

The Pathways to Communal Peace in Colossians 3:5-12 and their Relevance to National Peacebuilding

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Abstract

Communal peace, which has over the years encountered natural disasters and, in particular, flouting of secular and sacred rules by humans, experiences estrangement and communal disorder in the human community, including Colossae. However, the pathways to communal peace are provided in Colossians. Previous studies on communal peace have focused on sustainable reconciliation in a divided society, cosmic reconciliation, and Paul's proclamation of reconciliation, with little attention paid to the relevance of its pathways. This paper, therefore, examines the pathways ($\nu\epsilon\kappa\rho\acute{\omega}$ "put to death," $\acute{\alpha}\pi\omicron\tau\acute{\iota}\theta\eta\mu\iota$ "put away or put off," and $\epsilon\acute{\nu}\delta\acute{\upsilon}\omega$ "put on") to communal peace in Colossians 3:5-12, with a view to determining their relevance to national peacebuilding. While Ralph Martin's Grammatico-historical approach is adopted, the interpretive design is used. Data are subjected to exegetical analysis. The findings of this study will have implications for healthy relationships either between God and humans or among humans.

Keywords: Communal Peace, Peacebuilding, Colossians, $\Nu\epsilon\kappa\rho\acute{\omega}$, $\acute{\Lambda}\pi\omicron\tau\acute{\iota}\theta\eta\mu\iota$, $\acute{\Upsilon}\nu\delta\acute{\upsilon}\omega$

Background

Communal peace is freedom from disturbance, tranquillity, and a situation whereby there is no war as shared by all members of a community. Peacebuilding aims to address the fundamental roots of conflict, assisting people to resolve their differences peacefully

and lay the foundations to avert upcoming violence.¹ Communal peace and/or community peace are universal phenomena from the Bible times. In global discourse, the issue of communal peace has recently taken the central stage due to intra- and international communal conflicts, estrangements and acts of terrorism which are mostly caused by injustices, political lop-sidedness and economic hardships.

To this end, the global celebration of peace takes place around September 21st every year. The global assembly has confirmed this day to be devoted to invigorating the principles of peace, both in and between nations and people. According to the United Nations (UN), the International Day of Peace is observed on the 21st of September every year. It is done to recognise the hard work of people who have laboured so hard to stop disagreements, estrangements and encourage peace. Events to celebrate it varies from personal gatherings to community shows and several forums connecting different listeners. Programmes include: interfaith peace programs, a call to honor somebody for peace initiatives, lighting of candles, peace supplications, peace processions, tree planting for peace, art displays that advance peace, love feasts for peace and peace marches.²

Away from the World's Day of Peace on September 21st every year, some nations do observe the national day of reconciliation which is a civic anniversary, such as in South Africa, where it is observed on the 16th of December annually. The holiday came into effect in 1994 after the end of apartheid (a separated political system in South Africa from 1948 to the 1990s that pushed the indigenous aside and gave great privileges to those of European origin) to foster reconciliation, communal peace and national unity for the country.³

¹ Conciliation Resources, "What is peacebuilding?" 2011 (Accessed May 12, 2021), <https://www.c-r.org/who-we-are/why-peacebuilding/what-peacebuilding>.

² Time and Date, "UN Days" (Accessed December 19, 2016), www.timeanddate.com/holidays/un/int.

³ Day of Reconciliation. 2009-06-18. Retrieved 2009-11-05 but Accessed on 26/12/2016

To establish the fact that communal peace is a global phenomenon, there are several institutions and NGOs that are fully involved in peacemaking. They are Peace and Security Council,⁴ Institute of Peace and Conflict Resolution,⁵ Institute of Peace and Strategic Studies,⁶ Peace and Security Council/Africa Union.⁷ The establishment of these institutions, international organisations and NGOs lend credence to the importance and need for communal peace globally.

Literature Review

In our world today, several people in different places do discuss peace, but the true question is when people talk about communal peace and peacebuilding, are they talking about the same thing? According to Fisher,⁸ the Church at Colossae comprises the Jewish and the Gentile population, and the Church is facing serious doctrinal and practical problems from chapters one to two. Doctrinal and practical problems here could not be solved through down-to-earth dialogue between the Jews and the Gentiles for lasting communal peace to be attained, but Paul advocated great virtues instead of dialogue among the Colossians as a panacea to genuine and long-lasting communal peace which is a vacuum that this paper intends to fill.

Sewakpo's⁹ work on horizontal reconciliation posits that holistic reconciliation and/or communal peace could not be attained through military, political, economic, legal, cultural, civilised and religious

⁴ African Union, "Home" 1963 (Accessed May 12, 2021), <https://au.int>.

⁵ Namati. "A win for Justice"2012 (Accessed February 18, 2021), <https://namati.org>.

⁶ University of Ibadan, "Signing of MoU Ceremony between Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies (IPSS), University of Ibadan and West Africa Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP) at the Vice-Chancellors' office on Wednesday, 30 May, 2018." (Accessed February 18, 2021), <https://ipss.ui.edu.ng>

⁷ African Union, "Home" 1963 (Accessed May 12, 2021), <https://au.int>.

⁸ R. J. Fisher, "Social-Psychological process in Interactive Conflict Analysis and Reconciliation," in *The New Agenda for Peace Research*, ed. Howon Jeong (United Kingdom: Ashgate Aldershot:1999), 82.

⁹ H. M. Sewakpo, "Paul's Proclamation of Reconciliation for Peacebuilding," *Religions: Journal of the Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions*. 25no. 1 (January 2015): 168-185.

approaches but by vertical and horizontal reconciliation approaches as enshrined in Paul's proclamation of reconciliation which can automatically breed communal peace. He further reiterates that horizontal reconciliation involves a holistic restoration of the right relationship, it contains not only a compelling logic of justice but also provides the great promise of resolving peacebuilding tensions and fostering divine intention to embrace peaceful coexistence among people. Civilian and uniformed personnel, partisan politics and non-partisan politics, the bourgeois and the poor, the royal fathers and their subjects, the employers and the employees, mentors and mentees, lecturers/teachers and students, all need communal peace. As relevant as Sewakpo's work is, it did not address the νεκρώ (put to death), ἀποτίθημι (put away), and ἐνδύω (put on) issues which is the lacuna that this paper intends to fill

McNeil¹⁰ in "Roadmap to Communal Peace" sees lack of knowledge and awareness of man of injustice, and inequality, ignoring the plight of others and turning blind eyes to the world beyond us as major causes of communal estrangements. McNeil affirms that our theology matters when it comes to communal peace! The reason is that it is our theology that informs our anthropology, and our anthropology styles our sociology. That is, what we believe about God will enlighten us about what we believe about other groups; and what we believe about other people will tell us what type of community and society we believe we should endeavour to build. This is a laudable work but the focus here is mainly on the theological aspect, hence there is still a desideratum to fill.

The book also deals with how to resolve with one's next-door neighbour, to have communal peace with a co-worker, Church workers, labourers and how humans should respond to different people to have a peaceful community. Paramount in her discussion are the five landmarks towards reaching out for peace from preservation – isolation to transformation: (1) Catalytic event, (2) Realisation, (3) Identification, (4) Preparation, and (5) Activation stages. To activate communal peace, there are four moves, namely,

¹⁰ B. S. McNeil, *Roadmap to Reconciliation: Moving Communities into Unity, Wholeness and Justice* (Canada: Intervarsity Press, 2015), 15-23.

humans have to communicate, advocate, relate and educate. As laudable as all these roadmaps seem to peace, the approaches tilt toward political and ideological resolutions more than theological solutions that this work intends to navigate, hence a gap to fill.

Paul tells the Colossians about a holy lifestyle that is consistent with their new identity. Believers have been chosen by God and stand before Him as His beloved holy ones. They are to live up to what they are in Christ, and the result of which can engender peace and harmony. Tolerance is a virtue within the Christian community which also breeds communal peace, although Paul clearly does not want the Colossians to tolerate the false teaching, but instead *forgive each other . . . as the Lord has forgiven you*. When wronged and betrayed, Christians are called to forgive others, even as they have been forgiven for their betrayal, Christians are called on to love one another.

Brahm's¹¹ illustration of peacebuilding and communal peace stages is particularly appropriate to capture the stages of conflict from when it is latent (present but not expressed or dormant) up to the stage of deadlock and down to post-conflict and peacebuilding. Even after a resolution is reached and a peace agreement is duly signed, this is by no means an end of the disagreement. The terms of the peace accord must be followed to the letter, especially if it is a conflict between two people, which may not be very hard: the two people will just do what they have agreed to do and the past problem will be solved. However, this is not in every case evidenced by divorces that end up in court because one party does not think that the other has lived up to the agreement. Having established the gap in scholarship, the question arising from the above-stated submission is as follows: In which ways, therefore, can the exegesis of the selected biblical text, Colossians 3:5-12, portray the

¹¹ Eric Brahm, Eric-Education Resources Information Center, "Eric Brahm's graphical illustration of reconciliation and communal peacebuilding" (Accessed May 20, 2021), www.Eric.

pathways to communal peace and national peacebuilding through νεκρόω, ἀποτίθημι, and ἐνδύω?

Exegesis of Colossians 3:5-12

An attempt is made to exegete Colossians 3:5-12 with a basic focus on the pathways (νεκρόω, ἀποτίθημι, and ἐνδύω) to communal peace in Colossae.

Νεκρόω “Put to death” (Colossians 3:5)

Νεκρόω, “Put to death,” is one of the major pathways to communal peace that informed the loud cry of Paul. The Gospel of Peace is the foundation of communal peace which was accomplished by Christ; he did this through his work of atonement. Jesus Christ was able to achieve this feat by virtue of his being the firstborn, the head, the beginning and through whom God’s comprehensiveness subsists. In Colossians, Paul progresses from doctrines in chapters 1-2 to applications in 3-4, beginning from knowing what is good and legitimate to do in everyday living. Colossians 3:1-4 gives this viewpoint through which everyday living of the believers in Colossae ought to be. Paul counsels them to follow more detailed advice that will assist the people in a superior way to deal with the various themes in his admonition to “walk in the Lord” (Colossians 2:6).¹² Paul in Colossians 3:5 put it straight to the Colossians to remove all impediments from their path to living in peace in their daily interaction among themselves. Paul, therefore, admonishes Νεκρώσατε ὅσιν τὰ μέλη τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, “Put to death therefore what is earthly in you” (Colossians 3:5a).

About their status in the Lord, Paul counsels the recipients to detach themselves from their previous ways of life and practices. Paul instructs them this way to facilitate their hearts to become conscious of understanding everything that Christ can do by using them. The term νεκρόω, which depicts the tripartite important issues pointing to Paul’s major positions, is explicated as “put to

¹² James. D. G. Dunn, No date. *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon. A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2014), 211.

death” (v. 5), “cast away” (v. 8), and “never tell your neighbour what is not true” (v. 9). Paul stresses to the Colossians that because of their real status (v. 1), they ought to assume a definite manner towards their present stage of experience. The keyword νεκρώ “put to death” also connotes “regard as...dead.¹³”

Paul’s first catalogue contains several transactions which include sexual habits. Inventory about good qualities with bad ones was regular among the ethical structures in the primordial humanity, with the similes of “clothing yourself with” and “removing from your lives” were in addition, much known.¹⁴ Bad habits include the following:

- Depravity – πορνεία – also known as sexual depravity means illicit sexual intercourse.
- Uncleaness – ἀκαθαρσία –, in every form, is in focus, particularly ethical dirtiness in this context.
- Obsession – πάθος – connotes immodest infatuation or unrestrained unlawful wishes.
- Evil desire – ἐπιθυμίαν κακήν – denotes every wicked desire in a more universal common sense.
- Insatiability – πλεονεξίαν – literarily means “Longing to get more” any worldly yearning, with longing for things, that forget about the rights of other people.
- Idolatry – εἰδωλολατρίας – denotes an adoration of false gods, veneration of materialism, and worship of affluence. In

¹³ Frederick. F. Bruce, *The International Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 267.

¹⁴ James D. G. Dunn, 211; *O’Brien, Colossians*, 179-281; Rom. 1:29-32, I Cor. 5:9-11, 6:9-10, Gal. 5:19-23, Phi. 4:8, I Tim. 3:1-13, Titus 1:5-9. et al. See René A. López. A Study of Pauline Passage with Vice Lists, “*Bibliotheca Sacra*” 168:671 (July – September 2011): 301-316.

the plural, these evil behaviours are springing from idolatry and are peculiar to it.¹⁵

Each sin is fundamentally a product of self-interest, the veneration of self instead of the Creator, replacement of self for Christ in one's love (cf. Colossians 3:1-3).¹⁶ Varieties of bad conduct are catalogued in the New Testament; from diverse perspectives, they unveil some numbers of happenings among people and in communities which occur in their different settings.

Paul advises Christians in Colossae to destroy selfish love and put to death every personal wish and aspiration that can engender human rift. Paul further instructs believers to take drastic resolutions about their determination in life, that is, an essential move to promote peace at the centre. All things that can hinder humans from living peaceably with a fellow human must be surgically eliminated so that the desired peace can be achieved.¹⁷

Ἀποτίθημι “Put away or put off” (Colossians 3:8-9)

Paul deploys another Greek term, ἀποτίθημι “put away or put off,” connoting a pathway to communal peace in Colossians 3:8-9. Paul counsels the believers to ‘put to death’ all outward evil manifestations earlier but now he is saying separate, remove, put at a distance, lay them aside as a dead weight and put them off as filthy garments. These filthy garments and filthy communication towards one another whereby the credit and reputation of each other may be hurt, triggering discord, must be put to death. The reason is that these bad characters ruin friendships, families and by extension the community. People are afraid of the person who gets angry. Angry people shout and say bad things. Angry people may hit other people and hurt them. People cannot trust someone who lies, because they cause confusion and pandemonium among individuals and the community. To have an enduring communal

¹⁵ George B. Caird, *Paul's Letters from Prison* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 205.

¹⁶ William Barclay. *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians and Thessalonians* (Laurinburg, North Carolina: St. Andrews University Press, 2003), 179.

¹⁷ William. Barclay, 180-181.

peace, humans must make every effort to put away the old habits that God hates from obvious sins, such as sexual immorality, greed and other uncontrolled evil desires. Humans must also control the tongue and discipline personal behaviour which includes:

- Annoyance – ὀργή – an established feeling of enmity.
- Wrath – θυμὸν – an oral explosion of the wicked craze.
- Hatred – κακίαν – a bad feeling, a cruel character which can cause damage to fellow humans. “There are three cohorts of this sin of hatred here: rage that is unchecked produces anger and anger that is left not judged results in wickedness.”¹⁸
- Libel – βλασφημία – hurtful, detrimental and hateful speech in general.
- Offensive speech – αἰσχρολογία – dirty, outrageous and dishonourable words.
- Dishonesty – ψεύδεσθε – to deceive, distort, and give of statement that is not true.

The crucial rule in opposition to dishonesty is physically powerful. Paul factually cautions as follows, “on no account should you lie.” “The reason was proposed in (v. 9) which applies to every one of the previous vices.” The previous nature of humans was the being that the believers used to be in God’s presence before being integrated and reconciled with Jesus”. Every one of the above-listed vices is what constituted the impediments to healthy relationships among human relationships.

In Bruce’s¹⁹ colouration of impediments to genuine communal peace, he described Colossians 3:5-11 as “discard the old” to allow for the new virtues that could enhance communal peace among the Jewish-Christian-Gentile populace at Colossae, and it applies to other human societies. Paul’s argument continues as follows in Colossians 3:5-11, “Despite your heavenly life, you are now living

¹⁸ Harry A. Ironside, *Lectures on the Book of Colossians* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1929), 136. See H. M. Sewakpo, An African’s Perspective on Leadership in the Book of Titus. *IJOURNELS: Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies*, Vol.5. No. 2 (2015): 1-22.

¹⁹ Frederick F. Bruce, *The International Bible Commentary with the New International Version*, (Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 1457-58.

on earth, and so are in some degree of tension. There is indeed a place for Christian asceticism, but this is internal, not external, that is, the renouncing of propensities belonging to the old life.”

The Greek term, ἀποτίθημι, is represented by the imagery of clothing in which Paul exhorts the Colossians through this imagery to take off their former sinful ways, such as anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language, which divide the body of believers (Colossians 3:7-8). While anger is a more settled feeling of hatred, rage is more of an outburst of passion. In essence, anger and rage are the same things; they destroy harmony in fellowships and bring into disarray personal and interpersonal relationships. In addition, Malick²⁰ avers that slander and abusive languages are intentionally harmful to the peaceful coexistence of children of God. In this sense, Paul urges the Colossians to discard their old repulsive habits like a set of worn-out clothes.²¹

Also, Paul identifies five of the impediments in his admonition to the Colossians, namely immortality and impurity in behaviours, thought and desire, and reaching their climax in greed equated with idolatry. He implements a similar model to the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus, starting from outside activities to the inside intention, culminating in the spirit of acquisitiveness and making a god of gain. Humans must mutilate the physical elements here on earth that have physically disposed of humankind into those substances that breed enmity among relationships in the world.²² If humans refuse to kill all these evil vices, they will eventually kill all good relationships that humans are supposed to have with God and their neighbours. These impediments are listed as follows: immorality, evil deals, and wicked desires with insatiable longings that can naturally lead to material worship. These impediments are perceived as the little foxes that destroy the tender vines of a

²⁰ David E. Malick, *An Analytical Outline of the Book of Colossians* (Accessed February 14, 2022), <https://www.coursehero.com/file/111935579/AN-ANALYTICAL-OUTLINE-OF-THE-BOOK-OF-COLpdf/>: 2017), 1-36.

²¹ David E. Malick, *An Analytical Outline of the Book of Colossians* (Accessed February 14, 2022), <https://www.coursehero.com/file/111935579/AN-ANALYTICAL-OUTLINE-OF-THE-BOOK-OF-COLpdf/>: 2017), 2-32.

²² Matthew Henry, *Matthew Henry's Commentary in One Volume* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1961), 1873.

healthy relationship in any community. Paul here is emphatically emphasising – “make a corpse of,” “make dead” and “put to death”²³ the members that can cause you a good relationship with both God and your immediate neighbour.

Ἐνδύω “Put on” (Colossians 3:12-17)

After dealing decisively with the impediments “to put to death” and “put away” in Colossians 3:5 and 3:8, respectively (both the one that manifests outwardly and the one that manifests inside), Paul uses the third Greek term, ἐνδύω “put on,” to drive home what he considers as a pathway to communal peace with emphasis on peacebuilding in Colossians 3:12-17. Given this background, Paul advises his Colossians audience not only to dissociate themselves from behaviours that are unsuitable to their companion in Christ but also enjoins them to put on or cover themselves with a mindset and dealings that are pro-communal peace. Paul says this to complement their perceptions and responsibilities as Christians. “The intention of the mind is the stress in this segment.” Why should the Colossians put on the qualities and characteristics of new life that are towards communal peace and peacebuilding? Paul highlights four purposes that must promote believers’ walk in freshness of life as in Romans 6:4.²⁴ Paul tells the Colossians again who they were, “those elected by God because an admiration of who one is determines how he or she behaves.” God has specially chosen the Colossians, as Paul tells them, has placed them separately for mighty works, and has chosen them as an object of his affection. To pursue God’s given privileges, these unique characters are sensible.

²³ J. F. Brown, *A Commentary Critical, Experimental and Practical on Old and New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: W. B. Eerdmans. Publishing Company, 1984), 1993.

²⁴ Warren W. Wiersbe, *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary* (Colorado, USA: David Cook, 2007), 423. www.wiersbe.thebibleexpositioncommentary

These characteristics have to do with believers' conduct toward others, their estimation of themselves and their response to how they are handled by others.²⁵ These virtues include:

- Empathy - *σπλάγχνα οίκτιρμοῦ* –feelings to those in pain and want.
- Compassion – *χρηστότητα* – demonstrates itself in a pleasant nature and kind in interpersonal transactions.
- Meekness – *ταπεινοφροσύνην* –having a personal practical observation of oneself, “judging poorly of ourselves because we are so.”²⁶
- Quietness – *πραΰτητα* –not conducting oneself rashly or proudly but with thoughtfulness for others.
- Tolerance – *μακροθυμίαν* –the quality of accommodating others, and self-control.

The next two virtues dwell on the consideration of persistence.

- Comportment among each other, – *ἀνεχόμενοι* – denotes putting up with others, and enduring long-term discomfort with them.
- Forgiveness – *χαριζόμενοι* – entails not having bitterness or accusation alongside anyone.
- Love – *ἀγάπη* – suggests action that is most excellent for another person.

These characteristics have to do with the Colossian believers' interpersonal relationships as Paul stated. Though among the Colossians, they call it 'ordinary' or common virtues designed to lessen or get rid of interpersonal hostility.²⁷ In interpersonal relations, Christ's virtues must be conspicuous in our lives. “Love”

²⁵ Herbert M. Carson, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and Philemon: An Introduction and Commentary* (Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1960), 86.

²⁶ Charles J. Ellicott, *A Critical and Grammatical Commentary on St. Paul's Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians and Philemon*. (Wallingford, United Kingdom: Hanserbooks Publishers, 2019), 170.

²⁷ C. F. D. Moule, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 123.

is an extremely essential believers' desirable quality. Christians must clad themselves with love like a garment or like a belt that holds the others in place (Ephesians 6:14). "Love should not be viewed here as a virtue that contains excellence in itself, however, it must be viewed as connecting the other virtues, which can offer perfection to them, and maintain them in it."²⁸

Love, therefore, is the "connector of perfection" because love binds Christians together, making believers advance towards the target of faultlessness and nonviolent living.²⁹ To do a little word study, all the above-listed characteristics are what Paul advises the Colossians to put on among them to live a peaceful life either among the Colossian believers or within the Jewish-Gentile relationships.

- Compassion – οἰκτεῖρω³⁰ –to have pity, a feeling of distress through ills for others. It is normally used for God's compassion. Another one, σπλάγχνιζομαι means to be moved as to one inward and σπλάγχνα connotes to be moved with compassion, to yearn with compassion. Compassion is usually recorded of Christ towards the multitude and towards individual sufferers. It is an attribute that if put on one towards another will bring schism and friction among the Colossians' populace to zero level.
- Kindness – χρηστός –to be serviceable, good, pleasant and gracious. Also, χρηστότης means the goodness of heart or kindness. These are the virtues that make a community and interpersonal relationship very cordial. They are to be used to prevent or settle friction if any exists. Their forgiveness is prompted by Christ's forgiveness of them.³¹

Furthermore, Paul says that Colossians must put on love, not an additional garment, but the girdle to hold the others in place,

²⁸ John Eadie, *Commentary on the Book of Paul to the Colossians*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing house, 1957), 246.

²⁹ William Hendriksen, *New Testament Commentary – Exposition on Colossians and Philemon* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Book House, 1964), 19.

³⁰ W. E. Vine, *Vines Complete Exposition Dictionary of Old and New Testament* (USA: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1996), 116.

³¹ Frederick F. Bruce, *The International Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 1458.

in perfect unity. In verse 15, Paul then refers to peace, εἰρήνη, which in the Ephesians' Letter has the function of the girdle, but here, it is represented by love. This partial similarity between the letters of Colossians and Ephesians did not suggest that they were written by different authors, but the operation of Apostle Paul's brain down was analogous to different lines. Here peace, which in Philippians 4:7 is to garrison the heart, is to arbitrate, to be an umpire, to discipline the mind to a decision whenever there exists a disagreement of purpose or desires, to promote a unity of purpose in a spirit of thankfulness.³²

There are four imperatives (essential actions) expressing mood in verses 15-17 of Colossians 3 which identifies the precepts, directions and instructions that believers must follow. They are as follows:

- i. Let rule (the peace of Christ)
- ii. Give thanks
- iii. Let the (the word of Christ) dwell
- iv. Motives; undertaking everything in the Lord's name.

The first imperative is "Let rule (the peace of Christ)." Peace, as it were, is a prominent ingredient for communal peace as Paul points out to the Colossians. When there is the need for Christians to choose among many things, "Christ's peace" in our hearts ought to be a determining factor in doing that.³³ Paul counsels the Colossians to decide what will create peace between them and God, and in their everyday human dealings. Supposing such a decision lies within God's moral will. Johnson³⁴ states it this way "this order appears, with the word of God and the testimony of the Spirit dwelling in us, one of the vital doctrines of direction in the life of a Christian."

³² Frederick F. Bruce, *The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon and the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1984), 5-28.

³³ Joseph B. Lightfoot, *The Epistles to the Colossians and Philemon on the Greek text*. London, Kessinger Publishing, 1875), 221.

³⁴ S. L. Johnson Jnr, "Studies in the Book of Colossians," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 141: 561 (January-March, 1984): 30-31.

The second imperative is the achievement in the oneness of Christ's body as "one body." For instance, "Christ's peace" invites a spirit of praise, which must be demonstrated in our conduct either with God or humans. The second imperative is "be thankful."

The third imperative is "Let the word of Christ dwell." Christ's word was used here alone in the New Testament. It also means the teaching of Christ, and this is not merely talking about his daily ministry but it includes all his works in the Scriptures.³⁵ Christ's word is supposed to saturate humans' total being so that all resolutions and procedures could be made in its light. Thus humans are to surrender to the burden of the Christian doctrine and let it become so deeply entrenched inside them to organize all their opinions and behaviours.³⁶

In the last verse 17, Paul now deals with motives – whether in action or speech – must be done in Christ's name within an attitude of giving thanks to the Father. Mature believers need no set of laws. These fundamental principles apply to a range of interactions among men and this application is thought to be a fraction of a moderately fine highlighted collection of catechesis (religious instruction).³⁷

Colossians 3:17 corners all other judgments, expressions and deeds (all things that you engage in speech or action). The New Testament never has an exhaustive convention of a set of laws for believers, compared with the complicated and always increasing uniqueness in rabbinical laws (misleading moral principles). However what the New Testament provides are the basic beliefs of Christian living, which can be useful to every situation of life when they come up.³⁸ Basic doctrine must not be at variance with a lay down of specific set of laws. For instance, we must utter each of our expressions, and perform every action, in concord along with

³⁵ Harrison, p. 91. Cf. Eadie. p. 250

³⁶ C. Vaughan, "Colossians" in *Ephesians – Philemon* Vol.11 of the Expository Bible Commentary, p. 216.

³⁷ Ralph P. Martins, *Colossians and Philemon*. Ncent B. London.

³⁸ Frederick F. Bruce, 1986, p. 285.

the illumination of Christ, to be exact, beneath his power and like Christ's disciples.

Furthermore, performing in somebody's "name" often figured out all things discovered and acknowledged with the individual that is answering that name: believers are expected to "carry out everything" while giving thanks to God. The last imperative is indirect in the Greek text; however, interpreters have rendered it in the English text as "do". Righteousness and joy go together.³⁹ While Paul was confronted by an inquiry regarding those things that Christians should carry out, he admonishes that humans must clearly inquire by themselves the kind of behaviour that is suitable or intended for anyone that is recognised with Christ. "What do you expect Jesus to do?" This must be a pertinent question that deserves answer from every person. This method is very much different to the lawful approach that offers particular control to every circumstance.

Compassion towards the miserable and bowels of mercy should go together. Paul enjoins persons who are indebted a great deal to mercy to be merciful. As regards kindness, the plan of the good news was not to make softer the hearts of people, but to improve their minds unto righteousness, and to encourage companionship between people and reconciliation with God. "Cover yourself, as the chosen of Christ, sacred and dearly loved." As regards the Colossians, they are being encouraged on the way that they ought to conduct themselves in everything as it becomes the saint of God.

The next characteristic that the Colossians were urged to put on is the humbleness of mind *ταπεινοφροσύνην*, which means 'possessing a modest judgment about oneself'. To one another, there must be a humble mind among themselves to enhance a peaceful relationship. Paul here counsels the Colossians about meekness that they should carefully bring under control their annoyance, and tolerantly allow the irritations of other people. Selflessness is a characteristic that will make a person bear provocation even when it grows long.

³⁹ Harry A. Ironside, *Lectures on the Epistle to the Colossians* (New York: Loizeaux Brothers, 1929), 152-153.

If God demonstrates longsuffering to us, we should exercise longsuffering to others. Forbearing one another for communal peace to be genuine should be borne within the hearts of all humans. The last of this set is pardoning each other. Should anyone have a fallout against any, which can sometimes happen, even between the people of God or at any level of relationship, it behoves humans to pardon each other in cases like that. Even as Christ forgave humans, so also should they. Humans are obliged to follow this kind of Christ's example if humans themselves are expected to be forgiven.

The verses above, according to Bratcher and Nida,⁴⁰ which the Colossians are to put on, begin the sentence which continues in verse 13, with its emphasis upon the need for forgiveness, and ends with verse 14 which gives the sixth virtue, love, as the one which binds the other virtues in a perfect whole. All of them are qualities and characteristics of peace that Paul proposes for them to live a peaceful life among themselves. The imperative, "put on" which the verse begins with, is a consequence of what is said in verses 9-10, which says, believers have removed the old nature... and have worn the new nature. It is probably still the language of baptism, the fresh garment the baptised person puts on as in Galatians 3:27.

In verse 12, the holy living that Paul talks about involves additional steps than a profession or born-again knowledge, but basically, it has to do with the change in lifestyle that can promote harmonious living at the communal level. The interlinear⁴¹ Bible uses "put on" ἐνδύσασθε οὖν in the active continuous form to emphasize that believers have to constantly exhibit godly distinctiveness which is noticeable such as clemency, compassion, humility, gentleness and tolerance. Another rendering says, "Therefore, clad yourself in the wardrobe God selected out for you." This version suggests that these characters do not come naturally; hence, it necessitates hard work by the person and is possible through God's guidance. In K.J.V, the expression bowels, σπλάγχνα, means, feelings. The

⁴⁰ Robert G. Bratcher and Eugene A. Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letters to the Colossians and Philemon* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1977), 8-92.

⁴¹ *The Greek English Interlinear New Testament* (The Interlinear). Colossian 1:12.

dictionary describes bowel as the mind or love from the mind. It implies therefore that the qualities should emanate from within.

The N.L.T renders that Christians in the Colossian community ought to display saintly living by covering themselves in tender-hearted mercy (which is another rendition of compassion), kindness, humility, gentleness for meekness and patience for longsuffering. These are the benevolence virtues which Christ has acted towards humans, and are adjudged satisfactory and polite to promote the good relationship.

Conclusion

This paper has brought to the fore Colossians 3:5-12 which reveals νεκρώ, ἀποτίθημι, and ἐνδύω as the pathways that Paul deploys for communal peace in Colossae. Νεκρώ (Colossians 3:5) is characterised by fornication, impurity, evil desire and covetousness. These inward and outward bad habits are impediments to the God-human relationship and the human-human relationship in Colossae. Ἀποτίθημι (Colossians 3:8) stands for anger, wrath, malice, foul talk and lies. These vices constitute unhealthy relationships either between God and humans or among humans. Ἐνδύω (Colossians 3:12) is represented by compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, patience, tolerating one another, forgiveness and love. The text identifies peace in the heart, teaching and admonition, doing everything in Jesus' name, singing songs, administering just and fair treatment, having wise conduct of self, making a gracious speech, and embracing genuine love as the essential elements to sustain communal peace and national peacebuilding. However, ἐνδύω enhanced communal peace among the Jewish-Gentile relationships at Colossae and it is believed that if the systematic steps are fanatically followed among any people, communal peace would be well guaranteed between individuals and the community and by extension build national peace. Therefore, νεκρώ, ἀποτίθημι, and ἐνδύω are pragmatic in pursuance of communal peace and national peacebuilding.

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