


Assessing the sociological and Pauline insights to the quests for peace and security in Nigeria



Author:
Chidinma P. Ukeachusim^{1,2,3} 

Affiliations:
¹Department of New Testament and Related Literature, Faculty of Theology and Religion, University of Pretoria, Pretoria, South Africa

²Department of Abrahamic Religions, University of Religions and Denominations, Qom, Iran

³Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

Corresponding author:
Chidinma Ukeachusim,
chidinma.ukeachusim@unn.edu.ng

Dates:
Received: 25 Mar. 2024
Accepted: 10 June 2024
Published: 08 Aug. 2024

How to cite this article:
Ukeachusim, C.P., 2024, 'Assessing the sociological and Pauline insights to the quests for peace and security in Nigeria', *In die Skriflig* 58(1), a3081. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ids.v58i1.3081>

Copyright:
© 2024. The Author.
Licensee: AOSIS. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution License.

Read online:



Scan this QR code with your smart phone or mobile device to read online.

There are continued quests to achieve and maintain peace and security in the world, with special reference to Nigeria. However, in her history, sustainable peace and security have not been wholesomely consolidated. Nigeria is one of the crises-ridden nations in the world as indicated by the intensifying issues of insecurity, corruption, religious intolerance, multi-faceted ethnic groups, poor economy, poverty, poor education, unemployment, kidnapping cases, leadership, and political interests. Although, the federal and state governments as well as other external and internal agencies and Nigerian citizens may or may not be making adequate efforts to ensure peace and security in Nigeria, the bordering question is whether Nigeria, as a country, ever can achieve sustainable peace and security. The study adopted the exegetical design. This design involves descriptive, analytical, and hermeneutical research exercises related to the exegesis of the studied text, as well as the application of the lessons drawn from the exegesis to the theological and social issues being studied. The study employed the social-scientific method of biblical criticism to study 1 Thessalonians 5:3 and applied its findings to the issue of the world with special focus on Nigeria seeking peace and security, though worldly. This study explored the Nigerian quests for *εἰρήνη* and *ἀσφάλεια*, and unveiled the sociological and the Pauline theological insights to the causes and the theological implications of 1 Thessalonians 5:3 to the crises of peace and security in Nigeria. This study found that, like the rest of the world, Nigeria is one of the nations that is in desperate need for peace and security and hence, although worldly, is engaged in the quest for peace and security. In fulfilment of the prophetic utterance of Paul, the world has kept on questing for peace and security; however, achieving and consolidating sustainable peace and security appear to be an illusion. Although worldly, Nigeria is one of the nations in the world that is questing for peace and security. However, the disciples of Jesus should understand that it is in Jesus that they could be bequeathed wholesome, sustainable, and transcending peace and security.

Contribution: This study unveiled that the 1st-century social-context and Paul's theology reveal the root causes of the crises of peace and security in the world, with particular reference to Nigeria. This study advances Paul's theology that, although the world will keep talking about peace and security, *εἰρήνη* and *ἀσφάλεια* are obtained through identification with God through Jesus.

Keywords: 1 Thessalonians 5:3; eschatology; peace; security; world; Nigeria; Christians.

Introduction

World leaders and United Nation Organisations are consistently talking about peace in terms of 'complete absence of conflict among and within nations' (Mitchell 2002:1), and security in terms of seven key centric components which include economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political securities (Udeh & Amadi 2020). In 1 Thessalonians 5:3, Paul mentioned to the Thessalonica Christians that, in the last days, the people of the world will keep talking about *εἰρήνη* [peace] and *ἀσφάλεια* [security]. This is evident in Nigeria and other parts of the world. A lot has been put in place by the United Nations Organisations (United Nations n.d.), federal and state governments (United States Institute of Peace Organisation [USIP] 2021:2), and other official agencies and organisations (Peace-Insight 2021:5) to ensure the consolidation of conditions that promote peace and security. Still they keep failing to guarantee peace and security due to the complex realities of ideological intolerance, lawlessness, increasing violence, hatred, fear, internal wars, and hostilities due to economic, political and religious interests and fanaticism, aggressive nationalism and feelings of revenge which often contribute to the evolving insecurities, growing populations, failed democracy, deteriorating economy, poverty, cyber-security issues and so on.

Mitchell (2002:5) explains that the world is only dreaming of peace 'because societies, like individuals are complicated mixtures of high ideals and base instincts; they can simultaneously admire and, resent love and hate'. Those working to promote peace and security keep failing to fully harness and amplify the wealth of capacities and support structures that already exist (Saeedi 2020). The vast nature of the world is such that it is not easy to establish peace and security; hence, the world's dreams of achieving genuine peace and security, remain elusive and complex (Akinadewo 2023; Nikunji 2020:1). Yet, for several hypothetical and pragmatic reasons, world peace and security are still being forecasted. Consequently, those who are promoting world peace and security, keep forecasting strategies and opportunities to be harnessed by world governments, international peacebuilders, activists, and concerned organisations and individuals that are working to enhance and promote peace and security (Guardian News Editor 2021). They keep predicting that 'world peace' is not only possible but inevitable (Saeedi 2020); yet, peaceful and security guaranteed situations and environments seem impossible to achieve in their wholesomeness. Consequently, it is not surprising that Nigeria ranks 146th on the global peace index and ranks 8th least peaceful country in Africa (Olaiya 2021).

Politically, it was thought that, by gaining independence, nations in Africa, such as Nigeria, would achieve and sustain peace, security, and development (Onwu 1992:2). Nevertheless, gaining independence from the accused economic exploitative colonial powers (Boddy-Evans 2021:1), problems resulting in impoverishments, and crises of peace and security took other dimensions, resulting in people looking forward for change every now and then. Most Nigerians thought that with change in political leaders and structures of government, peace would be achieved and security guaranteed. O'Donovan (2000:131) observes that 'in Africa today, the winds of change are rapidly affecting almost every sector of public and private life'. People, yearning for peace and security, demanded change here and there; yet, even when the desired change is achieved, lasting peace and security are still far from being achieved, and it appears, as days go by, that Nigeria is not fixable (Akingbola 2017; Gistsmate Media 2023). Experientially, 'the demand for democratically elected government instead of traditional or military leadership has brought a tidal wave of upheaval in many countries' (O'Donovan 2000:1). In Nigeria, there has been a change from colonial masters to military regime, and power is now in the hands of the civilians who promise and advance 'the renewed hope agenda' (Elumoye, Francis & Addeh 2023:1); yet, the desired peace and security have not been achieved.

There has also been a leadership change from one political party to another and yet, achieving and consolidating lasting peace and security still have not been consolidated. Instead, these changes have generated more complicated problems, and it appears that the political leaders do not know what to do or where to start to solve Nigeria's complex problems.

Currently, Nigeria's economy is weakening amid the rising insecurity and violent conflicts that are threatening the progress that was already achieved in Nigeria's democratic development (USIP Organisation 2021).

How will there be peace without solutions to these problems confronting the people? Problems have increased without solutions. Meanwhile, people have not relented from yearning for peace and security. Would solutions to these problems consolidate lasting peace and security in Nigeria? Amid the assumed peace that would be achieved by changing persons in power, public offices, and change in the system of government, the entire system is over-heated. It results in consistent resurgence of events that lead to breach of order, discontent, and insecurities, which tilt to worse conditions even amid the yearned change. Many Nigerians are fed up with the deteriorating situation of their country (Iremeka 2022:1). Employing the social-scientific method of biblical criticism, which offers modern readers insights to understand the historical, political and social background of the context in relation to the theological concern under study (Baker & Balogh 2016:197; Moxnes 2015:160), this study exegetically interprets 1 Thessalonians 5:3, unravels the social context and the Pauline theological insights to the causes of the crises of peace and security in Nigeria, and the theological implications of 1 Thessalonians 5:3 to the quests for peace and security in Nigeria.

Unveiling the social context from which Paul grounds his theology about the world's quests for *εἰρήνη* and *ἀσφάλεια* in 1 Thessalonians 5:3

Paul's statement about the people of the world constantly talking about *εἰρήνη* and *ἀσφάλεια* in 1 Thessalonians 5:3, has a history attached to it. For Paul's motif and motivation in writing 1 Thessalonians 5:3 in its context to be understood, there is the need to understand the life situations from which his conviction was established and from which he responded to his conviction (Kee & Young 1973:vii). History has it that in Paul's day, Thessalonica had a major port and hence was an important centre of trade by land and by sea. It was marked by a multiplicity of cults (Brown 2014:458), and the cosmopolitan had a Jewish colony and a synagogue, with some Gentile adherents (Neil 1972:996). During Paul's second missionary journey, he visited the city of Thessalonica after he was released from detention in Philippi. For three Sabbath days, Paul consistently preached in the synagogue in Thessalonica before he was forced out of there by some angry Jews who instigated a riot against him (Ac 17:1-34). Because Paul suddenly had to flee from there, he left Timothy behind to continue evangelising and disciplining the new converts (McCain 2014:336). When Paul fled from Thessalonica, he entered Beroea, and from there, he travelled to Athens, where he preached at Areopagus. From Athens, Paul travelled to Corinth, where he stayed for 18 months preaching there. It was at Corinth that Timothy rejoined Paul and reported to him about the good testimony emanating from the new

converts at Thessalonica; hence, Paul was inspired to write to the Thessalonian church an encouragement letter.

Although the letters indicate Paul, Silas, and Timothy as co-authors (1 Th 1:1; 2 Th 1:1), the author of 1 and 2 Thessalonians is traditionally ascribed to Paul alone (2 Th 3:17), because Paul is the primary author whose voice is heard in the letters (Carson & Moo 2005:534–535). Silas and Timothy were with Paul and were also known by the Thessalonian Christians. However, they do not have any role in the writing of the letters (Brown 2014:462). Paul, as an inspired preacher, experienced church planter, and overseer (Ukeachusim 2021), wrote the letter of 1 Thessalonians to the Thessalonian Christians with multiple purposes, which majorly included 'to commend them for the exemplary life that they were living as Christians and to explain to them about the day of the Lord' (McCain 2014:336). Paul's first letter to the Thessalonian Christians stresses the doctrine of the *Parousia* of Jesus Christ. While in Corinth, Paul may have written this first letter to the Thessalonian Christians, which some scholars assume to be the oldest preserved Christian document (Brown 2014:457) between AD 49 and 54 (Koudougueret 2006:1485). The Thessalonian Christians were curious about Paul's narratives regarding the day of the Lord.

While Paul was explaining to them on a strong note how they are to be responding to the eschatological birth-bangs and days, he mentioned what would befall the world as they would be busy talking about peace and security. The situations-in-life that were taking place when Paul was inspired to make this strong statement concerning the world talking about peace and security, included the following: that both the Christians (1 Th 1:1; 5:13, 23; 2 Th 3:16) and other world inhabitants, which include the Jews and the Gentiles, were yearning for εἰρήνη and ἀσφάλεια (1 Th 5:3; 2 Th 3:2–3); when some found succour in idol worship by having faith in gods (1 Th 1:9; Phillips 1967:28); when Christians were fully aware, but the worldly world inhabitants were not aware that they were waiting for the *Parousia* (1 Th 1:10); when there were much conflicts (1 Th 2:2), deceptions (1 Th 2:3; 2 Th 2:3, 10) and many living in delusions (2 Th 2.10); when some leaders were seeking glory (1 Th 2:6) or worship (2 Th 2:4; Brown 2014:458); when Christians were suffering persecution and the worldly were enjoying their freedom (1 Th 2:14; 3:3; 3:7); when the worldly were enjoying the pleasures of sin in every form of unrighteousness (2 Th 2:12) while displeasing the Lord (1 Th 2:15); while Christians needed to be exhorted on how they were to be living and pleasing God (1 Th 4:1); when the sins of the worldly Jews were multiplying and consequently meeting the wrath (1 Th 2:16); when many who do not know God were indulging in sexual sins (1 Th 4:3), enjoying lustful passion (1 Th 4:5); when there were high rates of rebellion and lawlessness (2 Th 2:7–9); when there was lack of love in the world and hence many were transgressing and wronging one another (1 Th 4:6–7), therefore there was the need for Christians' love to increase (1 Th 3:12; 4:9); when the worldly were living flamboyant lives, while the godly were exhorted to be living quietly minding their own business and working with their own hands (1 Th

4:11); when many worldly people were living in darkness and are uninformed concerning the times and seasons they were living in (1 Th 5:4–5); when the worldly people were not appropriately spiritually awake (1 Th 5:6); when the worldly have been destined for wrath (1 Th 5:9; 2 Th 1:8–9); when there were many who were idle and, by implication, have refused to work with their hands to earn their living (1 Th 5:15); when the world was filled with perverse and evil men who have no faith in Jesus (2 Th 3:2); and when the worldly were indulging in diverse kinds of evils and hence are more tended to repay evil for evil (1 Th 5:22).

Although the letters of Paul to the Thessalonians were written to the Christians who, by their faith in Christ Jesus, have been bequeathed grace and peace from God (1 Th 1:1), it remains a theological concern to explore why the world and the worldly who have rejected Jesus, the Lord of peace himself (2 Th 3:16) and are deeply enmeshed in sin which attracts God's wrath (Ladd 1974:407), would keep talking about peace and safety (1 Th 5:3). The above-listed social situations behind the context of 1 Thessalonians are still occurring even in this modern era. Hence, these point to the Millenarian model behind the Thessalonian letters (Jewett 1986:np). The issues that were happening in the days of Paul when he composed this letter, are like the problems confronting the world and its inhabitants nowadays (Carson & Moo 2005:547).

In relation to the Old and New Testament eras, it is still relevant in every age that the world is consistently speaking about peace and safety; yet, the world is more and more getting entangled in situations that thwart peace and security (Jr 6:14; 8:11; Ezk 13:10; Mi 3:5; 1 Th 5:3; Weima 2012:331). It is recurrent that peace and security will never be holistically consolidated in the world because the world's, inhabitants are bound by the deceivableness of unrighteousness that makes them vulnerable to the coming wrath (1 Th 1:10) and destruction, for they rejected and keep rejecting the true love of God which might save them and yet they keep believing the delusion that they will continually have εἰρήνη and ἀσφάλεια (2 Th 2:10–12).

The exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 5:3

The content of the letter Paul wrote to a newly founded church in the city of Thessalonica about the day of the Lord contains the fate that awaits the world inhabitants who would be thriving in sin and lawlessness, and still be talking about peace and safety. Paul categorically used the Greek verb λέγωσιν, which is in its subjunctive present active 3rd person plural form, to imply that the world inhabitants, including both the Gentiles and the Jews who are 'outside of Christ' (Ladd 1974:398), will continuously be talking about εἰρήνη and ἀσφάλεια. The description is used in its present form, because the need for 'peace' and 'security' would ever be relevant. Peace and security are desired in every generation of humanity. For the world's inhabitants, it is in a peaceful state where safety, prosperity, and sustainability of good developments are guaranteed. Peaceful conditions may or may not be completely consolidated. In some situations, it

may, in a relative form, be achieved; yet there will still be the need for wholesome peace to be desired and envisioned. Therefore, the question of peace is always an unremitting issue. Paul referred to εἰρήνη and ἀσφάλεια because he knew the importance of the concepts of *peace* and *security* in the Christian perspective. Hence, he greeted Thessalonian Christians with 'peace from God' (2 Th 1:2), prayed and wished that Christians have peace (1 Th 1:1) and prayed for security (2 Th 3:2), called God 'the Lord of peace himself' (2 Th 3:16), and describes God as the Lord that is faithful in strengthening and protecting his own from evil (2 Th 3:3).

Paul relates the world's crises of peace and security to eschatology and hence implying that the world may keep talking about εἰρήνη and ἀσφάλεια, but achieving total peace and safety by the people of the world, would remain a delusion. Paul means that it would ever remain a mirage for the world to achieve wholesome peace and security, not minding any level of effort that would be set in place by the people of the world to consolidate εἰρήνη and ἀσφάλεια in the world. Peace and security cannot be holistically achieved due to the power and consequences of sin manifesting in the world in the form of 'the mystery of lawlessness' (2 Th 2:7). Even in the ancient world, although the Greek and Roman writers had no definite concept of sin, they feared that reckless living would destroy the harmony of their society. Hence, they wrote to criticise the immorality of their world (Packer, Tenny & White 1982:173).

Theologically, sin is encapsulated in lawlessness. Sin is enshrined in the world's consistency in rejecting God's love demonstrated by God's gift of Jesus to the world for their eternal salvation. Because they did not receive the love of the truth for them to be saved (2 Th 2:10) and because they are abusing God's love, they are destined for ὀργήν [wrath] (1 Th 5:9). Every form of sin is a rebellion against God. Persistency in rejecting and abusing God's love, his way, and commands predispose the worldly to be vulnerable to God's wrath and judgement.

The devil has been employing his power to perform lying signs and wonders, and many who are ἐν σκότει [in darkness] (1 Th 5:4) are delusively temporally enjoying what the sinful world system can define as peace and security. The world is described as sunk in sin because 'the very mind of the human race inhabiting and dominating the world is perverted by sin' (Ladd 1974:398–399). The world's inhabitants' continued indulgence in unrighteousness exposes them to the delusion of peace; hence, the world cannot achieve εἰρήνη and ἀσφάλεια but are destined for wrath and destruction (2 Th 2:10).

Sinners are those who are enjoying the deceivableness of unrighteousness, and who have rejected the love of the truth (2 Th 2:10). Enjoying the strong delusion inherent in the pleasures of sin and rejecting the love of the truth, neither predispose the worldly to be saved, nor can they access peace and security from God. Instead, what would come upon the worldly was described by Paul as αἰφνίδιος ὀλεθρος [sudden destruction] (1 Th 5:3; 2 Th 2:12). Those

whom the wrath will destroy are described to be the 'thoughtless', because in being inconsiderate about the consequences of their sins, they think that peace is guaranteed for them based on their freedom, wisdom, and efforts (Mason n.d.; Smith 2012). In their thoughtlessness, they make efforts to consolidate peace while dwelling in sin, and living against the will of God, which attracts God's ὀργή [wrath] (1 Th 1:10; 5:9).

The condition of the Jewish people when the Roman armies invaded their lands, and the Jews being fully convinced that God would not deliver Jerusalem and the revered temple to the powers of other nations to take dominion over them (Clarke 1998:568), may have inspired Paul to make this eschatological and continuous emphatic statement. The Jews thought that they were the custodians of peace and security for being God's nation, and then, suddenly, when they least expected it, destruction came upon them. Sudden destruction as implied in this verse, refers to destruction that was αἰφνίδιος [unforeseen] or unexpected (Barnes 2000).

The hope of the promised *Parousia* [second-coming] of Jesus, brings peace and joy to the godly. But the times preceding the *Parousia* and the actual time of *Parousia* would be heralded by birth-pangs that would be thwarting peace and security resulting in that the ungodly experience a lack of saving peace and security. Paul here used a metaphorical phrase to describe the supposed pain and anguish the sinners would suffer. This metaphor ὡσπερ ἡ ὄδιν τῆ ἐγκυστερὶ ἐχούσῃ [Just as birth-pangs upon a woman with a child] used here, explains that, just like labour pain of pregnant women, the suffering and pains of those that are 'in darkness' will be intensifying; the cause of their pains are within themselves. It comes suddenly upon them, and they cannot escape. Likewise, the cause of the pains and sorrows that the ungodly suffer, come from themselves, their sins, and contraventions. It will also come upon them suddenly amid their merriments, and their acclaimed εἰρήνη and ἀσφάλεια. Moreover, it is inevitable that it will certainly come at the appointed time, although the time is unknown. Like Jesus presaged in Matthew 24, Paul uses the birth-pangs of pregnant women to explain how pains that would be experienced by those who are enemies of God because of their persistence in sin.

Conclusion on the exegesis of 1 Thessalonians 5:3

Because of the problem of sin in the world, Paul foresees sudden wrath and destruction as the worldly will constantly talk about peace and security. In using the Greek words καὶ οὐ μὴ ἐκφύγωσιν [and they shall not escape], Paul implies the inevitability of the judgement, and that no enemy of God would escape God's wrath as they continue in their lawlessness. The reward of sin would always attract the ὀργή of God. In this, it should also be noted that the enemies of God would never have peace or security, for they will never escape the ὀργή that has been destined for them.

Sociological insights into the crises of peace and security in Nigeria

Nigeria is a great nation when compared to other nations in Africa in terms of 'the vastness of its land, the diversity of its peoples and languages, its huge population, and its oil and other natural resources' (National Geographic kids n.d.:1). Nevertheless, Nigeria, often described as the giant of Africa, is failing in fulfilling her basic tasks as a nation (Aderibigbe 2017; Mbutia 2023). Currently, Nigeria 'is shuddering with its most dangerous instability in 50 years due to insurgences, uncontrolled criminality and constrictions of freedom of expression' (Onubogu 2021:2). Nigeria is in a terrible condition economically, socially, politically, and otherwise. Agha and Nwaoga (2012:7) describe Nigeria as 'a nation in crisis'. Nigeria, being in crisis has been longing for peace and security. As Nigeria's problems are increasing, there is no clarity on the ways to solve them; hence, as days go by, the quality of the average Nigerian's life is depreciating and makes many Nigerians vulnerable to vices. Many Nigerians are responding to the hydra-headed challenges that are confronting them by bemoaning their fate and hoping for salvation from spiritual and physical means (Peterside 2021:1). How can there be peace and security in Nigeria when there is no equitability and inclusiveness in the distribution of resources, power, and justice, No reconciliation with or without dialogue, no peace among politicians, no religious tolerance, and the increasing rate of poverty, et cetera?

How can peace and security be achieved, and security be guaranteed when Nigerians are facing (Peterside 2021):

[D]ebilitating insecurity, extreme poverty, hyper-inflation, highcost of food and essential consumables, diminishing trust in government and its institutions at all levels, and worse, there is no clarity on the way forward. (p. 1)

Achieving peace and security in Nigeria are increasingly becoming challenges which every Nigerian is confronted with (USIP Organisation 2018:2). Below are discussed situations and theological insights that depict Nigeria to be a nation in crises of peace and security:

- **Insecurity:** Wide-ranging conflicts, occurring for diverse reasons in Nigeria, have contributed to weakening her internal security (Abia 2021; USIP Organisation 2018). Insecurities of life and properties are some of the major problems confronting Nigeria as an independent country. Currently, Nigeria is pictured as a chaotic and unsafe society – a society everyone wants to avoid (Dike 2007). The issue of insecurity is seriously threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria, especially the rampaging insurgency in the north-east, a surge in deadly pastoralist-farmer conflict everywhere else in Nigeria, long-running militancy in the Niger Delta, and the re-emergence of separatist agitation in the south-east (USIP Organisation 2018). In Nigeria, people live in fear, go to their farms in fear of being attacked and killed, and the travellers are afraid of possibly being abducted (Ukeachusim 2022:4). Currently, many Nigerians are uncertain of what would become of

their lives and properties due to the issue of insecurity. Peace and security are therefore fantasies that are hard to be realistic in the Nigerian environments; nevertheless, many Nigerians are ignorant or spiritually indifferent (1 Th 5:6), as they are believing and hoping that their efforts will achieve and consolidate peace and security for them (Agbakwuru 2023; Living-Truth 2022).

- **Corruption:** Corruption has been one of the greatest predicaments cutting deep into the wellbeing of Nigeria as an African country. Onah (2015:59) notes that 'there is a consensus that corruption is the main impediment to Nigeria's development'. In 2020, 'with a score of 25 out of 100 points, Nigeria ranked 149th on the Corruption Perception Index to become the second most corrupt country in West Africa' (Okogba 2021:1). In Nigeria, corruption has defied every meaningful effort to arrest it. One of the foremost causes of crises of peace and security in Nigeria is traced to the issue of corruption. Corruption has eaten into the structure of the country's system (Ituma, Ukeachusim & Ilechukwu 2013). In Nigeria, corruption exists in both high and low places. Due to corruption, many have been en-cultured into doing things that culminate in lawlessness. Many Nigerians, being of night [νυκτός] and darkness [σκότους] (1 Th 5:5), are unruly, dishonest, and lawless (1 Th 5:14), and fuel the crises of peace and security in Nigeria.
- **Religious intolerance:** Religious extremism in Nigeria centres around intolerance aggravated by the inability of Nigerian leaders and the led to accommodate others that are not of the same faith (Ituma et al. 2013:100; Okwueze 2001:216). Agha and Nwaoga (2012:3) explain that among the three religions in Nigeria, Christianity, Islam, and Traditional religion, differences of culture are not eliminated. Most of the times they do not have patience towards each other (1 Th 5:14). Nigeria, as a secular state, is a multi-religious society, a battlefield where different religions scramble for converts or maintain strongholds over an area that often results in tragic manoeuvres (Adukwu 2007:295). In Nigeria, religious crisis contributes to the crises of peace and security. Struggles over who controls Nigerian religious and political spaces have intensified in this era. Religious bigotry and fanaticism result in impatience (1 Th 5:14), religious intolerance, killings, and destruction of properties in Nigeria (Ukeachusim 2022:1). Directly or indirectly, the reoccurring cases of religious intolerance among the conflicting religious bodies (Ukeachusim 2013:100) are executed by those appointed unto wrath [ὀργή]. They rejected to obtain salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Th 5:9).
- **Multi-faceted ethnic groups:** The root cause of peace and the security crises can be related to the social situation where many ethnic groups are amalgamated under one government. In Nigeria, there are about 250 ethnic groups under one government that would hardly love (1 Th 5:8) fellow citizens that are from other tribes, and are most tended to embark on revenge missions (1 Th 5:15) to achieve their religious and/or political interests. Dike (2007) explains that:

[I]t is daunting to govern a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society to ensure peaceful and harmonious social interaction of the citizens because the social environment often creates obstacles that breed internal discontents. (p. 1)

In each ethnic group in Nigeria, there are some ungodly people who are not always imitating the good (1 Th 5:15), who are power 'drunken' (1 Th 5:7), and hence are destined for ὀργήν (1 Th 5:9). Power 'drunken' Nigerians from each ethnic group are seeking their diverse political, religious, and selfish interests by indulging in 'works of darkness', which directly or indirectly interfere with peaceful co-habitation with their co-existing ethnic groups. The multi-faceted ethnic nature of Nigeria has recurrently been pointed at as one of the major causes of the crises of peace and security in the country.

- **Poor Economy:** The economy of Nigeria is deteriorating (USIP Organisation 2021). As days go by, it is worsening. Nigeria's economy has been dwindling, especially oil prices. Foreign reserves have depleted (African Development Bank [AFDB] 2021), and the debt profile is increasing (Okwe & Jeremiah 2021). The increases in the prices of oil, fuel, and gas (Peterside 2021) have directly or indirectly caused the increase in the prices of other essential commodities. With the increase in prices of essential commodities, the poor usually suffers the most. In Nigeria, peace and security crises are escalating because there are the wealthy and many hungry and needy people who are not sober and do not have faith, love, and hope of salvation in Jesus Christ. Those who are not 'of-the-day' [ἡμέρας] (1 Th 5:8) indulge in dubious means to make ends meet. To consolidate their peace and security, many ungodly Nigerians indulge in nefarious dealings to meet their insatiable wants and needs. The bad economy in Nigeria has negatively lured people into vices and doing things that hinder peaceful existence and increase cases of insecurity.
- **Poverty:** Roohbakhsh and Yadollahi (2016:1386) note that 'poverty encompasses low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, insufficient capacity and opportunity to improve one's life'. In Nigeria, significant numbers of the masses are living in abject poverty and hardship (Elumoye et al. 2023). Dike (2007:2) explains that 'the rising poverty profile of the society is being exploited by the so-called leaders, as they are recruiting the poor youths as political thugs, thus, pushing up crime rate!'

The prevalent poverty rate is one of the reasons why peace and security cannot be achieved in Nigeria. Some unruly [ἀτάκτους], feeble-minded [ὀλιγοψύχους] and morally weak or sick Nigerians [ἄσθενῶν] (1 Th 5:14) who were caught and arrested for indulging into actions that disrupt peace and order, mostly identify poverty as one of the reasons for indulging into the vices that directly or indirectly result to the crises of peace and security in Nigeria.

- **Poor Education:** Abdullahi (2007:1) comments that, with millions of Nigerians in a weak political and economic system as well as persistent political, ethnic, and religious conflicts, education provides the best alternative for national stability, security, unity, and prosperity. Sound education is the key that unlocks people's potential and exposes them to have and know their value and the value of peace (Akinadewo 2023:2). However, the education sector in Nigeria remains crisis-ridden and needs urgent attention. Directly or indirectly, the problematic Nigerian poor educational system and many professing Christians being ἐν σκότει concerning the mind of God (1 Th 5:4), encapsulated in his commands on how they should be living in peace with one another (1 Th 5:13) in these last days, have strong relationships with crises of peace and security in Nigeria.
- **Unemployment:** In Nigeria, there is currently a growing unemployment rate for the numbers of Nigerians who are actively looking for jobs. It has been estimated that the unemployment rate in Nigeria has increased from 27.10% to 33.30% (Trading Economics 2021a), and the youth unemployment rate in Nigeria has increased from 40.80% to 53.40% in 2021 (Trading Economics 2021b). Many of the Nigerian youths who are graduates, are currently either unemployed (Erunke 2021) or underemployed (Alagbe 2020). Nigeria's 170 universities and 134 polytechnics annually prepare about 500 000 graduates to join other 25 million unemployed graduates in the labour market (Alagbe 2020). Redundancy of the Nigerian youths who are actively searching for jobs, and those who are underemployed are negatively affecting the country's economy. This scenario of lack of jobs for those who are qualified and desirous to work, not finding work pushes the morally debased, unruly, and feeble-minded unbelievers and some professing Christians (1 Th 5:14) to engage in sundry crimes which escalate the crises of peace and security in Nigeria.
- **Kidnapping cases:** Glaringly, Nigeria is beset by violence, as displayed by death tolls and the rate of hostilities occurring in the country on a regular basis. Tanko (2021:1) notes that 'Nigeria is faced with an unprecedented wave of different but overlapping security crises – from kidnapping to extremist insurgencies – almost every corner of the country has been hit by violence and crime'. The kidnapping cases occurring in Nigeria now and then, have resulted in the crisis of peace and insecurity (Ani & Nweke 2014:111; Ukeachusim 2022:4). The data on the kidnapping cases indicate that peace and security have been and will continue to be elusive in Nigeria (Okwueze 2001:101). It started with gunmen taking foreigners working in Nigeria, hostage for numerous purposes. With time, they also started kidnapping Nigerians – some unfortunate ones got killed, and some were lucky to be saved when ransoms were paid. Between 2019 and 2020, the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic caused a 169% increase in abductions (Bukar, Kwaja & Verjee 2021:1; Ukeachusim 2023b; 2024). Although there are many internal and external efforts to consolidate peace and security in Nigeria, the crime of abductions is increasing.

Kidnapping cases are increasing because of the intensity of evil (1 Th 5:3; Ladd 1974:203) arising due to love for money and other material things (Ukeachusim 2022). Therefore, kidnapping is one of the causes of the crisis of peace and insecurity in Nigeria.

- **Leadership and political interests:** There are diverse forms of leaderships and political problems in Nigeria and in the Nigerian Christendom. Significant numbers of political and church leaders in Nigeria are not appreciated because they are not diligently leading the people under their charge (1 Th 5:12), and because they do not have genuine concern for the masses they are leading. Dike (2007:1) avers that 'the problem with the leaders of Nigeria is that they do not realise the pain and anguish of the people they are ruling (or aspiring to rule)'. According to Yagboyaju and Akinola (2019) their ulterior motive for going into politics and church leadership is to achieve their:

[S]elfish-interests and other primordial considerations, which take priority over that of the public. The state has failed in three major areas: security of lives and properties, promotion of the rule of law, and provision of visionary leadership. (p. 2)

Differing political interests among the politicians and the numerous political bodies in Nigeria with regard to their selfish interests and corruption (Ijewereme 2015:1), and inciting words and predictive prophecies of some church leaders culminate in the crisis of peace and insecurity in Nigeria.

Pauline theological insight: Crises of peace and security as eschatological signs of the end-time

The crises of peace and security in Nigeria are theologically related to the eschatological signs of the end-time (1 Th 5:1–3). The world questing and always talking about peace and security are signs signalling that the world and its inhabitants are in the last phase of the interim, as it has been presaged that Jesus would come 'to bring salvation to his people' (1 Th 5:8–9; Ladd 1974:557). Jesus would come to judge those who are into all the deception of wickedness inherent in unrighteousness; who rejected him by not receiving the love of truth so that they might be saved, hence they are living under the strong delusion that influences them to keep believing what is false (2 Th 2:10–11). It is a damnable sin not to believe and accept the truth, but taking pleasure in wickedness, and by implication rejects Jesus who is the only medium through whom the world inhabitants could be saved, who is the God of peace himself, who sanctifies and blamelessly preserves the spirit, soul, and the body of anyone who identifies with him (1 Th 5:23) unto his second-coming; he who is the faithful protector of his own from evil [πρωτηρου](2 Th 3:3).

Daily, there are increases in occurrences causing crisis of peace and insecurity in the world, with particular reference to

Nigeria, due to the problem of sin (Ukeachusim 2022:3) inherent in rejecting the truth and identifying with the deceivableness of delusion of peace and security in the world. Consequently, they keep projecting that it is a normal occurrence in global economics for countries to slip in and out of recession just as Nigeria, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and other reasons slip in and out of recessions (Premium-Times 2021).

Although Nigeria, as a nation, has entered and exited the worst recession (FSDH Capital 2021:14), it continues to experience the dangers of climate change (Haider 2019:2), and challenging times (Erezi 2021:np). However, unbelievers and many professing Christians do not know the theological implications of the times and seasons they are living in (1 Th 5:1). They do not know that they are living in the end-time when it has been ordained that the Lord would come as a thief in the night (1 Th 5:2); when there is a high growing rate of lawlessness in Nigeria (Amadi 2021:1), selfishness and driving satisfaction in lustful passion, lack of love (Oluwasanjo 2021:2); when many leaders and the led are more tended not to support the vulnerable; when there is a high rate of intolerance (1 Th 5:14) where people repay evil with evil (1 Th 5:15), hypocritical leaders who, for their hidden motives, are always tended to cure lawlessness with more incentive for lawlessness, politicians and citizens who are not at peace with themselves (1 Th 5:13; Amadi 2021). Consequently, Nigeria, as one of the countries in the world, which is operating according to the system of this world, is most likely not to achieve its promise of holistic peace theologically (Erezi 2021), and the promise that 'insecurity will soon be history' (Abia 2021:1), even when peace and security have been promised by any government or by the efforts of external (Agbakwuru 2023; United Nations n.d.) and internal peace, and security agencies (Peace-Insight 2021) or concerned individual activists (Okunola 2020), freedom fighters (Oluwasogo 2019) and secessionist leaders (Ogunmupe 2021). Change of leaders and governments has not and will not bring wholesome peace and security in Nigeria. The peace and security crises in the world, even in Nigeria, are either directly or indirectly related to the end-time signs. This is the Pauline theological position that has, over the ages, proven to be true and ever relevant.

The theological implication of 1 Thessalonians 5:3 to the illusion of quests for peace and security in Nigeria

The exegetical analysis of 1 Thessalonians 5:3 unveils one of the sources or the root cause of the crises of peace and security – not just in Nigeria, but also globally. 1 Thessalonians 5:3 relates to what will keep happening in the world. Paul implies that, as nations and world governments will be busy making efforts to assure people of peace and security, destruction in diverse forms would continually be unleashed upon them. Noteworthy is that many efforts have been and are still being put in place to ensure peace and security in the world. For instance, there are consistent peace-making and

'peacekeeping efforts of the United Nations and several hundreds of intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations, no violent conflict has according to World Fact Book completely ended since 1922' (Akingbola 2017:1). Globalists in various parts of the world welcome any apparent period of peace and devote themselves wholeheartedly to the leaders they believe will bring about change and who assure them of peace and security, but it seems that sudden destruction in various forms continues to occur. In the world, crises of peace and security are observed when one considers the sudden advent of COVID-19 (Ukeachusim 2023b, 2024), and the linkages it has with instabilities and conflicts (USIP Organisation 2021:2) such as the turmoil in the Middle East, the unrest and heinous acts by terrorist groups, the advancements in technologies of killings, the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war (Ukeachusim 2023a) and 2023 Israel-Hamas war (Sherwood 2023:2), the intensifying human insecurities (Udeh & Amadi 2020:1); thus, all the sudden destruction in diverse forms that are occurring in the world and other foreseen and unforeseen future destruction. All these points of destruction await the world. Taking into consideration the advanced modern weapons that are now available, the theological presage about 'sudden destruction' becomes obvious and ever relevant and ever applicable.

The intensities of calamities and issues that disrupt peace and security would keep increasing due to the sin inherent to lawlessness in the world. Some of the major misfortunes that herald the *Parousia* are the crises of peace and security that occur because of the sin and lawlessness of the worldly people and many professing Christians. Sin in the world consolidates the crises of peace and security. It is the introduction of sin in the world that functions as the forerunner to its corollaries: the crises of peace and security in the world. 1 Thessalonians 5:3 is therefore not 'a political propaganda' (Weima 2012:331), but Paul's prophesy about the reoccurring crises of peace and security in the world as it waits in the interim, being prepared for the *Parousia*. Since, Nigeria's system is typical of the world's system; hence, theologically, it cannot achieve holistic peace and security.

Theologically, however, there is now a paradigm shift towards individuals and their willpower and power to make choices regarding access to peace and security (1 Th 2:13), and the gift of salvation inherent in the divine's election (1 Th 1:4). On this theological side of the paradigm, it is now individual Nigerians who desire to access peace and security from God that may be bequeathed peace and security which God is graciously offering to individuals in the world through the true faith, love, and hope of salvation (1 Th 5:8) that are inherent in one's identification with God through Jesus Christ.

Lessons and recommendations

- Theologically, it is Nigerians who would listen, receive, and believe the gospel of God, which is now, even though with much worldly oppositions, being preached to them with much grace that would access the peace and security that are from God (1 Th 2:2,13). Nigerians are therefore

persuaded to consciously answer the call of the gospel (2 Th 2:14) and access wholesome peace and security by identifying with God through the Lord Jesus Christ. Because grace, peace, and security are ordained for those who, through the acceptance of the gospel, do not mind the afflictions (1 Th 1:6) to which Christians in Nigeria are subjected, but receive the word of God with joy of the Holy Spirit and abide in the Lord Jesus Christ, and who will gain access to the peace and security from God (1 Th 1:1).

- It is Nigerians who yield themselves to be graciously chosen by God (1 Th 1:4; 2 Th 2:13), that would access the peace and security from God. Nigerians who have identified with God through Jesus are persuaded to be sincere and authentic believers, who have genuinely repented from their old way of living, which is synonymous with idol worship (1 Th 1:9), syncretism or atheism. They are to remain faithful in serving God through Jesus.
- It is Nigerians who please God (1 Th 4:1) by abiding in the Lord Jesus through the work of faith, the labour of love, and patience of hope in the Lord Jesus (1 Th 1:2-3), who have access to the eternal peace and security from God. For it is those who were sincere to their apostolic calling that would access the peace and security from God (1 Th 2:4), even though they are in the world but have received and believed the gospel (1 Th 2:13) and have become followers of Jesus and imitators of the apostles (1 Th 1:6; 2 Th 3:7-9).
- It is Nigerians, who by the implication of identifying with the truth and love inherent in God, despite the high rate of persecution being unleashed on Christians as on the early disciples, which might be saved (1 Th 2:14-15). It is also Nigerians who would refrain from the temptation of iniquity by those who are lost – those who do not receive the love of the truth to be saved (2 Th 2:10-11), who give themselves over to impurity, lies, perversity, lustful pleasure, delight in iniquity, wickedness and deceit inherent in this world system – which would gain access to peace and security from God (1 Th 2:3). Thus, those who do not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness, are ordained to be judged (2 Th 2:12).
- Individual Nigerian Christians who desire to access peace and security from God are to be faithfully hoping and patiently waiting for the promised *Parousia* of Jesus who delivers true believers from the wrath that has been presaged to come (1 Th 1:10).

Conclusion

The world, with particular reference to Nigeria, is experiencing crises of peace and security, which are conditioned by corruption, insecurity, religious intolerance, multi-facet ethnic groups, poor economy, poverty, poor education, unemployment, kidnapping cases, leadership and political selfishness, ethnic interests, crises of peace and security as part of eschatological signs of the end-time. Paul's theological stance upholds that no number of efforts put in place by the world governments or concerned non-governmental organisations and concerned individuals can guarantee lasting peace and security, because of the

thriving of sin inherent in lawlessness in Nigeria. The study advances the Pauline theological position that, as the world would be consistent in making efforts to ensure peace and security, rather it would be experiencing various forms and degrees of sudden destructions. Paul, in his first letter to the Thessalonian Christians, prophesies sudden destruction upon the world, as they would be consistent in talking about peace and security outside of Jesus Christ. The fantasy of achieving sustainable peace and security in the world will continue to be illusory, because the delusion of achieving lasting peace and security in the world is one of the theological birth-pangs of the end-time. Against all odds that thwart peace and security in Nigeria and in the world at large, the individual Nigerians, who genuinely desire to access wholesome, sustainable, and transcending peace and security from God, must consciously yield themselves to God through Jesus Christ by believing the gospel of Jesus Christ now being graciously preached in the world. They must keep refraining from conforming to the deceitfulness, uncleanness, lies, perverseness, and guile that are inherent to this world's system. They must repent from their old way of living and must remain faithful in Jesus through the work of faith, labour of love and hope, patiently waiting for the promised *Parousia* of the Lord Jesus.

Acknowledgements

Competing interests

The author declares that they have no financial or personal relationship(s) that may have inappropriately influenced them in writing this article.

Author's contributions

C.P.U. is the sole author of this research article.

Ethical considerations

This research manuscript submitted on the above topic has been duly reviewed and approved by the Research Ethics Committee, Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Enugu State.

The Research Ethics Committee waved Ethical considerations because this study is determined to be a non-human subject research, hence does not pose any risk to human beings. Because, this study's manuscript involves theoretical or conceptual studies, use of secondary non-human data, use of historical archives which has no risk, and because it adheres to the rules of conducting biblical hermeneutical exegetical research, it has been granted an Ethics waiver from the Committee of research ethics and integrity of the Department of Religion and Cultural Studied, UNN.

Funding information

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Data availability

The author confirms that the data supporting the findings of the study are available within this research article.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and are the product of professional research. It does not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of any affiliated institution, funder, agency, or that of the publisher. The author is responsible for this article's results, findings, and content.

References

- Abdullahi, A., 2007, 'Education and democracy in Nigeria: Vision 2020', *Gamji*, viewed 12 December 2023, from <http://www.gamji.com/article6000/NEWS6705/education-and-democracy-in-nigeria-vision-2020/>.
- Abia, I., 2021, 'Buhari said insecurity will soon be history now it's actually physics, chemistry & biology: Senator Sani', *First Reports Online*, viewed 10 November 2023, from <https://firstreportsonline.com/buhari-said-insecurity-will-soon-be-history-now-its-actually-physics-chemistry-biology-senator-sani/24/dec/2021/>.
- Aderibigbe, V., 2017, 'Is Nigeria still the "giant of Africa?"', *The Guardian News*, Columnists, 11 September, viewed 04 June 2024, from <https://guardian.ng/opinion/is-nigeria-still-the-giant-of-africa/>.
- Adukwu, R.M., 2007, 'Managing conflicts arising from religious extremism: Using the Jerusalem council paradigm', *Nigeria Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 1(1), 295–310.
- African Development Bank (AFDB), 2021, *Nigeria economic outlook*, viewed 20 May 2023, from <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries-west-africa-nigeria/nigeria-economic-outlook>.
- Agbakwuru, J., 2023, 'Insecurity: I won't lose battle to keep Nigeria secure-Tinubu', *Vanguard Nigeria*, viewed 20 January 2023, from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2023/12/insecurity-i-won-t-lose-battle-to-keep-nigeria-secure-tinubu-vows/>.
- Agha, U.A. & Nwaoga, C.T., 2012, 'Nigeria a nation in search of peace: God as the Panacea', *Nsukka Journal of Religion and Cultural Studies (NJRCS)* 5(5), 1–13.
- Akinadewo, M., 2023, 'Don calls for inclusion of peace education into school curriculum', *The Guardian Nigeria*, viewed 07 January 2024, from <https://guardian.ng/news/don-calls-for-inclusion-of-peace-education-into-school-curriculum/>.
- Akingbola, P., 2017, 'Peace in Nigeria: A mission impossible', *The Guardian News*, 16 June, viewed 20 January 2024, from <https://guardian.ng/opinion/peace-in-nigeria-a-mission-impossible/>.
- Alagbe, J., 2020, 'Pains of Nigerian graduates who earn less than corps members', *The Punch Nigeria*, 16 May, viewed 20 November 2023, from <https://punchng.com/pains-of-nigerian-graduates/who-earn-less-than-corps-members/>.
- Amadi, S., 2021, 'Banditry, lawlessness, and the failure of law reform in Nigeria', *The Cable Nigeria*, viewed 24 December 2023, from <https://www.thecable.ng/banditry-lawlessness-and-the-failure-of-law-reform-in-nigeria/feb/23/2021/>.
- Ani, K. & Nweke, E.N., 2014, 'Curbing kidnapping in Nigeria: An exploration of strategic peace building tools', *Africa's Public Service Delivery and Performance Review* 2(1), 111–133. <https://doi.org/10.4102/apsdpr.v2i1.46>
- Baker, C. & Balogh, A., 2016, 'Social-scientific criticism', in D. Mangum & A.L. Balogh (eds.), *Social & historical approaches to the Bible (Lexham Methods Series)*, Lexham Press, viewed 05 June 2024, from <https://lexhampress.com/product/129138/social-and-historical-approaches-to-the-bible>.
- Barnes, A., 2000, *Barnes' notes on the whole Bible-commentaries*, Ages Digital Library, WI.
- Boddy-Evans, A., 2021, *Chronological list of African independence*, viewed 20 May 2023, from <https://www.thoughtco.com/chronological-list-of-african-independence-4070467/may/3/2021>.
- Brown, R.E., 2014, *An introduction to the New Testament*, Theological-Publications, Bangalore.
- Bukar, Y., Kwaja, C. & Verjee, A., 2021, *Six alternative ways to measure peace in Nigeria*, viewed 20 May 2023, from <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/09/six-alternative-ways-measure-peace-nigeria>.
- Carson, D.A. & Moo, D.J., 2005, *An introduction to the New Testament*, 2nd edn., Apollos, Leicester.
- Clarke, A., 1998, '1 Thessalonians 5:3', in A. Clarke (ed.), *Clarke's commentary 1 Corinthians-Philemon*, pp. 544–576, Wesleyan Heritage Publications, Concord, NC.
- Dike, V.E., 2007, *Is peace impossible in Nigeria?*, viewed 20 May 2023, from <http://www.gamji.com/article6000/NEWS6292.htm>.
- Elumoye, D., Francis, N. & Addeh, E., 2023, 'Tinubu to Nigerians: Present hardship temporary, benefits will be permanent', *Thisday live*, 29 November, viewed 24 December 2023, from <https://www.thisdaylive.com/index.php/2023/11/29/tinubu-to-nigerians-present-hardship-temporary-benefits-will-be-permanent/>.

- Erezi, D., 2021, 'Nigeria in most trying times since Civil War, says Buhari', *The Guardian News*, 01 October, viewed 20 May 2023, from <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria-in-most-trying-times-since-civil-war-says-buhari/01/oct/2021/>.
- Erunke, J., 2021, 'Why millions of Nigerian graduates are unemployed FG', *Vanguard*, 11 November, viewed 20 January 2024, from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/nov/11/why-millions-of-nigerian-graduates-are-unemployed-fg/>.
- FSDH Capital, 2021, 'Macroeconomic review and outlook for Nigeria', *FSDH Research*, 01 March, viewed 31 December 2023, from https://www.fsdhcapital.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/FSDH_Nigerias-Macroeconomic-Review-and-Outlook2021Q1_research.pdf.
- Gistsmate Media, 2023, 'Nigeria not fixable as I thought, I'm sure Tinubu is shocked too-LP Senator, IretKingibe', *Gistsmate*, viewed 01 February 2024, from <https://gistsmate.com/nigeria-not-fixable-as-i-thought-im-sure-tinubu-is-shocked-too-lp-senator-iret-kingibe/>.
- Guardian News Editor, 2021, 'Why sustainable peace in new normal era is vital', *The Guardian News*, 26 September, viewed 20 May 2024, from <https://editor-guardian.ng/sunday-magazine/ibru-ecumenical-centre/why-sustainable-peace-in-new-normal-era-is-vital/>.
- Haider, H., 2019, 'Climate change in Nigeria: Impacts and responses', *PreventionWeb*, viewed 30 November 2023, from <https://www.preventionweb.net/publication/climate-change-nigeria-impacts-and-responses>.
- Ijewereme, O.B., 2015, 'Anatomy of corruption in the Nigerian public sector: Theoretical perspectives and some empirical explanations', *Sage Open* 5(2), 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244015581188>
- Iremeka, C., 2022, 'State of the nation: We are fed up, Nigerians tell government', *The Guardian News*, viewed 20 December 2023, from <https://guardian.ng/news/state-of-the-nation-we-are-fed-up-nigerians-tell-government/>.
- Ituma, E.A., Ukeachusim, C.P. & Illechukwu, L., 2013, 'The role of religion in combating corruption and management of religion crisis in Nigeria', *International Journal of Theology and Reformed Tradition (IJTRT)* 1(5), 30–47.
- Jewett, R., 1986, *The Thessalonians correspondence: Pauline rhetoric and millenarian piety*, Fortress-Press, Philadelphia, PA.
- Kee, H.C. & Young, F.W., 1973, *The living world of the New Testament*, Longman & Todd, Darton.
- Koudougouet, R., 2006, '1 Thessalonians', in T. Adeyemo (ed.), *Africa Bible Commentary*, pp. 1485–1490, Wordalive, Nairobi.
- Ladd, G.E., 1974, *A theology of the New Testament*, Lutterworth, London.
- Living Truth, 2022, *Security in Jesus*, viewed 31 May 2024, from <https://livingtruth.ca/blogs/devotionals/security-in-jesus>
- Mason, A.J., n.d., '1 and 2 Thessalonians', in C.J. Ellicott (ed.), *Ellicott's commentary for English readers*, vol. 3, Cassel, London, viewed 20 May 2024, from https://biblehub.com/commentaries/ellicott/1_thessalonians/5.htm.
- Mbuthia, M., 2023, 'The giant of Africa: Which country holds the title and why?', *Legit Nigeria*, Ask-Legit, 24 January, viewed 04 June 2024, from <https://www.legit.ng/ask-legit/guides/1307663-the-giant-africa-country-holds-title/-and-why/>.
- McCain, D., 2014, *Notes on New Testament introduction*, African Christian Textbooks, Jos.
- Mitchell, G., 2002, 'Is world peace an impossible dream?', *The Journal of the International Institute* 9(3), 1–5.
- Moxnes, H., 2015, '7-Social-scientific readings of the Bible from Part II – New modes of study of the Bible', in J. Riches (ed.) *The New Cambridge history of the Bible from 1750 to the present*, 09 June, pp. 160–171, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- National Geographic Kids, n.d., *Nigeria-geography*, viewed 04 June 2024, from <https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/geography/countries/article/nigeria>.
- Neil, W., 1972, 'I and II Thessalonians', in M. Black & H.H. Rowley (eds.), *Peak's commentary on the Bible*, pp. 996–1000, Thomas Nelson, Nashville.
- Nikunj, 2020, 'Why can't we live in peace?', *New Indian Express*, viewed 20 November 2023, from <https://www.newindianexpress.com/cities/chennai/2020/feb/27/why-cant-we-live-in-peace-2108955.html/27/feb/2020/>.
- O'Donovan, W., 2000, *Biblical Christianity in modern Africa*, Paternoster, Carlisle.
- Ogunmupe, B., 2021, 'The chequered history of secession in Nigeria', *The Guardian News*, 21 July, viewed 13 January 2024, from <https://guardian.ng/opinion/the-chequered-history-of-secession-in-nigeria/>.
- Okogba, E., 2021, 'Nigeria now second most corrupt West African country on corruption index', *Vanguard*, viewed 20 November 2023, from <https://www.vanguardngr.com/2021/01/28/nigeria-now-second-most-corrupt-west-african-country-on-corruption-index/>.
- Okunola, A., 2020, *10 Activists in Nigerian history who represent the resilience of its people*, viewed 20 May 2023, from <https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/nigeria-independence-activists-history-resilience/oct/1/2020/>.
- Okwe, M. & Jeremiah, K., 2021, *More worries over borrowings, foreign reserves depletion*, viewed 23 November 2023, from <https://guardian.ng/news/more-worries-over-borrowings-foreign-reserves-depletion/25may2021/>.
- Okwueze, M.I., 2001, 'Inter-faith relations in Nigeria: A traditionalist view', in J.O.C. Ozioko (ed.), *Contemporary issues in social sciences*, pp. 216–224, Topmost Publishers, Nsukka.
- Olaia, T.T., 2021, 'Nigeria ranks 146th on Global Peace Index, 8th least peaceful in Africa', *The Guardian News*, 18 June, viewed 18 November 2023, from <https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria/nigeria-ranks-146th-on-global-peace-index-8th-least-peaceful-in-africa/>.
- Oluwasanjo, A., 2021, 'Nigerians lack love; rejoice when calamities befall their country, says Femi Adesina', *Gazette Nigeria*, 10 June, viewed 20 November 2023, from <https://gazetteengr.com/nigerians-lack-love-rejoice-when-calamities-befall-their-country-says-femi-adesina/>.
- Oluwasogo, A., 2019, 'Ten Nigerian heroes who fought for our freedom', *All Nigeria Info*, 29 August, viewed 30 December 2023, from <https://allnigeriainfo.ng/ten-nigeria-heroes-who-fought-for-our-freedom/>.
- Onah, R.C., 2015, 'Poor government budget implementation in Nigeria: Who is to blame?', in *94th Inaugural Lecture of the University of Nigeria*, 11th June, The University of Nigeria Senate Ceremonial Committee, Nsukka.
- Onubogu, O., 2021, *It's time to end 'business as usual' with Nigeria*, viewed 25 November 2023, from <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/11/17/its-time-end-business-usual-nigeria>.
- Onwu, N., 1992, 'Biblical perspectives for peace, development, and reconstruction: Its socio-religious implications for the churches in Africa', *Nsukka Journal of Religious Studies (NJRCS)* 2(1), 1–10.
- Packer, J.L., Tenny, M.C. & White, W., 1982, *The world of the New Testament*, Word of Life, New York, NY.
- Peace-Insight, 2021, *Explored related peace-building organizations*, viewed 12 January 2024, from <https://www.peaceinsight.org/en/organisations/cppbi/?location=nigeria&theme>.
- Peterside, D., 2021, 'Rising gas prices: A crisis in the making', *Premium Times Nigeria*, 01 November, viewed 20 February 2024, from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/opinion/492686-rising-gas-prices-a-crisis-in-the-making-by-dakuku-peterside.html/>.
- Phillips, J.B., 1967, *Ring of truth: A translator's testimony*, Hodder & Stoughton, London.
- Premium-Times, 2021, 'Updated: Nigerian economy up 5.01% in second quarter of 2021', *Premium Times Nigeria*, 26 August, viewed 01 October 2023, from <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/news/headlines/481320-just-in-nigerian-economy-up-5-01-in-second-quarter-of-2021.html/aug/26/2021/>.
- Roohbakhsh, N. & Yadollahi, M., 2016, 'A theoretical study on poverty', *Journal of Fundamental and Applied Science* 8(2), 185–1409. <https://doi.org/10.4314/jfas.v8i2s.44>
- Saeedi, N., 2020, *World peace is not only possible but inevitable*, viewed 11 November 2023, from <https://www.undp.org/blog/world-peace-not-only-possible-inevitable/sep/20/2020/>.
- Sherwood, H., 2023, 'Israel-Hamas war: What happened in first few days and what caused the conflict?', *The Guardian News*, 08 October 2023, viewed 10 December 2023, from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/oct/08/israel-hamas-gaza-palestinian-territories/>.
- Smith, R., 2012, *Freedom for what*, viewed 30 May 2024, from <http://www.jerseygrace.org/sermons/sermon/2012-08-19/freedom-for-what>.
- Tanko, A., 2021, 'Nigeria's security crises- five different threats', *BBC News*, 19 July 2021, viewed 01 March 2023, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-57860993/19/july/2021/>.
- Trading Economics, 2021a, *Nigeria unemployment rate*, viewed 12 December 2023 from <https://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/unemployment-rate>.
- Trading Economics, 2021b, *Nigeria youth unemployment rate*, viewed 12 December 2023, from <https://tradingeconomics.com/nigeria/youth-unemployment-rate>.
- Udeh, C.S. & Amadi, E.N., 2020, *The impact of Covid19 on human security in Nigeria*, viewed 20 November 2023, from <https://www.grin.com/document/923276>.
- Ukeachusim, C.P., 2021, 'Understanding 1Timothy 3:1-7 and the need for righteous Church Overseers in Nigerian Christendom', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 77(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v77i1.6350>
- Ukeachusim, C.P., 2022, 'Exegetical study of John 16:25–33 and the church in persecution in Nigeria', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 78(4), a7366. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v78i4.7366>
- Ukeachusim, C.P., 2023a, 'Russia-Ukraine war: Understanding and responding to wars and rumours of wars as ἀρχὴ δόξου', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* 79(4), a8717. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i4.8717>
- Ukeachusim, C.P., 2023b, 'Eschatological events in Matthew 24:1–15 and Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 44(1), a2755. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v44i1.2755>
- Ukeachusim, C.P., 2024, 'Understanding COVID-19 birth-pangs' theological responses and the promised Parousia of Jesus', *Verbum et Ecclesia* 45(1), a2834. <https://doi.org/10.4102/ve.v45i1.2834>
- Ukeachusim, C.P., Okoli, A.B. & Enobong, S., 2013, 'Religious riots and its effects on sustainable developments in Nigeria', *Professor Bassey Andah Journal of Cultural Studies* 6, 100–114.
- United Nations, n.d., *Peace and security*, viewed 28 November 2023, from <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/peace-and-security/>.
- United States Institute of Peace Organization (USIP), 2018, *Achieving peace in Nigeria*, viewed 20 November 2023, from <https://www.usip.org/events/achieving-peace-nigeria>.
- United States Institute of Peace Organization (USIP), 2021, *The current situation in Nigeria*, viewed 20 December 2023, from <https://www.usip.org/publications/2021/08/current-situation-nigeria>.
- Weima, J.A.D., 2012, 'Peace and security' (1 Thess 5:3) prophetic warning or political propaganda?, *New Testament Studies* 58(3), 331–359, viewed 03 June 2024, from <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/new-testament-studies/article/abs/peace-and-security-1-thess-53-prophetic-warning-or-political-propaganda-2C7363C9A8CC77B5B2D122AF1955A73E>.
- Yagboyaju, D.A. & Akinola, A.O., 2019, 'Nigerian state and the crisis of governance: A critical exposition', *Sage Open* 9(3), 1–10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244019865810>