

Africa Needs Gandhi

The Relevance of Gandhi's Doctrine of Nonviolence

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Nihil Obstat and Cum Permissu Superioris
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Foreword by Rev. Fr. Dr. John O. Odey and Preface by Professor KA MANA

EPIGRAPH

“I love your Christ but I hate your Christians because your Christians are unlike your Christ” Gandhi

What...does Jesus mean to me? To me, He was one of the greatest teachers humanity has ever had. To His believers, He was God's only begotten Son. Could the fact that I do or do not accept this belief make Jesus have any more or less influence in my life? Is all the grandeur of His teaching and of His doctrine to be forbidden to me? I cannot believe so. (Gandhi, MR, Oct. 1941, p. 406-7)

DEDICATION

All Lovers of Peace and Nonviolence World Wide

Rev. Fr. Dr. John O. Odey, the Great African Gandhi Expert

PENN's Family

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Jude Thaddeus Langeh Basebang CMF

FOREWORD

We are living in a sick and confused age. An age when people talk of peace but prepare for war; an age that preaches love but poisons people's minds with hatred; an age that talks about the inalienable rights of every created human being but upholds the might of the rich, the powerful and the privileged as the only right there is; an age that preaches harmony among men but sows the seeds of discord and rebellion; an age that talks about people's rights - the right to life, the right to work, the right to justice and so forth, but tramples upon those rights with impunity; an age that talks about freedom but keeps millions of innocent human beings in social, religious, economic and political bondage; an age when different races, different countries and different people are duly united by the wonders of science and technology into a global village but are unduly fragmented into citadels of mistrust, terrorism, ethnic conflicts, fratricidal strife and shameful genocides by man's greed and folly; an age that preaches God but worships mammon; an age that can boast of having

everything that can make life easy, joyful and comfortable but lacks the peace that can sustain all that man claims he has.

My love for the enigmatic Hindu Saint, Mahatma Gandhi, is boundless. This love grew out of the abundance of my admiration for a man who was able to do, and to do it to perfection, that which most men and women know to be the right thing and would have loved to do but have not been able to do and may never be able to do. Simply put, I love Mahatma Gandhi because, though a Hindu by religious profession, it is he who made Jesus Christ more real to me.

Gandhi's supreme sacrifice for humanity, his boundless forbearance for the failings of humanity, his nonviolent approach to the inestimable violent acts of man's inhumanity to man, his inability to hate or even to be angry in the face of extreme provocation and his love for those who did everything possible to destroy him and his people convinced me more than anything else that an ordinary mortal, mere flesh and blood, can still echo those redeeming words of Christ - "Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing."

Before I read deep into the life of this great man I entertained the vague notion that the excruciating agonies of Jesus Christ which culminated in his supreme sacrifice on the cross and the generous dispensation of his persecutors were all veiled in the mystery of divinity. Then, came the Gandhian poser: If Christ is divine, Gandhi is human. If this human Gandhi, who was a Hindu, could be inspired by the supreme sacrifice of the Cross to do what he did to make this world a better place, then, it is still possible for mere flesh and blood to live out the message of the Cross.

Millions of people all over the world loved Gandhi long before ever our own generation came to be. Millions of people will continue to love him as long as the world lasts. And this love grows deeper and deeper with the passage of every day because Gandhi is so positively different. He is another of God's special message to humanity.

In an age when religion, that which should bind us together and then link us to God, has turned out to be one of the most deadly time-bombs that threaten

peace and the harmonious co-existence of people of different faiths, Gandhi demonstrated with his life that religious intolerance is an affront to God.

In an age when the inordinate pursuit of wealth and undue attachment to material things make the rich and the powerful blind to the cry of the poor and the weak, Gandhi discarded everything he owned to be free to surrender himself for the good of the downtrodden.

In an age when people measure their greatness by the enormous power they can wield, the number of people they can suppress, the estate they can command and the wealth they can display, Gandhi chose to take up the identity of the poorest and the lowliest people in order to raise them from the dungeon of oppression and despair and give them hope.

When Winston Churchill, the proud and powerful British leader bragged that India would complacently remain under the afflictions of British oppression and exploitation, Mahatma Gandhi liberated India with the healing power of truth, love, redemptive suffering and nonviolent resistance.

In an age that has replaced the message of the Cross with the threat of imminent nuclear annihilation, Gandhi chose to make his life a living Cross. Convinced that the life-style of many of the Christians of his time was a negation of the eternal teaching of Christ, he declared: "I love Christ but do not like your Christians." In Gandhi, therefore, God raised a Hindu to remind the world of the eternal message of the Cross.

These and many more constitute my love for Gandhi. They constitute Fr. Jude Langeh's love for him. They constitute the love people all over the world have for him. Somewhere along the line, this infectious love for Gandhi brought Fr. Langeh and me together, making it possible for me to become a part of this book.

As a student at the Claretian Institute of Philosophy, Nekede, Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria, Fr. Langeh came across some of my books, particularly the book on Gandhi. After reading it, he developed the type of interest I developed on the same Gandhi after reading about him many years ago. Besides, he wanted

to know more about the author of the book. This marked the beginning of our friendship. When he made the decision to write his degree dissertation on Gandhi's doctrine of nonviolence, he visited and stayed many days in my parish to enable him complete his research work in my library. This book is the offshoot of that dissertation.

Mahatma Gandhi is God's message to a world wounded by greed, reckless abuse of power and violence and by all the inequities mentioned at the beginning of this brief introduction. Those who have received the message and are interested in making the world, particularly Africa, a better place have an obligation to spread it.

That is precisely what Fr. Langeh has done by writing this book. The book is a brief account of the life and message of the man behind what is undoubtedly the greatest and the most challenging moral epic of our time. By writing the book, Fr. Langeh is repeating in his own way what Martin Luther King, Junior declared after reading about Gandhi's life: "Christ furnished the spirit and motivation (of nonviolent resistance against evil) and Gandhi furnished the method."

The ***Relevance of Gandhi's Doctrine of Nonviolence*** deserves the attention of all who are interested in our common good as a people and the future of generations yet to be born. It is an invaluable treasure for gaining a better understanding of the indispensable role of peace in the arduous task of building a better society and strengthening our fraternal solidarity. Its message beckons all of us to commit our material and spiritual resources to the search for peace through nonviolent resistance.

It is my privilege that Fr. Langeh has asked me to be a part of the book by introducing it to the public. I have done that with pleasure. I sincerely thank him for giving me that honour and congratulate him for a job well done.

**Rev. Fr. John Odey,
Holy Trinity Secondary School Ngbo,
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PREFACE

GANDHI

ou l'avenir de l'humain

Dans un monde où la violence des hommes et des nations a atteint des niveaux qui font craindre la disparition de la vie sur terre et l'anéantissement de tout ce que l'humanité a créé de beau, de grand, de magnifique et de merveilleux au cours des siècles, un livre sur la non-violence est toujours une bonne nouvelle à accueillir. Celui que vous allez lire l'est à plus d'un titre et sous plusieurs angles.

Il l'est d'abord parce qu'il nous replonge dans la pensée de l'homme qui, dans les temps contemporains, a fait de la non-violence non pas seulement une théorie fondamentale à promouvoir, mais une pratique décisive de transformation profonde de des esprits et des structures sociales : le Mahtama Gandhi. De cet homme exceptionnel, l'auteur du présent livre présente avec force les intuitions spirituelles et les lignes directrices de pensée et d'action. Il montre à quel point l'idée de la non-violence et ses orientations de vie telles que Gandhi les a développées sont un socle pour bâtir le seul monde qui vaut la peine d'être construit de nos jours : le monde de l'amour dans toutes ses virtualités d'humanisation des hommes et des peuples.

Ce livre est également une bonne nouvelle parce qu'il est écrit par un jeune prêtre catholique qui interprète Gandhi sur la base de ce que le message de Jésus-Christ a de radical dans sa compréhension de l'amour et dans la valorisation de la force d'aimer, pour reprendre l'expression de Martin Luther King. Quand on inscrit la non-violence dans la dynamique globale de l'amour au sens le plus profond que le Christ lui donne, on comprend que Gandhi ne s'est pas adressé seulement à son propre peuple dans un contexte de libération politique de l'Inde, mais à toutes les nations dont la non-violence représente

une sorte de condensé très fertile de ce que l'histoire a comme graines de spiritualité pour faire de chaque personne un vrai être humain et de la société un lieu d'humanité véritable. Quand un chrétien lit et comprend Gandhi selon cette perspective, comme le fait ici le Révérend Père Jude Thaddeus Lamgeh Basebang, il offre une contribution de grande valeur à notre monde actuel dominé par les violences les plus barbares et les plus sauvages, un monde où il est important et indispensable de poser la non-violence comme un nouveau fondement de civilisation.

Son livre est aussi une bonne nouvelle pour le continent africain. Depuis un demi-millénaire déjà, ce continent est dominé par la violence. Son histoire est une histoire de larmes et de sang, de sueur et de traumatismes, depuis les affres de l'esclavage jusqu'à l'actuelle mondialisation qui n'augure pas d'autre chose pour l'avenir que l'intensification exponentielle des violences. Aujourd'hui même, l'actualité africaine est tissée par ces violences : la violence des armes, la violence des identités tribales meurtrières, la violence des pouvoirs despotiques, la violence des misères sans fin, la violence du désespoir dû aux injustices, aux inégalités et aux dénis des droits humains partout dans nos pays. Dans un tel contexte, la bonne nouvelle de la non-violence n'est pas seulement une nécessité, c'est une urgence vitale. Le Révérend Père Basebang a compris cette urgence et son livre en répand le souffle avec un réel bonheur. Au sortir d'un tel livre, il est clair que l'Afrique de l'avenir ne peut pas se construire sur un autre socle que celui de la non-violence telle que Gandhi et telle qu'elle s'inscrit dans la fécondité de l'Evangile de Jésus-Christ.

Dans la mesure où le livre du Révérend Père Basebang se nourrit de tout le suc politique de la non-violence, il est une bonne nouvelle pour l'éducation des générations montantes, celles qui ont leur avenir à construire et qui ne doivent pas se laisser dominées par la civilisation actuelle de la violence et de la destruction. Aujourd'hui plus que jamais, en Afrique comme partout dans le monde, c'est à l'éthique de la non-violence que devra être consacrée

prioritairement l'éducation de la jeunesse. L'avenir en dépend et il y a urgence.

Avec une telle éthique, on peut imaginer qu'un autre type de politique sera possible : la politique de l'humain. Un autre type d'économie sera possible : l'économie du bonheur partagé. Un autre type de culture sera possible : la culture des solidarités responsables à l'échelle des personnes, des peuples, des cultures et des civilisations.

Nous devons exprimer une profonde reconnaissance au Révérend Père Basebang d'avoir mis en lumière ces exigences fondamentales de l'humain à partir de la pensée de Ganhi.

Kä Mana

Professeur des Universités

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BIOGRAPHY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was born on October 2, 1869 in Porbandar, India. He became one of the most respected spiritual and political leaders of the 1900's. Gandhi helped free the Indian people from British rule through nonviolent resistance, and is honoured by Indians as the father of the Indian Nation. He was highly influenced by Thoreau, Tolstoy, Ruskin, and above all the life of Jesus Christ. The Bible, precisely the Sermon of the Mount and the Bagavad -Gita had a great influence on him. The Indian people called Gandhi 'Mahatma', meaning Great Soul. At the age of 13 Gandhi married Kasturba, a girl the same age. Their parents arranged the marriage. The Gandhis had four children. Gandhi studied law in London and returned to India in 1891 to practice. In 1893 he took on a one-year contract to do legal work in South Africa.

At the time the British controlled South Africa (though South Africa as such did not exist at that time, and the British did not control all of it by any means. In fact the Boer War (1898-1900) established the supremacy of the British over the Dutch (Boers) and eventually led to the Union of South Africa. Gandhi served as a medical attendant in this war.). When he attempted to claim his rights as a British subject he was abused, and soon saw that all Indians suffered similar treatment. Gandhi stayed in South Africa for 21 years working to secure rights for Indian people. He developed a method of action based upon the principles of courage, nonviolence and truth called Satyagraha. He believed that the way people behave is more important than what they achieve. Satyagraha promoted nonviolence and civil disobedience as the most appropriate methods for obtaining political and social goals. In 1915 Gandhi returned to India. Within 15 years he became the leader of the Indian nationalist movement.

Using the principles of Satyagraha he led the campaign for Indian independence from Britain. Gandhi was arrested many times by the British for his activities in South Africa and India. He believed it was honourable to go to jail for a just cause. More than once Gandhi used fasting to impress upon others the need to be nonviolent. India was granted independence in 1947, and partitioned into India and Pakistan. Rioting between Hindus and Muslims followed. Gandhi had been an advocate for a united India where Hindus and Muslims lived together in peace.

On January 13, 1948, at the age of 78, he began a fast with the purpose of stopping the bloodshed. After 5 days the opposing leaders pledged to stop the fighting and Gandhi broke his fast. Twelve days later a Hindu fanatic, Nathuram Godse who opposed his programme of tolerance for all creeds and religion assassinated him.

There are five great contributions which Mahatma Gandhi gave to the world as follows: (1) A New spirit and technique- Satyagraha; (2) The Emphasis that the moral universe is one and that the morals of individuals, groups, and nations must be the same. (3) His insistence that the means and the ends must be consistent; (4) The fact that he held no ideals he did not embody or was not in the process of embodying. (5) A willingness to suffer and die for his principles. The greatest of these is his Satyagraha.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Apparently to many people, development and revolutions, which have shaken the world greatly, were done through violence. For example, The French Revolutions, The First and Second World wars, etc. Without really neglecting this, some pertinent questions have to be asked: Has there been real peace after these revolutions? Can one use a violent means to attain perfect peace and tranquillity? True enough, people are still suffering the after effects of wars like the loss of life and property, the denigration of human dignity, etc. in our world today we find ourselves having much affinity to psychological and physical violence.

This issue has bordered many moralists, Philosophers and think tanks all through the centuries. There remains a reality that in as much as violence has played a role in societal changes, there remains a philosophy and a pragmatic ideology, which has been affecting people. This is non other than the Philosophy of nonviolence. Great figures have proven that there can be revolutions without violence. Prominent among these is Mahatma Gandhi. This project aims at exposing the basic tenets of his Philosophy of Nonviolence and its relevance to this our contemporary world.

Chapter one traces the progress of violence and nonviolence in history. The concepts of violence and nonviolence are defined and succinctly explained. After this there is a short history of nonviolence from ancient to contemporary times. The Chapter ends with the Basic rules of nonviolence, taking special note to the methods of nonviolent action and the manner of behaviour expected of a nonviolent activist.

Chapter two exposes Gandhi's Philosophy of nonviolence. Here Gandhi understands violence and nonviolence from their Sanskrit terms *himsa* and *ahimsa*. The centre of Gandhi's contribution to the Philosophy of nonviolence, Satyagraha meaning Truth Force, is also treated. Its basic precepts involve Truth, Ahimsa and Suffering.

Chapter three seeks a deeper understanding and interpretation of Gandhi's Philosophy of nonviolence. It is noted that Gandhi's Philosophy has been understood from an Etic (Western) and an Emic (Eastern) point of view. Gandhi's Philosophy has been interpreted at public and private levels; at the public level we have Truth, Ahimsa, Trusteeship and Constructive action. The last two gives an insight into Gandhi's socialism and concern for the welfare of others. At the private level we have Respect, Understanding, Appreciation and Acceptance. The Chapter ends with the understanding of Gandhi's Philosophy of nonviolence in Politics.

After having traced Gandhi's Philosophy of nonviolence, Chapter four questions the relevance and application of Gandhi's Nonviolence leaning on some implications arising from his doctrines.

Chapter five is more of an imperative affirmation. After tracing the political situation of most African nations, the chapter ends with an affirmation that AFRICA NEEDS GANDHI.

Stemming from Gandhi's affirmation "I love your Christ but I hate your Christians..." Chapter six examines the relevance of Gandhi to Christendom and especially to the Catholic Church.

After such a reflection one must at least seek to know the way forward especially for us here in Africa. The last chapter takes care of this and is simply a befitting evaluation and Conclusion which brings the work to an end.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. GENERAL NOTIONS OF NONVIOLENCE

Nonviolence is an existing theory and a practice, which has affected the lives of many people in recent times. In a world assailed by violence, injustice, wars and hatred, hopelessness and lack of vision, the greatest and best thing to do is to make a choice in life. An author holds that with choice, “the doubt of personality is dispelled, and the creative self emerges... in it, there is infinite interest in one’s own existence... a form of Socratic goodness, integrity and self-knowledge”. ¹

In other words, in the face of a chaotic world, there is need to choose to adopt a value oriented system- a system of nonviolence. Before delving into discussing nonviolence, we shall first briefly discuss violence.

1.1. What is Violence/Nonviolence?

1.1.1. *Violence*

Violence is defined as the exertion of any physical force so as to injure or abuse (as in warfare), or in effecting an entrance into a house. Violence is also defined as “injury in the form of revoking, repudiation, distortion, infringement or irreverence to a thing, notion or quality fitly valued or observed”. ²

The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy distinguishes two forms of violence: Physical and Psychological violence. “Physical violence is the use of force to cause harm or destruction. Psychological violence is the causing of severe mental or emotional harm, as through humiliation, deprivation or brainwashing whether using force or not”.³ Physical violence may be directed against persons, animals or property thereby causing harm, pain and suffering. Psychological violence applies mostly to persons. It may be understood as the violation of beings worthy of respect.

Violence is criminal, especially when intended. It is an act of injustice. It sows seeds of injustice among people. Violence generates violence. It can never be the best solution to the social, political, cultural, religious crises we may encounter. Violence is a means to an end. For example, the institution of apartheid in South Africa for decades was a form of violence, which generated hatred, injuries, evils, etc. Ipso facto, we generally condemn all forms of violence as immoral, illicit and inadmissible. For Socrates, violence is not the best way to solve problems, even if one is wronged. Violence is a sin against one's parents and a far greater sin against one's own country.

Faced with the violence around the world today, the best alternative is not to repay violence with violence, or go back to the Hobesian "Homo Homini Lupus". In recent times, there has been a dramatic increase in people who have pursued nonviolence as a way of life. They organize symposia, conferences and even write books to help people abandon violence.

1.1.2. *Nonviolence.*

Nonviolence is an umbrella term for describing a range of methods for dealing with conflict, which share the common principle, that physical violence, at least against other people is not used. We shall distinguish nonviolence from the following.

- 1 Peace action, aimed at the abolition of war as an institution and the avoidance or termination of specific wars. Peace movements are primarily reactive to specific threats and disappear at war's end; though some like WAR RESISTERS INTERNATIONAL have survived since the First World War.
- 2 Social change activism. Not everyone who professes nonviolence is interested in radical social transformation.
- 3 One of the so-called New Social Movements (NSMs). The wave of transformative collective action in post war Europe and the US. That has addressed new grievances with new sources.

According to Robert Holmes, Nonviolence is “the renunciation of violence in personal social or international affairs. It often includes a commitment (called active nonviolence or nonviolent direct action) actively opposed to violence (and usually evil or injustice as well), by nonviolent means.”⁴

Nonviolence apart from being a method is also a pragmatic ideology of bringing about change in the political, religious and personal sphere of life without the usage of violence. It is the ideal or practice of refraining from violence on grounds of principle. Nonviolence is also defined as a “doctrine of rejecting violence in favour of peaceful tactics as a means of gaining political or social objectives”⁵

According to Gene Sharp, who is the acclaimed best known writer on nonviolent action, there are different types of nonviolence “Nonresistance, Active reconciliation, Moral resistance, Selective Nonviolence, Passive Resistance, Peaceful Resistance, Nonviolent Direction, Gandhian Nonviolence (Satyagraha), Nonviolent Revolution.”⁶

1.2. Some Terms Associated With Nonviolence

There are several terms, which have been used interchangeably with nonviolence. The term nonviolence “did not come into use until the twentieth century... There has been considerable growth in the methods that we now call nonviolent”⁷ Nonviolence has been around the world through the centuries though coloured by certain terms, like Pacifism and Civil Disobedience.

1.2.1. *Pacifism*

It is defined as “opposition to the practice of war.”⁸ It is also “the doctrine that all violence is unjustifiable.”⁹ Pacifism opposes not only war between nations but also violent revolution and coercive violence. In the modern era, pacifism has more often been associated with groups working for political ends and dedicated to nonviolent methods of achieving them. It remains a belief that all

wars and all forms of violence are wrong. Pacifism therefore holds that war could be, and should be abolished.

There is a central belief at the core of pacifism- a respect for a consequent repugnance towards killing and the inevitability of violence. Dovishness or Dovism is an informal term used to describe people to the nonpredatory nature of the dove. It is a form for pacifism. The opposite position is hawkishness or militarism.

1.2.2. Civil Disobedience.

This is the refusal to obey unjust laws or decrees. The refusal takes the form of passive resistance. For Civil Disobedience to be valid, it must be nonviolent. John Rawls defines Civil Disobedience as “A public, nonviolent, conscientious, yet political act contrary to law usually done with the aim of bringing about a change in the law with policies of government.”¹⁰

People practicing Civil Disobedience break a law because they consider the law unjust and want to call attention to its injustices, hoping to bring about its repeal or amendment. The people are also willing to accept any penalty such as imprisonment for breaking the law. It means the refusal to obey laws using nonviolent means to force concessions from government. It is mostly taken by large number of people against government principles.

Civil Disobedience has brought about important changes in Law and government policies and those who undertake this disobedience do not break the law simply for personal gain. They work with the conviction that “the society governs with laws and decrees promulgated by the ruling government. Some of these laws may disregard the rights of individuals who may feel aggrieved by such obnoxious laws” ¹¹ Individuals who are so affected and moved by conscience have the common good in mind and work with the dictum that “*lex injustas non est lex*”- “An unjust law is not law.”

Civil disobedience makes a distinction between unjust laws, which only apply to a portion of the population, and a just law, which applies, to everyone. Thus

Gandhi fought against laws in South Africa that only applied to Indians and Martin Luther King Jr. fought against racist laws that only applied to blacks. Despite this affirmation, we still affirm vehemently that a law can apply to all and still be unjust.

1.3. Historical Development of the Philosophy of Nonviolence.

The activities of great figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., who used nonviolence, have stirred up the quest to trace the history of nonviolence. It is not however easy to have a comprehensive history of the Philosophy of Nonviolence. This does not negate the fact that nonviolence ideologies have been around the world for a very long time.

Gene Sharp dates back nonviolence ideology to c. 2050 BC when King Bilalama formulated the Eshnunna law code. David McReynolds traces the History of nonviolence to an expression of the gospel or a variant of the stoic philosophy of Marcus Aurelius. This history can be grouped thus;

1.3.1. Nonviolence in Ancient Oriental Philosophy

Ancient Oriental Philosophy (this phrase is no longer widely used since there is a world of difference between Chinese and Indian thought) has furnished us with a good background of nonviolence. McReynolds attests that Buddhism is a "totally nonviolent philosophy, which despite hardships and persecution spread throughout Asia, finally subduing the Mongols who had so savaged Europe and China."¹² Buddhism like other religions is supposed to be a "totally nonviolent philosophy", this does not deny in any way some odds: Sri Lanka was in the midst of a brutal civil war for over 30 years, and the Sinhalese elites who are Buddhist waged a brutal and violent war upon their equally brutal adversaries, the Tamil Tigers (Hindus). In 700BC, Parshva taught nonviolence in India. Confucius also taught Humanistic Ethics.

1.3.2. Nonviolence in Ancient Western Philosophy

Among the ancient philosophers, Socrates distinguished himself as a Nonviolence activist. Scanning through Plato's Dialogues, we read that Socrates had the qualities of a nonviolence activist. His *Crito*, *Euthrypho*, *Apology*, *Phaedo*, and other Plato's Dialogues trace Socrates' concepts of Justice, approaches to violence, attitude to the truth and Law. These qualify Socrates as a nonviolence activist.

The Socratic way of accepting imprisonment and death showed a great sign of Civil Disobedience. Socrates refused to condone with the evil of the Democratic regime in 406BC and the Oligarchy regime in 404BC. Socrates felt it was necessary to create a tension in the mind so that individuals could rise from the bondage of Myths and half myths to the unaffected realm of creative analysis and objective appraisal.

Scanning through the stoic philosophy of Marcus Aurelius, some traces of nonviolence can be deduced. The emperor when teaching compassion for infirmity said in his *Meditations*.

When anyone does you a wrong, set yourself at once to consider what was the point of view, good or bad, that led him wrong. As soon as you perceive it, you will be sorry for him, not surprised or angry. For your own view of good is either the same as his or something like in kind, and you will make allowance. Or supposing your own view of good and bad has altered, you will find charity for his mistake comes easier.¹³

This attitude of Aurelius presents a basic principle of nonviolence which Gandhi will later expand. That of seeing the good in the other person and treating the person with love.

1.3.3. Early Christian/ Medieval Views

Nonviolence and pacifist elements can be found among early Christians. The Christian gospel with such exhortations as "love thine enemies" and "Blessed

are the peacemakers, they shall be called children of God” and other preaching portray nonviolence. Christians, using these, failed to fight during the persecutions of Diocletian- showing a nonviolent spirit. In the medieval era, ‘the Anabaptists’¹⁴ formed a nonviolent church and a nonviolent Hutterite.

1.3.4. Nonviolence in the 17th, 18th and 19th Century

Within this period, there began a more noticeable institutionalization of nonviolence in the form of religious organizations that survived to the present day. The Quakers in the 17th century fought a painful campaign against English law, forbidding dissenters to meet publicly. Many of them died in the pestilential prisons. They provide one of the early examples of a successful Nonviolence campaign.

Between 1760 and 1775, America faced the nonviolent phase of her revolution. By 1815, peace societies were founded. A prominent figure, David Henry, Thoreau wrote classical works on Civil disobedience and suffered imprisonment. His masterpieces “Resistance to Civil Government” and “Essay on civil Disobedience” remained a sine qua non to any nonviolent activist. . Gandhi read it later, after forming his own model of Civil Disobedience.

1.3.5. Nonviolence in the 20th and 21st Century

These centuries record a climax in nonviolence. From 1893-1910, Tolstoy who influenced Gandhi a great deal wrote extensive about love and nonviolence. In 1894, Gandhi helped Indians in South Africa to organize the Natal Indian Congress. From 1901-1917, Russia faced some traces of nonviolent resistance. Gandhi also carried out many campaigns to be explained in Chapter Two. By 1918, Bertrand Russell was imprisoned for pacifist writing. Albert Einstein also took active part in Nonviolence. He was a great admirer of Gandhi and exchanged letters with him. He advised people to refuse military service. The period also witnessed the advent of A. J. Muste and Martin Luther King Jr.,

great nonviolence activists. Nonviolence movements grew around a number of religious organizations like the Catholic Worker, Pax Christi, etc.

Women also in this period played great roles. Ira Chernus puts it thus; “Women have made huge contributions to the history of nonviolence... throughout most of the history... women were actively organizing, supporting and encouraging nonviolent movements and groups in all sorts of ways” ¹⁵ Prominent among the women were Dorothy Day and Barbara Deming. Back here in Nigeria, the Aba Women’s riot of October 1929 is a good example of the role of women in nonviolence. Ten thousand women rioted and the demonstrations swept through the Owerri-Calabar districts. (The term riot should not be understood in this case to mean ‘violent’, they exhibited nonviolence characteristics.) Mrs. Margaret Ekpo has distinguished herself as the doyen of women emancipation. She fought nonviolently for the rights of women in Nigeria. We can also mention the WOZA or Women of Zimbabwe Arise. It is a civic movement in Zimbabwe which was formed in 2002 by Jenni Williams. Here are the objectives of the group:

- Provide women, from all walks of life, with a united voice to speak out on issues affecting their day-to-day lives.
- Empower female leadership that will lead community involvement in pressing for solutions to the current crisis.
- Encourage women to stand up for their rights and freedoms.

They also Lobby and advocate on those issues affecting women and their families. WOZA is supported by Amnesty International. This group is a Ndebele word meaning ‘Come forward’. They have so far received many awards. In 2008, WOZA was awarded the Amnesty International Menschenrechtspreis (human rights award) of 2008 by the German chapter of Amnesty International. On November 23, 2009, prominent WOZA member Magodonga Mahlangu and founder Jenni Williams received the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award. The award was presented by US president Barack Obama.

In many countries around the world, we now hear of peaceful demonstrations, peaceful protest and boycotts. These are all forms of nonviolence action. One of the most recent accounts of nonviolence can be found at the protest by some people in the recent Iraqi-USA war.

1.4. The Basic Characteristics and Rules of Nonviolence

Many definitions have been proffered to make the philosophy of Nonviolence well understood. The history has served to give highlights of how nonviolence has been used consciously or unconsciously. We shall now look at the basis of nonviolent action generally and examine the basic rules of a nonviolent activist.

1.4.1. *Nonviolent Action*

Nonviolent action according to Gene Sharp is

A technique by which people who reject passivity and submission, and who see struggle as essential can wage their conflict without violence. Nonviolent action is not an attempt to avoid or ignore conflict. It is one response to the problem of how to act effectively in politics especially how to wield power effectively. ¹⁶

When Sharp talks of “Conflict without Violence”, it should not be concluded that anything without violence is nonviolence. It remains an undeniable fact that the first basic characteristic of nonviolence is the eradication of violence. This is because

In an age when threat to violence is as common as the air we breathe, the prospect of an alternative keeps receding into the archives of by-gone history. In such an age, opting for nonviolence may be considered to be not only foolish and scandalous, but untimely suicidal. ¹⁷

Again one must understand that nonviolence does not just mean “no violence”. This is elaborately described by Bob Irwin and Gordon Faison that:

Nonviolent action is not simply any method of action which is not violent. Broadly speaking, it means taking action that goes beyond normal institutionalized, political methods (voting, lobbying, letter writing, verbal expressions) without injuring opponents. It requires a willingness to take risks and bear suffering without retaliation. ¹⁸

In accepting suffering, we can reach the religious stage of Kierkegaard, which has its focal point simply in suffering. This helps us put an emphasis on active love

There are generally three main acts of nonviolent action.

- 1 **Nonviolent protest and persuasion.** This is a class of methods, which are mainly symbolic acts of peaceful opposition or of attempted persuasion, extending beyond verbal expressions. These methods include marches, vigils, pickets, the use of posters, street theatre, painting, and protest meetings.
- 2 **Noncooperation.** This is the most common form of nonviolent action and involves deliberate withdrawal of cooperation with the person, activity, institution or regime with which the activists have become engaged in conflict. Political noncooperation includes acts of civil disobedience,- the deliberate, open and peaceful violation of particular laws, decrees, regulations and the like, which are believed to be illegitimate for some reasons. Those who undertake this are faced with this question; must the law be obeyed? These feel that law portrays a great deal of normative personalism, in other words, if a law is unjust, it should not be obeyed. Noncooperation is an effective, noble and valuable means to bring change. Ravindra Kumar insists that this has been used by great men to end atrocities, inhumanities and injustices. It has been used to fight against wrongdoers, tyrants, oppressors, exploiters and unjust persons. One reads the following line from Kumar: “some ancient times great men, leaders of societies, philosophers and reformers have taken the path of non-cooperation to remove obstacles from the way of mutual

cooperation. For them, it has been a method of strengthening the process of cooperation”¹⁹. These great men, before proposing it to the world, tried it themselves and discovered its strength in according justice and freedom.

- 3 **Nonviolent Intervention**, which is the active insertion and disruptive presence of people in the usual processes of social institutions. It includes sit-ins, occupations, and obstructions of business as usual, in offices, the streets and elsewhere. This method poses a direct and immediate challenge than the others.

There are many other characteristics of nonviolent action outlined by Gene Sharp, but these ones outlined satisfy our needs.

1.4.2. Rules Guiding a Nonviolent Person

There are some basic rules, which a person must possess to carry out a successful nonviolence campaign. These are;

- 1 The person using nonviolence will seek to be absolutely open, honest and truthful.
- 2 The person using nonviolence will seek to overcome fear so as to act not out of weakness but from strength.
- 3 The person using nonviolence will never defame the character of the opponent, but always seek to find what the Quakers call “That of God” in those whom we struggle.
- 4 We shall do our best to love those with whom we are in conflict.

Many feel that ‘noninvolvement’ is a basic characteristic of nonviolence. Contrary to this, ‘noninvolvement’ means living in the aesthetic level of existence where one is strictly an observer- a non participant and the whole life is one of the cynical noninvolvement. He who possesses nonviolence has made a choice of life. This is eminent in Mahatma Gandhi’s Philosophy of nonviolence.

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CHAPTER TWO

2.0. GANDHI'S PHILOSOPHY OF NONVIOLENCE

With Gandhi, the notion of nonviolence attained a special status. He not only theorized on it, he adopted nonviolence as a philosophy and an ideal way of life. He made us understand that the philosophy of nonviolence is not a weapon of the weak; it is a weapon, which can be tried by all.

Nonviolence was not Gandhi's invention. He is however called the father of nonviolence because according to Mark Shepard, "He raised nonviolent action to a level never before achieved." ¹ Krishna Kripalani again asserts "Gandhi was the first in Human history to extend the principle of nonviolence from the individual to social and political plane." ² While scholars were talking about an idea without a name or a movement, Gandhi is the person who came up with the name and brought together different related ideas under one concept: Satyagraha.

2.1. Gandhi's View of Violence/Nonviolence.

Gandhi saw violence pejoratively and also identified two forms of violence; Passive and Physical, as we saw earlier. The practice of passive violence is a daily affair, consciously and unconsciously. It is again the fuel that ignites the fire of physical violence. Gandhi understands violence from its Sanskrit root, "*himsa*", meaning injury. In the midst of hyper violence, Gandhi teaches that the one who possess nonviolence is blessed.

Blessed is the man who can perceive the law of *ahimsa* (*nonviolence*) in the midst of the raging fire of *himsa* all around him. We bow in reverence to such a man by his example. The more adverse the circumstances around him, the intenser grows his longing for deliverance from the bondage of flesh which is a vehicle of *himsa*...³

Gandhi objects to violence because it perpetuates hatred. When it appears to do 'good', the good is only temporary and cannot do any good in the long run. A true nonviolence activist accepts violence on himself without inflicting it on another. This is heroism, and will be discussed in another section. When Gandhi says that in the course of fighting for human rights, one should accept violence and self-suffering, he does not applaud cowardice. Cowardice for him is "the greatest violence, certainly, far greater than bloodshed and the like that generally go under the name of violence." ⁴

For Gandhi, perpetrators of violence (whom he referred to as criminals), are products of social disintegration. Gandhi feels that violence is not a natural tendency of humans. It is a learned experience. There is need for a perfect weapon to combat violence and this is nonviolence.

Gandhi understood nonviolence from its Sanskrit root "*Ahimsa*". Ahimsa is just translated to mean nonviolence in English, but it implies more than just avoidance of physical violence. Ahimsa implies total nonviolence, no physical violence, and no passive violence. Gandhi translates Ahimsa as love. This is explained by Arun Gandhi in an interview thus; "He (Gandhi) said ahimsa means love. Because if you have love towards somebody, and you respect that person, then you are not going to do any harm to that person." ⁵ For Gandhi, nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than any weapon of mass destruction. It is superior to brute force. It is a living force of power and no one has been or will ever be able to measure its limits or its extend.

Gandhi's nonviolence is the search for truth. Truth is the most fundamental aspect in Gandhi's Philosophy of nonviolence. His whole life has been "experiments of truth". It was in this course of his pursuit of truth that Gandhi discovered nonviolence, which he further explained in his Autobiography thus "Ahimsa is the basis of the search for truth. I am realizing that this search is vain, unless it is founded on ahimsa as the basis." ⁶ Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills.

For nonviolence to be strong and effective, it must begin with the mind, without which it will be nonviolence of the weak and cowardly. A coward is a person who lacks courage when facing a dangerous and unpleasant situation and tries to avoid it. A man cannot practice ahimsa and at the same time be a coward. True nonviolence is dissociated from fear. Gandhi feels that possession of arms is not only cowardice but also lack of fearlessness or courage. Gandhi stressed this when he says; “I can imagine a fully armed man to be at heart a coward. Possession of arms implies an element of fear, if not cowardice but true nonviolence is impossibility without the possession of unadulterated fearlessness.”⁷ In the face of violence and injustice, Gandhi considers violent resistance preferable to cowardly submission. There is hope that a violent man may someday be nonviolent, but there is no room for a coward to develop fearlessness.

As the world’s pioneer in nonviolent theory and practice, Gandhi unequivocally stated that nonviolence contained a universal applicability. In his letter to Daniel Oliver in Hammana Lebanon on the 11th of 1937 Gandhi used these words: “I have no message to give except this that there is no deliverance for any people on this earth or for all the people of this earth except through truth and nonviolence in every walk of life without any exceptions.”⁸ In this passage, Gandhi promises “deliverance” through nonviolence for oppressed peoples without exception. Speaking primarily with regards to nonviolence as a liberatory philosophy in this passage, Gandhi emphasizes the power of nonviolence to emancipate spiritually and physically. It is a science and of its own can lead one to pure democracy.

2.2. Satyagraha, the Centre of Gandhi’s Contribution to the Philosophy of Nonviolence.

It will be good here to examine what Stanley E. Jones calls “the centre of Gandhi’s contribution to the world”. All else is marginal compared to it. Satyagraha is the quintessence of Gandhism. Through it, Gandhi introduced a

new spirit to the world. It is the greatest of all Gandhi's contribution to the world.

2.2.1. What is Satyagraha?

Satyagraha (pronounced sat-YAH-graha) is a compound of two Sanskrit nouns *satya*, meaning truth (from 'sat'- 'being' with a suffix 'ya'), and *agraha*, meaning, "firm grasping" (a noun made from the *agra*, which has its root 'grah'- 'seize', 'grasp', with the verbal prefix 'a' - 'to' 'towards'). Thus Satyagraha literally means devotion to truth, remaining firm on the truth and resisting untruth actively but nonviolently. Since the only way for Gandhi getting to the truth is by nonviolence (love), it follows that Satyagraha implies an unwavering search for the truth using nonviolence. Satyagraha according to Michael Nagler literally means 'clinging to truth,' and that was exactly how Gandhi understood it: "clinging to the truth that we are all one under the skin, that there is no such thing as a 'win/lose' confrontation because all our important interests are really the same, that consciously or not every single person wants unity and peace with every other"⁹ Put succinctly, Satyagraha means 'truth force' , 'soul force' or as Martin Luther Jr would call it 'love in action.' Satyagraha has often been defined as the philosophy of nonviolent resistance most famously employed by Mahatma Gandhi, in forcing an end to the British domination. Gene Sharp did not hesitate to define Satyagraha simply as "Gandhian Nonviolence."¹⁰

Today as Nagler would say, when we use the word Satyagraha we sometimes mean that general principle, the fact that love is stronger than hate (and we can learn to use it to overcome hate), and sometimes we mean more specifically active resistance by a repressed group; sometimes, even more specifically, we apply the term to a given movement like Salt Satyagraha etc. It is worthwhile looking at the way Gandhi uses Satyagraha.

2.2.2. Gandhi View of Satyagraha

Satyagraha was not a preconceived plan for Gandhi. Event in his life culminating in his “Bramacharya vow”, ¹¹ prepared him for it. He therefore underlined:

Events were so shaping themselves in Johannesburg as to make this self-purification on my part a preliminary as it were to Satyagraha. I can now see that all the principal events of my life, culminating in the vow of Bramacharya were secretly preparing me for it. ¹²

Satyagraha is a moral weapon and the stress is on soul force over physical force. It aims at winning the enemy through love and patient suffering. It aims at winning over an unjust law, not at crushing, punishing, or taking revenge against the authority, but to convert and heal it. Though it started as a struggle for political rights, Satyagraha became in the long run a struggle for individual salvation, which could be achieved through love and self-sacrifice. Satyagraha is meant to overcome all methods of violence. Gandhi explained in a letter to Lord Hunter that Satyagraha is a movement based entirely upon truth. It replaces every form of violence, direct and indirect, veiled and unveiled and whether in thought, word or deed.

Satyagraha is for the strong in spirit. A doubter or a timid person cannot do it. Satyagraha teaches the art of living well as well as dying. It is love and unshakeable firmness that comes from it. Its training is meant for all, irrespective of age and sex. The most important training is mental not physical. It has some basic precepts treated below.

2.2.3. The Basic Precepts of Satyagraha

There are three basic precepts essential to Satyagraha: Truth, Nonviolence and self-suffering. These are called the pillars of Satyagraha. Failure to grasp them is a handicap to the understanding of Gandhi’s non -violence. These three fundamentals correspond to Sanskrit terms:

- *Sat/Satya* - Truth implying openness, honesty and fairness

- *Ahimsa*/Nonviolence - refusal to inflict injury upon others.
- *Tapasya* - willingness to self-sacrifice.

These fundamental concepts are elaborated below.

1. Satya/Truth: Satyagraha as stated before literally means truth force. Truth is relative. Man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth. Satyagraha implies working steadily towards a discovery of the absolute truth and converting the opponent into a friend in the working process. What a person sees as truth may just as clearly be untrue for another. Gandhi made his life a numerous experiments with truth. In holding to the truth, he claims to be making a ceaseless effort to find it.

Gandhi's conception of truth is deeply rooted in Hinduism. The emphasis of Satya-truth is paramount in the writings of the Indian philosophers. "*Satyannasti Parodharmati (Satyan Nasti Paro Dharma Ti)* - there is no religion or duty greater than truth", holds a prominent place in Hinduism. Reaching pure and absolute truth is attaining moksha. Gandhi holds that truth is God, and maintains that it is an integral part of Satyagraha. He explains it thus:

The world rests upon the bedrock of satya or truth; asatya meaning untruth also means "nonexistent" and satya or truth, means that which is of untruth does not so much exist. Its victory is out of the question. And truth being "that which is" can never be destroyed. This is the doctrine of Satyagraha in a nutshell.¹³

2. Ahimsa: In Gandhi's Satyagraha, truth is inseparable from Ahimsa. Ahimsa expresses as ancient Hindu, Jain and Buddhist ethical precept. The negative prefix 'a' plus himsa meaning injury make up the word normally translated 'nonviolence'. The term Ahimsa appears in Hindu teachings as early as the Chandogya Upanishad. The Jain Religion constitutes Ahimsa as the first vow. It is a cardinal virtue in Buddhism. Despite its being rooted in these Religions, the special contribution of Gandhi was:

To make the concept of Ahimsa meaningful in the social and political spheres by moulding tools for nonviolent action to use as

a positive force in the search for social and political truths. Gandhi formed Ahimsa into the active social technique, which was to challenge political authorities and religious orthodoxy.¹⁴

It is worth noting that this 'active social technique which was to challenge political authorities', used by Gandhi is none other than Satyagraha. Truly enough, the Indian milieu was already infused with notions of Ahimsa. Nevertheless, Gandhi acknowledged that it was an essential part of his experiments with the truth whose technique of action he called Satyagraha.

At the root of Satya and Ahimsa is love. While making discourses on the Bhagavad-Gita, an author says:

Truth, peace, righteousness and nonviolence, *Satya*, *Shanti*, *Dharma* and *Ahimsa*, do not exist separately. They are all essentially dependent on love. When love enters the thoughts it becomes truth. When it manifests itself in the form of action it becomes truth. When Love manifests itself in the form of action it becomes *Dharma* or righteousness. When your feelings become saturated with love you become peace itself. The very meaning of the word peace is love. When you fill your understanding with love it is *Ahimsa*. Practicing love is *Dharma*, thinking of love is *Satya*, feeling love is *Shanti*, and understanding love is *Ahimsa*. For all these values it is love which flows as the undercurrent.¹⁵

3. Tapasya (Self-Suffering); it remains a truism that the classical yogic laws of self-restraint and self-discipline are familiar elements in Indian culture. Self-suffering in Satyagraha is a test of love. It is detected first of all towards the much persuasion of one whom is undertaken. Gandhi distinguished self-suffering from cowardice. Gandhi's choice of self-suffering does not mean that he valued life low. It is rather a sign of voluntary help and it is noble and morally enriching. He himself says;

It is not because I value life low that I can countenance with joy Thousands voluntary losing their lives for Satyagraha, but because I know that it results in the long run in the least loss of life, and

what is more, it ennobles those who lose their lives and morally enriches the world for their sacrifice.¹⁶

Satyagraha is at its best when preached and practiced by those who would use arms but decided instead to invite suffering upon them.

It is not easy for a western mind or nonoriental philosopher to understand this issue of self-suffering. In fact, in Satyagraha, the element of self-suffering is perhaps the least acceptable to a western mind. Yet such sacrifice may well provide the ultimate means of realizing that characteristic so eminent in Christian religion and western moral philosophy: The dignity of the individual.

The three elements: Satya, Ahimsa, Tapasya must move together for the success of any Satyagraha campaign. It follows that Ahimsa - which implies love, leads in turn to social service. Truth leads to an ethical humanism. Self-suffering not for its own sake, but for the demonstration of sincerity flowing from refusal to injure the opponent while at the same time holding to the truth, implies sacrifice and preparation for sacrifice even to death.

2.3. Satyagraha in Action

For Satyagraha to be valid, it has to be tested. When the principles are applied to specific political and social action, the tools of civil disobedience, noncooperation, nonviolent strike, and constructive action are cherished. South Africa and India were 'laboratories' where Gandhi tested his new technique. Satyagraha was a necessary weapon for Gandhi to work in South Africa and India. Louis Fischer attests that: "Gandhi could never have achieved what he did in South Africa and India but for a weapon peculiarly his own. It was unprecedented indeed; it was so unique he could not find a name for it until he finally hit upon Satyagraha."¹⁷

South Africa is the acclaimed birthplace of Satyagraha. Here Satyagraha was employed to fight for the civil rights of Indians in South Africa. In India, Gandhi applied Satyagraha in his socio-political milieu and carried out several acts of civil disobedience culminating in the Salt March.

Another wonderful way of seeing Satyagraha in action is through the fasting of Mahatma Gandhi. Fasting was part and parcel of his philosophy of truth and nonviolence. Mahatma Gandhi was an activist - a moral and spiritual activist. And fasting was “one of his strategies of activism, in many ways his most powerful.”¹⁸

2.3.1. Qualities of a Satyagrahi (Nonviolence Activist)

Gandhi was quite aware that there was need to train people who could carry on with his Satyagraha campaigns. He trained them in his “Satyagraha Ashrams”. Here are some of the basic qualities of expected of a Satyagrahi.

- 1 A Satyagraha should have a living faith in God for he is his only Rock.
- 2 One must believe in truth and nonviolence as one’s creed and therefore have faith in the inherent goodness of human nature.
- 3 One must live a chaste life and be ready and willing for the sake of one’s cause to give up his life and his possessions.
- 4 One must be free from the use any intoxicant, in order that his reason may be undivided and his mind constant.
- 5 One must carry out with a willing heart all the rules of discipline as may be laid down from time to time.
- 6 One should carry out the jail rules unless they are especially dense to hurt his self-respect.
- 7 A satyagrahi must accept to suffer in order to correct a situation.

In a nutshell, Satyagraha is itself a movement intended to fight social and promote ethical values. It is a whole philosophy of nonviolence. It is undertaken only after all the other peaceful means have proven ineffective. At its heart is nonviolence. An attempt is made to convert, persuade or win over the opponent. It involves applying the forces of both reason and conscience simultaneously, while holding aloft the indisputable truth of his/her position. The Satyagrahi also engages in acts of voluntary suffering. Any violence

inflicted by the opponent is accepted without retaliation. The opponent can only become morally bankrupt if violence continues to be inflicted indefinitely. Several methods can be applied in a Satyagraha campaign. Stephen Murphy gives primacy to “noncooperation and fasting”. Bertrand Russell has this to say about Gandhi’s method:

The essence of this method which he (Gandhi) gradually brought to greater and greater perfection consisted in refusal to do things, which the authorities wished to have done, while abstaining from any positive action of an aggressive sort.... The method always had in Gandhi’s mind a religious aspect... As a rule, this method depended upon moral force for its success. ¹⁹

Murphy and Russell do not accept Gandhi’s doctrine totally. Michael Nagler insists that they ignore Constructive Programme, which Gandhi considered paramount. A better understanding of Gandhi’s nonviolence will be seen in the next chapter.

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CHAPTER THREE

3.0. INTERPRETATIONS AND UNDERSTANDING OF GANDHI'S PHILOSOPHY OF NONVIOLENCE

Gandhi, through Satyagraha, has provided the world with a universal and timeless philosophy. Like Socrates, Gandhi was like a gadfly and was often an embarrassment and an irritant even to his friends and allies. He challenged mostly power positions that pretended to be based on sound knowledge and morality. Like Kant, he focused much of his attention to motives and intentions, but moved a step further to emphasize the primacy of morality. He therefore had little sympathy for detached theories of knowledge that are not grounded in morality or for theology and metaphysics which pretend to transcend morality.

Gandhi emphasized an integral relationship between means and ends. One cannot use impure or immoral means to achieve worthy goals. Gandhi departs from the Utilitarians as Sisir Sanyal attests:

The utilitarian philosophers in the west enunciated the concept of greatest good of the greatest number as the aim of state policy. This has failed to take a holistic view of the entire human race and ignored man; that is to say each and every man, as the prime concern of the state.... As against this, Gandhi propounded the theory of *sarvodaya*, which means the rise of all that too in the fullest measure each man is capable of.¹

In order to understand this 'timeless philosophy' propounded by Gandhi, it will be good to see the various interpretations given to it. After this, the basic principles of nonviolence at public and private levels will be exposed. This chapter will end with an understanding of Gandhi's dialectics and political theory, deduced from his philosophy of nonviolence.

3.1. The Etic and Emic Interpretations of Gandhian Satyagraha

Satyagraha has not been understood by all, especially those alien to the oriental traditions. As a result, there have emerged two different views of Satyagraha viz. the *Emic* and *Etic* views. When the perspective stems from common culture and history, it may be termed *Emic*. This contrasts to the perspective of an outsider to a culture, which can be termed *Etic*. The *Emic* view of Satyagraha is seldom evident to an untrained outsider because, while insensitive to the nuances of a given culture, it invites generalizations and comparisons. Differences in context might require differences of expression of Satyagraha. Events generally have different meanings with respect to the actor and viewer. The way things are done by a particular set of people may not be interpreted same as when viewed by outsiders not having the same history and culture.

These views have been well explained and used by William J. Starosta and Angu G. Chaudhery in their article “I can wait 40 or 400 years: Gandhian Satyagraha East and West.”² Satyagraha in the West is seen as *Etic* while in the east it is seen as *Emic*. This is because Satyagraha has much in common with Eastern Traditions and Philosophy. We don’t negate in any way that there might be a substantial tradition of Satyagraha, called by whatever names, in the West.

3.1.1. *Etic Interpretation: Satyagraha in the West*

To understand Gandhi’s Satyagraha in the West, most students turn to a familiar American Landmark. In the west, Gandhi’s Satyagraha has been understood in terms of Henry David Thoreau’s ‘Civil Disobedience’, though some others move a little further than Thoreau. The Salt March is often described ambiguously as Civil Disobedience. At times even Gandhi himself referred to the Salt March as civil disobedience when he attests that “you have given me a teacher in Thoreau who furnished me through his essay on ‘the Duty

of Civil Disobedience. Scientific confirmation of what I was doing in South Africa”³

Gandhi differentiated his Satyagraha from Civil Disobedience. Civil Disobedience is at most a branch of Satyagraha. For him, “Satyagraha is like a Banyan tree with innumerable branches. Civil Disobedience is one such branch. *Satya* (truth) and *ahimsa* (Nonviolence) together make the present trunk from which innumerable branches shoot out.”⁴

Krishna Shridharani’s book on “*War Without Violence*” has been quoted by Gene Sharp to show us 13 techniques most characteristic of Satyagraha. Of these, Civil disobedience is the 11th technique. The Etic interpretation seems too reductionist. The Emic interpretation will give a better understanding of Gandhian Satyagraha.

3.1.2. Emic Interpretation: Satyagraha in the East

Gandhi and Satyagraha are viewed here as continuous with three millennia old traditions of Indian tradition and practice. In other words Gandhi’s Satyagraha is deeply rooted in the Indian traditions. There are seven Emic aspects of Gandhian Satyagraha.

1) **Nonduality:** since the *Post-Vedantic*, Indian philosophic religion had evolved in the direction of philosophic monism. This implies no distinctions between self and absolute, thought and action, means and ends. While western philosophy sees distinction between “means and ends”⁵, Gandhi does not distinguish between them. To achieve good ends, one could use none other than good means. Violence begets Violence, Nonviolence begets Nonviolence.

2) **Purification:** In order to fetch Good out of Evil via Satyagraha constitutes a total effort of heart, mind, and body. There is constant need in the Hindu culture for purification. Purification can be done through renunciation of worldly things. The Indian term for this is *Bramacharya* (*Celibacy, Chastity*). Gandhi himself took the *Bramachyrya* vow and recommended it to the *Satyagrahi*.

3) **Sacrifice:** the earliest forms of Hinduism stressed '*vrata*' and '*tapas*'⁶ and properly would produce results in defiance of the gods themselves. The power of sacrifice was highly recommended by Gandhi. The Satyagrahi like Gandhi is asked to sacrifice life, family, things on earth, self-importance, and to court suffering in the belief that unearned suffering is redemptive. Gandhi was optimistic that just as Vedic sacrifice could defy the gods, so too self-sacrifice could defy British authorities

4) **Inevitability:** Gandhi was never daunted by length of time. "How long will a desired end take to be effected by means of Satyagraha? The result was inevitable; Gandhi never doubted"⁷. The stress in Hinduism upon *samsara*- a belief in repeated rebirths for so long as the person is lacking in perfection or understanding (*samsara* means 'world cycle'). One object is to transcend rebirth through disciplined action. This places Satyagraha into a mythic time frame, wherein laws of sacrifice will work themselves out in however long the process must take. A quick result might be politically desirable, but a religiously inevitable result would certainly be assured if not this time, then in the next.

5) **Conversion:** Satyagraha aims at converting the opponent. Evil is present in many forms within the world. In its mildest form, evil could represent error in a friend while in another case; it could represent evil in an opponent. The remedy for any degree of evil in the emic view was conversion through self-effacement. For example, if a follower of Satyagraha decides to put on a foreign dress instead of home spurn clothes, a Satyagrahi would be assigned to meet the offender on one's knees and humbly implore the person to correct the error. Satyagraha aims at fighting the person's deed and not the person. General Jan Smut was a target for conversion by means of Gandhian Satyagraha.

6) **Nonmanipulation:** The very fact that Satyagraha in publicly permitting evil to act upon a transparently defenseless target is the expectation that such evil would destroy itself through conversion to Good in Nonmanipulation. Manipulation is another form of force. Nonmanipulation sets up a scene in

which an actor risks characterization as evil because his acts become visible and morally accountable. In such a scene, only morally acceptable acts are likely to be performed. One writer refers to this force as “one of purification rather than of manipulation.”⁸

7) Being versus Doing: Satyagraha grew as a philosophy within a context that stressed being, contemplation, asceticism, and intrinsic goodness of character as preferred social ends. Civil disobedience grew in a culture which favoured doing over being. Contrary to a Western view, which would like to respond to act with act, anger with anger, deed with deed, a satagrahi is trained to thank the jail keeper for performing the arrest, to congratulate those who were imprisoned. By this preference for being over doing, the conflict was joined between spiritual truth and corrupt deeds not directly between antagonists.

In a nutshell it is good to understand Satyagraha within the cultural background form, which it evolved. It should be noted that the etic accounts saw the British as enemies and not friends. However, if understood with an emic view, Satyagraha will be seen as a public expression of pure thought, thought that is one with action; which is performed as a moral duty with no dread of consequence. “Such detached witness as sacrifice leading immutably and inexorably to conversion of evil to good”, Starosta and Chaudhery attest “if not now, then sometime later.”⁹

Gandhian Satyagraha for an emic culture resulted in the rendering of Gandhian techniques as syncretic. This is because the impact of the west, with etic views upon the several traditions of India bears traces of the thought and experience of modern Europe. The transplanting of social and political philosophies current in the west to the rich cultural soil of the Indian sub-continent has resulted in a growth both vigorous and productive. The impact of this syncretism Bondurant attests, has been “more tellingly demonstrated...in the development of the Gandhian technique.”¹⁰

3.2. Essential Principles of Gandhi's Philosophy of Nonviolence

A more Emic understanding of Gandhi's Philosophy of Nonviolence will reveal some essential principles both at the public and private level. The principles of Gandhi's Philosophy at the public level include; Truth, Ahimsa, Trusteeship and Constructive Action/Programme. While at private level we have; Respect, Understanding, Appreciation and acceptance.

3.2.1. *Gandhi's Philosophy of Nonviolence at Public level*

The Essential principles at public level are: -

- 1) **Truth:** The imperfect translation of the Sanskrit *satya*. The meaning of truth is, of course obvious. It must be noted that truth has many sides and is ever changing. What appears true today may not be true tomorrow, or what appears true to us may not be same for others. We must develop the ability to look at everything from different perspectives. However, we have to aim at the absolute truth, which Gandhi identifies with God. Aiming at this absolute truth implies numerous experiments with the truth, which Gandhi applied at public level.
- 2) **Ahimsa:** This is nonviolence in thought, word and deed. Far from meaning mere peacefulness or the absence of overt violence, Gandhi understood it to denote active love. It is used at public level to bring about positive changes. We should therefore aim at an A+ grade in our perception of nonviolence.
- 3) **Trusteeship:** For Gandhi, violence is inherent in our present economic, social and industrial systems. He therefore aims at bringing a change through the application of his concept of Trusteeship. Trusteeship according to Bader means "Having faith and confidence in a process of taking responsibility for assets and social values and administering their rightful and creative usage for benefit of others now and in the coming ages."¹¹

Its objective is to create nonviolent and nonexploitative relationships. Gandhi believes that the concepts of possession and private property were sources of violence. All wealth belongs to all people. He recognizes that the concept of ownership cannot wither easily and that the rich cannot be easily persuaded to share their wealth. He therefore invites those people who consider themselves today as owners to act as trustees; that is, owners, not in their own right, but owners in the right of those whom they have exploited. This principle seeks to destroy not the capitalists, but capitalism. Trusteeship provides a means of attaining an egalitarian society. The basis of this socialism is economic equality.

Trusteeship is strongly based on participatory democracy. It is a “fraternal partnership between all factors of production with the aim of achieving larger social benefit rather than working toward a narrow economic objective such as profit.”¹² Trusteeship is the natural corollary to constructive action / programme.

4) Constructive Programme: Gandhi devoted himself to the social, economic and spiritual regeneration of the country and felt this would be achieved by the efforts of the people themselves. Gandhi therefore emphasized on what he had originally conceived as “spiritual socialism”, the positive counterpart of noncooperation and civil disobedience and eventually called the constructive program.

To win independence, Gandhi felt the only truthful and nonviolent way would be through the constructive action. Gandhi therefore feels that the constructive programme may more otherwise and more fittingly be called “Construction of *Poorna Swaraj* or complete independence by the truthful and nonviolent means.”¹³ It means getting involved in finding constructive solutions to problems. We usually ward our responsibilities on someone else’s shoulders, usually government’s shoulders. Yet they have serious consequences.

The constructive programme was the greatest means to economic development for a poor country like India. Mahatma Gandhi feels strongly that the constructive programme is another form of Satyagraha, which could bring about

a nonviolent agrarian revolution. The following are the various constructive programmes listed by Gandhi:

Unity of religious communities, Removal of untouchability, Prohibition, Khadi, Other Village Industries, Village Sanitation, News of Basic Sanitation, Adult Education, Upliftment of Women, Education in health Hygiene, Provincial Languages, Propagation of Rastra Basha (National Language), Promotion of Economic Equality, Kisans (peasants), Labour, Adivasis, Lepers, Students. The Constructive Programme gave “Content to the Satyagraha framework and applied Gandhian principles in the Indian conscience.”¹⁴

3.2.2. Gandhi’s Philosophy of Nonviolence at the Private Level

According to Hector Ayala, true Gandhian peace has to come “through the proper understanding and practice of nonviolence based on the four principles of nonviolence at personal level which includes respect, understanding acceptance and appreciation”.¹⁵ If we learn to build good relationships based on the four cardinal principles, then conflict will be minimized. They all go to make the world more peaceful.

The essential principles here include:

- 1) **Respect:** This is a behaviour and attitude, which reflect one’s ability to see the worth and value in people, situations and institutions. When there is no respect between people, conflict arises and leads to violence. Gandhi therefore advocated fearlessly for the dignity of the human person. Gandhian Nonviolence teaches us to respect ourselves and others and all of creation if this respect is cultivated at personal level, we will be open to respect different cultures and belief systems.
- 2) **Understanding:** This is reached when we learn who we are and what our role in creation is. In our arrogance, we believe that humans are not part of nature. We are therefore prone to destroying our habitat and cannot expect to survive for very long. By understanding ourselves, and our reactions to life’s events, we can become better able to make changes we wish to see; with this

knowledge, which does not always come easily, we can map our response to life. Gandhi advocated for understanding and dialogue. When well practiced at personal level, the philosophy of nonviolence will help to foster dialogue.

3) Acceptance: This is the first step to tolerance. Acceptance does not necessarily equate to approval. However, it is a conscious decision to see value and inherent worth of others. One needs a level of humility to cultivate acceptance. This is attained when we accept differences, Physical and philosophical between human beings. When these differences begin to melt away then we accept each other as human beings and can dispense with the label that keep people apart.

4) Appreciation: This is the recognition of the value and worth of all living creatures having the ability to see goodness by learning to focus on the good, in people rather than on the bad even with some difficulty, to see God in all of life. Appreciation is a by-product of nonviolence. It implies developing an ability to recognise the value and worth in other human beings.

3.3. Gandhi's Philosophy of Nonviolence in Politics

Gandhi's experiments with truth led him to sample many political approaches. These can be examined by measuring it against two trends in western political thinking: Anarchism and Conservatism. On one hand, Gandhi strove to conserve many things like his religious convictions, local languages, etc. However, his infusion of his Satyagraha from which he developed his concepts of trusteeship and Constructive programme sees him deviating from some of his hereditary traditions, like untouchability.

In Gandhi too, we may find some elements of anarchical thought. He strove for the "greatest good of all". He believed this could be realized only;

In a classless and stateless democracy of autonomous village communities based on nonviolence instead of coercion, on service instead of exploitation, on renunciation instead of acquisitiveness

and on the largest measure of local and individual initiative instead of centralization.¹⁶

It is not easy to just refer to Gandhi's political ideas as just conservative or anarchist. The former label is rightly dismissed as doing injustice to the important elements of rationalism, radicalism and individualism on Gandhi. The latter makes central those references to a future ideal society, which for Gandhi were peripheral to his preoccupation with present means. Attempts to place Gandhi in the Development of political theory have led to an insight into Gandhi's Dialectics.

3.3.1. Gandhi's Dialectics

The Gandhian Dialectic is understood side-by-side Hegel and Marx's. In Hegel, there is insistence on the objective absolute and on the inexorable march of History. For Marx, both the direction and structure of conflict is predetermined. Gandhi lays emphasis on the very process by which conflict is to be resolved. The Hegelian dialectic is a system of logic describing inherent natural processes. Marxian dialectic is a method by which both the direction and the structure of conflict are predetermined. Gandhian dialectic describes a process of a technique of action to any situation of human conflict, a process essentially creative and inherently constructive.

Gandhi, in his dialectics, is preoccupied with the problem of means and ends. In his Satyagraha, he propounds the nonduality of means and ends. The means precede the ends in time but there can be no question of moral priority. Truth is inseparable from nonviolence and the method of achieving and clinging to the truth is nonviolence. Gandhi has referred to nonviolence as being both the end and the means. Shortly before his death, Gandhi commented in a prayer speech in New Delhi that "means and ends are convertible terms".¹⁷

The problem of means and ends has been a very central issue in political philosophy. The schools really concerned with these are Marxism and Liberal democratic theory. Gandhi's Philosophy of nonviolence supercedes these

schools because of this convertibility of means and ends. The dialectic implicit in the Gandhian method of Satyagraha is not dependent upon Gandhi's metaphysical assumptions, nor upon his Hindu based theology. It could operate in NonHindu societies as it did among the Muslim Pathans in the North West frontier province.

3.3.2. The Place of Civil Disobedience in Gandhi's Political Philosophy

The two crucial points in Gandhi's Politics are those of obedience to the law and the employment of Force. He was much concerned with the duty of the citizen in the imperfect states of the world. He cooperated with the Government but never condoned laws that disregarded the human person. In his Famous letter to the Viceroy, Inaugurating the Noncooperation Movement in 1921, Gandhi confessed openly that "From a staunch loyalist and cooperator, I have become an uncompromising, disaffectionist and noncooperator"¹⁸

In Gandhian Satyagraha Civil disobedience is justified. One should disobey such laws as are in themselves bad and obedience to which should be inconsistent with one's self respect. One should disobey Laws of state that lack moral turpitude. He warns however that: Disobedience to the civil must be sincere, respectful, restrained, never defiant, must be based upon some well understood principle, must not be capricious and above all must have no ill-will or hatred behind it¹⁹.

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CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. HOW RELEVANT IS GANDHI'S NONVIOLENCE?

Nonviolence is a philosophy, an existing theory and a practice, a lifestyle, and a means of social, political and economic struggle as old as history itself. From ancient times to the present times, people have renounced violence as a means of resolving disputes. They have opted instead for negotiation, mediation and reconciliation, thereby resisting violence with a militant and uncompromising nonviolence and respect for the integrity of all human beings, friends and enemies alike.

Nonviolence provides us with tools, the positive means to oppose and stop wars and preparations for war, to resist violence, to struggle against racial, sexual and economic oppression and discrimination and to seek social justice and genuine democracy for people throughout the world. In a very real sense, nonviolence is the leaven for the bread that is a new society freed from oppression and bloodshed, a world in which persons can fulfill their individual potentials to the fullest.

In the preceding chapters, we have sought to expose Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence. Some pertinent questions remain almost unanswered: Does Gandhi's philosophy have any relevance in our contemporary world, in Africa and in the church? How can Gandhi's nonviolence be applied? These questions will be tackled in this chapter and in the chapters that follow before the evaluations and conclusion.

4.1. Relevance of Gandhi's Philosophy of Nonviolence

Gandhi provided the world with his timeless philosophy. It was not meant for the independence of India only. Nonviolence is itself normative. It applies to any situation. Gandhi's nonviolence remains an authentic source of normative

personalism meaning that it aims first of all to re-instate the dignity of the human person. He was a fearless advocate of the dignity of the human person. This involves recognising the unique endowments of the human person-in-community and providing a foundation for Human Rights. He is therefore called the emancipator of the oppressed. He helped millions of the discriminated poor to discover meaning in life and live a life worthy of the true human calling. The clarity of the conviction of the transcendental goal of everyman led him to affirm the dignity of the human person at every level. He aimed at a Theanthropocentric society where the human person was at the centre of the social order. No doubt, Kesavulu sees Gandhian Trusteeship as an “Instrument of Human Dignity”.¹

Though Gandhi is dead, his philosophy remains alive. No doubt Jones reminds us “Gandhi is not finished. He is a living power, more powerful in death than life”.

² Gandhi presents to us through his principles, the means of fighting for civil rights. In the face of oppressor nations, Gandhi advises us to simply withdraw cooperation with the conqueror, and accept the consequences. Though some will be butchered, they remain martyrs in the movement. The jails would be overflowed and become ridiculous, for those jailed would be heroes of the new nation emerging. The jails would be the training ground, the classroom, for the new leadership. All the time, when the oppressor becomes oppressive, he would become weaker and all the time, the oppressed would resist the oppressor with the spirit of nonviolence, he would become stronger. It would be a losing battle for the oppressor and he would have to succumb, be converted or collapse. Gandhi’s greatest achievement lies in the fact that he used this philosophy to overcome the system the British had set up in India.

4.2. Applications of Nonviolence

Through Gandhi, we now understand that the philosophy of nonviolence can be applied in economics, politics, religion, society etc. Gandhi’s Satyagraha has been applied to bring about useful changes. Many people all through the

centuries have strove to follow Gandhi's spirit through seminars, workshops, writing of books and articles, projects, and strikes. Gandhi's spirit keeps on hovering in this world.

India's turbulent and violent post-independence history has nevertheless included two trends of nonviolent action and resistance. In one of these, those influenced by Gandhi's ideas on economics and simplicity conducted the "Sarvodaya" movement, which combined his ideas with a call for nonviolent revolution. More recently, social movements concerned with the natural environment and the effects of development and changes both on the environment and the livelihood of the people have turned to nonviolent protest and defiance of the state.

Many institutes have been founded to propagate Gandhi's philosophy of Nonviolence. These have applied nonviolence in the prisons, in curing drug addicts, in understanding anger, in resolving conflicts, and in fighting for civil rights. Notable among these institutes are the M.K. Gandhi's Institute for Nonviolence, Memphis, founded by Arun Gandhi, The Albert Einstein Institution founded by Gene Sharp, GandhiServe Foundation, Berlin, Germany, Sarvodaya Trust, and many other internet sources.

Among all the examples of the application of nonviolence in newspapers and magazines, one is most outstanding: The application of Gandhi's Philosophy of Nonviolence in the Football field. E.S. Reddy relates it thus:

The Hindu carried a report from London on December 26th that a British company had produced a football T-shirt with Gandhi's image on the chest. It is being sold for 20 pounds or about 30 dollars. The company ...said it had chosen Gandhi as a means of promoting nonviolence on the football field - winning a tackle though nonviolent methodology.³

The British football fans that are notorious for rowdy behaviour do need some education in nonviolence. Gandhi was fond of football and was head of football clubs in Durban and Johannesburg in South Africa almost a hundred years ago.

4.3. Application of Gandhi's Doctrine by Some Prominent Figures

Among individuals who have applied Gandhi's nonviolence, many figures are outstanding. The first three that will be mentioned are not of African roots. Since the work focuses on Gandhi's relevance especially for Africa, we shall move from general to particular. The next six will be personalities who are either totally Africans or African-Americans. Most of these quote Gandhi to justify their nonviolent action.

4.3.1. César Estrada Chávez (1927-1993), A Student and Follower of Gandhi

César Chávez was born on March 31, 1927, near his family's farm in Yuma, Arizona. At age 10, his family became migrant farm workers after losing their farm in the Great Depression. Throughout his youth and into his adulthood, César migrated across the southwest labouring in the fields and vineyards, where he was exposed to the hardships and injustices of farm worker life. For more than three decades he led the first successful farm workers union in American history, achieving dignity, respect, fair wages, medical coverage, pension benefits, and humane living conditions, as well as countless other rights and protections for hundreds of thousands of farm workers. César used peaceful tactics such as fasts, boycotts, strikes, and pilgrimages to bring about justice for farm workers. In 1968 César fasted for 25 days to affirm his personal commitment and that of the farm labour movement to nonviolence.⁴ The story of César Estrada Chávez also ends near Yuma, Arizona. He passed away peacefully on April 23, 1993, in San Luis, a small village nearby.

He read much about St. Francis of Assisi and Mohandas K. Gandhi and was influenced by both of these men, as well as the Civil Rights Leader Martin Luther King, Jr. he realized great men were those who set a good example, and he adopted the philosophy of nonviolence. He is known as a great prophet of nonviolence. His nonviolence rested in a deep faithfulness to God who can bring

about transformation. He was clear that nonviolence is the way of God. His life and work always reflected that he was first a farm worker who spoke from the plight of a much oppressed working group in this affluent country. Few have been known to so take on the plight of the poor.

From his lifestyle, we can affirm without mincing words that César responded to Gandhi's assertion that "nonviolence is not passivity in any shape or form. Nonviolence is the most active force in the world." For him, we must respect all human life. Nonviolence is the only weapon that is compassionate and recognizes each person's value. César went further to describe nonviolence for his movement as "aggressive nonviolence." In effect he held that Militant nonviolence is our means for social revolution and to achieve justice for our people.

Perhaps most notable in his pursuit of nonviolence was his call to fasting. Like Gandhi, he came to know for himself the special purification of fasting, particularly in overcoming violence. He fasted for 21 days in 1968 and at the end he said, "I am not completely nonviolent yet, and I know it. That is why I fasted; I felt it was a very personal form of self-testing and of prayer. Anyone could be nonviolent in a monastery. What's difficult is to be nonviolent in the cause, in the battle for social justice." With his acceptance of self suffering through fasting, he inscribed himself into the Satyagraha doctrine of Gandhi. His nonviolence rested in a deep faithfulness to God who can bring about transformation. César was clear that nonviolence is the way of God. This way included for him a deep respect for all living beings, including animals, and was manifest in his staunch vegetarianism.⁵

Some of César E. Chávez core values and quotations can be outlined below⁶:

1. **Acceptance of all People** - "We need to help students and parents cherish and preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity that nourishes and strengthens ...this nation."
2. **Celebrating Community** - "We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community ... Our ambitions must

be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.”

3. Respect for Life and the Environment - “However important the struggle is and however much misery and poverty and degradation exist, we know that it cannot be more important than one human life.”

4. NonViolence - “Nonviolence is not inaction. It is not discussion. It is not for the timid or weak ...Nonviolence is hard work. It is the willingness to sacrifice. It is the patience to win.” “There’s no such thing as defeat in nonviolence.”

5. Innovation - “A lasting organization is one in which people will continue to build, develop and move when you are not there.”

6. A Preference to Help the Most Needy - “We are tired of words, of betrayals, of indifference

...the years are gone when the farm worker said nothing and did nothing to help himself...Now we have new faith. Through our strong will, our movement is changing these conditions...We shall be heard.”

7. Knowledge - “Students must have initiative; they should not be mere imitators. They must learn to think and act for themselves and be free.”

8. Sacrifice - “I am convinced that the truest act of courage, the strongest act of [humanity], is to sacrifice ourselves for others in a totally nonviolent struggle for justice. To be [human] is to suffer for others. God help us to be human.”

9. Service to Others - “When we are really honest with ourselves we must admit that our lives are all that really belong to us. So, it is how we use our lives that determine what kind of [people] we are. It is my deepest belief that only by giving our lives do we find life.”

10. Determination - “We draw our strength from the very despair in which we have been forced to live. We shall endure.”

4.3.2. 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso: The Tibetan Nonviolent Laureate

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, is both the head of state and the spiritual leader of Tibet. He was born on 6 July 1935, to a farming family, in Taktser, Amdo, Northeastern Tibet. At the age of two the child, who was named Lhamo Dhondup at that time, was recognized as the reincarnation of the 13th Dalai Lama, Thubten Gyatso.⁷ He began his monastic education at the age of six.⁸

In 1950 he was called upon to assume full political power after China's invasion of Tibet in 1949. In 1954, he went to Beijing for peace talks with Mao Zedong and other Chinese leaders, including Deng Xiaoping and Chou Enlai. But finally, in 1959, with the brutal suppression of the Tibetan national uprising in Lhasa by Chinese troops, he was forced to escape into exile. Since then he has been living in Dharamsala, northern India, the seat of the Tibetan political administration in exile.

He took many Peace Initiatives worth mentioning here. In September 1987 he proposed the Five Point Peace Plan for Tibet as the first step towards a peaceful solution to the worsening situation in Tibet. He envisaged that Tibet would become a sanctuary; a zone of peace at the heart of Asia, where all sentient beings can exist in harmony and the delicate environment can be preserved. China has so far failed to respond positively to the various peace proposals he put forward.

Gandhi played an important role in the life of The Dalai Lama. During the campaign led by the Dalai Lama for the independence of Tibet from China he has famously insisted that Tibet will be free when China is free and that his people should not take up arms against, or hate, the Chinese people. When he spoke on November 4 2005 at Memorial Church Stanford, the Dalai Lama said nonviolence is the only way progress can be made with China.⁹

Tibetan Buddhism is very much in harmony with Gandhian nonviolence. In fact, the Dalai Lama said this of Gandhi:

I have the greatest admiration and respect for Mahatma Gandhi. He was a great human being with a deep understanding of human nature. He made every effort to encourage the full development of the positive aspects of the human potential and to reduce or restrain the negative. His life has inspired me ever since I was a small boy. Ahimsa or nonviolence is the powerful idea that Mahatma Gandhi made familiar throughout the world. But nonviolence does not mean the mere absence of violence. It is something more positive, more meaningful than that, for it depends wholly on the power of truth. The true expression of nonviolence is compassion. Some people seem to think that compassion is just a passive emotional response instead of a rational stimulus to action. To experience genuine compassion is to develop a feeling of closeness to others combined with a sense of responsibility for their welfare. This develops when we accept that other people are just like ourselves in wanting happiness and not wanting suffering. What is the relevance of nonviolence and compassion to the future of humanity? As Mahatma Gandhi showed by his own example, nonviolence can be implemented not only in politics but also in day-to-day life. That was his great achievement. He showed that nonviolence should be active in helping others. Nonviolence means that if you can help and serve others, you should do so. If you cannot, you must at least restrain yourself from harming others. I believe that it is very important that we find positive ways in which children and adults can be educated in the path of compassion, kindness and nonviolence. If we can actively do this, I believe we will be fulfilling Mahatma Gandhi's legacy to us. It is my prayer that, as we enter this new century, nonviolence and dialogue will increasingly come to govern all human relations.¹⁰

In effect, the Dalai Lama thinks and insists that in terms of basic human feeling, violence is not good. For him nonviolence as preached by Gandhi is the only way.

From so many of his other quotes, one can see the influence of Gandhi on him and especially his way of applying Gandhi's doctrine:

When we face problems or disagreements today, we have to arrive at solutions through dialogue. Dialogue is the only appropriate method. One-sided victory is no longer relevant. We must work to resolve conflicts in a spirit of reconciliation and always keep in mind the interests of others. We cannot destroy our neighbours! We cannot ignore their interests! Doing so would ultimately cause us to suffer. I therefore think that the concept of violence is now unsuitable. Nonviolence is the appropriate method.”¹¹

Since 1959 he has received over 84 awards, honorary doctorates, prizes, etc., in recognition of his message of peace, nonviolence, inter-religious understanding, universal responsibility and compassion. He has also authored more than 72 books. Being a man of peace, His Holiness the Dalai Lama in 1989 was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his nonviolent appeal for the liberation of Tibet. He has consistently advocated policies of nonviolence, even in the face of extreme aggression. He also became the first Nobel Laureate to be recognized for his concern for global environmental problems.

4.3.3. Aung San Suu Kyi, Prisoner of Conscience and Advocate of Nonviolent Resistance

Aung San Suu Kyi born 19 June 1945 is a Burmese opposition politician and General Secretary of the National League for Democracy. She was educated in Methodist English High School (Now known as Basic Education High School No.1 Dagon) for much of her childhood in Burma where she was noted as having a talent for learning languages. She is a Theravada Buddhist.

In 1964, Aung San Suu Kyi graduated from Lady Shri Ram College with a degree in politics in New Delhi. Suu Kyi continued her education at St Hugh's College, Oxford, obtaining a B.A. degree in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics in 1969. After graduating, she lived in New York City with a family friend and worked at the United Nations for three years, primarily on budget matters. In 1972, she got married to Dr. Michael Aris, a scholar of Tibetan culture, living abroad in Bhutan. She earned a Ph.D. at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London in 1985. In 1988 Suu Kyi returned to Burma at first to tend for her ailing mother but later to lead the pro-democracy movement. Influenced by both Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence and by more specifically Buddhist concepts, Aung San Suu Kyi entered politics to work for democratisation, helped found the National League for Democracy on 27 September 1988, and was put under house arrest on 20 July 1989. She was offered freedom if she left the country, but she refused. She gave over a thousand speeches between August 1988 and July 1989—all in direct violation of the government's open meeting laws—when she was placed under house arrest.

Her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD) carried over 80% of the 1990 vote. She remains under house arrest, and Burma remains under a military dictatorship. Suu Kyi has received more than 80 international awards, including India's Gandhi Award (2009), the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding by the Government of India (1993) and the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize. Suu Kyi was the recipient of the Rafto Prize and the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought in 1990.

On 2 May 2008, after Cyclone Nargis hit Burma, Suu Kyi lost her roof and was living in virtual darkness after losing electricity in her dilapidated lakeside residence. She used candles at night as she was not provided any generator set. Plans to renovate and repair the house were announced in August 2009.

One of her most famous speeches is the "*Freedom From Fear*" (1991) speech, which begins, "It is not power that corrupts but fear. Fear of losing power corrupts those who wield it and fear of the scourge of power corrupts those who are subject to it."¹² She also believes fear spurs many world leaders to lose

sight of their purpose. She also has several famous books and essays such as “Aung San Of Burma: a Biographical Portrait by his Daughter” (1991), “The Voice of Hope” (1997) and “Letters from Burma” (1997). She has expressed her ideology and beliefs in writing and in speech.

The story of Aung San Suu Kyi is a moving example of the power of nonviolence. Even though she was not able to entirely secure an effective umbrella organization to coordinate the resistance, nor implement what Gandhi calls “constructive program”, she led the Burmese people in a campaign for a democratic government. She is frequently called Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Daw is an honorific similar to madam for older, revered women, literally meaning “aunt”. It is thanks to the power of nonviolence in Burma that Ravindra Kumar insisted that:

“Today, it is not possible for military dictators...like that of Burma to dishonour an international call. If through a resolution of the United Nations the dictators of such a country are warned by international community of non-cooperation, restrictions or sanctions and boycott then this act, according to me, will be within the scope of nonviolent Gandhian way”¹³.

4.3.4. Kwame Nkrumah and his Gandhi Inspired Positive Action

Kwame Nkrumah was born on September 21, 1909, at Nkroful in what was then the British-ruled Gold Coast, the son of a goldsmith. He was trained as a teacher after which he went to the United States in 1935 for advanced studies and continued his schooling in England, where he helped organize the Pan-African Congress in 1945. He returned to Ghana in 1947 and became the general secretary of the newly founded United Gold Coast Convention but split from it in 1949 to form the Convention People’s party (CPP).

After his ‘positive action’ (nonviolence) campaign created disturbances in 1950, Nkrumah was jailed, but when the CPP swept the 1951 elections, he was freed to form a government, and he led the colony to independence as Ghana in

1957. A firm believer in African liberation, Nkrumah pursued a radical pan-African policy, playing a key role in the formation of the Organization of African Unity in 1963. As head of government, he was less successful however, and as time passed he was accused of forming a dictatorship. In 1964 he formed a one-party state, with himself as president for life, and was accused of actively promoting a cult of his own personality. Overthrown by the military in 1966, with the help of western backing, he spent his last years in exile, dying in Bucharest, Romania, on April 27, 1972. His legacy and dream of a “United States of Africa” still remains a goal among many. His numerous writings address Africa’s political destiny.¹⁴

If Nkrumah was successful, he owed part of his formation, directly or indirectly to Gandhi. Nkrumah became a disciple of Mahatma Gandhi’s nonviolent strategy of “Satyagraha”, which he coined as “Positive Action.”¹⁵

Here is a summary of what his positive action is all about:

Positive action has already achieved remarkable success in the liberation struggle of our continent and I feel sure that it can further save us from the perils of this atomic arrogance. If the direct action that was carried out by the international protest team were to be repeated on a mass scale, or simultaneously from various parts of Africa, the result could be as powerful and as successful as Gandhi’s historic Salt March. We salute Mahatma Gandhi and we remember, in tribute to him that it was in South Africa that his method of nonviolence and noncooperation was first practiced in the struggle against the vicious race discrimination that still plagues that unhappy country. But now positive action with nonviolence, as advocated by us, has found expression in South Africa in the defiance of the oppressive pass laws. This defiance continues in spite of the murder of unarmed men, women, and children by the South African Government. We are sure that the will of the majority will ultimately prevail, for no government can continue to impose its rule in face of the

conscious defiance of the overwhelming masses of its people. There is no force, however impregnable, that a united and determined people cannot overcome.¹⁶

Nkrumah was totally committed to the liberation of Africa from his student days to his death. The ideals of freedom, equality, independence, and social justice inspired him so much. These convictions underpinned his ambitions for self-determination for the Gold Coast, as Ghana was called at the time. He envisioned all social groups in African society had a role to play in mobilising for political independence via a campaign of “Positive Action.”¹⁷ He adopted the Gandhian strategy of boycotts, strikes, leafleting, and educational campaigns included women, youth groups, farmers associations and trade unions.¹⁸

African unity was the only solution by which Africans could regain their respect, dignity and equality in the world. On this note, he formed the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963. The intention was to win over his contemporaries to achieve Continental Union Government for Africa. For him,

We need the strength of our combined numbers and resources to protect ourselves from the very positive dangers of returning colonialism in disguised forms. We need it to combat the entrenched forces dividing our continent and still holding back millions of our brothers. We need it to secure total African liberation.¹⁹

As independence dawned in some parts of Africa, repression had mounted in others. The Gold Coast having become the independent state of Ghana in 1957, the All African Peoples' Conference was organised in Accra in 1958. A posthumously published work by Kwame Nkrumah reproduces the provisional agenda prepared for the conference: “The main purpose of the All-African Peoples' Conference to be held in Accra, Ghana, in December 1958, will be to formulate concrete plans and work out the Gandhian tactics and strategy of the African Nonviolent Revolution....”²⁰ Gandhi actually inspired his Positive Action. Nevertheless, Nkrumah was also accused of dictatorship and we must insist that

not all his doctrine are in line with Gandhi totally. But we praised his little efforts to follow Gandhi.

4.3.5. Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela: Leadership Qualities based on Gandhi's Spirit

Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela was born in Transkei, South Africa on July 18, 1918. His father was Chief Henry Mandela of the Tembu Tribe. Mandela himself was educated at University College of Fort Hare and the University of Witwatersrand and qualified in law in 1942. He joined the African National Congress (ANC) in 1944 and was engaged in resistance against the ruling National Party's apartheid policies after 1948. In response to Apartheid, the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) launched a campaign of Gandhi-inspired acts of civil resistance and nonviolent noncooperation. Mandela travelled across the country as the ANCYL's national volunteer-in-chief, recruiting volunteers and coordinating protests.

He went on trial for treason in 1956-1961 and was acquitted in 1961. On June 12, 1964, eight of the accused, including Mandela, were sentenced to life imprisonment. From 1964 to 1982, he was incarcerated at Robben Island Prison, off Cape Town; thereafter, he was at Pollsmoor Prison, nearby on the mainland.

During his years in prison, Nelson Mandela's reputation grew steadily. He was widely accepted as the most significant black leader in South Africa and became a potent symbol of resistance as the anti-apartheid movement gathered strength. He consistently refused to compromise his political position to obtain his freedom.

Nelson Mandela was released on February 11, 1990. After his release, he plunged himself wholeheartedly into his life's work, striving to attain the goals he and others had set out almost four decades earlier. In 1991, at the first national conference of the ANC held inside South Africa after the organization

had been banned in 1960, Mandela was elected President of the ANC. In 1993 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

On 10 May 1994 Nelson Mandela was inaugurated as the first democratically elected State President of South Africa on and was President until June 1999. As president, Mandela presided over the transition from minority rule and apartheid. His advocacy of reconciliation led to international acclaim and importantly the trust of the White African population.²¹ In 1999, Mandela received the Gandhi/King Award for Nonviolence from the World Movement for Nonviolence. The prize was presented by Ms. Ela Gandhi, granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi and a then-member of the South African parliament, a position she could not have held prior to the end of apartheid. Ms. Gandhi described Mandela as the living legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, the Gandhi of South Africa.

Although they never met, Gandhi and Mandela are often mentioned together as giants of 20th-century anti-colonialism. South African leader Nelson Mandela described Mohandas Gandhi as “the archetypical anti-colonial revolutionary” and acknowledged the earlier leader’s influence on the independence movement in South Africa.²²

Both Gandhi and Mandela began their careers as western-trained lawyers. Both served terms in Johannesburg’s infamous Fort prison for their activism. Mandela himself often cited Gandhi as an inspiration and claimed the Indian leader as a son of South Africa, stating that “India gave South Africa Gandhi the barrister and Africa gave India back Mahatma Gandhi the Great Soul.”²³ The leadership qualities of Nelson Mandela had at its base Gandhi’s Spirit. When Mandela spent 27 years of his life in Robben Island in the prison, the room was full of books of Gandhi and many other classics. The twenty seven years he spent in jail were spent in meditation and reflection and it is said that throughout the years, the bitterness left his soul and he provided the leadership to steer South Africa to be a multi ethnic state. Mandela stands tall amongst our contemporary leaders, for his ability to forge unity amongst traditional enemies.²⁴

Gandhi's influence on Mandela was shown by the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Visiting South Africa on the 137th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi's birthday, Singh described Mandela as the greatest Gandhian for transforming the lives of millions. Singh said Gandhi would have been "elated" to see his aspirations of peace and reconciliation realized in the transformation of South Africa under Mandela's leadership. In the eyes of the world, the mantle of Gandhi seemed to have "descended" on Mandela.²⁵ In fact, Nelson Mandela is "An Icon of his age."²⁶

Mandela tried his best to follow Gandhi in everything, though he differed from him at some point:

Gandhi remained committed to nonviolence; I followed the Gandhian strategy for as long as I could, but then there came a point in our struggle when the brute force of the oppressor could no longer be countered through passive resistance alone. We founded *Umkhonto we Sizwe* and added a military dimension to our struggle. Even then we chose sabotage because it did not involve the loss of life, and it offered the best hope for future race relations.²⁷

This behaviour of Mandela would never have happened to Gandhi! But he still traces the roots of his philosophy of life to Gandhi.

4.3.6. Martin Luther King Jr: The Gandhi influenced Peacemaker Hero

While commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the visit of Martin Luther to India from February 10, 1959 to March 10, 1959, in Washington DC on Feb 11 2009, The US House of Representative unanimously passed a resolution recognizing the influence Mahatma Gandhi had on Martin Luther King Jr, the great civil rights leader of America who has been a source of inspiration to President Barack Obama. Observing that the great American leader was tremendously influenced by the nonviolence philosophy of Gandhi, the resolution says King encountered this during his study of Gandhi, and was further inspired by him

during his first trip to India. King successfully used this in the struggle for civil rights and voting rights. The trip to India made a profound impact on Dr. King and inspired him to use nonviolence as an instrument of social change to end segregation and racial discrimination in America throughout the rest of his work during the Civil Rights Movement, the Congressional resolution says.²⁸ During a period of soul-searching, he had, in his words, “despaired of the power of love in solving social problems.” At this point, he was coincidentally introduced to the life of Mohandas K. Gandhi in a sermon by Mordecai Johnson, president of Howard University, who had just returned from a trip to India.

But which Martin Luther King are we talking about? Not the one at the base of the 16th Century revolution, but the one Nick Campbell from Juneau, Alaska ranked as the PEACEMAKER HERO. Martin Luther King Jr. was born in Atlanta on Sunset Adams Street in 1929. He was also a paper boy. His mom taught him to read before he went to school. He read books about black people who were heroes, like George Washington Carver. Jim Crow Laws were laws that separated blacks from whites. Martin’s parents did not like segregation, which means keeping blacks and whites apart. The situation was such that black people had to sit in the uncomfortable chairs and the white people had all the comfortable chairs. More to that, there were lots of restaurants open for whites and hardly any open for blacks. Worst still, blacks had to use different drinking fountains from whites. And above all, they had to pray without whites in church. Blacks were cursed, chased, lynched and killed, just because of the colour of their skin. When blacks came into the stores, white people wouldn’t answer their questions. King married Coretta Scott in 1953 and she proved to be a real companion. On Dec. 1, 1955, Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a bus to a white person. It started a Montgomery bus boycott of the buses by the black people. They didn’t know if it would work, because no one else had tried it before. But the bus boycott worked. It took one year to change the rules. Martin Luther King Jr. was the president of the Montgomery Improvement Association. He believed that love, not violence, was the most powerful weapon, just like Gandhi believed. King was encouraged after the successful Montgomery bus boycott in 1956 to visit India. By the time he accepted Prime

Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's invitation to visit India in 1959, the civil rights activist saw himself as a "pilgrim to Gandhi's land."²⁹ Martin told people not to obey unjust laws. The Children's March of Spring, 1963, played a central role in the advancement of Civil Rights. The Children's March's original goal was to desegregate downtown stores in Birmingham. People watched on TV and started thinking about black people's rights.

King is very famous for The Letter from Birmingham Jail or Letter from Birmingham City Jail. It is an open letter written on April 16, 1963 from the city jail in Birmingham, Alabama, where he was confined after being arrested for his part in the Birmingham campaign, a planned non-violent protest conducted by the Alabama Christian Movement for Human Rights and King's Southern Christian Leadership Conference against racial segregation by Birmingham's city government and downtown retailers. King's letter is a response to a statement made by eight white Alabama clergymen on April 12, 1963, titled "A Call For Unity". The clergymen agreed that social injustices existed but argued that the battle against racial segregation should be fought solely in the courts, not in the streets. King responded that without nonviolent forceful direct actions such as his, true civil rights could never be achieved. As he put it, "This 'Wait' has almost always meant 'Never.'" He asserted that not only was civil disobedience justified in the face of unjust laws, but that "one has a moral responsibility to disobey unjust laws." The letter includes the famous statement "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," as well as the words attributed to William Ewart Gladstone quoted by King: "Justice too long delayed is justice denied."

His popularity grew after his "I Have a Dream" speech delivered 28 August 1963, at the Lincoln Memorial, Washington D.C. Many assert that this dream was realized with the ascending of Obama as president of the USA. Martin was against the Vietnam War. He did not like violence. Martin was 39 when he was killed.

The impact Gandhi made on him is best described in his own words:

As I read his works I became deeply fascinated by his campaigns of nonviolent resistance. The whole Gandhian concept of Satyagraha...was profoundly significant to me. As I delved deeper into the philosophy of Gandhi, my skepticism concerning the power of love gradually diminished, and I came to see for the first time its potency in the area of social reform.³⁰

By this, King put Gandhian method of nonviolence as one of the most potent weapons available to an oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. What fascinated King most in Gandhi was The 'turn-the-other-cheek' philosophy and the 'love-your-enemies' philosophy which Gandhi drew from the Sermon on the Mount. He therefore came to realize that Gandhi was the first person in history to reinvent the Christian ethic of love as a potent instrument for social and collective transformation. It was a short journey thereafter to unreserved acceptance of the Gandhian technique of nonviolence as the only viable means to overcome the problems faced by his people.³¹ In Gandhi's teaching he found the answer to a question that had long troubled him: How does one set about carrying out a social reform? He found in the nonviolent resistance philosophy of Gandhi the only morally and practically sound method open to oppressed people in their struggle for freedom. King therefore advocated and practiced civil disobedience and nonviolence. Before he had read about Gandhi, he had almost concluded that the teaching of Jesus could only be put into practice as between individuals; but after making a study of Gandhi he realized that he had been mistaken.

Commenting on the relationship that existed between King and Gandhi, John Odey attests that King's reverence for Gandhi was such that he "kept on reminding the blacks of the momentous need to conduct themselves in the spirit of Christ and that of Gandhi. It would therefore appear that he and Gandhi were the same in every bit of their conception of nonviolence and the application of its techniques."³² While there are many remarkable similarities between the two, they also differed slightly in some areas. But their objectives were the same, to free the oppressed. There's a vast difference in

accomplishment between King and the others listed above. Most thinkers say that King remains one of those rare gems that tried to follow Gandhi to the latter. He died a real satyagrahi.

4.3.7. Desmond Mpilo Tutu, an African Religious Leader in Love with Gandhi

Desmond Mpilo Tutu was born in Klerksdorp, Transvaal on the 7th of October 1931 in South Africa. His father was a teacher, and he himself was educated at Johannesburg Bantu High School. After leaving school he trained first as a teacher at Pretoria Bantu Normal College and in 1954 he graduated from the University of South Africa. After three years as a high school teacher he began to study theology, being ordained as a priest in 1960. The years 1962-66 were devoted to further theological study in England leading up to a Master of Theology. From 1967 to 1972 he taught theology in South Africa before returning to England for three years as the assistant director of a theological institute in London. In 1975 he was appointed Dean of St. Mary's Cathedral in Johannesburg, the first black to hold that position. From 1976 to 1978 he was Bishop of Lesotho, and in 1978 became the first black General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches. As a vocal and committed opponent of apartheid in South Africa he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984. He was generally credited with coining the term Rainbow Nation as a metaphor for post-apartheid South Africa after 1994 under African National Congress rule. The expression has since entered mainstream consciousness to describe South Africa's ethnic diversity. Tutu was the first black ordained South African Anglican Archbishop of Cape Town. Other awards given to Desmond Tutu include The Gandhi Peace Prize in 2007, the Albert Schweitzer Prize for Humanitarianism and the Magubela prize for liberty in 1986.³³

Tutu is an honorary doctor of a number of leading universities in the USA, Britain and Germany.

Desmond Tutu has formulated his objective as “a democratic and just society without racial divisions”, and has set forward the following points as minimum demands:

1. Equal civil rights for all
2. The abolition of South Africa’s passport laws
3. A common system of education
4. The cessation of forced deportation from South Africa to the so-called “homelands”.³⁴

The concept of reconciliation and forgiveness as was practiced in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission headed by Archbishop Tutu was influenced by Gandhi. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in 1995 to deal with the harm that had been caused by Apartheid to people’s dignity, which affected their state of self worth. It underscored the fact that the process of reconciliation is not about forgetting the past but about acknowledging the crimes committed and thereby acknowledging the other person as a human being who had suffered. The perpetrators of crimes relating to human rights violations who gave testimony were given the opportunity to request amnesty from prosecution. The mandate of the Commission was to bear witness to, record and in some cases, grant amnesty and reparation as well as promote rehabilitation. This process was heavily influenced by the traditional practices of *Ubuntu* societies in South Africa.³⁵ *Ubuntu* is really a quality that Gandhi came to share with progressive Africa. It is our sense of connectedness, our sense that my humanity is bound up with your humanity. Tutu himself says: “What dehumanises you, inexorably dehumanises me.”³⁶

He received the Mahatma Gandhi Global Nonviolence Award and from his speech, one can depict the influence of Gandhi on Africa:

Gandhi was to influence greatly Martin Luther King Jr., the leading light in the American Civil Rights Movement, as well as the South African National Congress of Nelson Mandela. So many, many people expected our country to go up in flames, enveloped by a catastrophe, a racial bloodbath. It never happened. It never

happened because in the struggle against an evil of injustice, ultimately it did not take recourse to violence and because you and so many others in the international community supported the struggle.³⁷

4.3.8. Barack Hussein Obama: A Leader, a symbol of hope and a hero inspired by Gandhi

“You don’t have to fight in a war to be a hero; you just have to be responsible, courageous, loving, trustworthy, respectful and caring”. Many quote these words when contrasting Barack Obama with his predecessor George Bush. The former is the first African American President. He is outstandingly intelligent and doesn’t want what’s right for him; he wants what’s right for the world. Obama is a hero.

Barack Obama was born to a white American mother, Ann Dunham, and a black Kenyan father, Barack Obama, Sr., who were both young college students at the University of Hawaii. When his father left for Harvard, she and Barack stayed behind, and his father ultimately returned alone to Kenya, where he worked as a government economist. He was brought up largely by his grandparents. His father wrote to him regularly but, though he travelled around the world on official business for Kenya, he visited only once, when Barack was ten.³⁸

Obama attended Columbia University, but found New York’s racial tension inescapable. He became a community organizer for a small Chicago church-based group for three years, helping poor South Side residents cope with a wave of plant closings. He then attended Harvard Law School, and in 1990 became the first African-American editor of the Harvard Law Review. He turned down a prestigious judicial clerkship, choosing instead to practice civil-rights law back in Chicago, representing victims of housing and employment discrimination and working on voting-rights legislation. He also began teaching

at the University of Chicago Law School, and married Michelle Robinson, a fellow attorney.

His fame started in 1995 when Barack published an autobiography called, *Dreams from My Father: A Story of Race and Inheritance*. His audio version won a Grammy. Obama got more involved in politics every day and decided to run for the Illinois State Senate in 1996. After winning the seat, he worked to pass the first major ethics law in twenty-five years. He also worked to lower taxes and improved health care for everybody. In 2000, he ran for the United States House of Representatives but lost. He was not discouraged at all. He was still filled with “the Audacity of Hope”.³⁹ He was always against going to war in Iraq and spoke against it during a rally in October 2002. In 2004 Obama was elected to the U.S. Senate as a Democrat, representing Illinois, and he gained national attention by giving a rousing and well-received keynote speech at the Democratic National Convention in Boston. In 2008 he ran for President, and despite having only four years of national political experience, he won. In January 2009, he was sworn in as the 44th President of the United States, and the first African-American ever elected to that position.

He inspires many people by the books he has written, the outstanding speeches he gives, his community service and his belief that, together, we can all make the world a better place. He also inspires people by his determination to solve problems with other countries through negotiation instead of war. He has overcome obstacles during his life with great success. His actions throughout his life are evidence that he wants to make the world a better place, influence many people to do the same and create a more peaceful world. Obama is a leader and a symbol of hope.

In September 2009, while visiting Wakefield High School in Arlington Virginia Obama called for students to take responsibility and to learn from their failures so that they succeed in the end. One of the students asked him this question: “...if you could have dinner with anyone, dead or alive, who would it be?” “You know, I think that it might be Gandhi, who is a real hero of mine,” Obama said. From his answer, one can quickly decipher the impact Gandhi has

on him. “Now, it would probably be a really small meal because he didn’t eat a lot,” he continued. In a more striking way, Obama insisted “But Mahatma Gandhi is someone who has inspired people across the world for the past several generations”.

President Obama also recognized the 140th anniversary of Gandhi’s birth saying Americans owe him “an enormous measure of gratitude,” including his influence on Dr. King and the Civil Rights movement. He insisted that America “has its roots in the India of Mahatma Gandhi and the nonviolent social action movement for Indian independence which he led”. For Him Americans are to join with Indians in celebrating his life, and find time “to reflect on his message of nonviolence, which continues to inspire people and political movements across the globe,”

We can give the examples of how Gandhi influenced Obama. Prior to becoming President of the United States, then-Senator Obama noted that:

throughout my life, I have always looked to Mahatma Gandhi as an inspiration, because he embodies the kind of transformational change that can be made when ordinary people come together to do extraordinary things. That is why his portrait hangs in my Senate Office: to remind me that real results will come not just from Washington - they will come from the people.⁴⁰

Not even nine months as a President, He won the Nobel Peace Prize in October, 2009 for the hope that he will improve the global community. He was the fourth U.S. President to receive one, and the third President to win the Nobel Peace Prize while still in office. In a speech as he formally accepted his Nobel Peace Prize, the president said that the nonviolence practiced by such leaders as Gandhi and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. should be a guiding force. Their pacifism may not have been practical or even possible in every circumstance. The love they showed and their faith in human progress must always be a guiding force for any human being. In awarding the prize to Obama, the Nobel panel cited his call for a world free of nuclear weapons, for a more engaged U.S. role in combating global warming, for his support of the United Nations

and multilateral diplomacy and for broadly capturing the attention of the world and giving its people “hope.”⁴¹

Although Mahatma Gandhi was not awarded the Nobel Peace Prize but the coveted honour has gone to several individuals who believed in and propagated the Gandhian philosophy of peace and nonviolence globally. Barack Hussein Obama is latest in this club of Gandhian followers to have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize. As demonstrated above, the first African American president of the United States has been an avid admirer of Mahatma Gandhi. The Father of the nation Gandhi's contribution and influence in the rise of Obama is being acknowledged too.⁴²

U.S. President Barack Obama extends his nonviolent nation by personally advocating on the behalf of all political prisoners in most countries, especially in Burma. He has been working towards the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. However, saying that Gandhi was his hero and getting prizes are all very good, but Obama really needs to be more practical than theoretical. Gandhi, in contrast to Obama, never accepted public office - but accomplished so much! The presentation here on Gandhi's influence on Obama does not in any way mean we are canonising him. Many will obviously criticise his war theory. In an e-mail discussion with Professor Wahlrab Amentahru (Instructional Assistant Professor, Department of, Politics and Government, Illinois State University), he made a comment on this, by insisting that it's not a problem to say that Obama was influenced by Gandhi. He has talked about Gandhi enough for sure. He has also been influenced by Martin Luther King Jr. who was also influenced by Gandhi. However, Obama has a tense relationship with these pioneers of nonviolence because they would surely disagree with his continued wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and they would oppose his use of Drones to kill people in Pakistan, Sudan, Somalia, Yemen and now the greater Middle East. Unless Obama turns away from this vice, he will not be practically influenced by Gandhi.

Below is a constructive criticism for Obama during his acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize written by Michael Nagler⁴³ in the YES Magazine:

There were many noble thoughts resounding throughout President Obama's acceptance speech for the Nobel Peace Prize. The knowledge he revealed of some of his great predecessors, particularly Martin Luther King and Aung San Suu Kyi, was astounding for someone in his position; but then he made a fatal mistake, and it is essential to recognize that mistake and to correct it—to make sure that it does not happen again. Obama said, "A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler's armies." He is wrong. In March of 1943, Gestapo headquarters in Berlin ordered the arrest and deportation of the remaining Jewish men who had been left out of the roundups so far because they were married to 'Aryan' wives. But then a totally unexpected thing happened. First one, then another of those wives began to converge on the detention center on Rosenstrasse demanding their men be released. By the end of the weekend, they were nearly 6,000 strong and refusing orders to disperse though Gestapo headquarters was only a few blocks away. And the Gestapo caved in—they released the men. Moreover, as we have learned only recently, in Nazi-occupied capitals all over Europe, officials carefully watched the failed experiment and decided to leave their own Jews who similarly had Aryan spouses alone. In other words, an unorganized form of nonviolence carried out spontaneously by untrained people with no organization and no follow-up "stopped Hitler's armies" in their most virulent form, saving tens of thousands of people. On one level, it should come as a surprise that such a sophisticated president, who speaks knowledgeably about King and Gandhi, should come out with the oldest objection in the book, "it wouldn't have worked against the Nazis" — the most frequently heard cavil, the most knee-jerk reaction that people like me, who advocate the "sweet reasonableness" of nonviolence, can hear in our sleep. There are several problems with the logic of this apparently imperishable argument, but it will

do for now to simply say that it is patently false: nonviolence *did* work against the Nazis—when it was tried. The issue is not just philosophical.

Other statements he used in his speech like “Negotiations cannot convince Al Qaeda’s leaders to lay down their arms.” And “We must begin by acknowledging the hard truth that we will not eradicate violent conflict in our lifetimes,” are really pure speculations! Again, Nagler hammers in the same article:

President Obama displays more awareness of the nonviolent alternative than anyone who has held that high office in our lifetime. From what other President could we expect to hear these words in a public speech: “As someone who stands here as a direct consequence of Dr. King’s life’s work, I am living testimony to the moral force of non-violence. I know there is nothing weak—nothing passive, nothing naïve—in the creed and lives of Gandhi and King.” And yet, as he follows out of this logic he runs into a tragic block. He declares without evidence that nonviolence would not have stopped Hitler’s armies and cannot stop a ruthless and determined opponent, although it stopped Ferdinand Marcos in 1986, Slobodan Milosevic in 2000, and about a dozen other ruthless dictators. He likewise bemoans the fact that when a Darfur or a Rwanda happens we have only two choices, to stand by and do nothing or to use deadly force, because “inaction tears at our conscience and can lead to more costly intervention later. That is why all responsible nations must embrace the role that militaries with a clear mandate can play to keep the peace.”

Nagler does not want to criticise Obama at such, his aim is to condemn the culture that has entrapped him, forcing him to betray his high intelligence. So Nagler wants to alert every one of us to the danger it poses—to encourage each of us to learn all we can about nonviolence and personally begin the shift, as Martin Luther King urged, from a ‘thing oriented’ civilization to one based on the infinite potential of the human being. No doubt he concludes his article by

portraying that the election of Barack Obama to the Presidency of the United States opened a door to a much brighter, nonviolent future. We have to pluck up the courage to walk through that door before it closes once again.

4.3.9. John Okwoeze Odey, the Gandhi Expert of Africa

This icon is a catholic priest born in the Early 1950s in Ngbo in Oha-Ukwu Local Government Area of Ebonyi State Nigeria. After his seminary formation in Augustines Senior Seminary Jos from 1977-1984, he was ordained a priest on July 7, 1984. John Odey holds a doctorate degree in Moral Theology from Academia Alfonsiana in Rome. He is a writer of many books revolving around politics. His 37th book entitled “My life and my commitment”⁴⁴ is his autobiography in which this icon talked about himself. His numerous writings on the great nonviolent leaders Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr, coupled with his heated criticisms of the deploring political situation in his country ranks him a great nonviolent prophet of our time. His boldness and frankness towards authorities trying to bend the rules shows someone following the footsteps of Gandhi. This is a man who does not mince words as Stephen Elem would say to remind Nigerians (and I would add Africans) of their maladies:

... corruption in both high and low places, poverty, indiscipline, hunger, underdevelopment, selection instead of election, artificial fuel scarcity, abduction, strike, ethnic clashes, cultism, examination malpractices, internet fraud, network problem, power outage, marginalisation bad roads, rigging of election, injustice, jungle justice and the celebration of HIV/AIDS⁴⁵.

I certainly agree with Elem’s conclusion to the above article that it takes a man like Odey to stand up and fight for the rights of citizens in a country where freedom of speech is not free. In effect Odey offers constructive criticisms to the government to make the latter realise its shortcomings and improve.

Eugene Song urged Africans and especially Cameroonians to follow the example of this prominent figure who is a courageous and committed man of God trying

to bring about changes in his country. He praised the effort of Odey whom he identified as:

...the vociferous and indefatigable Catholic Priest of Abakiliki diocese...who challenges the vices that have crept into the socio-political and economic landscape of his country. He feels Nigeria has been plunged into a pool of bribery and corruption and something has to be done quickly so as to ransom the situation...Fr. John Odey believes that criticizing the vices ravaging the land must go beyond the pulpit. He holds that theologians/pastors should stand at the forefront leading the people in the fight against injustices.⁴⁶

What motivated John Odey to be interested in Gandhi's nonviolence? He outlines it himself:

Beginning from the year, 1979, when as a Seminarian, I first read some works of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, I have continued to grow in the conviction that to fight against social injustice is a compelling moral obligation. It is not enough to frown at social injustice and do nothing about its possible elimination. More importantly, I have since then equally lived in the conviction that nonviolent resistance provides the best solution to human conflicts.⁴⁷

The unstable socio-political situation of Nigeria was also a determining factor to opt for nonviolence:

...the increasing incidents of violence in Nigeria, the efforts of some Nigerians to counteract violence by disseminating the philosophy of peace and nonviolence, and my personal interest in and conviction that nonviolent resistance is the best and the most morally refined form of protest against social ills, combined motivated my choice...⁴⁸

Seeing that no serious study of the nature and meaning of peace and nonviolence can afford to ignore the role of Mahatma Gandhi, he hopes to throw more light to Nigerians (and I will add to Africans), who are interested in the nature, meaning and practice of nonviolent resistance. John Odey is of the serious opinion that when those who can talk, choose to remain silent in any situation, it is a great form of violence which he coined “violence of silence”. What does he mean by this? It is “the violence of those who are in the position to speak for the oppressed and whose voice could be heard and hearkened to, but who have decided to keep quiet and watch the predators destroy the nation and the people. Like the violence of Pilate who washed his hands after condemning Jesus, thinking that he had become innocent of his blood” ⁴⁹.

In his autobiography, Odey insists that the commitment to truth and justice is his like. In the last paragraph, he outlines the *raison d’etre* of his mission as a prophet:

Whether I am alive or dead, I will be glad if it is said that somewhere, sometime and someday that as a Catholic priest, I did not shy away from playing my prophetic role, no matter how feeble, to save Nigeria when our leaders went on rampage in their blind pursuit of wealth and power at the expense of the country and the people. If at the end of my earthly sojourn a good number of people will honestly say that I struggled to live the good life, to give hope to the poor and the hopeless, to set the oppressed and the downtrodden free, to speak for those who are enslaved by our so-called leaders, to defend the defenceless, to be the mouthpiece of those who have mouths but cannot speak, to open the eyes and minds of leaders blinded and distorted by the allure of power and money and that I tried to make our leaders understand that all the money they steal from the nation and in the process make life unbearable for millions for their fellow men and women have no value beyond the grave, I will pass on to the yonder world a happy man in the hope that God’s grace will take care of my many

shortcomings. But before then, the commitment to truth and justice is my life⁵⁰

4.3.10. Christian Cardinal Tumi: Man of God, Vociferous Prophet and True Patriot

Born on 15 October 1930 in Kikaikelaki, North West Region of Cameroon, Cardinal Christian Wiyghan Tumi is the Emeritus Archbishop of Douala. He trained as a teacher in Nigeria and London, and then went on to earn a licentiate in theology in Lyon and a doctorate in philosophy at the University of Fribourg, Switzerland. He was ordained a priest on 17 April 1966 in Soppo, diocese of Buea and from 1966 to 1967 he carried out his ministry as curate at Fiango (Kumbo). On 6 December 1979 he was elected the first bishop of the diocese of Yagoua, erected the same day. He received Episcopal ordination on 6 January 1980 in St. Peter's Basilica. On 23 April 1982, he was elected vice-president of the Episcopal Conference of Cameroon, on 19 November 1982 he was appointed Coadjutor Archbishop of Garoua and on 17 March 1984 he was made Archbishop. In 1985 he was elected as president of the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon a position he held until 1991. In 1990 he was President Delegate to the 8th General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops. He became the Archbishop of Douala on 31 August 1991 and in 1994, President Delegate to the Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops. He was one of the cardinal electors who participated in the 2005 papal conclave that selected Pope Benedict XVI.

Cardinal Tumi is one of the rare prelates to publicly denounce the political situation of Cameroon where so many of his kind seem to be silent! As a priest of God, he clamours for justice and peace and fights for the human rights of his compatriots⁵¹. His public pronouncements have led people think that he is interested in taking over the presidency of the country. There is an impression in the political world of Cameroon that pastors have always been silent or indifferent to the political situation. Eugene Song corrects this impression when

he says: “It will be a gross understatement to claim here that pastors of Cameroon have been wholly silent in the face of increasing corruption and injustices prevalent in the country”⁵². To add more flesh to this proposal, Eugene Song continues: “A prominent Cameroonian Statesman and a true patriot who has never been silent in the face of injustices and oppression in Cameroon is Christian Cardinal Tumi, Archbishop emeritus of Douala”⁵³. Tumi’s time bomb exploded when he published a book entitled “*The political regimes of Ahmadou Ahhidjo and Paul Biya, and Christian Tumi, priest*”. The effect of this book could be seen during the lunching. Ireneaus Chia Chongwain depicted well the scenario during the lunching.

It is understood when sports in general and football in particular, draw huge crowds in Cameroon, but when the launching of a book releases a human avalanche to the event, it can only be put down as the exception to every rule. That was the case on Tuesday, April 17, when a healthy portion of the Yaounde population trooped to the Djeuga Palace Hotel to witness the launching of Cardinal Tumi’s latest publication... The book chronicles the past and present regimes governance excesses, their obsession for power and the mechanisms used to keep a tight rein on dissenting voices and remote-control the citizenry. One indisputable conclusion cuts across the book the obsession for power breeds limitations in judgment⁵⁴.

Tumi in this book exposes in clear terms his experience with political leaders of both the Ahhidjo and Biya regimes. In it he also relates the plots and threats of his life. Some people prefer to call this book Cardinal Tumi’s Autobiography because he gives experience of his life. He has always loved to fight against corruption.

Just like Gandhi, Tumi opines for freedom of everyone. Therefore, the Catholic Church firmly believes in religious freedom for every human being. That is every man’s inalienable right. The Church must promote the right of every individual and community to social and civil freedom in matters of religion.

Such freedom is willed by the Creator of all things. It is therefore embedded in every man's nature and should not be curtailed by anyone whosoever. Any coercion in religious matters must be avoided. Quoting the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (num. 155), he insists that all men should be immune from coercion on the part of individuals, social groups and every human power so that, within due limits, nobody is forced to act against his convictions in religious matters in private or in public, alone or in association with others. This freedom is the power that the will possesses to determine for itself and by itself to act or not to act, without being forced by any external or internal force⁵⁵. The cardinal was by this, reacting to a situation in the north in which non-Moslems of the North of Cameroon believed they could get work with the government if they become Moslems; or at least, bear Moslem names. The cardinal never minced words to insist: "That is a moral pressure that violates the individual's freedom to choose a moral pressure that violates the individual's freedom to choose in conscience his own religion. It is even anti-constitutional"⁵⁶.

When the Lamibe in Garoua wanted to oblige Christians to pay the Zaka, a sort of tax Moslems pay to their religious chiefs, it was Tumi who sent a letter to all Christian communities telling them that they had no obligation to pay the said tax.

In his exercise of function as the President of the National Episcopal Conference of Cameroon, the Bishops reacted to the economic crises in Cameroon in 1990 recognizing the external causes of it but insisted on causes for which Cameroon was responsible. The government reacted bitterly. As a result this was said of Tumi: "He has become by this fact, the pet hate of the regime!"⁵⁷. Despite this, he never relented in his duties in forming people's consciences.

The Cardinal has always been a precursor of the right formation of conscience "...the formation of the conscience is vital for the Human person"⁵⁸. His stand on issues touching the political life of the country led some to think that the Cardinal was against Biya. The Cardinal's statement: "you can be against

someone's political thoughts and still love him"⁵⁹ is in line with Gandhi's thoughts.

Like Gandhi, Cardinal Tumi has always been an advocate of Justice. In the concluding pages of his book he invites all to reflect on justice:

I believe there are many people in our society who have been gravely hurt by all forms of injustice: the injustice of parents towards their children-not sending a child to school is unjust; injustice towards workers-workers deserve a just wage...in the absence of justice, nothing good can be expected from the citizens. It would be asking them for the impossible. This is the time to say loud and clear certain things, which could shock some who refuse to leave the already beaten path. Once leaders of a nation raise injustice into an instrument of government rule, the people and all men and women of good-will, who ardently yearn for peace, must not fold their arms. Otherwise, through their silence, they become accomplices to injustice⁶⁰.

In effect, Tumi is giving us a lesson great nonviolence leaders including Jesus have already given. We must not remain silent in the face of injustice. Cardinal Tumi is as Eugene Song insists "A glaring example of a vociferous prophet and a critical pastor of the regime in Cameroon"⁶¹.

From his words, we can deduce that Tumi is a harbinger of truth he thinks it is a virtue which politicians, in general, and in especially Cameroonian politicians lack:

The Cameroonian politician does not like the truth. He refuses to objectively analyse the opinion of the other person for fear that the other person might be right. Truth is the light that exposes everything; it resists all attempts to cover it up because what we strive to cover it with is called a lie. The man who lies goes against his sacred nature... I, insist on the love of the truth because I believe that is what Cameroonian politicians lack. Truth does not call for any defence because it is already by its very nature strong,

and it can never be defeated. It is only swindling and lie-telling that have no force before the truth, that need arms, soldiers and prisons to prolong their domination. A partial government digs its own grave. What is most important in the life of a politician, in the true sense of the word, is to free the heart and the mind from the fear of truth because it is a grave sin to give in to the evil of lies. He who is afraid has something to hide; that is obvious⁶².

With this, Tumi brings to the contemporary world a message of nonviolence which should be the option of all the prelates.

If nonviolence has been so effective, it can be applied to the African democracy. As late as the end of the sixties, the West African nationalist pioneer, Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe wrote in the light of his own experience: “On Gandhi’s teachings of satyagraha, history has proved Gandhi right...” And we can add that Gandhi will continue to be proven right in Africa.⁶³ In other words, Africa needs Gandhi.

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Bodhisattvas are enlightened beings who have postponed their own nirvana and chosen to take rebirth in order to serve humanity

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33. More about his biography can be gotten from the speeches, letters and sermons from 1976 to 1994, woven together in narrative by his media secretary. Cf. J. ALLEN (ed.), *The Rainbow People of God: The Making of a Peaceful Revolution*, New York, Doubleday, 1994.

34. http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1984/tutu-bio.html

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36. D. M. TUTU, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, Rider Books, Random House, London, 1999, p. 35.

37. D. M. TUTU, “Goodness is Powerful”, Gandhi Lecture on 21 September 2007 at the JMU Convocation Center, Harrisonburg, Virginia. http://www.jmu.edu/gandhicenter/wm_library/TutuGandhiLecture.pdf

38. <http://www.imdb.com/name/nm1682433/bio>

39. Audacity of Hope is the title of one of Obama’s works containing the thoughts of reclaiming the American dream. Published in New York by Three Rivers Press in 2006.

40. Indeed, as Senator, he included Gandhi in his “wall of heroes” gallery of photographs in his Senate office. The historic photo of Gandhi sitting at his spinning wheel hung among those of former U.S. Presidents Abraham Lincoln and John F. Kennedy, Dr. King, and the 1965 civil rights march in Selma, Alabama. Cf. S. KAUFMAN “Obama Honors Mahatma Gandhi”, 2 October 2009, <http://blogs.america.gov/obama/2009/10/02/obama-honors-mahatma-gandhi/>

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46. E. SONG, *Cameroon: A Nation Bleeding and Burning in Silence*, 30.
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51. Cf. "Christian Cardinal Tumi, un homme d'Eglise proche du peuple", in *Magazin International d'analyse et d'enquetes sur l'Afrique et le monde*, 020, 2010, 17.
52. E. SONG, *Cameroon: A Nation Bleeding and Burning in Silence*, 46.
53. *Ibidem*.
54. http://www.leffortcamerounais.com/2007/04/cardinal_tumi_p.html
55. Christian Cardinal Tumi, *The political regimes of Ahmadou Ahhidjo and Paul Biya, and Christian Tumi, priest*, Douala, MACACOS, 2006, 37.
56. *Ibidem*, 38.
57. *Ibidem*, 47.
58. *Ibidem*,. 49.

59. *Ibidem*, 52.

60. *Ibidem*, 167.

61. E. SONG, *Cameroon: A Nation Bleeding and Burning in Silence*, 48.

62. Christian Cardinal Tumi, *The political regimes of Ahmadou Ahhidjo and Paul Biya*, and Christian Tumi, priest, p. 121-122.

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CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. AFRICA NEEDS GANDHI! ¹

It is the desire of any rational being to live in a good and sound social and political system. For harmony and peace to reign in any country, it must be governed by competent leaders in a good political system. All through history, think-tanks have sought to formulate social and political theories and systems most fit for any country. While Plato and Aristotle had a pejorative view of democracy, and viewed it as a system of rule by the masses at the expense of wisdom, it is clear that our contemporary era in contrast with the ancient period has opted for democracy as the ideal political system. In this chapter, we will analyse the democracy in Africa and make allusions to Gandhi in order to propose some solutions to the African political problem.

Before delving into the core of this chapter, some pertinent questions run through the mind of any rational being: Why is democracy which seems to be a widely accepted political system so problematic for Africans? Can Gandhi in this contemporary era meddle into state affairs here in Africa in order to shape its democracy? This chapter attempts to unveil our minds of the above queries in four stages. We will first of all succinctly define democracy and its general understanding, Secondly; we will try to make a hermeneutics of the problem with democracy in Africa. Thirdly, we shall navigate succinctly into the Cameroonian democracy. With the problem exposed, we will in the fourth stage of the essay make recourse to Gandhi's vision of Democracy to support the efforts of installing true democracy in Africa, especially in Cameroon. But what is this democracy all about?

5.1. Towards Defining Democracy

Democracy is derived from the Greek word *Kratos*, meaning power or rule and *Demo* referring to “the people”. Democracy thus means “rule by the people”. The problem with defining democracy is that it seems to have no agreed meaning. It can mean anything to anyone and therefore risks having no meaning at all. Some see democracy as the most promiscuous word in the world of public affairs. North Korea is a “democracy” - and its official name is the Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea. Libya practises its form of democracy. Uganda, under the single party rule when political parties were banned was also a democracy; today, it is a democracy as well. Robert Mugabe has regularly held elections in Zimbabwe for the past years, a standard democratic practice but we are still to hope for a true democracy there.² Democracy seems to sound right and good, even the most authoritarian tyrant would wish to associate with it. As shown above, in ancient Greece, democracy tended to be viewed in negative terms. Well into the 19th century, the term continued to have a pejorative connotation, suggesting a system of “mob rule”. Now, suddenly, we are all “democrats”. Indeed, as the major ideological systems have faltered and collapsed in the late 20th century, the flame of democracy has appeared to burn yet more strongly. One can thus insist that:

The most important development of the past century has been both.....simple and profound. It has been the spread of democracy. Democracy hardly makes the world perfect, but it tends to engender open economies and more respect for human rights. Ultimately, democracy promises to make the world more peaceful, for democracies are less likely to go to war against each other than are totalitarian regimes.³

Today, the classical definition of democracy is found in Abraham Lincoln’s words: “The government of the people, by the people and for the people”.

It has not really been easy for African countries to practice democracy. When asked what he thought of elections in Africa, Fela Anikulapu Kuti quickly fumed

*“Democracy? Dem all crazy, what a crazy demonstration!”*⁴ This will be demonstrated in the succinct presentation of the democratic situation of some African Countries.

5.2. The political situation in some African nations

During the first three decades of post independence (1960 - 1990), most of the African states experimented variations between authoritarian rule and liberalisation. It was hard to find a political party using the reference to multi-party system. The perspective from 1990 was shaped by two different facts which occur simultaneously. The first is the claim for “full” democracy, including multi-party system and human rights. The second consists in the extension of this project all over the continent. The exceptions are countries involved in “old” democratisation experiences (Senegal, Botswana, Zimbabwe...) or affected by civil war (Sudan, Liberia ...)

In Africa, the debate on liberal democracy was poor before 1990. There were many dictators like Mobutu Sese Seko of DR Congo and Mengistu Haile Mariam of Ethiopia. Different versions of “africanized” democracy existed in experiences tested by leaders like Nyerere or Kaunda. Some other regimes defined themselves after the Marxist notion of “popular democracy” as in Benin or Congo-Brazzaville. However, the references to the rule of majority, to the existence of a legal opposition, to more than one party or to free elections were unknown out of the circle of intellectual elite. These notions were not part of local political cultures.

The high point of African democracy was doubtlessly reached on the 27th of April 1994 when South Africans trooped to the polls to elect a government led by Nelson Mandela in the country’s first democratic elections. In fact, a decade ago, it seemed democracy in Africa would have a bright future. Tyrannies in Benin, Ethiopia, Liberia, DR Congo, Congo Brazzaville, Ivory Coast and Mali had been ousted and many more were under threat. Opposition activists in Francophone Africa organised national conferences holding leaders to account

on claims of corruption and brutality. Pro-democracy activists in Ghana and Nigeria stepped up their campaigns. Nowadays, it seems clear democracy has not come to stay in Africa. The reason is clear: Incumbents have become adept at winning polls: doctoring voters' rolls; stuffing ballot boxes and using violence against opponents. Has democracy succeeded or failed? Can we say that the democracy glass is at least 'half full'? It is clear that there have been outright successes thanks to the efforts of opposition parties, quest for press freedom and above all, the presence of election observers. There have equally been many setbacks. A few countries will be taken as case studies here for better understanding of how bad leadership and dirty politics under the canopy of democracy have done a great blow on the African continent and is still doing.

5.2.1. Uganda

In Uganda on the 25th of January 1971, Idi Amin overthrew the government of Milton Obote and became president through a very bloody *coup d'état*. He formed a squad with whom he carried out his brutality on the innocent Ugandan citizens. Killing for him was a hobby. He ruthlessly killed the Archbishop of Luwun. He heartlessly massacred and humiliated people. It is on record that within three months of assuming power, he massacred ten thousand people. In two years it was about eighty thousand and after eight years the figure reached three hundred thousand. He ruined Uganda and later on fled into exile. Thank God that today, there is apparent peace. Nevertheless, much has to be done to checkmate the present democratic government.

5.2.2. South Africa

Back in South Africa, Apartheid ravaged the black race seriously till the early 1990s. They were discriminated against by the white people who saw themselves as having the full political right. It reached a stage where, black people were forced to live away from white people, to go to separate schools, not to intermarry, etc. defaulters were maltreated subjected to torture and

even killed. This was the case with Nelson Mandela who suffered imprisonment for 27 years!

5.2.3. *Chad*

Tension interspersed with bloodletting has been the norm in Eastern Chad for the past years, and policymakers most often view the crisis in Eastern Chad through a Darfur lens. Consequently, conflict resolution efforts have thus far focused principally on the tensions between N'Djamena and Khartoum. It is believed that Chad is fuelled by weapons and support from an external patron. The rebellion in Chad is the latest chapter in a decades-long internal power struggle. Chadian rebels' lightning strike on the capital N'Djamena in late January and early February of the year 2008 is one of the most dramatic consequences of two combustible situations that remain on collision course. The first is the continuous tragedy in neighbouring Darfur and the support for Chadian rebel groups by the government of Sudan, to topple the Chadian President Idriss Deby. The second combustible situation is the internal political crisis of Chad. Despite the Chadian government's assertions that all of Chad's problems emanate from Sudan's capital Khartoum, Chad's government is among the world's most venal and its citizens are among the world's most destitute and disenfranchised.

Chad provides an accommodating theatre for regional conflict and proxy war because it is grappling with its own very serious internal crisis. In the wake of the most recent coup attempt, the Chadian government has cracked down hard on the unarmed political opposition. Some opposition leaders have been arrested, some have fled to neighbouring countries, while others have been driven underground. Refugees from Chad fleeing from the situation fill the neighbouring countries like Cameroon and Central Africa. Chadian politics for the last 40 years have become synonymous with violence, political assassinations, military intimidations, insecurity, etc.

5.2.3. Democratic Republic of Congo

In Zaire, now the Democratic Republic of Congo, the former president Mobutu Sese Seko held a military rule for 32 years. “32 years of Terrorism”. According to John Odey, Mobutu ruled as a megalomaniac and as a kleptomaniac. He ruled his people from the throne and from the bunkers through the brutality of his mercenaries. He embezzled the country’s funds. According to the IMF in 1984 and the US treasury, Mobutu’s personal money had risen to the tune of 4 billion dollars. Mobutu died leaving behind an institutionalised kleptocracy, corruption, violence, a senseless plunder of a nation’s resources and the impoverishment of the country and everyone in it.⁵ Under the regime of the young Joseph Kabila, one would expect a messianic change. However, the situation in the Goma region of Congo, which occupies a special place in international news, is an eyesore. There is an urgent need as Professor Ka Mana will put it for Congo to invent a new Independence.

5.2.4. Cote d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast)

We were about praising Ivory Coast in a few lines above but ever since the last elections this December 2010 the stories have been gradually changing. A decade ago, Ivory Coast was seen as a haven of peace and prosperity in West Africa. This country however had internal divisions according to ethnic, religious and economic lines. Because of the Cocoa people from neighbouring countries fluxed in to earn their living and they stayed mostly in the North. Because of this some Ivorians portrayed northerners as not being real Ivorians. Ivory Coast has been called a *Country of Two Presidents*. On the one hand we have Laurent Gbagbo: 65-year-old former history teacher, southern Christian; president since 2000; backed by security forces. And on the other hand, we have Alassane Ouattara: 68-year-old economist, northern Muslim; prime minister 1990-1993; backed by former rebels, UN, African leaders and the West.

The Independent Electoral Commission declared Ouattara winner and almost simultaneously, the Court declared the incumbent president Gbagbo winner. Here are the results after the elections:

- Constitutional Council: Laurent Gbagbo 51%, Alassane Ouattara 49%, annulled results in seven northern regions
- Electoral Commission: Laurent Gbagbo 46%, Alassane Ouattara 54% True enough, The Ivorian IEC was not supposed to publish the results of the election as stipulated by the Ivorian law. Nevertheless, that does not mean the results she published were fraudulent. Maybe the IEC anticipated the results for fear it would be edited and the results given to the people would not be their choice. The Constitutional Council, headed by a Gbagbo ally, annulled the votes from the north, leaving Mr Gbagbo with a slender overall majority. The UN observer mission says that there was violence in parts of the north, as well as in Mr Gbagbo's home region in the west, but that overall, the vote was democratic and peaceful.

Did Gbagbo actually win the elections therefore? To whom do we give credibility: Gbagbo or Ouattara? The main question is this: was the vote in the north free and fair? People are losing their lives, homes and country because two old men in their sixties, nearing 70 cannot and do not want to doff their caps to each other. We have an impression that some of the international bodies supporting either of the parties do so not only for peace sake, but to support their private interests. The only way forward for Ivory Coast is Peaceful Dialogue between the two parties. Thousand of national and international bans will not solve the issue. If force is applied, to remove one of the parties, the country will continue to wallow in a situation of unrest. Real peace must come through Dialogue in a Nonviolent atmosphere.

5.2.5. Sudan

The political situation in Sudan cannot be left out. After a 21-year war in the south, the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation

Movement/Army (SPLM/A) hoped for a peaceful situation only to see a new war erupting in Darfur in February 2003 after years of skirmishes over land and water between ethnic groups that identify themselves mainly as “African” or “Arab”. The two main rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement, accused the central government in Khartoum of supporting Arab pastoralists in their disputes with African farmers. Most observers have blamed the Sudanese armed forces and a pro-government militia, known as the *Janjaweed*, for most of the atrocities in the war, including killing and raping civilians and destroying homes, wells and crops. The situation in Sudan has been described as “A complex conflict which brings mixed responses.”⁶ Unlike Southern Sudan where the majority are Christians, almost all the people of Darfur are Muslims. This is one of the reasons why Darfur conflict is arguably more complex. No doubt, Alfred Taban comments: “followers of the same faith living in the same region are fighting each other over resources, and ‘outsiders’- including northern-based Islamist opposition groups, the government and SPLM/A-are either giving tacit or open support to one faction or another.”⁷ Crime has always been a problem in Darfur but it has increasingly taken on political overtones with government vehicles being hijacked or businessmen associated with the government being targeted for attack. On a more general note, Sudan has suddenly become a land akin with moving corpses, kwashiorkor children, children soldiers, hunger, sickness and all forms of political unrest.

5.2.6. Central African Republic

In a continent beset with bloody conflicts often triggering banner headlines, the Central African Republic (CAR), located in an unstable triangle bordering the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Southern Sudan and Chad, is a silent crisis crying out for increased international donor support and media attention. In March 2003, with the world’s eyes riveted on Iraq, CAR suffered another political unrest in a long history of coups and uprisings when General Bozize led an army of insurgents to topple elected President Ange-Felix Patasse. The

situation in CAR remains fragile and volatile. In spite of its economic potential - rich in timber, gold, diamonds and uranium. The Central African Republic (CAR) is one of the least known countries in Africa and the world. Because of its relative obscurity, it is often overshadowed by its better-known neighbours such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sudan. Recently, however, internal conflicts stemming from its historical past and its present realities, as well as the spill over of political unrest and violence from Sudan and Chad, have given the CAR more prominence on the international map.⁸

5.2.7. Zimbabwe

The situation in Zimbabwe is a pitiable one because:

The popularity of opposition parties and the unpopularity of the incumbent regime do not guarantee political change. Zimbabwe's opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) party, widely reckoned to have won two much-criticised elections against President Robert Mugabe's Zanu-PF party, languishes in opposition without effective regional or international backing.⁹

This situation persists till this present date. It is hard to listen to any news focussing on the African situation without any mention of Zimbabwe. The population of Harare is victim of terrible economic crises and is turning more and more towards religion. They are much monitored by Mugabe's regime. He has always sought to corrupt even religious leaders. The Baptist pastor Raymond Motsi and the Catholic Bishop Emeritus of Bukwayo Mgr Pius Naibe have "paid it hot" for challenging Mugabe's regime.¹⁰ The country is presently undergoing a high rate of political unrest coupled with its almost crumbling economic situation.

5.2.8. Cameroon

In the Republic of Cameroon, we are living in a system where leadership seems to be stagnant and reserved for some privileged few. Cameroonians are said to be practising democracy with many political parties (multi-partism) like the Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM) which happens to be the ruling party and the Social Democratic Front (SDF) the main opposition party among many others. We see democracy as a common denominator while paradoxically speaking, ever since independence in 1960, Cameroonians have experienced just two presidents, Ahmadou Alhidjo and Paul Biya. The latter will be celebrate on the 6th of November 2010 his 28th anniversary as the president of Cameroon and has done all in his capacity to modify the constitutions and remain forever as an everlasting monarch in 'democratic Cameroon'.

It is true that there are no civil wars in Cameroon; neither do we have frequent strikes like in other African countries. There is 'apparent peace'. The peaceful atmosphere in Cameroon was polluted by violent demonstrations and riots in the month of February 2008. These riots paralyzed Yaoundé, Cameroon's capital, and Douala, the economic capital and a major port city, as popular anger exploded over high fuel and food prices and a move by President Paul Biya to extend his rule.¹¹ As if to flare up anger, Cameroonians were named "apprentice sorcerers" by the president during his speech and military men filled the streets, leading to destruction of life and property. The ruling party used the pretext to say that opposition parties were at the base of all these rioting. During the strike, TV stations and Radio stations like *Equinox TV* and *Magic FM Radio Station* who dared to speak were banned with the accusation of not meeting up to the current standards.

Many artists who sang anything against the Government tasted the *koboko* (a Yoruba word which means whip) and still taste it now. This is the case of the great musician LAPIRO who sang against the change of the constitution. He was thrown into prison with the charges of "inciting violence, simple rebellion and extortion of funds". The musician himself feels that "the CPDM is at the bay

and is bent on reducing to silence all those who opposed this catastrophic project ‘constitution change.’”¹² In his last album, “*Constitution Constipée*” (Constipated Constitution) he denounced the project of Biya to change the constitution and accused him of trying to remain in power despite his old age.

The political agendum in Cameroon as seen by most Anglophones is increasingly dominated by what is known as the ‘Anglophone problem’, which poses a major challenge to the efforts of the post-colonial state to forge national unity and integration, and has led to the reintroduction of forceful arguments and actions in favour of ‘federalism’ or even ‘secession’. Some Anglophones especially in Bamenda felt ‘neglected’ by the president who had not visited them for almost 20 years. Hopes of Anglophones were uplifted with the recent visit of Biya to Bamenda. It is the first time in about 20 years that Paul Biya comes to Bamenda after the visit of 9th February 1983, the 1984 agro pastoral show, March 1985 and in 1991 during the operation ghost town.

Between 1991 and 2010, the distance between the President and the people of the North West was ‘widened’ but recently it has also been reduced and with time it will become better. To the people of the Northwest Region, the President announced the creation of the University of Bamenda, the pursuit of negotiations to finance the Ring Road, and the construction of a thermal energy plant in Bamenda. He equally announced studies for the creation of referral hospital in Bamenda and the long-run option of constructing a hydroelectric plant on the Menchum Falls. We are waiting in hope for the day this will be realized. Action as we say speak louder than words.

What made the visit so interesting was the encounter with the chief opposition party SDF, in the person of Ni John Fru Ndi. According to the latter, it was a time of Dialogue. In an interview granted to The Post he showed that Dialogue was going to be the answer for a better Cameroon. “But the good news is that we finally met and we started dialoguing and by the time we rounded up we agreed that we will continue with the dialogue because we realised that information was not flowing between the two of us. May be there was a blockage somewhere” (<http://www.thepostwebedition.com>). This discussion

was the first time since the historic return of multipartism on the 19th of December 1990. Biya received Fru Ndi on the 10th of December. This is very symbolic as this is the day which commemorates the Declaration of Universal Human Rights.

Cameroon just celebrated 50 years of Unity, Stability and Peace. Is there really peace? Is everyone in Cameroon really happy? These are unanswered questions to tickle our medulla oblongata.

5.2.9. Nigeria

Nigeria like any other African country is also concerned with the need of having a good and sound political system. It was therefore all jubilation when Nigeria finally adopted democracy in 1999. Nigeria has had a long tortured history of dancing around democracy but never quite getting it right. With the second coming of President Obasanjo, it looked like the dividends of a true democracy had come to stay. But so far, what have been the dividends of this democracy? Before delving into this, we shall in a few words analyse the political situation of Nigeria before and after May 1999. Our aim will not be to sing litanies of praises, for “when a hunter is praised, he kills his own dog”. We will show that in as much as there are positive points in democracy so far, there is still much to be desired.

Without any intention of presenting a chronology of activities we may begin by saying that Nigeria is among the African countries that have suffered from great political mishaps such as slavery, colonialism, the menace of the pathetic Nigeria-Biafra war, and is still suffering from the phenomenon of Neo-colonialism. Far back in 1979, Obasanjo made a record of returning the federal government to civilian rule. However this “messianism” did not last long. There was another attempt to return to civilian rule in 1993 under Babangida which became Abortive. He was forced to hand over to Ernest Shonekan whom Abacha was to overthrow.

Nigeria for a long period has been under the pangs of military rule which many would agree was a very tragic period. The military rulers had a growing affinity to violence, injustice and in most cases as Onyeocha would put it: “terrorised their people with arbitrary laws...those who succeeded them have invariably had to resolve to the case of force.”¹³ Under the military regime, not only were the rulers dictators, the people had little or no say in the government. People lived in fear and the future remained always blurred. There were many political killings and brutality of Heroes like Alfred Rewane (An icon of Nigeria's pro-democracy movement during the dark days of the later dictator General Sani Abacha. He campaigned tirelessly democracy and human rights, true federalism, honesty, transparency and accountability in public office, and ethics in business. His murder on October 6, 1995 in suspicious circumstance provoked national and international outcry.), Alhaji Moshood Abiola (who won the elections that were annulled on June 12 1993), Ken Sarowiwa (Born on October 10, 1941, he is of the Ogoni People of Nigeria. At the peak of his non-violent campaign he was arrested, hastily tried by a special military tribunal, and hanged in November 10, 1995), etc. The authorities grafted corruption as the *modus vivendi* of any Nigerian. Schools were seized by the government.

The Church resorted to prayers like “A Prayer for Nigeria in Distress”, “A Prayer against bribery and corruption in Nigeria”. Everyone hoped for a hay day, for a political leader - A Moses who would lead Nigeria to her promised land. As if heaven answered our prayers, there was finally a change. In effect, a new course seemed to have been mapped out with the death in June 1998 of former military dictator, Sani Abacha, and the subsequent reforms of General Abdul Salaam Abubakar. Nigeria was therefore led into the promised land of DEMOCRACY under the distinguished leadership of Chief Olusegun Obasanjo.

Nigerians and other citizens of foreign countries were very happy with the forthcoming of Obasanjo. Hopes were very high. People expected a better situation under the democratic government. No wonder, Obasanjo did wet the appetite of many with his “rhetorical inaugural speech” made on the 29th of May 1999. We are still waiting to see the results of his speech. He began by accusing the

former governments of so many atrocities, and from there made so many promises. The 'dividends' of his democracy are clear. Elections are not only rigged, but conducted under bloodshed and violent conditions. John Odey did not waste time to say "*This Madness Called 2003 Elections*". Despite Obasanjo's condemnation of violence as "an ill-wind that blows no one any good"¹⁵, the elections that took place a few months later did not reflect this. Despite the fact that a few years ago, Nigeria, the giant of Africa, became crippled by corrupt, aimless and inept military dictatorship, John Odey still insist that we have not reaped positive dividends from the democracy under Obasanjo. This is because today, and for eight years at a stretch, Nigeria "has been suffering under the heavy yoke of President Obasanjo' democratic tyranny, moral insensitivity and executive rascality."¹⁶ In a nutshell what we are trying to bring out here is that: "when President Obasanjo took over the leadership of the country in May 1999, we thought that he had come to put things in order. We have ever since then discovered how mistaken we have been..."¹⁷

Professor Onyeocha, reflecting on the political situation of Nigeria presents to us these striking words:

Nigerian politics is one of acrimony, dissension, division, sectionalism, and political sleight of hand...Nigerian politics has as its permanent feature, the unwholesome and unsavoury epilogue of vitiation and vilification for anyone who ever dared to participate in it....It is quite an interesting speculative question whether at all it is possible to foster democratic principles in Nigeria.¹⁸

Interestingly, Onyeocha does not end in woes he insists on a more positive note that:" Nigeria is our country....We must tidy it up and clean up whatever mess there is...Our situation is not hopeless but hopeful."¹⁹ On this positive note, we praise the efforts of the new president of Nigeria so far. Nevertheless, we will not go deep into analysing the situation now. We give him enough time to see to the workability of his strategies. What actually prevents Africans from reaping the positive dividends of democracy?

5.3. The Problems with African Democracy

If after almost an average of 40 years of Independence in many African Nations, we cannot boast of sufficient dividends of governance, then there is something wrong. One of the characteristics of Democracy is the capacity to change leaders after a certain period of time. It is worthy to note that in Africa, most countries practicing democracy do not meet up to the standards required. Presidents in Democratic regimes remain on seat for many decades, for example, Paul Biya of Cameroon, Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Gaddafi of Libya, Dos Santos of Angola, Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea etc. African countries have been turned into political states where those who cry for justice are arrested, detained, tortured, imprisoned and even killed, but yet claim that these countries are oases of freedom. The following can be outlined as problems with our African democracy.

5.3.1. *Bad Leadership*

African leaders seek always their personal interests; their eyes are always on the material things of life, on opportunism, on what can be taken from the proverbial “national cake”²⁰. This is a general sickness of African leaders. Billions of African dollars are daily being moved into private accounts overseas by African leaders to feed the already overflowing economies of the West. In effect, for democracy to succeed, we must take a second look at our leadership formation and succession processes. In the past years, we have been rendered miserable, hopeless and have fallen from grace to grass because of corrupt leadership.²¹

5.3.2. *Corruption*

CORRUPTION is a canker worm which eats deep into our politics. Commenting on the situation in Nigeria, John Odey insists:

today in Nigeria, corruption has become a structural sin so contagious that it hardly leaves anybody without a smear. And since the country was justifiably stigmatized as a den of corruption, all Nigerians, both the guilty and the innocent, have been paying very costly for it. Everywhere in the world, Nigerians are generally feared like mad dogs, dreaded like criminals, cautiously approached like dangerous snakes and watchfully avoided like lepers.²²

Cameroon keeps on ranking year in, year out as the world's most corrupt country. When one listens to international news on Africa, one notices that corruption remains at the base of our dwindling democracy in Africa.

5.3.3. Economic fragility

The biggest obstacle to Africa's democratisation is its economic fragility. On this note, the former secretary-general of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), Dr. Salim Ahmed remarked: "Political reform cannot raise the world prices for Africa's commodities."²³ Spoils of office are always being shared between members of the same elite wearing different political colours. In effect, the situation has reached a level where economic uncertainties chip away at idealism and new style regimes find it easier to co-opt and corrupt rather than to bludgeon their opponents.

5.3.4. Neglect of the Children, the Aged and the Infirm.

Njoku Francis, in the opening pages of his work *Philosophy in Politics Law and Democracy* (Owerri: Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 2002) dwells on Hubert Humphrey's famous statement as a litmus test for a true government. The latter insists that the moral test for government is how it treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life the aged; and those who are in the shadow of life, the sick, the needy and the handicapped. The pitiable condition is that the children are not sure of their

future. Some cannot go to school because of the high prices needed for good education. Children suffer the effects of child trafficking daily. The lack of proper care of children leads to juvenile delinquency and stagnancy of future progress. What then is the essence of the so-called children's day? The aged and infirm are simply at the mercy of their family members. There is need for proper amenities. Most old and sick people take to begging and this becomes an eyesore for the Africa and for Cameroon in particular.

Seeing the few points above and many more, it is almost a consensus that most African countries have not yet achieved the required democracy. On this note, John Odey was bold enough to affirm that "Democracy is an illusion not a reality in Nigeria."²⁴ We can modify this by saying that, democracy remains an illusion in most African Nations.

It is not our wish to remain only on woes. The intention here is to propose a solution, a proposal which will seriously help the African to see more positive dividends of Democracy. At this juncture, we look up to what Gandhi has to offer.

5.4. Any hope from Gandhi?

Gandhi (1869-1948) gave the world a simple message, though held no political office. A lean, frail, 'half-naked fakir', It was just the moral grandeur of his soul which enabled him to fight against brute power, in any form. No doubt, Einstein said this of him: "Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this in flesh and blood walked upon this earth". His message was based on "a series of his experiments with truth"²⁵, touched upon every domain of human life: social, economic, moral/spiritual, cultural, political.

Gandhi considered the system based on nonviolence supreme and essential. Now, a question may arise. What is the system which is based on nonviolence as conceived by Gandhi? Dr. Ravindra Kumar insists that according to Gandhi:

that system can only be the real and pure democracy as *Ramarajya*. Whatever the basis of the democratic system of

governance that exist in the countries all over the world including India may be, the real democracy i.e. *Ramarajya* is altogether different. This kind of democratic system can be introduced in the present ones by evolving nonviolence with all its other facets. Democracy is the government of the people. In fact, justice and freedom for every citizen are possible only under this system. There is also every possibility of having opportunity for progress. It is a source of general welfare too. Gandhi has also said, “Democracy must be in essence...meaning the art and science of mobilizing the entire physical, economic and spiritual resources of all the various sections of people in the service of common good of all.”²⁶

For Gandhi, democracy necessarily means a conflict of will and ideas, involving sometimes a war to the knife between different ideas. The very essence of democracy is that every person represents all the varied interests which compose the nation. Nevertheless, democracy is a great institution and, therefore, it is liable to be greatly abused. It remains an impossible thing until the power is shared by all, but let not democracy degenerate into *mobocracy*.

In most cases, people feel violence can be included into democracy. Gandhi insists that, democracy and violence can ill go together. We can say that Gandhi supports a Democracy, disciplined and enlightened, is the finest thing in the world. Gandhi insists that “My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest” (*Harijan*, 27.5.1939). To safeguard democracy the people must have a keen sense of independence, self-respect and oneness. In true democracy every man and women is taught to think for himself or herself. The spirit of democracy cannot be established in the midst of terrorism, whether governmental or popular. To this effect, Gandhi defends the place of freedom in democracy. Thus, Ravindra Kumar insists that “Gandhi has given prominence to freedom in democracy and in human life as well. He has laid emphasis on decentralization of power as

guarantee for freedom. Indeed, it is very important and worth giving a thought and acceptable for maturity of democracy.”²⁷

5.5. Is Gandhi Really Relevant For Africa?

After all said and done, a pertinent question remains: Is Gandhi really relevant for Africa? This is a question which remains very pertinent in this our continent in which Democracy has become another form of DEM ALL CRAZY. It is worth seeing how Tabu Mbeki, the former South African president¹⁵ described Gandhi as a great human being. Mbeki said it was not possible some years back for an Indian Prime Minister to put foot on “our shores”. Gandhi, he said, was “a beloved son of South Africa” and provided the leadership for “this country’s triumphant march to freedom”. Noting that India had in 1946 at the UN put on the global agenda the need to end apartheid in South Africa, he said, Gandhi had championed the cause of peace with his tenacity. Gandhi may not be here physically to do the same in other African countries. However, he remains a great soul whose ideas remain a panacea for the African/ Cameroonian democracy. It is a pity that most African countries spend time propagating Marxist theories in Africa. Avijit Ghosh does not mince words to say that “Gandhi is more relevant than Marx today *in Africa* (words in italics are mine).”²⁸

In any country practising democracy, the populace must benefit from the dividends accruing from it. To this effect, in African countries, after having suffered and are still suffering political mishaps, the word democracy should not be only a meaningless sound or an aberration. The values of the democratic system should include the dignity of every human person, the respect of human rights, commitment to the common good as the purpose and guiding criterion for political life must be felt. There have truly been some good points in democracy, though not good enough. Democracy is still in a process of maturation. We cannot expect that after years of military rule and oppression, democracy will appear on a platter of gold. Despite setbacks and thwarted

hopes, we can say that democracy in Africa is at least half-full. Everyone must work to foster democracy. It is not only the problem of African leaders or the church. In our offices, we can refuse bribery. A journey of hundred miles begins with a step. Here is a message for all Africans and Cameroonians: *We may ignore Gandhi at our own risk. Africa needs Gandhi!*

END NOTES

1. Mahatma Gandhi is considered to be one of the greatest sons of the Indian soil, but through this write up, we want to defend the fact that he remains so relevant to African Democracy because he started this in South Africa.
2. O. KALINGE NNYAGO, *“Political crisis in Africa; time to rethink western democracy”* April 18, 2008, <http://www.monitor.co.ug>.
3. G. F. SEIB , *“Democracy Tells the Real Story of Our Century”*, in *Wall Street Journal*, December 29, 1999
4. P. SMITH, *“Crazy for Democracy”*, in *BBC Focus on Africa*, Vol. 15, n° 2, April-June 2004, 26.
5. J. O. ODEY, *Mother Teresa and Mobutu Sese Seko: The Beautiful and The Ugly-A Lesson for African Leaders*, Enugu, Snaap, 1997, 11.
6. ITAI MADAMOMBE *“Darfur crisis challenges Africa, world”* in *Africa Renewal*, Vol.18 #4, January 2005, 3.
7. A. TABAN, *“Darfur Fury”*, in *BBC Focus on Africa*, Vol. 15, n° 2, April-June 2004, 12.
8. J. C. WOODFORK and J. CHARNY *“The Central African Republic: Worsening Crisis in a Troubled Region”* in *USIPeace Briefing*, September 2007, http://www.usip.org/pubs/USIPeace_briefings.
9. P. SMITH, *“Crazy for Democracy”*, 28.
10. A. COMETTO, *« Au Zimbabwe, les Églises tiennent ferme face au régime »*, in *La Croix*, 11 April 2008, 8.

11. In 1998, the Biya regime amended the country's constitution to extend the presidential term of office from five to seven years and to allow the president to appoint one third of the Cameroon Senate. There isn't anything again as term of office. The president can be voted as many times as possible. This is a real case of "Dem all Crazy". Despite all the oppositions, Biya successfully changed the constitutions again! On that fateful day, military men filled the crux and the craniums of all the towns in Cameroon to terrorise any mob opposition.

12. P. EBWELE "Mbanga without Lapiro", in *Le Jour*, n°150, Monday 28 April 2008, 5.

13. cf. I. M. ONYEOCHA, *Idealism, Politics and Nation Building: The Nigerian Experience*, Washington DC, The Council for Research and Value, 1994, 55.

14. *Vanguard*, Friday March 7, 2003.

15. J. O. ODEY, *Africa: The Agony of a Continent: Can Liberation Theology offer any Solution?*, Enugu, Snaap, 2005, 152.

16. *Ibidem*, 158-159.

17. I. M. ONYEOCHA, *Power and Authority in our Culture*, Orlu, Chimavin Productions, 2005, 69.

18. *Ibidem*, 76.

19. As if there is a cake somewhere and each one goes and cuts his/her share. Are we under a leadership curse? Can't we follow the examples of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jnr., Mandela, etc.? We must begin to encourage good people to participate in politics.

20. Also linked to this problem of leadership, is that of Ethnicism and god-fatherism. It is almost not who qualifies who can lead the democratic government. Governance/leadership is now an issue of ethnic groups wanting to rule. A leader may be bad, but since he comes from a particular ethnic group, he would be preferred to a better person from a different ethnic group. In countries like Cameroon, we hear comments like, those from the north of

Cameroon have ruled. It is now time for the betis in the central region to eat the national cake. Jobs are given with one's capacity to speak the vernacular!

21. J. O. ODEY, *Africa: The Agony of a Continent: Can Liberation Theology offer any Solution?*, 153.

22. P. SMITH, "Crazy for Democracy", 28.

23. J. O. ODEY, Conference delivered during the NAPSSEC (National Association of Philosophy Students, Seminary Chapter) weekend held at the Claretian Institute of Philosophy, 15th January 2005, Unpublished.

24. This is the title which Gandhi gave to his own autobiography.

25. R. KUMAR, "Gandhi: Freedom and Democracy", <http://www.globalpolitician.com/23656-gandhi>, 6/27/2008

26. *Ibidem*

27. <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1514583.cms>

28. A. GHOSH, "Gandhi is more relevant than Marx today" <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/1514583.cms>.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0. GANDHI'S MESSAGE TO CHRISTIANS

Our contemporary world is in need of true witnesses and not just noisemakers or orators whose theories do not reflect their actions. The Bible exhorts all Christians to translate what they hear into what they practice. “Be doers of the Word and not just mere hearers lest you deceive yourselves” (Jas 1:22). Continuing in this same vein, an adage goes that: “actions speak louder than words”. All these imply that it is not just enough to say “I am a Christian”. “By our way of life, people should be able to say: “this is a follower of Christ”. Jesus himself insists that people will be known by their fruits (Mtt 7: 15-20). It is interesting to note that “it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called Christians” (Cf. Ac11:26). The word Christian means follower of Christ or being like Christ. In other words, a Christian is one whose life is based on the teachings of Christ. With such a definition, any non-Christian who has read the life of Jesus Christ, especially as presented in the Gospels and other biblical references, will expect to see Christians living up to, if not nearer to, such principles. Gandhi, a non Christian had this same experience.

After reading the life of Christ as presented in the Bible and in the writings of some renowned Christian authors, Gandhi admired the Sermon on the Mount (which shaped his whole philosophy of life) and hoped to see Christians live up to its standards. While living with Christians in England, South Africa and India, Gandhi expected to experience qualities like unconditional love, forgiveness, willingness to sacrifice, meekness, etc (Qualities of Christ). To his utmost dismay, Christians in his era never lived up to the standards preached by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount and on the Cross.

Seeing Gandhi live, the Christian missionary E. Stanley Jones asked him: “Mr Gandhi, though you quote the words of Christ often, why is it that you appear to so adamantly reject becoming his follower (Christian)”? The latter’s reply

was clear: *“Oh, I don’t reject your Christ. I love your Christ. It is just that so many of you Christians are so unlike your Christ”*. At this juncture, many questions pass in our mind: What led Gandhi to make such a statement which is at the same time a call for concern and an eye opener for any contemporary Christian? What can we take from this statement and what are our fears? In a very succinct presentation, we will see the implication of this affirmation to our contemporary Christians. On this note, we will see the criticisms and advice given by Gandhi on Christianity. Drawing from these premises, we will evaluate the importance of this affirmation to our contemporary Christians. The intention in the last part of this paragraph is to show that with the current situation of Christians in Africa and especially in Cameroon, the Gandhian affirmation remains a pertinent interpellation.

6.1. Gandhi’s Contact with Christ: Jesus was for Gandhi, a nonviolent prophet

During his studies in England, Gandhi became interested in the Christian faith. He had been reading the Bible to keep a promise he had made to a friend. He had difficulties understanding the Old Testament because in it, “he found out so much that he could not reconcile with the bidding of returning good for evil.”¹ He was studying for the bar exams in London when he was given the New Testament to read. This made a positive impression on him. The Sermon on the Mount as he said “went straight to my heart”. In this sermon, he was fascinated by these words: “But I say to you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.”² He insisted always that Jesus occupied in his heart the place of one of the greatest teachers who have had a considerable influence in his life...the message of Jesus as he understood in the Sermon on the Mount unadulterated and taken as a whole. Gandhi got two key words from Christianity: the teaching in the Sermon on the Mount and the Symbol of the cross.³ Gandhi described the Sermon on the Mount as the whole of Christianity for him who wanted to live a Christian life. Gandhi often

affirmed: “It is that sermon which has endeared Jesus to me.”⁴ But what does Jesus mean to Gandhi? He revealed this to us in these words: “I regard Jesus as a great teacher of humanity”⁵. What really attracted Gandhi to Jesus’ life and message is the aspect of Jesus’ suffering. Suffering for others form one of the pillars of Gandhi’s Message to the world. It is worth noting that Gandhi’s philosophy of nonviolence -*satyagraha* as already affirmed above has three principles: Truth- *Sat/Satya*, Nonviolence- *Ahimsa* and self-suffering- *Tapasya*. These are called the pillars of Satyagraha. Failure to grasp them is a handicap to the understanding of Gandhi’s nonviolence.

Gandhi saw all these principles in Jesus’ life and the one that really attracted him was the third aspect that is *Tapasya* - willingness to self-sacrifice or suffering. On this note Gandhi declares: “the example of Jesus’ suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in nonviolence which rules all my actions, worldly and temporal.”⁶ He kept hanging in his little hut a black and white print of Christ on which was written “he is our peace”. The picture of the crucified Christ wearing only a loin cloth such as is worn by millions of poor men in Indian villages, had touched Gandhi’s heart very deeply. It was in the Vatican in 1931, after returning from the Roundtable conference in London that Gandhi saw a life size crucifix and immediately had an emotional reaction towards it. After gazing at it, he declared: “I saw there, many nations, like individuals, could only be made through the agony of the cross and no other way. Joy comes not by the infliction of pain on others, but the pain voluntarily borne by oneself.”⁷ He understood the cross and believed that when one lived the life Jesus lived, he would probably end up in conflict with the powers that be. For him, Jesus died because of the way he lived. The cross of Christ was therefore the result of his living out his way of life to the end. On the cross, Gandhi saw the perfection of virtue. Living like Christ means a living a life of the cross, without it, life is long dead. For Gandhi, JESUS DIED IN VAIN if he did not teach us to regulate the whole of life by the eternal law of love.

Without going too deep into his many points of divergence with Christ, it is good to insist that he found in Christ the greatest source of spiritual strength

that man has never known. For him, Jesus Christ is the highest example of one who wished to give everything, asking for nothing in return. Jesus Christ belongs not sorely to Christianity but to the entire world. Jesus was for him the prince of *satyagrahi* (a nonviolence activist). His suffering is a factor in the composition of his undying faith in nonviolence. Just as Christ passed through the test of nonviolence through his virtues of mercy, nonviolence, love, truth, forgiveness of his murderer etc., Gandhi's followers were trained to forgive and thank the jail keeper for performing the arrest. Gandhi equally admired the gentle figure of Christ, so patient, so kind, so loving, and so full of forgiveness that he taught his followers not to retaliate when abused but turn the other cheek.

6.2. The basis of Gandhi's hate for Christians

I love your Christ but I hate your Christians because your Christians are unlike your Christ. After such a doctrine well founded doctrine on Christ, Gandhi will obviously expect Christians to be like Christ. Unfortunately, he never got it. The bone of contention here is to get the hermeneutics of what Gandhi meant. In fact, it is necessary to have faith to be saved but following Christ cannot be theoretical. It must be shown in action and in deeds. Before continuing, it is worth noting at the back of our minds that Jesus had warned in Mt 7: 21-23 that: "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you evildoers'".

Where can we situate the *terminus ad quo* of Gandhi's rejection of Christianity? His rejection grew out of an experience he had in South Africa. After reading the Bible and the life of Jesus, he was eager to exploring becoming a Christian. He decided thus to attend a church service. When he reached the door, the church elder asked "where do you think you are going, *kaffir*....There is no

room for *kaffirs* in this church. Get out of here or I'll have my assistants throw you down the steps". This is one who was just from reading the life of Christ as an epitome of love, unity, etc. Gandhi did not hesitate to confront Christendom with the principles of Christ. What is the Basis therefore of Gandhi's hate for the Christians? They are unlike Christ, they do not put into practice their religious principles, they do not favour inculturation and enculturation, they are more westernised etc. Gandhi does not end in criticisms. He presents a package of advice to contemporary Christians!

6.3. Gandhi's Advice to the contemporary Christian

*"You Christians, especially missionaries, should begin to live more like Christ. You should spread more of the gospel of love and you should study non-Christian faiths to have more sympathetic understanding of their faiths."*⁸

This citation summarises Gandhi's advice for the contemporary Christians. We ought to be true imitators of Christ and by so doing; we should also seek to understand other religions. The Catholic Church is really doing so today through her clarion call for ecumenism and inter-religious dialogue. Most of the Christian groups that preached to Gandhi quoted John 3:16 and forced people to believe. Gandhi felt that Christians should not just preach, but should put into practice what they preached.

to live the gospel is the most effective in the beginning, in the middle and in the end...a life of service and uttermost simplicity is the best preaching...you quote instead John 3:16 and ask them to believe it. That has no appeal to me... where there has been acceptance of the gospel through preaching, my complaint is that there has been some motive...A rose does not need to preach. It simply spreads its fragrance. The fragrance is its own sermon.⁹

For Gandhi, how we treat other tells the people more about what we believe. A better Christian follows Jesus in words and deeds. It is thus not just enough to distribute tracts or deliver sound sermons.

Pastor Mike Powel in his sermon insisted that Gandhi loved the teachings of Jesus Christ and the wisdom contained in the Bible, but he did not feel Christians lived up to these standards. The feeling that Christians do not measure up to the Golden Rule they extol, causes non-Christians to see them as hypocrites. Christians by the nature of bearing that name are expected to be righteous, kind and pure. When Christians do not show those qualities, it is a disappointment to everyone. Christians need to realise that they are as imperfect as everyone else and as a result of this, they should truly repent. In the past, Christians have not measured up to the ideals set forth by Jesus Christ. Sometimes, Christians have fallen short of ideals that it fills an onlooker with embarrassment.¹⁰ In essence, Gandhi accepted Christianity but rejected “churchianity” in a very vocal manner.¹¹

From his childhood, Christian missionaries stood on the corner of his grade school loudly deriding the gods and beliefs of Hinduism. Converts to Christianity were “denationalised”, “Britishised”. Christianity was “beef and brandy” (most Hindus are vegetarians). He was greatly disturbed when he heard Christians put aside the Sermon on the Mount as impractical or a dreamy idealism. He believes that, what is lived as Christianity is a negation of the Sermon on the Mount. He criticised mostly Christianity as practiced by Europe and the rest of the West. He criticised Christianity’s cultural imperialism. He perceived this phenomenon to be a destroyer of the Indian culture with its aggressive missionary work. His plea was for Christians to become more Christian. For Gandhi, Christianity became disfigured when it went to the West. The frightful outrage that was going on in Europe during his time (*war, colonialism*) showed that “the message of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of peace has been little understood in Europe, and that light upon it may have to be shown from the East.”¹² In Gandhi’s era, those who called themselves Christians (Europe) were just from taking part and consenting into two World Wars! This is a very big

scandal for a nonviolence activist. “It is a very curious commentary on the West that although it professes Christianity, there is no Christianity or Christ in the West or there should have been no war.”¹³ Here is his clear criticism for Christianity:

I ask my Christian brethren...not to take their Christianity as it is interpreted in the West. There, we know, they fight with one another as never before. After all, Jesus was an Asiatic depicted as wearing the Arabian flowing robe. He was the essence of meekness. I hope that the Christians of India will express in their lives Jesus the crucified, of the Bible, and not as interpreted in the West with her blood-stained fingers. I have no desire to criticize the West. I know and value the many virtues of the West. But I am bound to point out that Jesus of Asia is misrepresented in the West except in individuals.¹⁴

Thomas Merton bought Gandhi's idea when he constantly asked himself: “What has Gandhi to do with Christianity?” From this question, he insisted vehemently that everyone knows that the Orient has venerated Christ and distrusted Christians since the first colonizers and missionaries came from the West. Western Christians often assume without much examination that this oriental respect for Christ is simply a vague, syncretistic and perhaps romantic evasion of the challenge of the Gospel: an attempt to absorb the Christian message into the confusion and inertia which are thought to be characteristic of Asia. It is true that Gandhi expressly dissociated himself from Christianity in its visible and institutional forms. But it is also true that he built his whole life and all his activity upon what he conceived to be the law of Christ. In fact, he died for this law which was at the heart of his belief. Gandhi was indisputably sincere and right in his moral commitment to the law of love and truth. A Christian can do nothing greater than follow his own conscience with fidelity. Gandhi obeyed what he believed to be the voice of God.¹⁵

6.4. Relevance of Gandhi to the Contemporary Christian

It is worth noting that Gandhi influenced and keeps influencing Christians. We shall not propose that the contemporary Christian becomes a Hindu like Gandhi before becoming “like Christ”. The ball has already been set rolling by Gandhi’s life and message. If a non Christian can honour and imitate Jesus in this way, what more of those who call themselves, and really are, Christians?

Gandhi’s relevance for the contemporary Christian can be shown from what happened at the Westminster Abbey in London on the 17th of February 1948. Just like John Paul II whose funeral mass saw united together around his remains political and religious leaders whom he had been trying to put together during his lifetime, the message of Gandhi to imitate Christ and to unite was well understood. The cathedral was full and in a festive mood. The rector of the cathedral took up the floor and said “today this service is in memory of Mahatma Gandhi who has just been assassinated. He intoned a hymn and the populace responded. Here is a paraphrased translation from the French version of what he said:

We give thanks to you O lord for the witnessing

Of Mahatma Gandhi to the Truth

Of the Sermon on the Mount

And for his life of service

And for his defence of the poor ...

And for his action of peace

And for his hatred of violence

And for the witnessing which he has given

That love and sacrifice

Have a saving power. ¹⁶

I am sure, without renouncing in any way any catholic dogma, that if Gandhi were to be a catholic Christian, we should have been thinking of calling him

“Saint Gandhi”. This thinking is not supported by all. Robert Ellsberg criticises Gandhi on the grounds that the latter only “accepts the Sermon on Mount thinking it supports his principle of nonviolence and denies the rest of Jesus’ teachings and claims.”¹⁷ Nevertheless, what we can learn from Gandhi is how to put to practice what we profess. In fact his life should be a painful reminder to Christians. His’ was not mere intellectual appreciation of the teachings of Jesus. His understanding was grounded in the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount where some of his partners and adversaries professed to be Christians with whom he was engaged for over fifty years. In the process, he has left us two edited works: “*What Jesus means to me*” and “*The Jesus I love*”.

What is certainly true is that Gandhi not only understood the ethic of the Gospel as well, if not in some ways better, than most Christians, but he is one of the very few men of our time who applied Gospel principles to the problems of a political and social existence in such a way that his approach to these problems was inseparably religious and political at the same time. Christians understand the theology of the cross, while Gandhi puts it into practice. The missionary, Stanley Jones gives his own personal view of what he learned from Gandhi: “Gandhi has taught me more of the Spirit of Christ than has others in the East or West...The world which calls itself Christian talk of truth but Gandhi puts it in practice. Here is the difference...Never in human history has much light been thrown on the cross. It is only through this man who was not a Christian.”¹⁸

6.5. Criticisms of the affirmation: “I love your Christ but I hate your Christians...”

All what we have been trying to put together concerning the relevance of the Gandhian affirmation “*I love your Christ but I hate your Christians because your Christians are unlike your Christ*” to the contemporary Christian boil down to the fact that, the contemporary Christian should imbibe and synthesise the dialectic between *discourse* (thesis) and *praxis* (antithesis). This implies putting

into practice the words which we profess vocally. It is not enough to say Christ. It is better to be like Christ and by our fruits people will say “these are Christians”!

What does the contemporary Christian interpret in the word sacrifice? We are in a society where capitalism and egoism cut through the fabric of Christendom. How many of us can sacrifice ourselves for others in this contemporary world. True enough Maximillian Kolbe did so in Poland. Martin Luther King Jr. did same in the USA. Oscar Romero did so in El Savador. Contemporary Christians should follow suit. The cross of Christ should be our guide. In a contemporary world where revenge and unforgiveness even among Christians remain the order of the day, Gandhi teaches us to imitate Christ teachings in the Sermon on the Mount. If we do so then Gandhi can give the following message to Christians: *“I love your Christ and I LOVE your Christians because your Christians are making efforts to be like your Christ”*.

Gandhi essentially came to view Christianity, especially Western Christianity, as a betrayal of everything that Christ stood for. He saw someone such as Tolstoy as embodying what he understood to be the teachings of Christ; after Constantine, it is Gandhi's view, the institutionalization of Christianity delivered a death blow to Christ's teachings

6.7. The Catholic Church and Nonviolence.

The Catholic Church has always tried to defend the rights of the poor and defend the world against violence. Despite its persecutions on some individuals in the medieval era, the Catholic Social Teaching today consists primarily of a theology of peace. The Church is gradually embracing nonviolence. Through her catechisms and other documents, the church promotes virtues like peace, justice, inter-religious dialogues, Ecumenism, etc. The Papal Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* of Pope John XXIII regarded the need for a new world order based on peace and common good.

The Pope John Paul II commenting on the *Pacem in Terris* commended the U.N. and called for a new constitutional organization of the human family, truly capable of ensuring peace and harmony between peoples as well as their integral human development. Pope John Paul II has always preached nonviolence. He is of the opinion that “Those who built their lives on nonviolence have gives us a luminous example of integrity and loyalty, often to the point of martyrdom, have provided us with rich and splendid lesson”.¹⁹

In his address on January 1st 2005, the Holy Father exhorted us to abandon violence and embrace nonviolence, in order to build a society based on peace and common good. He puts it thus:

To attain the good of peace, there must be a clear and conscious acknowledgement that violence is an unacceptable evil and that it never solves problems.... Fostering peace by overcoming evil with good requires careful reflection on the common good and on its social and political implications.²⁰

The Catholic Bishops of many dioceses have preached nonviolence either single handedly or collectively. One has to admire with awe Arch Bishop Oscar Romero who fought vigorously and nonviolently for the cause of the poor.

The U.S. Catholic Bishops acknowledge the impact of Gandhi on Christian thoughts thus: “In the twentieth century, presiding from the non-Christian witness of a Mahatma Gandhi and its worldwide impact, the nonviolent witness of such figures as Dorothy Day and Martin Luther King has had profound impact upon the life of the church...”²¹

Back here in Africa, the Church has been highly concerned with the use of nonviolence. In Cameroon, the efforts of Christian Cardinal Tumi, in opposing the wrong deeds of Presidents Ahmadou Ahhidjo and Paul Biya nonviolently cannot be neglected. The Cameroonian Bishops have not failed in their duties to ring a correction bell to the government. Since 1977, the Bishops of Bamenda and Buea had charged Cardinal Tumi, then Rector of the Major Seminary in Bambui to form an ecumenical group called “Christian Study Group” with aim to analyse the socio-political events in Cameroon in the light

of the Gospel of Christ. As a result of their findings the Bishops, on the 27th of February 1977 published a pastoral letter entitled: “The Fight against Corruption in Cameroon”²². They willingly showed that there exist in Cameroon a high rate of Bribery and corruption. Material wealth has become the supreme and highest good for some of us camerooninans.

In recent years, Cardinal Tumi as shown in the preceding chapters has been one of Cameroon's most outspoken voices, demanding an end to government corruption and restrictions on press freedoms. He also has accused the country's police force of torture and carrying out summary executions. In a September 2004 speech delivered in Milan, Italy, the cardinal said his country was ruled by “the law of the strongest” and that elections were continually marred by ballot rigging. He said “the facade of democracy” in Cameroon “exists more for creating a pleasing, external image than for promoting individual and collective liberties. The proof is (found in) electoral fraud.”²² Soon after the election results handed President Biya a third consecutive term of office in October 2004, Tumi fumed that since independence from France and Great Britain in 1961, Cameroon has never had transparent elections. The cardinal, along with the nation's other bishops, has repeatedly called on Biya -- in power since 1982 -- to let the country move toward political pluralism. Cardinal Tumi has always hammered that it is the duty of the church to denounce the dishonesty of some government officials since the church has a duty to educate people about honesty.

There is real need for Justice and peace perpetrated by the Christians here in Cameroon. Song Eugene observes that:

Such an image is a far-fetched dream in Christian Cameroon if one were to go by the alarming cases of injustices, violence, discrimination, corruption and “god-fatherism” that have eaten deep into the fabrics of the society. This shows how shallow Christianity has penetrated the life of this people...they have not yet learnt to live as brothers and sisters in a church family of God. There is deep rooted hatred amongst the people....With this

gloomy picture, we have the impression that the church as family in Cameroon is not a hamlet of peace, love and care.²³

An immediate reaction to this is to say, Fr. Eugene Song is too hard on the Cameroonian Christians. Looking at it from another perspective however, one notices that he proves there are rivalries and squabbles among tribes and ethnic groups which have eaten into the fabrics of the Church. A glaring example which he portrays is the event that took place on the 17th, July 1999 when Mgr. A. Wouking (RIP) from the *Bamileke* tribe was appointed as archbishop of Yaoundé. As Fr. Eugene Song observes, there was open rejection by the “Christians of Yaoundé under the conspiracy of some diocesan priests and politicians...Priests claiming to be indigenes of the archdiocese wrote to the Vatican saying ‘le pape a fait une erreur’, that is, the Pope has made a mistake.”²⁴ Cameroonian Christians need Gandhi’s! The situation of our country is really deplorable. We need a nonviolent prophet who will stand up and fight the alarming rate of Bribery and corruption, ethnic and tribal wars which invade our country. We need Gandhi in Africa as shown by the AECAWA.

The inter-religious Dialogue Commission of the Association of Episcopal Conference of Anglophone West Africa (AECAWA) has presented many study papers to preach inter-religious Dialogue and the need for nonviolence in Africa. They are:

- (1) Inter-religious Dialogue and Nation Building Ibadan, 3-6 October 2000.
- (2) Religion, Violence and Peace in West Africa Accra, 7-10 October 2002.

Vincent Boi Nai a member of AECAWA highlighted the role played by great figures like Gandhi. He attests that:

People like Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr., and Nelson Mandela have taken history in a new direction. They have shown the power of nonviolence. Though they did not achieve their goals 100%, nevertheless, they showed a way that is worth following.²⁵

END NOTES

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2. Cf. M. K. GANDHI, *Autobiography*, Washington, D.C., Public Affairs press, 1948, 92.
3. T. J. RYNNE, Paper delivered at “Justice and Mercy Shall Kiss: A conference of peacemaking in the World of many faiths” in Marquette University, September 2004, 22-24, <http://fatherlasch.com/article/472/jesus-and-gandhi>
4. M. K. GANDHI, *What Jesus means to me*, 14, in J. O. ODEY, *Racial Oppression in America*, 105.
5. M. K. GANDHI, “Discussion with a missionary” in *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 65. April 14 1937, 79-82.
6. M. K. GANDHI, *Harijan* 7-1-1939.
7. M. K. GANDHI, *Young India*, 31 December 1931.
8. Quoted in S. K. George in *Gandhiji-his life and work*, 1944.
9. Complete Works of Mahatma Gandhi, vol. 60, 323.
10. Cf. Sermon of Pastor Mike Powel at University Bible Church titled “What is wrong with Christianity is Christians” <http://www.pocatelloshops.com>.
11. R. PARIKH, *Mahatma Gandhi, Chrisitan fundamentalism and politics of conversion*. October 29th 2006, www.sulekha.com
12. M. K. GANDHI, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* Vol. 13 , 6th June 1925, 220
13. M. K. GANDHI, *Harijan*, 17-1-1946, 405.
14. *Ibidem*, 7-9-1947, 315
15. T. MERTON, “The Gentle Revolutionary”, in *Ramparts*, San Francisco, December 1964, www.mkgandhi.org
16. E. PRIVAT, *Vie de Gandhi*, Paris, Denoël, 1958, 1-2.
17. R. Ellsberg (Ed), *A Critique of Gandhi on Christianity*, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1991, 32.
18. S. Jones, *Gandhi*, VI, VII, VIII, in Edmond Privat, *Vie de Gandhi*, Paris, Denoël, 1958, 186.

19. John Paul II, *Message for the 2000 World Day OF Peace*, No. 4
20. *Idem*, *Message for the 2005 World Day OF Peace*, Nos. 4 & 5.
21. U.S Catholic Bishops, *Pastoral Letter on War and Peace in the Nuclear Age*, Washington DC & CTSISPCK, London, 1983, 14.33.
22. cf. Christian Wiyghansai Shaaghan Cardinal Tumi, *The political regimes of Ahmadou Ahidjo and Paul Biya, and Christian Tumi, priest*, Douala, MACACOS, 2006, p. 20-31
23. Catholic News Service, "West African cardinal has experience with tough church problems", 2005,
<http://www.catholicnews.com/jpii/cardinals/0501855.htm>
24. E. SONG, *The Challenges of Inculturating the Good News within the Church in Cameroon in the Light of Ecclesia in Africa Fifteen Years After*, Bamenda, 2010, 47.
25. *Ibidem*, 48.
26. Joseph Kenny O.P (ed.) *AECAWA Interreligious Dialogue Accra*, an AECAWA Publication, 2003, 46.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.0. THE WAY FORWARD

7.1. Is Gandhi's Doctrine Possible?

Gandhi's doctrine of nonviolence has been shown to be very relevant and timely in many situations. He professed a philosophy, which he himself experimented in many situations, especially in gaining independence for India. One begins to imagine the number of lives Gandhi has touched. However, it is not a bed of roses for Gandhi and his followers.

Gandhi faced heated criticisms right from the time he was still alive. Those who could not contain his innovations had him assassinated. Jinnah Mohammed Ali disagreed most of the times with Gandhi and was instrumental for the formation of what we have today as Pakistan.

Can Gandhi's philosophy of nonviolence be understood in Iraq? Can it solve the current problems in the Middle East? Mandela found himself unable to continue with the application of Gandhian nonviolence and ended up making use of sabotage. Steger accuses Gandhi of sometimes condoning with what he called "conceptual violence."¹ That is the construction of an "other" who is spiritually inferior or lacks truth. This lapse into conceptual violence theoretically delimitates his theory of nonviolence. Earlier on in 1920, Gandhi claimed that his nonviolence was a universal philosophy. He claimed that "my religion (nonviolence) has no geographical limits. If I have a living faith in it, it will transcend India herself."² Gandhi however sacrificed at times his nonviolence principles in favour of nationalist power.

Any Universalist theory must be accessible to all without exception. It shuns inequality. Gandhi's concerns for his nationalist principles have plunged him into so many criticisms and have many moral implications. His critics claim that he tended to represent a theory of community based on the exclusion of others. Steger further notes that Gandhi made political choices in the interests of nationalist power and tainted his universal moral philosophy of nonviolence. He

further claims, “By participating in the instrumental process of seizing political power from the British, he (Gandhi) risked the dilution of his nonviolent principles.”³ Furthermore, Gandhi though claiming a Universalistic philosophy, invited a particular Indian history tied to a particular group of people. Even within the Indian context, Gandhi tended to speak with a predominantly Hindu context. Nobody speaks from nowhere.

On surface view, Gandhi’s interpretation appeared as a “Manichaeian world of good and evil with both violence and nonviolence serving as the main players.”

⁴ However, though Gandhi viewed violence as evil and nonviolence as good, it is difficult to reconcile his nonviolence with the way he took part in wars. Four times during his life, Gandhi offered his services to the army. Despite efforts to defend this attitude of, it still remains controversial to many people. However, the war service was something Gandhi outgrew.

On another note, some moralist find problem with Gandhi’s view of mercy killing. In the ashram, there was an ailing calf, which lay in agony beyond treatment. Gandhi decided to kill it by slow injection. When challenged if this would be done in the case of man, Gandhi’s response seems to support Euthanasia. He said:

In practice however, we do not cut short the sufferings of our ailing ones by death, because as a rule, we have always means at our disposal to help them, and they have the capacity to think and decide for themselves. But supposing that in the case of an ailing friend, I am unable to render aid, and recovery is out of the question, and the patient is lying in an unconscious state in the throes of agony then I would not see any himsa in putting an end to his suffering by death.⁵

In another case Gandhi was very absolute by saying, “should my child be attacked with rabies and there was no helpful remedy to relieve his agony, I should consider it my duty to take his life.”⁶ Such views portray mercy killing and are negative because it is a usurpation of God’s lordship over human life. I. M. Onyeocha attests that “The initial intention is to put the person to death,

while the ostensible reason is to make death easier and less painful and agonizing when it is considered that continued life would be burdensome.”⁷

Gandhi cannot go away un-punctured for his “hate” for Christians treated in the sixth chapter of this book. He seemed to have understood the Sermon on the Mount in a literary way. He tried judging Christianity with the standards of Hinduism. He read only the portions of the Bible which moved in line with his frame of thoughts, and without reading all, he tried universalising the particular. The Sermon on the Mount literally understood is NOT the whole of the Bible with 73 books! Even the Ethiopian Eunuch when reading the Old Testament Scriptures asked for the help of Philip because the former could not understand (Ac 8:26-40). One can quickly conclude in Gandhi’s case that the latter did not understand the Old Testament, so he kept it off from his doctrine. He could have asked for explanations from some biblical scholars.

We should not rely much on these criticisms lest after bathing a child thoroughly, we throw away the washbowl and the child! We can learn from Gandhi’s mistakes and sieve his thinking to take what is necessary. After reading the Gandhian affirmation which has been our bone of contention all this while, we insist that the contemporary Christian needs to put into practice what he hears and believes.

It is interesting to note that Gandhi, according to Vinay Lal is someone everyone loves to hate. Lal insists:

Gandhi has legions of admirers, but he has also been the target of severe, even virulent, criticism from numerous perspectives. Though Gandhi still commands veneration from many, he is also someone everyone loves to hate. Some critics fault him for particular positions, such as his support of the Khilafat movement, his inexplicable views on the Bihar earthquake, his deployment of Hindu imagery or idioms of speech such as ‘Ram Rajya’, and so on. Other critics, arguing from specific ideological positions, are inclined to find systemic shortcomings in Gandhi’s views⁸.

Many scholars like Vinay Lal ask so many interesting questions about Gandhi that one cannot fail to mention in these criticisms: why did Gandhi's legacy have no impact in countries such as Uganda and Kenya, where there were substantial Indian populations and yet the Indians faced eviction and discrimination? If even the Indian populations in Africa could not sustain Gandhi's teachings, should we expect that African people should have done so?

7.2. The Way Forward for Africa

After such a flamboyant expose on the relevance of Gandhi's Doctrine of Nonviolence to Africa, the chief question remains: What is the way forward for Africa to adopt nonviolence? How can Africa, move step by step towards adopting an African Voice of Nonviolence? This involves adopting Peace in African Societies in the religious, political, developmental and educational hemisphere. Many African thinkers and theologians like Jean Blaise Kenmonge, Kä Mana in the book *"Pour la voie africaine de la non-violence"* (Towards an African voice of Nonviolence) have recently asked this question: "Is it possible to imagine today an African voice of nonviolence and propose it to the world for a new project of civilisation and of culture?"⁹ The expected answer is obviously YES. A yes which does not end in imaginations but of course, a YES which will encourage Africa to incarnate and invent a nonviolent doctrine to fight the chaos that the world order has placed Africa into, as reflected in all the African calamities. In the preface to this book, Mgr Jean-Bosco Ntep, of the diocese of Edea in Cameroon observed that, in terms of philosophy and practice of nonviolence as a necessity for education towards peace, having as its base the construction of a society based on Justice, Prosperity and Respect of Human Rights, Africa has not yet vigorously and decisively imposed her voice to reflect. Despite the presence of so many associations and movements in the society which are apt to implement the methods of nonviolent action in many African countries, it is a pity that our continent has not yet clearly shown clearly and with determination this moving force¹⁰. Nkrumah dreamt of having a united Africa. It is our thinking that nonviolence goes with unity. Gandhi fought

vigorously to unite people. The best way forward for Africa is to be united. What happens in some African countries is quite appalling. Many who travel complain of the maltreatments received at the embassies in trying to get visas and also of the way they are badly treated in the receiving countries in Africa. We insist with Nkrumah that “Africa Must Unite!” Most African nations since the year 2010 have been celebrating 50 years of independence. One is tempted to ask if it is really fifty years of independence or fifty years of neo-colonialism. Many think that Africa must adopt a New Independence which involves healing our selves from this sickness of neo-colonialism and creating a new destiny built on African values. Africans need to feel free in the African continent and affirm themselves in the world. Africans will need to quit the consumer stage and take their right place in producing in all domains of life.

After about fifty years of African independence which in my own humble opinion have failed, it is necessary to adopt the clarion call of professor Ka Mana: THERE IS URGENCY! There is urgency in thinking of the New independence of Africa in terms of grandeur, liberty and creative power. There is urgency to reconstruct the future of Africa. There is urgency in thinking of the leadership of Africa in terms of the welfare of the people. There is urgency in putting in place political, economic and cultural institutions capable of bringing up the capacity of Africans inventing and organising themselves. There is urgent need of intergrating the life of each African in a regional dynamic of cooperation and political solidarity in order to build a sound political system. Since there is urgency, we need to hasten up and organise our countries so that Africa should succeed. We need to carve the path even if it means carving roads through solid rocks. In effect the time has come to make our countries shine with the light of the new independence. There is urgency!¹¹

Africa is aware of the light great people like Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr, and a host of others mentioned above have brought forward to show that nonviolence is an indispensable necessity and an imperative to bring concordance and authentic harmony among humans. The bishop observes also that Africa so far has not taken time to reflect on her religious treasures, social

norms and cultural values to offer proposals to the great barbarity ravaging our continent. Africa finds herself in a modernity in which, politics, economy international relations among religions are confronted by multiform absurdities. Despite this, Africa has not taken enough time to discover these modern forms of exploitation and domination, Africa has not proposed any new project of civilisation grounded on nonviolence.

7.2. Conclusion

In spite of all the heated criticisms on Gandhi, it is worth noting that he remains a fallible human being. In effect, “Gandhi may not have been his own best critic, his critics have also not done him the justice of attempting to understand how he negotiated the various critical worldviews that he encountered”¹². It was not by chance that he was given the “*Mahatma*” and “*Bapu*” titles. Anyone who critically examines his theories will hurriedly conclude that he was saint like. While recognizing his shortcomings, his philosophy of nonviolence remains a masterpiece. He is the emancipator of the oppressed, the freedom and the empowerment of the people vis-à-vis a totalitarian and centralized state which has usurped all such freedom and power. With his philosophy, politicians will be persuaded to understand the dangers of violence.

Gandhi faced heated criticisms from feminists, Marxists etc. Nevertheless, he opened up himself to criticisms by his frankness in his autobiography as Vinay Lal beautifully puts it:

Since Gandhi himself never much abided by the distinction between the private and the public, he also opened himself up to criticism. It is doubtful, for example, that anyone would have known anything of that very small heap of indiscretions which he describes in his autobiography and later writings - the theft of a few gold coins from the family home; the visit to a brothel from where he emerged, predictably, with his virginity intact; the

wretched encounter, which commenced and ended in his mind via the belly, with a dead goat; the lust that drove him to Kasturba's bed while his father lay dying; and the immense disappointment he experienced in his 60s when he was painfully brought to the awareness that he had not yet mastered the sexual instinct - had Gandhi not himself rendered his life, in his words, into an open book¹³.

On this note, rather than spending countless hours criticising someone whose life remains an open book, well disposed to criticism, it is better to learn from his many virtues.

Gandhi's intellectual influence on his countrymen was considerable. Some were attracted by his emphasis on political and economic decentralization; others by his insistence on individual freedom, moral integrity, the unity of means and ends, and social service; still others by his Satyagraha and political activism. For some students of India, Gandhi's influence is responsible for its failure to throw up any genuinely radical political movement. For others it cultivated a spirit of nonviolence, encouraged the habits of collective self-help, and helped lay the foundations of a stable, morally committed, and democratic government. Gandhi's ideas have also had a profound influence outside India, where they inspired nonviolent activism and movements in favour of small-scale, self-sufficient communities living closer to nature and with greater sensitivity to their environment.

Gandhi's moral and political thought was based on a relatively simple metaphysic. For him the universe was regulated by a Supreme Intelligence or Principle, which he preferred to call *satya* (Truth) and, as a concession to convention, God. It was embodied in all living things, above all in human beings, in the form of self-conscious soul or spirit. Since all human beings partook of the divine essence, they were "ultimately one". They were not merely equal but "identical". As such, love was the only proper form of relation between them; it was "the law of our being", of "our species". Positively, love implied care and concern for others and total dedication to the cause of

“wiping away every tear from every eye”. Negatively, it implied ahimsa, or “nonviolence”. Gandhi’s entire social and political thought, including his theory of Satyagraha, was an attempt to work out the implications of the principle of love in all areas of life.

For Gandhi, the state “represented violence in a concentrated form”. It spoke in the language of compulsion and uniformity, sapped its subjects’ spirit of initiative and self-help, and “unmanned” them. Since human beings were not fully developed and capable of acting in a socially responsible manner, the state was necessary. However, if it was not to hinder their growth, it had to be so organized that it used as little coercion as possible and left as large an area of human life as possible to voluntary efforts.

As Gandhi imagined it, a truly nonviolent society was federally constituted and composed of small, self-governing, and relatively self-sufficient village communities relying largely on moral and social pressure. The police were basically social workers, enjoying the confidence and support of the local community and relying on moral persuasion and public opinion to enforce the law. Crime was treated as a disease, requiring not punishment but understanding and help. The standing army was not necessary either, for a determined people could be relied upon to mount nonviolent resistance against an invader. In Gandhi’s view it was a “sin against humanity” to possess superfluous wealth.

A nonviolent society was committed to Sarvodaya, the growth or uplift of all its citizens. Private property denied the “identity” or “oneness” of all men, and was immoral. In Gandhi’s view it was a “sin against humanity” to possess superfluous wealth when others could not even meet their basic needs. Since the institution of private property already existed, and men were attached to it, he suggested that the rich should take only what they needed and hold the rest in trust for the community. Increasingly he came to appreciate that the idea of trusteeship was too important to be left to the precarious goodwill of the rich, and suggested that it could be enforced by organized social pressure and even by law. Gandhi advocated heavy taxes, limited rights of inheritance,

state ownership of land and heavy industry, and nationalization without compensation as a way of creating a just and equal society.

Gandhi touches the lives of everyone both young and Old. Michael Nagler recounts how Gandhi touched him since from the age of 10:

By the time I came to Berkeley, already a “peacenik” with the rhetoric of the civil rights movement echoing in my ears, I had of course heard of Gandhi—but like most Americans, I knew little enough about him. A few days after my eleventh birthday I saw a picture of the Mahatma’s cremation and the wild grief of the mourners on the cover of Life magazine, which left a distinct impression of otherness, even weirdness, about the man and his culture, and the little I later heard—about his fasts, his asceticism—did little to dispel this first impression. I admired his achievements, but they seemed almost more than human. I felt that he was probably a great man, and I was not, and that was that. But when Sri Easwaran began to weave his own reminiscences of Gandhi into his inspiring talks, slowly and from many angles shedding light on who Gandhi really was, an entirely new picture emerged. I began to see that Gandhi was at once much greater and yet more relevant—even to my own little life—than I had imagined ¹⁴.

We still insist that If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, thought and acted, inspired by the vision of humanity evolving toward a world of peace and harmony. Who is this great man that environmentalists, pacifists, conscientious objectors, non-violent activists, nudists, naturopaths, vegetarians, prohibitionists, social reformers, internationalists, moralists, trade union leaders, political dissidents, hunger strikers, anarchists, luddites, celibates, anti-globalisation activists, pluralists, ecumenists, walkers, and many others have at one time or another claimed as their patron saint, or at least drawn inspiration from him? We may ignore Gandhi at our own risk. The world needs Gandhi, Africa needs Gandhi.

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OUTER COVER

Mandela puts it that India is Gandhi's country of birth and South Africa his country of adoption because he began his philosophy of nonviolence in South Africa. The Gandhian influence dominated freedom struggles on the African continent right up to 1960s because of the power it generated and the unity it forged among the apparently powerless. Nonviolence was the official stance of all major African coalitions. Seeing the situation of Africa today, there is a special need for an inculcation of the Gandhian Doctrine of Nonviolence.

In Africa, morality/human rights have been overtaken by the growing tendency to violence. Violence reveals itself in the form of wars (like in Congo D.R., Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Liberia, etc), ritual killings, injustices, rigging of elections etc. Such violence in Africa seems to come in most cases from rulers who terrorize their citizens. Such leaders terrorize their people with arbitrary laws.... Those who succeeded them have invariably had to resolve to the case of force. Most African Leaders continue to boast of their might and remain dictators.

In Africa, most countries practicing democracy do not meet up to the standards required. Presidents in Democratic regimes remain on seat for many decades, for example, Paul Biya of Cameroon, Mugabe of Zimbabwe, Gaddafi of Libya etc. African countries have been turned into political states where those who cry for justice are arrested, detained, tortured, imprisoned and even killed, but yet claim that these countries are oases of freedom. Many citizens have started appreciating the philosophy of nonviolence. Onyeocha attests that, in Africa, it was not by chance but by conscious choice that nonviolence was preferred to violence." Freedom fighters in Africa like Nyerere, Nkrumah, and Mandela, have testified the importance of nonviolence in their lives, thanks to Gandhi's influence.

This book treats the relevance of Gandhi's doctrine of nonviolence with special reference to Africa and Cameroon. It is recommended for all lovers of Peace, Love and Nonviolence.

Opinions from readers

"Congratulations for the beautiful and insightful work! You have my blessing. God bless you" VRF Simeon Nwobi, cmf, Provincial Superior of Claretian Missionaries, East Nigeria

"I certainly agree with your conclusion that "We may ignore Gandhi at our own risk. The world need Gandhi, Africa needs Gandhi." I hope this valuable book will be read and taken to heart by many readers" Michael Nagler, President, Metta Center, USA

"The structure reads proper and the content interesting"
Peter Ruhe, Chairperson, GandhiServe Foundation, Rathausstrasse 51a,
12105 Berlin, Germany

"It was a pleasure reading through your book; it reminded me of my student days when I was first introduced to Gandhi's nonviolence ideas. I think your book will be a good introductory text-book to both academicians and activists alike".

Delia Maria, Friends of the Gandhi Museum Pune

"It is with high regards to your work that I am writing after the pleasure of read your book "The relevance of Gandhi's Doctrine of Nonviolence. Africa needs Gandhi". I must say I found the book a very interesting work in the effort of the diffusion the ideas and contribution of Gandhiji, in this specific case with the purpose of doing so in Africa. I cannot make any critical specific comments because I see a lot of work being accumulated in your effort to synthesize the Gandhian contributions. I always can say that I would do this or that in a different way but I respect your particular emphasis and decisions regarding where to put the importance and how to explain the story. I really think the book is a very interesting tool and I send you my best wishes for a good distribution of this work".

My best regards from Spain, Rubén Campos

"I did finally get to read your book and find it very interesting. You have done a good job. Thank you for allowing me to read it first". With good wishes
-- Arun Gandhi 160, Wintergreen Way, Rochester, NY 14618.

"I have gone through your manuscript...I congratulate you for your putting immense labour in the work. Moreover, I will express my happiness for your keen interest in Gandhi's philosophy". With best wishes, Yours sincerely, Prof. Dr. Ravindra Kumar (A former vice chancellor of Meerut University, India; he is currently the editor of Global Peace International Journal).

My view is that you show a very good comprehension of the principal teachings that Gandhi stood for, and in some cases you show an understanding of Gandhi that is not found in many

Books. With best wishes, Vinay Lal, Professor of History, University of Delhi; Professor of History & Asian American Studies, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA).

Your work is full of efforts and thoughts. The title of the book is really inspiring! Today's Africa has to look back and walk towards the future with Gandhi and his philosophy in all aspects of her life. Balamurali Balaji, The center for Information Technology and Gandhian Philosophy of Non-violence and Peace

"It is great sir...I salute you. World needs Gandhi..."

Gopi Kanta Ghosh, Freelancing on Rural Development and Writing Books

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



The author is a Roman Catholic Priest ordained on the 9th of April 2010. He is a Missionary Son of the Immaculate Heart of Mary (Claretian Missionary). He studied Philosophy in the Claretian Institute of Philosophy, Maryland Nekede in Imo State, Nigeria; An affiliate institute of the University of Port Harcourt in Nigeria and the Pontifical Urban University in Rome. He equally read Theology in *Ecole Théologique Saint Cyprien of Ngoya*, in

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Fr. Jude is currently serving in Paroisse Saint Gregoire le Grand (Saint Gregory the Great Parish), Ndobon-Bonaberi, in the Archdiocese of Douala, Cameroon.