, which were also appreciated during the TRC hearings.

## **7.2 The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Hearings**

The TRCSL hearings gave the opportunity to both victims and perpetrators of the war to give their version of the events that unfolded in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002. One example was the hearings conducted by bishop Humper, when he interviewed Adama Koroma, a war victim, whose hands were amputated and later lost her husband also due to him amputated earlier by rebels. The conversation between Bishop Humper and Adama, shows the impunity committed in the country during the war. In the conversation between Bishop Humper and Adama Koroma, the following insight on reparation was expressed:

The testimony of Adama Koroma, at a hearing in Makeni on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2003, is illustrative of how a reparations programme can assist victims. In 1998, Adama Koroma's village was attacked during her attempted escape; she was caught by the rebels. One of her hands was amputated whilst the other was permanently damaged; her husband's hands and ears were also amputated and he later died because of the amputation. Adama was later found by ECOMOG soldiers and brought to Freetown. She has four children. At the end of the testimony, when she was given the opportunity to ask questions to the Commission, she said the government should not leave our case behind. Bishop Humper replied: "What kind of recommendation will you want to make so that we can incorporate it in our report?" "This is all I have to say. We have no hands. We should be assisted. If we are assisted we will have peace of mind. All our children can think for themselves now. They ask us who chopped our hands and feet. We have to make our children reconcile their minds" (TRCSL Report 2004).

The Bishop, together with the commissioners, successfully published the TRCSL reports and recommendations, in line with the TRCSL Act of Parliament of February 2000 and the Lomé Peace Accord of 1999. His role was very similar to Archbishop Desmond Tutu's role in the South African TRC. Both were committed to Christian ethics throughout the work of the Commission. As Bishop Humper put it:

Reconciliation is strengthened through acknowledgement and forgiveness. Those who have confronted the past will have no problem in acknowledging their roles in the conflict and expressing remorse for such roles. True statesmen and leaders will always act accordingly for they

will recognise the powerful healing and unifying force such acts will have on the nation. Those who have confronted the past will be able to forgive others for the wrongs committed against them. Where the act of forgiveness is genuine it does not matter whether the perpetrator declines to express remorse. Learning to forgive those who have wronged us is the first step we can take towards healing our traumatised nation (Humper 2011).

In relation to another incident, Bishop Humper asked Tamba Finnoh:

“If you were to make a recommendation to this commission for consideration, what type of recommendation would you want to make?” Tamba Finnoh replied: “So I will recommend to the commission that they should put mechanisms in place, which will ensure that there are provisions for us, which will be sustainable maybe as long as we are alive and even for our children” (TRCSL Report 2004).

Those interviewed by the Commission were willing to forgive, but they were mostly concerned about their welfare, since their hands had been chopped off by RUFSL rebels during the war, as indicated by Adama Koroma when interviewed by Bishop Humper during the TRCSL hearings, mentioned above.

The concept of forgiveness is a Christian virtue. Christians are often heard quoting Jesus Christ as saying on the cross, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). According to the concept of Christian forgiveness, the forgiver is the benefactor, since he or she does not have to live with the pain and torment of bitterness and hate, a concept similar to *ubuntu* described in Chapter One of this thesis. Thus, there are many who argue that this type of forgiveness may also have some ATR undertones. In ATR communities, adversaries might have to reconcile based on the ATR reverence for their ancestors. According to this custom, whatever the ancestors order through a medium must be adhered to by the living beings (Olupona, 2014, pp. 28 - 32).

Nonetheless, I argue that the Christian leadership and contribution to the activities of the TRCSL cannot be underestimated, even though they were influenced by ATR. My research shows that over 50 interviewees recognised this role. In fact, throughout my fieldwork in Sierra Leone, the role Bishop Humper played for peace and reconciliation was mentioned by many Christians and Muslims, including a lawyer who was neither a Muslim nor a Christian. Alimamy P. Koroma, former CCSL and IRCSL General Secretary, and who became Minister of Labour in the current APC government,<sup>409</sup>

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<sup>409</sup> He was a minister in the APC government from 2007 until he was removed in a 2013 reshuffle, and re appointed as Sierra Leone’s Ambassador to China in 2015.

commented on the TRCSL: “We are God’s channels and instruments of peace. Hence the relative importance of a truth and reconciliation process for national healing and reconciliation in the Sierra Leone context” (Mr Alimamy Koroma interviewed by David Little in 2001).

Through its public hearings, reports and recommendations, the TRCSL, like many other TRCs around the world, contributed to developing a new ethic of peacemaking (conversations with Bishop Humper, 2011). This thesis will now focus on this role of the TRCSL.

### **7.3 Truth and Reconciliation Report**

The TRCSL report took into consideration the various factors that led to the war and gave recommendations to Sierra Leone’s government on how to free the country from war and prevent future uprisings. The report, according to my evaluation, was objective and described in detail most of the things that went wrong in Sierra Leone both before and after independence (Harris, 2013, p. 137; TRCSL, 2004). Based on the information the Commission found, a report was written in order to explain what had happened in Sierra Leone before, during and up to the end of the civil war. The report indicated the causes, nature and extent of human rights violations in Sierra Leone and the circumstances in which they occurred, and showed that what happened in Sierra Leone during the war was part of a strategy of rebel groups, the government and other groups. The report also made recommendations and indicated how to prevent another civil war and a repetition of the terrible acts that occurred (Mitton, 2015, p. 104; TRCSL report 2004).

A number of other activities were also organised, by TRCSL, including workshops and sensitisation sessions, which were efforts meant to inform and educate the general populace about the role of the TRCSL and to explain the Lomé Peace Accord, before the TRCSL hearings and the publications of the TRCSL report. When the report was finalised, it first, went through Parliament, which ratified it. Subsequently, a number of organisations copied it and sent it to various communities to share the spirit of the Lomé Peace Agreement (Olonisakin, 2008, pp. 5, 34 - 41, 141 - 162; conversations with Omar Paran Tarawally, July 2007).

According to the final report of the TRCSL, the world recoiled in horror at the tactics used by the RUFSL, its allies and its opponents. The reactions began as the conflict

exploded into appalling brutality against civilians (Keen, 2005, p. 299; Mitton, 2015). Reports emerged of indiscriminate amputations, abductions of women and children, recruitment of children as combatants, rape, sexual slavery, cannibalism, gratuitous killings and wanton destruction of villages and towns. Appalling acts of violence did not take place so much in battles and confrontations between combatants as they did in attacks on the civilian population (Mitton, 2015, pp. 31-34, 228 - 229, 248 - 9, 11 - 12, 35-36, 43 - 6, 73, 79-80, 133 - 5, 173). The war's dreadful climax was the destruction of much of Freetown in January 1999 (Olonisakin, 2008; TRCSL report 2004). At the TRCSL hearings, people came and confessed their activities during the war. As I spoke with Sierra Leoneans, it emerged that victims actually accepted apologies from the perpetrators and they were able to reconcile. Some maintained that as religious people they had to forgive. Others said they could forgive, but would never forget.

The TRCSL was not only an instrument of reconciliation, but an organ that produced a historic and relevant document that is a legacy and an impartial account of the causes of the war and how to prevent further violence in the future. It is clear in the TRCSL documents that faith communities contributed to reconciliation in Sierra Leone. The work of the Commission laid the foundation for reconciliation and healing for many of those affected by the civil war. Victims and perpetrators are beginning to find common ground on which to stand, and are learning to develop the country together in peace and harmony. Commenting on the period after the war, Pastor Gbla told me:

The best source now is to look at the TRC report without talking to anybody. Especially the part that has the recommendations and gives you the antecedents to the war ...and that is well articulated; you can go back to Volume Two [to examine] the interreligious council just after the TRC ended its mandate. Girls who were associated with the war had to be cleansed and dressed up to remove the stigma (interview with Pastor Alfred Gbla, July 2007).

Gbla was always emphasising these points to me whenever I spoke with him. However, I still thought it was necessary to interview people in addition to the documented causes of the war, since my strategy in data collection was triangulation. These interviews gave an emic perspective of the situation which helps to validate the results of this thesis. However, The TRCSL report also named the various individuals and organisations responsible for the atrocities, such as Foday Sankoh, Charles Taylor of Liberia and others. The report also condemned the governments after Sierra Leone's independence in 1961, which had woefully marginalised religion, ethics and morality in political matters. A list of victims was included along with the report and the methodology used

to arrive at its conclusions. The report was published in three volumes, with Volume III being subdivided into Sections “A” and “B.”. Volume I contains the foreword by Bishop Humper, the introduction and the mandate of TRCSL. It also sets up the Commission, concepts, management, operational report, methodology and process. Volume II of the TRCSL report includes the executive summary, which gives a cursory overview of the report and its principal areas of analysis. It also introduces the findings, recommendations and the list of victims (TRCSL report 2004). Volume III Section “A” focuses on the historical antecedents to the conflict, governance, the political and military history of the conflict and the nature of the war. Volume III Section “B” examines mineral resources, their use and their impact on the state, external actors and their impact on the conflict, women and armed conflict in Sierra Leone, children and armed conflict, youth, the TRCSL and the Special Court, reconciliation and a national vision for Sierra Leone.

After completing its work and making its recommendations, the Commission sent its reports to the President and made them widely available to the public. The President then sent them to parliament and to the United Nations Security Council. The Commission’s recommendations were based on its independent judgment, and neither the President nor any other group or individual was able to influence the report. The law that set up the TRCSL - the Truth and Reconciliation Act of 2000 - mandated that the government implement all of the TRCSL’s recommendations. It also stated that the government should facilitate the implementation of recommendations addressed to others, such as NGOs and the international community. A follow-up committee was to be formed to monitor the implementation of the TRCSL’s recommendations and to assist in the process, if needed. This committee was to include representatives of the United Nations and the countries that promised to oversee the implementation of the Lomé Peace Agreement in 1999. The Commission also maintained that all Sierra Leoneans should help the government, NGOs and others to implement the TRCSL recommendations (TRCSL report 2004). However, the recommendations of the TRCSL are yet to be fully implemented, particularly because the independent committee that was to be established to monitor the recommendations of the TRCSL has not yet been created.

The report offered suggestions regarding how the nation’s dignity might be restored. For instance, it argued that individuals might restore their dignity through formal recognition of their victimhood and through the opportunity to vent their grievances.

This might be similar to the concept of restorative justice referred to by Alimamy Koroma earlier in this chapter.

It was also reported by the TRCSL in its report that there were NGOs that were in favour of reparations. A representative from CARE, an NGO working in Sierra Leone, expressed the following view:

For reconciliation to be durable, the TRCSL itself should ensure that a sustainable package of compensation is developed and implemented while it lasts, and [also that] the special fund is strengthened to support those who have been crippled (TRCSL report 2004).

The Commission was not necessarily in favour of individual monetary reparations, arguing that this might further divide Sierra Leonean society because the state does not have such funds to address all those who might claim or have the right to reparations. The Commission claimed that “any recommendation enshrined in a service package offered more opportunity for sustainable assistance than a one-time cash payment” (TRCSL report 2004). Many interviewees were in favour of paying reparations to the victims of the war. Augustine Lassie, a final year B.Th student at the Sierra Leone Theological College in Freetown, thought that “if reparations are given to victims of the war, that is a way of encouraging them not to feel bad about their losses” (conversations with Mr. Augustine Lassie, October 2011). Though religion specifically played a role in encouraging the government to pay reparations to victims, these were not adequately handled, because the government of Sierra Leone seems not to have the financial resources necessary to implement the payment of reparations, since it is heavily dependent on donor funds for its budget. The reason for religions support for reparations, I suggest, is that reparations would have been the best way to address the war victims’ losses and the ills that people suffered during the war at the hands of both the government soldiers and the rebels. The following statement by the CCSL and the IRCSL to the TRCSL was presented and published in Freetown on the 1 August 2003:

As prefaced earlier in this presentation, every Sierra Leonean has been affected by the war directly or indirectly. However, there are those that have been affected most. These include those who lost dear ones, those whose houses were burnt down, businesses looted, etc. There are yet those who were orphaned, seriously wounded or amputated and are still alive. The IRCSL recommends that reparations be made to some of these groups (as the means allow). The Inter-Religious Council is aware of the implications of the above recommendation in terms of finances and their implication. The IRCSL, however, believes that the people and the Government, working together with the support of the international

community, can make peace [...]. It will be in the interest of the government and the people to establish a Centre for Peace and Reconciliation (IRCSL Presentation 2003).

The religious bodies represented by the CCSL and the IRCSL supported this kind of restorative justice that was often advocated by Christians and members of other religions, as well as NGOs. There is some theological basis, such as the teachings of Jesus in Mathew Chapters 5, 6 and 7, for reconciliation and peacemaking, and most Christians in Sierra Leone agree on the concept of a “just peace”.<sup>410</sup> According to these Christian views of reconciliation and “just peace” as defined in the introductory chapter in this thesis, where it is explained that peace, especially positive peace, is expected to be by peaceful means. Bishop Humper was also concerned about just peace and taking the victims of war and violence seriously, though he was not alone on this. Others who shared this view included Bishop Biguzzi, Mr Alimamy Koroma, Methodist President of Conference, Revd. C. V. A. Peacock and others.

Furthermore, according to Mrs. Eburn James-Dekan, the first female CCSL General Secretary in Sierra Leone, the TRCSL (under Bishop Humper) completed its task according to its mandate. However, she criticized the report for being too voluminous and argued that only a few people had knowledge of its contents. She stated that the follow-up of the TRCSL is as important as its reports, maintaining that those committees must be put in place to ensure that the TRCSL’s recommendations are implemented (conversations with CCSL General Secretary, October 2011). The recompense that the report recommended for victims of the war and other reparations are the primary responsibility of the government (TRCSL report 2004).

As one of the largest Christian organisations in Sierra Leone, the United Methodist Church contributed a great deal to the work of the TRCSL. The identity of the UMC members and other Christians allowed for a systematic and religiously “appropriate” use of resources for peace. As religious leaders, Bishop Humper, Revd. Christian V.A. Peacock, Revd. Moses Khanu, Alhaji Dr. Mohamed Tunis, Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, Mr. Alimamy Koroma, Bishop Gbonda, Bishop Biguzzi<sup>411</sup> and Archbishop Joseph Ganda

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<sup>410</sup> “Just peace” refers to the payment of reparations to the victims of war and violence. Those guilty of crimes pay the victims in one form or another.

<sup>411</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis.



had power and influence to legitimise the efforts towards reconciliation. Revd. Bob Kandeh was also part of the Special Court working group, which I personally observed in November 2002.

Various district committees were formed to facilitate the reconciliation role of the TRCSL and to enable it to function effectively. The TRCSL commissioners benefited from the cooperation of the UMC and other Christian churches. The churches, which are members of the CCSL, were present in all districts in Sierra Leone. As such, their support, like that of the Muslim communities, was crucial. The doctrinal and pastoral privileges of the Bishop of the UMC and other church leaders played a positive role in creating an ambiance of non-violence and in maintaining a peaceful coexistence. Based on my personal experience, I noted that most priests supported the work of the TRCSL in their sermons and in public meetings. There were planning and official opening ceremonies for the first war memorial in post-war Sierra Leone, which was named the Kamaa War Memorial. It was located in the house where at least one hundred people, including babies, were allegedly burned alive during the war. Religious leaders who used their “privilege” to work against violence and foster peace, reconciliation and healing promoted the opening of this particular memorial. Revd. D. H. Caulker was particularly influential in this activity (interview with Rev Sam Joe Ellie, July 2007). Bishop Humper, the TRCSL chair, was also very influential in the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone, which supported the work of the TRCSL and its reports and recommendations.

Another issue raised in the report was that of difference. The World Council of Religions for Peace (WCRP) represents an example of diversity among religions. WCRP was established in the 1970s and given consultative status, Category II, by the UN in 1973. Its membership includes all religions in the world, with the sole aim of engaging in activities for peace. This organisation is particularly useful since the diverse beliefs and views of world religions are often overlooked and minimised in favour of cohabitation. The reason for this is that mitigations are often based on the renunciation of religiocentric and ethnocentric stances. These religiocentric stances were visible in Sierra Leone in the CCSL and the IRCSL. Just as there was a concerted effort to solve the crisis, there were also differences among some members of the CCSL and the IRCSL. The connecting element was the role of the presidents of the IRCSL and the CCSL. The presidents of these bodies remained both loyal to their religions as well as maintaining a neutral stance when it came to taking steps for the common human

existence for peace. Since they were influential in their various organisations, their neutral role helped to persuade others who were ethnocentric and religiocentric to take a neutral position too.

However, I argue that the TRCSL was a reconciliation mechanism supported by Christian leaders, sustained by Christian leadership and others, and promoted by those same leaders. As Bruce (2005) argues, religion is not necessarily the cause of violence, but, as this thesis shows, it can become the source of peace and a resource for peacemaking. Though Christians were not the only influential people in the TRCSL, they used their Christian background of forgiveness and told the victims to forgive and the perpetrators to show remorse. In this reconciliation process, and as Koroma states, “the TRC actually told them, people of Sierra Leone, to accept each other, perpetrators of violence and victims, they told us to forgive and forget” (interview with Koroma July 2007). The obligation to ask people to forgive and forget seems to have some Christian undertones, because Christians are expected to forgive their enemies and to forgive seventy times seven (Mathew 18: 22). It is not surprising, then, that Koroma stresses the role of religion in peacemaking. The TRCSL was no exception. (interview with Koroma July 2007).

In his foreword to the report, the Bishop wrote that various aspects of his Christian view of peace and reconciliation were clearly echoed in the TRCSL’s work. Bishop Humper’s Christian view relates to the definition of peace in Christianity, as presented in Chapter One of this thesis. For example, in the first paragraph of his foreword, he draws attention to the healing of the traumatised nation. The healing role played by Christians in Sierra Leone is well known in the whole country and is expressed by varied materials in this thesis, as well as by the interviewees, some of whose verbatim words are attached in the appendices. Apart from the hospitals and clinics owned by churches, there are many trauma healing and counselling and reconciliation activities carried out by Christians. The TRCSL as a healing mechanism and many of my interviewees referred to the TRCSL as a healing and reconciling organ. I made these observations during my fieldwork in 2007. Furthermore, the CCSL General Secretary stated in October 2011 that the reason why the report is respected by Sierra Leoneans is probably because of the respect attributed to the religious leaders. The Secretary recognized that the content of the report has its own merits, but still put strong emphasis on the work of religious leaders.

One of the primary findings of the TRCSL was that “the conflict and the post-independence period preceding it represent the most shameful years of Sierra Leone’s history. These periods reflect an extraordinary failure of leadership on the part of all those involved in government, public life and civil society” (TRCSL report 2004). Thus, the TRCSL maintains “that the central cause of the war was endemic greed, corruption, and nepotism that deprived the nation of its dignity and reduced most people to a state of poverty”. (TRCSL report 2004)

Based on my experience and an interview with Bishop Humper, the Sierra Leone TRC was similar to other TRCs in the world in that it made sincere recommendations, including the following: The government should help to close the gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged through education, housing, and other programmes and services (similar to South Africa). Those who benefited from apartheid policies should contribute toward the alleviation of poverty (similar to South Africa). The government should promote a new military doctrine for the army that establishes basic principles for the appropriate relationship between the army and society within a democratic and pluralist framework (similar to Guatemala). The state should establish a day of commemoration for the victims and construct monuments and public parks in their memory (similar to Guatemala). These recommendations were based on the hearings of the TRCSL in both public and in certain private cases (TRC report, 2004).

The Sierra Leone TRC worked independently from the Sierra Leone Special Court, and the commissioners served as individuals, not as representatives of any political party, religious group or other organization. However, this does not mean that they were ethically neutral. They were bound by international human rights law. International human rights law states, for instance, that human beings are entitled to protection at all times, such as the right not to be tortured. Torture is prohibited under Article 3 common to forth Geneva Convention Article 75 ( 2a & e) of additional protocol 1 and Article 4 (2a & h) of Additional protocol 11. In international armed conflict, torture constitutes a grave breach under Articles 50, 51, 130 and 147 respectively of these conventions. Under Article 85 of Additional protocol 1, these breaches constitute war crimes. In non-International conflict, they are considered serious violations.<sup>412</sup> International humanitarian law also provides for certain protections during armed conflict (Article 51

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<sup>412</sup> [www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/faq/torture-law-2011-06-24.htm](http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/faq/torture-law-2011-06-24.htm). [Accessed 29 July 2016].

of Additional protocol 1 ... to the Geneva Conventions of 1949). Violations of which are punishable under Article 3 of the Statutes of the Tribunal. For example, it states that civilians must not be killed or be taken hostage. However, while the commissioners themselves might not have been ethically neutral, meaning they sided with human rights of people, they were impartial, this was guaranteed through ensuring that victims and perpetrators were given fair hearing and respect as human beings and because of the perpetrators were also seen as victims at times, especially when they were abducted as Children.<sup>413</sup> Bishop Humper stated:

We may apologize for a hasty word, we may pay the money due, we may take what reparation or restitution is appropriate. But in every case, the way to reconciliation lies through the effective grappling with the root cause of the enmity (Humper, 2011).

Having supported the formation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission,<sup>414</sup> the CCSL and the IRCSL<sup>415</sup> played vital roles by providing leadership, running workshops and organizing other projects and activities aimed at bringing about peace and reconciliation. Both bodies are permanently represented in the day-to-day maintenance of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the aim of reconciling the people of Sierra Leone after the war. According to public opinion in Sierra Leone, the religious bodies and leaders carried out their role quite well, due to the awareness that there is a return of religion in national politics in Sierra Leone. The CCSL and the IRCSL and its chairman, Bishop Humper, were very interested in consolidating the peace achieved through projects of reconciliation and involvement in sustainable development. For instance, in the words of Revd. Moses Khanu:

Just after the TRC ended its mandate.... The Inter-Religious Council took a follow-up programme which they called community development, community reconciliation programme. This was supported by the UNDP, and they went throughout the country to ensure that this programme was established, and a number of activities were accomplished, [such as] the building of mass graves. They identified the spots and where possible they wrote the names of the people believed to have been buried. There [were] name-changing ceremonies, ceremonial cleansing activities where young boys and young girls who were associated with the war had to be

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<sup>413</sup> See Chapter One of this thesis, regarding the concept of *ubuntu* in Africa.

<sup>414</sup> The CCSL and the IRCSL statement to the TRCSL on 1 August 2003.

<sup>415</sup> See Chapter Six of this thesis.

cleansed and dressed up to remove the stigma (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu 2007).

The TRCSL made several recommendations. For example, it recommended the establishment of a governmental oversight committee that would be charged with the responsibility of ensuring the implementation of the TRCSL recommendations. The reports and recommendations of the TRCSL were actively taken up by Christian leaders in carrying out their reconciliation programmes across the country. I witnessed several of these meetings. The dedication of war memorials and cleansing programmes were mostly Christian contributions to the reconciliation role of the TRCSL. True reconciliation, according to Bishop Humper, requires real consideration for the total well-being of all citizens, particularly children, youth and women. All citizens must have a genuine stake in society in order to create lasting peace in Sierra Leone (Humper, 2004).

Reconciliation is strengthened through acknowledgment and forgiveness. Since Christian leaders preached about these actions not only in the churches but also through their open display of support for the work of TRCSL for reconciliation in Sierra Leone, reconciliation was strengthened and forgiveness was achieved (interviews with Mr Olu Alghali, Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, Pastor Gbla, Revd. Sam Joe Ellie, Bishop George Biguzzi, Revd. Sam Khanu, and others, July 2007).<sup>416</sup>

The healing process began in 2003, and the religious factor was central throughout. The CCSL and the IRCSL made a joint presentation to the TRCSL on 9 May 2003. In that presentation, they highlighted the work of these “umbrella” bodies before, during and after the war. They also discussed both the successes and shortcomings of the government and called on all involved to address these shortcomings and consolidate the peace.<sup>417</sup> The religious concept of forgiveness permeated the workings of the commission (statement by Koroma, 2007). Furthermore, for the purpose of this thesis, it is evident that the Christian concept of forgiveness, as embodied by the Chairman of the TRCSL, was also reflected in the activities of Bishop Humper (interview with James-Dekan, 2011).<sup>418</sup> The respect in which the religious leaders were commonly held

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<sup>416</sup> See transcribed interviews in Appendix 1a of this thesis.

<sup>417</sup> See the CCSL and IRCSL presentation to TRCSL on 9 May 2003.

<sup>418</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

derives mainly from the selfless role played by religious leaders both before and during the war. Thus the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was appropriate, necessary and highly significant in order to heal the traumatised nation. The TRCSL Report was all-inclusive in that it not only exposed perpetrators and identified victims, but also served as a mirror through which all Sierra Leoneans examined their own roles in the conflict (TRCSL report 2004).

The findings of the Commission are divided into “primary findings” and “main findings.” The 38 primary findings point to the levels of greed and corruption of politicians, armed men, soldiers and the civil service that “plundered the nation’s assets, including its mineral riches, at the expense of the national well-being” (TRCSL report 2004). Youth lost all sense of hope. There was endemic greed, corruption, and nepotism, which deprived the nation of its dignity and reduced most people to a state of poverty. According to the TRCSL, the causes of the conflict were many and diverse. The report traced the causes of the war, starting with the colonial period and the independence period through the start of the war in 1991. The report blames the activities of the APC government, which crushed the few who stood up to totalitarianism (TRCSL report 2004). The country was also divided along tribal lines. In the main of the TRCSL report (Volume Two), the Commission declares:

The commission holds the political elite of successive regimes in the post-independence period responsible for creating the conditions for conflict in Sierra Leone. The governments headed by Sir Milton Margai, Sir Albert Margai, Colonel A. T. Juxon-Smith, Siaka Probyn Stevens, and General Joseph Saidu Momoh all bear a share of this responsibility. These leaders, together with the entire political elites, collectively placed their personal and political interests above those of the nation (TRCSL 2004).

These leaders had previously marginalised the role of religious bodies in shaping the minds of the civil servants on ethical and moral aspects, including using public funds for what they were meant for. These ethical aspects refer to honest activities whereby monies/ resources meant for the public are spent in the interest of the public and not end up in the private bank accounts of politicians and civil servants.<sup>419</sup> The TRCSL, according to most interviewees, helped to create the opportunity for people to express themselves, to reconcile and to confront the past (TRCSL, 2004). According to Revd. Moses Khanu:

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<sup>419</sup> See Chapter Three of this thesis.

So after the war ended. In 2002, the government passed an act which legalised the TRC. And the TRC actually started about the end of 2002 [and at the beginning of] 2003. It accomplished its activities and produced four volume reports[s]. Also, the Special Court was established; you know to try those who committed the greatest atrocities against humanity (interview with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2007).

The Commission's recommendations touch on every aspect of the life of Sierra Leone. In the following quote, Bishop Humper highlights their breadth:

The recommendations will go a long way towards promoting restorative justice in Sierra Leone. The recommendations do not only deal with the technical and policy measures required to build a peaceful and stable future, they also call for a fundamental change in the attitudes of Sierra Leoneans. With common resolve and commitment on the part of every citizen and the ongoing support of the international community, we can say that the prospects for sustained peace and the development of Sierra Leone are indeed bright (Humper, 2004, preface to TRCSL report).

In my view, restorative justice is as important as punitive justice because both types of justices are important in addressing specific areas of need in a post conflict situation. My question, however is, are Sierra Leoneans willing and capable to ensure a fundamental change in their attitudes? I argue that since Sierra Leoneans seem to not have changed their attitudes to resolve the problems in the country, religious leaders must drive home the need for ethics and moral behaviour in handling public funds and for the reduction of corruption, and was done through the TRCSL report. Thus I argue that this was only possible with Christian leadership in the establishment of TRCSL, and to this, I now turn.

#### **7.4 Christian Leadership in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

In the light of the role played by UN, the role played by, Christian leadership may be said to be minimal in ending the war, (Kumar, 2010; Olonisakin 2008). However, I argue the opposite and will illustrate why by focusing on the role of the Bishop of the UMC, as a Christian presence in the TRCSL. The aim of the TRCSL was to reconcile people and the entire nation as a whole. As Christians are expected to be peacemakers in order to be called children of God, it is reasonable to expect that a bishop who heads the TRCSL actually supports and practices this role. According to Miss. Janneh:

They were part of the Inter-Religious centre [Council]. They called all the parties that were in the conflict to try to settle the dispute so that we can get a lasting peace, which also led to the establishment of the TRC, to which Bishop Humper was appointed as its Chairman (interview with

Janneh July 2007). The Rt Revd. Dr Bishop J. C. Humper was the Head of this Commission. Furthermore, religious language, symbols, and the willingness on the part of the opinion leaders led to confidence building. Religious literature and communication led to a broad base willingness to work for peace and forgiveness. Religious contacts led to confidence building and the financing of the various projects undertaken by the CCSL and the IRCSL (TRCSL 2004).

Bishop Humper's role in the TRCSL shows that religion is a powerful force for peacemaking and reconciliation. He had immense human and religious resources all over Sierra Leone in the form of priests, teachers, nurses and UMC members. He also had the backing of other Christians and Muslims, who supported his work in the TRCSL and wanted him to succeed in the effort for reconciliation. Cobban (2005) had earlier recognised a similar situation in Mozambique, where leaders and practitioners in indigenous religions and Christian religious traditions contributed greatly to peace during and after the 1977 - 1992 civil war. Similarly, in South Africa, Cobban found that religious concepts and religious leadership were central to the success of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In Rwanda, while religious resources were used to fuel and even encourage the genocide in 1994, other religious resources have been used in the promotion of social healing in recent years (Abramowitz, 2014; TRCSL report 2004).

The Christian ideals of forgiveness, peace and brotherhood were preached in churches throughout Sierra Leone. Religious activities, such as prayers, preaching, teaching and religious tolerance, helped the Sierra Leonean perpetrators and victims to come forward and give testimonies to the TRCSL and ask for forgiveness in the spirit of brotherhood and the need to live together in peace. According to Alhaji Dr. Mohamed Tunis, Muslims and Christians had discussions with fellow church and mosque members about peace and how to reconcile Christians and Muslims. Indeed, pastors and imams encouraged the entire Sierra Leonean population to cooperate with the TRCSL. This was also echoed by Revd. John Bockarie, who described in detail the activities such as trauma healing, relief, advocacy, carried out in order to help citizens reconcile with one another (interviews with Tunis and Bockarie, July 2007). This brings me to the analysis, discussion and summary of this chapter.



## **7.5 Analysis, Discussion and Summary**

As a transitional justice system, the TRCSL was a necessary body in the peacemaking process in Sierra Leone because of its reconciliatory role and its investigation into the causes of the war. Its Christian leadership, though not explicitly mentioned in the reports, has influenced its philosophical bases, reports and recommendations. The idea behind the TRCSL was to heal a wounded nation, and in certain cases to find the perpetrators who were responsible for crimes against humanity. This kind of justice is termed restorative justice and has been used in many other countries emerging from war or conflicts, such as South Africa, Rwanda and Guatemala. The Sierra Leone TRC's mandate includes all of the above aspects, and the Commissioners and supporters worked hard to achieve their goals and record a future vision for Sierra Leone in their reports.

Even though some of its recommendations and proposals have not yet been implemented, Christians who played a leading role in the peacemaking process continue to work to establish a lasting peace. There is a need for the various churches in Sierra Leone, with all their structures such as youth fellowships, women's fellowships, men's fellowships, choirs and other fraternity organisations, to take this role very seriously. The report of the TRCSL is said to be relatively unread in Sierra Leone. The church, in order for its peacemaking role to be sustainable, must work harder to ensure that the TRCSL report and recommendations are fully acknowledged and implemented in order for the causes of the war in Sierra Leone to be averted in the future.

Church leaders should tap into their religious tolerance and ensure that there is political tolerance in Sierra Leone so that people can respect each other's rights and work towards a peaceful outcome of possible conflicts. Sierra Leone, in its current state, is still far from positive peace, and the TRCSL report has not yet been fully implemented. There were two transitional justice systems set up in Sierra Leone, the TRCSL and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The TRCSL completed its work, whereas, at the time of concluding this thesis, the Special Court had just completed its last case by sentencing Charles G. Taylor to imprisonment for supporting the war in Sierra Leone and for his role in the massive human rights abuses that occurred. The Court will be discussed in the next chapter of this thesis. It can be argued that these transitional justice bodies are the most important peacemaking organisations in post-war Sierra Leone.

In a conversation about the TRCSL in October 2011 with the General Secretary of the Council of Churches, Mrs Ebum James-Dekan, she maintained that the main problems in Sierra Leone are illiteracy and greed. Likewise, Bishop Humper's TRCSL pointed to greed, nepotism and corruption on the part of the civil service and the country's political elite as contributory factors to the conflict (Harris, 2013). Furthermore, Ebum James-Dekan emphasised that the church or religious bodies should be fully engaged in education, which is the role that they have always played in Sierra Leone through opening schools and hospitals. She also strongly recommended that there should be monitoring of the TRCSL recommendations. She held the view that religion was not marginalised in the post-war period, but that the religions had lost their prophetic voice, (James-Dekan 2011). I think what she meant by this was that the religions had a resource which they could have used, the prophetic voice, which is the point out the things in society that were unethical and immoral so that people can desist from them.

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I disagree with this view because of the dictatorial role played by politicians in Sierra Leone (Harris, 2013). Based on my own experience, there were multiple incidences of Sunday sermons and Friday sermons with prophetic messages, where societal ills were pointed out and religious adherents challenged to desist from such ills, but the politicians hardly ever took these seriously. Politicians, through my active engagement in politics as a participant observer, believed that politics was a "satanic business" and that it is not the place for "clean acts"<sup>421</sup> but for "dirty acts,"<sup>422</sup> meaning corrupt acts were seen either as normal or as the only way of governing in Sierra Leone (Harris, 2013, p. 71). However, contrary to popular belief, there were many voices speaking out against violence and advocating peace in the country. A good example was the voice of the CCSL, as well as the Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists and Pentecostals. Ebum James-Dekan recognises that the church can still help Sierra Leone to monitor the implementation of the TRCSL report. This can be done not only through implementing it to its fullest, but also through helping Sierra Leoneans to be honest, moral and kind and to create the necessary environment for children to learn good manners. This must

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<sup>420</sup> See Chapters Four, Five and Six of this thesis.

<sup>421</sup> See Chapter Three of this thesis.

<sup>422</sup> Conversations with Sierra Leonean politicians when I contested together with 19 others for the SLPP Flagbearership in 2010/ 2011, as a participant observer.

start from the home and continue in the churches (and mosques), and religious leaders should act as role models. There are many young men and women who seem not to have a stake in their society and who are easy prey for those recruiting for war (interview with James-Dekan, 2011).

It is against this background that the report of the Commission calls for introspection and a retrospective examination of the political, historical, economic, social and moral activities of both the state and the nation. While particular attention has been paid to the plight of victims, the motives and perspectives of those who committed terrible atrocities were intensively explored. (Humper, 2004).

In my view and in the view of many, however, expressing and learning the truth about what happened during the civil war in Sierra Leone can lay the foundation for genuine reconciliation, peace and development. This is the philosophy behind the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. According to this view, truth telling brings about a culture of transparency, accountability and moral judgment that is fundamental for the development of any society. This was supported by the churches in Sierra Leone, as indicated above; having a religious leader at the helm of the TRCSL both in South Africa and in Sierra Leone shows the powerful nature of religion as a peacemaking tool.

In most scholarly works on religion and violence, the role of religion in causing violence is often emphasized. However, as Bruce (2005) and other scholars <sup>423</sup> show, religion is often not the only cause of violence, and other factors may also contribute to the conflict. Even though there may be instances where religion is misused for war and violence, religion can still be a powerful resource for peace, as indicated by the role of Bishop Humper's view of forgiveness as a Christian value. In most scholarly works, religiously motivated violence is often pointed to and underlined or stressed. Islam is frequently blamed and violence is often also associated with the Christian religion. Unusually, certain scholars connect hospitality and violence. Boersma (2004) states that "[v]iolence is a necessary evil because divine violence is a symbol of divine hospitality and gracious embrace." However, Schmidt (2011) maintains that religion's legitimisation of violence does not make it less violent when justified by God's will. She highlights the healing role of and coping mechanism provided by religion, using examples from Perera (2001) and the USA (Schmidt 2011, p. 73), where religious ritual

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<sup>423</sup> See below.

helped a victim of injustice. Schmidt maintains that “I conclude... religion as a tool to cope with violence ... the focus in anthropology is usually on “violent imaginaries”. This implies that an act of violence can take place in the realm of the mind, without ever being performed”. As we saw in this thesis, a similar healing and coping mechanism was used in the work of the TRCSL.

Bishop Humper’s TRCSL healed the wounds of the victims and ensured that perpetrators of violence during the war in Sierra Leone had the opportunity to ask publicly for forgiveness and to have it granted. In a country where religion is pervasive, the role played by the bishops, religious leaders, the Council of Churches and the Inter-Religious Council in support of the work of both the TRCSL and the SCSL were very important for peacemaking in the country. The positive role of religion is the topic of this thesis, and that role was maintained by Humper as chairman of the TRCSL, and as co-chairman of the IRCSL as well as the CCSL. This does not in any way “romanticise” religion or Christianity or make me an apologist. Instead, it shows an additional aspect of healing and a variety of coping mechanisms and peacemaking and reconciliation in the work of the TRCSL under Bishop Humper’s leadership. Other Christian leaders across the country in almost every district were part of the district committees that facilitated the reconciliatory role of the TRCSL. The CCSL and the IRCSL were also instrumental in the peacemaking activity of the TRCSL. The ATR was involved as well, particularly through “the court Barry” meetings in various communities for the maintenance of peace. At such meetings, various stakeholders in the community were brought together to discuss and agree on how to bring the war to an end. After the war, the same venue was used to bring both perpetrators of the violence and victims to discuss, tell the truth about the war and agree to forgive each other. There were hundreds of people attending such meetings in mostly chiefdom headquarter towns like Sumbuya, Kailahun, Mattru, etc, where Chiefs, women, youths, religious leaders and sometimes even children participated to discuss community concerns. These meetings brought together perpetrators of violence and victims, who were given the opportunity to air their differences. The sole aim of these meetings was to encourage participants to forgive and to live together in peace once more. I witnessed many such meetings which were conducted between 2001 and 2004, when the IRCSL engaged the public as it carried out its activities under Bishop Humper.

However, there is no peace without justice. Justice can only be maintained if both restorative justice and punitive justice are meted out in a context similar to that of Sierra

Leone, where some acted with impunity. At the same time as the TRCSL was underway, the United Nations established the Special Court on the Civil War.<sup>424</sup> On 2 December 2002, eight judges were sworn in, and the court began its work in 2003 (Clark, 2007; Encyclopædia Britannica 2007), details of which are presented and discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>424</sup> See Chapter Eight of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 8 THE SPECIAL COURT FOR SIERRA LEONE AND CHRISTIAN PEACEMAKING

### 8.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I analyse the role of the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) in peacemaking and compare it with the role of the TRCSL, Christian leaders, churches and ecumenical bodies as peacemakers in action. The function of the SCSL was basically twofold. First, it put on trial those deemed to have had the greatest responsibility for the atrocities committed during the war. Secondly, the Court sentenced those found guilty for their crimes (Keen, 2005, pp. 281, 287, 288, 299, 303, 319).<sup>425</sup> According to Kumar's, a former UN peacekeeping officer stationed in Sierra Leone during the disarmament period in 2002, study of the United Nations Peace process in Sierra Leone:

The conflict in Sierra Leone is one of the most brutal humanitarian crises that the world witnessed during the recent past. The sheer scale of loss of human life and the nature of brutality shocked the world.... The UN peace mission in Sierra Leone was successful though a prolonged UN peace intervention in Africa in the changed global power structure. The events in Sierra Leone not only have lessons for international conflict resolution, but also regarding the human process of reconciliation and peace building. This process is based on ideas of conflict resolution and justice, and the success of the process depends on the robustness of these values (Kumar 2010, pp. 304 - 305).

The SCSL provided a transitional justice system to promote and maintain justice based on international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law. As presented in Chapter One, Christian peacemaking must involve justice. Therefore, the question was: What was the rightful place of the SCSL in the peacemaking process in Sierra Leone? Other questions to be addressed in this chapter include: Did the SCSL depend on any Christian teachings on justice and peace? Did the judges interpret the law through such Christian peacemaking ideas? Were some of the lawyers influenced by Christian peacemaking tenets and Christian teachings on justice and peace? Were there Christian ideals in the agreement between the government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations? What Christian concepts of peacemaking and justice, if any, can be identified from examining the inner workings of the Special Court for Sierra Leone?

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<sup>425</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CLk1rMQtCHg%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 12 May 2010].

The TRCSL (Chapter Seven of this thesis) and the SCSL were the two main peacemaking bodies and transitional justice systems in Sierra Leone established after the war (Wierda, Hayner & Zyl, 2010). These bodies are central to the peacemaking process in Sierra Leone and were crucial for the exercise of justice and fairplay.<sup>426</sup> Due to their centrality in the whole process of peacemaking and reconciliation after the war, any discussion and evaluation of peacemaking in Sierra Leone without reference to these two bodies would be incomplete. The Special Court functioned in accordance with the Statutes of the Special Court for Sierra Leone<sup>427</sup>, which is the focus of the next portion of this chapter.

### **8.1 The Composition of the Court**

According to its records, the Special Court was composed of a Trial Chamber and an Appeals Chamber. The records also allowed for a second Trial Chamber to be created if requested by the Secretary-General or the President of the Special Court. Such a request could only be made after the passage of at least six months from the commencement of the Special Court. Up to two alternate judges would be appointed after six months if the President of the Special Court determined it necessary.<sup>428</sup> The Special Court consisted of three organs: the Chambers (Appeals Chamber, Trial Chamber I and Trial Chamber II); the Registry (including the Defence Office); and the Office of the Prosecutor.<sup>429</sup> These formed the backbone of the Court. The Special Court also had eight judges, three of which made up the Trial Chamber, while the other five comprised the Appeal Chamber. Scholars are however divided on the usefulness of the SCSL. Some Scholars think as the Court as not supported by the general populace, and those who see it as a useful mechanism for fostering reconciliation between perpetrators and victims of the war (Ojukutu-Macauley and Rashid, 2013, pp. 47, 56).

According to Special Court documents, the Government of Sierra Leone, in consultation with the Secretary-General and the Prosecutor, was to appoint a Sierra Leonean Deputy

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<sup>426</sup> At the International Center for Transitional Justice, New York 24<sup>th</sup> June 2002 in [www.ictj.org](http://www.ictj.org). [Accessed 9 May 2010].

<sup>427</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CLk1rMQtCHg%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 12 May 2010].

<sup>428</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CLk1rMQtCHg%3d&tabid=176> . [Accessed 12 May 2010].

<sup>429</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/ABOUT/CourtOrganization/tabid/78/Default.aspx>. [Accessed 10 April 2010].

Prosecutor to assist the Prosecutor in conducting the investigations and prosecutions.<sup>430</sup> This was a new procedure in the history of an international criminal tribunal. The court documents required that the Prosecutor and the Deputy Prosecutor be of a “high moral character” and possess the highest level of professional competence and extensive experience in conducting investigations and criminal cases prosecutions. These conditions of a) high moral character and b) professionalism, are not contrary to the expectations of Christianity and its peacemaking tenets, particularly regarding the concept of Christian peace and justice as presented in the first chapter of this thesis. Christianity expects that people have “high moral standards” in all situations where justice is concerned. It also requires some level of independence, professionalism, and respect for human dignity, because all human beings are viewed as created in the image of God. The Prosecutor and the Deputy Prosecutor were independent in the performance of their functions, and did not accept or seek instructions from any government or other source. The Secretary-General of UN, after consultation with the government of Sierra Leone, appointed a Prosecutor, David M. Crane, for a three-year term, after which he/she was eligible for reappointment.<sup>431</sup>

The Registry supported all other parts of the court, including the defence teams and those dealing with administrative issues. Every accused person had a defence team. It was against this background that the Secretary-General of UN, in consultation with the President of the Special Court, appointed a Registrar. This individual was responsible for servicing the Chambers and the Office of the Prosecutor, and also for the recruitment and administration of all support staff. He or she also administered the financial and staff resources of the Special Court.<sup>432</sup> The issue of how to hire staff at the Court was also determined, and a key agreement was that the staff had to include both Sierra Leoneans and non-Sierra Leoneans.

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<sup>430</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CLk1rMQtCHg%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 12 May 2010].

<sup>431</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CLk1rMQtCHg%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 12 May 2010].

<sup>432</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CLk1rMQtCHg%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 13 May 2010].



## 8.2 Financing the Court

Justice could not be achieved without appropriate finances for the Court's operations. According to court documents, the expenses of the Special Court were to be met by voluntary contributions from the international community (Hancock and Zeren, 2010), making it the first international criminal tribunal to be funded entirely by voluntary contributions from external governments. The Special Court received contributions in cash and in kind from over forty states representing all geographic areas of the world.<sup>433</sup> The government of Sierra Leone provided the land where the Special Court was located in Freetown, the capital city.

It was understood that the Secretary-General of the United Nations would commence the process of establishing the Court when he had sufficient contributions in hand to finance the first 12 months of its operations, in addition to pledges equal to the anticipated expenses of the following 24 months of the court's operations. It was further understood that the Secretary-General would continue to seek contributions equal to the anticipated expenses of the Court beyond its first three years of operation. Should voluntary contributions be insufficient for the Court to implement its mandate, the Secretary-General and the Security Council would explore alternative means of financing the Special Court.<sup>434</sup> In the words of a political scientist at Ken State University, Landon E. Hancock and Aysegul Keskin Zeren:

The SCSL is different from the previous attempts at international justice embodied in the ICTY and ICTR in that it lacks the powers outlined in Chapter VII of the UN Charter and could not call on the UN to support the arrest and detention of indicted individuals outside of Sierra Leone. In addition, the structure of this court – as with all hybrid courts – differs from the UN tribunal structure. Unlike UN tribunals, the SCSL consists of a balance of locally-appointed and UN-appointed judges at the trial and appellate levels. Finally, funding for the SCSL also distinguishes it from its predecessors; unlike tribunals in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, which were both funded by the UN, the draft statute and subsequent agreement between the parties to the SCSL called for voluntary contributions from the international community (Hancock and Zeren, 2010).

The special court was financed by countries such as Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan,

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<sup>433</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/>. [Accessed 30 October 2011].

<sup>434</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CLk1rMQtCHg%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 13 May 2010].

Liechtenstein, Lesotho, Luxemburg, Mali, Mauritius, Malaysia, Mexico, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Philippines, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America and the United Kingdom. The Court's costs were approximately 57 million dollars over a three-year period. (Ojukutu-Macauley and Rashid, 2013, p. 47)

As noted above, the Sierra Leone Court marked the first time a Special Court was solely dependent on voluntary contributions for the maintenance of its operations, and this means of funding the Court created a legacy for peacemaking not only in Sierra Leone, but in the entire sub-Saharan region. The Court provided a physical deterrent to warmongers and people who planned to commit crimes against humanity. This function can be identified in the statutes of the Court, its culture, and legal interpretation.

### **8.3 The Statutes of the Special Court, Culture, and Legal Interpretation**

The Statutes of the Sierra Leone Special Court defined the legal rules to be followed by the Court during its implementation, including the areas of investigation, trial, the rights of accused persons, and the treatment of children. These statutes were upheld in March 2002 by the parliament of Sierra Leone, which passed laws that gave the Special Court its powers within the country's legal framework. It provided details on how to obtain evidence, perform arrests, and carry out other duties necessary for prosecutions.<sup>435</sup>

Evidence from court documents and statutes show that the Court was based on Sierra Leonean law, international humanitarian law, and the Geneva Convention.<sup>436</sup> International humanitarian law defines protection to include a range of human rights, such as the right not to be tortured, and states that every human being is entitled to protection at all times. During armed conflict, international humanitarian law ensures protection for certain individuals; for example, it states that civilians may not be killed or taken hostage. This law is not contrary to the Christian concept of peace discussed in Chapter One of this thesis. Within the Christian concept of peace, justice must be meted out to those who break the law, and their human rights must be maintained, defended and protected according to the biblical understanding of humanity created in the image

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<sup>435</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=uClnd1MJJeEw%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 16 May 2010].

<sup>436</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=uClnd1MJJeEw%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 24 April 2010].

of God. The Court's purpose was to create peace based on the concept of justice. A related purpose of the court was to bring to justice those that bore the greatest responsibility for the war in Sierra Leone, starting on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 1996.<sup>437</sup> The selection of this date is significant in that the AFRC carried out its coup on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 1997, during which time the war took on a different dimension of violence, and unspeakable atrocities were perpetrated. These activities were not based in Sierra Leonean cultural beliefs or practices, and religious leaders and communities vigorously opposed them in their public statements (interview with Kemoore Salia, April 2006).

The TRCSL administered a restorative form of justice, as presented in the previous chapter, whereas the SCSL employed more punitive forms. The concern of this chapter is the interpretation of legal traditions in light of these two aspects of justice. I will consider now the role of the court as it carried out its peacemaking role, meting out justice to both victims and perpetrators of the war. In other words, the SLSC served as both a transitional justice system and a peacemaking body.

#### **8.4 The Role of the Special Court for Sierra Leone as a Peacemaker**

The Special Court as transitional justice court was the initiative of the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone under the SLPP government of President Kabbah. Sierra Leoneans were anxious to see transitional justice bodies functioning so that the ills that the people suffered could be redressed. They also hoped that the bodies would help to prevent such atrocities from taking place in Sierra Leone in the future. The international community could not accept the blanket amnesty that was granted to the RUFSL,<sup>438</sup> the CDF<sup>439</sup>, or other factions under the Lomé Peace Accord. Therefore, the Special Court was able to comply with statutes of international law and rescind the amnesty granted at Lomé.<sup>440</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CLk1rMQtCHg%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 7 May 2010].

<sup>438</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/scsl/listCasesdefendant.asp?caseno=15>. [Accessed 29 October 2011].

<sup>439</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/scsl/listCasesdefendant.asp?caseno=14>. [Accessed 29 October 2011].

<sup>440</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=uClnd1MJJeEw%3d&tabid=70>. [Accessed 30 October 2011].

Following a request concerning the formation of an SCSL made to the United Nations by President Amad Tejan Kabbah, the Special Court was formed by the Sierra Leone government and the United Nations in 2000.<sup>441</sup> The United Nations Resolution 1315 (2000) signed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 2000<sup>442</sup> established the groundwork for the Court to put on trial those who bore the greatest responsibility for atrocities during the Sierra Leone Civil War from 1991 - 2002, particularly after the 30<sup>th</sup> of November 1996.<sup>443</sup> The purpose of the Court was to create peace based on law and justice. The judges were to be independent and fair in the trial chambers as well as in the appeal chambers (James-Allen., 2003, p.19). Apart from these roles, the Court also established a peace museum, which holds records of its proceedings. Though not yet accessible by the public, it will serve as a source of information for both Sierra Leoneans and non-Sierra Leoneans interested in peacemaking, especially in a punitive and just way. (Pratt, 2007)

The vast majority of Sierra Leoneans believed that the Special Court played a very important role in peacemaking in the country (Pratt, 2007, p. 22). While traditional ways of addressing conflict and reconciliation in Sierra Leone have included the Poro, Bondo and Wunday, among other secret societies,<sup>444</sup> the local courts of chiefs, funeral gatherings, annual family meetings and naming ceremonies, the Special Court was also said to be relevant to the majority of Sierra Leoneans (Pratt, 2007, pp. 22 - 26). The Court indicted, tried and meted out justice to nearly thirty people, including Charles Taylor, the former president of the Republic of Liberia, for various crimes, such as crimes against humanity. According to Hancock and Zeren:

The use of tribunals, particularly the various incarnations of international tribunals following the Nuremberg Tribunal, are a clear application of a Universalist notion of human rights that emerged to beat out cultural relativism after World War II. This application of universal human rights to transitional justice has been legitimized by the argument that peoples of the developing world lack traditions of rationality and reason and that their understanding of justice is enmeshed with religion, unlike states

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<sup>441</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CLk1rMQtCHg%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 16 May 2010].

<sup>442</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=uClnd1MJeEw%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 24 April 2010].

<sup>443</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CLk1rMQtCHg%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 18 April 2010].

<sup>444</sup> See the introductory chapter of this thesis.

from the North or West. Another argument is that transitional states are not capable of reconstructing their nationally fractured communities and are often not strong enough to pursue the path of justice, therefore requiring outside assistance to establish, or re-establish, the rule of law (Hancock and Zeren, 2010).<sup>445</sup>

However, the acceptance of the TRCSL and the SCSL had nothing to do with a lack of traditions of rationality and reason. Rather, similar to the role of the *Ubuntu*<sup>446</sup> philosophy of ‘human-ness’, or ‘human kindness’ in South Africa, Sierra Leoneans have high regard for traditional religion and the role of customary or traditional law in the lives of citizens. This is demonstrated by the beliefs regarding ancestors, by the community problem-solving systems within “court Barry” native administrative courts, which settle disputes in local communities at funerals, and by the secret “bush” societies. I argue, therefore, that Hancock and Zeren (2010) seem to have overlooked the importance of traditional customs. In fact, Sierra Leone is a country with long traditions of legal and rational thinking (Fyfe, 1962, 1979).<sup>447</sup>

Like many other African countries, Sierra Leone experienced financial difficulties in bringing a large number of people to justice in the Special Court. Nevertheless, many Sierra Leoneans not only had knowledge of justice, fair play, and the Special Court, but were actively in support of all of these principles (Pratt, 2007, p. 23). In the National Survey conducted by Memunatu Pratt, head of the Department of Peace Studies at FBC, the University of Sierra Leone, the following results were recorded:

On understanding the role of the Special Court, 83% of the whole country responses inclusive of male and female indicated that they understood the role of the court. On the extent to which respondents agree or disagree that the Special Court has contributed to building peace after intense violence, 93% indicated that they strongly agree that the Special Court has contributed to building peace in Sierra Leone. It is often stated that you cannot achieve peace without justice, [and] 81% of the respondents indicated that peace cannot be achieved without justice (Pratt, 2007, p. 24).

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<sup>445</sup> In this quote, Hancock refers to several scholars whose views he presents in his article, cited in the bibliography of this thesis.

<sup>446</sup> See Chapter One of this thesis for a more detailed definition of *ubuntu*.

<sup>447</sup> See Chapter Three of this thesis.

In fact, most of the Sierra Leoneans whom Pratt interviewed maintained that setting up the Special Court was the most appropriate option for addressing crimes committed during the war: “91% indicated that the Special Court was the most appropriate [institution] and over 87% of her respondents maintained that the court was relevant to Sierra Leone” (Pratt, 2007, p. 24). One can therefore argue that there was widespread support for the SCSL in and among stakeholders and grassroots individuals in Sierra Leone, which undermines the conclusions of Hancock and Zeren (2010) and Lamin (2003) as examined in Chapter Two of this thesis. Pratt’s “Nationwide Survey Report” on public perceptions of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, along with my own empirical research and subsequent writings in Sierra Leone from 2005 until 2015 show that the SCSL made peace through meting out justice, and that many Sierra Leoneans shared this view (Pratt, 2007).

The crimes that the court dealt with and tried people for were crimes against international humanitarian law and Sierra Leonean law, except for treason.<sup>448</sup> The Special Court prosecutor decided who should be tried, and those who were tried had the opportunity to have defence lawyers. If they were too poor to pay, the SCSL financed lawyers to represent those indicted (James-Allen, 2003, pp. 31 - 32). The accused also had the opportunity to take their cases to an Appeal Chamber if they disagreed with the Trial Chamber’s decisions. However, the Appeal Chamber, with its five judges, was the final entity that an accused individual could access. As previously noted, the Court tried both Sierra Leoneans and the Liberian president Charles Taylor, who, because of security reasons, was tried in the Sierra Leone Special Court seated at the localities of The Hague.<sup>449</sup> Although the death penalty is permissible under Sierra Leonean law, international law prevented the SCSL from mandating this form of punishment (James-Allen, 2003, pp. 30 - 31). In Pratt’s nationwide survey, 40 % of respondents believed that the Court should sentence people to death; however, the highest punishment the court could order was life imprisonment.

While there is no evidence of a special Christian contribution in setting up the court, Hancock and Zeren maintain that religion was very influential:

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<sup>448</sup> Unlike International Humanitarian Law, Sierra Leone Law opens for capital punishment for treason.

<sup>449</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org>. [Accessed 30 October 2011].

Religion has had a strong influence on the shaping of legal traditions, even if, as in the secularized West, religious institutions have been separated from the state. For much of the West and the international criminal justice structures, these legal traditions trace their roots back to the Christian Old Testament – otherwise known as the Jewish Torah – which prescribes punishments for transgressions against the deity, individuals, or the community as a whole (Hancock and Zeren, 2010).

Thus, in this chapter, I will show that there is no evidence, based on the conclusions of the court, that Christians were responsible for fighting, causing violence or fuelling the war. Instead, I present evidence that Christians promoted and actively worked for peace.

<sup>450</sup> I will also demonstrate that this Christian role or idea of peacemaking was not the mandate of the Court, but that including it in the Court was of major importance due to its relevance to peacemaking in Sierra Leone. The aim is to examine certain aspects of the Court and then look at Christian peacemaking inside and outside of the Court. The chapter also evaluates the work of the Court in peacemaking in Sierra Leone. Though the Sierra Leone Special Court is not mentioned in the Lomé Peace Accord, there are some references in Article XXVI to human rights violations to be dealt with by the TRCSL.

Bearing in mind all of the information presented above, the following questions come to mind: What is the relationship between the TRCSL and the Special Court? What is the background of the Sierra Leone Special Court? Does the Sierra Leone Special Court have any relation to religion and peacemaking? Does the Special Court meet the needs of the victims of the war in Sierra Leone? The formation of the Special Court for Sierra Leone was meant to be a means of addressing the issues raised in Article 26 of the Accord, which demanded that impunity and human rights violations must be addressed.<sup>451</sup> This leads us to the relationship between the SCSL and the TRCSL, which is the focus of the next sub-section.

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<sup>450</sup> See Chapters Four, Five, Six and Seven of this thesis.

<sup>451</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=uClnd1MJEW%3d&tabid=70>. [Accessed 30 October 2011].

## 8.5 The Relationship between the Special Court and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Sierra Leone

The Special Court and the TRCSL played different roles, though both helped to make peace in Sierra Leone after the war. Both the TRCSL and the SCSL were transitional justice systems in Sierra Leone concerned with bringing about peace based on justice, justice based on truth telling (TRCSL), and justice based on international law (SCSL). The complexity of the war<sup>452</sup> made it necessary for these two bodies to deal with their respective mandates. The Special Court began operating at around the same time as the TRCSL in mid-2000. In retrospect, the Chairman of the TRCSL, Bishop Humper, regretted this because of the challenges it created for the work of the TRCSL (Humper, 2011).

Bishop Humper regarded the TRCSL as a forum for restorative justice, healing, forgiveness and counselling that would deal with the entire populace of the country. The Special Court, on the other hand, was established to hold accountable those who bore the greatest responsibilities in the eleven year old civil conflict.<sup>453</sup> According to James-Allen:

Several things about the Sierra Leone TRC and the Special Court are unique. Five countries have had a Truth Commission working at the same time as prosecutions are taking place. It is also unusual for a Truth Commission and the courts to keep their information completely separate, as our TRC and Special Court were doing. These differences make Sierra Leone unique and interesting to the rest of the world (James-Allen, 2003, p. 49).

The uniqueness of the SLSC is also seen in the religious context of Sierra Leone, as presented in preceding chapters. It is against this background that I now highlight the relationship between Christian peacemakers and the SCSL.

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<sup>452</sup> See Chapter Two of this thesis.

<sup>453</sup> <http://awoko.org/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=8515&cntnt01returnid=15>. [Accessed 22 May 2010].



## 8.6 Christian Peacemakers and the Special Court for Sierra Leone

The research evidence shows that a number of Special Court workers and administrators were Christians. During my fieldwork and interviews from 2006 until 2011, for example, I observed that the Defence team included many Methodists. Although they practised Christianity and believed in the Christian tenets of peacemaking and peace as taught and practised in Sierra Leone, their role was purely legal. However, there is evidence to show that the legal aspects of their work might have been influenced by Christian peacemaking doctrines, as well as by certain Christian personalities who were practicing Muslims, Catholics Anglicans and Methodists.<sup>454</sup> At the same time, it is difficult to measure the exact impact of the role of Christians as peacemakers in the Special Court for Sierra Leone because the court was not explicitly based on Christian theology or Canon law, though Hancock and Zeren maintain that these law systems upon which the court is based have their origin in the OT Torah and Canon Law (Hancock and Zeren, 2010).

In the preceding chapters, the Council of Churches, the Interreligious Council, and religious leaders in general were described as peacemakers in action through various activities such as advocacy, relief, and spiritual activities. Though Bishop Humper was not pleased with the timing of having the Special Court and the TRCSL functioning simultaneously, he maintained that the Court was necessary and gave his support. Bishop Humper was concerned that the CDF, the Rebels and the AFRC might think of the TRCSL as an arm of the SCSL due also to the proximity between the court and the Commission. This concern was confirmed because, the rebels were more uneasy:

The boys<sup>455</sup> saw the TRC as a channel through which the SCSL could get evidence to try the rebels and other fighters. The unfounded rumour was that if they appeared at the TRC, they would then arrest them and put them into the TRC vehicles ready to take them to Freetown for trial before the SCSL (Humper, 2010).

This was a common rumour among former RUFSL rebels, and it created an uneasy atmosphere for the operations of the TRCSL. Another problem was that of the locations of the TRCSL and the Special Court. They were located within close proximity to each

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<sup>454</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/ABOUT/CourtOrganization/Chambers/AppealsChamber/tabid/87/Default.aspx>. [Accessed April 2010]. A list of appeal court judges with mostly Western/ Christian oriented education and background.

<sup>455</sup> Bishop Humper was referring to the former RUFSL rebels.

other, and a number of rumours used that proximity as evidence for the view that the TRCSL was working for the SCSL. Commenting on the Special Court, Bishop Humper drew the following conclusions about the rumours:

We were [sic] burgled with [sic] uninformed people. I think that as a Bishop [sic] it had something to say in order to dispel these rumours and conspiracies that seemed to obstruct the smooth working of the two bodies without conspiracies. The Special Court tried and sentenced less than thirty people, unlike the TRC, which though it did not try people, [it] helped people to work through their problems and traumas. The advantages of the Special Court are that its findings show that there were people who bore the greatest responsibilities for the violence and war that took place in Sierra Leone (Humper, 2011).

It is important to clarify that the Court does not strictly fit in with the focus of the thesis, in terms of its interest in the role of Christians as peacemakers, because it was a secular legal organisation established by resolution 1315 of the UN. However, considering the importance of the SCSL and the support of Christians for the work of the Court, one can argue that without Christian peacemaking support, the Court's success would have been much less likely.

The question of dependence on Christian or biblical precepts of peace, justice, and legality was presented in Chapter One of this thesis and was also addressed in an interview with Special Court officials in Appendix 1a. In answering this question, the Head of the Defence team asserted that “the Court was not necessarily dependent on Christian ideals or notions of justice and peace. The Court depended on the supremacy of the law and the impartiality of the judges” (Head of Defence Team, 2008). I argue, however, that even though this influence was not on the overt level, it was identifiable on a covert level, where moral standards can be perceived as Christian. I found this in my own research. From my observations, the words and actions of Sierra Leonean leaders and politicians expressed a severe deterioration of moral values. I argue that this lack of values based in morality led them to practice nepotism and clientelism in politics, marginalise religion and destroy the country's infrastructure. All of these failures contributed to the war in Sierra Leone. The Heads of Outreach and Public Affairs concurred with this connection in an interview (Chief of Outreach, 2008), during which they focussed on the laws within Sierra Leone, the Geneva Convention and international humanitarian law as the basis for the activities of the Court (Chief of Outreach, 2008). In short, the Court did not actively depend upon any Christian ideals. However, this brings us to a new question: Did the judges themselves interpret the law

through Christian ideals? Based on interviews and a review of documentary evidence,<sup>456</sup> I found that the judges declared that they were not influenced by Christian ideas in their interpretation of the laws, but rather based their interpretations on the law according to the rules of the Court, and on evidence, transcripts and arguments, including those of the prosecutors and the defence teams.<sup>457</sup>

In a series of press releases, the judges explained their decisions based on international criminal law and Sierra Leonean law, and declared the various counts and charges levied against the accused. International humanitarian law, due to its background in canon law and Roman law, is expected to be based on morality and ethics. International humanitarian law is derived from the biblical Torah, from which canon law developed, (Hancock and Zeren, 2010). This became the base for modern humanitarian law because the Torah law is probably the oldest set of recorded laws in the Judeo-Christian system, though the link might not be very strong, however, the similarity on ethical and humanitarian standard is crucial for the link between the two sets of laws. On the other hand, there are those who argue for the existence of ancient laws in other cultural systems. The Hammurabi code (1754 BC), for example is deemed to be older than the Torah. About 300 years after Hammurabi, in 1440 BC, Moses recorded the Law for the Israelites. In the RUFSL cases,<sup>458</sup> the accused were judged guilty based on legal principles, and not on any Christian principle. However, these legal principles are moral and ethical in nature, similar to Christian ethics.<sup>459</sup>

The same applied in the CDF cases,<sup>460</sup> the AFRC cases,<sup>461</sup> and also in the Taylor case in Sierra Leone Special Court that use the Court locations of The Hague.<sup>462</sup>

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<sup>456</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/documents /tabid/176/Default.aspx>. [Accessed 1 May 2010].

<sup>457</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/DOCUMENTS/tabid/176/Default.aspx> : Rules of procedure and evidence. [Accessed 1 May 2010].

<sup>458</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/CASES/ProsecutorvsSesayKallonandGbaoRUFCase/AppealJudgment/tabid/218/efault.aspx>. [Accessed 1 May 2010].

<sup>459</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=Tz9AZ1y3qcU%3d&tabid=53>. [Accessed 1 May 2010].

<sup>460</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=9xsCbIVrMIY%3d&tabid=194>. [Accessed 1 May 2010].

<sup>461</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=6xjuPVYy%2fvM%3d&tabid=173> [Accessed 1 May 2010]. <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=vTs8YQQJ%2bagg%3d&tabid=173>. [Accessed 1 May 2010].

While the judges state that they were not influenced by Christianity, I argue that some of the lawyers were affected and guided by Christian peacemaking tenets and by Christian teachings of justice. Some of the lawyers are definitely Christian by faith, though they answered in the negative when asked whether they were influenced by their faith. For example, in an interview with the Head of the Defence team, she made allusions to her Christian faith, but categorically said that their work is based purely on the laws of Sierra Leone, international humanitarian laws, and the Geneva Conventions.

The same comments were made with regard to the issue of justice. In fact, this was confirmed not only by the other interviewees but by the lawyers with whom I spoke.<sup>463</sup> I asked them if there were any Christian peacemaking ideas in the running of and implementation of the Special Court, and their replies indicated that the manner in which the Court was run was based on an agreement between the government of Sierra Leone (GOSL) and the United Nations. There is nothing in the agreement that indicates that the court had Christian peacemaking ideas in its implementation.<sup>464</sup> Several of those interviewed at the Special Court stated that there were no Christian ideals in the formation of the Court. This includes the Registrar; the logistics officer; defence and prosecution lawyers; and Memunatu Pratt, the Head of the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sierra Leone, Fourah Bay College (Pratt, 2007). Yet, in an interview with the Head of the Defence team, she stated that as a Christian, she was happy for the protection of God both during the war and during her work at the Court as a defence lawyer.

## **8.7 Discussion, Summary, and Conclusions**

My task in this section was to assess the Special Court and to evaluate whether we can conclude that religion helped to foment war, or alternatively, played a part in peacemaking. There are also others who have argued that religion could have been neutral and that one don't have to only consider the role of religion in black and white, or good or bad. However, as I argue in this thesis, religious organisations and leaders

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<http://www.scs1.org/CASES/ProsecutorvsCharlesTaylor/AppealsChamberDecisions/tabid/191/Default.aspx>.<sup>462</sup> [Accessed 1 May 2010].

<sup>463</sup> Chief of Outreach and Public affairs, legacy officer, defense lawyers and logistics officer. November 12 - 15<sup>th</sup>, 2008 and November 22<sup>nd</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2008.

<sup>464</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=CLk1rMQtCHg%3d&tabid=176>. [Accessed 6 May, 2010].

supported the work of the court in its responsibilities was evident, as presented in the preceding chapters. The Special Court judgements do not in any way show that the religious bodies were responsible for the war that took place in Sierra Leone.<sup>465</sup> The Court does not say what the religious bodies did or did not do with regards to the war; however, what the court did was to prove beyond all reasonable doubt that those responsible for the war were the Revolutionary United Front, the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council, and the Civil Defence Forces.<sup>466</sup> Though some of them used talismans for protection, their activities had nothing to do with religious convictions. Though Foday Sankoh and Hinga Norman died before their cases concluded, they did not in any way suggest that their actions were motivated by religious ideals of a just war or a just peace.

Although the Government of Sierra Leone agreed to an amnesty at Lomé, this only applied under Sierra Leonean law, as no amnesties could be applied to crimes under international humanitarian law, as a way of preventing future acts of genocide and crimes against humanity. For this reason, the Lomé Accord did not bar any prosecutions for violations of international humanitarian law that came before the Special Court.<sup>467</sup> This is an interesting aspect of the Special Court, because the Lomé Peace Accord was not necessarily referring to international law, but was mainly based on Sierra Leonean law. Some scholars even claim that the Accord failed to end the war, and that the Abuja Agreement (2000) was what ultimately ended the war (Hancock and Zeren, 2010). According to Hancock and Zeren the SCSL came about because of the May 2000 collapse of the Lomé peace accord. I view which I argue against because the Lomé peace accord was the document that actually helped to bring the crises to an end, even though Hancock and Zeren argue that:

The Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) was ‘the product of a confluence of circumstances’ brought about by the May 2000 collapse of the Lomé Peace Accord. The failure of Lomé increased pressure on the

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<sup>465</sup> <http://www.scsl.org/CASES/ProsecutorvsBrimaKamaraandKanuAFRCCCase/AppealJudgment/tabid/216/Default.aspx> . [Accessed 7 May 2010];  
<http://www.scsl.org/CASES/ProsecutorvsSesayKallonandGbaoRUFCase/AppealJudgment/tabid/218/Default.aspx>. [Accessed 7 May 2010];  
<http://www.scsl.org/CASES/ProsecutorvsFofanaandKondewaCDFCase/AppealJudgment/tabid/194/Default.aspx>. [Accessed 7 May 2010].

<sup>466</sup> <http://www.sc-sl.org/scsl/Listcases.asp>. [Accessed 30 October 2011].

<sup>467</sup> <http://www.specialcourt.org/Outreach/index1.htm>. [Accessed 21 May 2010].

United Nations to create a mechanism that would hold individuals accountable for past atrocities. The request by Sierra Leone's government to create an ad hoc court, however, soon ran into problems, mainly a lack of available funds and unwillingness by the Security Council to support yet another tribunal. Instead, the Security Council responded by negotiating with Sierra Leone's government to create an independent Special Court that would prosecute 'persons who bear the greatest responsibility' for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed during the civil war (Hancock and Zeren, 2010).

In my view, however, the Lomé Peace Accord did not collapse. Rather, I argue that it was this Accord that set the foundation not only for disarmament, but also for the establishment of the religious bodies as moral guarantors for the peace, as recorded in Article VIII of the Accord. The religious leaders then played their role within the mandate of the Accord in such a manner that they not only supported the Court, but acted as permanent observers in its proceedings. Religious leaders also influenced the truth-telling and restorative justice that took place to create healing and reconciliation in Sierra Leone.

However, the question still arises as to whether the prosecutor of the Sierra Leone Special Court omitted important people who should have been tried before the Court despite having held senior offices in the land. In fact, though both Hinga Norman and Foday Sankoh died before they could be tried before the Court, some, including myself, hold the view that they should have been tried posthumously: in my view, the Accord and international law should not exempt any individual, and even death should not stop a trial from proceeding, except in cases where amnesties were used to prevent the risk of the outbreak of further violence as argued by Snyder and Vinjamuri, (2003, p. 1.). They argue that:

Advocacy groups such as Human Rights watch and Amnesty International have made historic contributions to the cause of international human rights by publicising the need to prevent mass atrocities such as war crimes, genocide, and widespread political killings and torture....

However, my argument for the position of limiting amnesties is because of the enormous evil and trauma that the perpetrators of the war and violence inflicted on the people of Sierra Leone. In fact, in the views of many people (Koroma, 2007; Moiba, 2006; Turay, 2005 and others), the blanket amnesty that the Lomé Peace Accord granted was corrected by the Special Court for Sierra Leone, which was based mainly on international, rather than local law.

Any attempt to address the issue of peacemaking would be incomplete without discussing the efforts made on behalf of the Special Court, whether by Christians, Muslims or other bodies in Sierra Leone. One cannot discuss peacemaking without examining justice at all levels, both at the reconciliatory and legal levels. At the reconciliatory level, the TRCSL played a very important role, taking its mandate from Articles XXVI of the Lomé Peace Accord,<sup>468</sup> while in the legal sphere, the Special Court for Sierra Leone played a similar role, and this was supported by Christian leaders. Commenting on the Special Court, Bishop Biguzzi expressed the belief in every measure that helped people to change and reconcile (Biguzzi, 2009), and there was widespread support for the work of the Special Court among both Christians and Muslims. Even if one argues that the Court was not specifically based on Christian tenets of peacemaking, the fact remains that due to the respect carried by religious leaders, lack of support and co-operation with the Court from the religious community in Sierra Leone would have made its work either impossible or extremely difficult. This, in turn, made them very influential in all areas, including public opinion. Christian leaders, churches and ecumenical councils such as the Inter-Religious Council supported the work of the Court as well as the TRCSL and its leaders, outlined above.

As stated in the profiles of Christian leaders and organisations, Christians were actively involved in peacemaking through advocacy, relief, the provision of leadership and support for the bodies that were established after the war for reconciliation, peace, and healing. The Special Court was one such body. The Council of Churches Sierra Leone supported its operations as it had done for the work of the TRCSL and the SCSL, the focus of this chapter. The various church leaders in Sierra Leone supported all efforts to bring about peace in Sierra Leone. The Methodist Church Sierra Leone is particularly noteworthy in this light. Many lawyers and judges in the country have Anglican and Methodist backgrounds. The Catholic Church also supported the work of the Special Court (Biguzzi, 2009).

It is important to note that the Special Court, though not a Christian organisation, has played an important role based not only on the law, but also with some Christian undertones of peacemaking and justice. According to Hancock and Zeren:

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<sup>468</sup> See Chapter Seven of this thesis.

In terms of cultural influences on legal traditions, we can see two broad categories for comparison. The first category looks at transitional justice mechanisms influenced by international or formal conceptions of the rule of law, largely based on a Universalist view of law and human rights and most often following a path of retributive justice. The second category examines transitional justice mechanisms influenced by local or folk conceptions of the rule of law as coloured by local cultural and religious traditions. Instead of universal values, this perspective looks more often at particulars, such as the relationship between individual rights and social welfare and is quite often expressed in forms of distributive or restorative justice rather than mainly through retributive justice. (Hancock and Zeren, 2010)

Thus, the Sierra Leonean context of religious peacemaking can provide support for arguing that religion influenced the practices of justice in the SCSL. For example, Mr. Alimamy Koroma, a former General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, stated:

There is a need for justice in our region (West Africa) now, but when some talk of justice, they're often really talking about revenge. What we need is a restorative justice that permits true reconciliation and supports sustainable peace.<sup>469</sup>

This does not in any way rule out the work of the Special Court. However, this statement can be understood as an important supportive point for the kind of peace that the SCSL was working to achieve, namely peace with justice, and not a punitive peace. Since this thesis focusses on Christian peacemaking in Sierra Leone, it is important to note that though there was considerable support from Christians for the work of the Special Court, its supporters were not in any way limited to Christians, as backing for the Special Court also came from the Inter-Religious council of Sierra Leone.<sup>470</sup> The CCSL, bolstered by the World Council of Religion for Peace, was the catalyst for the formation of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone.<sup>471</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> Church world services, "Sierra Leone to host seminars on trauma awareness and recovery, available at: <http://www.churchworldservice.org/news/archives/2004/01/153.html>. [Accessed 9 January 2004].

<sup>470</sup> <http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/sierra-leone/inter-religious-council.php>. [Accessed 9 May 2010].

<sup>471</sup> In April 1997, religious leaders – with the active support and encouragement from the World Council of Religions for Peace (WCRP) – established the IRCSL. Some of the founders had been active throughout the Abidjan peace talks in 1996, earning the respect of both the government and the RUF. The Council was inspired primarily by religious beliefs and the promotion of social justice; secondly, by the example of the Inter-Religious Council in Liberia, which was very vocal against human rights abuses during and after Liberia's civil war; and, thirdly, by calls from their membership to be more proactive in the peace process. Organisational members include the Supreme Islamic Council; the Sierra Leone Muslim Congress; the Federation of Muslim Women Associations in Sierra Leone; the Council of Imams; and the Sierra Leone Islamic Missionary Union. Christian members include the Roman Catholic Church,



The statutes of the SCSL show nothing about the Special Court that was specifically Christian, nor do they indicate that there was a Christian contribution to peace or war in Sierra Leone. Yet, the Christian contribution to peacemaking and the role of the Court in peacemaking are important contextual models for peacemaking in Sierra Leone. There is no evidence, based on the conclusions of the court, that Christians were responsible for fuelling the war. Neither is there explicit evidence of religious leaders or bodies being involved in the formation of the court, though its efforts were strongly supported by the Christian community, (Pratt, 2007). The Christians with whom I spoke during the course of this research maintained that though the Sierra Leone Special Court was not a Christian organisation, many Christians supported it and were engaged in its work, and this leads me to the conclusions of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 9 CONCLUSION

### 9.1 The praxis of peace

In this chapter, I show how I answered my research questions and fulfilled my objectives. I specifically discuss the general aim of the thesis, the “praxis of peace”, the role of ATR in peacemaking, what issues/ challenges remain to be achieved, both in Sierra Leone since the end of the war and in this thesis. I subsequently demonstrate the academic and scholarly contribution I make with my thesis.

This thesis fills a gap in the study of religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone, since research on this topic is still generally nascent on the African continent. This gap is filled with evidence compiled from fieldwork, interviews and archives, together with the contributions by religious personnel as peacemakers in action, including religious leaders, churches, ecumenical bodies and the TRCSL and SCSL with religious support. This thesis also used documentary evidence from participant observations, internet resources and speeches, as well as personal experience to add new dimensions to the general academic debate on religion and violence and religion and peacemaking.

Based on this evidence, this thesis argues against the positions held by Hancock and Zeren (2010)<sup>472</sup> and Lamin (2003) that the SCSL was not favoured by the people of Sierra Leone and therefore was not very relevant to the peace process. Rather, it argues in favour of Mark Turay’s (2005) view that of all the NGOs in Sierra Leone, the IRCSL became the most visible and proactive body for peacemaking, and that this ecumenical organisation supported the work of the SCSL. He asserts that despite the difference between Christians and Muslims, they collaborated in the pursuance of peace and the condemnation of violence by the aggrieved forces through various actions including Sunday and Friday sermons from priests and Imams. This action by the religious leaders prompted the RUFSL to target religious leaders and their worship spaces. I also added important material and evidence for the peacemaking roles of the CCSL, the churches and Christian leaders in providing leadership for truth-telling and transitional justice in Sierra Leone. Supporting materials in the thesis chapters are included from individual Christian leaders, both lay and clergy, to churches, ecumenical organisations and transitional justice systems as peacemakers in action. This thesis has also highlighted

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<sup>472</sup> <http://religionconflictpeace.org/volume-4-issue-1-fall-2010/whose-truth-whose-justice>. [Accessed 2011 through 2015].

the lack of awareness of some scholars regarding the potential of religion in peacemaking, especially in Africa and particularly in Sierra Leone, a country that has demonstrated an unprecedented degree of religious tolerance and respect.

In the case of the African continent, Cobban's (2005) work shows that adherents of some religions can use violence in a conflict situation, as she experienced in Lebanon and Rwanda, as well as a resource for peace, as she experienced in South Africa and Mozambique. From her experiences in Lebanon, Israel, Palestine, Syria, Iraq and the central and southern African countries mentioned above, Cobban concludes that:

Lebanon is, of course, far from the only country in the Middle East, or indeed the world, where religion is, in my view, quite illegitimately used as a mobilising tool by cynical political leaders in their quest for earthly power and aggrandisement. But religion is also, I should note, used in the midst and the aftermath of war in some very different ways too[...] religious ideals and precepts [...] can be used in ways that provide succour to the afflicted and healing at all levels of society from the individual person through the group to the nation (Cobban 2005, p. 14).

In Sierra Leone, religion was used legitimately for the cessation of hostilities and for peacemaking. The positive role of religion is presented and defended in this thesis. It is documented not as a way of "romanticising" religion, but of showing the importance and relevance of focussing not only on religion's negative role, but also examining its positive role during and after the conflict. Schmidt maintains that religion can be a coping strategy for victims, and that in the study of religion and violence, scholars should put religion first, and then study violence, and not the other way round. According to Schmidt:

In this case, it [religion] has helped a victim of an act of violence to cope with the pain and humiliation of violence. This dimension of religion is often overlooked in studies of violence: the focus is often on violence first, religion second. However, studies of religion and violence should not ignore this side of the relationship. Religion can offer to healing (in particular for psychological injury) and means to cope with the experience of violence (Schmidt, 2011, p. 73).

The TRCSL provided the healing that was needed for the traumatised people of Sierra Leone.<sup>473</sup> It was led, managed and maintained by the presence of a Bishop during the truth-telling and restorative justice hearings in the country.<sup>474</sup> The provision of relief by

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<sup>473</sup> See Chapter Three of this thesis.

<sup>474</sup> See Chapter Seven of this thesis.

religious bodies for refugees from Liberia and Sierra Leone is one of the ways in which religious organisations, such as individual churches and the Council of Churches supported the people. This is presented in Chapter Six of this thesis.

In addition, it is worth noting that in my research, I have encountered many scholars dealing with the topic of religion and violence and religion and peace who shed light on a number of concerns in this intricate web. I am aware of the complexity of the issues and the danger of trying to too neatly summarise issues that often show constantly shifting patterns, attitudes and expectations, both among religious people and academics and at the grassroots level. However, the “praxis of peace,” as presented in this thesis, is a clear example of the legitimate use of religion, especially in the context of political intolerance.

As stated in the introductory chapter, the two main aims of this research were to examine the role of religion in peacemaking in Sierra Leone before and after 1989, and to highlight and defend religious resources as peacemaking tools in Sierra Leone, where religious leaders, churches, ecumenical bodies, the TRCSL and the Special Court played significant and specific roles in peacemaking. This has been achieved through evidence-based writings documented in the chapters of this thesis. I investigated the role of religion in the peace process in Sierra Leone and summarised the results, focussing on Christian leaders and organisations as peacemakers in action, such as the CCSL and the TRCSL under the leadership of Bishop J. C. Humper. In my qualitative and empirical studies, there is much evidence to demonstrate the power of individuals acting as faith-based diplomats, organisations drawing on their grassroots support and religious individuals acting in groups in their peacemaking efforts. The power of neutrality and impartiality in peacemaking is also presented, with the influence of an individual or group being perceived not only as genuine, but as impartial, helped greatly in resolving the crisis in Sierra Leone.

Thus, this thesis draws attention to the growing importance of Africa with regard to the growth of Christianity and Islam (Jenkins, 2002) through its documentation of the role played by Christians and Muslims in peacemaking in Sierra Leone, thereby filling the gap in knowledge with regard to religion and peacemaking in a country that is a unique example of religious tolerance. Scholars can benefit from knowing about Sierra Leone’s “praxis of peace” in the activities of individual leaders in the various denominations and the ecumenical bodies. In particular, the Methodist Church Sierra Leone, as well as

other Christian denominations, were visible in advocating peace and in offering leadership and support for peacemaking in Sierra Leone.

The logical frame of the thesis was demonstrated in the introductory chapter, and in Chapter Two I validated the results of this thesis. However, considering the importance of the background to the context of the study, Chapter Three was dedicated to a description of the religious, political and historical context of Sierra Leone relevant to the thesis. The material and methods in Chapter Two included a review of some of the literature on religion and peace, demonstrating the limited number of scholarly works on this thesis' position on religion and violence in Sierra Leone. Thus the contribution of this work aims towards filling that gap.

Scholarly views on religion and violence and religion and peace vary, as indicated in the literature review and in the various references throughout this work. As previously indicated, I have identified and documented various active roles played by religion in advocacy, relief, leadership, impartiality in mediation and reconciliation. Over fifty interviewees, both Christians and Muslims, gave evidence for this thesis. The interviewees were randomly selected both as informants and as actors (the latter being those closely involved in the action of the war). Some of the transcribed interviews are presented in various chapters and in the appendices.

In my empirical studies, various items of evidence underpinned not only the power of religious bodies in peacemaking in Sierra Leone, but also the power of individuals in religious organisations, who not only risked the lives of their families but were themselves involved in the struggle for peace. They engaged not only with the religious grassroots people, but also with the elite members of society, and because of the respect they had earned within their various religions, they used their influence in the areas of the economy and welfare. The vast majority of people in Sierra Leone have respect for religious leaders and organisations, and this helped the peacemaking process and contributed to strengthening religious peacemakers' roles and encouraging all the parties to the conflict to listen to their pastoral, priestly, Christian, prophetic and peacemaking appeals. The evidence in this thesis has shown that this religious respect had a positive impact on the peacemaking process.

The vast majority of Sierra Leoneans have in one way or another benefited from the role played by religious leaders in education, health, relief and peace. In line with the biblical concept of *shalom*, presented in Chapter One of this thesis, Sierra Leonean

churches helped provide schools, hospitals, clinics, jobs, food and clothes during and after the war, in a country where these welfare opportunities were greatly limited. Thus, in many instances, though individual Christians and religious organisations experienced challenges, they were able to focus on helping and healing, and as a result gained even more respect over the years. This contributed to the unparalleled esteem that religious leaders enjoyed, which in turn facilitated their role as peacemakers in action during and after the war. The church was a visible body in carrying out its advocacy, leadership and supportive role for peacemaking in Sierra Leone.

The concluding reflections on the role of religion in peacemaking in Sierra Leone address two oversimplified views in relation to religion and violence and religion and peace. In some schools of thought, religion is said to be an inherent source of violence and the cause of violence, which makes it even more dangerous, (Avalos, 2005; Hall, 2000; Huntington, 2002; Juergensmeyer, 2003). For example Avalos is of the view that religion is inherently violent due to four scarce resources, i.e. access to the Divine message (Holy books), Sacred spaces (Holy Land and Holy spaces), Good privileges (chosen people), and Salvation (the elect). I argue however that Avalos seems to have completely overlooked the role of theology as an internal critique in and of religions. The theology of peace, proposed in this thesis, recognises the role that violent texts, racism, segregation, and salvation might play in issues of violence, however, it is possible to argue that the resources Avalos is referring to as scarce are in reality available to be accessed by all, with very few exceptions. This was demonstrated in Sierra Leone due to its unprecedented religious tolerance as well as the many examples given by David Little and colleagues (2007) and Johnston and Cox (2003). Also, in line with this thesis, Cobban (2005), Leirvik (2006), Schmidt (2011) and others maintain that religion, if “properly used” or legitimately used, is a peacemaking resource and can be used as healing and coping mechanisms in times of crises. However, there may be truth in both propositions, though it might not be the whole truth. What this thesis argues is that religion is both a resource for peace, as demonstrated by the activities of religious leaders, the Methodist Church Sierra Leone and other churches, the CCSL, the IRCSL, and the TRCSL under Bishop J. C. Humper, and also a source of war, as evidenced by the ATR adherents who used force, including the CDF forces, who were members of secret societies and one or the other, of the two main religions in Sierra Leone. This thesis has argued that Christians, in collaboration with non-Christians, were peacemakers in action, contrary to the views of some academics writing on religion and

violence in the world, which omit or give little or insignificant space to this aspect in their analyses.

Christian leaders and organisations were not only active in dialogue, the leadership of the TRCSL, supporting the work of the SCSL for peace and the provision of relief for displaced people in Sierra Leone and refugees from Liberia, were themselves also agents of social change through their peacemaking activities, both publicly and in their respective organisations. These activities were not without some risks and sacrifices, and there were notable church leaders and church organisations in this role of peacemaking who risked their lives and, at times, their reputations, such as Bishop Biguzzi of Makeni. Though Makeni was occupied by rebels, and avoided as a “no-go area” during the height of the war, Bishop George Biguzzi remained in the Diocese of Makeni in northern Sierra Leone for quite some time during the war. For a period of time during the war, I personally experienced this area as a “no-go area”, where rebel fighters could ambush and kill those who travelled the roads of Sierra Leone leading to the provincial headquarters of Bo, Kenema and Makeni, and other areas. Religious leaders risked their lives in this dangerous zone engaging the rebels as a way of trying to placate them and lead them towards disarmament and the cessation of hostilities. The places where these religious leaders went were referred to as “behind rebel lines”. The Bishop risked his reputation <sup>475</sup> because all the fighting parties were suspicious of each other, and since Bishop Biguzzi had contact with the various factions at one time or another, there was often a tendency for him to be misunderstood. He, however, played his role in such an impartial manner that he gained the respect of many Sierra Leoneans, both rebels and ordinary citizens. The Bishop was even honoured by the Italian government as a:

grand officer of the first class for the highest degree of the Order of Solidarity for the exceptional merits of a life entirely dedicated to the service of others, to the cause of peace and for the promotion of human relationship, of human understanding and brotherhood. <sup>476</sup>

The Bishop travelled in and out of the rebel zones to Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone, and back to Makeni, the northern capital and the fourth largest city in the

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<sup>475</sup> This reputation has to do with the respect that religious leaders have built over time as peaceful, honest and selfless people.

<sup>476</sup> From the President of the Republic of Italy, President of the Order of the Star of the Italian solidarity, on the recommendation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs and specific indications offered by the Italian embassy in Abidjan.

country. He attended meetings of the IRCSL, making his contribution for peace during the war (interview with Bishop George Biguzzi, March 2009). This is not an explanation of why the Bishop risked his reputation, but it is meant to show his activities, which challenged the chaos and violence (amputation of hands, killing of innocent children, burning of houses and attacking commercial vehicles on the roads) that were prevalent during the war.

Furthermore, the Revd. Dr Joseph Christian Humper, Bishop of the UMC; the Revd. Christian V. A. Peacock, President of the Methodist Church Sierra Leone; Mr Alimamy P. Koroma, General Secretary of the Council of Churches; and the Revd. Moses Khanu, Human Rights Commissioner in Sierra Leone, among others, were notable figures in the process of peacemaking. These Christian peacemakers-in-action, in the words of Bishop Humper, “risked their lives and the lives of their families, as they engaged the fighters and travelled to the bush to negotiate with the rebels so that they can come out of the bush and stop the hostilities.”<sup>477</sup>

Throughout the research process, over fifty people were interviewed at various times over several periods that were very productive, though challenging. I gradually gained the confidence of several interviewees with the help of two research assistants,<sup>478</sup> who were very effective collaborators. I also carried out interviews and member checking<sup>479</sup> in October through December 2008, during which it was much more difficult to get the attention of people I had contacted earlier.

The objectives of this thesis were achieved through presenting and documenting evidence on religious tolerance, religious dialogue, faith-based diplomacy, leadership, truth-telling, the Christian chairmanship of the TRCSL and the strong support for the SCSL among both Christians and non-Christians alike. The above presentation comprises what I have termed the “praxis of peace”. The fieldwork and interviews I conducted in Sierra Leone helped to draw the attention of Sierra Leoneans to the aims and objectives of the thesis. These people were either themselves academics or

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<sup>477</sup> Interview with Bishop Joseph Christian Humper, TRCSL Chairman and former Bishop of the UMC, Sierra Leone Conference.

<sup>478</sup> Mr. Alex Bhonapha (now Chairman of the Kailahun District Council of Sierra Leone) and Mr. Augustine Lassie (now a Methodist minister in Sierra Leone).

<sup>479</sup> Member checking refers to giving interviewees the opportunity to read the transcribed interviews and comment on the contents as to whether they were correct or not.



grassroots people who have demonstrated a commitment to their faith and who, in one way or another, practise religious tolerance, either in their families, communities or nationally. Many were people living traumatised lives; however, they shared a rich heritage of religious tolerance, which, according to Bishop Humper, is second to none in the world. There were interviewees who confirmed the Christian contribution to relief, advocacy for peace, provision of leadership for the TRCSL and strong support for the SCSL. Mr. Omar Paran Tarawally, who described himself as neither Muslim nor Christian, maintained that the Christians were peacemakers through their activities both during and after the war.<sup>480</sup>

University students, people of faith and people of no faith gave evidence in support of this thesis, as presented in the preceding chapters. In the “focus group” interviews at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone, both male and female students supported the idea of religion as a peacemaker. Additionally, the conference documents of the MCSL and the conferences conducted by other churches, as well as other reports from the Development Department of the MCSL and other churches, fully describe the roles of relief, advocacy and care for children and women during and after the war. Organisations mentioned earlier, such as CAW, CARITAS and ADDO, also have documentary evidence for the role of Christians in peacemaking in Sierra Leone. They cared for both Christians and non-Christians. Other evidence for these acts of peacemaking is described on various web pages and documents that I studied as data for this thesis. All the material together provides new data for the academic debate on religion and peace, religion and violence and peace and development.

In this thesis, I argue that since the causes of the war cannot be attributed to religion, other factors were responsible for the conflict, and those factors included political intolerance, corruption, and the marginalisation of religion and morals in governance and ethnicity in Sierra Leone. Politicians had woefully marginalised religion and religious ethics in the country. However, during and after the war, religion re-emerged as a significant part of the healing process in Sierra Leone and a powerful resource in peacemaking. This was achieved through religious leaders, confidence-building within and between religions, advocacy for peace and reconciliation through the ecumenical organisations and transitional justice bodies, as presented in chapters Seven and Eight in

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<sup>480</sup> See Chapters Four, Five and Six of this thesis.

this thesis. There is also evidence to show the power of organisations, rituals and other religious practices, religious education and the use of church resources and other Christian concepts in the work for peace in Sierra Leone. Christians and their ecumenical organisations were most visible in the provision of relief and other forms of help to the refugees from Liberia and the displaced Sierra Leoneans in refugee camps across the country. (interview with Bishop Joseph Christian Humper, October, 2011) <sup>481</sup>

Reflecting on the role of religion in peacemaking in Sierra Leone, several concepts can be gleaned vis-à-vis the position of this thesis: common human existence; a common spiritual quest; longing for peace; acceptance and love; mutual trust, friendship and tolerance, which is not necessarily indifference or syncretism, but the politics of religious synthesis (Bowie, 2006). There are also the various ways in which scholars, as well as non-scholars, perceive religion within their social milieu. This thesis follows the approach of John Hick (in Seshagiri, 1997, p. 6), who believes that we need to have people living side by side, recognising each other's traditions and entering into dialogue, not with the aim of converting the other person, but with the goal of working for the common good, as demonstrated in the Sierra Leonean example of peacemaking in previous Chapters. There was obviously a pluralist tendency in the type of activities that the religious bodies undertook in Sierra Leone, and the establishment of the IRCSL paved the way for them to work together and have respect for each other's religious confessions and holy books. The religious leaders in the IRCSL even held prayers for peace together, in which they read from each other's sacred scriptures and prayed in their respective ways for peace in Sierra Leone. According to Bishop Biguzzi, "Christians and Muslims had prayer sessions together during the war and we read from our Holy Books" (interview with Bishop George Biguzzi, March 2009). However, there are also other adherents who considered themselves exclusivists, such as Catholics and Muslims, but who maintain that, though their religion is exclusive, they should engage in dialogue for peace. As this work shows, there are dogmatists, almost no real universalists and many inclusivists involved in the peacemaking process (Hick in Seshagiri, 1997). Dogmatists are active in various religions today. They are more concerned about their dogmas, and dialogue is secondary. Those in this group included the new religious movements who describe themselves as "born again", and they dominate much of Pentecostalism in Sierra Leone. Real universalists are difficult to

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<sup>481</sup> See Appendix 1a of this thesis.

isolate in the Sierra Leonean religious context. Based on my experience, many religious people in Sierra Leone consider the country's history of religious tolerance to be unique. The formation and functioning of the IRCSL itself demonstrates the inclusivist character of religion in Sierra Leone. In other words, there were various categories of religious adherents, such as the pluralists, who supported what was taking place in Sierra Leone, with the various religions accepting each other.

Sierra Leonean peacemakers have often been accused by foreigners of practising syncretism (Stewart and Shaw, 1994, pp. 25 - 42; interview with Mr. Kemoore Salia, April 2006). However, as Bowie (2006, pp. 194 - 196), points out: "...religious behaviour may have universal elements, but that it is also highly dependent upon its social and physical environment." There are ATR practices in both Christianity and Islam in Sierra Leone, that may be universal as well as practices that are highly dependent on the social and physical environment. This is a result of the role played by ATR in bringing the two main religions, Islam and Christianity, together. This means that adherents of both faiths have ATR as a common practice and or faith. Though Sierra Leoneans might claim to belong either to Islam or Christianity, they remain loyal to ATR ceremonies and practices. I saw that both Muslims and Christians joined the Civil Defence Forces, which had ATR characteristics. Thus, a Christian can perform the same traditional religious practices as a Sierra Leonean Muslim. In addition to the long-term meetings at the common meetings places for Christians and Muslims and the friendship and ensuing trust that existed among and between religious adherents in Christianity and Islam in the country, there was also an interest in peace education throughout the country. Most highly educated Muslims in Sierra Leone can attest to having attended Christian schools, and as a result were influenced not only by western education, but also by Christianity and its priests, ministers of religion and sisters, (Stewart and Shaw, 1994, p. 29).

Religious leaders and organisations stressed contextualisation and inculturation in their work to bring about reconciliation. However, the kinds of peacemaking activities in which Christians engaged were not dogmatic. The question arises, "Is the religious tolerance in Sierra Leone an expression of indifference to religious differences?" The Christians and Muslims with whom I spoke were very serious about their religious faith. Muslims participate regularly in the annual pilgrimage to Mecca (*Hajj*), one of the five pillars of Islam, and some are even willing to sell property worth tens of millions of Leones in order to go there. In the Pentecostal churches, members contribute large

amounts of money from their incomes to support church activities. Neither Muslims nor Christians in Sierra Leone are indifferent to the results of their activities in bringing peace to their country. As exemplified above, Christian leaders not only took risks in performing their peacemaking roles, but also encouraged others to do the same. The Chief Imam of the southern region, Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, put it this way:

They spoke to each other in the Churches so that they will find a way together, in public, and know mostly the things they did in public; to ensure that the war comes to an end. They used to talk to Christians, those that are Christians, to talk to other Christians to ensure that the war comes to an end. Even myself I experience many such occasions. That is what the Christians used to do (interview with Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis, July 2009).

The thesis shows that one must take the culture of a people into consideration when analysing their religious beliefs and practices. By contextualising them,<sup>482</sup> one can reduce the possibility of a narrow conclusion. Bevans suggests that contextual theology is a way of doing theology that takes into account four things: (1) the spirit and the message of the Gospel; (2) the tradition of the Christian people; (3) the culture of the particular nation or region; and (4) social change in that culture, due both to technological advances on the one hand and struggles for justice and liberation on the other, (Bevans, 2002, p. 186). As a result of doing theology contextually, the possibility of theology being an internal critic of religions emerges in the case of religious fanatics.

Thus, it is important to conduct an internal critique of those things that may debar the effective contribution of religion in peacemaking, since religion in my view is inherently peaceful, though it could be misused for war and or violence. Varied contexts may result in different interpretations, understandings and relevance than what has been asserted here. Sierra Leone is a unique example of religious tolerance, and its contextual contribution to peacemaking cannot necessarily be generalised. However, we have gained insights into the importance of religious leaders as peacemakers in action, particularly through the work of David Little and others. A major aim of this thesis was to investigate the role of religion in peacemaking, and I came to the conclusion that this role was positive. However, since many countries, especially in West Africa, experience religious intolerance, it is therefore evident that the religious context of Sierra Leone is

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<sup>482</sup> There are also the translation, anthropological, praxis, synthetic, transcendental and counter-cultural models of theology, according to Stephen Bevans.

far advanced *vis-à-vis* other West African countries. The groundwork for this perspective was the work of Sierra Leonean scholars and theologians such as Professor Harry Sawyerr (1968a, 1968b, 1970, and 1995), who emphasised the crucial role of doing theology contextually and taking Sierra Leone Traditional Religious categories of God and tradition seriously, and Dr Fashole-Luke (1974, 1978), who suggests an African Christian theologians do theology in a new environment of independence from colonial powers, especially with regards to the peacemaking role and religious tolerance of Christians and Muslims in the country.

These perspectives of Sawyerr and Fashole-Luke are crucial because religious resources are powerful, and can influence both conflict and peace. They must be considered contextually by appealing to the specific role played by religion in a particular country or territory so as to discover and interpret their true meaning. The reality of religious tolerance in the history of Sierra Leone has important implications that were prominent both during and after the war, as observed by scholars and other observers. During my research, many Sierra Leoneans commented on what they have learned from the war, and expressed a strong consciousness of the need to prevent another war in the near future. Not only did Christian leaders and organisations in Sierra Leone respond to the conflict by supporting peace through visible actions, they cooperated with the country's Muslims in the formation of the IRCSL, and hosted the organisation at the Richmond Grounds on the property of the MCSL at Kingharman Road in Freetown, where I used to stay as a Methodist minister<sup>483</sup>.

This religious tolerance moved the religious leaders to work for peace through their individual churches, the CCSL, the EFSL and the TRCSL, and through a proactive drive to engage all stakeholders: the government; the Revolutionary United Front; other rebel groups; the AFRC and others in peacemaking. In fact, according to Revd. Ndowu, "religious leaders who have played a very important role in peacemaking in Sierra Leone need to be given the opportunity to serve their countries, especially in ensuring

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<sup>483</sup> I was a Methodist local preacher between 1991 and 1994 following this period, I was sent to college as a probationer Minister and served as Minister-on trial in Freetown, 1994-1997. After I graduated in 1997 I was stationed to Segbwema Eastern Sierra Leone, 1997- 2000, and was ordained on June 19<sup>th</sup> 2000 at Wesley Methodist Church Lamina Sankoh Street Freetown. Later, I was displaced to Norway and became a Lutheran Priest in Norway from 2004 to 2011. It was during this period that I started this research and have permanently resided in Sierra Leone since 2011, first in Freetown and from 2012 to date, in Bo city.

that there is peace in the future in Sierra Leone” (conversations with Revd. Moses Ndowu, July 2007).

The MCSL, in collaboration with other bodies both in Sierra Leone and abroad, was also very active as a peacemaker. As indicated in Chapter Five, the MCSL, which propagated the work of its founder John Wesley, is widely recognised as an example of what churches did in peacemaking. The organisation had established a refugee department that supplied food and other items to displaced people. The church’s activities were visible for Sierra Leoneans to see; as documented in the fieldwork and during the review of archives, the church’s role in peacemaking in Sierra Leone clearly became evident.

Most interviewees said that the Christians and churches were peacemakers in action. The MCSL was not the only church carrying out advocacy, relief and rehabilitation; other churches did likewise, as indicated in the previous chapters. The other active churches included, but are not limited to, the UMC, the Catholic Mission Sierra Leone, the Anglican Church Bo, the Anglican Church Freetown, the Seventh Day Adventist Church, the Baptist Church Sierra Leone Conference and the Lutheran Church of Sierra Leone. There were also Catholic organisations such as CAW, CARITAS and CRS, which helped displaced people and children who were victims of the wars in both Sierra Leone and Liberia.

As detailed in Chapter Six, local ecumenical bodies in Sierra Leone such as the CCSL and the IRCSL were highly visible in practising their impartial role in peacemaking. They engaged with all factions and convinced them to seek peace. The ecumenical bodies were active in the process of the Lomé peace talks and supported the outcome of the talks and the establishment and work of the TRCSL and the SCSL. The activities of the ecumenical bodies demonstrated the power of faiths and organisations in peacemaking during and after the war.

The formation of the IRCSL was one proof of the cordial relationship between Islam and Christianity. Though the Roman Catholic Church is not part of the CCSL, it is a member of the IRCSL. This religious cooperation is what many observers call an inclusive and pluralist religious context, and they have pointed to it as being the most favourable way forward for religious peacemakers. The IRCSL, which was formed by the initiative of CCSL, empowered the religious communities in their policies of impartiality, tolerance and reconciliation, which provided the necessary incentives for

the organisation as they worked to end the war. There was the power of ritual, prayers, fasting and the reading of holy books together, which strengthened the policies of these groups in peacemaking. But it was not only the power of rituals, leadership and religion's economy and accountability that brought about peace in Sierra Leone, it was also the power of organisations such as the IRC SL, the CCSL and the TRCSL.

The inclusive and pluralistic views of religious adherents in Sierra Leone, both within the IRC SL and among individual religious adherents, was a resource that became so valuable that it can be applied in times of peace as well as in conflict. Sierra Leone's religious tolerance was achieved through a long history of religious interaction, cooperation and confidence-building, both by religious leaders and by religious adherents, as they sought to embody their religious and Christian values of peacemaking and education (interview with Bishop Joseph Christian Humper, October 2011).

There were criticisms of the roles of reconciliation, neutrality and accountability and the healing activities in which Christians and other religions were engaged (Avalos, 2005; Nelson-Pallmeyer, 2005). As acknowledged by the former CCSL General Secretary, Alimamy Koroma, "perhaps as religious leaders, we were too bold for our civil society activities, in terms of our method, we are too compassionate, we are too endearing, or we are too tolerant with ex-combatants" (Little, 2007, p. 295). Despite this criticism, there is evidence that religion was a respected institution that played a crucial role in making peace and advancing reconciliation, especially during the peace talks in Lomé in July 1999.

The TRCSL was headed by the Bishop of the UMC and contributed to restorative justice, whereas the SCSL championed the interpretation of international humanitarian law and indicted, tried and punished those deemed to carry the greatest responsibility for the crimes committed in Sierra Leone since 30 November 1996<sup>484</sup>. The court was widely accepted by the people of Sierra Leone. There were at least twenty people tried and punished for various crimes against humanity.

The war in Sierra Leone was not caused by religion; neither was it fuelled by religion. The "war-makers" were not making war based on religion, particularly their ATR, Muslim or Christian faiths. In every action taken by the Christian peacemakers was

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<sup>484</sup> This was the date for the signing of the Abidjan Peace Agreement, between the RUFSL and the Government of Sierra Leone.

based on their Christian faith and their understanding of peacemaking and justice, as presented in Chapter One. Christian peacemaking roles were carried out both at the individual <sup>485</sup> and at organisational levels (Little, 2007, p. 278ff). In other words, there were individuals who played peacemaking roles (Chapter Four), and Christian denominations played similar roles (Chapter Five). Likewise, the Christian Council and the IRC SL (Chapter Six) provided leadership for reconciliation in the TRCSL (Chapter Seven) and as supporters and observers for the Sierra Leone Special Court (Chapter Eight), thereby leading to this conclusion.

The Christian religion's history as providers of social welfare extends far into Sierra Leone's modern history. The Christian religion was a pioneer for education in Sierra Leone, and many schools were founded by missionaries both during and after the colonial era. The churches also provided healthcare through the hospitals they built. However, religions were previously made silent in political matters, especially when in cases of ethical violations. In my view, religion was woefully marginalised; evidence for this can be observed in public statements insisting that religion should not meddle in politics made by former rulers and political leaders in Sierra Leone. Politicians saw their field as profane sphere steeped in immorality, unsuitable for religious figures to dirty hands or become involved. This situation changed with the advent of the war, when the "power of faiths", meaning religious leaders and councils and the identity created by religious beliefs, was seen taking an active part in minimising the effects of the war, not only by making statements against violence and the conflict, but also by ensuring that religious leaders met with the fighting forces and their enemies on the other side and negotiated peace.

Over the decades of corruption, ethical and moral behaviour in politics in Sierra Leone had been undermined before the war, and those in politics and the civil service largely seemed in place not to serve, but for the sake of personal gain, (Gberie, 2005; Hirsch, 2001; Keen, 1991; Olonisakin, 2008). A local saying admonishes that "*Wusai u tie cow naday ee day it,*" or as Harris put it "*Usai u go tie cow, e go for eat*" which means "the cow eats where it is tied" (Harris, 2013, p. 71). <sup>486</sup> The country was long bedevilled by coups and counter-coups, often leading to instability and poor economic growth (Harris,

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<sup>485</sup> See Chapter Four of this thesis.

<sup>486</sup> Statements frequently uttered by President Siaka Stephens between 1971 - 1985, and remembered by Sierra Leoneans with whom I spoke.



2013, pp. 47 - 62). Education and freedom of speech were trampled upon, and those who spoke out before 1989 were often accused of treason and then silenced or killed. Religion was marginalised, and sacred and profane institutions were “used” for either intimidating religious leaders or disenfranchising them. Though this situation, as noted throughout this thesis, was largely reversed as religious figures and organisations became active and recognised as players in the peace process, as of 2015, it appears that the situation in Sierra Leone politics has deteriorated so that many Christians and Muslims do not feel as free to speak out and are now less active than they were during and immediately after the civil war.

Referring to religion and violence, Avalos says:

Likewise, most claims about “the correct interpretation” are ultimately statements of faith, and not purely the result of historical research. Choosing a violent interpretation is often no less justified than choosing a peaceful interpretation because faith claims about what “God meant” are equal in their unverifiability. Any appeal to a “proper context” is itself a theological construct. Consequently, and as I have argued before, even the most scholarly efforts by pacifist Christians to explain violent biblical texts often end up whitewashing the violence or using techniques that differ very little from how “fundamentalists” justify scriptural violence (Avalos, 2007, Volume 1, Issue 1).

As described above, Biblical and Qur’anic texts were used as resources for peace rather than for violence, though it is possible to argue that these same texts can be used otherwise, as indicated by Avalos (2007). There are observers and thinkers who maintain that religion is a tool for violence (Juergensmeyer, 2003), and emphasise that “toxic” texts can be found in both the Bible and the Qur’an, (Avalos, 2005; 2007). On the other hand, there are scholars who maintain that the relationship between religion and violence is more complex than is maintained by the first group, (Leirvik, 2006) . A third group maintains that religion is a powerful force that can be used for both violence and peace, but that the peaceful use of religious texts is in the common human interest and must be pursued vigorously (Leirvik, 2006). Since the connection between violence and religion is already well documented, there is a need to also document the link between peace and religion. This is the position that this thesis maintains, and it can be verified through the use of social scientific methods, including multiple sources of evidence for religion as a peace-making tool.

I used the qualitative research method with triangulation to gather multiple sources of evidence. The process, though demanding, was sufficient to build a case against the

positions of Avalos, Hancock and Zeren, and Lamin. Hancock and Zeren (2010) and Lamin (2003), for example, maintain that the SCSL was not an advocate in the interest of the people of Sierra Leone. However, according to my findings, the people of Sierra Leone, both grassroots and stakeholders, responded positively to the Special Court and expressed an overwhelming belief that the Court was a peacemaking tool. This interpretation was confirmed by the results of the nationwide survey by Pratt (2007), Head of the Department of Peace Studies at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone in Freetown.

The Christian concept of peace includes justice, and indeed argues that there can be no real peace without justice.<sup>487</sup> The CCSL, Christians and Muslims began to speak out against violence as soon as they perceived the toll the war was taking on the people. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, the President of Sierra Leone at this time, 1996 - 1997, was tolerant of religious leaders. Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone had always cooperated in a peaceful manner, but the way in which this situation fostered peace, justice and development before and after 1989 has not been adequately studied. A systematic study of religion as a peacemaking tool in Sierra Leone is increasingly important. *Realpolitik* has failed the Sierra Leonean electorates again and again due to the prevalence of corruption and institutional and structural violence expressed among civil servants and politicians since 1961, (Harris, 2013; TRCSL report, 2004). Sir Milton Margai's reign as prime minister (1961 - 1964) was peaceful, while that of Sir Albert Margai (1964 - 1967) was tactical, and Dr Siaka Stephens' administrations (prime minister 1967 - 1971; president 1971 - 1985) saw political collapse, coup d'états and ineffective long-term and macroeconomic policies. President Joseph S. Momoh's term, (1985 - 1991), in office led to reforms and economic collapse due to the *Jemil* factor - corruption in "high places" involving contracts to Lebanese businessmen, such as Jemil Said Mohamed, who made millions of dollars, yet failed to do the commissioned work or to do it well. The Tejan Kabbah reign (1996 - 1997; 1998 - 2007) was a diplomat's reign (Harris, 2013).

Regarding the current administration of Ernest Bai Koroma (2007- ), one could ask what the face of peace will look like in the years to come. Will there be justice? Will there be violence and more political intolerance? Will there be peace and development?

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<sup>487</sup> See Chapter One of this thesis.

How will conflicts be resolved? These questions must be addressed from the point of view of the TRCSL and the SCSL. These organisations had their own peacemaking and reconciliation methods, but did not succeed in creating the positive peace that was envisioned. The TRCSL made recommendations and presented a new vision for Sierra Leone; however, these recommendations and reports have not been fully implemented. If the work of these bodies is to be seen as a success story for peace and development, then implementing them is crucial. According to Revd. Moses Khanu, the TRCSL report constitutes the ultimate source, “without talking to anybody” for a framework of peacemaking as a religious activity, especially the part played by Bishop J C. Humper.

The TRCSL’s decision to set up a committee to follow up on its recommendations had not been implemented at the time this thesis was completed (December 2015). However, the Human Rights Commission, one of the other bodies recommended by the TRCSL, has been established. The SCSL has tried fewer than 30 people; the case of Charles Taylor was completed at the time of writing, and he was found guilty and sentenced. There are two schools of thought on the Court. Some expressed the belief that the people should have received the money spent on the Special Court instead of the lawyers and Court workers (Hancock and Zeren, 2010; Pratt, 2007). However, the vast majority believed that the Court is a source of justice and peacemaking, according to the survey carried out by Pratt, head of Peace and Conflict Department of Fourah bay College, University of Sierra Leone. Furthermore, in the words of Revd. Moses Khanu:

Looking at the war, some Sierra Leoneans believe that it had its good parts. It’s not all negative, but as humans, we always look at the negative impact, which is above [more than] even the positive. But let me go straight to the negative- the negative impact is the destruction of lives and properties. Particularly those very important traditional institutions, the traditional buildings, and monuments the fighting forces destroyed. This is a very serious impact. For a decade they also disallowed the ordinary citizen to do their farming to develop themselves. They impoverished the entire nation and it’s a poverty that will follow us in the next couple of years if something seriously tangible is not done (conversations with Revd. Moses Khanu, July 2011)

Another impact of the war is that it brought about an awareness of the crucial role of ethics and morals in politics that can be seen as either negative by politicians or positive by religious leaders who were influenced by ATR in peacemaking.

## 9.2 The Role of ATR in Peacemaking in Sierra Leone

In Chapters One and Three, I introduced the role of ATR in the peacemaking process. I have specifically focused on the use of force by African traditional societies specialised arms of Kamajor, Gbintii and Tamaboro and others in their efforts to end hostilities, and that ATR specialised societies membership comprised of both Christians and Muslims. This kind of behaviour is absent from the Christian organisations ways of working for peace. It was also shown that ATR is not isolated, considering its unifying role in Sierra Leone, whereby adherents of both religious groups are members of groups within ATR. For example, Mr. Charles Moiwo, a Christian of the Church of Salvation in Bo, served as the National Public Relations Officer for CDF, but he told me on several occasions over the years that he will never denounce his faith as a Christian. This was the same for many Christians. There were also Muslims active in the CDF who still practised their religion irrespective of their membership in either the Poro or Wunday societies. Thus, this unifying role can be seen as unique with regards to peacemaking in the country and could be emulated. Thus, this unifying role can be seen as a model of interaction that could be emulated by peacemakers. However, there are many who argue that Christian forgiveness may also have some ATR undertones, in which adversaries in a community have to reconcile based on the ATR principle of respect for ancestors and the concept of *ubuntu*, characterised as *ngoyila* among the Mendes. According to this principle, whatever the ancestors order through a medium must be adhered to by the living beings. Though the concept of ancestors might vary from country to country, the fact remains that in ATR, a major intercessory role is conferred upon the ancestors. God is believed to be the First ancestor because He existed before the world was created. A peacemaker is an elder, who uses traditional wisdom to help the society, and becomes an ancestor upon his or her passing. The feeling of communal responsibility or *ubuntu* is quite strong in ATR in Sierra Leone, and for one to become an ancestor, one is required to fulfil some criteria while on earth (Olupona, 2014). Among these are that one must have lived “a blemish-free life” and had children, or have contributed to the peace of the society and its wellbeing, and must have died a “good death”. People who are “evil” , violent and/or refuse to have children cannot become ancestors. Since there seems to be almost no view of ‘hell’ among the Mende people, those who do not qualify as ancestors are said to exist in a state of eternal unrest and move from place to place in order to cause havoc. In other words, ancestors have peace and grant peace to the community as long as they too had been peaceful before death.

The presuppositions of the translation model of contextual theology include, among others, that the essential message of Christianity, i.e., that it is supra-cultural and supra-contextual, does not change. Culture is only used as a conveying instrument. In other words, the Christian gospel has a “kernel”, and the “husk” spreads the kernel. The essential supra-contextual message can be separated from contextually bound modes of expression. In essence, there is a clear gospel message of peace, which can be isolated from all contexts and anomalies in the exercise of peace in both sacred texts and praxis. The “naked gospel” in this thesis is the Jesus of faith, who would be positioned as the supra ancestor in ATR, and whose status, as presented here, becomes relevant for the conceptualisation of the concept of God as a peacemaker in ATR in Sierra Leone. This is so because acceptance of the Jesus culture permeates many facets of the Sierra Leonean community, and this was especially true during the war. Funeral services, marriage services and other rites of passage, which used to be purely traditional, have become “Christianised” and are now conducted in church services. Thus the religious factor in Sierra Leone with regards to peaceful coexistence of people cannot be overlooked in the bigger picture of peacemaking.

### **9.3 The Religious Factor**

The cooperation between Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone through the IRC SL was a major peacemaking force. Faith-based peacemaking was both religious and social in nature, and the Sierra Leonean people were cared for by churches irrespective of their faith. There was a wide range of peacemaking activities carried out by faith-based organisations and individuals, including the provision of leadership, education in schools, interfaith and intra-faith actions and dialogue, communication, advocacy, mediation, transitional justice and forgiveness, restorative justice and retributive justice.

The CCSL and IRC SL, together with individual denominations, demonstrated specific and concrete strengths, such as long-term commitments to peaceful co-existence, education, relief, moral and spiritual authority, and the capacity to mobilise others for peace in Sierra Leone. Weaknesses were also demonstrated, which included possible opportunism, and allegations of syncretism due to the role of churches like Aladura (Fashole-Luke, Gray, Hastings and Tasié, 1978, pp. 107ff) and negligence in implementing the achieved results of peace (absence of war) into positive peace, elucidated by Galtung. Thus, it could be said that it is difficult to measure the exact impact of the role of religion in peacemaking in Sierra Leone. There were other players,

such as the UN, ECOWAS, the AU and British forces, but the religious factor certainly contributed greatly to peacemaking, as confirmed by the more than fifty interviews I conducted, as well as other research data, some of which are included in the appendices.

The CCSL and the IRCSL, having identified their crucial role in the conflict and in national politics, embarked on a massive campaign to bring about the end of the war. They used contacts, money, influence and their common background of ATR to influence the warring parties, which led to the cessation of hostilities. The role of the CCSL and the IRCSL can be accessed from both internal and external factors. A major description of the actions taken by religion in ensuring the end of hostilities was the awareness that there was a resurgence of religion, and that religious leaders, both in the CCSL and the IRCSL, as well as in the Catholic Church, were stakeholders in the building of the country.

Based on the Sierra Leone case, it is my view that the role of religion in conflict resolution is paramount. Drawing on empirical studies in the fieldwork in Sierra Leone, literature reviews and interviews, I was able to develop the “praxis of peace” in which Christian leaders were peacemakers in action – contrary to, for example, Huntington’s (2002) and Juergensmeyer’s (2003) theories that religion is a dangerous source of conflict. Churches were major tools for advocacy and peacemaking. The various ecumenical bodies, like the CCSL, IRCSL and even the TRCSL chaired by Bishop Humper, provided the necessary environment for peace in Sierra Leone. The religious leaders and communities not only used religious texts for preaching and teaching, they made their peacemaking messages “an addiction”, to use the words of one of my interviewees, Mr Olu Alghali. The primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions founded by the various religions were also places of active peacemaking in the form of peace clubs, peace education, reconciliation and religious tolerance. The provision of relief during the war was also very visible, and interviewees pointed to this activity.

In relation to the above, I have coined the phrases “theology of peace”, “the homiletics of peace” and the “praxis of peace”. These terminologies indicate the “addiction” to peacemaking messages referred to by interviewees such as Mr Olu Alghali, Alhaji Dr Mohamed Tunis and others. Churches and mosques spread the message of reconciliation throughout the war years, and religion in Sierra Leone has built a culture of tolerance that is unparalleled to none in the world, according to Bishop J. C. Humper,

Chair of the TRCSL, Alhaji Dr Amad Tejan Kabbah, former President of Sierra Leone, and many independent observers. The inter-religious dialogue in Sierra Leone is a value that can be specially noted and utilised for peacemaking. In the words of President Kabbah, “If Sierra Leone has nothing to export, then it must export its religious tolerance to other parts of the world” (President Alhaji Dr Amad Tejan Kabbah, 2002 and 2003).<sup>488</sup> This is my objective, and it has been achieved through documenting the evidence of Christians’ activities as peacemakers during and after the war. The field study conducted for the thesis creates new areas of knowledge about this subject, and because the literature on religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone is still nascent, this study attempts to fill that gap. The academic contribution of this thesis includes, but is not limited to, the expansion of the literature on religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone.

As I agree in line with Mark Turay’s (2005) position that the IRCSL was a key player in the peacemaking process; this thesis expands on that work and adds new insights into the role played by the IRCSL and the importance of education, accountability, communication, economy and personnel potential in peacemaking in Sierra Leone. The thesis also adds to and expands the debate of scholars in the various schools of thought on religion and violence and religion and peace. There has not been such a comprehensive and systematic study of religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone, focussing on Christian leaders and organisations as peacemakers in action, who demonstrated an unprecedented scale of religious tolerance.

### **9.3.1 Religious tolerance**

The church in Sierra Leone used its resources to play an active role in bringing the war to an end, and Christianity was actively involved in the post-conflict reconciliation activities of the TRCSL and the Special Court. This is what I refer to as the “praxis of peace”, drawing especially on the evidence of religious tolerance presented in this thesis as an example for the politicians in Sierra Leone to emulate and translate into everyday political and social activities in order to shape a better future and enable a Christian concept of peace and justice to take root in Sierra Leone. I argue that the “praxis of peace” is the only viable alternative to an intolerant political atmosphere in the country. The use of religious leaders and personnel, religious education, tolerance, respect,

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<sup>488</sup> Presidential addresses in 2002 and 2003 on national SLBC radio.

accountability, communication and religious economy to promote peace and reconciliation in Sierra Leone is a significant “praxis of peace”. Thus, the “praxis of peace” is both theoretical, as a possibility, and a practical reality. It is a possibility to be tested in other contexts, whereas it was a reality in Sierra Leone. Church leaders, churches, the CCSL, the IRCSL, the TRCSL and the SCSL were not found wanting in promoting the Christian concept of peace and justice described in Chapter One. Though these Christian bodies have not been able to accomplish the Norwegian level of positive peace, their religious tolerance is worth emulating in other contexts as well as in the political and social context of Sierra Leone. This means that the promotion of peace education in Sierra Leone is a priority in order to train citizens in alternative ways of solving conflicts, which are part of the living communities in all societies, including Sierra Leone. The “praxis of peace” is “charity that begins at home, but must not end there”. This brings me the the question of what has been achieved in the country and in this thesis and what is still to be studied.

#### **9.4 What has been achieved in Sierra Leone and in this Thesis and what is still to be studied**

Though the peace achieved through the efforts of religions was a reality in Sierra Leone, the churches have yet to take a position with regards to the use of force in peacemaking. The prophetic role of the church is not yet fully fulfilled in the political and social dispensation in Sierra Leone. However, there is awareness within religious circles that the churches cannot be silent or allow themselves to become politically marginalised, as their religious tolerance is crucial for reconciliation. There is still a need to work for the attainment of political tolerance in the country, drawing on the country’s tradition of religious tolerance and reciprocal respect within and among religions. A higher standard of morality, particularly among politicians, has yet to be achieved in Sierra Leone. Corruption is still prevalent, which makes it impossible to achieve real development and transformation of conflict in the country. However, an effort to combat the problem can be seen in the anti-corruption commission (ACC) that was established in 2000, which has been given the responsibility of charging corrupt civil servants and any other Sierra Leonean suspected of corruption. It is important to note that the ACC was partially funded and staffed by foreign (mostly British) experts until 2007, and that in early 2008, the commission’s powers were again amended to give it direct arrest and prosecution powers following the electoral victory of president Ernest Bai Koroma in September 2007 on a platform that made new anti-corruption actions as central plank. This



commission has tried several people, including government ministers and the mayor of Freetown, who in 2012 was found guilty on two counts and fined. He also lost his position as mayor.

Even though there is peace in terms of the cessation of hostilities, the peacemaking process can still move towards the attainment of “positive peace” and the establishment of those structures that can contribute to a “positive peace”, such as in Norway. There has not been a strong move to introduce peace education and anti-violence studies into the schools’ curriculum in Sierra Leone so that children can learn how to resolve conflict without resorting to violence. As stated earlier, violence is not a solution to any problem. This case study has shown that problems can be solved through dialogue and negotiation, but many people are still not aware of alternative ways of solving conflicts in Sierra Leone. This thesis has also demonstrated why the churches should not be silent in the face of social unrest. Furthermore, though the TRCSL worked hard and was able to complete its role and mandate, and the Human Rights Commission has been established, there is still the need to set up the Independent Oversight Committee, as recommended in the TRCSL report. This committee must be given the responsibility of ensuring that all the recommendations of the TRCSL are fully implemented in order to avoid another war in Sierra Leone. It is only through the establishment of this committee that we can hopefully see the full implementation of the recommendations of the Commission.

As it is now in Sierra Leone, according to a wide range of scholars and observers: Richards (1996); Reno (1995); Fearon (2005); Collier, Hoeffler and Rohner (200); Lujala, Gleditsch, and Gilmore(2005); Berdal and Malone (2000); Elbadawi and Sambanis (2000); Abdullah (1998); Fanthorpe and Maconachie (2010); Gberie (2005); Harris (2013), Richards (2006 a & b); Bates (2008); Keen (2005); Peters (2011); Bardal and Keen (1997); Jackson (1994); and Franks (2004), the factors that led to the war have re-emerged,<sup>489</sup> yet they can still be addressed to prevent another coming anarchy.<sup>490</sup> There is still a wide gap between the poor and the rich. The welfare system and the structures necessary to create a kind of peace according to Christian standards are still in short supply or not present at all. The Sierra Leone military was being trained by the

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<sup>489</sup> See above and Chapter Three of this thesis.

<sup>490</sup> See Chapters Seven and Eight of this thesis.

IMATT from Britain to be impartial and more professional, but this has not yet been achieved, though the head of the military is no longer a Member of Parliament (as he used to be under the government of President Siaka Stevens). There has also been the creation of monuments in Sierra Leone, especially in the cities, commemorating the victims of the war. However, the establishment of a peace museum may be a crucial step to take for the purpose of memorisation of the war both as a deterrent to war and a credible record for future generations.

The SCSL has been able to attempt to sentence such notable suspects as Charles Taylor, former President of the Republic of Liberia. However, there were four major players, major Johnny Paul Koroma, Sam Bockarie, alias “Mosquito”, Sam Hinga Norman and Foday Sankoh, who were supposed to be brought before the court for their trial, but died before this could be accomplished. These people could have been tried posthumously, considering their role in the violence that ensued in Sierra Leone. On the other hand, the courts are yet to be free from political influence, and the judiciary, though undergoing reforms, can be more independent to allow for the kind of justice described in this thesis as a requirement for peace. The poor and marginalised have yet to be given free access to justice. There was, however, paralegal help provided by the MCSL, especially in the Bonth District. This project enables justice to be achieved for the marginalised people in that district and helps in solving conflict through non-violent methods. Some forms of compensation have also been paid to some victims of the war. However, true reconciliation is yet to be achieved. I witnessed some of the issues that the TRCSL addressed, but others are still emerging that were not brought to the forefront of politics, such as the issue of the killing of the former Inspector General of Police, James Bambay Kamara, in 1992, as well as the execution of other coup plotters without a proper trial. There is a lack of political tolerance among political parties, and this can be studied further. Yet, the establishment of the PPRC and the Human Rights Commission in Sierra Leone is a step in the right direction. In general, it can be said that the Christian virtue of forgiveness has not yet firmly taken root in Sierra Leone, though the awareness that emerged in the years immediately following the war is still present. However, since 2007, the situation has begun to deteriorate, and old wounds seem to have been reopened. In light of this, one can conclude that the church has yet to achieve its full potential for peacemaking according to the Christian concept of peace. That is why this thesis deals with peacemaking and not peacebuilding, as one can only build on something that has already been achieved. Sierra Leone has yet to achieve positive

peace, though she have achieved a form of negative peace with the end of the open hostilities and violence.

The concept of forgiveness is a Christian virtue. In a conversation with the General Secretary of CCSL on the role of the Bishop and Christian leadership in the TRCSL, she acknowledged that “the church has not reached its full potential and that religion has more grassroots people than political parties and as such it has a crucial role in the bigger picture for positive peace, education, and development” (conversations with Ebum James-Dekan, CCSL General Secretary, October 2011). More studies can also investigate the relationship between Sierra Leonean law and international humanitarian law with regards to the death penalty, the Hammurabi, Torah, cannon law and the Christian concept of justice and peace. Studies can also be undertaken on *Lehini* and *Mbagbolii*, i.e., the veneration of ancestors, on ethics in politics, statistics of the various religions and many other areas of academic significance.

### **9.5 The Academic Significance of this Thesis**

The academic significance of this thesis covers a number of areas, including the theology of peace, religious studies, African religious studies, the study of religion and violence, conflict studies, peace education, etc. Others can use the insights gained from this thesis and benefit from the context of the study. The thesis also shows the potential of the “praxis of peace” and how this can be exploited for the non-violent resolution of conflict, based on the Christian concept of peace and justice. As this study on religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone fills the gap that had existed in peace studies, particularly in Africa, scholars studying religion and violence can learn from the positive role of religion as a resource in peacemaking and development, especially in the West African region.

Religion as a resource for peace is often under-utilised, and this thesis opens up the possibility of pointing out to scholars and also to policymakers the value of religious resources in times of peace, war and post-conflict situations. Among these are: moral and ethical leadership in politics; justice and peace; love; non-violent ways of solving problems; human rights based on holy books; truth-telling; reconciliation; transitional justice; positive peace and development. They can also learn the importance of impartiality, the power of grouping, welfare provision and dialogue through reading and referring to chapters in this thesis. In a conversation I had with curriculum developers in Sierra Leone, they were particularly happy with the insights gained through this study,

and there is now a conscious need for “religion and peacemaking” to be included in the curricula of schools and colleges in Sierra Leone. This study also throw light on the importance of religious tolerance which, unlike political tolerance, has been achieved in Sierra Leone. The insights gained from this work can place the important and positive role of religion into the forefront in new debates on the issues of religion and violence, religion and peace and peace and development in Sierra Leone and West Africa.

This work and the insights gained from it can even help politicians to work to achieve political tolerance, which has still not been achieved in Sierra Leone. Considering that the IRCSL and the CCSL played active roles in social processes in Sierra Leone, including as election observers, insights gained through this work can help moderate as well as more polarised politicians not only learn from the religious tolerance in Sierra Leone, but come to emulate the faith-based diplomats described in this work. The provision of welfare for the people is another important area in which Sierra Leonean policy-makers can hopefully learn from Christians, who are not only less corrupt with regard to the evidence on the ground, but more accountable to the grassroots people. The religious resources in Sierra Leone can help in the rebranding of politics from being perceived as a “profane business” to being seen as a noble calling, in which the needs of people are prioritised and not the other way round.

The thesis can be useful to academics, as it expands the debate on this topic. It can refer them to the role of Christians in peacemaking and in peace and development and add the important research materials contained in this work to the valuable academic debate on theology and peace, political and religious tolerance, anthropology of religion and violence, religion and peace and religion and violence, as well as peace, conflict and development. It can also help non-academics, such as missionaries and other groups working in Sierra Leone, to find insights into how to relate to the religious context of Sierra Leone and better understand the dynamics of religious tolerance built over time in the country. This work draws attention to peace and development and the creation of institutions for the maintenance of peace and economic development.

The thesis has also presented a situation in a specific context as an example that shows that everything is contextual, and that generalisations, especially in the subfield of religion and violence, the theology of peace, conflict and development and political tolerance, are not universally relevant, because all contexts are different and unique. In conclusion, this thesis’ position is significant to the academic, theological, political,

anthropological, religious and educational spheres for Sierra Leonean scholars, policy makers, educationists, social workers, development workers, religious leaders, the UN, the AU, ECOWAS, and the EU, as well as students, researchers, scholars and business people who can access information on Sierra Leone through this thesis.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1a Sample of Transcribed Interviews

#### Interview with Mr Umaro Koroma, Student at the FBC in Law,

**What role did Christians Play?**<sup>491</sup> Basically, I am not a Christian whatever view I am giving to you that's what the Christians played during the conflict. This is an outsider's view because I am not a Christian by faith. But looking at it from the point of view of the role played by the Christians under their various organisations or branches as you may want to call it, Basically, the Catholic relief services known as CRS is one of the organisations some of us actually knew played a very pivotal role in terms of the provision of relief materials for people who were trapped behind rebel line, some who were internally displaced. They provided relief items, food, housing materials etc. And also the Council of Churches (CCSL) was also very much pivotal in the peace negotiations. They played a very serious role in ensuring that we have peace in this country and Infact there activities later culminated into the formation of the Inter-religious council, thereby taking the lead of bringing the Muslims on board forum and they were able to play a very strong force during the Lome peace negotiations. In addition also they Christians they do offer a lot of prayers in their Churches I could remember in many occasions some very serious Christian pastors go over the air and they would declare a national day of fasting and prayer for the war to come to an end. I want to believe they (Christian's organisations and Leaders) played a very serious role in ensuring that the conflict came to an end (he emphasised that they ensured that the conflict came to an end by the tone in his voice). Whilst the war was on they also provided solace, hope and help to restore people that were actually destroyed by the conflict. **The role of Muslims?** Of course yes the other faith in Sierra Leone, well actually the largest in Sierra Leone they also played a very pivotal role. And we also want to look at their role under the umbrella of their organisation: And I want to specifically mention the African Muslim Agency- This was also an organisation that provided a lot of relief items to people displaced during the war. They provided food items. They had their hospital- now I don't know if they are still operating that hospital. People went there- a lot of people were hospitalised there. Both those who were wounded during the conflict, those who were sick etc. They also like the Christians offered lot of prayers and in combination with the Christians, through the inter-religious council, is a kind of a very serious force in the Lome peace negotiation. They also played a very serious role. **The role of the traditional religion?**

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<sup>491</sup> The questions typed in bold letters were asked by me.

This is something that would not be easily said. Because we are not actually informed as Sierra Leoneans as what people refer to as traditional religion. Putting it into perspective I want to say the role played by the Sierra Leone militia, the local militias in this country very much to our traditional religious practices that is the formation of the CDF movement- the *Kamajors* which later became known as the CDF. The beginnings of this movement actually could be traced in traditional practices. For instance to start with the *Kamajors* in the east and the south, they relied heavily on their societies- their traditional society. The traditional society is a kind of religion to our people in the provinces. They initiated people and they have beliefs and practices they held on to very strongly. Like for instance once you are a member of the *Kamajor* Society and you believe in what the *kamajors* were doing you like being invincible to bullets and any other forms of attacks from the enemy. This was the same spirit that was among the *Gbintiis* in the north particularly in Port Loko. The *tamaboros* in kabala, the *Donsos* in Kono etc- they all came together later and they were organised in what they called the Civil Defence Forces. And this group was very much instrumental in bringing this war to an end. **The role of religion after the war?** Religion has played a very very much active role because they have been involved in the reconciliation process. Mind you this is a post conflict situation and we were going about building the peace more in 2002 and it is a very serious issue. And the only institution that has the capacity to ensure that we have everlasting peace is that of religion. There are people both Muslims and Christians are still continuing in their prayers for peace in this country. They are continuing their preaching to their congregation both to be law-abiding and peaceful. One very serious Christian personality in the person of Bishop JC Humper was appointed to serve as the Chairman of the truth and reconciliation commission. One of the post-conflict reconciliation mechanisms actually established in this country. And the TRC say the lack of the implementation of its recommendations, has been perceived by many Sierra Leoneans as landmark for peace in this country. And this organisation was headed by no less a person but a Bishop, a Christian, JC Humper of the United Methodist Church, was actually able to bring all warring factions together, bring a lot of people, both perpetrators and victims together. People came and confessed what they did. Victims actually accepted apologies at the perpetrators and they were able to reconcile. As I speak to you now if you move around the country to do an interview about the reconciliation process, a lot of people will tell you that we have accepted people in our community because the TRC actually told us to accept people, told us to forgive and forget. This was actually led by somebody who was a Bishop, who used lots of his religious background to calm down people, to be able to simmer down the seeming anger that was going about in the country at the end of the conflict. So in no uncertain term religion has been very much instrumental in our post conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction. **Larger**

**ramifications from the war?** JA [...] in any war [...] after the end of any conflict there are the lot of ramifications. One of the issues in the country presently is large cases of armed robbery around the city of Freetown and all the provincial head quarter towns. Most of these people who were disarmed were settled in most of the urban towns. Some actually went back to their villages, some refused to go back since they opted for certain trade that will keep them in the provincial headquarter towns and the urban centres; like typing, some other technical jobs after the disarmament process. But this people actually upon the completion of whatever they did they were given two kits which they were expected to put into practice and continue whatever trade they had learned. But then what they did, some of them actually sold these items and they were left with nothing. As a result they are now roaming about the streets of Freetown for example. Some for example in the provincial headquarter towns and it's not possible to care for themselves and as a result they are now involved in armed robbery. This one I believe is one of the ramifications of the conflict [end of the conflict] Also we witnessed a very serious rural-urban migration in the capital will one say, those who are analysts that the capital city is overcrowded. Most of these people who came to Freetown as a result of the war have never returned. And are just staying around and most of them are not technically equipped for the city. They are passing around with a large scale of unemployment, with no shelter, health facility etc. as a result of the off shoot of the conflict. **To whom should I talk with regards to the causes of the war?** Well that is a very important question. Well in that regard, you don't need to talk to any specific person because the war in Sierra Leone, most writers or most commentators have actually failed to come up with one singular factor as responsible for the war. Some will tell you it is as a result of the over- centralisation of political power; which means you will have to talk to the political class. Others will tell you are as a result of the marginalization of the youth-The concept of the lumping. Youth theory that has been propounded by writers like Dr Abdullah and others, then you have to talk actually to people who are youth experts and some other people. Some will tell you it is as a result of diamonds, the misuse of our resources. Many causes' people have attributed to be responsible for the war in the country. If you want to talk specifically then you have no talk to not to individuals but maybe institutions. They may not be specific individuals to name but if you go to these institutions and meet their representatives there. If you talk to the inter-religious council for instance, find whosoever is in charge of that institution will tell you. You go to the civil society movement they will tell you. You go to like the Christian organisation, one that was here like the CRS, CAW etc. these were all organisations that will be able. And of course if you come to the university, the historians, and people like Joe AD Allie will give you the historical dimension of the war tracing it from the early days after independence up to 1991 when the war

actually broke out in our country. **Do you have any general comments to make with regards to this research?** Jaaaaaaaaaaaa basically it's a very interesting research. With the questions been asked you want to find out the role of religion specifically on how religion has actually contributed. Well Sierra Leone is a very unique country. We are a country that prides ourselves in our religious tolerance, something you rarely find in some other parts of the world. Throughout our conflict we [religion] remained very tolerant- Muslims going to churches to pray with Christians, Christians going to mosques to pray with Muslims for peace. And even the formation of the inter-religious council where Muslims and Christians sit together, you know, was a marvel in our country. So religion played a very serious role and it has served as a very good symbol of our national unity. And ehhhhhhhhhh I may suggest that you talk more to these people and you will be able to get an in-depth analyses of their perceptions of the war particularly now that the conflict has come to an end, what work are they doing so that we will [...] [end of tape]

#### **Focus group Discussion at Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone**

- 1) Taky Jalloh, final year student at FBC Faculty of Social Sciences and Law
- 2) Sabatu Mariama Rogers, student at FBC Mass Communication
- 3) Muloma Janneh, student at FBC Peace and Conflict Studies

**Role of Christians?** Jalloh: The Christians as a religious body in Sierra Leone played a very great role- They provide humanitarian relief in the form (Through *sic*) of NGO organisations. They helped in establishing displaced camps and coordinated with other organisations like FAWE and established trauma healing centres Rogers: Christians contributed by providing relief. The CCF (You know that it is the Christian Children's Fund) Children were greatly affected by the war. Was one of those bodies that helped Children in this country during the war? Janneh: They established organisations like CRS- Catholic Relief Services and Children associated with the war to help Children. They also established displaced camps and resettlement centres for the displaced people as well. **Role of Muslims?** Janneh: They were part of the interreligious centre (Council *sic*). They called all the parties that were in the conflict to try to settle the dispute so that we can get a lasting peace, which also led to the establishment of the TRC, to which Bishop Humper was appointed as its Chairman. Jalloh: The

Muslims like the Christians also helped in providing relief service and also helped in sensitizing the general populace through Islamic lectures and launching out Islamic musical albums, which spread the message of peace to the people. Rogers: Not much on that. They helped during the war. Prayed and encouraged people with God one can withstand. **The Role of the traditional Religion?** Jalloh: ATRS unlike Christians and Muslims, provided a defence mechanism in the forms of, for the southern province they had the *Kamajors* who protected the region, and in the northern province the *Donsos* and the *tamaboros* which protected their own regions. These were people who believed in these traditional practices by protecting themselves through the use of local medicines. They protected themselves and their villages where they lived. Janneh: Well the other groups which they also formed were the *Kapras* and the *gbintiis* which were also used to pursue this war. The traditional groups also helped to find other solutions for the war to come to an end so that everybody can return to their various areas. **Role of religion after the war?** Rogers: Religion has played a very critical role. As you can see the war has finally come to an end. AS soon as the war came to an end people had to realise that it's good to believe in God. So religion played a specific role in making people to believe that God exists. Jalloh: Really sensitisation of different aspects of civic rights to and peace with the help of the religious bodies. When people go to their places of worship they always told them about their civic rights, like voting, to maintain peace. An example is when this election is coming closer(2007 elections), They played a vital role in ensuring that people have the right to vote for whoever they feel is competent to be in office. It is not because that man with whom you are acquainted with or is your relative and does not vote for your opinion therefore you must go into arguments. Janneh: They are trying to put things in place so that the war will not repeat itself again. The Christians and the Muslims have all come together. They do things in common- Christians go to the mosque, Muslims go to the Church. There are also intermarriages between Muslims and Christians to prevent another chaos from happening in this our country. **Lessons learned from the war?** Jalloh: We learned divided messages. I can say that the negative lessons are greater than all the other lessons. We realised that these negative lessons are that our country was filled of tribalism, sectionalism, favouritism punched us into chaos and when we rise above all these things it is the war that have taught us that we are all Sierra Leoneans and we should all be independent and individuals. That is the vital lesson this war taught us. Rogers: The war has made us to realise that war is not good because when we watch around us and see how this our Sierra Leone used to be became completely changed and we noticed that war is very bad. It was very chaotic. Everything went back to zero. We have now come to realise that war sets people backwards in terms of development. **The impact of the war on our Country?** Janneh: The impact of the war in the country is

enormous. The war has helped us to be aware. There are certain things that used to go on in these countries which were not going down well. Now the war has created awareness in the citizenry. The war has taught us that we should try to love one another. We should not look low upon others, saying for example that that man is a Mende man can, will not go where he is. The war has taught us that all those type of things are not good. All Sierra Leoneans must be united.

Rogers: The impact of the war on the Sierra Leoneans varies. We have the negative aspects and the positive aspects. For example it created peace between the ethnic groups in Sierra Leone. During the war people showed humanitarian feelings for each other. Negatively, the war brought about some kind of corruption. People have become so corrupt because they have lost so much. As soon as they get the smallest opportunity to make up then they do all in their power to make up for their losses.

Jalloh: We realise that our economy is affected. Before the currency was not so devalued as it is today. The inflation is high. The exchange rate of the Leone to the dollar is very high compared to the periods before the war. There were not enough economic activities during the war. Most of our resources were going towards buying of ammunitions than the basic necessities like food, medicine and exporting. That is a big negative factor to the economy.

**Who can I talk with to find out more about religion and peacemaking in Sierra Leone?** Religious scholars, People that have played an important part. The elderly people that were in this country.

**General comments?** This is a very nice research for the people of this country. It will maintain peace. "End"

**Interview with Mr. James T. Koroma, teacher, Kabala, Northern Sierra Leone and Head of The Christian Reformed Church Primary School Kabala. He is 36 years old.**

**Role of Christians?** JA well during the ten years civil war in Sierra Leone, there was this inter-religious council. Once the inter-religious council was formed, there was headway and one we know that God is a peace giver: He uses people to establish that sort of peace among his people. With religion are necessary and pertinent to peace because God is a peace giver. The first and foremost thing is prayer- to put everything in the hands of God so that God will intervene. With Gods intervention then there is peace. The people also acted, they called parties together to come and make peace. And then that worked well saying see what God is planning, see what God is putting in the hearts of people in the heart of these boys [rebels and fighters]. They had to call together their colleagues saying that it is we that come together to make peace. They convinced some of the fighters, saying this [these] is [are] our brothers, this is our

country, let us come together and build Sierra Leone; and ehhhhhhhhhh we don't have any other country than Sierra Leone. We have no better place [to stay] on earth to stay than Sierra Leone. This is a God-given [laughs] earthly home, it's better that we live together than we can continue to survive on the surface of the earth. The relationship between Muslims and Christians in kabala- Northern Sierra Leone [the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Kabala is] very cordial. They have that rapport amongst them. There are inter- marriages. Christians [get] marriage [to] Muslims, Muslims [get] marriage [to] Christians. Some Christians work in Muslim institutions, some Muslims work in Christian institutions. So I would say it is inter-twined definitely. **Religious education and peacemaking in kabala, Sierra Leone?** [The religious education in the schools] is one; the moral aspect. 80% of religious teaching is geared towards the moral comportment of one's self that is ehh to live in the community according to the norms. And also to embrace one another love, and show care and love, love one another care for others. When somebody is in a deplorable situation we share with him just, not only just [by word of mouth] words but you can do something physically to help him or her from that situation. **Comments on the topic Religion and Peacemaking in Sierra Leone?** Religion and peacemaking is Sierra Leone, I think it's a very good topic. Even with me when I was doing my HTC, I wrote something about the effect of the western religion on traditional institutions of our people, that is the secret society and other things. The Christian religions also change some of these institutions in the area of worship. The rites no longer exist, the secret societies have diminished, the priest are becoming pastors and Imams and also it has help [for us] to know that whenever we come to the knowledge of God then there is total peace. You get total peace for God is the peace giver. So if somebody is following that then he is following everlasting peace in Sierra Leone. So having [writing about that] a topic on that, I think if the person is going to put in practice , I am sure that Sierra Leone will get an everlasting peace [what do you think about that sir?] [Interviewee laughs]. I think that Christianity affects the traditional religions. **General comments?** The comments about the research: I am saying it is not only easy. It has to take time to get into these two religions and see how best ahmmm they can come up with solutions that people who worship and at the end apply and enforce to become effective is not really easy. It will take your time; it will cost you more in even your personal life. Because when you go to some quarters they asked you whether you are a Christian or Muslim and if you say you are a Christian[when talking to Muslims, they will think] the will think maybe you become biased, so you have to keep a neutral plane sheet.... That [is] neutrality. How many Muslims and Christians in Kabala, Northern Sierra Leone? Well the percentage is 70% of Muslims ehhhhhhhhhhh, 30 % of Christians, well let me say 60, 40: 60 % Muslims 40 % Christians. **Role of Christians between**

**1991 and 2002?** The role the Christians played in the peacemaking building was very high. There are three basic things that were done during the crisis: 1. was a call to religious revival, wherein the whole nation was called upon to pray for peace and tranquillity and the speedy end of the war. The second thing that was done was to form what we call the inter-religious council which comprised of both Christianity Islam and traditional practices practitioners. These organisations together with the Christian organisations combine in not only talking, praying but even to meet the rebels in the bush. One of the rebel(s) [groups] took control of Orkra hill. These bodies the Christians and the Inter-religious bodies consisting of all the religious practices in Sierra Leone, that went and meet these men in the bush[ and tried to convinced them] to come out for peace. That was what they did. It was also the same body that met with Foday Sankoh [urging him] to make peace [with the government]. The talked about peace. It was also the religious leaders that went with the government delegation then to make the [when they negotiations for the accord was going on in Lome] Lome peace accords both 1 and 2. So here you can see the role Christianity both in spiritual, political and otherwise during the war. And after they archived, the third greatest thing that the Christian religion did was to continue with relief work. Almost all Churches in Sierra Leone [were] involved in relief and development work- supplying of food items, supplying of developmental tools for work and all the rest of it. The Christian Church did contribute and up till now [July 2007] developmental projects are on- if you go to the UMC they have a developmental desk officer, you go to CCSL there is a developmental desk officer, seventh day Adventists they have ADRA- Adventist Development and Relief Agency, you go to of course the Anglicans they have their own Development officer, Methodists [...] this was and is still going on as I am talking about it. They provide food for the people, shelter, [and] medical treatment- free of cost. These are some of the things the Church [churches] has done during the war and they are still doing even as I am talking today [July 2007] **The role of Muslims?** The Muslims also played a part. As I said, when they joined the Inter- Religious Council. That was they got involved in this peace building. They also called for prayers in the mosques, fasting just as the Christians they were also part of the team in meeting with these rebel leaders talking to them.... It came to a time when the war ended, the African Muslim agency for example, were involved in food distribution. They also bent on the Arab nations like Libya and even the Arab emirates sent meat, cow sheep, were send here to be given to the people free. Those were some of the things [the Muslims did]. Well now, they still continue with developmental programmes but on the side of the Muslims: like building of Mosques and small Muslim schools. What they are doing now is that in every fifteen sq miles there should be either a mosque or a Muslim school. They evangelise the Christians and the other people who are not. These one are people who don't



know. The government does not know. The Christians gave food to everybody, but the Muslims they give to other Muslims first, yes that was it. The Christian development was all over. Caritas run by the Catholics, CRS also a Catholic organisation. They were all there to make use of it. **The role of Traditional Religion?** The traditional rulers and religions they also participated in the inter-religious council so that they were meeting traditional rulers they all joined together with the Christians and Muslims in meeting the rebels talking to them so that they can talk for peace [take a peaceful option to the conflict]. But they these are local ones they did not have support from outside. They did not take part in relief work but they had started the CBF. Civil defence force is not actually a traditional religious religion as such. It was a political force sponsored by the government of the day SLPP. That is one aspect of looking at it but actually, the kamajors- the history that the people talk about a splitter group of RUF because of leadership position. When they voted at Mongaray, who should be the final leader of RUF, Foday Sankoh was chosen. So they [the kamajors] supported Hinga Norman [apparently Sankoh's rival for the leadership of the RUF] saying well we are going to the government, so they [supporters of Norman] formed the bulk of the Kamajors. The kamajors and the RUF were some were really know one another but the kamajors on the other hand had their powers to them depending entirely on the traditional sorcerer. They used juju, they used traditional herbs to arm themselves and protect themselves. These are some of the things and ehh mehhhh those who joined them could testify of terrible stories and how they were saved miraculously. Some people said they dreamt they were asked to pick some tribal herbs and used those herbs and then you can fire them with AK 47 it does not go. That's what they were saying. The traditional leaders actually they participated in persuading the rebels since they had part of their powers from traditional believes, so that's the part they played in also convincing them [that] its better we come[go inn] for peace than to continue fighting. **The relationship between Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone?** This is the only country as far as I have travelled in the whole world wherein a family partly Muslim partly Christian; and Muslims will attend Christian weddings, and Christians go to the mosque and vice versa in joy and happiness without any problem. [The reason for this very good relationship between Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone is due] to the kind of traditional structure; the traditional structure we have in the country that has contributed to this. Because when Christianity[...]. You see Christianity came and found the traditional rulers and so those areas particularly in the west was dominated by Muslims and Christianity and pagans; and then some areas in the north were [dominated] by Islam as well as tradition. So the good relationship between Islam and traditional practices are very, were very small .And some people when the embraced Christianity they saw that the Christians way of living[standard of living] was greater than

Islam; at the same time they will not discourage their children to go to School[Christian Schools]. An ehh the Christians came with education, but Islam did not come with Christian education, as a result they [Muslims] sent their children to Christian schools and they got Christian education, they were able to persuade their families. Christianity and Islam are one. And so the belief that we are serving the same God has being unifying. The muslims attending Christian Schools. It was not until 1962 when Muslims started – the Ammadis came and established a primary school in Bo and a secondary School in Bo, but before then it was only Christian[schools] around. Ian So those Muslims, who attended those Christian Schools, persuaded their parents; by saying that there is nothing wrong, my father is a Muslim too. My father is a Muslim, my mother is a Muslim, one of my uncles is a Muslim but one is a Christian [referring here to him] but I am a Christian and a pastor. You see all of us we meet together we talk as Muslims we see them carrying Christian names. Like my brother in-law James Bangura, he is a Muslims but he has a Christian name. The Muslims in Sierra Leone have Biblical names; in fact I have my brother who is carrying a Muslim name but he is a Christian! We cannot identify the [religion] of the person by the name; a Mohamed can actually be a Christian or a James or Augustine can actually be a Muslim. **What has happened in Sierra Leone since the end of the war in 2002?** Even now we [Religious Leaders] are still working on it [peacemaking]. We don't allow factions, the Christian organisations still meet, Even now we are calling for prayers I the mosques, in the Churches, and the traditional ways are used to avert any impending problems. The church is still, religion is still playing a very important part. I did not go, but when during the war, the delegations that went to Saudi Arabia, Jordan and other places consisted of been Christians, Muslims; and traditional practitioners. The people in Jordan said they could not understand that kind of relationship. It is only Sierra Leone that has this kind of relationship between Muslims Christians and traditional practitioners, meeting together, working together for peace. I believe that from the traditional perspective, we were able to tolerate both Christianity and Islam, so as a result it has even [...] it is only those traditional practices of our people [...] They accept Muslims and Christians. Though the traditional practices have no religious structures, the still practice tolerance. Unlike the Vatican which claims that the [...] is for all Catholics. What the Pope says for a Church is the same for all Churches, what the reformation theologians decided should what it should be for all reformation Churches, what the Pentecostal councils decide on should be the same for all Pentecostal Churches. Traditional religion does not have this kind of mind set: that allows this development in Sierra Leone [...] I believe it could be a basic factor because if they had had a structural thing they can call our own organisation, well established it would have been difficult for Christianity and Islam to penetrate sincerely. But there is no specific structure, no

administrative structure, no creed, no [...] When people want power [in Sierra Leone], they go to the tradition [...] they do not fight to get but when people want power, they go the traditional way. They go there! The traditional religions are not well organised and established but it is very vital. [There is no sociology of knowledge without sociology of religion] It is true; there is no society without that; because if society exist, religion has existed from the time when man came to the universe [...] Religion has existed throughout the world and at various times, except that the development of these various religions defer so to say [...] but the most important ones are Christianity, Islam and Traditional Religions and few others. **Is ATR silently taking over Islam and Christianity in Sierra Leone?** Yes definitely when you look at it in-depth it's that, but overtly no [laughs] hehehehe, because when people want power they go to the traditional leader and then they perform all the rights to get what they want [...] Any power struggle in Africa, everywhere even in Sierra Leone [...] in addition to that the peace making role of religion was also probably taken traditionally [...] the Christian leaders said that we cannot make peace only using Christianity and Islam you will fail because that powerful secrete- tradition. So when they were added, they were able to persuade there other practitioners about the need for peace rather than violence. **The impact of the war on the country?** It depends on where you look at it because the can be negative on men women and children and like burning houses were very negative, but what I discovered also is that during the war as in any Science, theologically in my view, there was a religious revival. Men came to realise that without Christianity, there would be no peace. And so peace building everywhere. Even in the area of music, it was the religious musicians that made money, Alpha Bassie, this ehh Donald and Ara. They were the ones who made money- singing praising God, appealing to God to help and bring the peace; appealing to people to come nearer to God because you can die at anytime. There was serious religious revival, unlike what is happening now, after the war the Churches are no more fully [seated] as it used to be. What is Peacemaking in your view? Peacemaking involves all [everything] because if there is no peace there will not be human development. Like now if there is no peace we would not be able to meet and discuss religion [the topic] but because of peace that is why I have the time to meet with you at the hotel [...] These missionaries come, every other person comes and we do business- it is just everything. Sheik Abubakar Conteh is an Islamic Scholar who can be helpful by giving you an interview. He is a Lecturer at Freetown Teachers College. There is also another man Sheik Ishmael Koroma, at Milton Margai [College of Education and Technology Goderich Freetown] he was also involved in this peacemaking. From the religious perspective like what you have interviewed me on. But for academic assistance talk to Dr Albadin Jah. **General Comment?**

What I can say is that it is a very good venture. You can have other kinds of materials on peace studies; you look at it.

**Interview with Alhaji Dr Mohamed Hassin Tunis Regional Chief Imam, Southern**

**Province Sierra Leone. 80 years old. [the province includes four of the twelve districts in Sierra Leone: Bo, Pujehun, Bonth and Moyamba]**

**The role of Religion during war?** Ehhh we did lot and lots of actions to help bring this war to an end. This was done collectively and individually. Collectively, we used to call conferences of Imams from Districts and Chiefdom, holding meetings in mosques, houses, court houses, talking to people about unity, about the need for the absence of war, stressing that war does not lead to development in a country. We spoke to them about unity and peace, stressing that fighting is not a wise act. That we must be united as that is the only thing that leads to development. Individually, we told the Muslims in the evenings, they were admonished to pray to the almighty God to help us bring the war to an end. We prayed fervently to God to help deliver us from the war. These were the two basic things we did. **The role of Christians?** They spoke to each other in the Churches so that they will find a way together, in public, and know mostly the things they did in public; to ensure that the war comes to an end. They used to talk to Christians, those that are Christians, to talk to other Christians to ensure that the war comes to an end. Even myself I experience many such occasions. That is what the Christians used to do. **The relationship between Christians and Muslims?** They are no ill feelings between them. Especially the good Christians and especially the good Muslims. Wherever we meet, we always show that we are worshipping the same person, who is this person? It's the almighty God. Whether you are going to the Church or to the mosques we have to have it at the back of our minds that we have one God. Also, the Bible and the Qur'an were passed on to the Prophets. The Qur'an was passed on to Prophet Mohammed; The Bible was passed on to the Prophet Issa [Jesus]. So we used to remind religious people about this and we are still reminding them about this. These two people are Prophets who left us message which must be followed. So we still remind them about this. The president of Sierra Leone said once that "if there is nothing else sierra Leoneans can export, we must export the religious tolerance that our people have maintained during and after the war" **Do you agree with him?** Well I believe that! That is a strong message; because even for me I started working for an Islamic organisation,

called Muslim World League at the United Nations. I worked there for up to 30 years! So my main responsibilities were to travel around the world – there are very few places where I have not visited in the world. So the Christians and the Muslims were my concern during those work-travels around the world. So I discovered that the views of president Kabbah is true, based on my experiences during those travels around the world. In the early days of religions, educated people were not many on both sides of the religious divide. There were not people on the Islamic side that were well educated in Islamic studies. This was how the Christian side also was; men now, on both sides of the religious divides are now very well educated. So this is [coughs] [...] Excuse me [...] the reason [...]. [recording tape stops] Illiteracy creates problems; education solves problems ehh education which is now a usual thing is responsible for the smooth running of things. Many Muslims are well educated. They no longer take only one type of education. For example I can speak nine languages and can write four of those. I can read and write French, I can read and write Arabic, I can speak and write Swedish; I can speak and write Spanish [...]. Education leads to intelligence. If a family has many educated people then have will develop. Many educated people in a country leads to development. I am of the view that Christians are now well educated- I am not saying that they were not well educated before. It is as a result of the level of education for Muslims and Christians that united is triumphing. When they lacked education before, it was easier to create disturbances and cause problems. A well educated Muslim, who is well informed about history, easily reconciles with his adversaries. In this country, you can experience inter-marriages between Christians and Muslims. For us Muslims and in the Muslim tradition, this is accepted. Even for my humble self, [though I am a Chief Imam], my wife is a Christian that has not created any problems and disturbances. This kind of marriage is permitted in the Islamic law. Islamic law is divided into four parts; The Qur'an, the Prophets speeches [hadith], the interpretations and sayings of the educated [Itjihad], and analogy. These are the four bases and backgrounds for Islamic law. There are those who say that they would not want their girls to get married to a Christian is due to a small reason. So that there girl child does not get married to Christian so that the girl child is not converted to Christianity [in Nigeria] and then the Muslim number dwindles. That is the reason why Muslims do not allow their children to get married to Christians. However, getting married to a Christian is not forbidden in Islamic law. **Role of religion after the war?** Since the end of the war, let us think about something else so that the war that took place in this country does not repeat itself. This statement is made with regards to the bad experience during the war. Things like painful and the destruction of lives and property, etc. If people do you bad things and if you believe in God whether you are a Christian or a Muslim, [it's important] to forgive those misgivings that were experienced during the war. If those misgivings are not

forgiven, then the war will not come to an end. Revenge is in some peoples mind, but revenge is not good. Let the sufferers remember that it is God that allowed things to happen to you. That is what I will say let us not revenge. Is this what you tell all your imams in the southern province and also in the rest of Sierra Leone to tell Muslims? Yes as well as lots of [such peaceful] messages which I cannot express now. However when I meet with all the Imams every first Saturday in the month, I admonish them about this [spreading the message of peace]. This is the same message I deliver in the mosques when delivering my sermons. Religions must recognise all the prophets of God especially the 24 prophets [in our religious traditions]. We need to believe that all those [24] are prophets and Gods messengers. The war brought few good things and a lot of suffering to the people and country. The war led to awareness and consciousness about lots and lots of things the war brought unity and caused lots of destructions but there are also some things that were not destroyed at all. The war stimulated prayers, the delivery of sermons, though the war, we did not stop going to mosques, Even myself, I used to go out say two hours before dawn and spoke to people. [...]. We used to explain to people that it was on God who was capable of solving the problems and helping in ending the war. The period before the war, we used to advice the supremacy of God. So God has no blemish [for helping end the war]. Politicians whether Christians and Muslims, should always include God even in their political speeches [...] they should give examples about the past. What was it that people did in the past that led to their rejection by God. What people are doing now that leads to their rejection by God and their underdevelopment? Those are the examples that should be cited .There are many you can talk to but they are not in this town.

**General Comments?** The word Islam means peace. You one is a Muslim, then one must be a peacemaker. You should be one who mediates in situations of war and or conflict to ensure that peace reigns. Create peace wherever you are if there is no peace there. However if peace is there, then you [Muslim] must work to ensure that it is build and maintained. One must defend peace until the end of one's life on earth. [...] Salamualakum- Peace be upon you. This is a greeting meant for everybody, even the angels that guide us. So peacemaking is the main thing [is this world]. Without peace there is no development. With peace then comes development. So that is what I want to say.

**Alpha Brima Bah, Teacher at the Abdunaser Islamic Secondary School Bo, Practicing Muslim. 40 years old.**

**The role of Christians before and after 1989?** Basically the Christians played a very pivotal role as far as peacemaking is concerned, because they were preaching to the people about peace. Quite apart from that they came together [and got] wherein they were uniting people at least to forget about the war, because when we talk about peace, peace is the only way out. The absence of violence will bring peace. **The role of Muslims?** As I am talking to you, I am a Muslim. The Muslims also played a pivotal role. They were preaching in mosques. They were calling meetings wherein they have to talk to people to forget about war by reading the holy Quran so that through that people will see that peace will come into our country. The Islamic Imams usually preached in mosques and where ever gatherings were held, where ever people meet [met]. They preach about peace, quite apart from that, most especially to the youths, because they feel the youths were used and misused by people [politicians] and they were preaching to them about peace. That's why now we have what we call religious moral education. That's a combination of both Christianity and Islam so wherein pupils will be taught about both Islam and Christianity- so that will mould their characters. They [teachers] teach both the Bible and the holy Quran. **Role of ATR?** Well the traditional religion also played a very important role because these were talking to people and even in traditional places. They bring people together explaining to them what some of the problems affecting us are, and what the solutions to these problems are so that we can preach peace to our people. [...] They [traditional practitioners] were not fighting but at least at the end of the day, they must come to oneness. The Kamajors and the Gbintiis were traditional fighters- they came purposely to fight for their motherland when the rebels took over or entered into the country, destroying lives and properties of people, they think that it is time for them to team up together to thrash out these rebels so that the country can become peaceful and violent free. **The aftermath of the war in 2002?** Well for now we can see that peace is going on, but quite apart from that everybody is determined. Even school going pupils are now determined for now we have so many institutions, everyone want to learn something because we feel that through peace we think these things can happen. And I think people have learned a lot because most of the youths believe that we have been misused by unfaithful politicians for their own personal aggrandisement; and they thought it fit that they want to learn trade so that at the end of the day, either they gain employment or they become self-reliant. **The Impact of the War on the country?** The impact of the war on this country, it has created awareness to people. People are now aware. Quite apart from that although we have some negative impacts but I think the

positive is more than the negative impact. Larger ramifications from the war? Some people lost their homes. Their homes were destroyed and a lot of other things [...] development is an ongoing event. Talk to Universal peace federation adviser: The District Imam. **General Comments?** *Ja* basically thinking about peace and talking about religion, in Sierra Leone we have Muslims and Christianity[and] the relationship is very cordial and We are very happy about that because thinking about other countries like Nigeria, we see negative things happening between Christianity and Muslims. And if there is peace, I think everything will go on successfully. And even with our politicians, they [religious leaders] are preaching peace to them and we all come together, I think there will be development in our country.

**Samson Lahai, 13 b Line Jai Town Bo, Hotel Manager. Adult.**

**The Role of Religious Leaders?** Well the religious leaders actually were get around people the factions of the war like the kamajors, the rebels, the soldiers, and bring them together, even in fact bringing the police involved into it and other civil services and organisations to make sure that we have peace. That's just the role that they were gearing towards. Talk to government officials religious bodies and the religious leaders like the Imams, the reverends because we were having council of churches of which the reverends attend[ed] certain meetings; they called for conventions, started [organised] workshops. So within those people, also the police force, they are going to give you good comments about the war. **General comments?** Ahmmm, I want to say that ahhhhhhhhmm, that Ahmmm, as far as my memory is concerned, we have two major religions in Sierra Leone. Muslims and Christians, and not of a tussle, they are peaceful. The Muslims and the Christians we hardly have problems. You know, So it's like, the general concept is like ehh we are uniting even if we have everything that is disturbing us, we join hands to make sure we remedy the situation. Under control. So it's like ahmm, the role of the religion[s] in Sierra Leone was actually positive. We are all gearing towards having peace, having sanity towards living together and live a better life. So we are all preaching towards good governance, peace, you know, having love, concern for each other, concern for the country. And not opposed to each other's concept. There are some skirmishes and some disbelief about some religions like that, but we have the general belief that we are serving the same God and these religions are doing well in terms of peace. They were actually galvanising, that is coming together and in many occasions were preaching peace, were saying something that anything that was so bad, anything that will come with conflicts, with chaos. **Religious Education?** Well actually in Sierra Leone we don't inculcate that idea of creating conflict. Because the preaching is about serving God you know, doing well, just being religious and not something that will create conflict between the two religions.



**Peter Bona, Teacher, Taking further studies at the Njala University, Bo Campus, 40**

**years old 25 years teaching experience.**

**Role of Christians?** I will start by [with] what cause[d]s the war. .At the time when the APC took over the administrative setup, it was difficult for even to communicate. If you communicate, it [was] done in fear. It was difficult to communicate. If you talk anything hard, the government was going to impound on you or even try to finish away with you. That was what happened in the case of John Bangura, who was a [Bank] governor because he tried to be restricting the financial set up; that led to his death. So infact it was only the Christian Council that was able to solicit on behalf of this war. During the course of this war, ehh the people wanted religion, they wanted help, and they wanted whatever things that they will need. But, they cannot say it because if you say it, because if they say it, APC government was going to impound or even try to kill you [...] They continued to pray, and pray and pray, until the government was overthrown [...] they were overthrown [...] they drove them out by the NPRC government. So when this happened, the APC government went into exile, by then, the president by then was not even trying to solicit for people, to try to talk to people. The Christian Council, the religious council had to solicit and talk on behalf of the populace. Infact at the time when the religious council met, they had to call on the government so that the government will give them the chance to talk to the people- they had to go to the grassroots to talk to them even though the war was escalating yet still the persisted to talk to them for us to have a peace, a permanent peace. Even I can remember Reverend CVA Peacock was one of those who were working hard for the war to come to an end, just within the cause of these activities, Reverend CVA Peacock had to pass away. Reverend CVA Peacock together with many other religious leaders was working hard so that peace is re-established in this country. Therefore they persisted to act interreligious to ensure that peace is returned to this country.

**The role of the Muslims?** In the first instance, the Muslims, they coordinated, with the help of the CCSL at that time, headed by Reverend CVA Peacock. They were talking, they were soliciting, Christians and Muslims, came together to work for the peace of this country. Therefore the peace that we are experiencing today should be geared towards development and peace building. Infact they instituted reconciliation, so that even if others have wronged you, you can still reconcile [...] forget about every act. Even as that, nowadays, people can forgive but they will not forget. **Is that forgiveness?** The Christian Council, the religious council, they are all working towards the development of this country; the peace of this country. **The Role of the ATR?** They had to organise themselves just to work as a unit just for peace to be restored to this country. I can say that the Kamajors contributed greatly into the peace process [...] They

were working together just to let ends meet so that the rebels will forget. They themselves were a fighting force. Coming together, they were fighting against the rebels, the RUF, and the Juntas. The Christians and the Muslims were coordinating [just their efforts] just for peace to be restored into this country. [...] [highlighted the evils of war] Sierra Leone after the war? We are now experiencing peace to now. Peace can be defined as an aspect of bringing the evil ones and the good ones together so that permanent peace can be restored in this country. [...] so that development will be implemented. Reconciliation plays a very important part [...] When the reconciliation exercise is enforced even the peace process. [...] I was one of those that were going into villages to coordinate the peace process. We talked to people to forget about all the evil things that happened in this country. [...] and then we come together and work as a unit. [...] There were food supplies from either CCSL or Methodist people. We went there and were supplied. Each group with at least nine people got a bag of rice [50kg], oil, other amenities like clothing, were supplied to people. Talk further to the indigenous people, those living in villages. In fact if you go to them, they will tell you infact the causes of the war. All was because of greed – That's responsible, because whenever something happens towards development, it was only centralised. Because only those in the APC government enjoyed. Another cause of the war is political corruption and stealing [public funds] government monies. People squandered and held [public funds]. That was one of the main reasons for the war. The religious Leaders had no, no way, no power to even talk, when you talk like in the case of APC government they will kill you or your [ have got to] run away from this country. This has drastically changed [as I am talking to you, July 2007]. **General comments?** Well I can say with whatever experience I have now, it was because of this interreligious council. Infact there are groups in this country now [...] people [...] I don't know how I can express it [...] Local people coming together to meet, to interact, whom hardly met to discuss [issues] [...] Now there is an access to express what we want and don't want.

**Interview with Mr. Olu Alghali. Country Director World Rehabilitation Fond, New York Based, Age 62, married with four Children. Freetown, Sierra Leone, 5<sup>th</sup> July 2007, at Mariannella House in Freetown.**<sup>492</sup>

**The role of Christians in the war that took place between 1991- 2002?** We are known to have done as far as Christians are concerned played a positive role in trying to help people to find peaceful manner in which people sat down together and talk in order to end the war. One area I believe the Christian religion played a good role was in the area of prayers. We had a lot of Churches that prayed asking God to intervene. Practically also, there was the inter-religious council of Sierra Leone which took the frontline in terms of talking to the two parties, the RUF and the government to find ways of ending the war. Humanitarian support also was provided by the Christian religion organisations and quite a number of them helped people with clothing to people and shelter from the war protagonists. I could recall one of these that are the Catholic Mission in Sierra Leone, set up what they called “Children associated with the war” CAW, for short. CAW led by Reverend Fr Theophilos Momoh, played a major role in terms of getting the Children who were involved in the war you know, Child soldiers were taking from the war arena, brought to safer areas where homes were build for them and they were kept there and de-traumatised and some of them were sent to school. As you know there is a young, several young Doctors now were once Child soldiers. And now in the universities in the country and are now participating in the peace building in the country. the Christian religion also, Their representatives of the Christian religion sat with the team, the various teams that met in Lome, Togo, to find peaceful solution. I think there are more I terms of what they did, but these are the major ones. **The relationship between the Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone?** Well this is amazing, really in this part of the world it’s amazing when you see both religions under the umbrella of the inter-religious council of sierra Leone comprising of the Imams and the reverends, and the bishops etc, they would sit together, they would pray together, they would talk together, would dialogue and they would move together to places to meet with the fighters with the RUF particularly to find ways of sorting out this mess. Historically, this country does not have any kind of religious problems. Like even myself talking now, I attended a Catholic School Saint Edwards Secondary School, and I would gladly say that because of the facilities they provided, I almost became a Christian [laughs], but for the fact that my parents were ardent Muslims, [I ended up as a Muslim], the several of our top people today, like even the president of the republic of Sierra Leone also attended a Catholic School and vice versa. So there was no problem whatsoever about that. [...] I am also married to a Christian. I am a

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<sup>492</sup> The details stated are those information the interviewees were willing to supply me for my records.

Muslim and I am married to a Christian. Actually, we meet during our student days in the United Kingdom. And ehh we fell in love and ehh, religion did not actually matter. And I told her that God willing by my name Alghali, that I am Muslim and that also, it was easy for me know that she is a Christian. We met and had a courtship and then in 1967, we got married in ehh, what do you call it now, not in a Church or a Mosque, but in [...] Registry! After that we went and had some prayers we did some now religious thing, we went to a Church and then they blessed the marriage and then I took her to the mosque and [laughs] they also blessed the marriage. And we have been together since then and it's now 41 years [...] this is very common in Sierra Leone. You see this is the wonder that happens here. For instance, I would follow her to some Church services, particularly those that are celebratory [Catholics] I would follow her and then we would participate in the service. And then this almost becomes regular, even though I would like to see her come to the mosque a little more than [syncretism?] She does, but ahhmm, religion doesn't matter here. For instance one of the major churches in this country, the Trinity Church at Kissi Road [in Freetown] was [set on fire]burned down by the rebels, the trinity church happens to be within an area that you have Muslims and Christians, and the interesting aspect was that the moves that people made to put the fire off the burning Church; both Muslims and Christians and the interesting thing is that they also contributed towards its construction and I was invited during the opening of the Church and the Muslims were provided for, they sat outside there and they also participated in the service. This is also common during the New Years Eve celebration. Muslims go to the Churches to pray and sing for the New Year. This is a very common thing, so with those reasons I must say we don't have the kind of problems ahhmm. There are no religious problems. No. Bishop Joseph Humper was head of the Inter religious council. The main body that infact spare headed the peace more or less; because of, probably because they were religious in nature were not harm although at one stage the arch bishop of Freetown and Bo was abducted [laughs] but they were so scared they could' not do him anything and they just released him and then he came back and told us that "I have met these boys", like the other one in Makeni as well, Bishop Biguzzi; and at some stage because of his close ties, not close ties as per say [literally] because of his inter action with both parties, he was been considered to be a supervisor [laughs] of the rebels but the rebels were located in his official Bishopric. So he had to really talk to them and his contribution was very good and important in terms of getting in peace. **The role of Muslims?** Again they [Muslims] played a very pivotal role and ehh as I said days of kind of national prayers were being offered in the Mosques and the Churches almost every Friday and Sundays and ehh they provided food for the poor, they provided clothing for the poor, and they also participated within the ambits of the inter religious council. [advocacy and relief] in Sierra Leone in trying to find a peaceful

solution to the war. And ehh I don't know the name of the guy now, I think he was the deputy to the Chairman Bishop Humper, you know and they visited most West African capitals and they participated in the peace meetings in Abidjan and also in Lome, which culminated in the signing of the Lome peace accord. In general they played a pivotal role as well. Even that quite a number of fighters were mainly Muslims. It was considered necessary to see how best they can condemn this kind of thing. **The Role of Sermons?** It became a kind of obsession for Imams, reverend and priests to always in their sermons to preach about peace; and how to try and stop the war! I think it was a common practice among all religious leaders, during Church services, during mosque services; they called on the people to desist killing people and come to the table and dialogue and see how we can find [peace] They asked for divine intervention. It came to a time when both religions believed that it was only God that could stop the war.

And we believed also that man will fail us. Because of the prayers that were made almost every day, led to the people coming together and sorting out their problems. **The Islamic Schools and colleges Role?** The major Islamic polytechnic is not in town. It is located in Magborocca in the northern Province [of Sierra Leone], ehh the Ammadiyya Muslim Schools which is[are] located in the east end of Freetown, ahmm you know ahmm [...] mainly as you look at it now mainly the Children, were barely Children who were fighting in the war, were sent to school during and after the war mainly. When they were caught, they were end to these Schools and supported by the organisations, Muslim organisations [...] we now see the results. But let me say this it was, it got to a point when people thought probably that was not the right thing to do, you know because these boys came from the bush so to speak and they have being fighting for years. And within six months they were bundled into secondary schools in the, various areas of the country. And because of them some of these violence activities we saw it in these sport meetings. When we they had sporting activities at the stadium. What they would do after losing [laughs] a football match or athletics, they just start stoning cars and things and then that mentality they brought in there. But after a while it cooled down a little and then we started seeing them behaving [well]. Like as I mentioned, quite a lot of them now, we have a few, like in my house where I live, we have a boy we found in 2000 [...] he is called T-Boy. It's a very intense. I would like you to meet with him. We gave him the name T-Boy, because we had them call him T-Boy. We asked him what his name was he said T-Boy. We asked him what his father's name was; he said he doesn't know his father. He doesn't know his father, he doesn't know his mother. We have kept him now for the last seven- eight years. He is now in a secondary school. He is like a son to us and ehh when we gave him not our name because this seems to be a problem in this country when those who kriols had adopted children they gave

them their names. So it became quite a lot of problems- they lose their identities. We were able to find out that he came from the Kono area- the eastern area. So when we noticed that [we found out that] T-boy, is the short cut for Tamba [...] He was about three years when they abducted him. He is now called Tamba Serry, he attends a secondary school. He attends Colligate Secondary School and he is now in second grade [...] the wife works in a humanitarian organisation called CAW- Children associated with war. [...] We went to the ministry of social welfare and adopted him [...] He loves his education. He would do everything, every amount of terrible things but when it comes to going to school, you will see him running to school. He gives us some amount of hope that in the end this guy will succeed in life. **What is peace in your view?** Both Christianity and Islam look at peace in a broader perspective. They have continued their programmes, ehh because you see as you go around this country, you will see that poverty is the main enemy now and if poverty is not addressed, then of course one would not say that we are in a peaceful environment. The Haves and the Have nots you will see them. In terms of those that have, they have so much, and ehh, and ehh it is becoming scandalous to the extent that ehh it is an open confrontation now between the Haves and the Have nots. We fear that if poverty is not addressed, in the long term there is going to be problem. Religious leaders, priests or reverends take upon the government and try to lead towards changing their bad habits, [and challenge them] to make good policies, policies that are social in terms of providing things for the people. Hospitals, schools, employment facilities, etc, etc. In the forefront of the fight against corruption. Corruption deters a system. It is just government corruption, the ministers per say, it is the national.

The moment you say hello to someone their first reaction is to ask you for money it will cost you some money [laughs] just to say hello. So when you walk into an office even an hospital [...] The first thing the Doctor or the matron or the nurse will ask[or] is for money [...] In a private hospital I was asked to deposit half million for a patient to be admitted there [...] the man died that night. Low life expectancy...problems for women going to the hospital at the last minute as well as the problem of traditional practices. **The Role of Traditional Religion?** The traditional organisations like the kamajors, the Gbintii, they also got involved in the fighting. Their own expectations were that they had enough spiritual power to kind of beat up the rebels [...] You will never believe but a lot of people believed that they played a role, using their fetish [...] psychologically a lot of people in the country thought that those people can use their magical power to their stop the war [...] But practically it did not happen. And ehh a lot of them lost their life's [...] it was a national kind of thing. People had lost confidence in the military. [...] they fought on the side of the government. The role of secret societies in Sierra

Leone? Not much was known about them. They really did not play any significant role. The fact is that most of the fighters were members of secret societies. Their own role was in fact fighting, being part of the war machine. Like the Bondo society it has nothing to account for.

**What has happened in Sierra Leone since the end of the War?** Well I think that the government and religious organisations just decided that with the help of donors, the war machines should be silent. And the way they went about it was through resettlement, demobilisation. Took the war machinery away from them and resettle them in their habitats, their actual habitats. An ehh for some two to three years, we had what they called the DDR program; where they demobilised hundred and something thousand fighters. They were trained in various vocations and were given start up kits. To go about their own business. Most of the drivers you see around now [laughs] are more or less ex-combatants. Resettlement was a big programme for the RUF after the war. It was a very big programme supported by the United Nations, DFID and various religious organisations abroad. Monies were poured in through the United Nations system here for development. The refugees also came in, we had about 2 million refugees they had to be brought into the country so UNHCR had a high commissioner for refugees and played a very pivotal role in the refugees. So in effect, let's say the first three to four years, the attention was mainly in resettling the people and ensures that they returned to their homes. I could name one or two organisations like the Norwegian refugees organisation provided homes that build shelter for the people. Because most of the homes had been burnt. The government will tell you that this first five years has been concentrated on socio-economic areas. Socio, in terms of building hospitals, getting the schools back to normal, building new schools and rehabilitating old ones. And ehh building health centres and in every part of the country. But one area they have not addressed is the economic development area. What do we do for tens of thousands of youths that are all about the country that have settled in Bo Kenema, Freetown, mainly Freetown? That is what we call for the peace building port which the United Nations has just provided. How to get these boys to work? Train them and give them something to do. Basically that is what any new government will address, or should address. The youth unemployment, the youth problem, and poverty; the provision of materials [...] etc, etc [...] **Programmes undertaken by religious bodies to address socio-economic issues?** The Catholic mission undertake programmes sponsored by CARITAS [...] is a household name in the country. UMC [undertake], the Methodists have programmes in areas of development and ehh. We know that [they undertake] the construction of schools, UMC schools, Construction of hospitals [...] The St John Hospital in Makeni [...] and In fact there is another one being built again in Makeni by the Catholic Mission. The religious organisations complement the efforts of government. They are depending on aid, something that will not last

forever. The religions are both responsible for providing aid and encouraging Sierra Leoneans to be self reliant. I know of a programme in Makeni, a Politecnique, where these boys train in various vocations and ehh and ehh my own organisation particularly which is New York based, more or less provided the funds to through CARITAS, to help 250 women and girls, abused women and girls in skills; tailoring, gara tie dyeing, batik, weaving, etc, etc. And then we gave them monies at the end to start some kind of enterprises. That's where the sustainability comes from. We gave them monies and we gave them start up kits, and they are on their own [...] this has changed their lives. The religious organisations are helping with programmes to help the women that are left out of the economic system [...] The impact of the war on Sierra Leone? It depends on whom you talk to. For instance, I remember having some talk with some ex-combatants. I told them look at what you have done, you have burned down all these houses etc, how do you feel about that? Then they said Pa if we had not had burned these wooden huts that were called hospitals, we would not have got these ones [...] [obviously better ones] [laughs] these modern ones, so you can see from his own point of view, his own position is negative- you have to destroy, according to him, to build. From the general point of view, one could say that what he is saying, could be wrong but that is what we see happening. We notice that there is a lot of reconstruction; rebuilding of schools, hospitals, like the major hospitals here. The buildings have been like this since 1920s but when those guys came and burned the things, now is almost a new hospital. The war has both positive and negative impacts. We had Siaka Stephens in the 1970s and 1980s, and he ruled dictatorially. What he said we just swallowed, and even when he did bad things, people applauded him, it would never happen now. People question. If you drive a four wheel car, now, come and tell us where did you get the money from? Where did you get the money from, how could you with the kind of salaries that is paid here, afford to build a house and own a car? [...] They question it [...] somehow. I have a four wheel drive, it's not mine [...] It's my son in laws who is in England. The cordial relationship between Christians and Muslims[...] Its a commonality [...] We believe that in the church you call God, in the mosque you call God and we believe that there is one God and we are all calling up to him in different ways. [...] we don't believe that it is possible to undertake terrorism in the name of religion. We don't do it here. We have never fought religious war! [...] The causes of the war were the lack of things. People were fed up with back governments and [...] we suffered Muslims and Christians and pagans, everybody more or less [...] and when it ended we came together again as one body. I don't know whether this could be taken abroad [...] In Sierra Leone we have a sizeable number of Muslims but it does not have negative impact on other religions. We live together and work together and pray together. As I told you, I also would attend masses Churches. [...] This is something unique about Sierra Leone it's



very unique [...] during the celebration period. [Laughs]. When its Christmas, its Christmas for everybody, are invited to homes to Christian homes, Muslims go to Christian homes [...] equally when there is the Ramadan period and that's interesting, the Christians support the Muslims [...] [Respect and confidence has been built over a long period of time amongst and between religions in Sierra Leone] [...] We all dance the lantern. It does not matter whether you are Christian and Muslim. Like where I come from, we see Muslims running towards the Church during Easter period, Easter prayers etc. Muslims will go Church [...] it's a common thing. They keep their faith but they respect others. **Larger ramifications from the war?** People are more aware now [...] I was in Bo in 1991 when Bo was attacked by the rebels and I was also there when in 1999, the Bo Mile Siaka road started [...] I went to Bo a few months ago [ 2007] the road was still been made. That's one big effect that the war brought on us. [Laughs] To whom should I talk? Every Sierra Leonean. Scholars like Professor JD Allie. General Comments? I think this research is a very important one. I hope we would be able to read it. I hope it will reflect the true perspectives. The role that religion played in the war. Some of us are very grateful- the role of the TRC as well. Bishop Humper and his team and I know [...] religious organisations ending the war and ensuring that there is peace.

**Reverend Moses Khanu. Former Head of CCSL, former Secretary of IRC SL, currently working as a Commissioner with the Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone**

**Your role in the peacemaking in Sierra Leone?** One could say that I was in the middle of it all because of the then capacity I held. As president of the Council of Churches, an ecumenical movement in Sierra Leone. Then I was also co-chairman, an equivalent for a president, for the inter religious council of Sierra Leone, which represents the two main religions in Sierra Leone, the Muslims and the Christians. So because of that occupation, that position, I provided leadership for both organisations, ehh to broker peace; meeting the government and the RUF. **The role of Christians?** Well it is a very wide and big role. Ehh if you take it by its compartments, and compartment here means, the various denominations, not only focusing on the ecumenical movement which is the Christian Council. But if you take the Catholics, the even have a secretariat in almost every district headquarter town or religion from which they played a very significant role in terms of caring for the displaced communities, providing some subsistence for them and some other medical aspects. Take the evangelicals of Sierra Leone, the EFSL, they also played a very great part in terms of supplying basic amenities for the displaced communities, people who found themselves in Freetown but they were internally displaced. For the Council of Churches, they catered for both the internally displaced and the other displaced; the refugees. [The refugees] who originally came from Liberia and resided in

some parts of the country. They provided shelter, they provided food and medical. But when the war hit a greater part of the country in Sierra Leone, the various denominations like the Baptists, the Methodists, Anglicans, well not so much the Anglicans may be through CCSL, other denominations, the Wesleyans, the UBC, played a very significant role as individual denominations. But collectively, under the Council of Churches, they played a very significant role, by providing on a daily basis, providing basic supplies for the displaced communities and also the Liberian refugees. What role did the politicians play Vis a Vis the Christian Leaders? The Christian Leaders played a very significant role compared to the politicians. This is so because if one has to be really realistic, it is the politicians that muddled the water and it was the Christians came along to make sure that the water is Crystal clear! Also by helping because if it were not for those organisations, I wonder what would have happened because the politicians see themselves as been chased by the rebels. The Christians had confidence, some good confidence with the warring factions, because they saw them as people who provided assistance for them. **Are Sierra Leonean Christians Peacemakers?** Well if we want to make that generalisation eh [laughs], one could say that. Even though there was bit of role of the inter faith relations and interfaith council, the Christians could be said to [have] play[ed] a very prominent role. Does this have to do with the role of Christian educational Institutions? Of course, yes. Even though if you do a proper history [you will find out that] Islam came to Sierra Leone about the 11<sup>th</sup> century. But it was the type that, most of the clerics that came, found themselves in the homes and families of Chiefs and very prominent people. But when Christianity came [going] go back historically in 1605, when the Catholic Jesuit priest came with a number of other Catholics and started Christianity and then that was followed by the arrival of the freed slaves, you know who [were] settled in Freetown. Particularly those that came from Halifax in Canada all of them about a 1000- 1200, were all professing Christians. They came with their pastors, David George and others, one could say yes fundamentally it could have been a Christian nation. [Laughs]. Does that also mean that Christians empower women, youths and Children? Well if we talk of empowerment, it depends from what angle you look at it. Originally one could say yes the Christians, Christianity allowed the girl Child to be educated. For me that is a very fundamental empowerment. Unlike Islam wherein they are allowed to learn a little bit just to enable them to pray, and then they quit. And so one could say yes. But again in terms of core leadership, it was quite a little bit of marginalisation. They allowed them to play all kinds of part but when it comes to prominent leadership, then they are kind [bypassed] of shifted, even in Christianity. But Of late, maybe in the latter part of the last century, we have seen a lot of development wherein women are been ordained; women are playing a very prominent role in social work and in religious work. Has the Church something

to contribute to the aspect of Human right? The Church cannot do otherwise. From its very holy scriptures, it has its own human rights background. But if we come to modern days in terms of social life's, economic life yes the Church is seen to be playing that role because of its supposed justice it stands for, in terms of caring for the orphans, caring for the marginalised, and so forth. So for me they are very prominent in terms of human right. **Other Comments on the role of Christians before and after 1989?** Oh yes in terms of actually brokering peace, because through the inter religious council, it was only when the Christians who were members of the Inter religious council , you know, contacted the then rebel leader and courageously went to the Bush[ where the rebel fighters were fighting from] to meet with the rebels. And developed a dialogue with them that culminated into the Lome peace agreement. **What specific role did religious Leaders play during the signing of the Lome Peace agreement?** Their role was very prominent. One could say that if it were not for the inter religious council that was present during the Lome peace talks, the talks probably would not have materialised. But there were, I remember clearly three occasions when the talks were about to breakdown, almost the other party walked out, the RUF, of the peace talks. And then it was the interreligious council, the AU, UN, that the Ecomog turned to and said hey, could you please come in , they went in and then they broker we kind of encouraged them to go back to the peace talks. So it was very prominent. So because of that they became moral guarantors to the Lome peace agreement. [Article viii in the peace agreement?] Yes. [Coughs]. **What role did Muslims play during the war that took place in Sierra Leone between 1991 and 2002?** Again probably individual organisations because also the Muslims have liked what the Christians have. We call them denominations, but probably they may call them that way too but they also have their own groups, you have the supreme Islamic council, the latest one they formed is what they call the Sierra Leone Muslim League. For now it is the big umbrella which all Muslims should be under, with the exception of the Ammadiyya. Because in all of these organisations, the Ammadiyya are not members. Even at the level of the Inter religious council they are not members. But they played a very prominent role. We all came together both Muslims and Christians to work for peace. Many organisations among the Muslims, they also provided relief and other assistance, be it medical and otherwise. **What role did traditional religion play during the war between 1991 and 2002?** Well somewhere along the line probably when Kono was attacked, I don't want to call it religion, again we have to draw the line those of us who are doing research, because even in my last paper, I argued the point to underscore the point of traditional religion and traditional practices. From the outward, one is tempted to say it is traditional religion; it's a practice which is completely different. But if we take it for convenience that we want to put it under the cluster of traditional religion, one could say that

the *Tamaboroh* from Koinadugu district, because of the mystical means they were using, for convenience one could say it's a traditional practice. So they were the first militia group that rose up to fight alongside with the government troops. But when they killed their leader, I think it was at the end of 1994, when Kabala was attacked and their leader got killed then you don't hear from Tamaboroh anymore. There after then the *Kamajors* militia from the Mende tribe rose up. Again because of their claimed mystical powers which cannot devolved it from tradition well, they rose up and they played a very prominent part, trying to counter act the efforts of the RUF, trying to protect defenceless civilians. There after it cut across. The Kono developed their own, the *Donsos*, literally meaning Hunter. The Temnes in the north particularly Tonkolili and Bomballi, they developed what they called the *Gbintiis*, *kapras*, again *Kara* means Hunter. *Gbintii* means it does not mean Hunter. *Gbintii* means is a traditional cliché meaning "it's too much", "you have gone beyond the mark"- that is the word *Gbintii*. The Temne word meaning it's too much [laughs]. So we are not going to take it any longer [...] they are all under the guide and hunters and they played a very prominent role. There were others who played their own mystical [role] and they are found in both groups even the RUF. Stories came out that they also used to have these mystical people who kind of prophesied if they were going to attack a particular Town if they were going to succeed so traditional practice played a very prominent role. At the end of it it's kind of defeated so to say. **What has happened in Sierra Leone since the end of the war in 2002?** Hmmm, much has happened, much [laughs] from the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2002 when the president declared that "the war don" meaning the war has ended, ahhhhhh a number of things have happened: 1) the demobilisation and disarmament and demobilisation and the reintegration of ex combatants took place even before that time and it kind of heightened up. About an estimated figure of 46 thousand were disarmed demobilised and reintegrated [...] DDR [...] The third aspect, which is the reintegration, did not quite succeed. There were kind of crash programmes, trainings given to these ex-combatants; some of them did not make quite good use of it. They lapsed back into crimes; they lapsed back into diamond mining, went back into the ghettos. What plans a put in place by religious leaders and Christians and Muslims for these kinds of people? The inter-religious council just after the TRC ended its mandate. The Inter religious council took a follow up programme which they called community development, Community reconciliation programme and this was supported by the UNDP. Ant they went throughout the country to ensure that this programme was established. And a number of activities were accomplished. Like the building of mass graves, they identified the spots and where possible they wrote the names of the people believe to have being buried there [...] there were name changing ceremonies, ceremonial cleansing activities , where young boys and young girls who were

associated with the war had to be cleansed, and dressed up to remove the stigma. So after the war ended. In 2002, the government passed an act which legalised the TRC. And the TRC actually started about the end of 2002 [and beginning of] 2003. It accomplished its activities and produced four volume reports[s]. Also the special court was established, you know to try those who committed the greatest atrocities against humanity. And a number of activities were also conducted in terms of workshops, sensitisations, explaining the Lome peace accord to people to the community. First of all it went through parliament which ratified it and then a number of organisations replicated and went into various communities to share the spirit of the Lome peace agreement. A number of other activities were conducted to keep the peace. **When we say peace what is the view of Christians, is it just the absence of war?** Does peace include human development and growth, the provision of job facilities for young people and so on? First of all after a very terrible and difficult period of conflict, when one talks about peace, it's the cessation of hostilities, in a very narrow sense to the ordinary person. But when the hostilities cease, the wider dimension of peace emerges, which includes, [...] the development aspect the provision of jobs, and the rebuilding of their communities and all of these, which give the wider meaning of the word peace. But we have to look at it from a narrowed definition; *the end of a conflict. But the wider meaning is development, resettling ex-combatants, rehabilitating communities and so on and so forth. Is the total picture.* The role of Christians to ensure a free and fair elections and maintaining peace in the 2007 elections? The council of Churches, since end of last year, had started mountain preparation to observe the election, to sensitise the communities, to prepare them for the elections, preach a non violence kind of election. [...] I don't know, I have not checked recently whether they will be bringing, what number of international observers they will be bringing. They are bringing inn international and domestic observers. And I think the Interreligious council which comprises both Muslims and Christians has also being involved in sensitisation. And I know the catholic Church in Makeni, the Makeni diocese, and I have also heard that they had held workshop in Kenema, so one could also say the diocese of Kenema, not so much of western area. The Diocese of Freetown and Bo have not had much but for the Dioceses of Makeni and Kenema, they are on top of it. Doing and conducting sensitisations for paramount chiefs because when in the beginning of last year there were rumours that paramount chiefs are being bought by the ruling parties and had associated themselves with the ruling party and have even stopped other parties from campaigning in their chiefdoms. So the Church has to say that this is not democracy. So I think they are doing so much and they are planning to do more. **What has been the impact of the war on the country?** It's so much, it's so great. Ahhmm you can say the war left an indelible impact that cannot easily be erased. First of all it has its good parts. It's

not all negative, but as humans we always look at the negative impact, which is above [more than] even the positive. But let me go straight to the negative the negative impact is the destruction of lives and properties. Particularly those very important traditional institutions, the traditional buildings and monuments the fighting forces destroyed. This is a very serious impact. For a decade they also disallowed the ordinary citizen to do their farming to develop themselves. They impoverished the entire nation, they impoverished the entire nation and it's a poverty that will follow us in the next couple of years if something seriously tangibly is not done. Another impact of the war is that it brought a kind of awareness. Its negative it's also positive. Negative aspect is that Children have become extraordinarily stubborn. Become very unloyal to their parents. They love the street they love to be among their pair groups and so on. It brought an enormous suffering in such a way those prices of basic commodities continued to rise and skyrocketing. Petrol continued to rise even though the advanced an argument that well in other countries the prise is higher. We did not used to have it that way. The customs because of its failure as a partner to support our government, their only sources is to increase customs duty. This has a very negative impact for the consumer because if the importer pays so much they have to recover it and causing a lot of high cost of basic commodities. But it has its good part and the first part which I am able to remember is many people who would not have being able to go to the west, has gone there on resettlement. For me one could say it's a positive impact. Another positive impact one could say is that it left with us a level of understanding of the way politics works. People today have a lot of a very high awareness. If you go to the village and organise a workshop without giving them small pardiem, because they have being in Freetown where workshops were conducted and they were given some kind of transportation. [...] There are many more. It was during and immediately after the war. At this time I have to be very honest, it seems as if those who [are] supposed to rise up and make statements had not had any. And again I am saying this I hope it would have gone even in the radio, that the key leaders, when they speak government Trembles; they have associated themselves with the system and they have gone into silence. One could say like the Pentecostal Churches, they are praying and I think that's a very wonderful contribution, we cannot lose sight of it. In the main Churches, our own leaders you don't hear them. Call them Catholics, call them Wesleyans, call them Methodists, you don't hear them. They have not made any statement so to say. I think religious leaders cannot be neutral. [...] They have to be objective. They cannot publicly show which political party they support [...] how can you go and pay your loyalty to a head of state or to a politician, you as a religious leader. [...] For me its contrary, you have already taken sides you cannot be objective. Neutrality is a very difficult word. One can be neutral in certain cases but objectivity should be a hallmark of a Leader. You

have to be objective you have to be outspoken. If not Desmond Tutu and others would not have made their own name. What larger ramifications if any exist from the war? Hmm as I said, the war has left us with a legacy of consciousness, a legacy of awareness and we cannot pretend and nobody will pretend to you this is it. I believe the war divided us and because of that divide, one would have hoped that the politicians, who created all the pitfalls that culminated to the war, would have been wise enough to see how best we can narrow the gap. Because of the war, there has been counter allegations, regional counter allegations. Everybody respect religious Leaders except if a religious leader says he does not want to be respected. These are people who occupy very prominent and key positions in society. They are supposed to be the conscience of the people. They are the pact makers of the community. People respect them and one would believe that because of the present situation, they would have being a little bit more proactive in terms of narrowing some of the divide that has being created. To whom should I talk to get more information for my Research? Hmm, the best source now is to look at the TRC report without talking to anybody. Especially the part that has the recommendations and gives you the antecedents to the war [...] and that is well articulated you can go back to Volume Two. **General Comments**? I would say your background material should go way back in history. Because a true picture of what Sierra Leone was, and what Sierra Leone is now. Also your background material should be able to give the reader an objective thought on the whole aspect. Because before this time I remember after 1992, when the NPRC took over, the incident in Bo on a cleaning Saturday, the then secretary of state south led his men to the compound of the Bishop, Bishop Kailie, they molested him and they beat up his men and they had to hospitalise him. When news of that incidence reached Freetown, Muslim leaders and Christian leaders assembled at the fore ground of the CCSL and went to statehouse to register their petition to the then head of state Captain Valentine Strasser. Immediately, that secretary of state was removed from Bo. And so you start to see the power of religious Leaders how much impact they would create if they are willing. But you look back, before independence and after independence what happened, because for me a greater part of our problem is that we were not ready for independence. We were not ready. Again it goes back to the Second World War. There was a world depression. World Economic depression. England [United Kingdom] could no longer control their colonies. When Sierra Leone came by they received their independence almost on a golden platter. We were not prepared; we were not ready to take over the reins of government. [...] today we talk about corruption but you go back to those days. **How is the relationship between Christians and Muslims in Sierra Leone?** Again it is historical, you remember when we started the conversation [and] I told you that Islam is older than Christianity in Sierra Leone. It was the host religion was traditional religion. Then Islam was

brought by the clerics. Even before the disintegration of the Mali Empire, when the Muslims started descending southwards and came down Guinea and then to Sierra Leone. Even before that time Islam had already entered Sierra Leone. Muslim Clerics got married into chieftaincy families. The names like Sesay, Mansaray, Turay, they may have a Mandingo background but when they get intermarried, they were also preparing the Chieftaincy garments. These Muslim Clerics. That is why even today when they crown a paramount Chief, they have to have a Muslim cleric to sit down and prepare all of those vestments, to give it the kind of thing it has. And so that goes back to those old days so when Christianity came, people of one family would be Muslims others would be Christians. And again Christianity rapidly grew up due to the western education. Because most of the Schools were run by Christian organisations. And so the Muslims who were Muslims but there were no Muslim secondary schools then, they attended Christian Secondary Schools. And even Fourah Bay College [Oldest part of the University of Sierra Leone] was considered a Christian organisation. Because it started as a place to train teachers and Chaplains, thoroughly run by Anglicans. Because of this interaction way down from secondary Schools and in then Institutions you find that there is a give and take. And so it developed. It is so historical that you find Christians and Muslims exchanging gifts festive seasons, very outstanding ceremonies like marriage, some Muslims go to the Church because the relative is getting married; some Christians go to the mosque because a relative is getting married. They don't go there to pray, they go to bring moral support. So because of this traditional side again from the latest developments it might not continue that long. Because I have seen certain documents that are coming from some other quarters. When you see the benchmarks in Sierra Leone in particular if the church does not stand, we may experience some difficulties. [...] it was not brought by a militant method [...] the clerics that came were busy making amulets [...] the true Islam condemned all of this. [...] Many Muslims attended prominent schools in Freetown they attended there they continued to maintain their Islamic faith [...] they could recite the Lords prayers; they could recite almost anything you think about in Christianity, but they remained Muslims. Likewise a good number of them some of them are *Alhajis* today but they attended Albert Academy [...].



## **Appendix 1b Case Study Data Base**

### **Evidence and other sources of documentation**

#### **Internet Resources**

IRCSL and CCSL Press Releases:

<http://www.c-r.org/our-work/accord/sierra-leone/inter-religious-council.php>

[Accessed, November 2005, through November, 2011].

<http://www.google.no/search?hl=no&q=Inter-religious+council+of+Sierra+leone&btnG=Google-s%C3%B8k&meta=>

[Accessed, November 2007 through November, 2011].

Agendas, announcements and minutes of meetings, and other written reports of events

Administrative documents, proposals, progress reports, and other internal records

News paper clippings and other articles appearing in the mass media or in community news papers.

#### **Other internet resources:**

<http://www.sierra-leone.org/>. [ Accessed 1.10.2006 up to November 2011]

<http://www.sierra-leone.org/trcact2000.html>. [Accessed 1.01.2007 through January, 2011].

Abidjan Peace Accord:

<http://www.sc-sl.org/abidjanaccord.html>

[Accessed 1.10.2006 up to November 2007].

Lome Peace Accord:

<http://www.sierra-leone.org/lomeaccord.html>

[Accessed 1.10.2006- up to November 2007].

TRC Report 2000 pages:

<http://www.trcsierraleone.org/drwebsite/publish/index.shtml>

[Accessed 1.10.2006, up to November 2007].

Special Court postings on the internet:

<http://www.sc-sl.org/>

[Accessed 1.10.2006 up to November 2011]

Special Court proceedings and rulings

<http://www.sc-sl.org/>

[Accessed 1.10.2006 up to November 2011]

Formal Studies from Universities and Colleges in Sierra Leone (Thesis)

Organisational budgets

Maps of Sierra Leone, and other relevant archives

### **Appendix 1c List of names, other materials used in data collection, etc.**

Revd. Dr JC Humper, Alhaji Dr. Mohamed Tunis, Mr Alpha Bah, As well as list of interviewees, presented below in this appendices.

Personal record, such as diaries, calendars, and telephone listings

Conference documents

My personal diaries, 1999- 2011

Church calendars since 1999

Names and telephone numbers of interviewees and other informants

#### **Interviewees**

Over 50 persons, see list in this appendices

Interviewed at various times first Two months, Vis prior research; 01.09- 02.10.06

Field work; July 2007, and at intervals until December, 2011.

Guided conversations, structured, unstructured and fluid, rather than rigid.

I followed my own line of enquiry as reflected by the case and asked questions in an unbiased way in line with the enquiry.

Engaged two research assistants

Transcribed most of the interviews and returned it to the interviewees for their comments and confirmation and corrections

Categorised the Interviews

#### **Participant observation**

I was Regional supervisor for civic education 1998- 2000.

I worked as a priest in the East of Sierra Leone, 1997- 2000

I was Part of the team that was working hard to end the war

I gained good experience at all the visits in 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, until 2011.

**Direct observation**

Prayer meetings, inter faith activities etc. I gained good experience at all the visits in 2000, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007 until 2015.

Interviews carried out in July, 2007, etc.

Member checking October through November, 2011.

Interviews with bishop Biguzzi, Abdul Gaba, etc, and general observation and field visit in July-August 2009- March 2010.

Review of thesis in Sierra Leone, January to November, 2011.

## Appendix 2 List of Interviewees

- 1) **Reverend Sam Joe Ellie**, Christian. Former Head of Church, UBC Sierra Leone Conference Pastor of UBC Church, Wellington.
- 2) **Mr. Abdul Gaba**, Muslim. 31 years old, Business man-Clothing and textile, Freetown resident.
- 3) **Reverend Moses Khanu**, Christian. Former Head of Church, Former Head of Council of Churches in Sierra Leone, Former Secretary of Inter religious Council Sierra Leone Currently Working as a Commissioner with the Human Rights Commission Sierra Leone.
- 4) **Mr. Alie Y Kallay**, Muslim. 6E Old Railway Line, Tengbeh Town, 0023276847100 alivea@yahoo.com
- 5) **Mr. Olu Alghali**, Muslim. 62 yrs old. Country Director of an American based NGO in Sierra Leone, Freetown.
- 6) **Mr. Omar Paran Tarawally**, Religion: “Godist”. Neither Christian nor Muslim, “but he speaks directly to God” LLB (USL) Deputy National Secretary General PMDC Sierra Leone. Attempted Muslim prayers once.
- 7) **Mr. Peter Bona**, Christian. Teacher, Taking further studies at, the Njala University, Bo Campus
- 8) **Mr. Samson Anthony Lahai**, Muslim. 13 b Line Jai Town Bo, Hotel Manager
- 9) **Mr. Alpha Brima Bah**. Muslim. Teacher at the, Abdalnaser Islamic Secondary School Bo, Stays at 97 Ngalu Road Bo.
- 10) **Alhaji Dr. Mohamed Hassin Tunis**, Muslim. Regional Chief Imam, Southern province Sierra Leone, including four of the twelve districts in Sierra Leone, Bo, Pujehun, Bonth and Moyamba Districts.
- 11) **Pastor Aske Bee Alfred Gbla**, Christian. Milton Margai College of Education and Technology, Head of Sierra Leonean Languages department and Lecturer Religious and Moral education.
- 12) **Mr. James T Koroma**, Christian. Teacher, Kabala, Northern Sierra Leone
- 13) **Mr. Taky Jalloh**, Muslim. Final year student, Faculty of Social sciences and Law
- 14) **Miss Seibatu Mariama Rogers**, Muslim. Student at FBC, Mass Communication

- 15) **Mr. Muloma Janneh**, Muslim. FBC, Peace and Conflict Studies
- 16) **Mr. Umaro Koroma**, Muslim. Student at the FBC- law Student, Student politician
- 17) **Mr. Edward Kamara**, Muslim. Freetown resident
- 18) **Mr. Muloma Janneh**, Muslim. Freetown resident
- 19) **Mr. Richard J. M. Ratcliffe**, Christian. Dino Mining Ltd, 55 Randall Street  
Monrovia, Liberia, on visit to Freetown
- 20) **Mr. Kemoore Salia**, General Secretary, CCSL, Freetown, Sierra Leone
- 21) **Mr. Lamin Kaloko**, Traditionalist, Freetown
- 22) **Mrs. Yeayea Conteh**, Muslim from Makeni
- 23) **Sheik Mohamed Kargbo**, Muslim. Islamic Clergy Freetown
- 24) **Sheik Mohamed Turay**, Muslim. Islamic Clergy, Freetown
- 25) **Mr. Issa Koroma**, Muslim. Taxi driver, Freetown
- 26) **Mr. Tommy Tucker**, Christian Catholic and Teacher, Freetown
- 27) **John Joana**, Christian. Bo City.
- 28) **Revd. John Bockarie**, Christian. Circuit Superintendent, Bo City
- 29) **Mr. Tommy Alie**, Christian. Teacher, Bo Commercial Secondary School, Bo City
- 30) **Mr. Panda**, Muslim. Njala University College, Bo Campus, Bo City
- 31) **Mr. T. Kamara**, Christian. Njala University College, Bo Campus, Bo City
- 32) **Mr. J. Kamara II**, Muslim.
- 33) **Mr. Jalloh**, Muslim.
- 34) **Mr. A. Lahai**, Muslim.
- 35) **Mr. Deen**, Christian, Freetown.
- 36) **Mr. Lahai II**, Muslim.
- 37) **Mr. McCarthy**, Muslim.
- 38) **Mr. Alex Bhonapha**, Christian. Research Assistant, MA Student, Njala University  
College of Sierra Leone
- 39) **Mr. Charles Vandy**, Christian. Student University of Sierra Leone, FBC
- 40) **Miss Rose Dakowa**, Christian. Nurse at the Kenema government Hospital
- 41) **Mr. Anthony Lahai**, Christian. Bo City.
- 42) **Dr. Tamba Missa**, Christian. Medical Doctor in charge of the Nixon Memorial  
Methodist Hospital Segbwema

- 43) **Mr. John Saffa**, Muslim. Business Manager, Nixon Memorial Methodist Hospital, Segbwema
- 44) **Reverend Dr. Joseph Christian Humper**, Christian. Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Sierra Leone, Former head of the Truth and reconciliation Commission in Sierra Leone
- 45) **Mr. Tommy Mustapha Alie**, Christian. Teacher and Resident of Bo city
- 46) **Mr. Brima Panda**, Muslim. Bo City.
- 47) **Mr. Teddy Kamara**, Muslim. Teacher and resident of Bo town
- 48) **Mr. Mohamed S. Kamara**, Muslim. Student
- 49) **Mr. Abednego M. Yoko**, Christian. Computer Student
- 50) **Mr. Lawrence Davis**, Christian. 18 years Old, Computer student at the Methodist Resource Centre, Bo.
- 51) **Mr. William Dorikuna Juma**, Christian. American- Liberian based in the City of Bo
- 52) **Mr. Alfred Gassama**, Muslim. Computer Student at the Methodist resource centre, Bo
- 53) **Mr. Alpha Tarawally**, Muslim. Methodist Resource Centre, Bo City
- 54) **Mr. Lawrence Junis**, Muslim. Computer Student at Methodist Resource centre, Bo City
- 55) **Mr. Kelfala A. Wai**, Muslim. Computer Student at Methodist resource centre, Bo City
- 56) **Mrs. Dr. Memunatu Pratt**, Christian. Head of Department Peace and Conflict Studies FBC University of Sierra Leone. Christian
- 57) **Mrs Egun James-Dekan**, Christian, The first female General Secretary of CCSL.

I sent out 130 questionnaires in Eastern Sierra Leone, and received 50 responses.

### **Appendix 3 Letter to The Special Court**

Revd. Joseph G. L Moiba  
Birmingham Christian College  
Hamilton Drive Selly Oak  
B 29 6QT

Special Court for Sierra Leone  
866 UN Plaza,  
room A 333  
New York, N.Y. 10017

Birmingham, 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2007

#### **RE: Application for access to official documents of the Court**

I wish to apply for access to the official documents of the Special court for Sierra Leone. The reason for this is that I am presently doing a research for the degree of PhD on Sierra Leone with the Birmingham Christian College in collaboration with and granted by the University of Wales, Lampeter(UK).

Attached are letters of recommendation from my Supervisor and from the University of Wales, Lampeter. My email addresses are j.moiba@bham.ac.uk, moiba@hotmail.com and I can also be contacted on 0044(0)7795545267 or 0047 93035193, in case you want more information from me.

I hope to hear from the Court

Yours Sincerely,

Revd. Joseph G L Moiba, HCPS, Cand Mag (BA),  
PPU1&2, PTE, MA, Cand Theol. (University of Oslo),  
PhD Research (UK)



## **Appendix 4 Forward To The TRC By Bishop Joseph Christian Humper, Cr**

The establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (the Commission) in Sierra Leone after eleven years of bitter civil conflict was appropriate, necessary and indeed, highly significant for the healing of a traumatized nation. The Report is all-inclusive in that it does not only expose perpetrators and identify victims but also serves as a mirror through which all Sierra Leoneans can and, indeed, are encouraged to examine their own roles in the conflict.

The Commission was a product of the Lomé Peace Agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). The work of the Commission has laid the foundation for reconciliation and healing for all of those affected by the civil war. Victims and perpetrators are beginning to find a common ground on which to stand, live and develop the country together in peace and harmony.

The Report of the Commission (the Report) calls for introspection and a retrospective examination of the political, historical, economical, social and moral activities of both the state and the nation. While particular attention has been paid to the plight of victims, the motives and perspectives of those who committed terrible atrocities were intensively explored.

The Commission endeavoured in its report to address the questions: “Why Sierra Leone?” “What went wrong?” “What needs to change?” “How will we effect the change?” The Report is intended to enable Sierra Leoneans to understand the conflict and to come to grips with the problems which gave rise to it, many of which continue to plague Sierra Leone today. In this way, the Commission hopes the Report will serve as a roadmap towards the building of a new society in which all Sierra Leoneans can walk unafraid with pride and dignity.

The Commission’s findings force us as a nation to confront the past. They reinforce the belief that the past cannot, indeed must not, be forgotten. Forgetting or ignoring the past means we cannot learn its lessons and are at greater risk of repeating it. Through attributing responsibility for the different causes of the conflict, and the many violations

of human rights committed throughout it, we create accountability and state unequivocally that we reject impunity. With this knowledge and understanding we vow to build a society that will be able to prevent such causes and violations from recurring.

The Commission's recommendations touch on every aspect of the life of our nation. They will go a long way towards promoting restorative justice in Sierra Leone. The recommendations do not only deal with the technical and policy measures required to build a peaceful and stable future, they also call for a fundamental change in the attitudes of Sierra Leoneans. With common resolve and commitment on the part of every citizen and the ongoing support of the international community, we can say that the prospects for sustained peace and the development of Sierra Leone are indeed bright.

Our ultimate goal of peace and reconciliation will be reached if all living within its borders sincerely respect the human rights of all, without exception. We must reaffirm our resolve to live in a nation where justice reigns, where nobody is above the law, where unity and tolerance is the order of the day, where genuine democracy thrives, and where love and concern for each other and our country is paramount. True reconciliation requires real consideration for the total well being of all our citizens – including children, youth and women. All citizens must have a genuine stake in society in order for there to be a lasting peace in Sierra Leone.

Reconciliation is strengthened through acknowledgment and forgiveness. Those who have confronted the past will have no problem in acknowledging their roles in the conflict and expressing remorse for such roles. True statesmen and leaders will also act accordingly for they will recognise the powerful healing and unifying force such acts will have on the nation. Those who have confronted the past will be able to forgive others for the wrongs committed against them. Where the act of forgiveness is genuine it does not matter whether the perpetrator declines to express remorse. Learning to forgive those who have wronged us is the first step we can take towards healing our traumatised nation.



These are my hopes for our people in Sierra Leone. As we read the pages of this Report let us do so with an open mind for the voices of thousands of Sierra Leoneans are contained in its volumes. These voices call upon all of us never to permit intolerance and brutality to afflict our Sierra Leone again. We are called upon to live in such a way that we can truly say “never again”. The future prosperity of our children and indeed future generations depend on how we conduct ourselves. We must meet this challenge.

I wish to acknowledge and pay tribute to the many organisations and individuals that made possible the fulfilment of the Commission’s mandate. Firstly, I wish to express my deep appreciation to several donor countries that supplied financial support: the European Commission, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Norway, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, Ireland, Sweden, France and Luxembourg. I wish to pay tribute to Mrs. Mary Robinson, the former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose vision ensured the realisation of this Commission. Several persons in the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights played key roles in establishing and supporting the Commission, including Mr. Jan Cedergren, former Chief of Activities and Programmes Branch, Ms. Tokunbo Ige, African Team Coordinator, and Mr. Martin Ejidike, the Desk Officer for Sierra Leone. The Commission received valuable administrative and logistical support from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL). In particular, I would like to thank the members of the Human Rights

Section and of the Media and Public Education Department of UNAMSIL for their unwavering support for the Commission's work. I extend my appreciation to the President of Sierra Leone, Dr. Ahmad Tejan Kabbah and the Government of Sierra Leone for their committed support to the on-going and long-term truth and reconciliation process.

Several organisations, both within and outside Sierra Leone, played significant roles in promoting the work of the Commission. Within Sierra Leone such organisations included the Campaign for Good Governance, the National Forum for Human Rights, the print and broadcast media and the Inter Religious Council. The Truth and Reconciliation Working Group served as a useful liaison between the Commission and the NGO community. UNICEF provided support to the Commission and enabled it to publish the Children's Version of the Report. The Commission wishes to thank Saudamini Siegrist for her dedication in compiling the Children's Version. UNIFEM supplied advice and resources to assist the Commission to address the role of women in the conflict. WITNESS produced a video version of the Report and the Commission wishes to express its gratitude to Gillian Caldwell, Louis Spitzer and Tijanie Bah. The International Centre for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) supplied valuable support and input, and the Commission wishes to thank in particular Marieke Wierda who was always available for advice and counsel. The ICTJ provided consultants to the Commission and also supplied financial support for and the National Vision for Sierra Leone.

Finally I would like to pay tribute to the Commissioners and staff of the TRC. The Commissioners, Hon. Justice Laura Marcus-Jones, Mr. Sylvanus Torto, Professor John Kamara, Ms. Yasmin Louise Sooka, Professor William Schabas and Madam Ajaratou Satang Jow who took time out of their busy schedules to ensure the success of the Commission. In particular I would like to pay tribute to Mr Ozonnia Ojielo, the Head of Information Management Unit, who played an instrumental role in the establishment and management of the Commission, and in the production of this report.

## **Appendix 5 Charles Taylor’s Trial**

ABC Television-Africa ©2009

Sierra Leone / Trial of Charles Taylor – Special Court says “No Chance”

FREETOWN, Sierra Leone, May 5, 2009/ABC Television-Africa (ABC)

The Judges of Trial Chamber II in The Hague have dismissed in its entirety a Motion for Judgment of Acquittal brought under Rule 98 by the Defence Counsel on behalf of former Liberian President Charles Taylor. This means that Mr. Taylor has a case to answer on all 11 counts in the court. The Trial Chamber ruled that the Prosecution had presented sufficient evidence on all counts which, if believed, would be capable of supporting a conviction. The Chamber made its findings based on the Joint Criminal Enterprise (JCE) mode of liability, and ruled that it need not examine other modes of liability, that “The Chamber agrees with the Prosecution that it is not necessary for the purpose of Rule 98 to evaluate the sufficiency of the evidence in relation to each mode of liability and that it is sufficient if there is evidence capable of supporting a conviction on the basis of one of those modes,” Justice Richard Lussick said in reading out the Chamber’s decision. “In relation to the alleged participation of the accused, the Trial Chamber [...] Justice Lussick emphasized that the standard for determining sufficiency of evidence under Rule 98 “is not evident [...] The Chamber ordered that the Taylor Defence open their Defence Mr. Taylor is expected to take the stand in his own defence [...].

Note: The Chamber’s decision to dismiss the Motion for Judgment of Acquittal does not amount to a conviction against Mr. Taylor. It basically means that Mr. Taylor has to answer and that he should do so by presenting his defence in order to rebut the

<http://www.sc-sl.org/DOCUMENTS/ImportantCourtDocuments/tabid/200/Default.aspx>

[Accessed on a regular bases in 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011].

## **Appendix 6 Special Court For Sierra Leone**

### **Sierra Leone RUF rebels sentenced:**

An international tribunal has jailed three former Sierra Leone rebel leaders for a total of nearly 120 years. All three were senior leaders in the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and were convicted of overseeing atrocities during Sierra Leone's civil war.

Issa Sesay was sentenced to 52 years, Morris Kallon to 40 years and Augustine Gbao to 25 years. They were found guilty in February of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the 1991-2001 conflict. "The chamber concluded that the inherent gravity of the criminal acts for which Sesay, Kallon and Gbao have been convicted is exceptionally high," the judges said. Tactics favoured by the rebels included amputating hands and arms or carving the initials RUF into the bodies of their victims. 'Massive scale' It is the last case to be held in the capital, Freetown, at the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone. "Children were deprived of normal education and some of them had the letters of the RUF branded on them as if they were the organisation's property" [...] Judge Pierre Boutet [...] The RUF trial began in mid-2004 and the court heard about the rebel commanders' role in the conflict.

"The crimes were committed on a massive scale [...] Sierra Leoneans were raped, enslaved, hacked to death and brutalised," the AFP news agency quotes presiding judge Pierre Boutet as saying. "The impact of the crimes on the Sierra Leonean society has been enormous," he added. The RUF was notorious for using the so-called Small Boys Units - child soldiers forcibly recruited and issued with AK-47 assault rifles - who had a reputation for particular cruelty among the civilian population.

### **RUF sentences:**

- Issa Sesay: 52 years, 16 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity
- Morris Kallon: 40 years, 16 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity
- Augustine Gbao: 25 years, 14 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity

"Children were deprived of normal education and some of them had the letters of the RUF branded on them as if they were the organisation's property," Mr Boutet said.

By the time the conflict ended, tens of thousands of people had been killed while tens of thousands were left mutilated, their arms, legs, noses or ears cut off.

Thirteen people were originally indicted by the tribunal, but RUF rebel leader Foday Sankoh and his deputy commander Sam Bockarie died before coming to trial. When the RUF leaders were found guilty in February, the judges concluded they "significantly contributed" to a joint criminal enterprise with former Liberian President Charles Taylor to control the diamond fields of Sierra Leone to finance their warfare. Mr Taylor faces 11 counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity related to his role in the conflict. His trial has been moved to The Hague for security reasons. Earlier this week, his lawyers called for the dismissal of the charges saying the prosecution had not presented sufficient evidence of his link with the abuses.

Story from BBC NEWS: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/7990065.stm>

Published: 2009/04/08 16:58:22 GMT

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## **Appendix 7 General Issa's Trial Documentary Released**

The trial documentary of one time RUF Commander, General Issa has been produced by a team headed by Rebecca Richman Cohen, a staff of the Special Court for Sierra Leone and launched at the British Council Auditorium past week. The documentary explains in details the trial process of General Issa; and the role played by the witnesses, the prosecution and defence. It further pictures, General Issa himself elaborating on his responsibility as an interim leader of the Revolutionary United Front on the presumption that in his regime and a leader, he brought calmness to many areas that were under the control of the RUF. He further revealed that he practically contributed to the disarmament of his colleague who were not mostly ready to give up arms, since they thought “giving up their arms would render them powerless” That notwithstanding, he went on, upon the Lome Peace accord, having met with political godfathers and peace-preachers in the likes of General Sani Abacha, Maxwell Khobe and officers of the UN peace keeping mission, he saw the need for the prevalence of peace in the country. He however sadly stated that “having gone to such an extra mile to allow peace in the country, I am now being kept behind bars for crimes I did not commit” and said that “one day the truth will be revealed” Shortly after the documentary film, a panel of four was brought onboard comprising officers who are human right officers, Special Court officers and people working towards the sustenance of the truth and reconciliation programme. In a short statement, Bishop Humper of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission regarded TRC as a forum for restorative justice and it deals with the entire populace of the country, whereas the Special Court is there to hold accountable those who bear the greatest responsibilities in the eleven years civil conflict. Human Right Commissioner Mr. Edward Sam upheld the view that it is indeed necessary for people to be held accountable for crimes they commit. This will enhance sustainability of peace and disallow the existence of impunity. Participants of the programme raised questions in respect of the judgment passed against the RUF leader on 16 counts, even when he is one of the contributors, a primary one to the end of the war.

*By Poindexter Sama*

<http://awoko.org/index.php?mact=News,cntnt01,detail,0&cntnt01articleid=8515&cntnt01returnid=15> [ Accessed 22.05.2010 at 02.02].



## **Appendix 8 Time Line**

**2005/ 2006:** Prior research

**2007:** January: purchasing of a Laptop, cassettes, and gathering literature

**2007:** February: Reading literature on the History of Sierra Leone

**2007:** March: Writing a History of Sierra Leone

**2007:** April: Literature Review

**2007:** May: Writing the proposal

**2007:** June: Delivering the proposal at the research Seminar Day at the University of Wales Lampeter, contacting possible interviewees.

**2007:** End of June, July and August: Research Visit to Sierra Leone

**2007:** Sept & Oct: Transcription of data collected from Sierra Leone

**2007:** November, December and January 2008: Writing the results of the Study

**2008:** February, March, April and May: Organising the Thesis

**2008:** June, July and August: Preparing to present the Organised Thesis to the Thesis Chairs for comments and suggestions.

**2008:** September: Writing the Introduction

**2008:** October: Writing the Review of the Literature

**2008:** November: Explaining the methodology

**2008:** December: Presenting the results

**2009:** January: Summarizing and discussing the Results

**2009:** February: Preparing the Thesis for defence

**2009:** March- June: preparing to hold a successful Defence

**2009:** July- December- 2011.: Thesis Position, Write Up And Thesis Review

**2010:** In Sierra Leone Thesis write up.

**2011:** In Sierra Leone Thesis Review.

**2012- 8/ 9/ 2016:** Corrections and amendments of thesis based on examiners report

## **Appendix 9 Bishop George Biguzzi**

Bishop George Biguzzi was born in Italy in 1936 during a difficult political time, the time of Fascism and Mussolini. For five years, 1940-45, he also experienced the Second World War, particularly tragic at the last two years, when the German Nazis of Hitler were bringing havoc in the whole Country. After the war, Italy saw a large number of young boys being encouraged and really entering the minor seminaries by the thousands. Not that at 11 years a boy would have the vocation to be priest for life, but certainly in a seminary he would have a great opportunity to be protected from false desires and grow in the service of the Lord. So our little George, immediately after his compulsory five years of primary school, left his family for the minor seminary of Cesena, where he distinguish himself more for good commitment and results in his studies than for games or sports in general. Later on, when he was 17, he joined the Regional Seminary of Bologna, the city of the world's first university, to study philosophy and theology in preparation for the ordination to the priesthood and the pastoral ministry in his diocese of Cesena. However God, in his own ways, was making George more and more aware of a world beyond his diocese, a world that was quickly becoming a global village, and of a human society ever more in need of the Good News of Christ. Moreover the frequent visits of missionaries to the Seminary of Bologna, together with an effective dissemination of books and magazines on the missions around the world, entered easily in the heart of our young seminarian to dedicate his very life to the universal spreading of the Gospel. And so it happened. At the end of his first year of theology, only three years short of his ordination and incardination in his diocese, the young George, not without some regrets from his diocesan bishop who was eyeing him for his good intelligence and dedication, asked the Superior General of the Xaverian Missionaries to enter his Congregation. In October 1956 the Xaverian Novitiate of San Pietro in Vincoli, a small village not far from Ravenna and actually a few miles away also from his native village of Martorano, welcomed George among the Xaverian novices. He made his first Xaverian professions, with the vows of obedience, poverty, chastity, and mission, on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 1958, with the Xaverian number 714. Then he immediately joined the Xaverian Theology students at the Mother House in Parma, where, two years later, he

was ordained priest, together with some 20 classmates, by Bishop Pollio, an expelled missionary bishop from China. A year later, Father George was sent to USA to learn English and to be part of the vocational and missionary promotion there. He remained there almost 12 years in the formation of the American Xaverian aspirants while attaining the M.A. in Education. Finally his original dream of going to the mission became a reality in 1974, when Fr. George arrived in Sierra Leone soon after Christmas, together with Fr. Peterlini of blessed memory. With his formative and educational background, Fr. George was immediately appointed to the role of formation in our minor seminary of Makeni, but not without many periods of teaching R.E. at St. Francis Secondary School. There he was noticed by all for his solid ecclesial and educational capacities, for his intelligent contributions to both the Diocese of Makeni and the Xaverian Congregation. Thus it was almost taken for granted that at the end of 1977 he was elected Regional Superior by and for the Xaverians in Sierra Leone. Fr. George occupied well that post for a successive term of three years, when he had to pass it on to another Xaverian, as it is in the healthy tradition of most religious congregations. In 1984 Fr. George served for a short time as parish priest in Lungi together with Fr. Milan. There he soon became successful to get that large piece of land presently and providentially occupied by the Salesians and their schools. But he was not to remain there for long, because, in spite of all the complaints from the Xaverians in Sierra Leone, that very year 1984, he was called by his Superior General to be the Master of Novices in Italy. There too he was not to remain for a long time, for on December 3<sup>rd</sup> 1986, he was elected bishop of Makeni, to replace Bishop Azzolini, who had then reached retiring age. Pope John Paul II ordained Fr. George Bishop on January 6<sup>th</sup>, on the Epiphany of the Lord, in the Basilica of Saint Peter in Rome. Bishop George at last arrived in his Diocese of Makeni a month later with the non-easy task of putting his feet in the shoes of Bishop Azzolini, his great predecessor and founder of the Diocese. But he certainly succeeded, even with different character, style, and pastoral initiatives. The almost 24 years since Bishop George took over the Diocese have proven this very well. Under the Episcopal authority of Bishop Biguzzi the Diocese has seen growth and consolidation, in particular with many Sierra Leonean Priests, new parishes, other congregations, catechists, Christian Families, Small Christian Communities, the first-ever held Diocesan Synod in the Country, The Catholic University

of Makeni and lots more. In all his activities Bishop George continued to be a priest faithful to the Lord and God's people with liturgical and catechetical concerns and commitments. His many projects of social justice, education, religious dialogue [...] will remain part and parcel of this Diocese for many years to go. [...] No one here, in his Diocese as well as in the whole Country of Sierra Leone, will ever forget the role of our Bishop George during our civil war, to assist the refugees, to coordinate efforts, to bring peace among the fighting groups, and this at the very risk of his life, several times. This is what Bishop George was and did with the gift of priesthood the Lord had given him 50 years ago. Yes, a priest is always like Christ, the good shepherd who leads the sheep to the green pastures of life and, because he loves them so, he is always ready to give his life. *By Monsignor Kamara, Makeni.*

## **Appendix 10 The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) Coup The May 25<sup>th</sup> Coup – As Recorded in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC-Sierra Leone)**

The mastermind of the 25 May 1997 coup was Sgt Alfred Abu Sankoh (alias “Zagallo”). The coup was not detected by the officers or the military intelligence because it was planned on the 24th and executed the next day. Zagallo was a bodyguard to a former Secretary of State during the NPRC regime, and had enjoyed a lot of benefits from that association. He was also a footballer and had been associated with a number of Freetown clubs and was finally requested to set up a football club for the army. The membership of the club was to provide the nucleus of the coup plotters. Zagallo gave vent to the frustrations in the army that led to the coup: “Soldiers in the lower ranks were not paid a good salary unlike the officers...we were denied of privileges such as overseas courses [...] soldiers were killed at the war front and no provision was made for their families [...] there was the burning issue of the rice allocation, our rations had been drastically reduced and many times we got them quite late [...] the issue of Kamajors was another thing that finally discouraged the soldiers under the regime of the SLPP. As all of this was happening there was widespread rumour in the army that the government wanted to cut down the size of the army [...] about 240 soldiers were retired from the army early in 1997 [...] most of them had served for more than 30 years [...] when their retirement benefits were finally paid it was a mere four thousand Leones and four bundles of zinc to each retired soldier and nothing more. There was a lot of grumbling from both the retired soldiers and even serving soldiers were not happy about the way the old men who had suffered in the army were treated.” There was complete disorderliness in the military among the rank and file. The officer cadre played ostrich while the soldiers complained. Many of the rank and files, including Zagallo, decided to resign from the army. Their letters of resignation were not accepted. On the morning of 24 May 1997, Zagallo assembled his team of footballers numbering 17 at the billet of the Wilberforce Barracks where the footballers were camping and reiterated the problems in the country to them, the need for them to take action, and that the way forward had been presented to him in a dream the previous night. He was told in the dream that all their problems were caused

by the senior officers. They agreed to arrest all the senior officers and detain them at the military headquarters in Cockerill, Freetown. They further resolved to carry out the operation the next day. In attendance at this meeting were the following people, listed overleaf:

1. Sgt. Alex Tamba Brima
2. Lance Corporal Tamba Gborie
3. Corporal George Adams
4. Warrant Officer 11 Franklyn Conteh
5. Warrant Officer 11 Samuel Kargbo
6. Sgt. Ibrahim Bazzay Kamara
7. Sgt. Brima Kamara
8. Sgt. Moses Kabia alias Rambo
9. Sgt. Sullay Turay
10. Corporal Mohammed Kanu alias 55
11. Corporal Momoh Bangura
12. Lance Corporal Foday Kallay
13. Lance Corporal papa Bangura alias Batuta
14. Ex SSD Officer Hector Lahai
15. Civilian Bioh Sisay
16. Abdul Sesay, a civilian staff of the army
17. Sgt. Abu Sankoh (alias "Zagallo")

On Sunday 25 May 1997 they all met at 6.00am at Cockerill, the military headquarters. They went through the main gate and met Corporal Gborie who was on duty. All seventeen of them were encouraged to assemble with their personal arms. Major King, the Commanding officer in charge of the Air Force in Cockeril was allegedly contacted by Alex Tamba Brima and had pledged his support to the group. Alex Tamba and WO II

Franklyn Conteh were to take care of the armoured tanks. The group then moved on to the arms store. The door was not locked. They collected as much arms as they could carry on their persons including AK 47 rifles and rocket-propelled bombs and tubes. They arrested the soldiers on duty at the Air force and headquarters security office, tied them up and locked them at the Military Police guardroom. They seized all the arms and ammunition contained in both offices. They then proceeded to the tanks and ammo stores. There was no soldier on duty there either. From this store, they collected a formidable supply of rocket-propelled grenades which they loaded in three Mercedes Benz cars they found at Cockerill. They then surrounded the perimeter of the military headquarters and mounted a road block. As they did so, other soldiers quickly understood what was happening and joined them swelling their ranks to about 100 men. They began deploying themselves to strategic areas. One group headed by Tamba Gborie quickly left for the state radio station SLBS FM 99.9 to announce the takeover of government to a shocked nation, and to alert other soldiers on guard duty at the station. Sgt. Alex Tamba Brima was dispatched to the Wilberforce Military Barracks while Sgt Brima Kamara quickly moved to secure the army ordnance at Murray town with a group of soldiers. WO II Franklyn Conteh was left behind to take care of the military headquarters. Group three under the command of Corporal Mohammed Kanu alias 55 was to handle the 7th Battalion. The rest of the group commandeered several vehicles and moved into the town towards the prison. At the Wilberforce Barracks they arrested about 15 senior officers including Colonels K.I.S. Kamara; A.K. Sesay; S.O. Williams; S.T. Davies; A.B.Y. Kamara and Major Koroma. The arrested officers were locked up at the military guardroom at the barracks. By 7.00am this group had numbered several thousand soldiers. They split into different groups and approached the prison from different directions. There was agreement that all the prisoners, in particular, the military officers who were detained at the prison were to be set free. With the numbers of soldiers who had joined the revolt, sporadic shooting was occurring all over the city. There was no resistance at the prison gates, as the prison officers obediently opened the gates. The Nigerian ECOMOG officers that previously guarded the prison were nowhere to be seen. They were too few to offer any meaningful resistance. All the detained prisoners were set free. One of them was Major Johnny Paul Koroma detained earlier for alleged coup

plotting. He praised the boys for freeing him, describing them as brave. Later, Major Johnny Paul's countenance changed and as he assumed command of the operation which had now taken a different dimension, he first gave orders that we should head for CID headquarters... so that we could burn it down. The reason he gave was that this was a place where cases were not decided with fairness taking his own case as an example. He later changed his mind. No one told Major Johnny Paul Koroma to assume command of the operation but seeing the situation and after we explained to him that our intention initially was to arrest all the senior officers in the army for reasons already outlined above, he told us that he was now taking over command as he saw that we were all junior officers. By 8 o' clock a blue helicopter flew towards Juba Hill in Freetown. A few minutes later they saw the helicopter flying towards Lungi. The President was leaving the country. They suddenly found themselves in control of the country. Johnny Paul Koroma has given a somewhat different account of the events of this date. He claimed that he had requested his liberators to simply release him so that he, his wife and children could leave the country safely, to which they replied: "No you have to be with us. You have to lead or else we will not allow you to go. If you say you are going we will have to kill you." Johnny Paul Koroma believed that his presence helped stabilize things as the coup plotters were going to kill all the politicians and all the senior officers. The first sign that the CDS, Brigadier Hassan Conteh had of the coup was a radio message he received at 4.30am on the 25th from a Lt. Banja Marrah of the Signals Squadron at Wilberforce reporting that some armed soldiers in a Mercedes Benz car had claimed that they were staging a coup and had taken over the country. He began calling on all senior officers to report to the Myohaung Officers Mess. Within a short while, there was sporadic shooting all over the city. For the President, he was having his early morning shave, when he heard the exchange between Brigadier Conteh and the Lieutenant on the service radio. He requested information from Brigadier Conteh on the efforts being made to repel the coup. Not satisfied with the response, he continued to call the Brigadier regularly on the service radio. After a short while, the radio went off air. That was when it dawned on him that the coup makers had succeeded. He quickly accelerated his plans to leave the country. Meanwhile Brigadier Conteh and a group of other officers having learnt that the plotters had taken over the officers mess and were on the lookout for officers quickly detoured to



the British High Commission where they holed up to plan a counter attack strategy for wresting control of the capital city from the coup plotters. He tried to rally the remaining troops to the support of the government. Increasingly it became clear that the respective formations were either not lifting their finger in support of the government or were pledging support to the coup plotters. Col Tom Carew after escaping arrest at the Wilberforce barracks had tried to mobilise the remaining officers and men to mount a resistance. Some of the officers like Major Gottor and Lt Akim had already joined with Johnny Paul Koroma at the State House. By 10.00am there was a broadcast by Corporal Tamba Gborie on the state controlled radio that the “other ranks” of the armed forces had taken over power. The broadcast called on Foday Sankoh to join the new government and urged the RUF to come out of the bush. This weakened the resistance of the remaining loyal troops who all scampered to different parts of the country for personal safety. Johnny Paul Koroma prevented the mounting of an assault on the State House, which had been proposed by the soldiers. He also ordered that no politician should be molested by the soldiers. Many of them were arrested, detained for a while and then released. All senior officers were directed to report at Cockerill and those who did, like this witness, were locked up:

“It was during that period when this fourteen other ranks, mostly junior ranks interfered with the operations of governance. After that I was detained by junior military officers. I was there for three weeks on the allegation that the President was in contact with me by telephone at my house. My official residence was looted and vandalized and they came to my office. I tried very hard to work with other officers to let the boys understand that it was not acceptable for coup or whatsoever. They could not understand.”

Later in the day there was a phone call from London to Major Johnny Paul Koroma by Omrie Goley the external spokesperson of the RUF, who said he had heard the radio broadcast calling on Sankoh to join the new government. He said that in the interest of peace he was going to make Sankoh’s phone number in Nigeria available to the coup plotters. Major Johnny Paul Koroma then called Sankoh in the presence of some of the coup leaders such as “Zagallo” and Tamba Gborie. Major Koroma told Foday Sankoh that the war was over and invited Sankoh to take over the leadership of the new

government. Sankoh replied that this was impossible since he was detained in Nigeria. He commended the plotters for their nationalistic action in inviting the RUF to join the new government and requested that he wanted to relay a message to his fighters which he wanted recorded immediately. He gave his blessing to the new regime and called on all his fighters to come out of the bush and join the new government. They were directed to henceforth take all orders from Johnny Paul Koroma. This statement was subsequently rebroadcast repeatedly on the state run radio station. The invitation to the RUF was justified as necessary to end the war:

We are all Sierra Leoneans and were just killing one another all the time; so you see it was senseless. At least we could call these guys from the bush to come and join us to get peace in this country. They decided to bring the two armies to one – the RUF and the SLA, we are all brothers; we are all one. So we should join to make a People’s Army.

I had small fear of them, because the [RUF] guys were proper trained commandos. The plan was to train them to be trained like professional soldiers. I was really surprised [because] it was peaceful at the time – no firing, no ambushes, just peaceful. I felt happy because I was tired of war at that time. The RUF too said that they are tired of war and that this is the time to bring peace in Sierra Leone. There were all Sierra Leoneans, just like us.”

The new government suspended the constitution as well as political parties. To the shock and consternation of the populace, Freetown was overwhelmed within days by the presence of the RUF combatants who came to the city in their thousands.

“Some of us were in the bush at that time, we only heard an instruction that we are to go and join the AFRC junta; that it is because of peace that we should join them and then the UN will come in between for peace. So that gave the passion to some of us – when the command was given, there was no time to waste. In the space of three days, some good number of the RUF left their hiding places and came to bigger towns. Some were sent to Bo, some were sent to Kenema, some in fact went as far as Freetown.

In fact, as I told you, we believe in loyalty. When the instruction came that we should join, we never knew the circumstances at the end but our feeling was that when we were coming to a town like Freetown, we could be in Freetown, and then the UN and other

international bodies would come in between us and make the peace. That was what the other Commanders told us: that the war is over; we are agreeing to join the AFRC for disarmament.

But when we came to Freetown, after a couple of times, we saw different issues; things were looking somehow unsuitable with regards to what they had told us in the bush. So, some of us who had far-sighted thinking started to leave from Freetown. We said: “Hey, this is not the peace; this is just a sort of suspended government.”

This effort to end the war worked briefly in getting the RUF out of the bush but it was counterproductive. It endorsed the assertion that the army was in connivance with the ‘rebels’. This stiffened the peoples resolve not to have anything to do with the new “people’s army”. All commercial enterprises closed shop, schools and offices remained closed for much of the nine months that the AFRC was in power. About eighty percent of the armed forces had forsworn their allegiance to the constitution and the elected government and joined the Peoples’ Army established by the AFRC. The CDF and all militia groups were ordered disbanded and to hand in their weapons at the nearest police stations.