



## ABSTRACT

In recent times, the church and the political structure or aspect of the society have become so entangled that they two cannot be separated one from the other.. Before now, the two have been separate structures complementing each other. They played key roles in the society but toe separate paths that end up promoting the growth and development of the society. In contemporary times in Nigeria, the two have seemed so intertwined that none seem separate any longer. It must be established that the church or religious structure by all standards be the

# THE CHURCH AND POLITICS IN A DEFINED MARGIN AND ADVOCACY FOR A DYNAMIC CHRISTIAN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

**\*VEN EGESI JONATHAN, C.; \*\*VEN DURUJI SIMEON UGOCHUKWU (PHD); & \*\*\*DR (MRS) NWEBO-EZECHUKWUNYERE IJEOMA**

*\*Imo State Polytechnic, Umuagwo-Ohaji, P.M.B 1472, Owerri-Nigeria.*

*\*\*Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri.*

*\*\*\*Department of Educational Foundation, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri.*

## Introduction

The human society as we know is made up of various structures, some are considered as sub- structures while some others are considered as super structures. To for other buttress my point home, the sub-structures can further be considered as the foundational structures while others are the completion or complementing structures. Among other things, education, religion and economy are among the sub- structures while politics is among the super-structures. It must be established that the off-shoot of the sub-structures are considered as the super structures. That in effect means that the two broad categorization are closely related to each other. The foundation and the completion share or have something g in common so to speak.

For our discourse we are practically and basically interested in politics and religion as structures making up the human society. It must be established that in recent times, the political structure is beginning to assume unimaginable domination over the rest all others, This ought not be so. Though each structure has its own basic cum primary roles and responsibilities, they most times checkmate themselves. While some are considered as important some others are considered as more important than others. This is because certain things that take place in some whether positive or negative go a long way in affecting the rest of the system . A typical example is the political structure.



*watchdog of other structures of the human society, the political structure inclusive. This as believed will keep the political structure on its feet. This is also believed as something that will keep the political structure on its toes or feet. It will also make the political class avoid the temptation of usurping the rest of the structures making up the human society. The above statement from the gamut of this study. Various data collection techniques as interviews, use of questionnaire, textbooks, journals and the internet were used. The structural- functionalist theory was adopted as theoretical framework. Thereafter, conclusion was drawn.*

**KEYWORDS:** Church politics, Defined margin, Advocacy, Dynamic, Participation.

This structure to a very reasonable extent determines what happens in other structures. That is to say that when the decision is favourable , it go along way in affecting the rest of the system favourably and when otherwise, the same thing happens. In recent times, many religious denominations have forgone the role of checkmating the political structure, rather they have found joy in sharing in the booty of the so called political class. Infact, one find it exceedingly difficult to separate the church from the political structure in recent. The religious sector other playing the role of correcting political ills now have dabbled deeply into it that what is being experienced is utter or total decay and this really is appalling.

#### **DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

In this section of the work, we shall be examining certain terms or concepts embedded in the topic that might seem a bit difficult for ordinary people to understand. They include these:

#### **CHURCH POLITICS/ CHRISTIANITY POLITICS**

The relationship between Christianity and politics is a historically complex subject and a frequent source of disagreement throughout the history of Christianity as well as in modern day politics between the Christian right and Christian left. There have been a wide variety of ways in which thinkers have conceived of the relationship between Christianity and politics., with many arguing that Christianity directly supports an particular political ideology or philosophy. Along these lines, various thinkers have argued for Christian anarchism, Christian libertarianism , or Christian democracy . Others believe that Christians should have little interest or participation in politics or government, Wikipedia online dictionary,2022.

#### **DEFINED MARGIN**

Margin is taken as the percentage of the purchase price of a security that must be covered by cash or collateral when using a margin account. The current initial margin requirement set by the Federal Reserve board's regulation is only a minimum requirement , some equity brokerage firms set their initial margin requirement higher, investopedia.com.



### **ADVOCACY**

Advocacy is defined as any action that speaks in favour of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others. This fact sheet offers others a look at how advocacy is defined, what kind of activities comprise advocacy work, and what kinds of advocacy projects several tax-exempt groups are currently leading. On the other hand, Lobbying is basically one kind of advocacy. Not all advocacy is lobbying but all lobbying is advocacy

### **DYNAMISM**

According to Collins dictionary, dynamism is taken for any of the several theories that attempt to explain phenomena in terms of an immanent force or energy. It can also be taken for the forcefulness of an energetic personality. In furtherance, it is taken for the theory that force or energy rather than mass or motion, is the basic principle of all phenomena, the quality of being energetic, vigorous etc.

### **PARTICIPATION**

At the most basic level, participation means people being involved in decisions that affect their lives. Through participation, people can identify opportunities and strategies for action and build solidarity to effect change.

### **REASONS FOR CHURCH PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS**

There are very many reasons why church or Christians take part in politics, they are very many but the most important ones are these:

### **LEGISLATING MORALITY**

In commanding Christians to be salt and light of the world, Jesus is encouraging us to influence our culture rather than isolate ourselves from our culture. Some well intentioned believers feel any efforts to exert pressure on the behaviour of non-Christians is wrong.

Anything beyond evangelism is off-limits. As a result, Christians should definitely not engage in politics. This thinking is characterized by the false assumption. I personally believe in such and such, but I can't impose my morality on others.

Every time a legislature enacts legislation,, it is always an imposition of morality. Laws against thievery impose the morality of the honest over the dishonest. Laws against prostitution impose a sexual morality. Declaring anything legal or illegal is a statement of morality. Legislation is built upon morality and morality is built upon religion.

### **VOTING YOUR/ ONE'S RIGHT**

God has given Christians in democratic countries a unique way to salt their world that first-century believers did not enjoy. We have been granted the freedom to choose leaders that will advance righteousness or unrighteousness.

When you hear someone say God is in control, no matter who gets elected. A statement like that is usually intended to ease the guilt of someone who chooses to ignore biblical values when they vote. God always has ordained the means to achieve that outcome when people vote. Ignoring



what the bible say about the issues at stake in an election is inexcusable. Ignoring the positions of individual candidates on matters like abortion, same sex marriage and religious rights is immoral. Those who say that Christians should not try to impose their morality on the populace should listen to the counsel of late Chuck Colson. As he posits that the popular notion that you can't legislate morality is a myth. Morality is legislated everyday from the vantage point of one value system being chosen over another. The question is not whether we will legislate morality, but whose morality gets legislated.

#### **WHY CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIANS HAVE FAILED TO MAKE POSITIVE IMPACT IN POLITICS**

Many reasons have been adduced why the church has failed to make reasonable cum positive impact on politics and the following are among them.

#### **HIGH RATE OF CORRUPTION**

In recent times, it has become evident that both the political class and the church has become so tied and intertwined that the laid down principles and moral standard of the Christian believers have dropped tremendously. It has been discovered over time that the Christian believers nowadays have closed the disparity or demarcating line between politics and the church. This is due man's crave for insatiable desire of wealth accumulation. This has dragged many people's personality and prestige to the mud. The system has become so corrupt that the rich gets richer and the poor masses are ravaged by excessive hunger. This infact is so ridiculous. As the gap has kept on widening everyday. Regrettably those we consider the Christians in politics seem to have become more corrupt than the non believers.

#### **LOSS OF DIRECTION AND VISION**

Another aspect of the whole thing which needs to be discovered and talk over so seriously is the problem of loss of direction and good sense of vision. Many Christians have lost out of vision of what they are pursuing due to carelessness and the value system around them. The society has gone so bad that people have lost vision of what they are pursuing and where they want to end up. They have decided compromising their stand and faith in the Lord.

#### **CRAVE AND DESIRE TO BELONG**

It has equally been discovered that various slang has sprang up which are used in addressing people in various ways and for various occasions and purposes. Certain people want people to know they belong or they know what is happening and wouldn't want to be regarded and unexposed or uncivilized in some sense. That is why in a bid to achieve the feeling to achieve this sense of belongingness ego they do virtually everything and stop at nothing to achieve it, this really is discrediting.

#### **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.**

#### **THE FUNCTIONALIST THEORY**

The functionalist theory was selected as theoretical framework for the study. The functionalist theory otherwise known as the structural- functionalism is a framework for building theory that



sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. This approach looks at society through a macro- level orientation which is a broad focus on the social structures that shape society as a whole and believes that society has evolved like organisms. This approach looks at both social structure and social functions. Functionalism addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements : namely norms, customs , traditions and institutions.

A common analogy , popularized by Herbert Spencer presents these parts of the society as organs that work toward the proper functioning of the body as a whole in the most basic terms, it simply emphasizes the effort to input as rigorously as possible, to each feature ,custom or practice, its effect on the function of a supposed stable cohesive system . For Talcott Parsons, structural functionalism came to describe a particular stage in the methodological development of social science rather than a specific school of thought.

In essence, both religion and politics are two sub- structures of the society. They form part of the foundation of the human society. In a better sense, no society can do without either of them and without the two. Invariably, they prove key to the growth and development of the society. The two structures are key organs if considered in the light of a human/ organism. It is considered that when one of the two key elements or structures is experiencing abnormality it affects the rest of the system. And since that is considered the case here, this paradigm or theory is considered most appropriate for this study.

#### **EMPIRICAL STUDIES**

Various scholars have examined and in depth too the rapport between the church and politics. They examined this under sub headings.

The church serving the function of a mediator.

This actually has been one way church leaders can come in to serve as mediating structure. According to Oderinde (2012: 87) defined mediating structure as those institutions standing between the individual and in his private life and the larger institutions of public life. Practical examples are the neighbourhood, family, church and voluntary as associations. As Christ is the mediator of the world universe , so also must Christians see themselves as mediators in order to bring sanity to the political structure. Oderinde 2012 page 87 added Christianity should serve as a panacea to corruption , Watkins 2012:486 stressed that the word panacea means something that is said or believed to cure all ills or troubles . Therefore, Christians should come into politics in order to speak against the ills and corruption of the country. As a church, we are to shed light on the path and heart of men. Oderinde 2012: 88, this position should enhance faith and the fear of God among the corrupt people of the world. . Not only that , but our position should promote sense of responsibility for the reformation of man's thought and belief. Christianity also promote high principles of morality, human relations and extinguishes all sorts of ill practices from the political society, Corrie, 2017: 291, came to understand that the leaders of churches founded by missionary activity have often been ready to take part in the political process . In the Philippines Evangelical , Christians joined in the protests that brought the downfall of Marcos . In Sarawak, an Evangelical church released one of its pastors to stand for parliament. In Malaysia, Evangelical Christians have engaged as co-belligerents (that is aggressively hostile) with other non- Muslim groups to protect



the church's status. In South Africa, some Christians churches were active in the post Apartheid situation and in particular the Truth and Reconciliation commission was built upon Christian principles. However, where the church has failed to engage with its own political context, opting for a gospel that is disengaged from the world, the result can be disastrous, the events in Rwanda in 1994 being a classic example. Many churches have accepted that as communities still in this world, it is vital for them to take a role in the political process of their countries both as individual Christians and as institutions.

### **CONCLUSION**

By way of conclusion, the position of the church in our society is beyond our active party politics. We stand in a position to contribute in solving various social and political problems. The church should be able in that regard or sense to make peace between fronts of tensions, be it at ward level, village, tribal groups or different religions.. There is need for a sense of citizenships needs to be built from below. The Christians do so by training ourselves to be service to others. Christians do not only become active where religious interests are served but have in mind the common welfare of all. We cannot control or dominate all areas of life as a church but what we are saying in essence is that we must be ready in all these areas. Therefore whatever serves human needs and combat poverty, ignorance, oppression and sickness, may be said to be the relative aim of Christian politics and politicking, nothing more, nothing less.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Having concluded this discourse, we make following recommendations.

- 1) Contemporary Christians should understand their vision and pursue it vigorously.
- 2) The craze to make wealth by Christians should be discouraged.
- 3) The church should rise up to the challenge of offering valuable advise to the rest of other structures in the system other than losing its focus.
- 4) Christians and the church should resist at all cost every temptation to get corrupted by the political class.

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