

ABSTRACT

The study examines Christian participation in politics: a moral concern in contemporary Nigeria, the study has the following objectives, To examine the level of Christian participation in politics considering the moral concerns in contemporary Nigeria, To examine the factors limiting Christian participation in politics in Nigeria, To determine the prospects of Christians active participation in politics in Nigeria.

Concerning methodology for this study, data was obtained from primary source that is questionnaire. The data to be obtained out there in the field shall be presented in a tabular form and analyzed through the use of a simple percentage table to enhance quick and easy understanding of the respondents' responses or opinion on the topic being researched on. The statistical tool employed to test the hypotheses of the study is the regression and chi-squared. The sample size of this study consists of thirty-two (32) respondents. This research work adopted the convenience sampling technique in selecting the respondents from the total population. A total sample size of two hundred and forty (200) respondents was selected from the research population using the convenient sampling method.

The study has the following findings; to examine the level of Christian participation in politics considering the moral concerns in contemporary Nigeria. To examine the factors limiting Christian participation in politics in Nigeria and to determine the prospects of Christians active participation in politics in Nigeria.

This research will educate the general public on the level of participation of Christians in Nigerian politics and will also enlighten on how the teachings of Christianity can be used as a tool for national development through eradication of corruption and other social vices.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Nigerian Christianity dates back to the abolition of the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the early nineteenth century, which was followed by the emergence of a literate African elite, consisting of liberated and returned slaves as well as local converts. The need for political stability in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. Indeed, all segments of the Nigerian society are interested in the political future of the nation. However, this interest is approached from various dimensions. A major interest in the Nigerian polity is the Christian participation in politics, moral concern in contemporary Nigeria.

Politics is about the acquisition of power and the use of such power. The Oxford *Dictionary of*

Words defines politics as “matters concerned with acquiring or exercising power, within a group or an organization”. Onyekpe (1998) defines the term politics as the struggle for power which itself is the authority to determine or formulate and execute decisions and policies, which must be accepted by the society. It is the struggle for power of governance, especially executive authority (Onyekpe 1998).

Onyekpe however gives a caveat to the first part of his definition. According to him, the struggle for or the acquisition of power and the reaction of the society to it, depend greatly on the level of political development of the country. In an undemocratic society, it does not really matter whether the decisions and policies are accepted by the society. Thus the value of political power or politics leaves little or no room for the people to have input, except where democracy has already been entrenched.

Abogunrin (1984) in his paper titled “Towards a Unifying Political Ideology and Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria: A Christian View” Dal et al, (1999) opines that Christianity and politics are two inseparable institutions in the human social psyche and structure. He equally asserts that earthly governments are mere agents of God’s theocratic governance of the physical and the spiritual world (Abogunrin, 1984). He, however, points out that the ideals of Christianity is a good guide to better political conducts, but the practices of such ideals are usually influenced by the socio-cultural institutions in the society, including politics.

Christians have always present argument based on the statement of Jesus Christ that “Give unto Caesar what is Caesar and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:17-22). This phrase has often been used to exclude from participation Christians and clergymen, who want to venture into politics. Matthew Hassan Kukah however, disagrees with this school of thought, with an exegesis on this passage. He writes that what Jesus really meant was not that Christianity and politics do not mix, nor did He mean that Christians should not participate in politics, the coin was representation of the power of Caesar and that was why the coin had Caesar’s sign. In the case of God, His authority is over and above the realm of Caesar’s empire. In that sense both Caesar and his coin are under the aegis of God and the issue of separation or Christians should not participate in politics is an aberration (Kukah 1998). It should be noted that the argument of these opposing schools are hinged on their belief, perhaps based on experience, that politics often corrupt Christian religion. Also that

political leaders use Christianity as a platform to deceive the people.

According to Leicester Webb, these societies are united by certain political values, closely associated with Christian doctrines and ethics as it relates to justice, morality, freedom, equity, etc (Alford 1981). However, B. Alford suggests that there is a possibility of effective and successful governance if Christians are actively participating in politics. Christians in Nigeria would rather not get involved in politics but the fact remains that Jesus Christ did not discourage political participation for the faithfuls. In Judaism, which provided background to Christianity, the God of Israel, Yahweh is the God of war (Josh.6:20ff), economy (Ex. 16) and God of obedience and moral virtues (Num. 21:4-8). Yahweh is all in all in Judaic traditional thought and politics. Even though, politics in Nigeria has been marred with corruption, violence and even murder, these are against the Christian ethics and believe. This morality issue has been limiting the participation Nigerian Christians in politics.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The uncertainty about the future of Nigeria is unfortunately tied to poor democratic culture, which is an important ingredient of political life of every nation. Nigeria has been tagged, a failure in all fronts (political, economic, social and moral). Despite an abundance of economic resources, attempts to reduce poverty and promote sustainable development have not become a reality in Nigeria. Lack of political will, corruption, a deficiency of proper coordination for sustainable development programs, and wasteful patterns of production and consumption have hindered any meaningful progress in Nigeria. The non-participation of Christians in politics, monetization of politics and predentialism (popularly known as God-fatherism and God-son syndrome), violent behaviors of politicians such as political thuggery, political motivated assassinations, molestation of innocent citizens, seizure of ballot boxes, and wanton destruction of properties (ARSON), intimidation of political opponents, political sycophancy, looting, prevalence of cult's activities and incitement of religious crisis in the name of politics, are negative behaviors exhibited by the political thugs in the name of politics in Nigeria. These aforementioned anti-social behaviors portrays the politicians as having no more fear of God, nor respect on their father's land and human life, because money has been introduced into politics in Nigeria. This however, has made it necessary for the researcher to examine the Christian participation in politics considering the

moral concerns in contemporary Nigeria.

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of this study:

1. To examine the level of Christian participation in politics considering the moral concerns in contemporary Nigeria.
2. To examine the factors limiting Christian participation in politics in Nigeria.
3. To determine the prospects of Christians active participation in politics in Nigeria.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the level of Christian participation in politics considering the moral concerns in contemporary Nigeria?
2. What are the factors limiting Christian participation in politics in Nigeria?
3. What are the prospects of Christian's active participation in politics in Nigeria?

1.5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

H_0 : The level of Christian participation has no significant effect in politics considering the moral concern in contemporary Nigeria.

H_1 : The level of Christian participation has significant effect in politics considering the moral concern in contemporary Nigeria.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The following are the significance of this study:

1. Finding from this study will educate the general public on the level of participation of Christians in Nigerian politics and will also enlighten on how the teachings of Christianity can be used as a tool for national development through eradication of corruption and other social vices.
2. This research will also serve as a resource base to other scholars and researchers interested in carrying out further research in this field subsequently, if applied will go to an extent to provide new explanation to the topic.

1.7 SCOPE/LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study on Christian participation in politics, moral concern in contemporary Nigeria will cover the practice of Christianity as a religion in Nigeria and its influence on the politics. It will cover the participation of Christians in politics considering the moral concerns.

LIMITATION OF STUDY

Financial constraint- Insufficient fund tends to impede the efficiency of the researcher in sourcing for the relevant materials, literature or information and in the process of data collection (internet, questionnaire and interview).

Time constraint- The researcher will simultaneously engage in this study with other academic work. This consequently will cut down on the time devoted for the

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