



An Investigation of Interreligious Dialogue as Path for the Promotion of Peace in the Society According to the Writings of John Paul II

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study was to investigate interreligious dialogue as a path for the promotion of peace in the society as asserted by John Paul II in the World Conference on Religion and Peace. Rising incidents of political, social, and ecologic problems is a great concern to interreligious dialogue. Using document analysis, collecting of information from books in the library and internet sources, it was found that interreligious dialogue as asserted by John Paul II plays a role in promoting peace in the society. The consideration of some activities as asserted by John Paul II are very crucial in interreligious dialogue. The activities contribute to the promotion of peace through interreligious dialogue. The study definitely answers the questions regarding the correlation between interreligious dialogue and the promotion of peace in the society. The researcher acknowledges the fact that future research could be carried out to establish the correlation between the different forms of interreligious dialogue and the promotion of peace in the society.*

Keywords: *Interreligious dialogue, dialogue, peace, John Paul II*

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1. Introduction

The Second World War and the Second Vatican Council shaped the thinking of John Paul II about the situation he was facing in Rome as the bishop and as the head of the Catholic Church. During the Second Vatican Council he was the archbishop of Krakov. He participated in the Second Vatican Council. It was during the Second Vatican Council that the Catholic Church reflected on the relationship of the church with other religions. The council opened a new approach to dialogue with other religions which was centered on the desire for understanding of the other religions and a respect for them (Shserwin & Kasimow, 1999)

Pope John Paul II was committed and dedicated to interreligious dialogue (Shserwin&Kasimow, 1999). According to Degryse (1999) the breakthrough of interreligious dialogue is attributed to John Paul II. As a pioneer of interreligious dialogue, he organized prayer for non-Christian confessions and non-Christians in Assisi, in 1986. The purpose of the come together was

to pray for peace around the world. As a matter of fact, John Paul II, asserted that every religion is called to promote peace in the world (Degryse, 1999). He had to establish two dicasteries for the task of interreligious dialogue. As a pioneer of interreligious dialogue he was guided by the following principles. First everyone is a child of God. Every child is made in the image of God. God desires that every child should be brought to the joy of the kingdom of God. Every child is called to love each other as God had loved us. According to him religion has two major responsibilities of bringing God to each other and by making people to be closer to each other (Shserwin & Kasimow, 1999)

According to John Paul II, the world consists of one community of people with a common origin and a common destiny.¹ This one community of people have different religious affiliations. Some of the religious affiliations are Christians, Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, and African Traditional Religion (Poposka, Ristoska, &Payet, 2017). The community is marked by political, social and ecological problems (Poposka, Ristoska, &Payet, 2017). These problems are often caused by

political, economic, military, and religious motives. Literature shows that religion has been a source of conflicts in the world. For instance, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Thirty Years War and the Holocaust (Poposka, Ristoska, & Payet, 2017). Religion has been misused to commit grave acts of violence against humanity (Gort, Jasen, & Vroom, 2002). These problems are motivated by materialism and secularism. (Shserwin&Kasimow, 1999) These problems in the world is a great threat to the human person. (Kasimow&Race, 2018). After reflecting on these problems, John Paul II was convinced that interreligious dialogue among religions could be path way for the promotion of peace in the society (Shserwin & Kasimow, 1999). This study will be investigating interreligious dialogue as path for the promotion of peace in the society.

Research Questions

The research questions of this study will guide the researcher in analyzing the problem under consideration. The research questions will be the tool for the research.

1. How can interreligious dialogue promote peace as per the writings of John Paul II?
2. What are the activities which can promote peace in the society according to John Paul II?
3. What are the challenges of promoting peace through interreligious dialogue as per the writings of John Paul II?

2. Methodology

The following methods will be applicable in this study that is: document analysis, collecting of information from books in the library, and internet sources.

2.1 Interreligious Dialogue as Path for the Promotion of Peace according to John Paul II

In this section of the study, the researcher will discuss how interreligious dialogue can promote peace in the society as ascertained by John Paul II in his writings. Before the researcher expounds on how interreligious dialogue promotes peace according to John Paul II, the researcher will present John Paul II's understanding of interreligious dialogue. According to John Paul II, interreligious dialogue is the interaction between members of the different religious groups. The purpose of this interaction is to promote peace and harmony between the members of the different religions. For instance, the meeting held in Assisi in 1986, by John Paul II with the religious leaders (Stensvold & Vik, 2018). During this meeting, John Paul II made the following remarks in regard to interreligious dialogue.

Firstly, John Paul II asserts that the coming together of the different religions is not a moment of seeking for religious consensus. Secondly, the coming together is

not a moment of faith negotiation of convictions. Lastly, the coming together of the religions is not a moment of reconciling the religions at the level of common commitment on earthly project. In fact, the gathering of religions is not a moment of concession to relativism in religious belief. (Stensvold & Vik, 2018). This means dialogue of religions is not an opportunity for one religion to convert members of other religions. Also it is not an opportunity for faith negotiations. In addition, it is not a concession of relativism in religious beliefs. Therefore, interreligious dialogue among religions should respect religious diversity of other religions because interreligious dialogue is an opportunity to demonstrate religious harmony.

Prayers in Interreligious Dialogue

In, 1986 Pope John Paul II, invited all non-Catholic Christian confessions and non-Christian religions to pray together for peace in the world. Among the religious members were Buddhists, Hindus, Jains, Zoroastrians, Sikhs, Muslims, Jews, African Traditional Religion, chiefs of states, the Dalai Lama, and the delegation from the World Conference on Religion and Peace. The invitation of the different religions and chiefs of states indicates some basic elements in interreligious dialogue. Firstly, John Paul II states his intention for the meeting which is to pray for peace. This means that a clear purpose for interreligious meeting is essential. Secondly, there was a careful selection of the participants for the meeting. The participants were leaders from the different religions and the chiefs of states were people who can champion the process of peace in the respective religion. Lastly, the nature of the environment for interreligious dialogue is very important. These elements are very essential when engaging in interreligious actions or activities.

John Paul II chose Italy because it was a safe and a secure environment. This gesture of inviting religious leaders to pray for peace in the society marks the distinction of the thoughts of John Paul II on dialogue of religions. This also situates the researcher within the context of the paths which John Paul II engages on in promoting peace through dialogue. The gesture of John Paul II engaging in prayer with the different religious leaders indicates the first step which he considers as priority in promoting peace through dialogue of religions. This demonstrates the importance of spirituality in interreligious dialogue. The praying together for peace has the following significance in the context of interreligious dialogue. Firstly, every religious tradition seeks peace. Secondly, it shows that peace is holy and it is a gift from God (Degryse, 1999). As a gift from God, it has to be sought only through prayers. Those who pray for peace in humility and truth has to dedicate themselves to the work of peace (John Paul II, 1994). Thirdly, it shows the intrinsic link of what is authentically religious. Fourthly, it shows the great good of peace which is made evident to all in the world. Fifthly, it marks the beginning of the movement of interreligious peace. Lastly, it indicates a different attitude of the Catholic Church towards other religions. In addition, John Paul II, indicates the centrality of

prayer in interreligious activity. Hence, this prayer was a way of connecting humanity to God and of drawing the attention of every person that God is the source of peace and that God must be at the center of interreligious dialogue if it is to bear fruit of peace in the human society. Praying together shows that humanity is side by side to implore God for the gift of peace which humanity needs to survive on today. Therefore, for humanity to survive in the universe, it must strive for peace (Degryse, 1999).

The gesture of praying together in Assisi in 1986 shows the respect for the members of other religions. Such a respect for the members of other religions always result to peace and harmony in the society that is torn apart by conflict (Shserwin & Kasimow, 1999). In that moment of prayer, members from the different religious groups prayed according to their religion. Such a freedom makes members from other religions to observe and experience how others pray. This opens the window for deeper emotional and spiritual realities to those involve in conflicts (Connille, 2013). It also shows the concern and openness of the religions. This implies that every religion as well as the chiefs of the states need to be opened to each other in order to promote the value of peace in the society (Degryse, 1999). Finally, this gesture of John Paul II demonstrates and equally rolls out the fact that religion should not be used to cause violence and war in the world (John Paul II, 1988). In fact, religion should not be used as a pretext for conflict (Shserwin & Kasimow, 1999). In addition, John Paul II's gesture highlights some components such as respect, solidarity and fraternity (John Paul II, 1994). These components underline the aspect of cooperation which religious leaders have to foster in order to nurture their unity and share values such as peace and the upholding of the institution of the family (John Paul II, 1988). The components are essential in that they facilitate the process of interreligious dialogue and consequently the promotion of peace in the society (John Paul II, 1988). Furthermore, for interreligious dialogue to promote peace, there has to be the respect for the cultural and religious identity of each religion. In fact, John Paul II emphasizes that for interreligious dialogue to foster peace, members of the different religions have to be aware that God does not belong to a particular religion. (Degryse, 1999) Finally, the prayer in Assisi highlights the element of friendship which existed between John Paul II and the other religious leaders as well as chief of states. It underlines the centrality of friendship in the dialogue of religions. Friendship fosters communication and sharing. Through the fostering of communication and sharing, members of the different religions can be able to strive together for their common desire which is peace (Shserwin & Kasimow, 1999).

The Respect of Human Rights

Peace is the work of justice. It requires the respect for the rights of every person and the fulfillment of corresponding duties. This shows the connection between justice, truth and peace (John Paul II, 1988). This has to manifest itself in the provision of access to justice for all, the promotion of inclusive societies, and

the building of effective and accountable institutions. (Mardsen, 2022) The respect of human rights is a way in which different religions bear witness to the truths which are necessary point of reference for the individual and the society. In doing this, interreligious dialogue advocates for the promotion of peace in the society. The dignity of everyone has to be respected regardless of the ethnic origin, religious affiliation or political commitment (John Paul II, 1994). In fact, interreligious dialogue contributes to the respect of human rights through information to the secular bodies which carry out the implementation and the enforcement of human programs. It creates information and courses of action that help policy makers to make better decisions (Adeney & Sharma, 2007)

Role of Religion

According to John Paul II (Shserwin & Kasimow, 1999) the priority of every religion is to promote peace. To him, religion and peace go together. He acknowledges the great contribution of religion in the promotion of peace in the society through interreligious dialogue (Rasul, 2009). In pointing out the role of religion in peace, John Paul II reminds the religious leaders that they have a role in showing that they are pledged to the promotion of peace because of their religious belief. (John Paul II, 1994) Religious leaders are considered as credible and trusted institutions which can set values as well as moral warrants to oppose injustice, to mobilize the community for the process of peace, and consequently, the promotion of peace and harmony in the society (Rasul, 2009). Besides, it has a goal of fostering unity among the diversity. This entails that humanity have a common origin as well as destination. The origin of humanity is God and the destiny of every humanity is to be with God (Degryse, 1999). This common origin and destiny of humanity points to the fact that human beings all belong to one family. As members of the same family, everyone has to take the responsibility to accompany each one so that we can all live peacefully. The support in the family must be done in a fraternal way. Through fraternal support each member can reach the goal which is God. Peace in the family requires justice because peace and justice complement each other (Shserwin & Kasimow, 1999).

The family is the first community with the responsibility to educate its members of the essential values of human life. The essential values are: man is precious in itself. That is why John Paul II underlines that religion has the role to help the family to fulfil its role in the society. (John Paul II, 1994) Following the same lines of thoughts, Rasul argues that because of the social role of religion, it can promote peace in the society. Religion makes people to have a sense of belonging. It is a compass for everyone and to the religious community. Therefore, it is this social dimension of religion that brings people of different religions together. When they come together, they are able to discuss the common values which they need to work for such as peace (Rasul, 2009) John Paul II further underlines that in order to effectively promote peace through

interreligious dialogue, some conditions must be considered.

Conditions for Interreligious Dialogue to Promote Peace according to John Paul II

According to John Paul II (Christiansen, 2022), interreligious dialogue is a tool for peacemaking. For interreligious dialogue to promote peace in the society, it must take into consideration the following conditions. First, it must uphold some values such as patience and perseverance. Secondly, it must also struggle against hatred, oppression and disunity. Thirdly, it has to use non-violent methods in mitigating in the face of conflicts and wars. Fourthly, it has to implore creative and courageous actions. Lastly, it has to examine the relationship of traditions and the social, economic and political structures. The relationship between the traditions and these structures are crucial in that these structures are often agents of violence and injustice (Christiansen, 2022).

Activities which Promote Peace through Interreligious Dialogue according to John Paul II

In this second chapter of the work the researcher will discuss the activities which John Paul II states in his writings as necessary to promote peace through interreligious dialogue. John Paul II argues that there is need for some activities to be carried out by the different religious denominations in order to foster peace (Christiansen, 2022). These activities include: exchange of ideas and reflection, solid and suitable religious education, commission for interreligious dialogue, sharing of spiritual experience, and organize works of charity and works of mercy. The question that comes to mind is, of what importance is each of these activities?

Exchange of Ideas and Reflection

John Paul II suggests that dialogue is an activity with guiding principles, requirements and dignity. As an activity, dialogue involves the exchange of ideas and reflection among religions. In the process of the exchange of ideas and reflection, the church uncover the seed of the word and the ray of truth which enlightens humanity (Christiansen, 2022). The exchange may be solemn such as the day of prayer for peace in Assisi in 1986. It may take the form of a structural meditation form or prayer meeting. It can also be in a simple form such as presence for the celebration of birth, marriage, or funeral. When the exchange of ideas and reflection is carried out in the atmosphere of prudence and love, there is the promotion of good things, promotion of spiritual and moral values as well as the socio-cultural values among the people from the different religions (Cassidy, 2005). The exchange of ideas and reflection fosters friendship among the different religions. It strengthens the spiritual life of the members from the different religions (Shserwin&Kasimow, 1999). John Paul II, had a number of exchange of ideas and reflection with

members from other religions. Therefore, the exchange of ideas and reflection promotes the spirit of peaceful relationship among members of other religions as well as in the society (Shserwin&Kasimow, 1999). The exchange shows a respect for what the other holds as sacred. (Zago, 1998)

Solid and Suitable Religious Education

In 1986, in India John Paul II emphasized that different religions have the duty to promote and defend the ideals in the society such as the right to education. Dialogue and collaboration among members of the different religions have a role to promote a solid and suitable religious education (Shserwin&Kasimow, 1999). Religious education fosters human spiritual values which motivates human persons to become fraternal allies in service to the human family (Shserwin &Kasimow, 1999). John Paul II notes that all educators at all levels should train and educate the younger generation. For this reason, it is imperative that educators instill in the younger generation general moral and civil values. In fact, educators need to instill in the younger generation a lively sense of rights and duties. Therefore, the primary tasks of educators is to educate the younger generation in justice in order to educate them in peace. Furthermore, John Paul II urges the family to play her role in the education of its members. The family is the appropriate environment for the education of the younger generation. The family is the first place of education. Values learned from and in the family are important for the development of the individual and the good of the society (John Paul II, 1988).

Commission for Interreligious Dialogue

Worthy of note is that John Paul II changes the secretariat for Non-Christians to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican. This change is to show respect for people in their own identity (Shserwin&Kasimow, 1999). The respect for the identity of people implies respect for one's personal conscience, rejection of any form of discrimination, with regard to faith, freedom to practice religion and appreciation and esteem for all genuine religious traditions (Shserwin&Kasimow, 1999). The commission enables Christians to bear witness to God through mutual respect of the values and religious traditions of other (Ateh, Njongai, &Tatah, 2009).

Sharing of Spiritual Experience

The Spirit of God is universal and it is not limited by space or time. (Shserwin&Kasimow, 1999). The Spirit's presence and activity affects the lives of everyone. It affects history, peoples, cultures, and religions. The Spirit is the origin of all the noble ideals which profits humanity on its journey in the course of history. This means everyone experience the Spirit. Thus, sharing the experience of the Spirit in the lives of the members of different religions can each enrich the life of others. Everyone experience the Spirit at different levels. For this reason, the sharing of spiritual experiences in interreligious dialogue is very essential

(Shserwin&Kasimow, 1999). The sharing of spiritual experiences is the summit of dialogue among members of different religions (Degryse, 1999).

Organize works of Charity and works of Mercy

John Paul II suggests that dialogue among religions call for care and concern for the weak and those who suffer. Charity towards the poor and the marginalized in the society is one of the activities of interreligious dialogue. The care for the weak and the vulnerable is a way in which religious dialogue promotes peace, justice, human rights, and human promotion. Charity towards the weak is a witness to the Gospel. This leads to integral human development. Hence, doing charity to the weak is a way of expressing the fact that humanity belongs to the same family. Therefore, doing charity is a way of showing solidarity with others (Degryse, 1999). The act of doing charity towards the weak in the society is a duty of the church. The church does this to foster fellowship among humanity and consequently peace in the society (Flannery, 1965). John Paul II suggests that the work of charity and work of mercy is for the service of life of the human person. This works of charity and mercy promotes justice and peace. The collaboration among members of the different religions is called to work for the values of justice and peace in the society through the woks of charity and mercy (John Paul II, 1995)

Challenges of Interreligious Dialogue as Indicated in the Writings of John Paul II in the Promotion of Peace through Interreligious Dialogue

In this third chapter of the work, the researcher will address the challenges involve in the process of interreligious dialogue as path for the promotion of peace. Alongside, the challenges, the researcher will also discuss the recommendations as indicated by John Paul II for the promotion of peace through interreligious dialogue.

To begin with, John Paul II asserts that there is need for a deep respect for everything that has been brought about in human beings by the Holy Spirit, who blows where he wills. To John Paul II, respect is an essential element in interreligious dialogue. Sometimes inadequate respect for the religious beliefs of others can be a hindrance for interreligious dialogue to promote peace in the society. For this reason, John Paul II emphasizes that those involve in interreligious dialogue need to be open to the Holy Spirit. Secondly, John Paul II acknowledges that sometimes in interreligious dialogue, members who come for dialogue seem to view it as a confrontation. Seeing dialogue as a confrontation is a huge stumbling block for interreligious dialogue to promote peace. Thirdly, John Paul II recognizes that the moral ambiguity of interdependence in the modern world is oppressive and therefore, a great challenge to interreligious dialogue. Fourthly, John Paul II states that diplomacy or mutual cooperation without theological base is a challenge to interreligious dialogue. John Paul

II further explains that those involve in interreligious dialogue should keep it as a theological enterprise since theology helps the members involve in dialogue to seek the truth. Furthermore, theology helps those involve in dialogue to bear witness to their own faith. Fifthly, sometimes those involve in interreligious dialogue often neglect their religious traditions and convictions. John Paul II urges those involve in interreligious dialogue to be consistent with their own religious traditions and convictions. Being consistent with their religious traditions and convictions help members to approach each other with humility and frankness, bearing in the mind that dialogue enriches each side. Lastly, some partners consider interreligious dialogue as opportunity to convert each other. This is because some official documents of the church states that dialogue is part of the evangelizing mission of the church. With this some partners as well as some Catholic Christians see dialogue as an attempt to convert others. John Paul II again clarifies the purpose of interreligious dialogue as an activity that goes to the heart of the church's work and is not meant to convert members of other religions into ones religion (Fredericks, 2010).

Moreover, negative criticism can discourage members involve in interreligious dialogue. Not everyone was pleased with John Paul II when he organized prayers in Assisi in 1986 for the different religions to pray for peace in the society. For instance Marcel Lefebvre distributed flyers outside the Basilica of St Francis denouncing John Paul II as an apostate. Additionally, some members of the Catholic Church criticized the model of John Paul II in interreligious dialogue. Finally, interreligious dialogue can sometimes seem to be more of diplomacy or hope for collaboration. Regarding this, John Paul II calls members who are involved in interreligious dialogue to invoke the Holy Spirit to be the guide and the foundation of dialogue. With the Holy Spirit as the foundation of dialogue, members will possibly go beyond diplomacy or hope of collaboration. Consequently, their engagement and commitment becomes firm since the foundation is on the Holy Spirit (Fredericks, 2010).

Furthermore, John Paul II, laments that humanity continue to face some challenges such as poverty, racism, climate change, illiteracy, environmental problems, terror, and war. These problems affect the process of interreligious dialogue for the promotion of peace among religions. Despite, these problems the different religions have to seek for ways to co-operate and to address these problems. Their cooperation in addressing these problems will promote peace in the society. The challenges point to the fact that the process to promote peace through interreligious dialogue is not easy. It is not a party where religious leaders and scholars sit down together and make pleasant and optimistic statements. But rather it is a process which requires love (Ozedemir, 2012).

Due to the challenges involve in the process of dialogue, John Paul II suggests that collaboration is very important in interreligious dialogue because it strengthens the dialogue process to overcome the

challenges of the society. Collaboration among the different religions enable everyone to move towards the transcendental goal. Collaboration has to be marked by respect and love towards all persons (John Paul II, 2022). That is why John Paul II suggests that when considering collaboration, there is need for the respect of the freedom of conscience. The respect for the freedom of conscience of everyone has to be recognized, practiced, and safeguarded by the law. However, the lack of respect for the freedom of conscience continues to manifest itself in the society where people are treated as objects (John Paul II, 2022).

In addition, John Paul II underlines that better understanding and effective communication facilitates co-existence among members of the different religions. Such peaceful co-existence among religious groups is essential for the well-being of the human person as well as the well-being of the society. Therefore, co-existence among religions can move the society from incompatibility to compatibility and from intolerance to tolerance. In doing this, they seek justice and peace for all. The co-existence among different religions is an obligation and a task of responsibility which the present generation have towards the future generation. The present generation has to start to work and collaborate with each other as partners for peace. John Paul II again acknowledges that collaboration and co-existence has its own challenges. Despite the challenges, the different religions need to seek for wisdom and motivation which can ensure the triumph of the mutual understanding and cordial respect (Ozedemir, 2012).

Some of the challenges of interreligious dialogue include religious, ethnics and racial discrimination. These challenges post a great threat to interreligious dialogue for the promotion of peace (Tiemeler, 2013) In addition, Huff (Huff, 2000) argues that fundamentalism is a challenge to interreligious dialogue. Fundamentalism is a prime threat to interreligious dialogue. Also Premawardhana (2011) asserts that inadequate space for reflection is a challenge to interreligious dialogue alongside the sponsorship that is funding of the different activities of dialogue. Moreover, the questions about who convenes, sets the agenda and decides on the invitees is another great challenge to interreligious dialogue. As a matter of fact, these challenges hinder interreligious dialogue which can promote peace for the society. According to Cisneros (Cisneros, 2010) poor communication is a hindrance to interreligious dialogue for the promotion of peace. Poor communication brings about misunderstanding and conflicts. Communication is very central to interreligious dialogue in that good communication enhances the exchange of values in an effective way.

Discussion

Groff (2002) argues that in an interdependent world there is religious diversity. In the religious diverse world there is need for human beings to come together as one family. Regarding the coming together there is need for harmony and honoring and respecting the diversities. In

the religious diverse, there are bound to be conflict, violence and misunderstanding. Despite the conflict, violence and misunderstanding there is an urgent need to find a positive way of resolving them. Interreligious dialogue is a positive tool which can be used to resolve religious diversities, conflict, violence and misunderstanding. Being a positive tool it promotes peace and harmony in the human societies. Besides, interreligious dialogue strengthens, understanding among different religious as well as it promotes the common good among the different religions in the world. It is also noted that interreligious dialogue is becoming a social movement for the promotion of peace in the world. In a similar way, other scholars argue that the integration of the three levels of interreligious dialogue is essential for the promotion of peace. The three levels must be approached from an integrated perspective. The levels include; high level, mid-level and grass-roots level interreligious dialogue. High level interreligious dialogue is the dialogue among the high religious leaders. For instance the world prayer day in 1986 in Assisi of which all the world religious leaders gathered to pray for peace. Such a dialogue among religious leaders is that it gives legitimacy and credibility of their message. But it is also noted that such a dialogue often lack necessary time to commit themselves to long term interreligious dialogue. The mid-level interreligious dialogue consists of the interaction between religious leaders, pilgrimages to one another's religious sites, meeting between practitioners and seminars and dialogue among scholars. In fact, such a dialogue is important in that it can influence both the high level interreligious dialogue as well as grass-roots dialogue. Those involve in this dialogue are scholars, professionals, business people, and artists. They contribute greatly to interreligious dialogue in that they have time and resources and as a result they can play a great role in interreligious dialogue. Lastly, the grass-roots level of interreligious dialogue is the relation among the different religions at the community level. The relationship among members of the different religions at the grass-roots is very important for the building of sustainable peace in the society. In fact, interreligious dialogue at the grass-roots level include; cross community dialogue. This contributes to the fostering of reconciliation among the different religions. Agents of grass-roots level interreligious dialogue include; youth groups, women's organizations and local organizations (Kadayifci-Orellana, 2013). Also interreligious dialogue is a tool for the promotion of peace in that it involves shared action. The shared action seeks to pursuit the identified common needs in which people engage across religions. Furthermore, the promotion of peace through interreligious dialogue entails the engagement of interreligious dialogue in addressing political and economic concerns as well as issues which are related to poverty and various forms of gender inequality. This calls for interreligious dialogue to articulate the clear visions of peace that critique unequal and unjust structures of power, address social grievances, oppose gender inequalities and ensure to promote advance inclusive and active citizenship beyond religious and ethno-nationalist (Merđjanova, 2009). The interaction among religions have contributed

in the creation of collective and synergistic vision of peace which has multi-dimensional and multi-system aspects (Groff, 2002). In a study, Cornille argues that interreligious dialogue promotes peace by exploring religious, cultural and national symbols whose values, myths and images enhance coexistence and peace. It also contributes to the transformation of behaviors and attitudes through the rebuilding of trust which facilitate the process of promoting peace among different religions (2013).

However, despite the commitment of interreligious dialogue in the promotion of peace, it is noted that people from different faiths have historically as well as today resolve to conflict, violence and war. In fact, some religious members as well as some people have often used religion to justify non-religious objectives for power or aggression. It is noted that interreligious dialogue is not the only condition for the promotion of peace. This is because people have real issues, government role is central in the promotion of peace. The government has a responsibility of ensuring that everyone participate in the social and economic development as well as political participation and the preservation of culture. As a matter of fact, there are seven aspects of peace. Interreligious dialogue deals only with intercultural and inner peace. For the society to experience peace and harmony, the seven aspects of peace have to be addressed. Recent studies demonstrates that western cultures and religions tradition have focused on creating peace by changing aspects of the external world likewise in the Eastern cultures and religions have focused on creating inner peace (Groff, 2002).

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

John Paul II demonstrates that interreligious dialogue is a responsibility of everyone. It is the responsibility of everyone because human beings have to seek the common good of the present generation as well as the future generation. Peace is a common good (Ozedemir, 2013). As a matter of fact, religions have the ability to inspire peace, solidarity, justice and liberty. This points to the essential role which religions can play in the present society as well as in the future society. Therefore, John Paul II calls for co-operation among the different religions in order to promote peace, solidarity, justice and liberty (2006).² John Paul II also asserts that peace is a gift from God to humanity and for humanity to experience peace they need to invoke God, who is the giver through prayers. This shows that God has to be at the center for any interreligious dialogue that seeks to promote peace in the society (Welle, 2013). According to John Paul II (Clooney, 2017) the process of interreligious dialogue has to pay great attention to the link between dialogue and proclamation. This helps the

church to maintain and intensify her relationship with the non-Christians. Therefore, there is need to remain steadfast to ones deepest convictions and identity. At the same time one has to be open to the others because dialogue can enrich each other. Hence, openness has to be complemented by courage. Also interreligious dialogue contributes to the transformation of perceptions and attitudes through the transformation of perceptions and attitudes and through this it becomes a tool for the promotion of sustainable peace in the society (Ayse, 2013).

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