

**CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF CHURCH AND STATE RELATIONSHIP IN
NIGERIA (1960-2020)**

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**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIONS
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

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**A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIONS,
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MARCH, 2026

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research thesis was carried out by ODERHOWHO David Ejoke in the department of religions, University of Benin, Benin City under my supervision.

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DEDICATION

This research thesis is dedication to all lovers of knowledge and hard work.

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ABSTRACT

The Church, from its inception, had been a beacon of hope, transformation and development in society. Therefore, this study was aimed at investigating the relationship between the church and state in Nigeria between 1960 and 2020.

The study adopted a critical investigation into the relationship that existed between the church and the Nigerian nation in the areas of education, politics, morality, agriculture and human empowerment, interwoven with historical and phenomenological approaches in the process of writing. It also embraced a comprehensive understanding of some aspects of works that are unpublished, critical reviews of textbooks, articles in journals, newspapers, as well as data from the internet.

The findings of the study illuminated how the relationship between the Church and Nigerian nation had engendered collaboration for growth and development in the area of education, agriculture, politics and moral development of the Nigerian citizenry through character and spiritual training, fair treatment of children, youth empowerment and eradication of women marginalization. It was recommended that the church has ability to foster group cohesion, nurture and sustain reciprocity among members of any community. Therefore, Christian congregations are expected to serve and deal with the social needs of their community. Also, the Nigerian Government should deem it necessary to always embrace the church in matters concerning the public and politics because the church influenced politics not only by ruling power but in so far as it served the communities in which it lives.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Study

Since the advent of Christianity, the Church has always been a beacon of hope, transformation and development in society. From Constantine and through to the Middle Ages, the Church has brought unprecedented growth and restoration to nations and humanity. It has also stood as an advocate of justice, peaceful co-existence, societal engineering and a veritable instrument for national development. History bears witness to the fact that western world owes much of its achievements, in the areas of law, economy, politics, culture and sundry spheres to its association with the church.

In Nigeria, the church has maintained relationship with the nation through Christian Council of Nigeria (C.C.N) and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) by making recommendations that have led to the emergence of a united, virile, prosperous and peace-loving nation. These recommendations include:

To exhibit and pursue at all cost the oneness of the church of Christ which is an essential element in nation building.

That the church treats with all seriousness the evil of bribery and corruption that are steadily eating into the heart of our national life and involving ever-increasing number of people. That the churches make greater provision for vocational training of school leavers and that C.C.N should establish a committee to implement this on an inter-church basis.

That the churches undertake industrial mission work in urban areas and working through C.C.N in full co-operation with the regional government; wherever possible set up and carry out an active rural extension program to attract young people in rural areas to undertake agriculture work. That considering the moral confusion among some of the youths of this country, the churches should study how greater emphasis can be placed on the religious and moral instruction of the children committed to their charge.

The Christian Council should take such action as may be considered desirable to persuade government to place more emphasis on these all-important parts of education.

In the same vein, governments, both in the past and present have aided church growth by granting her support in form of cash and kind to implement recommendations, run church programs and crusade and to build religious houses. The Nigerian government aided Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) to build a gigantic edifice in Federal Government Territory, Abuja for Christians to worship their God. Governments at Federal, State and Local levels have assumed financial responsibilities for a great deal of maintenance and assistance to church sponsored Schools and Hospitals. The Nigerian Governments have aided the church growth by the provision made that clergymen are authorized to conduct legally registered marriages and that Christian denominations, like all other philanthropic bodies are exempted from paying some taxes and some other regulations. The Federal Government has set up a Pilgrims Welfare Board for Christians who may wish to go on pilgrimage to the holy land, i.e. Jerusalem and Rome. This is mostly handled by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN).

From the foregoing, we can thus see that there has been very cordial relationship between the church and the state. They are partners in progress in the task of Nation building.

Moreover, the objectives of the colonial missionaries were to convert the pagans. The missionaries went about with the Bible and were protected by the colonial guns; they help to civilize the people and help to impose colonial imperialism. It was thought that Nigeria would be free from the clutches of Christian missionaries after independence. Christianity was seen as foreign religion. There was growth in Christianization during the colonial era. The Christian missions and colonial administration joined to suppress some traditional cults. The missionaries and the colonial administrators had no common goals. Grass-root evangelism was dominated by Nigerians; independence did not bring retrogression. After independence the leadership in churches fell into the hands of the local people. The attitude of Lugard in preventing Christian missionary penetration in northern Nigeria was very vivid. The missionaries concentrated in the minority ethnic groups in the north, the various groups made success through the minority ethnic groups. People from these minority groups became enlightened and became pressure groups who fought for the interest of minority groups, and they demanded for Middle Belt State before

independence. Making appointments, the Christians from middle-belt state had a good proportion of ministers, and members of House of Chiefs than traditional Muslims. The Middle-Belt embraced western education than those from other areas. The Christians in the North used education they got from the mission schools to forge unity, assume leadership roles, took part in politics and free themselves from Islamic Oligarchy. In the Eastern Nigeria there was division between Protestants and Catholics.

How the church would make an impact in the life of the nation:

To fight against bribery and corruption

To fight against moral confusion among youths

To fight Islamic intrusion

To contribute to state creation

To contribute to winning election

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The relationship of the church in Nigeria with secular government beginning from colonial times was symbiotic. For instance, the church through her schools provided the manpower needed by the colonial government which in turn offered grants to the church for its educational programs and policies. The church has equally been in the forefront to eliminate poverty, injustice and harmful socio/cultural practices.

Church and state relationship in Nigeria is not without challenges. For instance, the law that permits the government to regulate church activities has left sour taste in the mouth of many Christians. The trajectory of the church in Nigeria and the leadership of the country is one of vicissitudes that portends great prospects for the country. Unfortunately, no scholarly work on this subject matter undertaken along defined parameter exists on this vista that holds great prospects for the country. It is this vacuum that this study seeks to fill.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between the church and state in Nigeria between 1960 and 2020.

The objectives of the study were to:

1. explore the past history of the church in Nigeria between 1960 to 2020;
2. identify the impact of the church on the socio-economic, political and religious landscape of Nigeria;
3. investigate the impacts of government policies on the church.
4. identify the challenges associated with church and state relationship in Nigeria between 1960 and 2020;
5. highlight the prospects of church and state relationship in Nigeria; and
6. suggest possible ways to eliminate friction between church and state in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Methodology

The study adopted a critical investigation into the relationship that existed between the church and the Nigerian nation in the areas of education, politics, morality, agriculture and human empowerment, interwoven with historical and phenomenological approaches in the process of writing. Data collection was through secondary sources which included: scholarly articles, books, Journals and information gathered from the internet.

1.5 Significance of the study

This thesis is significant because it shows how church and state are related with each other for maximum growth and development. The study reveals that the goal of the church was not only the propagation of the gospel and narrow confines of the well-being of her members but to embrace the larger society. It denotes that government owes much of its achievement, in the area of politics, education, economy, culture, politics and sundry spheres to its association with the church. The study exposes that despite the friction between church and state in Nigeria, the

relationship that exists between the both was symbiotic. This thesis is unique because the church and state relationship in Nigeria holds great promise for both parties and therefore deserve to be strengthened and sustained.

1.6 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The scope of this study was restricted to Nigeria within the time frame of 1960 and 2020. It also focused on the challenges that were associated with the relationship between the Church and Nigerian nation and prospects.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW/THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Church

Alan (1050: 46), explains that “Church” is generally derived from the Greek word “Kuriakon” meaning “the Lord’s house or a building for Christian worship”. Church in the New Testament is translated from the Greek “ecclesia”, which means an assembly of people. For Davis (1944:111), “Church is the Lord’s house and an organized community of people acknowledging the Lord Jesus Christ as their Supreme Ruler, and meeting steadily or as opportunities offered, for religious worship”. Okwueze (2003: 152) defines it as “an organized body of followers of Jesus.”

According to E.D. Hayes in his book *“The Church: The Body of Christ in the World Today*, the church is used in five different senses in the New Testament:

1. It is translated as “an assembly” in the ordinary classical sense (Acts 19:32,39,41).
2. It denotes the whole body of the redeemed, all those whom the father has given to Christ, the invisible Catholic Church (Eph. 5: 23, 25, 27, 9, Heb. 12: 23).
3. Christians associating in observing the ordinances of the gospel (Rom. 16:5; Col. 4:15).
4. All the Christians in a particular city whether they assembled together in one place or in several places for religious worship (Acts 13; 1) Example, the church at Jerusalem (Acts 8: 1) and the church at Ephesus (Rev. 2:1).
5. The whole body of professing Christians throughout the world (1 Cor. 15; 9; Gal, 1:13, Matt. 16: 18) are the church of Christ.
6. The Church is called the body of Christ, the family of God, the people of God, the elect, the bride of Christ, the company of the redeemed, the communion of saints, the new Israel, among others.

For the purpose of this paper, the overview of the Church will be limited to that of the people of God, the body of Christ and the temple of the Holy Spirit called out to please God by serving humanity.

2.2 State

A state according to Wikipedia is a centralized political organization that imposes and enforces rules over a population within a territory. Also, a popular sociologist, Max Weber defines a “state” as polity that maintains a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence or force over a territory, (Max Weber, 1946:19). Another definition of a state could be derived from its characteristics that is used to define it as a legitimate entity with a territory, a sovereign government and human population.

A state is therefore defined by its possession of various characteristics as follows:

1. **Controlling a territory:** One of the major characteristics of a state is that it has a geographical location in which it has exclusive rights over, with clearly delineated borders and boundaries.
2. **Legitimacy:** A state is said to be legitimate through the recognition of other states and actors in the international system.
3. **Population.** A state must have a human population within its boundaries for it to be considered a state. This human population consists of citizens and non-citizens.
4. **Sovereignty:** A state has the ability to make its own individual decision without any interference from external source. This is what is referred to as sovereignty.
5. **Government:** A state has a government which is the overall authority ruling over the territory of the state.

Functions of the State

The state performs the following functions

- i. **Providing Security:** It is a state's primary function to provide security and protection to the citizens. This includes protection from both internal and external threats. This function is achieved by providing an efficient security apparatus such as the police and the military. Protection goes beyond the traditional military view into the provision of social, environmental, economic and political security.
- ii. **Dispute Resolution:** It is the role of the state to ensure the provision of means of dispute resolution such as a strong, effective and fair judicial system. This is also inline which social protection to ensure conflicts are resolved peacefully at all levels of society.
- iii. **Providing Welfare:** It is the function of the state to provide welfare to its citizenry. This welfare includes broad guarantees of social security to the vulnerable populations. Under the role of welfare, the state also performs the function of providing public goods such

as a functioning health and education system as well as an effective transport system (online citation www.diplomacy-school-network.com.accessed june23,P.22).

2.3 Relationship

According to Britannica Dictionary, relationship means the way in which two or more people, groups, countries, etc, talk to, behave towards and deal with each other. Cheery Kendra as reviewed by Romanoff Sabrina (2022), gave the meaning of relationship as “any connection between two people which can be either positive or negative”. According to Sabrina, to be in a relationship does not always mean there is physical intimacy, emotional attachment, and /or commitment involved. The concept of a “relationship” reinforces the legal right of a free people to freely live their faith in public without fear of government coercion.

In church and state relationship, St. Aquinas recognized the distinct roles of the church and the state. He believed that the church is responsible for guiding individuals towards their spiritual salvation, while the state is responsible for maintaining temporal order. Aquinas advocated for a harmonious relationship between the two institutions, with the church providing moral guidance to the state and the state respecting the activity of the church in matters of faith and morals.

St. Augustine’s view of the Church and state relationship is instructive. According to him, in his book: ‘the Doctrine of the Two Cities’, his stand does not defend the glorious City of God against the pagan City of humanity. It also invites the reader of *De Civitate Dei* to find genuine references common to the two cities.

Moreover, Augustine’s use of the two cities doctrine does not restrict a Christian to a passive obedience of any regime whatsoever. Despite St. Augustine’s emphasis on both, the primacy of God’s action and the sinfulness of humanity, he calls for an active Christian involvement in political life and thus for a none-exclusionary church-state relationship.

Jonathan Leeman also explains church and state relationship; thus, we could say, God has given the power of the sword to government and the power of the keys to churches, and he intends for them to work separately but cooperatively toward the greater end of worship. Leeman summarizes his opinion that government should employ the sword in order to protect life, enable the cultural mandate and provide a platform for the work of the church; they are guardians of this present age. Churches should exercise the keys of the kingdom in order to testify to King Jesus, his message and his people; they are witnesses of the age to come

2.4 Missionary Church

Wikipedia explains the missionary church as a unique blend of the thought and life of a people who have sought to build their church according to scripture and who have appreciated their historical roots. Such people found themselves in Nigeria and established their church within the country. Osokoya (1989) gave the list of the missionary church in Nigeria thus:

- i.** The Wesleyan Methodist Church
- ii.** The Church Missionary Society (C.M.S)
- iii.** The Baptist Church
- iv.** The Roman Catholic Mission
- v.** The Presbyterian Church
- vi.** The Primitive Methodist Missionary Society
- vii.** The Qua Iboe Mission

All these churches according to Osokoya were established in Nigeria in the 19th Century due to their revival zeal to win souls for Christ which started in Sierra- Leone their landing port from Europe, where they moved to other parts of West Africa and Nigeria respectively.

Among the early missionaries who established churches in Nigeria, Osokoya revealed that they include: Henry Townsend, Hope Waddel, De Graft, Samuel Ajayi Crowder, Bench Freeman, Rev. C.A. Golimer, Fr. Lutz and a host of other missionaries.

Osokoya pointed out that although, the major purpose of the missionary church was to win souls for Christ, yet there were other activities carried out by the church which include, establishing schools, opening recreational centers, creating health facilities and centers, as well as establishing commercial activities to alleviate poverty.

2.5 Doctrine

Doctrine according to Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theory is something that is taught; a principle or creed of principles presented for acceptance or belief; a system of beliefs. From the scriptural perspective, doctrine is the scriptural teaching on theological truths.

The following are doctrine of Christianity:

I. God the Father

This is the belief that there is only one God who created the heavens and the earth. (Deut. 6:4. Isaiah 3:10 and Galatians 4:8-9). There is also the belief in the attributes of God as the Omnipotent, meaning that He is all powerful, Omnipresent, meaning that he is everywhere at the same time and Omniscient, meaning that He is all knowing.

2. The Trinity

Christians believe that God is three in one (Trinity), that is, God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthews 3:16-17, John 14:16-17, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Acts 2:32; 1 Peter 12).

3. Jesus Christ the Son

Christians believe that Jesus Christ is God who became a man, born of a virgin, who is perfect, sinless, the only way to God, fully man and fully God. (John 3:16, 1:1; Mathew 1: 18. Luke 1:26-35; Philippians 2:1-11; Colossians 2:9, 1 Peter 2:22, Luke 10:22).

4. The Holy Spirit

The Christian doctrine holds that God is Spirit, the Holy Spirit is God (John 2:24, 2 Corinthians 13: 14).

5. The Bible: The Word of God

Christians hold the Bible with a high esteem as the word and mind of God revealed to man. It is also “inspired” or God breathed and word. The Bible in its original manuscripts is without error (2 Timothy 3: 16-17: John 10: 55, Hebrews 4:12).

6. God’s Plan of Salvation

Christians hold the beliefs that humans were created by God and in His image; all people have sinned; death came into the world through Adam’s sin; sin separates us from God; Jesus Christ died for the sins of each and every person in the world; the death of Jesus Christ was a substitutionary sacrifice for all that sinned; Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead in physical form; salvation is a free gift of God; believers are saved by grace; those who reject Jesus Christ will go to hell forever after they die; those who accept Jesus Christ will live for eternity with him after they die. (Genesis 1:26-27 Romans 3:23; 5:12-15; Isaiah 59:2; 1 John 2:2; Matthew, 20:28; John 2: 19-21, 1John 1:8-10; Ephesians 2:8-9; Revelation 20:11-15, John 11:25; 2 Corinthians 5: 6).

7. Hell is real

Christians believe that hell is a real place of punishment, and it is eternal (Matthew 25: 41-46; Revelation 19:20).

8. End Times

Christians believe in the rapture of the church, Christ's return to the earth, the raising of Christians from the dead, final judgment, Satan banishment in the lake of fire and God's creation of a new heaven and a new earth. (1 Corinthians 15:51-52; Acts 18: 1, 1Thessalonians 4:14-17. Hebrews 9: 27; Revelation 20: 10, Revelation 21: 1.).

Theoretical Framework

2.6 Catholic Theory on Church and State Relationship

According to Fr. Gomes, in more than two thousand years of Church history, there have been many different conceptions and theories of church and state relationships. In the post Constantinian age, the church was a public institution linked to and at the same time, part of the empire, it was a relationship characterized by advantages and disadvantages.

Below are the considerations of Catholic Theory on Church and state relationship.

- i.** The Roman Catholic holds the Theory that Church is in Charge of all issues of a spiritual nature while the state is in charge of its own temporal affairs. This Theory therefore implies that there is a division between the church and the state, each with its own "dignity" and acting in its own sphere of competence. Pope Galasius the Roman Catholic Pope sustained his Theory by saying that the church was founded by Christ with the purpose of taking care of souls while the temporal power on the other hand, exists for the care of the temporal affairs. Thus with temporal issues, the priest must obey the emperor and in spiritual matters, the Emperor must obey the Priest. Through this "formula" Pope Gelasius defined the space the church occupies in human society. The Pope's main target at that time was the defense of the Petrine Primacy and the protection of the church from the interference of imperial authority in matters of faith.
- ii.** The Roman Catholic Church holds the Theory of Emperor Charlegne who proclaimed a union of religious and temporal powers. He said that both powers should be united under one main authority that unified human kind in this world, which is Christ. This Theory

proclaimed the constitution of one unique body in which there was no space for diversity. Under this “unionist” model of church and state relationship, the society was characterized by only one faith, one church and one temporal authority. It was a society in which human beings were simultaneously *civis* and *fidelis* (Civil and Fidel). There was no room even for the idea of secularism, nor for a distinction between vassal and faithful, as both fused into one. Both the church and the state identified with each other in a mutually indissoluble unity.

iii. The Roman Catholic holds the Theory that every human being has freedom of religion with special reference to the right to observe Sunday as a holiday and the right of each person to worship. The basic idea of this Theory is that the church is not a society created inside a specific state or by this same state’s judicial system and therefore, not like other societies created under civil law that we can find in our states. Rather, being created by Jesus Christ, the church has the *voluntas* (will) of the son of God as its foundational act and not the wish of a human being. In this way, the Church proclaims the right to exist, and the right to announce and proclaim the gospel, the right to teach the Christian faith and the right to have and build communities and others without seeking direct permission from the state authority. This Theory maintains the distinctiveness of church and state in their relationship without being totally separated from each other.

iv. The Roman Catholic church also maintains that the Church is superior to the state only in the dignity of its nature and end, not in those matters that are the peculiar province of the state. The state is supreme over the church in all department of life. The church has no co-ordinate and independent authority nor any province that is exclusively its own. Therefore, the state exerts omnipotence over the church.

- V. In the recent times in Nigeria, the Catholic Church holds the Theory that the church is a stake-holder in Nigeria and cannot afford to be apolitical or unconcerned with issues of national development. The church would not be true to her nature if she retires into the sacristy and engages in closed circuit television of self-entertainment in sacred liturgy, splendidly isolated from the world outside. The Church therefore continues to emphasize and promote the positive involvement of the members in the betterment of the state.

2.7 Anglican Theory on Church and State Relationship

The Anglican Communion holds to the faith as expounded by the scriptures and by the early church fathers. The Anglican Communion Theory on Church and State relationship is as follows:

- i. The church respects the authority of the state but does not submit to it. In other words, the church holds the beliefs of the existence of the state but does not conform to its exert of authority on the church. The context of this Theory is that the church is a perfect society so is the state within its own limits. Thus, there should be not in any Theory, be a conflict between the church and the state. Indeed each depends to some extent, upon the other.
- ii. Another theory holds that the relationship that exists between the church and state helps to illuminate and define the nature of the country; especially a country that is categorized as a pluralistic society like Nigeria. The church being a perfect society helps to sharpen the societal norms, government expectation and quasi-governmental regulation, particularly in view of the constitutional evolution of the common wealth and spread of the Anglican Church. In this way, the Church though a perfect society, is not immune from the influence of the contemporary society and the expectation of both the population (inside and outside the Church) and the secular government.

iii. The final theory of Anglican on church and state relationship was consequent upon the contemporary debate as to whether the Anglican Church should be influenced by the state law or that the church should stay out of the state apparatus. However, church and state relationship is not only restricted to a particular country but the entire world and that has made the Anglican church to now hold two opposing views:

1. That in some states the church should be separate;
2. While in others the relationship between both of them should be symbiotic.

2.8 John Locke Theory of the Church and State Relationship

John “Locke” theory of Church and State relationship centers on separation of church and state. His theory was philosophical and jurisprudential concept for defining political distance in the relationship between church and state. It also deals with the creation of secular state (with or without legally explicit church and state separation) and to de-establish the changing of an existing formal relationship between the church and the state. The concept of this theoretical framework originated among early Baptist in American in 1644 which was promoted by the enlightenment philosopher John Locke. Locke wrote concerning the separation of church and state in his book “Social Contact”. Here, Locke argued that the government lacked authority in the realm of individual conscience as this was something rational people could not cede to the government for it or others to control. For Locke, this created a natural right in the liberty of conscience which he argued must therefore remain protected from any government authority.

John Locke also proclaimed religious tolerance and rejected the use of the power of the magistrate to enforce religious belief or practices because his sole purpose was to use coercive powers of the state to protect the lives, liberties and properties of every individual. As long as people “mind only their own business” the magistrate has no interest in them whatsoever. Besides, Locke thought that to enforce outward conformity to certain religious practices was hypocritical as it left untouched “the inward persuasion of the mind”. There was also the “slippery slope argument” that if one allowed the zealous magistrate to enforce religious beliefs in the name of the welfare of the people, then, what was to stop them interfering in every other aspect of a person’s life which affected their physical or spiritual wellbeing? Locke’s advice to the preacher was to make sure their “pulpits every were sounded with this doctrine of peace and tolerance” in the society.

2.9 The Jamaican State Theory on the Church and State Relationship

This theory is postulated by Michael Manley. In the theory, the question of how the church and state should relate to each other continues to be an important and enduring one and is answered in a variety of ways by Devon Dick.

1. Devon Dick: Dick was a Baptist theologian who held the following theories thus:

- a.** The church and state should be separate because they have two different agendas and like oil and water, they cannot mix. Dick’s opinion centers on two historical views of separation of church and state.
 - i.** One, the Jefferson view. This view holds that separation protects government from undue influence by the church.
 - ii.** Two, the Roger Williams view which states that separation protects the church from the government. Dick’s conclusion about both views is that in a pluralistic society, government should completely detach itself from the activities of the church and the church should not create any avenue for government to be involved in its activities so as to avoid chaos that can divide the society among religious lines.
- b.** Dick, however came up with a contrast view which states that the church should be in solidarity with the nation without “being conformed to the world”. Dick’s Theory was derived from the Sint Maarten society which proclaims that the church should be “distinct yet inseparable from the state”.

2. Michael Manley: The former prime Minister of Jamaican state propounded a theory which states “Distinct Yet Inseparable, Church and State”. What Manley meant in his view is that the church is concentrating on its divine mandate of the propagation of the gospel of Christ on earth yet it cannot completely detach itself

from the socio-political, economic and cultural life of the people of the society which it belongs, rather, it should embrace the larger society. The church in Manley's Theory should be actively involved in the day to day running of the state affairs for growth and development. Manley held this Theory because of the church's role in the development of Jamaica state and how the church had also developed other states in the past, especially in the Middle Ages when the Roman Emperor Constantine was converted to Christian and subsequently made Christianity the state religion.

Manley theorized church and state relationship from the perspective of the educational role the church has played and still plays in Jamaica by stating different schools established by Christian missionaries in Jamaica. According to him Christians established the first elementary school for the education of the children of slaves in Jamaica. In support of this fact, Acting Director of Regional Education services, Nevadeene Miller, said that the church's pioneering work has left an indelible mark on the educational landscape in Jamaica. Mrs. Miller added that the church in Jamaica today established thirty-three primary schools, including infant schools; fourteen in St. Elizabeth, eleven in Manchester, six in Westmoreland and two in Clarendon. These schools are classified as owned or leased and are fully funded by the government to train children in Jamaica with a sense of taking responsibility to better the country.

Manley's Theory is that both the church and state should work together to develop education as it is in Jamaica, so as to bring up children with a sense of responsibility to full adulthood.

Manley spoke on political relationship of church and state in his works while discussing the institution of democracy. According to him, the Church is one of the nine institutions of democracy with a crucial role to play both in accelerating and mobilizing for change through working in concert with the government. Manley affirms that the guiding principles of

Almighty God are the core values of democracy in Jamaican government. He gave instances that the oath or promise that elected and appointed officials make when taking up office is concluded with the phrase “so help me God Almighty”. The government together with the church holds five ecumenical services per year, where prayer is offered to the Almighty God. Political speeches as well as speeches by the governor, members of parliament and all government officials often invoke the name of God or call on God to bless the Jamaican nation. The official representatives grew up on the Island attending church activities and Christian principles of right and wrong were instilled in them from an early age. Therefore, Manley stated that it is impossible to have a clear distinction between church and state in their political relations.

In the Economic perspective, Manley held the Theory that the church is registered by the law of the land as a not-for-profit organization, yet, it has been the number one contributor to the national economy and to the poor in the following ways;

- i.** The church has, for as long as the nation is old, been operating numerous schools and has been a prime contributor to the education sector from preparatory, primary and high schools and to university education. Through this sector alone, Manley said thousands of Jobs are created and many families and communities’ benefit both from the schools and the income generated.
- ii.** The church owns and operates several hospitals and is also an operator of several media houses involved in humanitarian ventures, efforts and long-term activities.
- iii.** The church as an organization and along with its members has shares and accounts in credit unions and banks. In fact, the church owns and operates a credit union.
- iv.** The church has the greatest purchasing power and influence in Jamaica. The church pays out millions of dollars monthly to light, water, communions, media, distribution, housing, vehicle companies and other agencies, not to mention the tolls and taxes paid.

Keep it in mind that the church cannot go to these institutions when the bill is due and tell them “Jesus loves you” as payment for the bills.

Manley therefore, concluded that with these facts it is impossible to separate the church from state. Moreover, further attempts are made by the church to boost Jamaican economic, and agricultural produce through trade in export.

Concerning morality and eradication of harmful socio-cultural practices in Jamaica, Manley echoed the call for greater involvement of the church in providing strong moral code of conduct and ethical behaviour for all citizens. He believes that partnership between the church and state in inculcating morality in the life of the people remains an important connection in ensuring lasting peace in the society. To achieve the very strong code of conduct and ethics in Jamaica, the church by support of government therefore planned a social outreach program that would sharpen the character of the people.

Michael Manley also added that the church in collaboration with government would be able to eradicate harmful socio-cultural practices in Jamaica, such as the marginalization of women and child abuse. Therefore Manley advocated the eradication of such harmful socio-cultural practices by re-echoing the moral codes as stipulated in the Jamaica penal code and sacred books thus:

- i.** He who despises women despises his mother
- ii.** Who is cursed by women is cursed by God
- iii.** The tears of a woman call down the fire of heaven on those who make them flow
- iv.** Evil to him who laughs at women suffering, God shall laugh at his prayer
- v.** There is no crime more odious than to persecute women.

More also, the church through her foster care in Jamaica under the theme “Give love, inspire hope and foster a child” had heightened public awareness and encouraged more Jamaicans to

protect the right of children. The church established primary education, children health care facilities and nursery homes to cater for children in Jamaica.

With the above facts, Michael Manley concluded that church and state relationship is “distinct, yet inseparable”.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ACTIVITIES IN THE PRE-INDEPENDENCE NIGERIA

Before independence in Nigeria, different or various Christian missions arrived to evangelize the Nigerian people and to create an atmosphere of relationship with them. Among these missions included: the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant Churches, the African Indigenous Churches and the Pentecostal Movement. Consideration on their activities in Nigeria are made below:

3.1 The Catholic Church

Okafor (2004) states that “The first Christian missionaries to come to Nigeria were Portuguese Roman Catholics. They visited Nigeria in 1485 and had Benin and Warri as their first contact. Following the pattern of Church and state relationship, these missionaries called at king’s court, sought to convert the kings and from there attempted to make the people Christians.” In this respect, the Oba of Benin and Olu of Warri both in the present-day Edo and Delta State made many contacts with the Christian missionaries during the early period.

The arrival of Catholic Church Missionaries in Nigeria did not end with these first and early contact. They later visited other parts of Nigeria and carried out activities that are worthy of consideration. These activities include:

- i. **Evangelization:** they evangelized and planted the church among those people and groups where the word of God has not taken root.

Fr. Lutz for instance, in Onitsha established a Christian village in 1885 as a strategy to convert the freed slaves. According to Nwosu *et al* (1985), “As soon as the Catholic missionaries arrived in 1885, they discovered that opposite their Onitsha mission was a flourishing slave market where slaves were sold on daily basis”. Seeing this practice as sin against humanity, Nwosu *et al*. said that “the Catholic missionaries under the supervision of Fr. Lutz started

buying these slaves and kept them to live within the mission premises”. Thus were the slaves converted to Christianity and taught Catholic doctrines and practices.

Apart from the slaves, other Nigerians were equally evangelized and baptized into the Catholic faith. In this way, the Catholic mission created a peaceful atmosphere in the Nigerian communities to the extent that people trusted them and used them as arbiters in settling disputes and quarrels among themselves. Many Nigerian children and redeemed slaves that were converted to Christians by the Catholic mission formed the foundation of school education in Nigeria. (Nwosu et al 1985:22-30).

ii. The Catholic church established schools in the country

Fr Lutz the Holy Ghost Missionary and his company made a request to the Obi of Onitsha in 18th century when they arrived to build a school. Obi et al (1985) recorded this request thus: “We come to live near you to open a school, to teach your children and your good people, all who may wish to come and learn knowledge from white men of Europe”. Certainly, the King was impressed and interested to have his people acquire western education. This early and humble request of Fr. Lutz paved the way for the establishment of a school in Onitsha. This is how it happened as documented by Obi et al (1985:226),

Thus, with a combination of acts of charity and the offer of knowledge of white men’s wisdom, these pioneer Catholic missionaries gathered around them a group of converts comprising of freed men and slaves, adult and children. Some of the latter (children and Adults) were taken under the care of the mission and they were given shelter. These groups formed the nucleus of the pupils of Fr. Lutz’s school at Onitsha, the first Catholic school in Igbo land.

Obi et al also recorded that “about forty (40) pupils started the first school and that was a good sign that the school apostolate had good prospects” (p. 226). In 1887, the subjects taught were English and Music By Fr. Lutz, Arithmetic and writing by Fr. Home. While Rev. Brother David Doran took full charge of the school administration. (pp. 227-233).

More schools were opened to encompass the major seminary in the present day Ekpoma and S.S. Peter and Paul in the Present day Bojida, Ibadan. Minor seminaries such as the Holy Martyrs of Uganda Seminary in the present-day Effurun, Delta State and St. Paul Minor Seminary in the present-day Air-Port Road, Benin-City.

iii. Youth formation

In order to show how important youth formation is to the Catholic church, Eke et al (2006, p. 36) pointed out the vision of Libermann thus:

I saw the people of the African continent presenting a tremendous opportunity for the church. To exploit the opportunity, however, I realized the church must establish stable Christian communities headed by native hierarchies. To bring this about, there is the need to devote particular care to the education of the young people and to provide them the most perfect civilization we are able to offer.

Thus, Catholic missionaries engaged the youth in different skill acquisition. For example, as early as 1908, a brass band was bought for the youth which they mastered instantly. With these musical instruments, the youth were invited from time to time to perform on various religious ceremonies and even on civil occasion. This development on the youth by the Catholic missionaries led to great interaction between the church and the societal people.

iv. Health care:

Fundamentally, health care was paramount in the instruction Christ gave His Apostles when he sent them out saying; “Heal the sick, bring the death back to life, cleanse the lepers and drive out demons” (Matt 13:8).

With this instruction, every aspect of health care is taken care of. This explains the reason why Fr. Lutz and his companions stocked themselves with medicine before leaving the shores of Europe. As soon as they set their feet on the Nigeria soil, they began to proclaim the word of God as well as providing care to the sick people. Nwosu et al observed that between 1886 and 1888, more and more sick people were flocking in the mission for medication. Frequently, Fr. Lutz was called to visit the

homes of many sick people so as to administer medicine and sacrament. For more serious cases, he advised that they be brought to the mission for more intensive care. Fr. Lutz was assisted by Fr. Home in the medical care of the people. Nwosu et al (1985:236-245) observed that the “Catholic missionaries took control of leprosy among the people. The lepers who were the neglected members of the society were taken adequate care of by the Catholic church”.

Thus, in August 1888, the first leper from Asaba was received in Onitsha by Fr. Lutz and provided him (leper) with shelter and medicine. Within seven days another leper arrived and was taken care of. Other lepers gradually arrived and eventually a leper settlement developed. Hospital, clinics and maternity were built to take care of the sick people.

v. Vocational Centres:

With the arrival of the Catholic Missionaries in 1885, there arose different needs that required the help of the indigenous people in areas such as; carpentry, tailoring, brick-laying and shoemaking. This humble attempt of the Catholic missionaries later gave rise to the establishment of formal vocational institutions. Places where these vocational centres existed were “Dumukofia, Nkpor, Nnewi and Onitsha where Home Economics, Business Studies, Carpentry and Social Studies were taught or offered” (Nwosu et al 1985:232).

vi. Establishment of Rehabilitation Centres:

The Catholic missionaries established orphanage and motherless babies home to cater for the people who they have evangelised to and also were in these categories. The Catholic mission established orphanage home at Obosi and Umuoji and from there spread the establishment of orphanage homes to other parts of Nigeria. (Nwosu et al).

3.2 The Protestant Churches

Protestant Churches refer to branches of Christianity that emerged in the 16th Century as a result of efforts to reform the Catholic church. They are characterized by theological ecclesiastical, cultural and geographical divisions. Some of the protestant churches have a global presence while others are limited to specific countries or even individual congregations.

In Nigeria for instance there were quite a number of the Protestant churches that emerged in the pre- independence time. They include:

- i.** The Methodist Church
- ii.** The Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion).
- iii.** The Presbyterian Church of Nigeria

- iv. The Nigerian Baptist Convention
- v. The Salvation Army
- vi. The Lutheran Church of Christ in Nigeria.

These protestant churches emerged in Nigeria under the umbrella of the Christians Missionary Society (CMS) and carried out activities that were of paramount importance to Nigerian people.

Their activities that created a sense of relationship between them and the societal people are:

- i. The peaching of the gospel and worship pattern in Nigeria. Thus, Nigerians were converted. They also establish church houses all over the place.
- ii. Taking a look at Nigerian language and culture and reshaping them.
- iii. Bringing to an end the slave trade. This was made possible by the help of the British Colonial Government and the British legitimate traders in Palm Oil and Cotton.
- iv. They introduced missionary hospitals in the Country. e.g. the present day Eku Medical Centre/Hospital; Formerly called Baptist Medical Centre.
- v. The protestant churches under the umbrella of the Christian Missionary Society (C.M.S) and by the effort of Mary Slessor stopped the killing of twins and the eradication of human sacrifices.
- vi. In the area of education, the church brought early schools which provided formal education to the citizen e.g St. Gregory's School, Lagos and Dennis Memorial Grammar School Onitsha (Founded in 1925) and the Infant Church Nursery School founded in 1844 by Mr. & Mrs. De Graft in Badagry.
- vii. Politically, the Protestant Churches gave Nigerians an insight into the divide and rule system of government.
- viii. The churches helped to brighten the intellectuals in Nigeria through the knowledge of the ethnic histories.

- ix. In the aspect of Agriculture, the Protestant Churches introduced agriculture which led to fish farming, cocoa farming, honey bee farming, palm oil produce, cassava farming, kolanuts and cotton farming. They taught Nigerians how to use artificial fertilizer to boost production
- x. They introduced vocations such as carpentry, shoemaking, tailoring brick laying and bread making.
- xi. They established recreational centres such as swimming pool in Eku Community, Delta State, Sport complexes and lounge.
- xii. The protestant church economically introduced legal trades in Nigeria. They brought refined good and mirror in exchange for palm oil and cotton. Agha (2004, pp.22-28) and Fafunwa (1974, pp.131-140).

3.3 African Indigenous Churches

African indigenous churches emerged in the 18th century in Europe and settled in Africa and particularly Nigeria between 19th and 20th centuries.

Some of these African indigenous churches are:

- i. African Native Baptist
- ii. Faith Tabernacle (1918) by Evangelist Garrick Sokan Braide
- iii. Christ Apostolic Church (1930) by Prophet Ayo Joseph Babalola
- iv. Cherubim and Seraphim (1925) by Prophet Moses Tunlase Orimolade
- v. Celestial Church of God by Samuel Oshoffa.

A. Reasons for the emergence of African indigenous churches

- i. Desire to Indigenize Christianity:

That is, African Christians were no longer satisfied with the methods employed by the foreign missions to Christianise African people. Therefore, they desired that Christianity should better be expressed in the African perception and worldview.

- ii. Passion for a Purer form of Christianity. The long period of catechetical instruction often impeded the growth of mission. As a result, African Christians and Mission Churches encountered conflict situations in both church and on the mission field. African Christians also argued that converts should be able to read the Bible themselves instead of long period of catechetical instruction.
- iii. Freedom to exercise gift of leadership
Mission vacillation and insensitivity on the issue of indigenous leadership in the church created invariability and became the root cause of a lot of disaffection among mission authorities at home or on the field, their agents, white and black and the numerous African converts.
- iv. The sterility of Mission Christianity in the face of a growing desire for a prompt and effective resolution of ultimate issues of life through the dynamic religious faith which could prevent a reversal into either the traditional religion or Islam.
- v. Mission disregard for or misunderstanding of African cultural past, especially in regard to her religious heritage and belief.
- vi. Other reasons for the emergence of African indigenous churches include: the crucial issues of personality clashes, racial discrimination, prejudice, polygamy, the role of Henry Venn, the Nationalist Feeling, Mass movement and circumstantial factors (Olatunde 2016:1-20).

B. Activities of the African indigenous Churches in Nigeria

The activities of the African indigenous churches created a sense of interaction or relationship between the church and the people in the following ways:

- i. They played major role in the attainment of Independence. The initiatives of the concerned indigenous African Church leaders who felt that Christianity should be better expressed in the African perception and worldview later aroused the interest of

the nationalists towards agitating for freedom or independence from the British rule. This freedom or independence was attained in Nigeria in October 1st 1960.

- ii. African indigenous Christians carried out activities that had to do with the proclamation of a holistic gospel of salvation that usually includes the deliverance of many Nigerian and those who were considered deviants of the National laws because they were believed to had been under the control or influence of evil spirits. Moreover, those that were sick and declared incurable by Medical Doctors' report were divinely healed by intensive prayers by those African Church leaders; e.g. Babalola healed by ringing of bell and handkerchief at Ipetu Ijesha, Osun State.
- iii. African indigenous Christians were involved in aggressive evangelistic activity, innovation and mission initiatives which led to rapid church growth and peace in Nigeria.
- iv. They established churches with their building in different parts of the country.
- v. Their activities called for religious tolerance which created peace and unity in the country. Example of such was Babalola's experience in his home town in Ilofa and Offa in the 1930s whereby the long-standing quarrel between Christians and Muslims were eradicated.
- vi. They also established schools such as St. Andrew Africa School and Joseph Ayo Babalola University both in Osun State where Africans or Nigerians were trained to be intellectuals and contributed to the development of the nation Nigeria. (Offiong 2020:1-20).

3.4 The Pentecostal Movement

The Pentecostal Movement refers to the group and sect which have traditionally placed emphasis on the speaking and receiving of certain gifts of the spirit such as speaking in tongues, prophesying and healing as a sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. They believed and claim

that the experiences of the apostles on the day of Pentecost are re-enacted in the day-to-day activities of the church. They maintain that, as in the early church, their meetings are characterized by outbursts of ecstatic enthusiasm featuring healing, speaking in tongues, interpretation of prophecies and all kinds of miracles.

Pentecostal churches include a wide variety of denominations.

Notable among these are:

- i. The Apostolic Church
- ii. Holiness Pentecostal e.t.c

These churches are also referred to as Holiness Movement and the Born-Again Movement.

There are neo-Pentecostal Churches that sprang up in the recent time which include:

- i. The Redeem Christian Church of God
- ii. The Deeper Life Bible Church
- iii. Christ Chosen Church
- iv. Foursquare Gospel Church
- v. Faith Healing Church
- vi. The Apostolic Faith Church
- vii. The Gospel Faith Mission International to mention but a few.

All these churches are anchored on a single body called the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN). Das, Ayegboyin, (2011, pp. 1-10).

1. Activities of Pentecostal Movement in Nigeria and their Relationship with State Affairs and Development.

Pentecostal movement has provided a framework for national transformation in Nigeria to such an extent that members are encouraged to participate in any sector of the society, like politics, economics, health, education, entertainment, industry and manufacturing, information and communication technology, etc. Therefore, through social networking and active participation,

Pentecostals influence government projects and provide social amenities, thereby improving the socio-economic and political land scape of Nigeria. Pentecostal movement serves as a catalyst of social change in Nigeria in the following way:

a. It brought physical and spiritual healing/development to Nigeria

Many Christian leaders of this movement claimed and demonstrated the healing power of God in the life of many Nigerians.

b. The Pentecostal Movement rendered Humanitarian services.

They gave food to the hungry, water to the thirsty, clothe to the naked and welcomed stranger. This they did in accordance with the scripture in Isaiah 61:1 and Matthew 25:46 with emphasis on doing good to all.

c. The Christian Leaders of Pentecostal Movement Initiated Good Governance and Political Participation.

This they did by showing dissatisfaction in the British rule and clamoured for political freedom and good governance by allowing Nigerian Christians to actively participate in politics which finally was made possible on 1 October 1960

d. The Pentecostal Movement rendered Healthcare Services.

The movement established health care centres and Hospitals in different part of Nigeria. These health care centres and Hospitals included Seventh day Adventist Hospital in Aba, Ilisan Faith Clinic Foundation in Nsukka, Queen Elizabeth Hospital Umuahia, Shedam Hospital Gombe and so on.

e. Pentecostal Movement Established Education Centres

Educationally, Pentecostal Movement or Churches have in no small measure contributed to national development. They have demonstrated this through, the establishment of Nursery, Primary and Secondary Schools, Adult Education, Sabbath and Sunday School Classes, Mass illiteracy, Program planning and training courses. Examples of some of

the educational institutions established by Pentecostal Churches that we can find today include: Ajayi Crowther University Oyo State and Bingham University established in some part of Nigeria by ECWA Church.

f. Generation of Employment and Opportunities for University Education

It is observed and true that the establishment of private Universities by some of the Pentecostal churches has created employment and provided admission to the admission seekers in Nigeria (Okoroafor & Okereke 2019:1-19).

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 CHURCH AND POST INDEPENDENCE NIGERIAN STATE

Following the Jamaican theory of church and state relationship propounded by Michael Manley in his writing "Distinct, yet Inseparable, Church and State", the elementary relationship of church and state was vividly stated, which includes: education, politics, economy, morality and eradication of harmful social cultural practices. In Nigeria these elements of church and state relationship as stated by Manley are quite evident, from 1960 when Nigeria attained independence to 2020.

4.1 CHURCH AND EDUCATION

Education was of paramount importance to Christian Missionaries when they arrived in Nigeria. They made several attempts to develop education in the country. The aim of their establishment of schools is stated below:

i. Why Church Introduced Education

The Christian missionaries effort to educate Nigerian locals or indigenous people to have a mindset against slave trading had resulted to the establishment of education in Nigeria. Moreover, the church's aim to preserve indigenous languages, in order to raise interpreters and make reading and writing of the Bible possible for the best interest of the people also led to the introduction of western education in Nigeria.

As Nigeria transitioned to independence, the church played a crucial role in educational development by establishing various levels and types of education.

ii. Various Levels/ types of Education

The church opened more of primary and post primary schools, as well as tertiary institutions at various levels. The number of church schools far outnumbered government owned primary and secondary schools in the country then, but were more in the Southern part of Nigeria. Every community in the Southern region has at least one church own primary school or secondary school. Some communities have both primary and secondary schools owned by the church. This church school continues to flourish even as communities and private sector began to queue in, providing educational facilities for their people (Adewale, 2000).

Adewale also noted that the church schools include, Wesley Boys and Girls High School, Saint Gregory College, Obalende, Ijebu-Ode Grammar School, Ijebu-Ode, Ipetu-Ijesha Grammar School, Osun State, Baptist High School Eku, St Andrew's Africa School, Ipetu-Ijesha, Osun, State. Mary Mount Mission School, Agbor, Delta State and a host of other primary and secondary mission schools all over Nigeria.

Apart from the primary and secondary schools established by the mission churches, there are other institutions of higher learning also established by these mission churches, such as faith-based universities to get further knowledge and be qualified to become professionals in different fields of study endeavor. According to Eshun, cited online (2023: 12-13), "Faith-based schools in Nigeria play a significant role in providing quality education that is rooted in spiritual values and principles; in the sense that these institutions combine academic excellence with a strong emphasis on character development and moral values".

Eshun also noted that some of the top Faith based schools in Nigeria that are renowned for their commitment to holistic education in the recent times include:

Covenant University, Otta, Joseph Ayo Babalola University of Christ Apostolic Church, Saint Peter and Paul Seminary Ibadan, Bowen University, Osun State, Babcock University, Ogun, Redeemers University, Lagos, Madonna University, Okoja, Anambra State, Anchor University

of the Deeper Life Bible Church, Lagos and a host of other faith-based Universities or Institutions of higher learning all over Nigeria.

iii. Government Involvement

In 1970, after the civil war, government got involved in education and introduced the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976 in order to give basic sense of responsibility to and train the Nigerian child to useful adulthood. According to Osokoya, immediately after independence in 1960, and the civil war that lasted between 1968-1970, education witnessed unprecedented growth not only in primary, secondary or other tertiary institutions, but also in Teacher Training Schools or Colleges. As part of the program to have qualified teachers to train school children in the Universal Basic or Primary education established in 1976, Federal government established teacher training Schools or National Teachers Institute for all grade II teachers and NCE in the federation.

Today, the effort of the church to establish teacher training schools to produce teachers that will train the Nigerian child to useful adulthood has made the church to beckon on government to further establish more of Teacher Training Schools such as Colleges of Education, Faculties of Education, Universities of Education in general to train qualified teachers to full capacity. Today, there are qualified teachers who hold B.Ed, BSc Ed, B.A Ed, M.Ed, and Ph.D degrees in Education from qualified Colleges and Universities. (Osokoya 2024).

Moreover, as part of the aim of government to be involved in education in 1970, government attempted to take over mission schools or schools founded by religious groups because education was thought to be a huge government venture and no longer a private enterprise. Another aim of government to take over schools founded by religious groups was to centralize education management and foster national unity by combating tribalism and promoting a common Nigerian identity. However, the result of this takeover was that the moral and character molding, which characterized missionary schools gradually eroded. Little or no attention was

paid to learners' character, morality and ethics. Another reason is that many of the teachers who themselves were product of UPE, lacked the needed moral training and thus did not possess the virtue to pass on to the learners. Government even neglected to fund schools which led to inadequate infrastructure Oranelo, (2022). However, as government returned schools to the original owners (missions), church delved into equipping schools to full capacity.

From 1970s, and after the return of schools to missions, to 2020, the church continues to do away with these inadequacies in the following ways:

- a.** Opening nursery, primary and secondary school with fully equipped facility such as light, fans and other electric gadgets to make teaching and learning process easy. They also fixed chalk board by the wall and provided writing materials like slates, notebooks, pens, school uniform and lots more for their pupils and students.
- b.** Establishment of tertiary institutions and universities. The Church established Colleges of Education, Polytechnics and Universities fully equipped with laboratories, sporting and recreational centers within the school premises as extra-curricular activities to facilitate teaching and learning process.
- c.** Giving grants to students who are less privileged in form of scholarship.
- d.** Building school hostels, refectories, dormitories and staff quarters for both staff and students.
- e.** Constructing and tarring of roads within the school premises were effectively done by the church.
- f.** The government reciprocated the church's effort to equip schools by leasing or releasing landed properties for missions to build schools and equip them. (Oranelo, 2022).
@www.onlinecitation.com.

iv. Benefits

The church gained more converts through establishment of schools and improved church finance from the income generated or profit made from schools. As government supported the church by releasing landed properties to build schools, The Nigerian child has access to quality education by the effort of the church in collaboration with government to establish infrastructure in schools in order to train them with a sense of responsibility to full adulthood (Oranelo 2022).

Other benefits according to Oranelo includes:

- a.** The church modeled Nigerian curriculum and teaching by emphasizing moral education.
- b.** Christianity encouraged character development through biblical teaching and introduction of Western education with religious value.
- c.** The church integrated Christian ethic into subjects like literature and history with the aim to instill Christian virtues in students.
- d.** Christian Religious Studies was incorporated into various subjects across the curriculum.
- e.** Through the introduction of Christian Religious Studies in curriculum, students learned biblical stories and Christian ethics alongside other academic contents.
- f.** The study of Christianity in school deepened student understanding of their faith. It fosters spiritual growth and moral development in students.
- g.** Christian principles emphasize love, compassion and service in education. Teachers incorporate these values into their teaching methods.
- h.** Teachers prioritize holistic development, nurturing students spiritual and moral well-being.
- i.** In the curriculum, Christianity promotes a student-centered approach, encouraging active participation. Teachers model Christian virtues in their interaction with students.

In a nutshell, the church has significantly influenced Nigerian education by shaping curriculum, teaching methods and the overall approach to learning.

4.2 The Church and Politics

The role the church plays in Nigerian politics cannot be over-emphasized. This is due to the fact that the church has been enmeshed in politics from time immemorial, from the Roman Empire to the medieval era and to the present day. Both parties have interacted and still interact for a political sustainability in the country. Although, it is argued that the church and state should be separated politically, but such argument has not always been so clear cut because of the role the church plays in Nigerian politics.

Moreover, Adeola (2020) examines the church and state relationship in politics in Nigeria and concludes that since October 1st 1960, the church has occupied a place of prominence in the last sixty years, as it is seen as the centre of righteousness where God can be consulted on issues regarding the nation. The church has over the years intervened in so many affairs of the nation in the following ways;

a. The Church is a place where God’s mind is spoken concerning the nation:

Clerics have spoken the mind of God over the nation for growth and development. For example, the former Head of State, Yakubu Gowon together with other Christian leaders held a national prayer rally for the country in the year 2020 at All Saints Anglican Cathedral, Osogbo with the theme “Never again”, to speak God’s mind concerning the nation.

b. The Church is a force to reckon with in Politics:

Church leaders have become a force to reckon with in check-mating politicians and public office holders in ensuring that they discharge their duties to the citizenry. For instance, one of the leaders of the Catholic Church, Rev. Fr. Mbaka in his sermon in the past few years urged Nigerian politicians to discharge their duties to the citizens in a free and fair manner whereby God and man would be pleased.

C. The Church is a Rescue Unit in Politics

Many government officials and politicians believe that the church remains the rescue unit for the masses never to loss hope but trust in the Lord their God. That is why the Former Vice President, Yemi Osibanjo together with other church leaders in a crusade held by Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN) in the University of Benin Teaching Hospital field some years ago urged all Nigerians, especially Christians never to loss hope but trust the Lord their God in the wake of Boko-Haam insurgency, herds men attack and hardship ravaging the society.

d. The Church is a Rallying Point in Politics:

Politicians have used the church as a rallying point to display personal and political interest during general elections in Nigeria. For instance, during one of the general elections in the past few years, the presidential aspirant from the south-south zone visited church houses to display his political interest. Even in the 2015 general elections, the campaigns' spokesperson of President Goodluck Jonathan said "our campaign train visited many major churches in the country as possible. We saw crowds of potential voters. Prayers were offered. There were declarations of vision and revelations". This statement revealed church and state relationship in Nigerian politics. Online citation @www.politics.Nig.org. 2022, pg.10.

Other points of interaction between the church and state in politics are:

i. The church involves itself in politics more directly by denouncing what is wrong in society:

According to Danladi (2009), the church encourages its members to participate in politics so as to enable them identify their gifts of leadership and use them to serve people in the society; especially those that are marginalized and oppressed. Christians are not just to present the church in the government but more importantly

to address the issues of injustice, corruption and bribery in the country. This the church has done and still doing in our nation Nigeria. In fact, during the struggle for democracy, 1993-1999, Catholic Bishops, leaders of Anglican Church and the Pentecostal Federation fought for the right of Bashorun Abiola and Baba Gana Kingibe to be given their mandate. A similar case also occurred in the just concluded general elections whereby the church stood for the presidential candidate of the Labour Party (LP), Peter Obi to be given his mandate. The church always stand out, strengthen Nigeria politics by encouraging her members to register for, update their Permanent Voters Card (PVC) and join any political party of their choice at the ward (grassroots) levels and participate actively in political activities of that party while upholding righteousness.

- ii. **The Church flushes out dirt from Nigerian Politics:** It is said that politics is a dirty game in Nigeria and should be jettisoned by Christians. However, the church seizes the opportunity to get her members involved in politics of the day to influence it positively and flush out the dirt. (JFO,1993).
- iii. **The church as a Panacea to corrupt politicians:** Since panacea means something that is said or believed to cure all ills or troubles, Christians therefore come into politics and speak against the ills and corruption of this country. Oderinde (2012).
- iv. **The Church as mediating structure in politics:** Oderinde (2012) noted that Christ is the Mediator of the world or Universe so also Christians see themselves as a mediators to bring sanity to the political structure of Nigeria.
- v. **The Church as a light to the path and heart of politicians:** Oderinde (2012) noted that the church is a light to the path and heart of politicians. According to him, the church has over the years been the light to the path and heart of politicians in the country, even to the present time. He noted that despite the

Muslim-Muslim ticket of All Progressives Congress (APC) in the just concluded 2023 general elections, yet the incumbent President Bola Ahmed Tinubu invites church leaders to Aso Rock to seek the face of God concerning how the affairs of the country should be handled towards political stability. This he does because he sees Christians especially those that are involved in politics as light to the path and heart of all other politicians in the country. Therefore, all Christians and those involved in politics are making several attempts to preserve politics from decay and to offer direction to the political leader whose practices are derailing from the principle guiding good politics. The church guides many Nigerians in their faith and many have been motivated and empowered to go against the general current of corruption to lead a good life.

4.3 Church and Morality/Eradication of Harmful Socio-Cultural Practices:

The church is an agent of change in the society. It plays significant role in the moral behaviour of citizens. In fact the existence of the church is fundamental to the rebirth of morality which seems to have faded in the modern day Nigeria. From 1960 till date, the church has been playing vital role in maintaining high moral standard of living for the citizens. According to Nwakwor *et al.* (2023:10), the church possesses the solution to Nigeria's moral problems and that the church remains an agent of moral rebirth in any society where it is found". Okogba (2021) noted that the role the church plays in sharpening morality in Nigeria since independence till date cannot be over emphasized. According to him, the church helps to maintain the set of moral standards to enable the people to live cooperatively in the society. The church helps to determine and do what is right and acceptable both in the sight of God and in the society. In fact, the moral relationship of church and state in Nigeria includes the following:

- i. The Church is a Fundamental Rebirth of Morality in Nigeria:**

The state of moral decadence in Nigeria in recent times has become so high that people no longer value what is morally good. According to the statement of a British Journalist who visited Nigeria about four decades ago “The highly cherished morality in Africa has been laid down at the altar of immorality and corruption” Sogolo (2019). Sogolo further noted that it seems that the yardstick for measuring what is good is lost in the country. What was supposed to be frowned at has become what is celebrated. According to him, Nigeria is the only country where corrupt individuals are celebrated rather than made to face the wrath of the law. However, the existence of the church is fundamental to the rebirth of morality which seems to have waned in modern day Nigeria. The church through the preaching of the gospel re-echoes the fundamental law of the land as stipulated in the book of Exodus chapter 20:12-17 that every citizen of the country must abide by the law of God and the man-made law derived from the word of God to regulate human conduct for peaceful coexistence in a given society. The church inculcates morality in the minds of members through the gospel to behave themselves in the right way so that the society can be worth living. By the church instilling morality in the mind of her members they profess peaceful relationship or coexistence in the society to which she belongs.

ii. The Church constantly reminds members of the society of the impending punishment awaiting deviants of law:

The church through her teaching constantly reminds her members of the punishment that awaits the deviants of moral code of conduct such as the armed robbers, thieves, prostitutes, liars, corrupt politicians, internet fraudsters (popularly called Yahoo boys), fake drug dealers, fake clergymen, corrupt instructors in education sector (e.g teachers and Lecturers), dubious market women, dubious commercial drivers, kidnappers, ritualists, greedy landlords and landladies, bad or rusticated students, corrupt

government officials and workers, corrupt private sector employer and employee and corrupt individuals.

iii. Governments Dependence on God for Good Moral Conduct in the society:

Nigerian government looks towards the church for God's guidance to enable its citizens abide by the moral code of conduct. No wonder, the phrase "so help me God" in the Old National Pledge; "O God of creation direct our noble cause" in the Old National Anthem and "O God of Creation grant this our one request, help us to build the nation" in the third stanza of the present National Anthem, show the kind of affiliation the state has with religion or church in the nation.

Another aspect of church and state relationship in morality is the eradication of harmful socio-cultural practices which includes:

i. Protecting the right of women:

The African traditional society is not as uncritical to women as we would like to think. In Nigeria, women have been treated as "second-class citizens". Often, they were used and handled like personal property of men, exploited, oppressed and degraded. Even the church leaders, knowingly and unknowingly to them have in one way or the other marginalized women in the church by confining them to only participate in one area of the church work. Some government officials in Nigeria have also reserved specific position only for men without putting it into consideration if women could function better than men in some of these positions. However, both church leaders and government officials in Nigeria in the recent times have decided to compromise and protect the rights of women thus:

1. Discard women marginalization, relegation, discrimination and dehumanization of all types.
2. Give women leadership role at all level, be it political, public offices and full participation in the government of Nigeria.
3. Give women full authority to lead in the religious society, especially a church.
4. Allow women to lecture in theological schools, head a Christian ministry and other important leadership roles in Christian folds.
5. See women as vessels of honour made by God and for a specific role just like men and should be treated as such.

In 21st century Nigeria, women are to do away with the subsisting cultural and traditional norms that woman are only meant for domestic chores. Agbalajoni (2009) and Abogunring et al., (2009)

ii. Jettisoning Child Abuse:

The rights of many children in Nigeria have been violated. In the northern region of Nigeria for instance, where Islam in various shades and form is the dominant religion, practices that might otherwise be regarded as child abuse are regarded as religiously correct. For instance, marriages of under age children. Child betrothal is also practised in some rural areas in the south and eastern regions of Nigeria. In most cities in Nigeria, such as Lagos, Port-Harcourt, Ibadan, Asaba, Onitsha, Calabar, Kano, Abuja, Warri and Benin-City and so on, children litter the streets, hawking various things under rain and sun to commuters during school hours. Needless to argue, these children are exposed to various vices on the streets. Some become victims of sexual molestation, motor vehicle and other accidents, while others have become objects of ritual killing.

In Nigeria notwithstanding, both government and the church are now seriously involved in the propagation of rights of children. The Federal Government enacted the Child's Right Act of

2013 which many states and the church have domesticated as comprehensive legislation on the rights of the child. The Act states the following about children and their rights:

- a. The best interest of the child shall be the primary consideration whatsoever.
- b. Every child must be given protection and care necessary for his/her well being.
- c. No Child should be allowed to do hard labour or night work.
- d. No child should be forced to early marriage or child betrothal.
- e. The choice of religion by the child must be by the prerogative of the parents or guardians of the child.

In support of government effort to protect the rights of children, the church has taken varied steps to curb child abuse in the following ways:

- i. Preaching against child abuse.
- ii. Sensitizing the public on the dangers of child abuse.
- iii. Calling on the government to step up efforts in tackling the problem.

For instance, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Nigeria (CBCN) in a communique issued at the end of its meeting in Umuahia in September 2012, condemned the abuse of human right, especially children and call on relevant authorities to wake up to their responsibilities. The same was applicable to the Diocese of Lagos West (Anglican Communion) at the end of its 3rd season of the 5th Synod in May 2014 decried the increase in the cases of violence against children and frowned at the sales of babies by outfits popularly called baby factory. The synod called on the states that have not adopted the Child Rights Act to do so in the interest of the Nigerian child.

Moreover, both church and government have and are still eradicating other harmful socio-cultural practices such as the killing of twins and human sacrifice prevalent in the pre-independent Nigeria, as well as drug abuse, prostitution and other inimical acts that are prevalent in the modern-day Nigerian society. Kaigerma & Martin (2012) and Wushishi (2014).

4.4. Church and Agriculture:

In Nigeria, the relationship between the church and agriculture is multifaceted, with churches playing various roles in promoting and supporting agricultural development. They are actually involved in initiatives ranging from large-scale farming to providing support for local communities affected by agricultural challenges like flooding. Some churches have established farms themselves, while others encourage and support individual farmer and local agricultural initiatives. Here is a more detailed look at the church involvement:

1. Direct involvement in farming:

a. Large scale farming: Some churches, particularly Catholic parishes, seminaries, monasteries and convents have established large farm for production. The main modern contribution of the Catholic church to Nigerian agriculture is in the area of human management, including the sponsorship of many projects aimed at organizing farmers into cooperatives, examples include the Igala Farmers' Council and Ogidi Farmer's cooperatives. The church programmes often place emphasis upon small projects under popular control. This approach gives maximum scope for the rural farmers to develop on their own and at a pace they can manage and control. There are cases whereby the church embarking on large scale production and calls for cooperation with the government and other sectors of the economy in the task of developing Nigerian agriculture.

b. Supporting Local Communities:

Churches like the ones mentioned above are actively involved in providing food, security and support to communities affected by issues like flooding.

c. Sponsorship or Training and Development:

Church is also involved in sponsoring training programs and developmental initiatives focused on modernizing agriculture as seen with the Presbyterian rural training centre in Bafut.

2. Promoting a “New Age” Agricultural Revolution:

a. Leveraging Church Resource:

The church shows her capability of being able to release necessary resources (Fund, manpower, land and influence) to drive a revolution in agriculture.

b. Changing Mindsets:

The church is seen as having the ability to influence community views and education to change perspectives and promote sustainable practices in agriculture.

c. Economic Development:

Churches are seen as having the potential to contribute to economic development through their involvement in agriculture. The Anglican church has launched a large-scale agricultural project to ensure food availability and boost Nigerian economy and diocese’s finances.

According to Bishop Rt Rev Ndubuisi Obi (2025), the diocese had acquired extensive land in various parts of the South-East for agricultural activities; farms have been established in Okija, Ozubulu, Anaku Igbariam, and arrangement are underway to acquire more land in other parts for agriculture. The bishop reported that significant quantities of crops such as cucumber, watermelon, pineapple, green pepper, cassava and yam have been cultivated and harvested. The church operates 40 large fish ponds, a piggery section, a poultry and a snail section. The Diocese employs an irrigation system to ensure constant water supply, allowing for continuous harvesting of vegetables. Palm oil and rice mill have been established with about 200 gallons of oil and 50 hectares of rice being produced by the church periodically. Some Pentecostal churches own farms like Redeemer’s Farm,

Mountaintop Granaries, Canaan land Growers, Deeper Mixed Farms etc, with hectares of land which have been put to very good use. Major crops such as cassava, plantain, maize, yam, pepper, fruits of all kinds and other plants like sugarcane, cotton, cocoa, kolanut, coconut, pear, oranges, palm fruits as well as fishery, animal farming, snail rearing and honey-bee making are farmed on the land to make food available for house holds and raw materials for manufacturing companies. As the church collaborates with government for agricultural development in the country, government also reciprocates by providing extension services not only in land but also in cash, needed material and manpower. According to the statement of one of the governors of Nigeria, Aregbesola, the Governor of Osun State to be precised during the visit of church leaders to him in the government house for agricultural development both in the state in particular and Nigeria in general, “The starting point of our economic recovery is the capacity to feed ourselves”. He further stated that “massive agriculture production remains the most sustainable alternative to success and progress in any country of the world, especially Nigeria that is blessed with fertile soil”. Wealth according to him is simply the capacity to feed oneself, individual, community, state and nation as well as saving surplus for the future and for exportation. Therefore, he said that both his local and state government are in full support of the church to provide extension services not only on land but in all ramification to aid the people’s effort on economic recovery and also to actualize their dreams on agricultural development in the country. This statement of the Governor shows church collaboration with Nigerian government for agriculture sustainability. Webmaster (2016:16) and Okechukwu, C.N. (2018).

4.5 Church and Human Empowerment:

Churches in Nigeria have a critical role in the socio-economic development of their communities. By shifting their focus from just preaching the gospel and enrichment to empowerment, they positively impact the lives of their members, particularly youth and women, as well as contributing to human rights advocacy.

Here is a more detailed look at the church's involvement in human empowerment in Nigeria:

1. Youth Empowerment Education and Skill Training:

The Church often provides educational programs and skill development opportunities for young people, helping them gain the skill and knowledge needed for employment and entrepreneurship. For instance, the former Head of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Ayo Oritsejafor has equipped many youth in Nigeria. With collaboration with the former President of Nigeria, Goodluck Ebele Jonathan, the church sent many Nigerian youth to technical and vocational training. Often time, AMNESTY was granted to many young persons in the country, as a result of which many were trained to become masters in such field as, driving, tailoring, barbing, carpentry, welding, fishing, snail rearing, bead making, honey bee making, production of soap, candles and repair in electronic gadgets.

2. Women Empowerment:

Churches are actively involved in training and educating women and girls on their human rights and advocating for their equality particularly in areas like leadership and economy. Churches provide financial literacy training, microfinance opportunities and support for women entrepreneurs, helping them to become economically self-sufficient. Some churches if not all are actively working to promote women's leadership within the church structure and in wider society. Women are now empowered to hold key Theorys in the church, like the Theory of Pastors, Evangelists, Deaconesses, Financial Secretaries, Ministers of Sacraments, Catechists and Prophetesses. For instance, Esther Ayandokun, a female Professor was empowered to become a key leader in the Nigeria Baptist Convention. Agbonifo is also a key leader of "Women Decree a Thing" world-wide. The Catholic Women Organization (C.W.O) and the Pentecostal Women Organization (PWO) are not left out in this regard.

The collaboration between the church and state has become a source of empowerment for women in Nigeria. It has made women to stand out as key leaders. Women are holding Theory of leadership in the present-day Nigeria. For instance, Fidelia Njezie was the Former Minister of Aviation, Veronica Ogbuazu, Former Commissioner for Education, Delta State, Late Dora Akunyili, Former Director General of National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC), Cordelia Agbebaku, Former Vice Chancellor of Ambrose Alli University, Lilian Imuentinyan Salami, the Vice Chancellor of the University of Benin, Ireti Heebah Kingibe, the present Senator of the Federal Capital Territory, Obiageli Orogbu of the House of Representatives, as well as Ngozi Nma Odu, the incumbent Deputy Governor of Rivers State.

Moreover, with church and government collaboration, women are being empowered both in cash and kind to be economically sufficient in different areas of specialisation.

Some women in the federation have been given loans to trade. Some women who are farmers have been granted fertilizers to enable effective crops production. The other day, about fifty women were given huge amount of money by church leaders with government officials to alleviate poverty. Also, in December 2021 the Human Right Activist of Nigeria together with Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) organized training for women and girls in Abuja. The church has also collaborated with the Nigerian government to establish the following for women and girls:

- i.** Education for gender equality.
- ii.** Literacy courses for widows, single women and girls.
- iii.** Vocational training for widows single women and vulnerable young people in the field of fashion design, tailoring, knitting, shoemaking, cosmetics and catering in various training centres.
- iv.** Vocational training for young women and men whose lives are characterized by drugs, violence and poverty in the city of Jos.
- v.** Awarding start-up grants to successful graduates of vocational training programs.
- vi.** Workshops in business management and allocation of startup capital to set up a small business
- vii.** Workshops for young mother on nutrition and hygiene and on promotion of mother child health.
- viii.** Psychological support and trauma management for victims of flood, violence and conflict
- ix.** Awareness campaigns regarding human rights and gender-based violence to empower women and girls and increase their educational opportunities. (2016).

3. Social Justice Support and Advocacy:

Churches provide a platform for individuals to share their experiences and concerns, fostering a sense of community and enabling them to advocate for their rights and needs. Churches collaborate with government to address issues of poverty, inequality and other social injustices, advocating for policies and practices that promote fairness and equity. They also provide for the poor and the vulnerable in the society. Many men who were victims of Boko-Haram insurgency, flood, herdsmen attack and other natural disasters have been relieved and empowered with cash or other relief materials to be self-sufficient. In many places across the nation of Nigeria where herd of cattle have destroyed the crops and produce of farmers, the church in collaboration with government have sent relief materials to them to alleviate the effect of the disastrous act. Today both church and government are in full support of social justice and advocacy.

4. Government Policies:

Government policies and regulations impact the ability of the church to operate and complement her empowerment programs. For instance, in recent years, the Nigerian government in an attempt to empower citizens especially the youth and alleviate poverty among the people launched various programs which include National Poverty Eradication Program (NAPEP), National Directorate of Employment (NDE), National Economic and Empowerment Development Scheme (NEEDS) and Family Economic Advancement Program (FEAP) which the church keyed into in the attempt to eradicate poverty among members of the church and citizens of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Chikwelu and Arinze, (2009), Azhekueme(2015), Hornby (2016), and SEJRSD (2020).

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF CHURCH AND STATE RELATIONSHIP

5.1 Organization of Islamic Conferences (OIC)

OIC is an organization or body of Islamic countries, communities or Conferences which is been used by Muslims who are leaders in the country for the Islamization agenda. A good example of this was the Former Head of State Ibrahim Badamusi Babangida (IBB), who in 1986, allegedly registered Nigeria as a member of OIC and this posed a lot of challenges to Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) because such an attempt was made to relegate Christianity to the background. The Christians became even more restive when it was discovered that top government officials like the Chief of General staff, the Foreign Minister, Minister of Internal Affairs and the Minister of Information, who were Christians, were just as equally bemused and ignorant of the decision as the general public. For example, the second in command to the Head of State, Ebitu Okiwe, publicly declared that he had been unaware of such an important policy decision. Indeed, many Nigerian Christians believed that it was this public utterance that led to his removal from office by Babangida as Christians attempt to kick against such development (Falola 1998).

However, the immediate fallout of Nigerian's full membership of the OIC was that it deeply divided the country along religious lines. Both Christians and Muslims anchored their opTheory and support on the interpretation of the secular status of the country. Christians demanded an immediate withdrawal from the organization because the 1979 constitution clearly makes Nigeria a secular state. Championing the Christian cause was Archbishop Okogie, the then leader of the Christian Association of Nigeria, who held his views very strongly that Nigeria should be totally and unconditionally withdrawn from OIC, Okojie (1986).

The Former Head of State, Ibrahim Babangida after series of meeting with some government officials concluded that rather than affirm Nigeria's member of OIC or announce its withdrawal, it would be mute on the matter and allow sleeping dogs lie. Since then, the church has found it difficult to penetrate the northern states of Nigeria and establish the church there with full confidence. Olaniyi and Huriwa (2021).

5.2 Sharia Question

Another major problem confronting the smooth running and rapid growth of the church in the country is the issue of Sharia. Muslims in Nigeria perceived English legal codes operating in the country as Christianized and therefore, agitate for the implementation of the Sharia to try cases concerning Muslims. They provided many grounds upon which they based their arguments which include:

1. That the whole system of the Nigerian government favours Christianity. They did not seek for the abolition of the common law in Nigeria but sought their cases to be tried by the sharia.
2. Muslims maintain that official recognition of Sunday as free-working day, English as an official language, official use of Gregorian calendar for all governmental activities and the use of Christian cross as an emblem in the government health care institutions ambulances and first aid kits as well as the theory of secularism in Nigeria among others have had English-Christian connection.
3. Muslims maintain that the issue of secularism as advocated by western Christians entailed separating the spiritual from the mundane and subordinating divine laws to man-made laws. It is pertinent to note that in Islam, secularists are irreligious, because Islam is the total way. Muslims are also of the view that secularists are the representatives of western Christian civilization because they believed in the separation of state from religion and the subordination of Allah's law to man-made laws.

However, Christians stood their ground to counter the views of Muslims by opposing Sharia and defending Christianity in the following ways.

- i.** That English is just a language just as Arabic is. Christians argued that the relationship between Arabic language, Islam and the Sharia is similar to the relationship between English language, Christianity and the Common Law.
- ii.** Christians agitated against the Arabic inscription on the Nigerian currency and sought it expunged.
- iii.** Christians are of the view that if they could tolerate Arabic language and the inscription, there should be no reason why Muslims could not appreciate the fact that English language and Roman inscription represent Christian because it was brought by Europeans who were English and Christians as well.

Thus, the institutionalization of English law in the Nigerian legal system and its enforcement across Nigeria since independence served as the reason why Christians viewed the Sharia as not part of the Nigerian legal system. The Sharia legal system according to Christians had been in operation in the predominantly Muslim north for centuries before the British occupation and the introduction of English law in the area.

As a result of the above sharia debate, the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) found it obscure to penetrate with the gospel the northern hinterland and thrive there; even when a Christian leader late Reinhard Bonnke visited Kano in the year 2000 to propagate the gospel, it all resulted to a mini-civil war because of the incompatibility of the gospel with the Sharia. Today the rapid growth and development of the church is now restricted only to the southern part of our country Nigeria. This is indeed a great challenge to the church. Ibrahim A. (2000) and Labbo *et al.*, (2019).

5.3 Secularization of Mission Schools

Actually, the aim of the church to establish schools in Nigeria was to convert indigenous Nigerians to Christianity. It was also a way to preserve indigenous languages, in order to raise interpreters and make reading and writing of the Bible possible for the best interest of the people. Other reasons include, to educate Nigerian locals against slave trading, emphasizing moral training as well as spiritual wellbeing of the people and further train them to be qualified to work in various parastatals of Nigerian government offices.

However, secularization of schools by government in 1970s dealt a blow to the church in the following ways:

1. The aim of the church to establish schools associated with high standards and moral discipline became null and void.
2. The takeover favoured Muslims in northern Nigeria, where parents were encouraged to enrol their children in schools for free of charge, meanwhile Christians in the south were neglected.
3. The takeover negatively impacted the moral education and discipline fostered by Christian mission schools.
4. The take over led to a decline in education due to increased demands on resources and a focus on a more secular curriculum.
5. As government took over schools from missions it weakens the strength of the church to grow and spread rapidly; especially in the northern regions.
6. The government takeover was seen as a step towards secularization aligning with the Nigerian constitutions' principle of secularism, which prevents the adoption of a state religion.

7. Secularization of schools was a threat to the church due to the fact that it gave upper hand to Muslims schools to be fully funded by government, especially in the North to the detriment of church schools in the Southern region of Nigeria.

5.4 Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 (CAMA LAW)

On August, 2020, President Muhammadu Buhari signed the Companies and Allied Matters Bill 2020 into law to regulate activities of religious bodies including investigating their finances. The law also states that a non-Christian may be appointed interim manager of a church to replace Christian church members. Worse still, there is no tenure limit for the appointed “Interim” management. Churches are voluntary association which people join and leave of their own free will. Anyone who dislike the manner in which his/her church is being run is free to leave. CAMA 2020 effectively empowers such disaffected members to petition government to replace the Overseer or Board of Trustees with appointees who perhaps do not have the interest of the church at heart.

External appointed leaders who do not know, understand or agree with these beliefs will only violate them and cause unnecessary trouble. As such, CAMA 2020 tramples on the internal right of members of the voluntary association as contained in their governing instruments. However, social commentators and Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) condemned the new legislation, calling it “unacceptable, ungodly, reprehensible and an ill wind that blows no one any good”. This is because the CAMA is an affront on the church as well as relegating the church to the background because the law excluded Islamic institutions, which are covered by sharia legal code. Enahoro E. (2020) & www.DailyTrust.org (2020:8).

Prospects

5.5 Dispute Resolution

In Nigeria, churches frequently play a vital role in dispute resolution, acting as a mediator, facilitator and advocate for peace. They leverage their religious principles of love, forgiveness and justice to resolve conflicts; often through dialogue and community engagement. This role is particularly important in the context where the government may struggle to address complex socio-political issues and the church can fill the void in this regard.

Here is a more detailed look at the roles played by the church in dispute resolution:

a. Mediator and Facilitator:

Church leaders and representatives can directly engage in conflict resolution, serve as mediators between conflicting parties. For instance, in the past, the church played a complementary role in the civil war that lasted from 1968-1970 by becoming an arbiter between the bight of Biafra and the Federal Government. Another instance was when the church stood as an advocate and mediator to resolve conflict between the duly elected civilian president and the then military president in the annulment of the June 12, 1993 presidential election, adjudged by international observers as Nigeria's freest and fairest election.

b. Established Social Structure and Authority

Churches have a well-defined hierarchy and leadership structures, providing a framework for addressing disputes and grievances. Their influence extend beyond the church walls, encompassing various social strata and influencing community norm and values.

Pastors and church leaders often hold significant social standing and are respected for their spiritual guidance which can be leveraged to facilitate dialogue and reconciliation.

c. Spiritual Authority and Biblical Principles

As a matter of fact, Christian faith emphasizes love, forgiveness, reconciliation and justice, providing a moral compass for conflict resolution. Biblical teachings offer frameworks for addressing disagreements, emphasizing dialogue, mediation and seeking common ground. Therefore, the church's spiritual authority and emphasis on peace building can inspire individuals to approach conflict with a commitment to resolve issues peacefully. For instance, the church by the effort of Fr. Lutz and his companions used spiritual authority and biblical principle to resolve conflicts among their host communities in Onitsha when they arrived Nigeria.

Existing Networks and Resources

Churches have established networks within their congregation and with other faith-based organizations, providing a platform for connecting with individuals and groups involved in conflicts. These networks can be used to identify disputes, facilitate dialogue and mobilize resources for peace building efforts.

The church had also leveraged its existing infrastructure and programs to support mediation and reconciliation processes. The church in Nigeria possesses a unique combination of social influence, spiritual authority and existing resources that make it a valuable prospect for dispute resolution (Uzukwa.1989).

5.6 Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) has the vision of fostering unity, promoting social justice and advocating for Christian values in Nigeria. By focusing on these areas, CAN enhances its positive impact on the Nigerian Society in the following ways:

- a. Promoting Ecumenism:** As the vision of CAN to be the unifying voice of all Christians in Nigeria. CAN works towards greater unity among Christian denominations in Nigeria, fostering understanding peace and mutual respect.

- b. Advocating for Social Justice:** As part of the activities of CAN to impact the development of the Church and Nigeria, CAN advocates for the well-being of Christians and all Nigerians, including programs that address financial and economic challenges, as well as poverty alleviation.
- c. Upholding Christian Values:** CAN plays the role in promoting moral and religious education, contributing to the development of a strong moral foundation in society.
- d. Engaging in Dialogue:** As part of the objectives of CAN to act as a Liaison committee, CAN has engaged in open and respectful dialogue with other religious groups and the government, seeking common ground and address issues of concern to the nation.
- e. Impacting Spiritually:** The Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) contributes to the spiritual development of both the church and the nation, introducing various programs like crusades, residuals, rallies and other activities to boost the spiritual awareness of Nigerians. For example, CAN at the national level organizes three days prayer and fasting for restoration of peace in the North-East zone of Nigeria. Various branches in different states organize inter denominational crusades as refresher to the spiritual status of Christians and non-Christians in the society.
- f. Impacting Politically:** CAN would not limit its impacts to the spiritual wellbeing of Nigeria alone, it has as well impacted positively and actively as a political pressure group of Christians in Nigeria. CAN has played tangible and vital role in election of political office holders. It has served as rallying point and new bride for political parties and groups. During the takeover of schools in Osun State, Anambra State and Kwara State between 1991 and 1994, CAN raised its voice politically in support of retaining or returning schools to the original owners.
- g. Educating Nigerians:** Christian Association of Nigeria has contributed to education in Nigeria by supporting its members to give orientation to the populace through

enlightenment programs. CAN has achieved its aims of educating Nigerians by encouraging its members to establish schools ranging from nursery schools to university education where people will be trained with high moral conduct and responsible mind to function in various government offices and be useful to themselves. Omotoye (2024), Dodo, (2025), Akamu (2025) and Williams C.O, (1976)

CHAPTER SIX

FINDING, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Finding

The findings from this study are as follows:

1. The church in Nigeria had undergone significant historical development between 1960 and 2020, influencing various aspects of national life.
2. The church had made notable impacts on the socio-economic, political, and religious landscape of Nigeria.
3. Government policies have had both positive and negative effects on the activities and growth of the church.
4. That there were promising prospects for improved church–state relations in Nigeria if mutual understanding and respect were maintained.
5. That several challenges had characterized the relationship between the church and the state in Nigeria from 1960 to 2020, but there were viable strategies to overcome them.
6. Concluded that fostering dialogue, tolerance, and policy reforms could help reduced friction between the church and the state in Nigeria.

6.2 Recommendations

This thesis has contributed to knowledge in the following ways:

1. that any real or perceived threat to the Christian faith tends to unite Christian faithful and their leaders irrespective of their denominational affiliations.
2. that as a religious and social organization, the church was capable of transforming any society by her teaching on personal responsibility, hardwork, dignity of labour, love for fellow humans to mention but a few.

6.3 Conclusion

It was concluded that the relationship between the Church and Nigerian nation had engendered collaboration for growth and development in the area of education, agriculture, politics and moral development of the Nigerian citizenry through character and spiritual training, fair treatment of children, youth empowerment and eradication of women marginalization. It was recommended that the church has ability to foster group cohesion, nurture and sustain reciprocity among members of any community. Therefore, Christian congregations are expected to serve and deal with the social needs of their community. Also, it Nigerian Government should deem it necessary to always embrace the church in matters concerning the public and politics because the church influenced politics not only by ruling power but in so far as it served the communities in which it lives.

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