CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, continues to grapple with a complex web of socio-political and economic challenges that have impeded her progress since independence. Issues such as ethnic tension, corruption, poor governance, insecurity, and economic inequality have persistently undermined national development and unity. As calls for restructuring gain momentum across different segments of society, the need for moral, spiritual, and institutional intervention becomes even more urgent. Within this national quest for renewal and transformation, the Church emerges as a crucial moral and socio-political actor whose influence transcends spiritual boundaries.

The Church, as both a spiritual and social institution, occupies a unique position in shaping public consciousness, moral values, and ethical leadership. Historically, the Church in Nigeria has played significant roles in education, healthcare, and social welfare—serving as a catalyst for moral reformation and social justice. However, the current realities of political instability, economic hardship, and moral decay demand a re-examination of the Church's prophetic and transformative role in national reconstruction. The question arises: to what extent has the Church contributed to Nigeria socio-political and economic restructuring and how can it

enhance its engagements in this crucial process? This research seeks to explore the multifaceted roles of the Church in Nigeria's ongoing quest for national restructuring. It will examine the theological, ethical, and practical dimensions of the Church's involvement in socio-political discourse and economic development. The study situates the Church not merely as a religious entity concerned with personal salvation, but as a moral agent and stakeholder in nation-building—called to bear prophetic witness against injustice and to promote good governance, equity, and sustainable development.

Furthermore, the study will interrogate the internal and external limitations that have hindered the Church's effectiveness in influencing public policy and economic systems. It will also assess the potential of ecumenical cooperation, interfaith dialogue, and theological advocacy as tools for constructive engagement with state actors and civil society. The overarching aim is to propose a biblically grounded and contextually relevant framework through which the Church can more effectively participate in Nigeria's restructuring agenda.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the broader theological discourse on the Church's role in public life. It seeks to reaffirm the relevance of Christian social ethics in addressing national crises, and to demonstrate how the Church, inspired

by its mission of justice, peace, and holistic salvation, can serve as a transformative force in the socio-political and economic renewal of Nigeria.

1.1 Background to the study

Nigeria as a nation is plagued by a lot of socioeconomic challenges, including poverty, unemployment, ethnicity, youth restiveness, terrorism, secessionist agitations, electoral fraud, political injustice, sectionalism, insecurity and militancy. Many scholars have invested great amount of energy attempting to work out how these problems can be resolved. This study is one of these attempts; it used philosophy as a midwife for the church to realize her potential as an institution. Particularly, the study adopts the historical method of documentary analysis to investigate the possible roles the Church/Christianity in Nigeria can play to achieve socioeconomic liberation for the country. This was based on the philosophical assumption that the Church has a radical potency and capacity for confronting and transforming unjust social order.

Social and political scholars often debate on whether or not the Church should involve herself or play any role in the socioeconomic affairs of the society. In this evolving controversy, there are some philosophical and religious thinkers who argue that such involvement would jeopardize the Church's spiritual status as the universal sacrament of salvation. Those in this category also believe that such

involvement will endanger the well-being of the society considering that modern societies are generally multi religious. An intervention by the Church, the argument goes, might elicit a reciprocal reaction from other religious groups, Islam for example and lead to conflagration of society. A. Gill on this ground claims that the Church in particular and religion in general are increasingly irrelevant in modern social life (A. Gill, 2001, 117-138). Also, the subsisting 1999 Nigerian Constitution (Section, 10) and indeed all the previous Nigerian Constitutions have consistently provided that, the Government of the Federation of Nigeria shall not adopt any religion as state religion. Hence, the generally held notion of secularism of the Nigerian state essentially derives from this constitutional provision. In any case, it has to be noted that the secularization worldview is not a Nigerian peculiarity. It is a phenomenon that started in Western Europe and North America but has currently spread to most countries across the world.

Nevertheless, there are other scholars who have shown that the refusal to confront societal socioeconomic injustice calls into question the Church's self-understanding as the light and salt of the earth (Callaway 2011, 1). These argue that the Church has something positive and substantial to contribute to the quest for socioeconomic societal liberation. To this end, Dillon, M. (2003) argues that the "Church illuminates the everyday experiences and practices of many individuals; is a significant component of diverse institutional processes, including politics…and

plays a vital role in public culture and social change." In the same token, Levy, G., & Razin, R. (2012) maintains that the significance of the Church and religion to social liberation cannot be dispensed with.

It will seem more appropriate to take a re-conciliatory or midway position that while she is not expected to become a political organization, the Church has a substantial role to play in socioeconomic liberation by acting as a principled guide, moral watchdog, spiritual counsellor and conscience to the society. The aim of this paper, therefore, is to establish philosophically that implicit in the sacred and sacramental mission of the Church is her social ministry as an instrument of justice in an unjust socioeconomic system, an instrument of reconciliation and peace in a conflict and crisis- ridden society, as well as an instrument of freedom in an oppressive structure. This position is practically at variance with Karl Max perception of the church.

> *For the last 35 years, there has been agitation and a call by individuals, churches, non-governmental organizations, geo-cultural groups and geo-political associations for the restructuring of Nigeria (Bello 2017). This call has experienced a rising and falling surge, and currently, another rising owing to the fact that the structure and system of governance in Nigeria have continued to breed corrupt leaders and produce political leadership heavily tilted towards some geo-political zones instead of spreading throughout the six geo-political zones (Emeh et al. 2020).*

The past and present heads of state and government within the last 20 years have given less concern to this burning issue which has even attracted the attention of

the international community. It was the action of former president Goodluck Jonathan in 2014, the inauguration of a National Conference that gave Nigeria a ray of hope. After his tenure, nothing seemed to happen on the matter. There are a few reasons why people rejected the idea of restructuring. Bello (2017) opines that such poor support to the call to restructuring was because of the ambiguity of the subject matter and what it is meant to achieve. Northern Nigeria had robustly resisted moves to restructure Nigeria in the past (Muhammad, Nazariah & Isah 2019:80) probably out of fear that political restructuring will be in favour of the south because the crude oil, which is Nigeria's most relied upon source of external revenue, is in the south. However, there are more agitations from southern Nigeria in support for restructuring, nevertheless with divergent views.

Recently, prominent northerners, even military generals, have supported the call for restructuring. For example, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar made a call towards restructuring (Ajayi 2016). Bello (2017) noted that the Speaker, House of Representatives of Nigeria, Dogara suggested a constitutional amendment that would give rise to local government autonomy. In the same vein, retired military generals such as Babangida (Efeurhobo & Fredrick 2020), Alani Akinrinade and Tunde Ogheha have shown support towards restructuring (Onwumere 2019).

> *Although there has been dissenting voices from the north towards restructuring, such opinions do not capture the entire opinion from*

> *the North. El-Rufai (2017) observed that despite the nation's endowment with natural resources which hitherto positioned it as Africa's leading economy and most populous nation, Nigerians are neither happy nor content with the current political structure, the present Constitution and virtually all the institutions of governance at the federal, state and local levels. The Church in Nigeria is not alien to this development. Indeed, various studies have shown a good working relationship between the Church and politics. Both are inseparable (Kasomo & Naila 2012).*

The Church is not expected to shy away from political issues because politics ensures good governance and godly leadership (Dajur 2019). Politics always depends on religious commitments, and religious commitments are never politically indifferent but yield to political demands (Leeman 2021). The two variables have long been established as complementary to each other. Therefore, the role of the Church in Nigerian politics cannot be overemphasized. The Church has played major roles in positively affecting the culture, socio-economic, socio-political and educational life of the people. For example, 'the Church of Nigeria set up election monitoring groups to ensure fair outcomes of the 2003 and 2007 elections' (Nolte, Danjibo & Oladeji 2009). Economically, Anglican Communion, Diocese on the Niger, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Onitsha, to mention but a few have projects that include building of affordable homes, guest houses, recreational facilities, clinics and hospitals and other commercial complexes. (Anozie 2013) It has remained a strong force in influencing various countries' political processes and nation building.

Therefore, the situation of manipulating church leaders by some powerful individuals or politicians who claim to be part of the Christian faith to pursue selfish interests remains one of the negative effects of the Church on the nation's polity. In addition, greed has crept into the religious terrain to the extent that some religious leaders now patronise political office holders to satisfy their lust for money and other material gains (Sahara Reporters 2010). Omosor (2019) explains how Rev. Fr. Mbaka embarrassed and sent out Peter Obi during Mbaka's church harvest thanksgiving because Peter Obi belonged to the People's Democratic Party (PDP). Rev. Mbaka was alleged to openly campaign for Hope Uzodimma of the All Progressives Congress (APC) and demanded that President Buhari send money to his ministry to avoid failing the 2019 elections. In spite of the negative effect on the polity, the place of the Church cannot still be undermined.

Considering the critical role the Church has played in Nigeria's politics, the call of the Church towards restructuring of the country has been emphasised (Nche et al. 2020; Ngele & Peters 2019) and this would also be reflected in this study. However, this article maintains that the Church cannot have a positive impact in the quest for political restructuring in Nigeria as long as it sits on the fence or is manipulated by the political class.

The term restructuring implies refinement, transformation, changes that will bring about some levels of justice and development in a given polity that is structurally imbalanced politically. The unending agitations over resource distribution and other socio-economic and key political appointments in the federation among others created room for this concept in Nigeria.

Over the years, Nigerians of different ethnic backgrounds have co-existed harmoniously. However, things began to change gradually in the buildup of the

1966 coup. Since then, there seems to have been no peace. Religious and ethnic sentiments now dominate the country's daily activities. Some individuals are of the view that the nation be divided into at least three nations. Could it then be concluded that these groups in Nigeria cannot co-exist? Is it possible for Nigeria to exist as an entity? What role can Christianity play to ensure peaceful co-existence? Nigeria is made up of about two hundred and fifty ethnic groups. She is rich in diverse cultures (Ejikeme, 2016). The dominant religions include Christianity, Islam, and African Traditional Religion.

Due to differences in tribes and religious beliefs, there are numerous incidences of hostilities, resulting in destruction of lives and properties. Hostilities are recorded along the line of tribes and religions. The element that underline conflict according to Higazi, (2011) include "ethnicity, politics and religion". The hostilities have become so pronounced that unity of the nation is under threat. Some of these threats are political crisis, militancy, land disputes, trade disputes, and religious crisis among others. It has become very difficult for an individual to live in a different culture or religion in Nigeria without being afraid of being killed. This is probably why Olawale, (2013) tagged Nigeria a "security risk nation" to which many international communities have warned their nations not to live or even travel to Nigeria. Nigeria has been experiencing a number of crises, social vices, and lack of cordial relationship among her citizens since independence. The

various political crises that led to the 1967-1970 civil war have had devastating effects on unity and peaceful coexistence in Nigeria.

However, the intensity and frequency and rapid spread of crisis in recent times is an issue of intense public concern. In most states of the federation, one hears stories of violent conflict involving individuals or groups for instance, Odi Massacre in Bayelsa state, Urhobo - Iteskiri crisis in Warri, Jimeta clash in Jos (Egwu, 2001 and Alanamu, 2004), Boko haram uprising in the northern states, among others. In these conflicts,

> *People are displaced, properties are destroyed and lives are lost" (Orude, 2009). Obuseh (2016) is of the view that Nigeria cannot live in peace because "of selfishness"". Supporting this view on why Nigerians would not co-exist peacefully is Oluwaseun (2014) who sees religion as a threat to Nigeria"s peaceful co-existence. According to him, "it is easier for a Yoruba to marry an Efik than for a Muslim to marry a Christian" and vice versa. This also shows religious intolerance as a threat to unity. And the questions, what ought to be the relationship between Christianity and peacebuilding? The question here is, what role can Christianity play to ensure peace in Nigeria? Some scholars are of the view that Christianity cannot play any role towards peacebuilding because "religion is arguably one of the single most significant cause of war and turmoil in human history (Abu-Nimer 2001).*

Gopin 1997 & Diez de Velasco 2007). So much malevolence have been done in the name of religion (Ayer 1976, Cited in Collins et al. 2006). However, so much good has also been done in the name of religion. The successful expansion of the Christian missions in Nigeria "began in the 19th century through the activities of

freed slaves from Sierra Leone" (Anene, 1991), Missionaries" activities carried with it the building of schools, churches, roads, hospitals and of course other institutions of government.

> *It should be borne in mind that social reforms came with Christianity's commitment to national, moral and political advancement. Christianity featured prominently in the "series of events that led to the development of the Nigerian nation, and were able to bring about certain political, economic and technological changes in the region" (Ajayi, 1991).*

Their activities helped to break down ethnic prejudices and to bring their converts in loyalty transcending ethnicities. Hence, patriotic Nigerians came to believe that by practicing Christianity they were paving the way for the creation of the Nigerian nation. The Nigerian state of their dream was one in which Christianity would flourish, inter-tribal wars would cease and the industrial, technological and intellectual revolutions which had occurred in Europe would repeat themselves in Nigeria. By encouraging a common consciousness, Christianity would reduce to a minimum all other sectional loyalties such as the many incipient tribal/crisis groups that divided Nigeria. It becomes very necessary to ask if Christianity, being a major religion in Nigeria, has no capacity to contribute to Nigeria"s peaceful co-existence.

Peaceful co-existence in Nigeria means Christians, Muslims and African Traditional religionists engaging in ecumenical discourse and working together in

different contexts to engage with and proffer solutions to social, political, economic and cultural problems instead of the hate-filled antagonistic discourse of superiority and dominance. Whether Islam or Christian, what is common to both sides is that adherents of both faiths are human beings and faith also binds them together as Nigerians. Adherents of both religions love their country and God. However, it has been observed in recent times that some of the potent tools used by mischief-makers to cause dissatisfaction, hatred, disunity and tribal war are ethnicity and religion. Rupisinghl (1991) defines co-existence as "to exist together (in time or place) and to exist in mutual tolerance". Peaceful co-existence in Nigeria implies recognizing our differences and appreciating them. Importantly, Nigerians should focus on areas where they concur and work together to strengthen the common ties and design a mechanism that will enable them to actually appreciate their areas of disagreement with mutual respect for one another.

It is the responsibility of Nigerians to work collectively to protect and safeguard our co- existence. In doing so, Nigerians must avoid extremism, exercise caution by recognizing the religious differences, show high level of understanding and respect for one another such that all and sundry are given equal opportunity so that Nigerians can live in peace with one another irrespective of their tribal and religious affiliations. What practical ways and potential responsibilities can be explored by Christianity so as to sustain peaceful co-existence? These are the

problems that this research resolves. The research adopted historical phenomenology in view of the need to draw conclusions from the historical setting of problems associated with the quest for peaceful co-existence.

Flowing from some of the perspectives posited by different shades of Nigerian leaders as compiled by Aziken, et al (2017) and Abah, (2017), "the following should be noted; According to General Ibrahim Babangida, while the unity of the nation is not negotiable, structures should be strengthened to make the union more functional based on the state comparative advantages". Restructuring implies change, and change denotes a departure from the old order to a new one.

Restructuring can therefore mean fundamental change in the building block of a nation's educational system: change in the social, economic, infrastructure and political landscape of a nation. (Ibok, Owouko & Out,Sunday, 2018). According to Atiku (2017), it means effecting changes to the current federal structure to bring closer to what the founding leaders erected in order to address the very issues and challenges that led them to opt for a less centralized system. Peaceful coexistence is a situation of order anchored on the harmonious relationship that exists between and among people occupying a particular area. It is a living condition that is sustained by peace, happiness and other traits that enhance good and quality living.

There is peaceful coexistence, if members of the same community live together with little or no rancour in pursuit of human endeavour.

For the last 20 years or so, there has been agitation and a call by individuals, churches, non-governmental organizations, geo-cultural groups and geo-political associations for the restructuring of Nigeria (Bello 2017). This call has experienced a rising and falling surge, and currently, another rising owing to the fact that the structure and system of governance in Nigeria have continued to breed corrupt leaders and produce political leadership heavily tilted towards some geo-political zones instead of spreading throughout the six geo-political zones (see Emeh et al. 2020). This is corroborated in the words of Osaretin (2019):

The politics of imbalance in the nation's political, social, economic, political and co-operate governance in the management, sharing and allocation of the nation's common wealth constitute to a very large rampant state of insecurity, rancor, fear, suspicion and feelings of agitation, exclusion and isolation within and among the various ethnic nationalities in Nigerian state.

The past and present heads of state and government within the last 20 years have given less concern to this burning issue which has even attracted the attention of the international community. It was the action of former president Goodluck Jonathan in 2014, the inauguration of a National Conference that gave Nigeria a

ray of hope. After his tenure, nothing seemed to happen on the matter. There are a few reasons why people rejected the idea of restructuring. Bello (2017) opines that such poor support to the call to restructuring was because of the ambiguity of the subject matter and what it is meant to achieve. Northern Nigeria had robustly resisted moves to restructure Nigeria in the past (Muhammad, Nazariah & Isah 2019) probably out of fear that political restructuring will be in favour of the south because the crude oil, which is Nigeria's most relied upon source of external revenue, is in the south. However, there are more agitations from southern Nigeria in support for restructuring, nevertheless with divergent views.

Economically: The Anglican Communion, Diocese on the Niger, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Onitsha, to mention but a few have projects that include building of affordable homes, guest houses, recreational facilities, clinics and hospitals and other commercial complexes. (Anozie 2013). It has remained a strong force in influencing various countries' political processes and nation building. Therefore, the situation of manipulating church leaders by some powerful individuals or politicians who claim to be part of the Christian faith to pursue selfish interests remains one of the negative effects of the Church on the nation's polity.

In addition, greed has crept into the religious terrain to the extent that some religious leaders now patronise political office holders to satisfy their lust for

money and other material gains (Sahara Reporters 2010). Omosor (2019) explains how Rev. Fr. Mbaka embarrassed and sent out Peter Obi during Mbaka's church harvest thanksgiving because Peter Obi belonged to the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

In spite of the negative effect on the polity, the place of the Church cannot still be undermined. Considering the critical role the Church has played in Nigeria's politics, the call of the Church towards restructuring of the country has been emphasized (see Nche et al. 2020:9; Ngele & Peters 2019:5) and this would also be reflected in this study. However, this study maintains that the Church cannot have a positive impact in the quest for political restructuring in Nigeria as long as it sits on the fence or is manipulated by the political class. Restructuring has become one of the most popular languages used in the Nigerian political world today. Mohammed and Sulaiman (2018) operationally views the term as: Political and administrative connotation, which implies agitation for more formation in the entire component of the existing federalism, as a result of the need to control the center or representation in the political landscape of the country (p. 3), Restructuring then assumes the call for restoration of federalism – the foundational constitution structure to which all Nigerians subscribed as encapsulated in the independence Constitution of 1960 (Aziken et al. 2017). It usually involves major

changes for the organisation in its multiple departments and locations, including procedures and processes.

Theoretically, restructuring leads to more efficient and modernized entities. However, it may also lead to the redundancy of jobs and the layoff of personnel (Katarzyna 2016). The essence of restructuring is change (Slawomir 2012). Amboka (2012) contends that the restructuring of an organisation involves making strategic changes when the organisation faces environmental challenges. This applies to the study in the form of political need for change. This should reflect on creation of states/local government areas (LGA), resource control, regional autonomy and power devolution, etc. The most sensitive of which is resource control, especially oil wealth. From this political perspective, it spills into the processes of re-organizing the legal and operational structure of the nation for the purpose of making the country more favourable and friendly for its populace. Restructuring Nigeria then would by implication mean returning Nigeria to the kind of federal arrangement envisioned by the founding fathers in the 1960s. The federal arrangement of the 1960s is as follows: various distinct parts of the country were federating units. Each state had the constitutional power to manage its unique problems and concerns, to develop its own resources for its people, to manage its own security and to make its own kind of contributions to the well-being of the whole country. The central government managed common matters like the defence

of the country, international relations, currency, state relations and ensuring protection of fundamental human rights. If the country takes the impetus to restructure, the country will move forward both economically and socially. But if not well-planned and implemented, it can lead to more problems or even system collapse.

The quest for restructuring in the Nigerian polity has become a serious academic discourse in contemporary time because of the agitations and arguments arising from denials of the national cake by certain powerful forces and ethnic schism in a country that is supposedly owned by all. These agitations and quests arose from the structural imbalance of the federating unit. For some intellectual pundits and policy analysts, the unending quagmire threatening the peaceful coexistence of the country emanated from a political system that is highly tailored towards some sections of the country at the expense of other ethnic nationalities. This situation has generated a lot of confusion, distrust and disagreements among all that have agreed to live together under a federal arrangement.

It is common knowledge that one of the reasons for adopting federalism is to put the fear of the minority to rest. That is for fear of conquest by external aggression but, today in Nigeria, the reverse is the case as the minority ethnic nationalities are gradually being swallowed by the actions and activities of the major ethnic groups

arising from the conspicuous struggle to gain ascendency over other smaller groups.

Thus, the imbalance in the structural arrangements virtually in some key sectors of the national economy has been keenly and clearly identified by some intellectual pundits, policy makers, opinion leaders and other relevant stakeholders as the causal factor. This imbalance has consequently led to violent agitation across the nation. The idea is to give a fair treatment to all in order to promote a healthy and egalitarian society where peace and oneness prevails. Hence, the desire for restructuring that will enhance and promote security in our national development where peaceful co-existence and socioeconomic development is inevitable. This is because some notable areas of imbalance in the federation gave room for this agitation and violent conflict that threatens the peaceful co-existence of the sovereign state at the moment. Some of these areas are leadership, employment status, appointments into key positions of governance, among others.

The aforementioned have generated controversies and disagreements that have made some sections of the federating unit feel marginalized and poorly treated. For instance, the leadership of this country seems to be tilted to the North even though some of the Northern Oligarchs argued some time ago that it was their birth right to lead the country. These self-imposed beliefs have been the guiding principles by

the North till date which more often than not has adversely affected our national unity in almost all ramifications. Very recently, the controversy over "RUGA" (that is the settlement of Fulani Herdsmen and their flock) in different parts of the country has been an issue in the political domain.

In a federal state like Nigeria, this imposition by a section of the country should not arise not to talk of its implementation, as it is capable of instigating crisis that may consistently result in political instability. Perhaps, it is this awkward behaviour of most Nigerians that reflects in our different places of national assignment that prompted the late NAFDAC boss Dora Akunyili to come up with the policy of rebranding Nigeria.

Although, it generated some controversies among the intellectual pundits, policy makers, students and opinion leaders' as it is difficult to change a full grown adult from his old, archaic and mundane ways of pursuing personal interest and national goals of development. In contemporary Nigeria, what has dominated the political terrain is restructuring for a better and more habitable Nigeria that will serve as germane and propelling force for national growth and development. Alapiki (2017), looks at restructuring as a process of acquiring a fundamental internal change that alters the relationship between different components or elements of

organization or internal change that alters the relationship between different components or elements of organization.

The persistent and consistent agitations of Nigerians over the structural imbalance of the federation call for the restructuring of this magnitude. The centre can no longer hold as things are falling apart on daily basis because of the overwhelming and parochial approach to the national resources by a collective few. In the political development, as noted by Udah (2018), Nigeria should be restructured to meet the dictates of true federalism, where political and economic structures are in tandem with the overall interests and overall well-being of all the segments or ethnic nationalities that constitute the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

It is in this light that Nnamdi Kanu, the crusader for the indigenous people of Biafra should be commended and widely acknowledged. He pursued this struggle with every vigour some three years ago until he was chased out of the country by the opposition of restructuring. Even till date he has not relented, despite his sudden disappearance.

It is pertinent to note that the calls for rebranding and restructuring reveal without any equanimity that something is fundamentally wrong with our sovereign national state. The agitations and struggles by some patriotic elements of this country towards the actualization of restructuring is a concomitant nexus for political

stability that will help promote and sustain national cohesion as a means to conveniently meet the needs and expectations of the average Nigeria.

Nigeria, as a multi-ethnic and multicultural society, needs true federalism. For the past 17 years, Nigeria has experienced uninterrupted civil rule and this is praiseworthy. However, the idea of non-implementation of true federalism has attracted the attention of many Nigerians. The problems of lack of free and fair election, negation of fundamental human rights, un accountability of government and disregard to constitutionalism and rule of law need to be tackled in order to give way for political restructuring. The participation of the Church as the voice of the voiceless, and a sacred institution with an indispensable social mandate and relevance should not be overlooked. The Church remains a powerful agent for socio-political change and liberation from marginalization tendencies. Therefore, for Nigeria to achieve political restructuring, the Church must be involved. The above thoughts led the researcher to work on this dissertation on the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria as a way of charging the church to wake up to her national responsibilities.

1.2 Statement of Problem

Participation in the process of socioeconomic liberation for the realization of justice is a task, even a 'sine qua non' for the Church both as a religious and viable

social institution. Christians are to take positive actions to destroy all forms of oppression and injustice wherever they are found (Hastings 1976, 91). Nevertheless, this does not mean, that the Church as a body should be expected to leave the Word of God to serve tables by getting herself involved in a violent revolutionary overthrowing of governments or even in partisan political activism. The liberating role of the Church should be such that will enhance her influence on the socioeconomic order without jeopardizing her spiritual and evangelistic vision and mission. This will involve her confronting and challenging every unjust, oppressive and exploitative structure with Christian values and ideals. This implies a prophetic and priestly role for the Church in Nigeria, just like Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and other prophets in the Bible. In this role, the Church can, along with her direct spiritual vocation, be committed to the process of justice, human liberation and social transformation by fulfilling the following five functions: prophetic denunciation of the oppressive mechanism; promoting programs of raising social consciousness among the masses; practical alleviation of the conditions of the oppressed masses; peace building through positive reconciliation of the oppressed and oppressive members; and personal conversion of the ordinary man.

Nigeria became independent from Great Britain in October 1960. However, by January 1966, the civilian government was brutally ousted by the nation's Military.

Central to the arguments of the soldiers, for toppling the government in power was the question of corruption, in which the adherents of each of the two major religious persuasions in the country were self-evident participants. In addition to leadership sleaze, there was inter-tribal hatred in the national polity. Hence, the first military coup of January 1966 in the country and the counter coup in July of the same year, featured on massive scales, alleged and proven cases of tribal induced murder of the nation's leaders.

Profoundly found in the country at this time were deep-seated ethnic antagonisms, not religious bigotry. A civil war ensued (the Nigeria-Biafra war) fought between July 1967 and January 1970. At the end of the warfare, the Military remained in power, with intermittent pretenses of handing over the affairs of the state to civilians, whom they would subsequently bring down. S. I. Ebohon, and N. O. Obakhedo, (2012) argue that despite the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian state and its concomitant defects, the nation at independence, was seen as a beacon of hope to many other nation-states in the continent. That is to say that no matter the circumstances, Nigeria held the prospects of a strong developmental state that would be a rallying point to other states. The reason for this huge confidence was that Nigeria was perceived as a regional economic hub and political force and an African regional super-power. The military mishap in the politics of the country however unfortunately accelerated the pace of bringing the emergent state to its

developmental nadir. The Military in the country continued to stage counter coups against subsisting military governments in the Nigerian state. Hence, leadership instability (as driven by the soldiers) remained a permanent feature of governance in Nigeria, from October 1960 to May 1999, when the men of the Armed Forces seemed to have finally surrendered power to civilian politicians.

However, in all of the foregoing, another enduring feature of national affairs in the country is what seems to border on elite determination to guarantee that the Nigerian nation fails to survive as a nationally prosperous entity, for the good of all her citizens. Consequently, either in military fatigues or civilian garbs, the power elite in Nigeria possesses a seemingly irrepressible tendency to gravitate towards the thieving of national resources. Citing Ihonvbere C. C. Ojukwu & J. O. Shopeju (2010) contend that the country's picture and identity is replete with confused, factionalized and extremely corrupt elites, with a limited sense of nationhood. These elites, Ojukwu & Shopeju argue, lacking strong and viable base in production, turns the state as its primary instrument of primitive accumulation and in the end, the state is mangled and rendered impotent, in the quest for nationhood, growth and development, much less democracy. There are several roles the church plays in modern times; however, the study seeks to:

1. Whether the church has roles to play in the quest for socio-political restructuring of Nigeria

2. Whether the church has functions and duties has failed to discharge over the years in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria

3. Whether there are some factors militating hindering the church from performing its roles towards socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The objective of this study is to encourage or stimulate the participation of the church in the socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria irrespective of church denominations, tribe or religion which may create a platform for national re-birth. This research is informed by the level of socioeconomic injustice currently prevalent in Nigeria. As pointed out at the abstract, the overwhelming upsurge of secessionists' groups in Nigeria these days such as IPOB (Indigenous People of Biafra), people of Oduduwa, the Boko Haram and banditry insurgency in the North, End SARS protesters and other similar movements are commonly interpreted as demonstrations against the state resulting from the strains of injustice in the system and as signaling the level of discontent among the citizenry especially the young people.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The target audiences of the study include church authorities, scholars and researchers, Christian religious studies educators, parents/guardians, curriculum planners, school authorities, Ministries of Education.

Findings from this study will educate the church authorities and the general public in Nigeria on what the church need to do or incorporate into the system to ensure socio-political restructuring of Nigeria.

This research will also serve as a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research in this field subsequently, if applied will go to an extent to provide new explanation to the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria.

The work intends to give an insight into the democratic menace in Nigeria that has brought about staggering developmental challenges rather than sustainable development in the nation decades after independence and the role of the masses in ensuring a liberal and non-violent revolution which ultimately aims at ameliorating their situation. It represents a bold and sincere attempt towards reappraising the Nigerian predicament in one hand, and advancing a suitable and workable ideology that is capable of transforming humanity and ensuring a more integral development of the nation on the other hand. The work will finally serve as a stirrer in re-

awakening the consciousness of Nigerians in mastering their destiny for posterity sake. Students, researchers, individuals interested in ameliorating the Nigerian state of affairs, amongst others, stand to benefit greatly from this research.

The findings of this study will help to improve religious studies teaching and learning in Nigeria. The findings from this study will enable the researcher, Christian religious studies educators, parents/guardians, curriculum planners, school authorities, Ministries of Education and organizations of interest to have empirical evidence on the state and conditions of Nigeria with regard to Religion and Social Instability in Contemporary Nigeria. It will provide information regarding the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria.

The findings of this study will contribute to religious and cultural studies education possibilities for improving religious studies teaching and stability in corporate Nigeria. The finding of this study will also give information about teachers experience, teachers' qualification, and level of understanding of the influence of religion on social stability in Nigeria. The findings of the study will also help future researchers to gather data or information that will be relevant to their study or who may want to replicate it elsewhere.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study is designed principally to address the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria. It covered the role of the church in meeting the challenges of socio-political and economic restructuring. It is premised in the fact that the country's attempt at achieving socio-political and economic restructuring has not been an easy task. Some of the challenges hampering socio-political and economic restructuring relate to issues of corruption, ineffective leadership, religious and ethnic crises.

1.6 Research Methodology and Sources of Data

The dissertation employed the historical research method as the writer adopted the application of a systematized and objective method to the description and analysis of the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria. This work is a qualitative research, specifically a documentary research in which data is sourced from books, journals and other records. That is, researcher's own writing and that of other scholars in political and social philosophy in particular and other related areas of philosophy in general the critical hermeneutics which is geared at analyzing the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria. The method of documentation used in this work is classical method; there are end notes at the end

of each chapter and bibliography at the end of the work. This work is divided into five chapters. The method employed entails the investigation of documented sources such as textbooks, learned journals, magazines, and newspaper and internet publications.

1.7 Conceptual Classifications

Historically, philosophy is understood as the fundamental of all disciplines: the basic human inquiry which has yielded the multiplicity of all disciplines that take care of virtually all aspects of human life. It is an inquiry which is the mother of all inquiries and from which all other21modes of inquiries originated. Philosophy is also an attitude to life. This is closely linked with the etymological meaning which portrays philosophy as a conscious quest for knowledge. Philosophy in this regard is that critical attitude to life which is characterized by curiosity to know, openness of the mind to all issues, lack of dogmatic assertions or stand, tolerance and preparedness to examine everything without prejudice. It is from this perspective that philosophy is used in this research to serve the purpose of socioeconomic liberation of Nigeria through the Church.

Scholars usually conceptualize the Church in two senses: the institutional and organismic senses. In one sense, the Church is used as an institution while in another sense it is used as an organism. The Church as an institution is defined by

Van Reken as the "formal organization that sets out to accomplish a specific purpose" (1999, 198). According to him:

It is an agent which can do things; and can say things because it has its own voice. The Church as an institution has its own purposes and plans, its own structure and officers, and its own mission. It has its own proper sphere. In many ways it parallels other institutions, like governments or schools.

It is from this perspective that C. N. Ogugua (2019, 31) understands the term, Church to mean an organized people of God, a spiritual and moral force to be reckoned with. On the other hand, the Church as an organism refers to "the church as the body of believers, the communion of believers" (Van Reken 1999, 198). The distinction between the two concepts of the Church is that while the institutional church refers to a unified organization, the Church as an organism refers to an aggregate of individual believers in which each Christian acts as a personal agent with a purpose and a call in God's plan. Based on this distinction, Van Reken goes further to distinguish between "Church work" and "kingdom work". Church work, according to him, is the work that a Christian does as an agent of the institutional church, while kingdom work is the work that a Christian does in service of his Lord not as an agent of the institutional church but in his/her secular vocation or calling, whether as a plumber, a teacher, or a politician (Van Reken 1999, 198).

This twofold meaning of Church reverberates in Jim Harris' view when he says: "By 'church' I mean both the individual believer and the institutional entity" (Harris http://thebigpicture.homestead.com/ ChurchinPolitics.html). It therefore means that in discussing the role of the Church in the pursuit of justice in the socioeconomic system of a given country, we are invariably dealing with the part that both individuals and the corporate body have to play in the society.

The three concepts that will facilitate the objective understanding of the article are 'restructuring', 'politics' and 'church'. Both conceptual and operational definitions of these terms will be applied to drive the study's point home.

Restructuring:

Restructuring has become one of the most popular languages used in the Nigerian political world today. Mohammed and Sulaiman (2018) operationally views the term as: [A] political and administrative connotation, which implies agitation for more formation in the entire component of the existing federalism, as a result of the need to control the center or representation in the political landscape of the country. (p. 3) Restructuring then assumes the call for restoration of federalism – the foundational constitution structure to which all Nigerians subscribed as encapsulated in the independence Constitution of 1960 (Aziken et al. 2017). It usually involves major changes for the organisation in its multiple departments and

locations, including procedures and processes. Theoretically, restructuring leads to a more efficient and modernised entities. However, it may also lead to the redundancy of jobs and the layoff of personnel (Katarzyna 2016). The essence of restructuring is change (Slawomir 2012).

Amboka (2012:2) contends that the restructuring of an organisation involves making strategic changes when the organisation faces environmental challenges. This applies to the study in the form of political need for change. This should reflect on creation of states/local government23areas (LGA), resource control, regional autonomy and power devolution, etc. The most sensitive of which is resource control, especially oil wealth.

From this political perspective, it spills into the processes of reorganising the legal and operational structure of the nation for the purpose of making the country more favourable and friendly for its populace. Restructuring Nigeria then would by implication mean returning Nigeria to the kind of federal arrangement envisioned by the founding fathers in the 1960s. The federal arrangement of the 1960s is as follows: various distinct parts of the country were federating units. Each state had the constitutional power to manage its unique problems and concerns, to develop its own resources for its people, to manage its own security and to make its own kind of contributions to the well-being of the whole country. The central

government managed common matters like the defence of the country, international relations, currency, state relations and ensuring protection of fundamental human rights. If the country takes the impetus to restructure, the country will move forward both economically and socially. But if not well-planned and implemented, it can lead to more problems or even system collapse.

Church:

The New Testament concept of the Church, its organisation and purpose are little understood outside the circle of biblical scholarship. The word 'church' comes from the Greek genitive noun kuriakon, which could be assumed to mean 'belonging to the Lord' (Berkhof 2003:557). The most widely used New Testament term for church is the Greek 'ekklesia'. According to Smucker (1966:13), 'Ekklesia…is the translation of the Hebrew term for the whole community of Israel as the people of God, the word qahal'. It is popularly understood as the assembly or congregation called out from the world of darkness into God's family.2 Ekklesia is a compound Greek term, derived from the verb ekkaleo.

The prepositional prefix ek means 'out' and kales means 'to call', thus the compound word means 'called out'. The noun would then be a 'calledout group' or 'set apart group'. In secular24Greek, ekklesia was 'a political assembly of citizens

of ancient Greek states, especially the periodic meeting of the Athenian citizens for conducting public business and for considering affairs proposed by the council' (Caudle 2020:1). In the Gospels of Matthew, 'Church' was used to show that Jesus is the builder or foundation of the called ones (cf. Mt 16:18). For a proper understanding of this article, two distinctive uses of the term 'Church' are noted, namely as an institution and then as an organism.

The Church as an institution is defined by Reken (1999:198) as the 'formal organization that sets out to accomplish a specific purpose'. According to him, it is an agent which can do things, and can say things because it has its own voice. The Church as an institution has its own place, purposes, mission, plans, structure and leadership. From an organisational point of view, Iwe (1979:88) understands the 'Church' as an organised people of God, a spiritual and moral force to be reckoned with. The Church is a unified 'body of believers, the communion of believers' (Reken 1999:198). It is the totality of individual believers in which each Christian acts as an instrument in God's hand to accomplish God's purpose.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The dissertation on the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria was anchored on church-sect theory which was originally proposed by H. Richard Niebuhr in his book The Social Sources of

Denominationalism, the theory discusses the difference between churches and sects. Niebuhr proposed that there is a cycle which sects and churches follow. Religions originate as sects designed to serve the needs of the deprived. If they flourish, they increasingly serve the interests of the middle and upper classes and are transformed into churches. Once the sects have become churches they become less effective in satisfying the needs of the lower class and the formation of a sect is re-created. In 1963 Benton Johnson revised the church-sect theory into its current state. Church and sect form opposite poles on an axis representing the amount of "tension" between religious organizations and their social environments. Tension, as defined by Benton Johnson, is "a manifestation of deviance." The tension is described to be between the group's members and the outside world. Churches are described as religious bodies having low tension, whereas, sects have high tension.

Ideology

Some social scientists have become increasingly uncomfortable with what they see as the intermingling of social scientific analysis and free-market ideology in rational choice theory. Some have likewise raised critical questions about the ideological use of neo-classical economic metaphors in rational choice theorizing about religion.

Religious economy refers to religious persons and organizations interacting within a market framework of competing groups and ideologies. An economy makes it possible for religious suppliers to meet the demands of different religious consumers. By offering an array of religions and religious products, a competitive religious economy stimulates such activity in a market-type setting.

The field applies rational choice theory to the theory of religion such that supply and demand are used to model the development and success of organized religions. Major proponents of the theory include William Sims Bainbridge, Roger Finke, Laurence Iannaccone, and Rodney Stark. The idea of religious economy frames religion as a product and as those who practice or identify with any particular religion as a consumer. But when the idea of belief is brought into the equation, this definition expands, and ideology affects the "product" and who "consumes" it. When examining depictions of religious identity in a global world, it is easy to see how ideology affects religious economy.

Carl L. Bankston III refers to religions and religious groups as "…competing firms [that vie for] customers who make rational choices among available products…" (311). Using a liberal economic (see Economic liberalism) framework for analysis, Bankston is claiming that religions and religious groups' popularity is dependent on the laws of supply and demand. As a marketplace, religious consumers are

subject to things such as marketing, availability of product, resources, brand recognition, etc. But unlike some actual commodities such as a computer, these commodities speak to an individual's beliefs. Bankston poses the idea that belief deals with ideology and extends beyond what one would typically define as a market good by stating "…belief is produced and resides in communicated thoughts, (and) the consumers of goods of faith can only become consumers by becoming producers, by participating in interactions of belief…" (322).

1.9 Literature Review

This chapter affirmed that many have attributed the cause of these challenges to lack of good governance at all levels whether in the military or democratic dispensation. The study maintained that the several structures and institutions through which effective government can be entranced are heavily compromised from the beginning to the end. This is why Achebe (1985) observed that the failure of Nigeria as a nation is not in the system but rather in the calibre of persons entrusted with the management of the nation's vast human and material resources. This chapter affirmed that It is in the face of these challenges and quest for solution that many have called for national transformation, hence the national transformation agenda of President Goodluck Jonathan. Though the policies are

well packaged, there are still some challenges which may hinder the effective performance of the policies.

The Concept of the Church

The church is one of the social and religious institutions in the society that has both the divine mandate and the social responsibility to preach the good news and make disciples of all people (Ononogbu, 2005). The church through the ages sees its social role as that of guiding the society into all truth. This makes it incumbent upon the church to concern itself with the problems of social behaviour as well as social justice. Owoh (1985) posited that because the church possesses the total truth, it could be applied at any given time as its influence interpenetrates society at all levels. According to him, the role of the church is bound to influence man's ideas politically, socially and economically. To Ikani (2009), the church has the aim of initiating social change and maintaining it. As an agent of social change, the church brings light to the dark corners of the society.

The role of the church in national transformation cannot be over emphasized. They can be instrumental to social change by providing the idea or the moral cement for nation building. Imaekhai (2010) asserted that historically, religious institutions through their leaders have played critical roles in social transformation or revolution. He cited the puritan preaching of Jonathan Edwards as providing a

spiritual and moral compass for the American Revolution. The teachings of protestant Calvinist leaders which emphasized hard work, saving money, financial discipline and the rejection of frivolous pursuit brought about industrialization based on capitalism in Britain (Odiba, 2009). The challenge for the Nigerian church today is how to effect transformation among the citizenry of the country especially among the political leaders. This is a great task given the pitiable political and social economic situation of the country. The question is what should be the role of the church in meeting the challenges of national transformation? This is what the paper will be addressing.

Concept of National Transformation

To transform means to change. It is a process that is concerned with fostering changes. In other words, there should be a movement from our present location to somewhere in the future. National transformation therefore could refer to a complete turnaround of a nation's system or institutions for the better (Philip-Ogah& Josephine, 2013).

In realization of the need to correct the flaws in the country's drive for development after years of stalling in terms of perspective, continuity, consistency and commitment to policies, the Goodluck administration decided to initiate a four year transformation agenda (Akinola, 2013). The program is a based on a set of

priority policies which when implemented will make life better for Nigerians. The policies are in the areas of macroeconomic framework and economic direction, job creation, public expenditure management, governance, justice and judiciary, foreign policies and economic diplomacy, legislature, education, health sector, labour and productivity, infrastructure policies, programmes and projects, power, information and communication technology, Niger Delta and transportation (Usigbe, 2011). However, the programme faced a lot of challenges. Imaekhai (2010) remarked that the national transformation of the country seemed impossible because people's concept and expectation of it is intrinsically flawed. Also, while government position about it is promising, the threats of corruption, religious and ethnic crises are threats to its success.

Politics

The word politics is one of the difficult terms to define because there is no universal definition to it. It has a wide range of meanings. Some people view it based on what happens in the political administration of any region or state (Hawkesworth & Kogan 2013; Udegbe 2017). Its definition varies from theory to theory of usage. It has been viewed as a dirty game, where elections and selection process are marred with violence, treachery, deception and all forms of wickedness (Udegbe 2017). It has been defined in various ways, as the study of conflict

resolution (Crick 1962), the art of government, the conduct and management of public affairs, etc. (Modebadze 2010:39). According to Modebadze (2010), the two contradictory approaches to understanding politics are the narrow definition of politics and the broad definition of politics. Narrow definition of politics is what takes place within the government and state departments:

Only politicians, government officials and members of the political parties are involved in this brand of politics, whilst a broader conception of politics argues that politics is not only confined to a particular sphere, but also takes place in all aspects of human endeavours (p. 44), that is, in the home, religious institutions and in the society at large. Such a broad concept of politics assumes that politics is the interweaving of state, people and power. Hence, Usikaro (2011:31) wrote that 'politics is the power system of a place'. Ekwunife (1995) approaches the concept of politics from a religious view. To him, politics: [I]s an expression of Christ's care for the masses. Christ who leads the sheep to green pastures, who is so devoted to their cause that he is prepared to die for them. (p. 40) Ekwunife's perception contradicts people's belief that politics is a dirty game. The attachment of dirtiness to the game of politics in Nigeria has made it quite unattractive to the masses because of the associated corruption. This has led to the notion amongst Christians that politics is evil which people of questionable character have wholly embraced. In 1914, Nigeria saw the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern

Protectorate by the colonial masters. This is a nation with more than 200 ethnic groups (Mustapha 2005:4) and multiple ideologies. From 1960 to 1999, Nigeria has been experiencing different political restructuring. Under the leadership of Tafawa Belewa and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe (1960– 1965), they saw the creation of the Western Region. General Aguiyi Ironsi (January 1966–July 1966) abolished federating region; power became concentrated at the centre and also began a unitary system of government.

Under General Yakubu Gowon (July 1966–August 1975), Nigeria was divided into 12 states. General Murtala Mohammed (July 1975–February 1976) started the process of relocating the federal capital from Lagos to Abuja, drafting a new Constitution and creating additional states. General Olusegun Obasanjo finalised and approved the change from a British parliamentary to an American presidential system of government, relocated the federal capital from Lagos to Abuja and shared central revenue amongst three tiers of government. Alhaji Shehu Shagari (October 1979–December 1983) established federal character principle in federal appointments. General Ibrahim Babangida (1985–1993) attempted to enforce a two-party system for Nigeria, whilst Sani Abacha (November 1993–June 1988) created six additional states and local governments. Between 1999 and 2018, there was no major political restructuring.

However, an attempt was made by former president Goodluck Ebere Jonathan to restructure the country politically, leading to the inauguration of the National Conference Committee. The current administration seems to lack the capacity to implement the outcome of the National Conference Proceedings but aims at fighting political parties and not corruption. After independence in 1960, the military regimes exacerbated problems of the Nigerian political structure. Recently, the military heads of state that destructured Nigeria are now asking to undo some of the changes they made during their 29 years in power.

Bello (2017) observed that: The incursion of armed forces into Nigerian political landscape is a bag of mixed blessings, some of the structures they created are difficult to dismantle and some of the changes they made are impossible to reverse. (n.p.) On the other hand, the political leaders in the country today have failed to imbibe democratic principles which preach social justice, fairness and equity. The level of social injustice and marginalisation currently prevalent in Nigeria is reaching an alarming magnitude. Agitations for a restructured Nigeria have remained at the front burner of national conversation, amidst the cries of marginalisation amongst some of the estimated 250 ethnic groups in the country (Bakare 2017). The overwhelming increase of secessionist, militant and terrorist groups in Nigeria these days such as the Biafra agitators, Niger Delta Militants, Oduduwa Republic agitators, Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen, etc. bears huge

testimony to the inequality and neglect in some quarters. This demonstrates the unfavourable political state of Nigeria.

Secularization and religious economy

Prior to the emergence of the theory of religious economy some scholars of religion, such as Steve Bruce, believed that modernization would lead inevitably to the erosion of religiosity. These sociologists have predicted the disappearance of religion from Earth, based on the decline in religious belief and observance in Western Europe. According to the theory ofreligious economy, societies that restrict supply of religion, either through an imposed state religious monopoly or through state-sponsored secularization, are the main causes of drops in religiosity. Correspondingly, the more religions a society has, the more likely the population is to be religious. This is refuted in the orthodox view by stating that if a liberal religious community is tolerant of a wide array of belief, then they are less likely to hold certain beliefs in common, so nothing can be shared and reified in a community context. If nothing is shared, then nothing is shunned, and there is thus a loss in observance of modern liberal traditions.

Revival

According to Rodney Stark, revival is another aspect of religious change which coincides with secularization. Over time established religious groups will spawn smaller and less worldly subgroups of the faith. This trend of revival provides a plausible explanation why religion never seems to fade away and to why previously prominent religious organizations have dissipated. Revival produces a shift in which religious groups a population will follow and proves effective against the demise of religion.

Cults

Unlike a sect which follows traditions from its parent religion, a cult presents completely new religious traditions. Cult is simply another word for a new religion and all current religions at one point could have been considered cult movements. The negative connotations on the word cult have led to hostility between these movements and their social environments. Rodney Stark defines the two reactions from secularization being revival and cult formation. As old faiths eventually weaken the rise of different religious sects and cults will prevail. Strict regulations to enforce strong ties.

Strict churches are prevalent in the US and around the world and they are characterized by strong ties within the group with few weak ties branching outside

to other groups. Strict churches arise from strict doctrines and can be in many forms such as large churches, sects, or cults but are not limited to these. Churches are most often known for their "cosmopolitan networks, while sects tend to consist of intense local networks," while this may be true for "unstrict" doctrines this is not always the case for strict doctrines. Strong doctrines can arise from certain sects as various religions have done such as Orthodox Judaism, Islam, certain denominations of Christianity, or can include rather smaller cults or small sects. What all strong doctrines employ though, are formal controls to discourage free riding within the group and to keep the church strong and together. These controls can vary from church to church but all serve the same purpose of keeping group solidarity.

As commonly seen strict churches employ various means of keeping their ties in their church strong while limiting excessive access to other groups such as dress code, eating habits, and rituals that prevent mixing with other groups. The implication of these, "strict demands 'strengthen' a church in three ways; they raise overall levels of commitment, they increase average rates of participation, and they enhance the net benefits of membership." Complying with these demands prevent the members of a church from free loading within the group and promote group solidarity. The strict rules that govern and regulate a church actually help and promote the strength of the ties within the group. Those who don't comply with

these strictures are screened out leaving only those who do comply and comply earnestly. These strict doctrines and regulations serve to keep the church strong and together while screening out members that may actually harm the church unintentionally by being free loaders within the group.

Development

The theory of religious economy arises from the application of fundamental principles of economics to the analysis of religious organizations. Just as commercial economies consist of a market in which different firms compete, religious economies consist of a market (the aggregate demand for religion) and firms (different religious organizations) seeking to attract and hold clients. The theory of religious economy was developed to explain why and how religions change.

Market situation

According to the theory, religious pluralism gives the population a wide variety of choices in religion and leads to a religious economy in which different religious organizations compete for followers, much the way businesses compete for consumers in a commercial economy. The Theory of Religious Economy takes into account a wide spectrum of issues (e.g., the differences between competitive religious markets and religious monopolies), making this theory one of the most

significant developments in the social scientific study of religion during the past thirty years. The theory focuses attention on religious suppliers and whether religious firms have the ability to increase the demand for religion.

In a free market, or pluralistic religious market, many religious organizations exist and seek to appeal to certain segments of the market. Organizations in a free market cannot rely on the state for resources so they must compete for participation of the religious consumer. Contest among religious firms results in the specialization of products so that consumers are able to distinguish different organizations from others (Chesnut). Pluralistic religions operate on a personal scale, marketing more to individual demands as opposed to the public. As the majority of the consumer market, organizations market more to women than men. Pluralism is only possible through lack of favoritism by the state.(Chesnut)

A competitive and pluralistic religious economy has a positive effect on levels of participation. A microeconomic theory of the household production function and time allocation is associated with the work of Chicago economist Gary Becker. An influential approach dating from the 1970s adapts that theory to explain religious participation and a resulting formation of norms. It postulates stable preferences and rational choice constrained by limited human and social capital to explain behavior.

As in economics, the market situation can be described with concepts about monopoly, prohibition, and pluralism. Monopolies in religion are only made possible through state enforcement and often function on a public scale. When the government establishes a set34religion and all other competition is drowned out then "believers are culturally connected but not necessarily spiritually" (Andrew Chesnut) to the religion enforced by the state. Since participation in a religious monopoly is not as important because the church does not have to rely on members for resources they are not forced to provide adequate or marketable "religious products" (Chesnut), due to lack of competition. The ability of a religious organization to monopolize a religious economy is entirely dependent on the extent to which the state governs the religious economy. A monopolized religious economy tends to have lower levels of participation. Some states may categorically ban religious observances, and attempt to sanction those who persist in displaying religious conviction. Disestablishmentarianism results from state withdrawal from an organization that was originally established under the state.

Religious markets are similar to other markets in that they are social creations. The exchanges that take place in a religious market are regulated by social factors. Elements of social interactions such as norms and morals influence the individual choices and preferences of the religious consumer. Therefore, elements of social

interactions influence the types of religious goods offered to consumers in the marketplace and the changes in consumer demands over a span of time.

According to W. Robertson Smith, "The fear of the gods was a motive to enforce the laws of society which were also the laws of morality". People are taught that those who believe will gain rewards or avoid punishment in the afterlife, and non-believers will miss out on the rewards or receive punishment. The religious economy model sparked a lively debate among sociologists of religion on whether market models fit religious practices and on the extents to which this model of religious behavior is specific to Nigeria.

Challenges of Socio-Political and Economic Restructuring Of Nigeria Towards National Transformation

Many believe that the Nigerian society needs massive re-organization, redirection, rebirth, reconstruction and repositioning. However, this task has always been hampered by many challenges. The areas of challenges among others are: ineffective leadership, corruption, inter-religious intolerance and ethnic crises.

Inter Religious Intolerance: Religious crises and fanaticism have no doubt become a trend and threat to the nation's political development or transformation. Religion crises have become a threat to the nation's security. Religion in Nigeria is a concept deeply interwoven with the life of the people. One would therefore be

quick to ask why has religion that plays a very significant role becomes a source of sorrow to the people of Nigeria judging from the number of religious conflicts and destructions in the past decade. The two major religions are Christianity and Islam. Islam in particular has left a legacy of mutual suspicion and aggression while seeking to impose their respective ways on the lives of the people (Mason, 1980). Several reasons have been advanced for the regular occurrence of these conflicts. One is the socio-economic factor. It is said that poverty, widespread unemployment and biting inflation are conditions that can aggravate people's tension and make people restless. At the slightest provocation therefore, the people could riot.

Williams (1987) posited that events in the country show that religion has been systematically manipulated by some forces for specific purposes which are clearly opposed to the unity of the country. These crises are engineered by politicians to achieve a particular political goal or interest. He further stated that because the political class lack national acceptance or spearhead a national mobilizing ideology, it resorts increasingly to the politicization of religion. From the Northern part of Nigeria between 1980 and 2010, there were over twenty-five religious crises (Osasona, 2011). We saw the havoc caused by the Maitatsine sect in Kano in 1980, the religions violence at Bulunkutu in Bornu and Kaduna in (1982), Bauchi

and Jimeta also suffered from religious riots in 1984. The Boko Haram sect has caused and is still causing a lot of havoc in the North eastern part of Nigeria.

It is estimated that a total of five hundred and twenty three (523) Christians were killed, fifty four (54) churches burnt and ninety thousand (90,000) people displaced following various attacks in the three states of Borno, Yobe and Adamawa between 2009 and 2014 (Olanrewaju, 2014); public buildings schools, banks, army and police barracks have also been razed and the sect was responsible for the kidnapping of over two hundred (200) girls from Government Secondary School, Chibok in Borno State (Tell, 2014). Persistent insecurity resulting from religious crises imparts negatively on the economy and development prospects. The tempo of economic activities in the northern part of the country has declined. The Lagos State Chamber of Commerce and Industry noted that as a result of the long drawn battle by the insurgency on the nation, investors' confidence have been hampered, thereby limiting the realization of the tremendous potential that the economy presents (Adekoya, 2014). Religious conflict, if not handled with the requisite tact and urgency is capable of tearing the country apart and destabilizing the whole sub-regional West African as Boko Haram is doing now.

Ethnic Crises: Ethnic tension and crises have also become worrisome for many in Nigeria and a threat to its fragile federation (Yusuf, 2010). Nigeria is a country

with different cultural as well as human and natural diversities. Unfortunately according to Mujil (2006) instead of finding strength in these diversities it has been exploited to create ethnic rivalries and intolerance as is exhibited in the numerous ethnics' violence across the country. Instances of such violence from ethnic clashes in the past include the crisis between the Andonis- Ogonis/Okirika, Jukuns/Tivs, Ife/Modeko-OmuleriAgweri, Ijaw/Itsekeri etc. Also, conflicts between pastoralists and cultivators of farmlands in the country are pandemic more especially between the Fulani herdsmen and the natives. Struggle for ownership and access to the land in communities found along the border areas of Nasarawa and Benue State by the Fulani herdsmen which started 2001 is still on till date. This struggle is one of the major causes of communal clashes in the said areas (Donatus, 2013).

The peace of this country has come under several threats as some militant ethnic groups are up in arms either against themselves, neighbours or the federal government. Among these groups are the Ijaw National Congress (INC) and Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign Sate of Biafra (MASSOB). The Niger Delta has been at crisis point since the 1990s as a result of the oil production activities. The militant posture of the natives has always constituted a serious threat to the oil industry which is the mainstay of the nation's economy. From 1992 – 2000, different militant groups like the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Niger Delta People Volunteers Force (NDVF), the Niger Delta

Vigilantes (NDV) and most prominently, the Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) were formed. There have been several clashes between the militant groups and the Nigerian state. Kidnapping of both foreign and local workers is the order of the day among these groups. They also target oil facilities by blowing up pipelines and flow stations with the intent of crumbling the oil economy of Nigeria (Ngwoke&Numonde, 2011). With these challenges, Nigeria's desired vision for national transformation will remain a nightmare. This is because the security, transparency, peace and stability which constitute the pivot for national transformation will elude the nation as a result of the above factors. With these challenges hindering effective national transformation in Nigeria, what kind of leadership is expected of the church?

Ineffective leadership and corruption: Leadership challenges have always been a dominant concept in Nigeria polity. This is because more than fifty years after independence, the country still lags behind in her quest for economic, political and social transformation. The reason is that its history has been bedevilled by bad leadership. Political analysts and commentators like Rinji (2001) and Achebe (1985) observed that the cause or failure of Nigeria as a nation is not in the system but in the calibre of political leader entrusted with the management of our vast human and material resources. Nwaneri (2014) believes that with few exceptions the country has been ruled by incompetent leaders at various levels of governance

who are gradually running the country aground while less endowed nations that had their independence the same time as Nigeria continue to make appreciable progress. The Nigerian leadership has proven on many occasions that it is unable to inspire and motivate positive productive impact on the nation's citizens. Many of them lack leadership quality and attribute of good governance like the rule of law, transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, equity and accountability which are essential for the development of the society. They often abuse the mandate and trust of the electorates and become the public's enemies as they assume positions of authority. Many political leaders are neither in office for national interest nor are they there with the view to making a difference but are in office to enrich themselves, siblings, kins, tribesmen etc. The resultant effects of these poor leaders on the nation are sectionalism, tribalism, nepotism, election rigging, violence and insecurity (Shamija, Alachi and Moji, 2013).

There is also an alarming rate of corruption among the political class in the government. Corrupt practices take many forms like embezzlement of public fund, theft, illegal use of public property, bribery of officials and influence on procurement decisions. (Osaretin, 2009). The issue of corruption at every level of government (past and present) is often seen on the pages of newspapers every day. It is evident in the political settings, the police force, the judiciary, the business world, in the academic world and even in religious institutions. Instances of

corruption include the fuel scarcity scam; a member of the house of representative – FaruokLawan – facing a seven count charge bordering on obtaining 620,000 dollars from an oil magnate Femi Otedola in order to doctor the committee's report in favour of Zenon oil and Gas Ltd (Ikechukwu, 2014).

The reckless spending of ten billion Naira by the Minister of Petroleum Resources – Mrs.Diezani Allison Madueke etc. Bodies and organizations like the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offences Commission (ICPC) that are put in place to check accountability are being manipulated by the government in power. Findings and recommendations of most panels and commissions on corrupt practices are neither made public nor implemented. The phenomenon of corruption has been a major factor in Nigeria's underdevelopment. It undermines the effective implementation of government policies that would translate into development. There is a general notion in Nigeria that politics is only formidable on paper but very poor on the ground. This is because corruption impinged on the policy formulation process resulting to unsteadiness and inconsistency in the nature and character of government policies and programmes (Ogenyi, 2008). Most policies initiated are not achieved or are observed to benefit a particular set of minority – the ruling class. Foreigners are reluctant to invest in a country with an unstable political climate rife with corruption.

1.10 Conclusion

This study has explored Nigeria and political structure, the need for Socio-Political Restructuring of Nigeria and Nigerian overheated religious conflicts and threat to disintegration: its effects on Socio-Political Restructuring of Nigeria. The study has affirmed that the Church is not expected to shy away from political issues because politics ensures good governance and godly leadership. The study has also affirmed Politics always depends on religious commitments, and religious commitments are never politically indifferent but yield to political demands. The two variables have long been established as complementary to each other. Therefore, the role of the Church in Nigerian politics cannot be overemphasized. The Church has played major roles in positively affecting the culture, socio-economic, socio-political and educational life of the people. For example, 'the Church of Nigeria set up election monitoring groups to ensure fair outcomes of the 2003 and 2007 elections. The study has affirmed Economically, Anglican Communion, Diocese on the Niger, Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Onitsha, to mention but a few have projects that include building of affordable homes, guest houses, recreational facilities, clinics and hospitals and other commercial complexes. The study has affirmed that it has remained a strong force in influencing various countries' political processes and nation building.

CHAPTER TWO

NIGERIA AND SOCIO-POLITICAL RESTRUCTURING

2.0 Introduction

This chapter explored Nigeria and political restructuring. It examined amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorate, Restructuring and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria, the need for socio-political restructuring of Nigeria, Nigerian overheated religious conflicts and threat to disintegration: its effects on socio-political restructuring of Nigeria.

2.1 Amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorate

In 1914, Nigeria saw the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorate by the colonial masters. This is a nation with more than 200 ethnic groups (Mustapha 2005:4) and multiple ideologies. From 1960 to 1999, Nigeria has been experiencing different political restructuring. Under the leadership of Tafawa Belewa and Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe (1960– 1965), they saw the creation of the Western Region. General Aguiyi Ironsi (January 1966–July 1966) abolished federating region; power became concentrated at the centre and also began a unitary system of government. Under General Yakubu Gowon (July 1966–August 1975), Nigeria was divided into 12 states.

General Murtala Mohammed (July 1975–February 1976) started the process of relocating the federal capital from Lagos to Abuja, drafting a new Constitution and creating additional states. General Olusegun Obasanjo finalised and approved the change from a British parliamentary to an American presidential system of government, relocated the federal capital from Lagos to Abuja and shared central revenue amongst three tiers of government. Alhaji Shehu Shagari (October 1979–December 1983) established the federal character principle in federal appointments.

General Ibrahim Babangida (1985–1993) attempted to enforce a two-party system for Nigeria, whilst Sani Abacha (November 1993–June 1988) created six additional states and local governments. Between 1999 and 2018, there was no major political restructuring. However, an attempt was made by former president Goodluck Ebere Jonathan to restructure the country politically, leading to the inauguration of the National Conference Committee. The current administration seems to lack the capacity to implement the outcome of the National Conference Proceedings but aims at fighting political parties and not corruption. Military heads of state that destructured Nigeria are now asking to undo some of the changes they made during their 29 years in power.

Bello (2017) observed that: The incursion of armed forces into Nigerian political landscape is a bag of mixed blessings, some of the structures they created are difficult to dismantle and some of the changes they made are impossible to reverse. (n.p.). On the other hand, the political leaders in the country today have failed to imbibe democratic principles which preach social justice, fairness and equity. The level of social injustice and marginalisation currently prevalent in Nigeria is reaching an alarming magnitude.

Agitations for a restructured Nigeria have remained at the front burner of national conversation, amidst the cries of marginalisation amongst some of the estimated 250 ethnic groups in the country (Bakare 2017).

2.2 Restructuring and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria

The agitation for restructuring as a result of the structural imbalance of the federation by persons, scholars who have conspicuously seen the damage it has done to some sections of the country will help to improve on the socio-economic development of Nigeria. This is because it will give deserving autonomy and will for all the existing federating units to independently contribute their quota to development of the country as a whole rather than dissipating their energies on arguments over the lop-sidedness of the federating units. The fact that some sections of the country are in the hands of a privileged few speaks volume on the

lop-sidedness of the poor political arrangement. The Christian and Islamic religious ethos and pathos that were supposed to be the guiding principles are tearing the people apart. This is simply because of accusations and allegations of neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, discrimination, marginalization, nepotism and bigotry" (Asike, 2017). Consequently, this unpleasant development has had adverse effects and implications on socio-economic development in Nigeria, as people of different religions no longer trust themselves even in their trade relationship. Invariably, social justice suffers. In the words of Aminigo and Nnaokugha (2011) "social justice demands that the state and its leaders put in place social mechanisms through which the poor masses can realize their potentials without much difficulty. Social justice is an idea of supporting individuals within collective units of social existence". All these are possible through effective and efficient restructuring of an imbalance federation such as ours. When this is achieved, socio-economic development is guaranteed. Unfortunately, the poor political arrangements has killed the patriotic zeal and desire towards actualizing the national goal as most leaders who are privileged to assess the national cake seems

to be more concern about their areas than the country as a whole. Thus, forces such as ethnicity, religion, politics and such other variables become the determining factor in sharing the national cake. These aforementioned variables conspicuously

come into glare during elections as the basis for electing leaders is centred on ethnicity as well as religion.

Consequently, socio-economic activities suffer adversely in areas where the leader(s) did not emerge from. Thus, it is not incorrect if one alleges that the Nigeria federation is operating a unitary system of government. This is because all the component units seem to be playing a subordinate rule rather than being independent in their constitutional responsibilities and functions. On the other hand, scholars like Akpotor (2007) argued from their own perspective that federalism is essentially a bargaining process.

According to him, the factors that account for the emergence of the federal states are not to be found in a legal document, but rather in the factors that propels the leaders of various groups to enter into the bargaining process, to form a union. There is thus, a total deviation from the practice and principles that sustain a true federal state. Ethnicity, particularly seems to be playing a negative role in this unpleasant arrangement towards the sharing of what ordinarily should belong to all that have agreed peace fully to form the union of convenience. According to Njoku (2007), the problem of inter-ethnic conflicts arises from unhealthy inter-ethnic competition for scarce resources, sustained inter-ethnic suspicion and hatred emanating from the past hostile inter-group relations and the manipulations of

vicious political leaders, all tend to pose serious threat to inter-ethnic harmony and stable internal security of the country. He further reiterated that the growing incidence of ethnic nationalism and tribal parochialism tend to ignite social insecurity in some parts when the federal system actually kicked off the different regions (North, South and East) operated with the greatest of ease and autonomy in the efficient distribution of the resources meant for the regions.

More importantly, the individual contribution of these regions was for the overall interest of the national government. Politics of ethnicity and religion have seriously undermined this progressive gesture. Consequently, the relative peace and political stability is threatened. Ball and Dagger (1995) acknowledge that; Nigeria's heterogeneous character is evident in the diversity of its ethnic and religious groups. These diversities have often constituted a source of conflict within the entity. Perhaps, cognizance of the fact religion represents a political force capable of pushing in different directions. (P.253). The overwhelming implications of this sad development is the unending squabbles borne out of very serious competition to pursue socio-economic activities.

Often time, this competition fuels the ember of disunity and anger among these who should have seen themselves as one despite the variables of religion and ethnicity that seem to be heating the polity at the moment. The further implication

of this poor arrangement is that peaceful coexistence is being threatened almost on a daily basis. According to Asike (2017), the basic social change process of the transformation has turned to conflict as it provokes fear about the loss of a society's religious identity, and stimulates resistance and rediscovery or invention of indigenous tradition.

From the interview conducted, the following people gave responses to the following questions in relation to this subtopic above:

Pastor Onogharigho Oghenero Murphy, associate Pastor of Gladtiding International christian Center.

Question: What do you see as the key economic challenges affecting Nigeria today?

Resp: "High poverty and inflation, significant infrastructure deficits especially in power, a heavy reliance on oil exports, high unemployment, pervasive corruption, and growing insecurity are key economic challenges affecting Nigeria today"

Mr Ekanem James Emmanuel, a Professional Accountant with vast knowledge in information technology currently the Assistant Manager @ Forever living products warri NG.

Question: What do you see as the key economic challenges affecting Nigeria today?

Resp: Nigeria's key economic challenges are "BAD POLITICAL ACTORS. Political leaders formulate policies and implement them to favour a few minorities. These policies deter entrepreneurs from assessing a fair business environment.

Question: How do you perceive the relationship between faith-based organizations and economic development?

Resp: The relationship between faith based organizations (FBOs) contributes to economic development rendering essential services such, poverty alleviation, Networks, education and healthcare for nation building.

Pastor Victor Otaigho, Data analyst and software engineer, The lead trainer at Hallmark it Institute, and an associate pastor at The Beulah Int'l Christian Centre, Warri.

Question: How do you perceive the relationship between faith-based organizations and economic development?

Resp: Faith-based organizations provide vital human development services, including education and vocational training, which empower individuals with knowledge and skills for self-sufficiency and entrepreneurship. Some churches

have successfully developed businesses and non-profit entities that create affordable housing, provide essential social services, and even establish community-based businesses like schools, restaurants and medical offices.

By addressing community-specific needs and providing opportunities for empowerment, FBOs play a significant role in reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development at the grassroots level.

Rev Daniel Oghenerume, CEO Deobeth Company, publishers, printers, Suppliers and General contractors.

Question: How do you perceive the relationship between faith-based organizations and economic development?

Resp: Our faith based organizations are part of the nation, whatever they are doing is to bring relief to the economy so they should work according to government policies and government should create a conducive environment for them thrive. Both should work together to improve the economy.

2.3 The need for Socio-Political Restructuring of Nigeria

The overwhelming increase of secessionist, militant and terrorist groups in Nigeria these days such as the Biafra agitators, Niger Delta Militants, Oduduwa Republic agitators, Boko Haram, Fulani herdsmen, etc. bears huge testimony to the

inequality and neglect in some quarters. This demonstrates the unfavourable political state of Nigeria. The word politics is one of the difficult terms to define because there is no universal definition to it. It has a wide range of meanings. Some people view it based on what happens in the political administration of any region or state (Hawkesworth & Kogan 2013; Udegbe 2017). Its definition varies from theory to theory of usage. It has been viewed as a dirty game, where elections and selection process are marred with violence, treachery, deception and all forms of wickedness (Udegbe 2017). It has been defined in various ways, as the study of conflict resolution (Crick 1962), the art of government, the conduct and management of public affairs, etc. (Modebadze 2010:39). According to Modebadze (2010), the two contradictory approaches to understanding politics are the narrow definition of politics and the broad definition of politics. Narrow definition of politics is what takes place within the government and state departments, only politicians, government officials and members of the political parties are involved in this brand of politics, whilst a broader conception of politics argues that politics is not only confined to a particular sphere, but also takes place in all aspects of human endeavours (p. 44), that is, in the home, religious institutions and in the society at large. Such a broad concept of politics assumes that politics is the interweaving of state, people and power. Hence, Usikaro

(2011:31) wrote that 'politics is the power system of a place'. Ekwunife (1995) approaches the concept of politics from a religious view.

To him, politics: Is an expression of Christ's care for the masses? Christ who leads the sheep to green pastures, who is so devoted to their cause that he is prepared to die for them. (p. 40). Ekwunife's perception contradicts people's belief that politics is a dirty game. The attachment of dirtiness to the game of politics in Nigeria has made it quite unattractive to the masses because of the associated corruption. This has led to the notion amongst Christians that politics is evil which people of questionable character have wholly embraced.

A common reason, as a matter of urgency, to engage in political restructuring in Nigeria, is that every section of the country complains about marginalisation (Othman, Osman & Mohammed 2019:88). These agitations are motivated by the aim of finding geographical expressions for socio-cultural identities. These agitating groups (especially the Indigenous People of Biafra [IPOB] and Oduduwa) invoke their right to negotiate their existence with the Nigerian state as enshrined in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, to which Nigeria is a signatory.

As an art of mediation, restructuring could calm all agitations, and create room for Nigerians to advance, discuss and refine ideas for adjusting resource control. It will

also encourage the jettisoning of ethnicity, encourage an equitable and fair distribution of national resources, bring all stakeholders to the table with sincere intentions of finding a lasting solution (Efeurhobo & Fredrick 2020:129–130) and check the unhealthy idea of born-to-rule mentality operational in the north (Efeurhobo & Fredrick 2020:119). These would expectedly make the nation more politically and economically stable by encouraging hard work and competition amongst the federating units, hence allowing each unit to develop at its own pace. According to (Efeurhobo & Fredrick 2020:119), the government should partner with the Church towards:

1. Ensuring equal access and equal opportunity for all. The place of minorities in the Nigeria political structure should be considered. Every Nigerian, irrespective of background and social status, must be given a sense of belonging.

2. Correcting structural imbalance, thereby giving room for equalization of all inequalities, fosters fairness, justice, and inclusivity in governance. This ensures equitable distribution of resources, representation of all tribes and ethnic groups, and the promotion of unity and national cohesion. It creates an environment where every citizen, regardless of background, enjoys equal opportunities to participate in political, economic, and social development.

3. Ensuring that the place of meritocracy in selecting leaders and directors be given strong attention.

4. Encouraging unity in diversity.

According to the following respondents who responded to this question; In your view, what are the underlying factors that necessitate socio-political restructuring in Nigeria?

Rev. Nelly Amalonye of church of God mission Agbarho Zonal Hqtrs and a Journalist;

Resp: Several underlying factors make socio-political restructuring necessary in Nigeria such as: The current federal system often disproportionately benefits certain regions, leading to marginalization of others and fueling separatist agitations. Too much power is concentrated at the federal level, stifling local governance and development. States often lack the autonomy to manage their resources effectively. The current revenue-sharing formula is seen as unjust by resource-producing regions, particularly in the Niger Delta. Ethnic and religious tensions, banditry, terrorism, and separatist movements are symptoms of deeper structural issues. Centralized control has created inefficiencies and opportunities for corruption, weakening service delivery and public trust. Many Nigerians

believe that restructuring toward true federalism would encourage competition, innovation, and better governance among the states.

Pastor Onogharigho Oghenero Murphy;

Resp: Nigeria's diverse ethnic and religious landscape has created tensions and power struggles, making restructuring necessary to address these differences and promote peaceful coexistence in every region in Nigeria. The concentration of power in the central government has led to structural imbalance were other regions are marginalize, issues like resource control and revenue allocation disputes. Re-examining the federal structure to promote greater autonomy and regional development will promote unity and stability of our nation.

Mr Ekanem James Emmanuel.

Resp: Tribalism and bigotry, religious tension, mal-administration and corruption and mismanagement and the need for a balanced distribution of national resources.

Pastor Victor Otaigho

Resp: The reasons Nigeria needs to be socio-politically restructured would include an iniquitous colonial foundation, structural imbalances and real/perceived inequitable marginalisation of ethnic and religious nationalities, a hint of corruption and bad governance, a severe misallocation of resources and authority,

lack of and economic stability, high poverty and unemployment and riotous distrust and mistrust of component parts of the federation.

Mrs. Grace Okonkwo, Christian women leader, social activist, and founder of a Christian NGO focused on women's empowerment and community development.

Resp: Nigeria's current governance structure does not reflect the realities of its diversity. Ethnic and regional imbalances, coupled with economic dependency on a single revenue source, have created tension and underdevelopment. Restructuring is necessary to grant states more autonomy, which will drive innovation and accountability at the grassroots.

Pastor Emmanuel Danjuma, Youth pastor in Northern Nigeria, passionate about peacebuilding and youth empowerment.

Resp: Over-centralization of power and resources has left many states dependent on federal allocation. This structure has marginalized some regions and created resentment that fuels insecurity. Restructuring will allow for resource control, regional autonomy, and fair representation, which can enhance national stability.

Mr. John Eze, a political science lecturer and church elder with expertise in governance and public policy.

Resp: The current federal structure is not truly federal but highly centralized, which contradicts the principles of equity and development. This has fueled ethnic agitation, resource conflicts, and political instability. Restructuring will allow each region to control its resources and determine its developmental priorities.

Deacon Michael Adeyemi, Businessman and philanthropist with a strong commitment to community development.

Resp: Nigeria's diversity has not been effectively managed under the current political system, which has led to inequality and injustice. The imbalance in revenue sharing and lack of autonomy for states hinder economic growth. Restructuring will ensure fairness, reduce political tension, and encourage self-reliance among states.

Rev Daniel Oghenerume.

Resp: Poor governance, we need the right people doing the right thing

Religious Power tussle, powerful religion in this country always want to be in power it doesn't work that way. Injustice, can everyone get a fair hearing yes, but are we getting it? No!

Constitutional deficiency, our constitution is too old to manage the nation it's a one sided constitution that needs reform

Insecurity in this nation is so much that socio-political and economic development will be difficult.

Rev. Dr. Samuel Adebayo, Senior Pastor of a large Pentecostal church in Lagos with over 25 years in ministry, actively involved in social advocacy.

Resp: Nigeria's socio-political structure has remained largely centralized since independence, resulting in marginalization and a lack of equity among regions. The concentration of power at the federal level has fostered corruption, resource mismanagement, and ethno-religious conflicts. Restructuring is necessary to promote fairness, decentralization, and inclusive governance that allows every region to thrive based on its strengths".

2.4 Nigerian Overheated Religious Conflicts and Threat to Disintegration: Its Effects on Socio-Political Restructuring Of Nigeria

No doubt Nigerian political system is seriously overheated with religious conflicts. One can even argue that Nigeria is threatened with disintegration. This becomes more intense as each of the two dominant religions in Nigeria (Muslim and Christianity) tries to control government activities or to shape activities of government following the tenets of her religion. The question now becomes is he a Muslim or Christian President, Minister, Governor or even Local Government chairman? The consequent abuse of human rights following these religious

conflicts cannot go unnoticed. Such rights as freedom of speech, life, association, religion and movement are no longer observed.

In the face of political instability following these conflicts Southern (Christians) no longer settle in Northern (Muslim) Nigeria for fear of loss of life and property and vice versa. Remarkably, Baum (1975:15) summed it up and argued that bad religion promotes structures of domination in human history while Nwachukwu (2001:212), further buttressing this point noted that:

> *Policies are carried by emotional sentiments rooted in ethnicity or religion, politics in Nigeria is characterized by religious cleavages. The education religious and political elites (class) prey upon the masses and use them as satellites to achieve their socio-political and economic objectives. This is done through orientation, indoctrination or violence using the masses on the already conceived stereotypes against their political and religious opponents. Right from formation of political parties to campaign processes and voting patterns, all tend towards religious affiliations and tribalism. As a result, politics in Nigeria is associated with violence and lack of accommodation. Thus religious conflicts have chartered the routine of political process in Nigeria.*

Religion suggests an attempt by man to work out a relationship with a super-ordinate being often epitomized in God. Implicit in this is an interaction between religion and the society within which it functions. This occurs first, at the level of the state/social institutions and second, at the level of individual relations. Consequently, because of its tendency to colour relationships, religion has become a major influence in politics, playing significant roles in the entire societal process

especially in multi religious societies such as Nigeria. This study interrogates the interaction between religion and society in Nigeria.

It is realized that the high sentimental attachment to it by people of different culture and background makes it a politically active instrument in both national politics and the country's external relations which at times assume a destructive dimension. This situation obviously poses some threat to social, political and economic stability of the country.

Northern Nigeria has, since 1980, remained the theatre of armed communal conflicts which resulted in widespread destruction, thousands of deaths, and enormous property losses. These violent conflicts are labeled ethno-religious because what we normally call religious conflicts here often has ethnic, political and economic undertones, while the so-called ethnic conflicts are complicated by religious, political considerations.

In spite of various remedies proposed and tried, ethno-religious conflicts have not only remained a recurring feature of the region's socio-political scene, but it has in recent times assumed a frightening dimension as exemplified in the recent anti-Miss World Pageant outburst and the attendant destruction of lives and properties in various parts of the region.

The perennial occurrence of the problem does suggest the inadequacies of both the prevailing intellectual analysis and prognosis of the problem as well as the remedies proposed and tried so far. Yet while it is true that in a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multi-cultural developing country like Nigeria, ethno-religious antagonisms cannot be completely rooted out of existence the disruptive effects of violence inspired by ethno-religious factors have to be drastically curtailed if peace, and therefore development are to be attained.

This require an adequate understanding of its root cause, the course it takes, the intervening variables, and the potential outcome of the complex series of events which go into its making.

This paper is an attempt at providing such an explanation. It locates the problem in the impact of colonialism on inter-group relations, competition for political power and economic resources as well as the devastating consequences of the long period of Military dictatorship on the nation.

Igwe (2003:379) observed that:

> *Both Christianity and Islam have been introduced into Africa mostly as instruments of colonialism, feudal conquest, and the destruction of the local culture and traditions. These foreign religions sowed strife where peace used to prevail; the killing of the innocent had become part of the African cultures. They cite their "civilizing missions" without mentioning the local civilizations they destroyed. They are*

silent on the mass annihilation, weapons, genocides and ethnic consciousness they introduced.

Notably, religious intolerance and inter-religious conflicts have continued to threaten the peace, unity and stability of our nation. More so, politicians now exploit these religious differences as well as ethnic division for selfish ends. No wonder Ilaogu (1974:V111) argued that religion that took no account of people's way of life would only destroy the man's soul.

Inter-religious conflicts have strained relationships between the Moslem dominated Hausa/Fulani of Northern Nigeria and the Christian dominated Southern Nigeria. Religious conflicts have escalated ethnic rivalry in Nigeria. The fact is that religious conflicts have increased ethnic consciousness among Nigerians and hence to sort explanation from such dimensions and even fight them out in line of ethnicity. Religious violence has brought mutual and persistent suspicions between the two dominant religions.

The Southerners living in the Northern part of the country are not safe like the Northern in the South. Religious differences have varying problems ranging from problems of recruitment in jobs of non-indigenes especially of different religions using the interdenominational analysis of religion as basis for socio-cultural rivalry in Nigeria.

Amucheazi (1980:22) observed that road construction; school project; electricity' water; maternity homes and other projects were either frustrated by religious conflicts or sited in wrong places where utilities are near zero. The prevalence of religious conflicts sets in frustration and feelings of deprivation. These conflicts further breed enmity and hatred among adherents of the two dominant religions-Muslims and Christians. The importance of human resources to the economic development of a country cannot be over emphasized. Since 1960 so many people have lost their lives to religious conflicts, properties worth billions destroyed, trade stifled and banks closed down in Nigeria.

In fact the lost to these conflicts cannot be calculated accurately. In agreement with our theory, the powerful religious elites use religion to achieve their economic safety and resort to conflict by appealing to religious sentiments when it suits them. So, they seek religions sentiment in order to deceive the public, hence Marx rightly observed that religion is the opium of the masses, where man once again losses himself (Lobkowicz, 1979:124). Religious conflicts and intolerance retards economic progress, hampers economic activities and consequently breeds unemployment, poverty and starvation.

There is a tendency for religious conflicts to disrupt trading and other commercial activities. It claims the lives of able bodied men and women who would have

engaged in productive ventures and contribute to the economic development of Nigeria. The cost of rehabilitating and reconstructing destroyed buildings after each religious conflict in Nigeria is so high and could be channeled to a more useful direction for further development of our productive forces in Nigeria.

Largely these conflicts persist because some religious elites utilize these violent opportunities to enrich themselves. Sometimes, these religious elites appeal to adherents of the same religion outside the country therefore, giving room for infiltration of illegal arms into the country. Hence the Nigerian economy continues to be integrated in a subordinate manner to the global system. The elites under the cloak of religion connive with foreign capitalists who are interested in exploitation to foment religious troubles to subsist their exploitative motives. Thus, religious conflicts have become mean through which few alienated segment of the ruling class assent their economic power thus primitive accumulation by deals on arms. The questions that come to mind when ponders on all of these religious issues are:

Can people who belong to different cultures, different ethnic groups, and different religions live together peacefully in a single state or could separation be the only way to survive?. Nigeria is in trouble if 53 years after independence her politicians refuse to take a serious look at why violent threats from its diverse

Ethnic/Religious groups still persist. Why does the Federal Government tolerate ethnic movements like?

- Odua People Congress – OPC

 - Arewa People Congress – APC

- Niger Delta People Volunteer Force – NDPVF led by Asari Dokubo but hound and persecute MASOB – Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra led by Uwazurike whose agitation is to draw attention to the fact that Igbos are cheated in the distribution of strategic political posts in Nigeria, including the Presidency.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter concluded that although the country may not have experienced a full-blown religious war, nothing seem to suggest that such will not occur given the trend and character of religious conflicts in the country. Stemming this tide therefore, requires that the issue of religion and harmonious interfaith relation be given more than a passive attention by both the government and the entire citizens at large. This chapter has explored Nigeria and political restructuring. It examined amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorate, Restructuring and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria, the need for socio-political restructuring of

Nigeria, Nigerian overheated religious conflicts and threat to disintegration: its effects on socio-political restructuring of Nigeria.

CHAPTER THREE

NEED FOR PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC

DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA.

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explored the need for peaceful co-existence and socio-economic development of Nigeria. Muslims Vis-À-Vis Christians ConflictsAnd How It Hinders Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria: It examined the implications of the Nigeria insecurity situation towards sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria.

3.1 Peaceful co-existence in Nigeria

Peaceful co-existence which is anchored on socio-economic development can only be possible to a very large extent when the country is properly restructured. It is this restructuring that will help to enhance and sustain national security. The seeming agitations and hullabaloo that have taken grip of the nation today, are as a result of the senseless and reckless acquisition of wealth by some ethnic and religious bigots, who by hook or crook means have had access to the means of power, and have decided to use it for their own interest at the expense of the

generality of the country, who have been made to suffer the many effects of a structurally imbalanced federal arrangements.

According to Oganwu and Babtunde (2018), the hundreds of millions of people who are not currently enfranchised by the economic and political system want in, not out. They see the world on the move and full of opportunity, innovation and prosperity, and this defines their expectations. They simply want their states economies and societies to function. But their daily encounters with the state produce frustration and humiliation. They know that it is the dysfunctional state that stands between them and a better life. Corroborating the above, Asike (2017) has this to say, as Nigerians prepared for independence, in 1960, they had no alternatives than to resort to their faith in the union of a nation state. They felt the need to merge, irrespective of their ethnic, religious, cultural and political differences.

Constitutionally, they agreed to live together as a nation, but still have not been committed to build the nation. When the state is generally perceived as serving the partner interest of one group, it starts losing its legitimacy and indeed its authority. As capacity declines, fear of uncertainty increases to an extent that citizens resort to other levels of solidarity viz religious, ethnic, regional and so on, with a view of getting guaranteed security. This is the situation where the poor political

arrangement in the name of federalism has landed this nation. The security apparatus has been overstretched with the attendant effect of human lives being lost on a daily basis as a result of competition that is anchored on ethnic political and religious variables.

3.2 Muslims Vis-À-Vis Christians Conflicts And How It Hinders Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria:

In Nigeria today, Muslims vis-à-vis Christians, including other diverse ethnic groups, no longer trust each other in matters of everyday life. Since each group lives in "a state of nature", how can we talk about national unity amidst perpetual conflict, bitterness and gross animosity between Muslims and Christians and among the Ethnic groups? For this reason Okafor observed that "The unhealthy ethnic politics and mutual distrust among various cultural linguistic and ethnic groups in Nigeria are the main causes of Nigeria's social and political upheavals" (Okafor, 1997. 1). In view of this, the need for objective Ethnic/Religious Dialogue is Imperative!

> *People and countries with similar cultures are coming together. People and countries with different cultures are coming apart. Alignments defined by ideology and super power relations are giving way to alignments defined by culture and civilization. Political boundaries increasingly are redrawn to coincide with cultural areas: ethnic, religious and civilizational……The question "which side are you on?" has been replaced by the much more fundamental one, "who are you?" every state has to*

have an answer. That answer, its cultural identity, defines the state's place in world politics, its friends, and its enemies" (Huntington, 1997).

Today, inter-state conflicts are relatively rare, but the numbers of internal wars within a given state are increasing. Throughout the African continent, the nation is finding it difficult and or impossible to co-exist with the state. Nationalist, regionalist, ethnic and religious sentiments are rising, and the state is being challenged by these forces. The result of this development on humankind is devastating. Violent conflicts in various degrees of intensity rage with massive social, economic and humanitarian consequences. Terms such as pogrom, genocide, ethnocide and ethnic cleansing are becoming common adjectives for describing communal conflicts in Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Nigeria , Cote d' Ivoire and so on.

Internal conflict is however no longer restricted to the South. The conflicts between the Serbs, Croats, Albanians and Muslim Slavs population in the defunct Yugoslavia have become some of the most devastating cases of human tragedy in recent history. Most of these conflicts are attributable to identity related issues such as ethnicity and religion. Ethnic and religious conflicts have on many occasions challenged the territorial unity of Nigeria's federation.

Northern Nigeria in particular has, since 1980, remained the theatre of armed communal conflicts which resulted in widespread destruction, thousands of deaths, and enormous property losses.

In spite of the various remedies proposed and tried, ethno-religious conflicts have not only remained a recurring feature of the country's socio-political scene, but it has in recent times assumed a frightening dimension in various parts of the region. The perennial occurrence of the problem does suggest the inadequacies of both the prevailing intellectual analysis and prognosis of the problem as well as the remedies proposed and tried so far.

Nigeria in recent times has witnessed an unprecedented level of insecurity. This has made national security threat to be a major issue for the government and has prompted huge allocation of the national budget to security. In order to ameliorate the incidence of crime, the federal government has embarked on criminalization of terrorism by passing the Anti-Terrorism Act in 2011, installation of Computer-based Closed Circuit Television cameras (CCTV) in some parts of the country, enhancement of surveillance as well as investigation of criminal related offences, heightening of physical security measures around the country aimed at deterring or disrupting potential attacks, strengthening of security agencies. This will be

achieved through the provision of security facilities and the development and broadcast of security tips in mass media.

Despite these efforts, the level of insecurity in the country is still high. In addition, Nigeria has consistently ranked low in the Global Peace Index (GPI, 2012), signifying a worsened state of insecurity in the country. Hence, Aluforo (2011) is of the view that the efforts of the government have not yielded enough positive results.

The concept of insecurity would be best understood by first presenting the concept of security.

In the view of Akin (2008) security refers to "the situation that exists as a result of the establishment of measures for the protection of persons, information and property against hostile persons, influences and actions". It is the existence of conditions within which people in a society can go about their normal daily activities without any threats to their lives or properties. Insecurity is the antithesis of security. However, because of the very many ways in which insecurity affects human life and existence, the concept of insecurity has usually been ascribed different interpretations in association with the various ways which it affects individuals. Some of the common descriptors of insecurity include: want of safety; danger; hazard; uncertainty; want of confidence; doubtful; inadequately guarded or

protected; lacking stability; troubled; lack of protection; and unsafe, to mention a few.

Human history is the history of conflicts of values expressed in various inter and intra religious, ethnic, regional or class conflicts and contradictions. This idea was aptly expressed by Marx and Engels (1968) when they argued that the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle. Conflict therefore is synonymous with initialization and aggregation of human interest. This implies that conflict (religious, ethnic or class) is impossible unless there exist incompatibility between different values, desires or needs of people that co-exist (Stewart 1987). While class conflicts exist between social classes, inter-state conflicts exist between nation states. While ethnic conflicts exist between ethnic groups, religious conflicts exist within and without class; ethnic groups and nation states (see Marx, 1968; Ake, 1981; Nnoli, 1978; Igwe, 2003 and Okolie 2001). Religion exists at the level of super structure, expressed as an ideology. However, ideologies and values remained the main cause of conflicts across the globe since the end of the cold war.

Although inter-religious conflict dates back to constant upheavals between Judaism and Christianity in 16th century AD, it became more prominent with the ascendance of Christianity as a state religion in Rome during the reign of Emperor

Constantine (306-336AD) (Kegan, et. al. 1991). The ultimate expression of which was the 30 month war that sought among other thing to separate the secular and secular worlds.

Islamic- Christianity conflicts known in Nigeria and elsewhere today may have originated from the military campaign by Christian to capture the Holy land where Jesus lived from the Moslems. The crusade claimed a lot of lives and properties of both groups (see Mear and Schneider 1985:247).

The argument above suggests that religious conflicts could be Judaism VS Christianity; Christianity VS Islamic; Islamic VS Traditional religions; Christianity VS Traditional religion, Buddhism VS Hinduism or Islamic VS Buddhism etc. The invasion of Jihadist group in Northern Nigeria brought Islamic religion in that part of Nigeria earlier than Christian Missionaries that later captured Southern Nigeria and introduced Christianity.

Notably, the amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Nigeria in 1914 brought together the two religions demarcated by ethnicity. These two religions subdued the Traditional religion hitherto known by various ethnic groups that make up Nigeria. Hence, ethnic chauvinism, border disputes and Islamic VS Christianity conflicts remain the main source of instability in Nigeria.

However, these religious conflicts are not peculiar to Nigeria as it is also known in other regions like the Middle East, and other parts of Africa like Egypt, Sudan, Chad and Tanzania (Waqf, 1993). Meanwhile, Islamic VS Christianity crises in Nigeria has reached the state that it could be referred to as war in various parts of the country ranging from Kano revolt (1980); Bulunkutu Bizarre (1982), Kaduna crisis (1982), Jimeta War (1984), Gombe revolt (1985), Kastina crises (1999), Kano riot (1995), Sharia crises in Zamfara, Kadunna, Bauchi, Sokoto etc in 1999, Sharia reactions in Aba, Onitsha, and Owerri in 1999, Jos crises in 2008 and Boko Haram in 2009. These instances are few as there was no year without three to four instances of religious conflicts in Nigeria.

These conflicts are not without cost to the Nigerian people. The disintegration, dispersion, instability, loss of lives and properties, discontinuing economic programmes and projects. The increase in the number of FDI that escapes the country can not go without notice alongside the consequent unemployment; hunger; diseases; infrastructural decay; corruption and low income per capita that still pervade the economy.

It has equally been explained that these violence have continued to exist because they serve the political and economic interest of ethnic religious leaders in Nigeria

who use the violence as bait for federal negotiations (Chukwulozie 1986:42; Stewart, 1981:393; Berghe, 1973:205 and Maduagwu 1991: 218-228).

While previous studies have tried to use various theories to explain the logic of emergent religious crises in Nigeria ranging from frustration- aggression to elite, class, and relative deprivation theories. These theories have little or no interest in ascertaining the implications of incessant religious conflicts on the socio-economic development of the nation. This therefore study seeks to re-explain the mounting religious crises in Nigeria with a conscious blend of intractable conflict and political economy theories with a view of determining the effect of these conflicts in Nigeria development. We shall turn to this later, meanwhile; let us attempt a brief conceptual clarification. What is conflict and development?

3.3 Implications of the Nigeria Insecurity Situation towards Sustainable Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria

Insecurity has been identified as one of the obstacles to sustainable development (Call, 2000, Ujah and Eboh, 2006, Igbuzor, 2011). The term sustainable development was popularized in a report by the Brundtland Commission published by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987. In the report, sustainable development was defined as "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet

their own needs (UN, 2010). Since then, the concept has been variously conceived in terms of vision expression, value change, moral development, social reorganization or transformational process toward a desired future or better world (Gladwin et al, 1995). In their view, development is unsustainable when an enlargement of human choice excludes, disconnects, promotes inequity, reflects imprudence or raises insecurity.

Development is the primary goal of every well-meaning government and it is essentially dependent on the level of economic activities in a country; the level of economic activities is in turn enhanced by peaceful coexistence by people. It is people who interact to carry out economic activities through their businesses. Businesses are the vehicle for economic activities that would lead to national economic development. It therefore follows that businesses play a great role in the process of development and such role can be hampered in the absence of adequate security as we now find in Nigeria.

The aim of sustainable development is to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all and sundry and to simultaneously maximize national goals, organizational goals and individual goals that can persist over generations. As noted by Akpobibibo (2003) the principle behind sustainability is to make life meaningful to all. Therefore, security is crucial for sustainable development. In the absence of

security, economic growth and development cannot be sustained as it destroys economic, human and social capital. Under conditions of peace and security, people and government can direct their efforts and resources towards improving human life.

Security and development are also related in the sense that being a public good, the imperative to maintain security competes with other public goods such as education, health and infrastructure for public funds. Expenditures on security are therefore an essential component of the development process. For instance, the use of resources to strengthen a country's security system could have been useful in other relevant areas. Insecurity therefore, becomes a drain on local and national resources at the expense of development and peoples' well being thereby, having adverse consequences on economic growth and development (Nwagboso, 2012, Call, 2000).

Thus, in the absence of any real threats to security, expenditures on security can be reduced significantly, allowing national and local governments to channel more resources to other public goods to improve the quality of life of the people. In addition, insecurity destroys existing infrastructure and also prevent an environment for the development of further infrastructure; and a safe environment for economic activities by individuals to give them economic empowerment that

will enable households not only to cater for their present generations but also to provide for future generations.

The importance and implications of the security situation in Nigeria have been emphasized by a number of world leaders, both in words and in action, and the need for the Nigerian government to brace up to the challenge. For instance, the former president of Ghana, John Kufour stated that the bane of Nigeria development is insecurity (Kufour, 2012). He observed that insecurity situation in Nigeria is costing Nigeria its leadership role in Africa in terms of development. As a result, it is unable to claim its rightful position as 'giant of Africa' from which other African nations could benefit or copy as a role model and that "if there is no security, there is no liberty, and if there is no liberty, life is not meaningful and society reverts back to the law of the jungle and man's primary objective of forming a state is defeated".

To drive further the relationship between the security situation in Nigeria and her development, the U.S. government through its ambassador to Nigeria, Eunice Reddick has also acknowledged the insecurity situation in Nigeria as the major factor hindering Nigeria's development efforts. As she put it, "Security is a prerequisite for successful development in Nigeria". She observed that prevalent pervasive insecurity in the country, threatens to erode the country's economic

progress (Oluwarotimi, 2012). Consequently, more sustainable development initiatives regarding insecurity are needed in Nigeria and this is imperative, since security is central to development, and the national transformation agenda of the current administration may not be achieved if there is no solution to the menace of insecurity ravaging the country.

Some respondents gave a responses to these questions;

Dr. Bright Onwudinjor

Question: How can churches influence ethical business practices and reduce corruption in the private sector?

Resp: The church should train it's members and prepare them for different life endeavours. Churches shouldn't only train people to be pastors, apostles etc.

Pastor Joseph Omo

Question: How can churches influence ethical business practices and reduce corruption in the private sector?

Resp: By setting up workshops, seminars, and conferences on ethical entrepreneurship and professional integrity. By also providing mentorship programs for Christian business leaders and entrepreneurs to guide them in building businesses rooted in ethics.

3.4 Socioeconomic/Political Injustice in Nigeria: An Evolutionary Approach

Nigeria became independent from Great Britain in October 1960. However, by January 1966, the civilian government was brutally ousted by the nation's Military. Central to the arguments of the soldiers, for toppling the government in power was the question of corruption, in which the adherents of each of the two major religious persuasions in the country were self-evident participants. In addition to leadership sleaze, there was inter-tribal hatred in the national polity. Hence, the first military coup of January 1966 in the country and the counter coup in July of the same year, featured on massive scales, alleged and proven cases of tribal induced murder of the nation's leaders.

Profoundly found in the country at this time were deep-seated ethnic antagonisms, not religious bigotry. A civil war ensued (the Nigeria-Biafra war) fought between July 1967 and January 1970. At the end of the warfare, the Military remained in power, with intermittent pretenses of handing over the affairs of the state to civilians, whom they would subsequently bring down. S. I. Ebohon, and N. O. Obakhedo, (2012) argue that despite the heterogeneous nature of the Nigerian state and its concomitant defects, the nation at independence, was seen as a beacon of hope to many other nation-states in the continent. That is to say that no matter the circumstances, Nigeria held the prospects of a strong developmental state that

would be a rallying point to other states. The reason for this huge confidence was that Nigeria was perceived as a regional economic hub and political force and an African regional super-power.

The military mishap in the politics of the country however unfortunately accelerated the pace of bringing the emergent state to its developmental nadir. The Military in the country continued to stage counter coups against subsisting military governments in the Nigerian state. Hence, leadership instability (as driven by the soldiers) remained a permanent feature of governance in Nigeria, from October 1960 to May 1999, when the men of the Armed Forces seemed to have finally surrendered power to civilian politicians.

 However, in all of the foregoing, another enduring feature of national affairs in the country is what seems to border on elite determination to guarantee that the Nigerian nation fails to survive as a nationally prosperous entity, for the good of all her citizens. Consequently, either in military fatigues or civilian garbs, the power elite in Nigeria possesses a seemingly irrepressible tendency to gravitate towards the thieving of national resources. Citing Ihonvbere C. C. Ojukwu & J. O. Shopeju (2010) contend that the country's picture and identity is replete with confused, factionalized and extremely corrupt elites, with a limited sense of nationhood. These elites, Ojukwu & Shopeju argue, lacking strong and viable base in

production, turns the state as its primary instrument of primitive accumulation and in the end, the state is mangled and rendered impotent, in the quest for nationhood, growth and development, much less democracy.

Hence, according to T. Soniyi (2012), it was estimated that $400 billion of Nigeria's oil revenue had been stolen or misspent since the country's independence in 1960. The estimation was attributed to a Nigerian-born former World Bank Vice-President for Africa, Dr. Oby Ezekwesili. In that same year (2012), almost 100 million Nigerians were living on less than $1 (£0.63) a day (BBC News (2012). World Population Review (World Population Review, 2015), highlights that Nigeria's current population is in the region of 194.0 million people out of which almost 100 million were living on less than $1 (£0.63) a day. Furthermore, according to L. Nwabughiogu (2015), Nigeria's Vice President, Yemi Osinbajo, had disclosed that about 110 million Nigerians were still living below poverty line in the country, despite the policies of past governments to improve their welfare. It is however held in this study that elite grandstanding had fully tainted such policies of government, thereby making them largely ineffectual, as such policies were not truly designed with the needy citizens in mind. In the face of these apparent distresses, B. Ademola-Olateju (2013) then ponders:

Why are Nigerians content at setting new unbecoming standards every day? Bad roads? Take it to The Lord in prayer! Comatose Healthcare System? Bad diseases will not be our portion in Jesus name! Collapsed Educational System? What will be will be, our children are overcomers! Epileptic Power Supply? May the good Lord bind all the principalities, demonic spirits and the powers of darkness preventing Nigeria from enjoying stable electricity supply! In consequence, Nigerians sit on their hands, praying for celestial edicts to be beamed down to them from God's majestic throne.

3.5 Conclusion

It was concluded that Nigeria's contemporary narrative therefore borders on hopes betrayed by the elite and new expectations solely hoisted on the benefaction of the Almighty by the citizenry. It is also a history of evident elite-arrest of a national system - what Ebohon & Obakhedo (2012) have similarly depicted as elite constructivism. In addition, embodied in these configurations, is a critical case of apparent acquiescence to such state capture, by the subaltern class of the Nigerian polity. This chapter has explored the need for peaceful co-existence and socio-economic development of Nigeria. Muslims Vis-À-Vis Christians Conflicts And How It Hinders Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria: It examined the

implications of the Nigeria insecurity situation towards sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROMOTING PROGRAMS OF RAISING SOCIAL PEACE CONSCIOUSNESS AMONG THE MASSES

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explored Promoting programs of raising social consciousness among the masses, practical alleviation of the conditions of the oppressed masses, Peace Building through Positive Reconciliation of the Oppressed and Oppressing Members, Personal Conversion of the Ordinary Man, The Role of the Church in Meeting the Challenges of National Transformation, The Responsibilities of the Church towards Political Restructuring, Prophetic Denunciation of the Oppressive Mechanism, The Church and the Socio-Economic Liberation of the Nigerian Society, Prophetic Denunciation of the Oppressive Mechanism, Promoting Programs of Raising Social Consciousness among the Masses, Practical Alleviation of the Conditions of the Oppressed Masses, Peace Building through Positive Reconciliation of the Oppressed and Oppressing Members and Personal Conversion of the Ordinary Man. It also examined peace building through positive reconciliation of the oppressed and oppressing members.

4.1 Promoting Peace Consciousness among the Masses

In line with Francis Bacon's sagacious assertion that knowledge is power, this is a social educational program aimed at creating socio-political awareness among the people for an eventual peaceful elimination of the structures of oppression. It is a gradual but effective approach to structural change through a re-orientation of the group and individual's consciousness. The sensitization of the masses involves, among other things, the provocation, stimulation, creation and building up of "a new awareness in them" to give them "a new consciousness" which encourages them "to see the possibility" and "accept responsibility for their own development." It also involves the mobilization of the masses "to join hands together for positive action towards change" (Omoera, 1987, 125).

The goal of this mental liberation is to emancipate the Nigerian minds from such a "fatalistic world view" which makes them resign themselves to the culture of poverty and hopelessness. It enables them to be able to see their "capacity to create a better society for themselves" (Adegbola 1987, 69 - 70). This is the attitudinal aspect of liberation philosophy in which the marginalized, oppressed and down-trodden masses are able to face the future with meaningful and reasonable optimism. This is done by helping them to see themselves in the light of the biblical evaluation of themselves. Such function disabuses and emancipates their

minds from the belief that God has destined their lot to be so. This attitudinal aspect of liberation philosophy also involves the sensitization of the upper and middle class elite members of the Church to the real nature and extent of the plight of the oppressed, thereby soliciting their change of attitude, sympathy and commitment to the cause of the oppressed. It may be that some of them do not actually realize the full implications and effects of their activities on the masses. They may likely change for better and help to change their colleagues when their consciences are awakened.

These are the responses gotten from the respondents towards the above subtopic;

Mrs. Grace Okonkwo

Question: In your opinion, what practical approaches can be adopted to foster peace through constructive reconciliation between historically oppressed and dominant groups in Nigeria?

Resp: Peace building requires empowerment and inclusion. The church should organize community reconciliation programs where grievances can be aired and addressed. Creating economic opportunities for disadvantaged groups can reduce hostility and build mutual respect between communities.

Mr. John Eze

Question: In your opinion, what practical approaches can be adopted to foster peace through constructive reconciliation between historically oppressed and dominant groups in Nigeria?

Resp: The first step is to create platforms for dialogue and negotiation among the various ethnic and political groups. The church can act as a neutral mediator because it commands moral authority. Finally, promoting education and cultural integration can bridge the gap between these groups.

Pastor Emmanuel Danjuma

Question: In your opinion, what practical approaches can be adopted to foster peace through constructive reconciliation between historically oppressed and dominant groups in Nigeria?

Resp: True reconciliation begins with empathy and a willingness to forgive. The church should organize inter-ethnic dialogue sessions and community service projects to foster unity. Economic empowerment programs that include marginalized communities can reduce the cycle of oppression and retaliation.

Deacon Michael Adeyemi

Question: In your opinion, what practical approaches can be adopted to foster peace through constructive reconciliation between historically oppressed and dominant groups in Nigeria?

Resp: Forgiveness and justice must work together. The church can create initiatives that bring together conflicting groups for dialogue and skill-building projects. By teaching biblical principles of love and equality, the church can foster unity and heal historical wounds. (4.5)

Pastor Victor Otaigho

Question: In your opinion, what practical approaches can be adopted to foster peace through constructive reconciliation between historically oppressed and dominant groups in Nigeria?

Resp: Fostering peace between oppressed and dominant groups in Nigeria requires a multi-faceted approach focused on community-led dialogue, inclusive governance, justice reform, economic development, and peace education. Practical steps include organizing cross-ethnic community forums, establishing inclusive local government structures that represent all groups, reforming security institutions to be more equitable and community-oriented, investing in economic

opportunities in marginalized regions, and promoting peace education in families, schools, and religious institutions to instill values of empathy and cooperation.

4.2 Practical Alleviation of the Conditions of the Oppressed Masses

The Church's liberation work as the champion of the cause of the poor, weak and oppressed masses does not end with attacking the perpetrators of injustice and oppression "afflicting the comfortable", but also includes the alleviation of the miserable and painful condition of the victims of the system "comforting the afflicted". This will necessitate practical concern with economic programs for the improvement of their conditions, since the callous bureaucratic system would only frustrate the hopes of the helpless masses for such projects if left in their hands. This goes beyond mere charity works for the provision of subsistence needs.

The Churches can embark on practical socioeconomic projects such as we see in some Latin American countries. This can include building of hospitals, establishing co-operative bodies for joint venture, scholarship funds for students from poor families, educational programs for those who are disadvantaged by the government's educational system, organizing training programmes in business and technological skills. Although some of these projects have been undertaken by some churches already, their lack of liberating tendencies is obvious when we try to answer the question, which category of people benefit from them, the poor or

the rich members of these churches? In addition to this, the Church must also seek ways of influencing public policies to favor the improvement of the poor and powerless masses, since she is their last hope and place of refuge.

Some respondents also gave their opinion towards this subtopic:

Dr. Bright Onwudinjor, an optometrist in general Hospital Ekpan and also a Pastor in Church of God mission

Question: How can churches partner with businesses to foster economic growth and social stability?

Resp: Churches should have a unit that is made up of businessmen and women and professionals for better awareness.

Question: Do you think the Church should advocate for business-friendly policies or remain neutral in political-economic discourse?

Resp: The church can't be neutral if it must thrive in any environment

Pastor Joseph Omo, A pastor in Living Faith Church and also the vice president of PEC Global Multi-Purpose Cooperative, who responded to these questions;

Question: How can churches partner with businesses to foster economic growth and social stability?

Resp: Churches and businesses can actually complement each other in ways that strengthen both economic growth and social stability by creating Job and employment linkages. Churches can serve as employment hubs, connecting skilled members to businesses looking for reliable workers.

Question: Do you think the Church should advocate for business-friendly policies or remain neutral in political-economic discourse?

Resp: It could push for ethical capitalism, where profit is balanced with compassion, justice, and stewardship but let us not start what we cannot finish. Aligning too closely with specific economic ideologies or political parties risks politicizing the pulpit and alienating members with differing views.

4.3 Peace Building through Positive Reconciliation of the Oppressed and Oppressing Members

The priestly role of reconciliation is another major social function of the Church in the process of socio-political and economic liberation. Unlike the Marxist approach to justice, which implies the elimination of the oppressive rich for the liberation of the oppressed poor, the Christian approach to justice seeks to create a community of reconciled people, the rich and the poor, the oppressor and the oppressed. It is "a peace-creating justice which binds together in a new transformed community" (Hellwig 1974, 169). The Church's liberation ministry is, therefore, a ministry of

positive reconciliation of both parties and not that of violent revolution. The Church is to show concern both for the deplorable conditions of the victims of injustice and oppression and also for the ultimate judgment on the vices of the oppressors.

Thus, its prophetic indictments of the oppressive status quo should not be mere arbitrary, malicious and vindictive criticisms of the system, but rather constructive and corrective criticisms which ultimately aim at the eventual liberation of both the oppressors from their vices and the oppressed from their victimization, thereby reconciling them. This fact is aptly captured in the statement cited by Uchegbue that "God does not seek the destruction of members of the ruling classes who are willing to change their ways … in order to create a new system…" (Uchegbue 1985, 99).

Dr. Joseph

Question: In your opinion, what practical approaches can be adopted to foster peace through constructive reconciliation between historically oppressed and dominant groups in Nigeria?

Resp: Reconciliation must begin with truth-telling and acknowledgment of past injustices. The church can mediate peace dialogues and create platforms for mutual understanding between aggrieved parties. Additionally, the message of

forgiveness, coupled with equitable policies and inclusive governance, can build trust and lasting peace.

Dr. Samuel

Question: In your opinion, what practical approaches can be adopted to foster peace through constructive reconciliation between historically oppressed and dominant groups in Nigeria?

Resp: Reconciliation must begin with truth-telling and acknowledgment of past injustices. The church can mediate peace dialogues and create platforms for mutual understanding between aggrieved parties. Additionally, the message of forgiveness, coupled with equitable policies and inclusive governance, can build trust and lasting peace".

4.4 Personal Conversion of the Ordinary Man

The Church's liberating mission in Nigeria goes beyond commitment to mere philanthropic activism or welfarism, protesting against social injustices and motivating and mobilizing people for active participation in social transformation. Religion essentially sets a transcendental goal by helping us to realize that life is more than the satisfaction of immediate material needs of hunger and poverty (Luke 12:15; Matthew 6:25). As Douglas Webster cited in Norman Autton rightly

pointed out, the human tragedy is sin and not hunger while the worst privation is ignorance of God rather than social inequality.

Therefore, though poverty, exploitation, oppression, and so on seems to be the prevailing problems of our day which provide the Church with "the context for mission", the "contents" of her mission are not determined by them. In the final analysis, the Church's mission is ultimately and supremely concerned with God (Autton 1972: 226-227). According to him, though "Man does need bread", he needs God above all (Autton 1972: 227).

Thus while the Church seeks for socio-political and economic liberation to provide a more just system in Nigeria, it must relentlessly and without distraction seek for the spiritual liberation of the people – a change in the personal man himself. If social changes are to bear lasting fruits, a deep-seated conversion and fundamental spiritual transformation of the individual members of society – the oppressed, the oppressors and the liberators are of indispensable necessity. The reason is that the ordinary, normal, usual or average man is inherently corrupt. History has proved that the revolutionary of today may become the reactionary of tomorrow and the progressive of today may become the conservative of tomorrow unless they are inwardly transformed themselves.

How can one under the iron shackles of evil and wickedness change an evil and wicked system? This reflects the picture of the hypocritical liberators presented by the Apostle Peter in his Second Epistle where he writes, "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage" (2 Peter 2:19 KJV).

4.5 The Role of the Church in Meeting the Challenges of National Transformation

The church is one of the social and religious institutions in the society and has many roles to play in Nigeria. The crucial role of the church in Nigeria today is how to bring about transformation of lives among the citizenry especially the political class elites. This is a great task for the church judging the level of moral decadence that have bedevilled the country over the years. The prophetic role of the church is to declare the will of God in the political, social and economic life of the nation.

Luther, in Quaben (1960), contended that the church is put in possession of the word of God and this can transform the hearts and minds of men and renovate the society. This is one way to ensure that leaders experience inward change. If they encounter spiritual change, then the much desired change in leadership pattern will automatically follow.

The church is challenged, through its pastors, clergy and laity to ensure genuine religious conversion that will transform people's attitude to possessions, power and social prestige reflect the demands of the gospel. The failure of the church to call corrupt political leaders to order through their preaching is responsible for many tragedies in the country. According to Ibrahim (2010) the church has failed to bring their rulers (political and secular) forward to account for their stewardship, but rather prefer to praise them because of selfish, material and financial gains. The roles the church is called to play include the setting of leadership models – the servant-leader principle of leadership that will enhance honesty, accountability and transparency both in public and private life (Chukwujuidu, 2014). It should give direction to the society in matters of holiness, righteousness and integrity.

For any stable national transformation, there must be peace, unity and appreciation of human dignity and freedom. Religious and ethnic issues have often been politicized in the country and these have led to many conflicts. No meaningful transformation can be established and sustained under such unhealthy atmosphere. This situation calls for a purposeful and effective religious teaching (by church leaders) which will disengage true religion from undue politicization to that which promotes peace.

The Catholic Archbishop of Abuja Diocese Cardinal John Onaiyekan has on many occasions charged the political class to ensure that Nigerians do not suffer as a result of their ambition. He equally used his position to condemn the use of religion by politicians to perpetrate evil in the country saying it would encourage disunity and take the country backward (Isaac, 2013). Religious values that emphases the dignity of the human person as created by God irrespective of his or her belief and situations in life should be preached (Kukah, 2007). Values should be preached because it enables man to be aware of his specific obligation to himself, his fellow human being and the society to which he belongs and above all, his maker. Religion by its nature if practised well unites individuals, communities and nations.

Apart from ensuring the value of peace, the value of social justice must also be emphasized. Violence and disharmony among ethnic nationalities are those that arise out of unjust social structures. The church through her position should challenge the inequalities inherent in social institutions and structures. The Holy Bible is replete with examples of prophets who spoke against injustices in society. Onimhawo and Adamu (2011) stated that the church must be a voice for the voiceless. It should be fearless and courageous in tackling the socio-economic situations in Nigeria as we have today. Unemployment among youths, poverty,

inequality and environmental deprivation in the Niger Delta are issues that the church cannot afford to overlook.

Some respondents were interviewed over this subtopic and the following are their responses:

Mr. John Eze

Question: What strategic roles can the church assume in addressing the challenges associated with national transformation?

Resp: The church can become a critical stakeholder by promoting political literacy and ethical leadership. It must take a prophetic stance against corruption and injustice while encouraging peaceful political participation. Through research-based advocacy, the church can also influence policy formulation in favor of fairness and equity.

Pastor Emmanuel Danjuma

Question: What strategic roles can the church assume in addressing the challenges associated with national transformation?

Resp: The church should focus on mentoring young leaders with integrity and vision for national development. It must also collaborate with civil society to

educate communities about their civic responsibilities. Through prayers and advocacy, the church can demand accountability from political leaders.

Pastor Emmanuel Danjuma

Question: What strategic roles can the church assume in addressing the challenges associated with national transformation?

Resp: The church should focus on mentoring young leaders with integrity and vision for national development. It must also collaborate with civil society to educate communities about their civic responsibilities. Through prayers and advocacy, the church can demand accountability from political leaders.

Deacon Michael Adeyemi

Question: What strategic roles can the church assume in addressing the challenges associated with national transformation?

Resp: The church must become a moral watchdog and an advocate for inclusive governance. By setting an example of transparency in its own operations, the church can influence societal values. It should also support community development projects that align with national transformation goals.

Rev. Nkem Simeon Kelvin, Head pastor in Church of God Mission Int'l. with over 10 years in ministry.

Question: What role do you believe the Church should play in influencing governance and national restoration?

Resp: The Church should teach sound doctrine and also show perfect example.

Mr Ekanem James Emmanuel.

Question: What strategic roles can the church assume in addressing the challenges associated with national transformation?

Resp: Strategic roles the church can play is to provide and encourage communities with moral and spiritual guidance, offer support through education and poverty elleviation.

Pastor Victor Otaigho

Question: What strategic roles can the church assume in addressing the challenges associated with national transformation?

Resp: The church contributes to national transformation by propagating biblical values as a foundation for national growth, functioning as the "salt and light" of the nation to preserve society and bring direction. This involves engaging in policy-

level politics to influence systems and institutions, actively participating in the political process, and promoting ethical standards to counter corruption and moral decadence. The church also plays a vital role in community development through social services, and by nurturing individuals who become agents of positive change in society.

4.6 The Responsibilities of the Church towards Political Restructuring

In Nigeria Participation of the Church in the process of socio-political restructuring for the realization of justice is a mission that should not be overlooked. Christians are to take positive actions to destroy all forms of oppression and injustice wherever they are found (Hastings 1976:91). The restructuring role of the Church should be such that will enhance influence on the socio-political order without affecting spiritual and evangelistic mission (Uchegbue 2013:142). This will involve confronting and challenging every unfair, oppressive and exploitative structure with Christian values and principles. The Church along with direct spiritual vocation should be committed to the process of justice, human freedom, social development and a well-organized system of governance by fulfilling the following responsibilities: rejection of marginalisation, creation of awareness, Christians' active participation in electing political representatives, encouraging dialogue and peace building, and upholding the scriptural principles (Uchegbue

2013:149). The leadership of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) should work together as one united body to achieve this political restructuring.

Marginalisation is an exclusion from religious, political, economic and social well-being of the people. Mowat (2015:454) asserts that 'Marginalisation is a global problem that impacts negatively upon societies across the world'. People who are marginalised have relatively little control over their lives and the resources available to them. They may become stigmatised and are often at the receiving end of negative public attitudes. The Church as an instrument entrusted with ethical principle enshrined in the gospel has unconditional responsibility in confronting and challenging the systems of corruption, exploitation and injustice which deprive the masses their right of living. It is obvious that Church leaders, because of the corrupt leaders, become unable to challenge the corrupt nature and attitude of these leaders towards good governance. The Church should always remember her calling to impact positively and transform the society with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, he mentioned the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, kindness, self-control, goodness, etc. These are virtues which object to marginalisation.

The Church is called to give prophetic witness through a life of selflessness dedicated to defend the marginalised by preaching justice peace and integrity of creation (Ishaya 2017:10). The Church as an agent of liberation from injustice and inequality should stand on her calling in liberating the nation from selfish individuals without seeking for personal gains. For Karl Marx, religion is the opium of the masses (1994:57), but the Church is the voice of the masses calling for the adoption of principles enshrined in the scripture which will lead to a lasting solution over marginalisation in Nigeria.

The New Testament concept of the Church, its organisation and purpose are little understood outside the circle of biblical scholarship. The word 'church' comes from the Greek genitive noun kuriakon, which could be assumed to mean 'belonging to the Lord' (Berkhof 2003:557). The most widely used New Testament term for church is the Greek 'ekklesia'. According to Smucker (1966:13), 'Ekklesia…is the translation of the Hebrew term for the whole community of Israel as the people of God, the word qahal'.

It is popularly understood as the assembly or congregation called out from the world of darkness into God's family. Ekklesia is a compound Greek term, derived from the verb ekkaleo. The prepositional prefix ek means 'out' and kales means 'to call', thus the compound word means 'called out'. The noun would then be a

'called-out group' or 'set apart group'. In secular Greek, ekklesia was 'a political assembly of citizens of ancient Greek states, especially the periodic meeting of the Athenian citizens for conducting public business and for considering affairs proposed by the council' (Caudle 2020:1). In the Gospels of Matthew, 'Church' was used to show that Jesus is the builder or foundation of the called ones (cf. Mt16:18).

For a proper understanding of this study, two distinctive uses of the term 'Church' are noted, namely as an institution and then as an organism. The Church as an institution is defined by Reken (1999:198) as the 'formal organization that sets out to accomplish a specific purpose'. According to him, it is an agent which can do things, and can say things because it has its own voice. The Church as an institution has its own place, purposes, mission, plans, structure and leaderships. From an organisational point of view, Iwe (1979:88) understands the 'Church' as an organised people of God, a spiritual and moral force to be reckoned with. The Church is a unified 'body of believers, the communion of believers' (Reken 1999:198). It is the totality of individual believers in which each Christian acts as an instrument in God's hand to accomplish God's purpose.

Scholars usually conceptualize the Church in two senses: the institutional and organismic senses. In one sense, the Church is used as an institution while in

another sense it is used as an organism. The Church as an institution is defined by Van Reken as the "formal organization that sets out to accomplish a specific purpose" (1999, 198). According to him:

> *It is an agent which can do things; and can say things because it has its own voice. The Church as an institution has its own purposes and plans, its own structure and officers, and its own mission. It has its own proper sphere. In many ways it parallels other institutions, like governments or schools.*

It is from this perspective that C. N. Ogugua (2019, 31) understands the term, Church to mean an organized people of God, a spiritual and moral force to be reckoned with. On the other hand, the Church as an organism refers to "the church as the body of believers, the communion of believers" (Van Reken 1999, 198). The distinction between the two concepts of the Church is that while the institutional church refers to a unified organization, the Church as an organism refers to an aggregate of individual believers in which each Christian acts as a personal agent with a purpose and a call in God's plan. Based on this distinction, Van Reken goes further to distinguish between "Church work" and "kingdom work". Church work, according to him, is the work that a Christian does as an agent of the institutional church, while kingdom work is the work that a Christian does in service of his Lord not as an agent of the institutional church but in his/her secular vocation or calling, whether as a plumber, a teacher, or a politician (Van Reken 1999, 198). This twofold meaning of Church reverberates in Jim Harris' view when he says:

"By 'church' I mean both the individual believer and the institutional entity" (Harris http://thebigpicture.homestead.com/ ChurchinPolitics.html). It therefore means that in discussing the role of the Church in the pursuit of justice in the socioeconomic system of a given country, we are invariably dealing with the part that both individuals and the corporate body have to play in the society.

From the following respondents, these responses were ascertained;

Pastor Joseph Omo

Question: Do you believe churches have a significant role in empowering people economically?

Resp: Yes, I do. Churches can play a very significant role in empowering people economically, especially in the area of Skills Development and Training. Churches can organize vocational training, business workshops, and financial literacy programs. They can mentor young entrepreneurs and connect them with networks of opportunities".

Question: From a business perspective, how effective have church-led empowerment programs been?

Resp: From a business perspective, church-led empowerment programs have shown meaningful effectiveness in 2 ways,

(a). Capacity Building and Skills Training

Many churches run vocational centers (hairdressing, tailoring, ICT, catering, etc.) and equip members with practical skills that can lead to small businesses.

(b). Financial Empowerment

Church-led cooperative societies, thrift contributions, and micro-loans have helped members access capital in ways commercial banks often fail to provide.

4.7 Prophetic Denunciation of the Oppressive Mechanism

The Church's prophetic stance obligates her to confront and challenge the systems of corruption and injustice which oppress, exploit and deprive the masses by criticizing and judging them by the Gospel standards. The Church in Nigeria, in the words of Archbishop Cyril Garbett, is to "fight the world by bearing against it militant and prophetic witness … shown in open attacks on the sins of the world … and expose the falseness of the values accepted by the world …" (Ryan 1987,159-160). By Means of official statements from ecumenical bodies like CAN, ecclesiastical councils, critical and corrective sermons, and so on, such unjust systems can be decried, denounced and called to order. Such prophetic calls can function to disturb the comfort and untouched conscience of the affluent in the

society whose power and wealth are accumulated at the expense and to the detriment of the impoverished peasants.

As the proclaimer and interpreter of the Divine purpose and will for the nation, the Church can act as a moral check on the activities of the ruling class, rejecting, resisting and denouncing ungodly and unpopular policies which prevent the full realization of justice and equity in the society. She can provide an "alternative voice" through the establishment of a more reliable, intrepid and independent media for the dissemination of her prophetic messages to the nation. As a prophet the Church can function as the conscience of the nation, the voice of the voiceless, a critic of unjust institutions and an iconoclast in the oppressive tradition. As S. I. Omoera points out, the Church is "to be aggressive … in condemning sin" in demanding for justice, and in fighting "the battle of the poor, the hungry …" against a system that "too often turns deaf ear to their appeals" (Hastings 1987, 93).

These are the responses from the interview conducted in relation to this subtopic:

Mrs. Grace Okonkwo

Question: What strategic roles can the church assume in addressing the challenges associated with national transformation?

Resp: The church must rise beyond spiritual matters and engage with socio-political realities. By training Christians for leadership and policy engagement, the church can raise leaders who value integrity. Additionally, the church can partner with NGOs to address poverty and gender inequality, which are fundamental to national transformation.

Rev Daniel Oghenerume.

Question: What strategic roles can the church assume in addressing the challenges associated with national transformation?

Resp: As a pastor l can tell u for free that the church has bn doing their best to addressing the challenges. Before now churches don't show much interest in politics but today is not so. Failure and success is in the mind the church is the mind builder,

Let the church organize national prayers with sincere mind not for what they will get. The church should set up organizations that will be economically friendly

The church should preach the truth to the government for only the truth can set this country free.

Rev. Nelly Amalonye, an associate pastor in Church of god mission Agbarho Zonal Hqtrs, Delta state and a Journalist.

Question: What strategic roles can the church assume in addressing the challenges associated with national transformation?

Resp: The Church can play several strategic roles in national transformation, including: Moral leadership: By promoting values such as justice, integrity, compassion, and service, the Church can help reset societal norms. The Church can speak prophetically to power, advocating for policies that promote fairness, inclusivity, and good governance. Through interfaith dialogue, mediation, and forgiveness-centered programs, the Church can foster healing in divided communities. Churches can educate their members on their civic duties—voting, holding leaders accountable, and participating in democratic processes. Providing aid, education, healthcare, and skills training helps lift people out of poverty, which is a root cause of unrest. By nurturing leaders who are ethically and spiritually grounded, the Church can contribute to a new generation of change-makers.

4.8 The Church and the Socio-Economic Liberation of the Nigerian Society

As already noted at the introductory part of this work, participation in the process of socioeconomic liberation for the realization of justice is a task, even a 'sine qua non' for the Church both as a religious and viable social institution. Christians are to take positive actions to destroy all forms of oppression and injustice wherever they are found (Hastings 1976, 91). Nevertheless, this does not mean that the Church as a body should be expected to leave the Word of God to serve tables by getting herself involved in a violent revolutionary overthrowing of governments or even in partisan political activism. The liberating role of the Church should be such that it will enhance her influence on the socioeconomic order without jeopardizing her spiritual and evangelistic vision and mission. This will involve her confronting and challenging every unjust, oppressive and exploitative structure with Christian values and ideals. This implies a prophetic and priestly role for the Church in Nigeria, just like Amos, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Micah and other prophets in the Bible.

In this role, the Church can, along with her direct spiritual vocation, be committed to the process of justice, human liberation and social transformation by fulfilling the following five functions: prophetic denunciation of the oppressive mechanism; promoting programs of raising social consciousness among the masses; practical alleviation of the conditions of the oppressed masses; peace building through

positive reconciliation of the oppressed and oppressive members; and personal conversion of the ordinary man. We shall now examine these points in some detail.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter explored Promoting programs of raising social consciousness among the masses, practical alleviation of the conditions of the oppressed masses, Peace Building through Positive Reconciliation of the Oppressed and Oppressing Members, Personal Conversion of the Ordinary Man, The Role of the Church in Meeting the Challenges of National Transformation, The Responsibilities of the Church towards Political Restructuring, Prophetic Denunciation of the Oppressive Mechanism, The Church and the Socio-Economic Liberation of the Nigerian Society, Prophetic Denunciation of the Oppressive Mechanism, Promoting Programs of Raising Social Consciousness among the Masses, Practical Alleviation of the Conditions of the Oppressed Masses, Peace Building through Positive Reconciliation of the Oppressed and Oppressing Members and Personal Conversion of the Ordinary Man.

It also examined peace building through positive reconciliation of the oppressed and oppressing members. In sum, a combination of the task of spiritual and social liberation enhances the Church, more than any other institution, to influence the socioeconomic life of the Nigerian society positively. It is no exaggeration to

maintain that an inspired, honest, faithful, dedicated, converted and courageous Church, through its clergy and laity, remains a powerful agent for social change and liberation of the citizens of a callous, corrupt, inept and exploitative society like Nigeria. In other words, the Church in Nigeria has the mandate, message and method which can contribute greatly in the attempts to solve the socioeconomic problems of the country.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW INSURGENCY (BOKO HARAM) AND OTHER RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM HAS AFFECTED SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF NIGERIA

5.0 INTRODUCTION

Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation and largest economy, has faced persistent challenges to its socio-political and economic stability over the past two decades. Among these challenges, insurgency—particularly the Boko Haram movement—and other forms of religious extremism stand out as major threats to national security and development. Emerging in the early 2000s and escalating into full-blown armed conflict by 2009, Boko Haram's campaign of terror has claimed thousands of lives, displaced millions, and destabilized communities, particularly in the northeastern region.

Religious extremism in Nigeria is not confined to Boko Haram alone; various extremist ideologies have fueled ethno-religious crises, sectarian violence, and communal clashes across different regions. These violent movements, driven by radical interpretations of religion, have disrupted social harmony, eroded trust in governance, and undermined the rule of law.

The implications of these insurgencies extend beyond security concerns—they have devastated Nigeria's socio-political structure and economic development. Agricultural activities in the North-East have collapsed due to insecurity, leading to food shortages; foreign investment has declined as a result of heightened risk; and billions of naira are allocated annually to security operations rather than infrastructure, education, and healthcare. Furthermore, democratic processes and governance have been strained by internal displacement, electoral violence, and weakened state institutions.

This study examines the far-reaching effects of Boko Haram insurgency and other religious extremism on Nigeria's socio-political fabric and economic progress, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive strategies to restore peace and foster sustainable development.

5.1 Religious Extremism and socio-political and economic development of Nigeria

Nigeria's 12-year conflict with Boko Haram has devastated communities in the country's northeastern states. Boko Haram has targeted its attacks on both civilians and security personnel, damaging and destroying buildings and public infrastructure. Local communities have suffered grave human rights abuses as a result of the incessant raids. These abuses include murder, abduction, sexual

violence, forced labor, forced conscription of children, looting, and burning public buildings (such as schools), personal property (such as farmland), and, in some cases, entire villages.

Since the beginning of the conflict, more than 43,000 people have died from Boko Haram violence. Those who have survived this violence are often left with enduring physical and mental trauma.

In Nigeria, the Boko Haram insurgency has opened up wide-ranging discussions regarding human security and human rights. The crisis has exposed the sheer neglect and near exclusion of people under mental distress from health facilities, despite the urgent need for adequate mental health support and care for those who have experienced extreme violence. If people are unable to receive mental health care, the crisis will likely lead to further violence and other human rights abuses. As well as ensuring that there are mental health care services available, government leaders must address the social determinants of mental health. This includes providing legal support to ensure justice for victims; promoting community enterprises to help build communal resilience; undertaking awareness and information campaigns on the value of mental health support interventions; and encouraging people to recognize that mental health is a human right. To achieve all of these things, new legislation and dedicated funding is needed.

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) asserts that "health is a fundamental human right indispensable for the exercise of other human rights where every human being is entitled to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health conducive to living a life in dignity.

The African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights draws on language from the ICESCR and also mandates the health security of individuals as a human right. Nigeria ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities in 2007 and its Optional Protocol in 2010, recognizing the importance of mental health, Human rights demands adequate and urgent care for survivors of trauma, especially in high-burden environments such as war zones or mass atrocity environments. Despite these commitments to human rights, Nigeria lacks a national mental health policy. The World Health Organization estimates that over 2 million of the country's near 200 million residents suffer from depressive and anxiety disorders. However, there are insufficient mental health workers in Nigeria to cater to the dispersed population, even without the burden of Boko Ha-ram-induced mental distress. For example, in one of the northeastern affected states, Borno, 80% of local government areas have insufficient numbers of functioning health facilities.

During periods of conflict or post conflict, heavier burdens are placed on every aspect of the public sector, thereby forcing facilities to compete against each other for reduced budgetary allocations.

Consequently, public health facilities and services in Nigeria, including mental health services, are in a poor state to respond to a crisis such as mass atrocity. Accessibility to mental health care services in the northeast is severely restricted, with mental health services and staff unable to meet the needs of individuals requiring attention. In 2020, there were about 250 psychiatrists in the entire country: community mental health task-shifting pilot programs were limited to a few locations. As a result, the impacts from trauma—such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and drug dependence—go untreated. This exacerbates the harm that Boko Haram has inflicted on the community at large and increases the risk of perpetuating the cycle of violence.

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trauma, especially in high-burden environments such as war zones or mass atrocity environments.

Despite these commitments to human rights, Nigeria lacks a national mental health policy. The World Health Organization estimates that over 2 million of the country's near 200 million residents suffer from depressive and anxiety disorders However, there are insufficient mental health workers in Nigeria to cater to the dispersed population, even without the burden of Boko Ha-ram-induced mental distress. For example, in one of the northeastern affected states, Borno, 80% of local government areas have insufficient numbers of functioning health facilities.10 During periods of conflict or postconflict, heavier burdens are placed on every aspect of the public sector, thereby forcing facilities to compete against each other for reduced budgetary allocations.

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stress disorder, depression, anxiety, and drug dependence—go untreated. This exacerbates the harm that Boko Haram has inflicted on the community at large and increases the risk of perpetuating the cycle of violence.

To limit the long-term mental health impacts of Boko Haram violence, governments at the local, state, and national levels must protect and fulfill victims' mental health rights, without discrimination. In a multidimensional, intersectoral response, Nigerian officials must reinforce support for the social determinants of mental health, recognizing that individual needs and community relationships are fundamental in promoting and protecting improved mental health and well-being.

The lack of mental health services compounds survivors' inability to adjust and cope with the losses and trauma they have experienced. Across most of the country, people who have experienced mental distress remain stigmatized and discriminated against. Personal and religious beliefs may cause survivors of these atrocities to reject mental health interventions. Government-led awareness and education campaigns at the local or community levels, and in partnership with religious institutions, could help promote the acceptance of mental health interventions.

Reparation, another important mitigating factor in healing, has not yet been addressed. The legal system needs to provide official recognition of victims' need

for justice and develop strategies to help people who have been kidnapped or injured by Boko Haram. Although testifying must be handled sensitively to avoid retraumatizing victims, the courts can provide justice and closure for those who have been harmed.

The suffering caused by Boko Haram is a collective loss, as well as an individual one. An injury to one community member injures all. While the community has experienced harm, the community can also be a source of healing. Cultural and community affiliations promote resilience in the form of family, cultural, religious, and traditional associations. Training in skills acquisition and enterprises, such as soap making and sewing, has offered communities collective coping solutions to mitigate suffering. More such opportunities are needed.

5.2 Obstacles (lingering insecurity in Nigeria) hindering the church towards effective contribution in the socio-political and economic development of Nigeria

Lingering insecurity in Nigeria such as the Boko Haram insurgency has exposed serious and substantive flaws in Nigeria's public health system. Nigeria has human rights obligations to address these failings, and must do so in a way that is consistent with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The United Nations Human Rights Commission has been advocating for the

domestication of this convention at state levels for some time, to promote the human rights entitlements of people exposed to Boko Haram atrocities. In particular, it is imperative that the National Assembly pass a mental health bill that, among other things, will lead to an increase in the number of mental health workers and to a reduction in discrimination and stigma. Local government and state emergency response teams could also advocate for such legislation.

Mental health support in Nigeria, especially in the northeast, requires multidimensional and multidisciplinary approaches for research and practice that frame health issues within the broader context of the psychosocial well-being and rights of post conflict societies. It must provide justice, employment, and economic support, all of which contribute to sustained good mental health of individuals and communities.

5.3 How unemployment and underemployment, tribalism and nepotism has affected socio-political and economic development of Nigeria

Nigerian, in general, are confronting numerous challenges, these include unemployment and underemployment,tribalism and nepotism, erratic power supply, infrastructural gaps, insufficient social amenities, poor healthcare services, the lack of access to quality education and the threat posed by violent extremism all in the past decades (Omoju & Abraham, 2014). Those who occupy the

proportional number among the youths are youth, those below the age of forty years. Several studies pointed out that Nigerian youth are facing challenges, despite the high population size and potentiality they possess.

However, the majority of those of working age do not have formal employment and there are few opportunities to get standard education. Earlier this year, government statistics showed that 40% of Nigerians lived in poverty as found by the National Bureau of Statistic, (NBS, 2020). This portrays that the major challenges facing Nigerian youths are unemployment or underemployment, poverty, poor or lack of quality education, coupled with police brutality, intimidation, harassment, extrajudicial killing and extortion.

The poverty rate among the youths has remained very high due to underemployment. The Nigerian government in 2008 stated that 80 % of Nigerian youths were unemployed while 10% were underemployed (Daily Trust, 2008). NBS (2020) revealed that Nigerian unemployment rate as in the second quarter of 2020 projected is 27.1% indicating that about 21.7 million Nigerians remained unemployed. However, unemployment and underemployment in Nigeria are combined at 55.7%. This means that the total number of Nigerians who are unemployed and underemployed as of 2020. The most pathetic situation, the worst-hit are Nigerian youth with over 13.9 million currently unemployed. Youth

between the ages of 15-24 have about 6.8 million Nigerian out of job and another 7.1 million unemployed. Consequently, NBC, (2020) further revealed that Nigerian's youth population eligible to work is about 40 million out of which 14.7 million are fully employed and another 11.2 are unemployed. To put things into context, the Nigerian youths unemployed are more than the population of Rwanda and several other African countries.

> *Additionally, NBS (2020) stated that the youth population is also about 64% of total unemployed Nigerians suggesting that the most agile working-class population in the country remains unemployed. Consequently, this assertion may not be unconnected with various agitation, antisocial vices and criminal act engaged by youth in Nigeria. The movement of Boko Haram was established by youth; the movement of herdsmen-farmers was perpetrated by the youth; the kidnapping groups and the majority of the members are also youth. In the positive part, organizers and members of Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) are youth; the EndSARS movement and protesters are youth, but it was hijacked by another set of youth who have a different mission. Therefore, if youths were given the necessary care and support they would contribute positively to the development and growth of the country.*

However, contrary to it, there is the tendency of youths engaging in various social problems such as insurgency, kidnapping, herdsmen-farmers conflict, protesting and terrorism among others. Poverty is another problem confronting Nigerian youth because there is a proportionate number of youths roaming around the street in cities, towns and villages that couldn't afford three square meals in a day. Youths are the backbone of development of any given society. No rational

community will afford to neglect the contribution of its teeming youths because they are the vital resources of development. The neglect of this group of human resources is no doubt the most pernicious of wastes, which can militate against the development of efforts of the nation (Oday & Okoye 2014).

> *Conceptually, there are three views of poverty and each one apply to Nigerian youths; first, poverty as severe deprivation of human needs at the individual or household level. second failure to achieve basic capabilities such as being adequately nourished, living a healthy life, possession of skills to participate in economic and social life, permission to take part in community activities etc. third subjective poverty assessments.*

The core of this view of poverty is that poverty must be defined by the poor themselves or by the communities that poor people live in Oday & Okoye (2014). Looking at the three views of poverty, the first view considered poverty as material deprivation, while the second regarded it as multi-dimensional phenomena, and the third said poverty has both physical and psychological dimensions.

However, the majority of the youth segment of the Nigerian population lives below the poverty line, due to unemployment. These cumulative challenges that put Nigeria youths to form many movements to removed themselves out of nefarious exploitation, harassment, extortion, extrajudicial killings, rapes and other ill-treatment perpetrated by Nigerian police against young Nigerians.

Historically, it is the use of these nefarious forces, the Nigerian police that met the members of Boko Haram that led to the escalation of Boko Haram insurgency for more than a decade. Apart from the police brutality young Nigerians are, therefore, most affected by government policies that have led to a lack of jobs and meaningful sources for livelihood. Other triggers include the lavish lifestyle of political leaders. The government budgets more money for the members of the National Assembly than for health and education. These are some of the challenges confronting and affecting the Nigerian youth and they used the End SARS protest to express their anger and dismay.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter explored how insurgency (Boko Haram) and other religious extremism has affected socio-political and economic development of Nigeria, Obstacles (lingering insecurity in Nigeria) hindering the church towards effective contribution in the socio-political and economic development of Nigeria, how unemployment and underemployment, tribalism and nepotism has affected socio-political and economic development of Nigeria. In this chapter, it was indicated that the country is plagued with multidimensional problems which are antithetical to peaceful co-existence, such as socio-economic in-balance, instability and inequality The study opined that despite the country's oil wealth, it is still one of

the poorest countries in the world where millions of children of primary school age are not in school, youths have no access to quality education and majority are unemployed; educational institutions are without enough infrastructure and no access to safe water, good roads and health services. Also, insecurity, kidnapping, armed robbery as well as unsteady electricity supply have crippled the country

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the major findings of the study in relation to the objectives, research questions, and the theoretical framework adopted. It seeks to interpret and analyze the results obtained in Chapter Five, highlighting their implications for the Church's role in the socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria.

The discussion is anchored on the belief that the Church, as a moral and spiritual institution, has both a divine and civic responsibility in promoting justice, equity, good governance, and sustainable development. Thus, this chapter critically examines how the findings align or contrast with existing literature and previous studies, as well as their relevance to the Nigerian context.

Furthermore, the chapter explores the extent to which the Church has influenced national consciousness, policy advocacy, and moral reorientation in the pursuit of restructuring. It also considers the challenges and limitations faced by the Church

in fulfilling this role, alongside potential opportunities for greater engagement in Nigeria's transformative agenda.

The insights drawn here will form the basis for the summary, conclusions, and recommendations presented in the chapter.

6.1 Summary

Chapter one provided the framework on the evaluation of the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria. The researcher was challenged to investigate this issue against the background of his personal observations of the daily conducts in the private and public lives of majority of church members and Nigerians in general as indicated in the study. To this end, the chapter examines the background to the study. The chapter highlighted the statement of Problem, the purpose of the Study which included that the role the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political restructuring of Nigeria, identifying the functions and duties of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria and identifying the factors militating hindering the church from performing its roles towards socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria.

Chapter one also highlighted the significance of the Study which included educating the church authorities and the general public in Nigeria on what the

church needs to do or incorporate into the system to ensure socio-political restructuring of Nigeria. The research explained that the study should a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research in this field subsequently, if applied will go to an extent to provide new explanation to the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria. The study explored the scope of the Study which covered the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria. The study highlighted those who are included or excluded from it. This helped to narrow the scope of the field of study and enabled the researcher to articulate the relevant facts surrounding the investigation. A brief review of the relevant literature was done on the role of the church in meeting the challenges of socio-political and economic restructuring. It is premised in the fact that the country's attempt at achieving socio-political and economic restructuring has not been an easy task. Some of the challenges hampering socio-political and economic restructuring relate to issues of corruption, ineffective leadership, religious and ethnic crises. All these were geared toward identifying or discovering the work of scholarly authors on the subject matter.

Consequently, Chapter one explored the methodology and sources of data used in the course of the study which indicated that information were collected from secondary sources which consist of textbooks, learned journals, magazines,

newspaper, internet browsing and publications on the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria. This work is qualitative research, specifically documentary research in which data is sourced from books, journals and other records. That is, researchers own writing and that of other scholars in political and social philosophy in particular and other related areas of philosophy in general the critical hermeneutics which is geared at analyzing the roles of the church in the quest for socio-political and economic restructuring of Nigeria. The method of documentation used in this work is classical method; there are end notes at the end of each chapter and bibliography at the end of the work. This work is divided into five chapters. The chapter highlighted the conceptual clarifications which included the three concepts that will facilitate the objective understanding of the article are 'restructuring', 'politics' and 'church'. Both conceptual and operational definitions of these terms will be applied to drive the study's point home.

Chapter one highlighted the organization of study which indicated that the study was organized into six chapters as follows: chapter one deals with background to the study, Statement of Problem, Purpose of the Study, Significance of the Study, Scope of the Study, Methodology and Sources, Conceptual Clarifications, Theoretical Framework, Literature Review and references. Chapter two focused on Nigeria and political structure, the need for Socio-Political Restructuring of

Nigeria and Nigerian overheated religious conflicts and threat to disintegration: its effects on Socio-Political Restructuring of Nigeria. Chapter two explored Nigeria and political restructuring. It examined amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorate, Restructuring and Socio-Economic Development in Nigeria, the need for socio-political restructuring of Nigeria, Nigerian overheated religious conflicts and threat to disintegration: its effects on socio-political restructuring of Nigeria. It was concluded that Nigeria's contemporary narrative therefore borders on hopes betrayed by the elite and new expectations solely hoisted on the benefaction of the Almighty by the citizenry. In addition, embodied in these configurations, is a critical case of apparent acquiescence to such state capture, by the subaltern class of the Nigerian polity. This chapter has explored the need for peaceful co-existence and socio-economic development of Nigeria. Muslims Vis-À-Vis Christians ConflictsAnd How It Hinders Socio-Economic Development of Nigeria: It examined the implications of the Nigeria insecurity situation towards sustainable socio-economic development in Nigeria.

Chapter Two explored how insurgency (Boko Haram) and other religious extremism has affected socio-political and economic development of Nigeria, Obstacles (lingering insecurity in Nigeria) hindering the church towards effective contribution in the socio-political and economic development of Nigeria, how unemployment and underemployment, tribalism and nepotism has affected socio-

political and economic development of Nigeria. In this chapter, it was indicated that the country is plagued with multidimensional problems which are antithetical to peaceful co-existence, such as socio-economic in-balance, instability and inequality The study opined that despite the country's oil wealth, it is still one of the poorest countries in the world where millions of children of primary school age are not in school, youths have no access to quality education and majority are unemployed; educational institutions are without enough infrastructure and no access to safe water, good roads and health services. Also, insecurity, kidnapping, armed robbery as well as unsteady electricity supply have crippled the country

Chapter three explored Promoting programs of raising social consciousness among the masses, practical alleviation of the conditions of the oppressed masses, Peace Building through Positive Reconciliation of the Oppressed and Oppressing Members, Personal Conversion of the Ordinary Man, The Role of the Church in Meeting the Challenges of National Transformation, The Responsibilities of the Church towards Political Restructuring, Prophetic Denunciation of the Oppressive Mechanism, The Church and the Socio-Economic Liberation of the Nigerian Society, Prophetic Denunciation of the Oppressive Mechanism, Promoting Programs of Raising Social Consciousness among the Masses, Practical Alleviation of the Conditions of the Oppressed Masses, Peace Building through Positive Reconciliation of the Oppressed and Oppressing Members and Personal

Conversion of the Ordinary Man. It also examined peace building through positive reconciliation of the oppressed and oppressing members.

Chapter four explored Promoting programs of raising social consciousness among the masses, practical alleviation of the conditions of the oppressed masses, Peace Building through Positive Reconciliation of the Oppressed and Oppressing Members, Personal Conversion of the Ordinary Man, The Role of the Church in Meeting the Challenges of National Transformation, The Responsibilities of the Church towards Political Restructuring, Prophetic Denunciation of the Oppressive Mechanism, The Church and the Socio-Economic Liberation of the Nigerian Society, Prophetic Denunciation of the Oppressive Mechanism, Promoting Programs of Raising Social Consciousness among the Masses, Practical Alleviation of the Conditions of the Oppressed Masses, Peace Building through Positive Reconciliation of the Oppressed and Oppressing Members and Personal Conversion of the Ordinary Man. The study examined peace building through positive reconciliation of the oppressed and oppressing members. In sum, a combination of the task of spiritual and social liberation enhances the Church, more than any other institution, to influence the socioeconomic life of the Nigerian society positively. It is no exaggeration to maintain that an inspired, honest, faithful, dedicated, converted and courageous Church, through its clergy and laity, remains a powerful agent for social change and liberation of the citizens of a

callous, corrupt, inept and exploitative society like Nigeria. In other words, the Church in Nigeria has the mandate, message and method which can contribute greatly in the attempts to solve the socioeconomic problems of the country.

Chapter five explored how insurgency (Boko Haram) and other religious extremism has affected socio-political and economic development of Nigeria, Obstacles (lingering insecurity in Nigeria) hindering the church towards effective contribution in the socio-political and economic development of Nigeria, how unemployment and underemployment, tribalism and nepotism has affected socio-political and economic development of Nigeria. In this chapter, it was indicated that the country is plagued with multidimensional problems which are antithetical to peaceful co-existence, such as socio-economic in-balance, instability and inequality The study opined that despite the country's oil wealth, it is still one of the poorest countries in the world where millions of children of primary school age are not in school, youths have no access to quality education and majority are unemployed; educational institutions are without enough infrastructure and no access to safe water, good roads and health services. Also, insecurity, kidnapping, armed robbery as well as unsteady electricity supply have crippled the country.

6.2 Conclusion

The study concluded that a combination of the task of spiritual and social liberation enhances the Church, more than any other institution, to influence the socioeconomic life of the Nigerians. Constitutionally, the federating units in Nigeria agreed to live together as a nation, but still have not committed to build the nation. When the state is generally perceived as serving the partner interest of one group, it starts losing its legitimacy and indeed its authority. As capacity declines, fear of uncertainty increases to an extent that citizens resort to other levels of solidarity viz religious, ethnic, regional and so on, with a view of getting guaranteed security. This is the situation the poor political arrangement in the name of federalism has landed this nation. The security apparatus has been overstretched with the attendant effect of human lives being lost on a daily basis as a result of competition that is anchored on ethnic political and religious variables.

This study has affirmed that Nigeria, like many countries of the world today, especially, countries in Africa is in great need of socioeconomic liberation. It is also very obvious that the Church as a sacred institution with indispensable social significance and relevance can and should contribute significantly towards the realization of this noble responsibility. What is needed, for the church to enhance her effectiveness in fulfilling this aspect of her mission therefore, is a balanced

form of theological and philosophical orientation which is both spiritually oriented and socioeconomically relevant. This will produce a kind of church "that calls the world evil and steps into the world, looks at its evil forms full in the face, and does something to change it" (Verkuyl and Schulte 1974, 69).

It is in this light that Edmund Ilogu rightly comments that "There is no hope for calling any organization a Church that has not manifested the marks of Christ's fight against evil in the world" (Ilogu 1964, 275). Such a church that must be able to fulfill this task must be a dynamic and progressive church rather than a static and conservative church that arbitrarily supports the status quo. As Iwe equally points out, "Only a creative church with a high sense of ministry and commitment can effect significant contributions to the life of its people" and adequately, legitimately and competently work for the welfare of society …" (Iwe 1979, 161).

In sum therefore, a combination of the task of spiritual and social liberation enhances the Church, more than any other institution, to influence the socioeconomic life of the Nigerian society positively. It is no exaggeration to maintain that an inspired, honest, faithful, dedicated, converted and courageous Church, through its clergy and laity, remains a powerful agent for social change and liberation of the citizens of a callous, corrupt, inept and exploitative society like Nigeria. In other words, the Church in Nigeria has the mandate, message and

method which can contribute greatly in the attempts to solve the socioeconomic problems of the country.

6.3 Recommendations

1. The Church should always remember her calling to impact positively and transform the society with the gospel of Jesus Christ. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, he mentioned the fruit of the Spirit which is love, joy, kindness, self-control, goodness, etc. These are virtues which object to marginalisation.

2. The leadership of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) should work together as one united body to achieve this political restructuring.

3. The Church along with direct spiritual vocation should be committed to the process ofjustice, human freedom, social development and a well-organised system of governance by fulfilling the following responsibilities: rejection of marginalisation, creation of awareness, Christians' active participation in electing political representatives, encouraging dialogue and peace building, and upholding the scriptural principles.

4. The crucial preliminary task of the church would be to create awareness among their members about the magnitude of the moral crisis in Nigerian politics and its consequences for national survival and development.

5. Resolving the moral crisis in the country's politics would require primarily a morally upright leader or elite that can resist the temptation to abuse its mandate.

6. Church leaders should endeavour to organize seminars, conferences and workshops for their members during which the importance of truth, honesty, loyalty, dutifulness, peace and justice will be taught and emphasized.

7. Debates on topical issues and publications of books, journals and magazines should be utilized as a way of inculcating moral consciousness in the society.

8. The church should denounce or question publicly vices and abuses such as political intolerance, violence, constitutional infidelity, distributive justice, absence of a sense of civic responsibility and private appropriation of public resources.

9. Any corrupt church member in government, politician involved in corruption or not living according to Christian principles should be excommunicated with immediate effect to avoid the spread of such vices.

10. Church leaders must live exemplary lives both in speech and in conduct. It is no gain saying that being good examples to their flock can reduce practices that hinder national transformation. This is why a church leader who is guilty to corruption should be willing to resign from his office voluntarily.

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Deacon Michael Adeyemi, Businessman and philanthropist with a strong commitment to community development.

Dr. Bright Onwudinjor, an optometrist in general Hospital Ekpan and also a Pastor in Church of God mission ministry.

Mr Ekanem James Emmanuel, a Professional Accountant with vast knowledge in information technology currently the Assistant Manager @ Forever living products warri NG.

Mr. John Eze, a political science lecturer and church elder with expertise in governance and public policy.

Mrs. Grace Okonkwo, Christian women leader, social activist, and founder of a Christian NGO focused on women's empowerment and community development.

Pastor Emmanuel Danjuma, Youth pastor in Northern Nigeria, passionate about peacebuilding and youth empowerment.

Pastor Joseph Omo, A pastor in Living Faith Church and also the vice president of PEC Global Multi-Purpose Cooperative, who responded to these questions;

Pastor Onogharigho Oghenero Murphy, associate Pastor of Gladtiding International christian Center.

Pastor Victor Otaigho, Data analyst and software engineer, The lead trainer at Hallmark it Institute, and an associate pastor at The Beulah Int'l Christian Centre, Warri.

Rev Daniel Oghenerume, CEO Deobeth Company, publishers, printers, Suppliers and General contractors.

Rev. Nelly Amalonye, an associate pastor in Church of god mission Agbarho Zonal Hqtrs, Delta state and a journalist.

Rev. Nkem Simeon Kelvin, Head pastor in Church of God Mission Int'l. with over 10 years in Rev. Dr. Samuel Adebayo, Senior Pastor of a large Pentecostal church in Lagos with over 25 years in ministry, actively involved in social advocacy.

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