

ADJUSTMENT OF SCHOOL/PUBLIC COUNSELING AGAINST INSECURITY: LETTER TO PHILEMON AND AFRICAN FOLKWAYS IN FOCUS

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Abstract

In Nigeria today, insecurities have appeared to be the order of the day. Some decades ago, it was predominantly the Niger Delta militants and Boko Haram. Currently, it has grown to IPOB (Indigenous people of Delta) – Biafra a succession, ESN – Eastern Security Network,

unknown Gun-men, Fulani herdsmen and even the emergence of End-SARS in October, 2020. All these issues are constituents of insecurity in Nigeria that call for solution(s). the problem that bothers this article is the fact that many measures have been put in place to quench these conflagrations, yet it seems much have not been done. Hence, this paper is designed to address the ugly state of Nigeria. In order to proffer or contribute to the existing solutions or measures adopted for the control of insecurity in all the country, the paper advocates for adjustment of the systems and services of experts or professionals to adhere to the message of St. Paul to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus where Paul achieved making Onesimus to repent, before taking him to his master Philemon for forgiveness and the compliance of Philemon. More so, African folkways mainly the kingship institution that had been very effective in controlling critical and crises situation are also advocated to be built in both primary and secondary schools, tertiary curriculum and the public where it affects the services of the guidance and counseling expertise, because it is always better to catch them young. The parties involved should also imbibe the spirit of forgiveness, repentance and being proactive on critical conditions. It is found that insecurities have increased Nigerian citizens' quest to reside abroad. Again, lives of her domicile citizens equally are threatened. The paper employs hermeneutical and phenomenological approaches. Data were collected from primary and secondary materials. Information gathered was analyzed with descriptive and historical styles of data analysis. It is also recommended amongst other things that Nigerian traditional nomadic and customary sciences should be introduced to the security control and management strategies from schools to government, public and suspects etc.

Keywords: Guidance and counseling Letter to Philemon, African folkways, insecurity

Introduction

In the New Testament part of the Christian Bible, there is a counselor par excellence impact found in the actions of Paul to Onesimus and Philemon his master which contemporary guidance and counseling professionals in the contemporary Nigeria are encouraged to learn in this article, Paul's action brought complete repentance and heartfelt forgiveness, Essay Topics (2021:3) writes thus:

Paul wrote a letter to Philemon while he was in prison thus called the book of Philemon. Paul appealed to Philemon to forgive his slave and no longer view him as a slave but a brother in Christ... Therefore, this letter Paul tactfully persuades Philemon through means of emotional kinship, during this time in Roman.

Empire half of all people were slaves and owners had full rights to do as they please... so when Onesimus ran away he thought his best option was to lose himself in the crowd so he would not be caught...

Though in Nigeria context, there is no room for legal slavery but at any point offenses arise to alarming degrees, this is always for domestic intervention from the hierarchies with the view of applying and encouraging the spirit of patriotism, forgiveness and repentance as in the case of St Paul, Philemon and Onesimus respectively. Nwigwe (1998:82) buttresses thus:

This is a special epistle to an individual. It holds a unique place among the writings of St. Paul. It is the only strictly private letter of his which has been preserved the pastoral epistles indeed are addressed to individuals, but they discuss important matters of church discipline and government. On the other hand, the letter before us does not touch upon any question of public interest. It is wholly occupied with an incident of domestic life.

Insecurities in Nigeria should be understood as matters of domestic interests. More so, security matters are not best handled with public interest and attention. For instance, there is serious suspicion that IPOB is the brain behind the existence of unknown gunmen and eastern security network, hence, the arrest of Mr. Nnamdi Kanu with a major charge of terrorism. There is also arrest of Boko Haram terrorists, different arrests of the Fulani herdsmen, et cetera. It is on this background that this paper advocates that guidance and counseling professionals ought to arise to their service for the sake of Nigeria where security matters are becoming too public that foreigner(s) appear(s) in domestic court matters and other matters relating to insecurity. Guidance/counselor are advocated to adjust their system and contents of their services as it affects insecurity in Nigeria but strategizing to make a few Nigerian leaders to show some sense of patriotism through direct communication with chief executive officers of different levels of government in Nigeria from federal to local government on issues of insecurities in such a way that the leaders will have the spirit of forgiveness and the offenders, the spirit of repentance and make everyone understand every citizen as brothers and sisters not as slaves. The strategy is paramount to be adopted in the guidance and counseling services in primary, secondary and tertiary institutions and to the public with special reference to the book of Philemon and African folkways, Ruch and Anyanwu (1981:382) stress that: "In an African community everybody is linked with all other members, living or dead, through a complex network of spiritual relationships in a kind of mystical body". When guidance and counselors make this conviction of the folk way mostly the kingship institution that both spiritual and physical bond very essential in Nigerian peoples understanding of the world around Nigerians, it will go a long way to control insecurity because no one would neither want to harm his brother or relation nor attract the wrath of the unknown spiritual world. The kingship institution of the Nigerian people encourages the provision of the room for repentance which awaits heartfelt forgiveness as it is to the intervention of Paul in conflict between Philemon and Onesimus. The paper employs both hermeneutical and phenomenological methodologies. Data were got from primary and secondary sources. Data gotten were analyzed with historical and descriptive styles of data analyses. The paper recommends that Nigerian traditional normative and customary sciences should be introduced to the insecurity control strategies from schools to government, public and suspects and so on. The research discovers that insecurities have increased Nigerian citizens' quest to reside abroad. Again, lives of her domicile citizens equally are threatened. Therefore, it is aimed at addressing these insecurities related problems. Hence, it is aimed at addressing these insecurities related problems.

Conceptualization of Terms

The terms that are considered to be explained in this research include adjustment, school, public, insecurity, guidance and counseling, letter to Philemon, and African folkways.

Adjustment has been defined by M. Webster(2021:2) as: “a correction or modification to reflect actual conditions”. Adjustment as used in this research looks at a modification from absolute use of force in tackling insecurity in Nigeria to application of guidance and counseling services built on the lesson from the letter to Philemon and the traditional folkways in Nigeria. School is seen as a place or institution for teaching and learning; ...establishment for education (Your dictionary, n.d:4). The school meant here refers to those places or institutions meant for teaching and learning. They range from primary general secondary, vocational, colleges of education, special technical schools/polytechnics and universities. Public has been explained by Summers (2001:6) as: “... connected with all the ordinary people in a country who are not members of the government or do not have important jobs. The public this research refers to deals with the common man on the street that is not in governmental power or authority. Insecurity, Lexico (2021:3) expresses insecurity as: “the state of being open to danger or threat, lack of protection.” In Nigeria, the citizens seem to be so open to danger and threats without reliable protection.

Guidance and counseling is an area of study taught in institutions of higher education. It is a discipline that falls within the faculty or school of education. Dr. Mrs. Oguji (personal communication, 3 November, 2021) states that guidance and counseling is a course that is taken serious in highly developed countries. She points that it is an area of study introduced to guide and counsel people to adjust to a good or better life styles. The experts of guidance and counseling are expected to guide their client on ways to avoid violence, teen pregnancy, terrorism, child abuse, and so on. letter to Philemon was explained by Rev. Dr. Sam Nwigwe (personal communication 7 July, 1998) as one of the pastoral epistles written by Apostle Paul. He adds that it is a biblical book with its uniqueness radiating from actualized repentance that seeks for possible forgiveness propelled by an intercessor or a middleman in the person of St. Paul the Apostle. African folkway is, the learned behavior, shared by a social group that provides a traditional mode of conduct (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2014:2). The folkways that are peculiar to African societies could be termed African folkways. They Africans, the learned behavior shared by independent African peoples that provide traditional mode of conduct.

Areas of Insecurities and the Need to Adjust Guidance/Counselling in the Light of African Folkways as a way of Controlling Insecurity in Nigeria

The areas of insecurities in Nigeria have been conceived as emanating from terrorism e.g. Boko Haram, Eastern Security Network, Unknown Gun Men, Fulani Herdsmen et cetera. Another aspect is the IPOB – Indigenous people of Biafra – Succession/creation struggle and agitation. There are other banality actions, and the emergence of EndSars in October, 2020 and so on. Ayitogo (2021:1) laments thus:

Killings by armed non – state actors in Nigeria continued last week with at least – 68 people in various attacks across the country. ...A majority of those Killed last week (November 14 - 20) were civilians, most of whom were killed by bandits operating in the North-West region of the country.

It is evident that the bandits are strongly tormenting the Nigerian citizens. On terrorist attacks, the Boko Haram attacks, for example, have not rested, likewise other terrorists' activities. The Boko Haram insurgents have succeeded in abduction of Nigerian citizens especially the teens. Efforts have been put in place by Nigerian government to arrest the ugly situation but the group is still gaining entrance to some parts of the country. Global Conflict Tracker (2021:6) posits that:

After a peak in Boko Haram related violence in 2014 and 2015, the number of casualties' attribute to the group fell dramatically. The Nigerian military with assistance from Benin, Cameroon, Chad and Niger has pushed Boko Haram out of several provinces in northeastern Nigeria, but the group retains control over some villages and pockets of territories and continues to launch deadly suicide attacks and abduct civilians, mostly women and children.

The federal government of Nigeria keeps fighting and resolving with the insurgents with the use of arms and talks respectively, yet the group destroys the security affairs of the country. The issues of insecurity in Nigeria has been connected to bad governance from the Highest ranking officers to the lowest. In October 2020, there was a violent protest that claimed lives and properties of Nigerians organized by the youth against the Special- Anti Robbery Squad (SARS) of the Nigeria Police Force. Afterwards, the Indigenous Peoples of Biafra (IPOB) declared Monday sit at home in the South Eastern Nigeria especially at the arrest of Mr. Nnamdi Kanu – The IPOB leader. ACLED (2021:8) asserts thus:

On the 3rd Day of October 2021, in Nigeria, operatives of the Special Anti- Robbery Squad (SARS) allegedly shot a young man at wetland hotel in Ushelli injuring him. This incident was filmed and went viral sparking an outcry on social media against SARS using the hashtag# EndSARS. By October 8, demonstrations associated with this hashtag has begun to increase in size and number throughout Nigeria, peaking at Twenty- six (26) Demonstrations events on 13th day of October...

There is still the fear that demonstration of EndSARS equivalent can still take place in Nigeria because of abnormalities in the country. The ENDSARS protest in Nigeria got global attention. Other killings suspected to come from IPOB group also threaten the security of the country; etc.

In order to restore a peaceful and reduced insecurity threat to a barest minimum, the paper view the adjustment of the services of the guidance and counseling to ally with the traditional kingship institution as one of the measures to tackle these insecurities in the nation. Orji and Olorin, Okafor (2020:250) observes that: "By traditional institutions, we refer to the indigenous political arrangement whereby leaders with proven track records are appointed and installed in line with the provision of their native laws."

The essence of the institutions is to preserve the customs and traditions of the people and to manage conflicts arising among or between members of the communities by the instrumentation of laws and customs of the people (Okafor, 2020:250). In the traditional settings culprits exist but in most cases the kingship institution efficaciously handles such

insecurities caused by related culprits or hoodlums. The kingship uses and adheres to the traditional guidance and counseling measures more than the use of firearms. It is similar to Nathan and David scenario in the Christian Bible and its transforming outcome. Gaiya (2018:66) emphasizes thus:

In condemning David, Nathan said, “this sword shall not depart from your house”. This was fulfilled in David's domestic crises which led to the murder of Ammon and the death of Absalom. Absalom also went to his father's concubines on the sigh of Israel. David was seriously punished for the great crimes of adultery, ingratitude, murder and hypocrisy he committed in this case. David confessed his sin and repented. God pardoned him by sparing his life although David had condemned himself to death.

The traditional kingship institution accommodates a similar intervention and message from an emissary. The services of guidance and counseling should be adjusted to lessons here. Nathan lamented on David's crimes and prophesied the punishment accruing from them. Within David, he had condemned himself unworthy and deserved death. He (David) sought for forgiveness and God Granted him forgiveness after seeing his remorse and very high spirit of repentance. In the traditional people's lives, people intervene on actions against people who have also made life highly insecure for the society. Mr. Oguejiofor Okeke (personal communication, 4th November, 2021) stresses that occasions arise, where communities caught terrorists, bandits, punish and ostracize them. At the same time such a person can be seen in other communities, but are not reported to king(s) or leader(s) of the communities where such terrorist(s) bandit(s) was/were found. These kings or community leaders can decide to live with such persons guide and counsel them, then, after being convinced that the criminals have been positively transformed, the king(s) or the leader(s) of the host community or communities can take such an individual to his or her community that ex-communicate or ostracized him or her with the assurance and conviction that the criminal has repented and will become a valuable human resource to his immediate community and beyond.

Guidance/counseling for decades has not received attention in Nigeria the way it is presently recognized Suleiman et al (2019:1) stress that “guidance counseling is a service that all human beings need at one point of their life. There is no human that has not gotten problem at one point or another. Guidance counseling is a noble profession whose importance in educational system of Nigeria is becoming increasingly recognized by the country's educational planners and policy makers. Therefore, this paper finds importance in adjusting guidance counseling to accommodate both schools and the public in Nigeria, where professionals of the discipline would build the lessons and the use of African folkways especially the traditional kingship institution in tackling national issues just like the steady growth of insecurity challenges in Nigeria. When criminals, terrorists and so on are firstly gotten by the way of making them repent and being forgiven after confession as done in traditional societies and in case of David, it will yield more fruits than the use of firearms and the courts. Rehabilitation centers can be built more than what is obtainable in the country now, for this purpose, then enough guidance counseling professionals should be recruited. People can only go to prisons and courts on extreme cases. It is also relevant to

emphasize on the fruitful outcome of Onesimus, Paul and Philemon's relationship where Paul serves as a great counselor.

Adjusting Guidance/Counselling in the Light of Philemon as another Way of Controlling Insecurities in Nigeria

The Letter to Philemon is a single chapter book. Though it is the shortest of Paul's writings, it ranks third of the shortest in the New Testament. The principal characters in the Letter are the wealthy man of Colossae and his slave Onesimus. But were converted and brought to the new faith by Paul at different times under different circumstances. Before his encounter with Paul, Onesimus escaped from Philemon but later encountered Paul, who now intervenes for Onesimus. Paul pleads to Philemon for forgiveness, love and brotherhood on behalf of Onesimus for whatever offence(s), which is/are not specifically stated in the text. But this could have included running away from his master Philemon. He requests Philemon to accept him back, no longer as a mere slave but a believing brother in the Lord.

Thereafter may not go far to notice that the story presumes enormous background knowledge. Lack of adequate knowledge of the occasion makes the reading very challenging. Its complexity precipitates multiple hypotheses, which are sometimes confusing. Besides the traditional view of "the run-away slave", other readings include the "dispatched slave," the "*amicus domini*," the "estranged younger brother and the roaming slave (*erro*)" hypotheses. But the common thread that runs through is on the relationship between the wealthy Philemon and the weak Onesimus, whereby the latter is considered either as a slave or an estranged brother to Philemon. The study acknowledges the two competing hypotheses of the runaway slave and the *amicus domini*. The agreement is that Onesimus fled from Philemon and accepts Paul's services as mediator in a dispute between himself and his master Philemon. It convincingly proves the mediatory role of Paul as a diplomatic counsellor, whose ingenuity calls for a special attention.

But this paper looks at the role of Paul in the tale as de facto a counselor and guardian. It is this role that would necessitate Paul sending back Onesimus to his master with a missive requesting for the reacceptance of Onesimus as "a child of Paul" and a brother to Philemon. Even if Onesimus was once considered as "useless," Paul now acknowledges him "useful" and sells the same idea to Philemon. Paul emphatically argues that the relationship between Onesimus and him is a nurtured one that had grown with time, experience, sacrifices and understanding. The new relationship proves that the *one* once thought as *useless* (*ἄχρηστον*) is now *useful* (*εὔχρηστον*). Assuring Philemon of the usefulness of the 'new' Onesimus, Paul steps out of his way to assume the responsibility of paying back whatever debt and pains the absence of Onesimus might have caused Philemon. He prays Philemon to extend to Onesimus the same goodness Philemon might have reserved for him (Paul), while anticipating meeting Philemon at the earliest possible time. Guidance/counsellors in Nigeria can be encouraged through programmes to function in a more mediating service than central service or public service delivery just as Paul has mediated informally as a counsellor, and the other parties responding positively.

The Enhancement of the Personality of Paul and Philemon in the Letter to Philemon

The question that is often asked is whether the intervention of Paul could be considered as a selfless enterprise or with some personal interest. Whatever answer one may come up with, the focus of this paper is on the reconciliatory role of Paul that makes it plausible to consider him as an ideal counselor. This could be seen from the text tropes. The document is structured as a deliberative rhetoric and clothed with literary elements of *ethos*, *logos* and *pathos*. Paul upholds his integrity, credibility and honesty from the onset by applying certain rhetoric features of *ethos* and *pathos*. He manipulates the circumstance of his imprisonment as a confident tool to draw the attention of Philemon. He describes himself twice as “a prisoner of Jesus Christ”, refers to Epaphras as his “fellow prisoner”, speaks twice of his “imprisonment”, and alludes to Onesimus as “a child begotten” in his imprisonment (v. 19). All these play out to boost the *ethos* of Paul as a defender of the faith. He notes his privilege status as old man, who could have acquired more experience about life than Philemon and Onesimus. He also reminds Philemon that their relationship includes other interested partners that form a league of friends and co-workers.

Paul also demonstrates his respect for Philemon. His decision not to keep Onesimus without Philemon's consent is a clear testimony for his deep deference. He speaks about his willingness to take up Onesimus's debt, while counting on the good nature and love of Philemon. In short, Paul deliberately affects a stance of weakness rather than strength *vis-a-vis* Philemon. He does not bear himself as a man of influence with apostolic authority. He rather creates a kind of rhetoric *logos* by appealing to Philemon to take the advantage of his request, which would be of (double) benefits and useful to both Philemon and Paul himself. Thus, forgiving Onesimus and taking him back would enhance the image of Philemon and brings honor to him in the eyes of those who really matter. It would go a long way to confirm Paul's adornment of the personality of Philemon as a dear friend, co-worker, lover of the saints, 'refresher of the hearts of the saints' and faithful follower of Christ. He gives thanks and praise to God for the person of Philemon.

Paul is very cautious in presenting his request. It is done indirectly, thus avoiding inflammatory or offensive languages as to win the hearing of Philemon. Thereafter, he establishes his case in an incidental manner. While building his case on the rhetoric principles of *ethos* and *pathos*, Paul makes his appeal then reiterates it in even stronger terms which tactically remove Paul from deploying any apostolic authority.

Protecting the Personality of Onesimus in Paul's Letter to Philemon

In the presentation of his case, Paul goes a long way to hedge and protect the personality of Onesimus. He carefully avoids any derogatory language against Onesimus. He rather demonstrates that there is something in a name: using pun to describe Onesimus, alluding indirectly to the possible weakness of the action of Onesimus, 'if he has done anything wrong' and qualifying his temporary separation from Philemon as something positive and beneficiary to all the parties, and above all, as the miraculous work of God. Paul tactically avoids mentioning his name until almost halfway through the letter. He does not explicitly tell Philemon to forgive his slave, but strongly implies that Philemon must take this course

of action. Rather than ordering Philemon to do this or that, Paul wants Philemon to discover the appropriate path for himself. In doing this, Paul at no point would want to dent the reputation of Philemon. His approach may suggest that all steps ought to be taken transitionally and spiritually to restore the relationship between Philemon and his servant. By making the letter personal and public, it is a way for the house-church to appreciate the behavior and actions of Philemon, and to encourage the community to accept Onesimus unconditionally as a brother in the midst of other members. Important for Paul, therefore, is the changed spiritual conditions of Onesimus. Philemon can now have back forever, no longer as a slave but a dear brother. The emphasis, according to Moo, is no longer on the past quarrel between Philemon and Onesimus but new relationship of brotherliness.

The New Relationship between Philemon and Onesimus in Paul's Letter to Philemon

Philemon as “beloved.” This language demonstrates the close relationship between the two while at the same time adding to the creation of pathos Philemon has been an encourager of the “saints”. He owes his own soul to Paul, a reference to Philemon's conversion to Christ and Paul plays the role of an elder in his life. Onesimus shares in the same relation being a child to Paul and owes as well his own soul to Paul.

Paul considers Onesimus as a representative of Philemon but not a substitute. Unknown to Philemon, he usefully plays the role of Philemon in the life of Paul by ministering to Paul. Paul would have loved to keep him for the same purpose but for his respect for Philemon. It is, of course, a sacrificial but privileged duty, which Philemon himself would have gladly taken up if he was geographically close to Paul. Expressing the sacrificial role of Onesimus, Paul likens him to Epaphroditus, who risks his life to make up for those services that the Philippians could not at that moment give to Paul (Phil 2:30). The logical conclusion is simply to convince Philemon to see more reasons why Onesimus should not only be received but also be treated as a brother.

In addressing Philemon, Paul repeatedly applies certain emotive words not for mere emphasis. They positively speak to the *ethos* and *pathos* of Philemon. Such words include 'brother' (Phil. 1,7,16 and 20), 'heart' (Phil. 7,12,20), 'appeal,' (Phil. 9,10) love (Phil. 5,7,9), 'refreshment' (Phil. 7,20) and Paul's name (Phil. 1,9,19), also qualifies himself as 'prisoner of Christ' (vv. 1, 10). Paul's manipulation of the word brother, establishes a chain of relationship binding Paul, Philemon and Onesimus. He further relates same to Timothy, which indicates that the relationship at stake involves a wider circle beyond the trio. It is used as a moral force that Philemon may not easily jettison. Some even see the appearance of the word in the text as reflecting a kind of *inclusion* that further bring together Paul, Philemon and Onesimus: A. Brother Philemon (Phil.7) B. Brother Onesimus (Phil. 16) C. Brother Philemon (Phil. 20)

Both A and C refer to the undeniable fact of Philemon's relationship to Paul. But that, which is at stake, is the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus. Could the two be considered at any point as brothers? Paul acknowledges openly that both Philemon and

Onesimus are brothers to him (Paul). Both now share the brotherhood of Jesus with Paul, and by implication are brothers as well. No matter how painful this may be to Philemon, the fact is very pressing on him that he cannot but embrace the reality.

One observes also that in the use of 'heart' to qualify Philemon creates a kind of league, where Philemon is not only counted among the saints (believers), but more a representative of the league, a dear friend and co-worker. Both Philemon and Onesimus are part of Paul's heart. Therefore, Paul may not count himself complete without any (of these hearts). One may now appreciate the insistence of Paul on Philemon's acceptance of Onesimus, for it refreshes the heart of Paul *in Christ*, which he shares *with* Philemon, and now also *with* Onesimus. What is important to note in the argument among the three major characters, as presented in the missive, is that their common relationship does not depend on any of them. It is rooted *in Christ*. Hence none of the partners has the moral obligation to terminate the relationship for whatever reason. Gloer and Stepp are quick to notice that the use of the word 'heart' serves a kind of internal structure that helps the argument to progress gradually from one character to another, from the praise of Philemon to request of Philemon binding them in the middle with Paul's "heart."

The 'refreshment motif' as observed in the writing comes always with the heart. Bringing the two lexemes close adds more persuasive force to the request, which may be extremely difficult to resist. The motif appears in the middle preceding the Paul's request and at the closing part where Philemon is called to take a decision. Philemon is once praised as a refresher of the hearts of the saints (including Paul and Philemon), and now is called out to demonstrate the same virtue to Paul in particular.

Paul's name is repeated often in the epistle more than ordinary. Gloer and Stepp (2015:43) comment that the repetition of Paul's name within the epistle is something extraordinary. It goes beyond the normal practice of the Hellenistic letter-writers, who seldomly mention their own names after the epistolary opening. Paul features his name thrice and having earlier demonstrated how the name of Paul in the epistolary opening plays out to create the rhetorical *thos* and *pathos*, locating the same name in the middle of the missive is emotive, for there is something in a name. It recalls some psycho-socio-historical experiences that bind people together, which could be revoked at moments of joy and sadness, moment of crisis and uncertainties. This is what is at play here. Paul appeals to Philemon on the basis of love, and identifies himself as an old man and a prisoner of Christ Jesus.

Paul as a Counselor in the Letter to Philemon

One of the weaknesses of the *amicus domini* hypothesis and the mediatory role of Paul is silence over rights or wrongs, or even remorse from any of the concerned parties. The questions yet to answer to are how to explain the so much praises Paul has lavished on Philemon, if he had wronged Onesimus, or refrain from conveying Onesimus' remorse. "One argues here that there could have been fault on both sides, and for diplomatic and strategic reasons Paul is reluctant to suggest blame." Nevertheless, the encounter of Paul

with Onesimus could have generated to a level of trust, confidence and love. Paul enters into the shoes of Onesimus and Philemon, and decides to play the role of a counselor as a part of his missionary and apostolic mandate of transforming and reconciling the human persons and their relationship to higher (spiritual) level. This is evidenced in the encounter between Onesimus and Paul that led to a kind of transformation in the life of Onesimus, and the love between Paul and Philemon, eventually led to Paul's intervention, asking Philemon to forgive the Onesimus. One observes here the place of repentance and forgiveness. None of these Christian virtues arguably depends on the other but both are indispensable for true peaceful coexistence.

The text tells the reader the length Paul as a diplomatic and good counselor could go to win hearts for reconciliation. One learns the role of *pathos*, *ethos* and *logos* in counseling. It demands going beyond the physical. It touches all aspects of the human person. It underlines the fact that physical force or authority is not always the solution to agitation and protest. A sustainable and enduring peace comes with persuasion and reason. It is beyond the force of arms and ammunition. One observes Paul's delicacy in approaching Philemon about Onesimus. Paul is considerable diplomatic. His restraint from using the words of authority on Philemon but persuading him to act on conviction and love is very telling. He speaks "indirectly and allusively, contenting himself with dropping hints about what he wants Philemon to do. The allusiveness of the letter gives considerable scope to scholarly ingenuity," as interpreters of Paul would never exhaust themselves piecing together what Paul wants Philemon to do.

Philemon Challenging the Contemporary Age as Contained in Paul's Letter to Philemon

The opening address carries a sense of corporate and shared responsibility by including may names either as sender or 'recipients' of the message. It goes well to speak of counseling as a shared, supportive and accommodating responsibility. Paul's request in the letter is very explicit and his strategy is to constrain Philemon to accept his request. It reminds the reader that all behaviours, whether good or bad, have their corresponding consequences. And that repentance can go a long way to restore a distorted relationship on the social and spiritual levels, though some scares and dents may still linger for a while. This is understood by the virtue of Paul sending Onesimus back to Philemon in contrast to keeping him, a decision Paul considers very challenging in the mediatory process.

Important in the letter for New Testament scholars is the considerable injection of the New Testament perspective on slavery, which has generated much passion. The reader is reminded of the danger of reading the modern categories of thinking into the first-century church. But the obvious is Paul's diplomacy and counseling, which plays out here. By presenting Onesimus as the child of his heart and Philemon as a beloved brother, Paul's new understanding of human relation outdates the master-slave relationship. What counts now for Christians is the spirit of brother/sisterhood. Paul seeks to reconfigure the relationship between Philemon and Onesimus in terms of their shared faith and the "fellowship" that the faith creates. The interest is not necessarily whether the slave is physically freed or not. It is

on a relationship of loving even the slave with the self-giving love of Christ. This is the perspective found not just in Philemon but in the New Testament “household codes,” which do not call on Christian masters to liberate their slaves but to treat them fairly and justly (Eph. 6:9; Col. 4:1; 1 Tim. 6:2). The logical implication Paul's request could have included in the case of Onesimus all forms of liberation.

Paul equally reminds his audience that forgiveness is one of the essential features for the restoration and maintenance of relationship, whether on private or public sphere. Thus, narrating his experience as a counselor, Kempling (2018:18) argues that “failing to forgive” and “hanging on to resentment can become an emotional cancer”. Therefore, forgiveness is not primarily for the good of the forgiven but the forgiver. It is a release of the offender, and above all, the offended from spiritual bondage. It is a kind of restoration to freedom that allows each member of the community to participate spiritually as equal partner in the life of the community.

The text carries further a message of brother/sisterhood of the believers. There is a kind of theological reconfiguration of human relation that calls for sacrifices from all stakeholders. It requires that each key player should do something that would have been uncommon for them to do: “Paul has to send back to Philemon “his very heart”; Onesimus, who has gained some measure of freedom, has to go back to his master; and Philemon has to accept back this slave as if he were Paul himself!” The 'uncommon' dovetails into the national history, it challenges all human efforts for peace and unity. This is true if the reader agrees with Wright that the central theme of Philemon is *koinonia*, “fellowship”. For a nation to exist in peace, to think of peace and work for peace, the sense of nationhood must always come to fore. It is a bond that unites *above* whatever could disunite. But one of the contentions in this paper is that nationhood is never a finished product. It is a transformation in the like of Onesimus. It is an action in progress. It can be initiated, developed and maintained. Therefore, the invocation of many Christian and African traditional values in her cultural folkways could be of help in the attainment of nationhood: forgiveness, community solidarity and love of the human persons, irrespective of creed or colour, as taught in Christianity. In the understanding of this paper, what counts first in the human-to-human relationship is the engraved image and likeness of God in the totality of human race. In short, the Christian Gospel breaks all socio-cultural, economic, political and religious barriers to build a block of one human race.

There is also in the letter special emphasis given to the understanding of Christian reconciliation. It gives further support to the earlier claim that peace and unity are never achieved with the edge of sword but through dialogue and persuasion. This is bold in Paul's relationship with Philemon. Paul argues that he has the apostolic authority to remind and insist on Philemon to act as he (Philemon) has been taught and commanded. But Pauline deference suspends his apostolic power and authority, and appeals to Philemon's sense of *logos*, *pathos* and *ethos* in order that they (Paul and Philemon) might win back Onesimus for Christ and for the community. In other words, rights and privileges may sometimes be dumped for peace and harmony in human relationship.

The reader is once again reminded that agitation, protest and even revolt can sometimes be a blessing in disguise, especially in pursuit of national unity. It may appear as a hard way of learning, it worth the sacrifice. The temporary separation (protest), as Paul informs Philemon, becomes a permanent harmonious union, a win-win for all. Onesimus is seen no longer as a mere slave. He is now a *true person*, very dear to Paul, and more to Philemon socially and spiritually.

Recommendations

The recommendations are as follow:

1. Traditional nomadic and customary sciences of Nigeria should be introduced to the control and security management strategies from school to government to the public and suspects.
2. Guidance/counseling should be developed more than what it is now to have a special unity in charge of security management through counseling.
3. Guidance/counselors should always apply the lessons from Paul's intervention into Philemon and Onesimus crisis in tackling public and school counselling especially as it affects insecurities in Nigeria.
4. Engagement of firearms should be applied by Nigerian government and the public on extreme cases, rather, guidance/counseling with full sense of how to transform criminals in the light of Nigeria traditional folkways, with special interest on the use of traditional kingship institution and biblical models of counseling to assure repentance and then proceed for forgiveness would yield good fruits.
5. More Rehabilitation centers should be built for the service of the guidance/counselor on the criminal repentance than build courts and prisons.

Conclusion

Insecurities are in every nook and cranny in Nigeria. Nigeria roads are feared to travel on. Hon Peter Okafor (personal communication, 20 December, 2021) explained that between 18 and 19 December, 2021. Hoodlums just invaded one of the members of his community's house and set the whole building ablaze. No one confidently relaxes with reliable security assurance. The condition in Nigeria today as it affects insecurity is that the more force men and arms are deployed, the more the bandits, terrorists, and other criminal actors sprout.

It is on this background that guidance and counseling experts are advocated in this paper, to adjust their services towards tackling insecurities in Nigeria. If culprits are caught, they can be taken to rehabilitation centers to be attended to by guidance and counseling professionals for a stipulated period of time, based on successes achieved in transforming a criminal, then the culprit, if has been found to have represented, he/she can be presented to be forgiven by the relevant authorities with close monitoring and confirmation sighting. The counselors can achieve this effectively by applying the lessons from the book Philemon and traditional kingship institution. There is hope that if this measure more and exact information and solutions to why they embark on crimes will be revealed

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Interview

1. Dr Mrs Esther Oguji, Enugu State, Counsellor, 68yrs, 3/11/21
2. Rev. Dr. Sam Nwigwe, Imo State, Lecturer, 47 yrs, 7/7/1998
3. Mr. Oguejiofor Okeke, Anambra State, Civil servant (Rtd), 76yrs, 4/11/2021
4. Hon Peter Okafor, Enugu State, Public servant 54yrs, 20/12/2021