

**PEACE-BUILDING IN NIGERIA:  
A MISSIO-POLITICAL CRITIQUE OF THE  
CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NATIONS  
(COCIN)'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE  
PLATEAU STATE WITHIN THE  
CONTEXT OF VIOLENT CONFLICT IN  
JOS, NIGERIA (2001-2010)**

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**DECEMBER 2015**

## **DECLARATION**

As required by University regulations, I hereby state unambiguously that this work has not been presented at any other University or any other institution of higher learning other than the University of KwaZulu-Natal, (Pietermaritzburg Campus) and that unless specifically indicated to the contrary within the text it is my original work.

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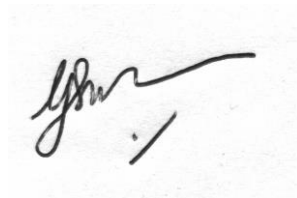
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**02 December 2015**

## **CERTIFICATION**

We the undersigned declare that we have abided by the College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal's policy on language editing. We also declare that earlier forms of the dissertation have been retained should they be required.



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**GARY STUART DAVID LEONARD**

**02 December 2015**

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**BENJAMIN JUNNANG POKOL**

**02 December 2015**

## DEDICATION

I respectfully dedicate this research work to the Muslim, Christian, African Traditionalist, and the Non-religious victims of the violent conflict which engulfed the city of Jos, Nigeria, from 2001 to 2010. My prayer is for the living to forgive the past and work for a better future where humanity expressed in *Suum-Ngi*, *Mang-Djala*, and *Ubuntu* becomes the bases of treating each other, instead of the imposed social constructs that tend to divide us through life-denying violence committed against each another.

I equally dedicate this work to all those individuals who are resolute on promoting peaceful living and co-existence from all the groups involved in the Jos crisis. I also hunger for a fresh consciousness among Christians and Muslims in Jos that all of us are human beings before we chose what religion and/or political affiliation to belong to. Until we value our human-ness and human life in equal measure, all our valued social constructs will remain destructive.

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accountable to social justice so that together we might promote the common good of all the citizens of Jos, indigenes and settlers! I equally wish that the Plateau State elite will stop using religion for oppressive politics but to serve the justice of God and thereby ensure that the bloodletting becomes a thing of the past.

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## **ABSTRACT AND KEY TERMS**

This study focuses on a critique of the nature of church-state relations that exists between the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) and the Plateau State, Nigeria, with a view of assessing the extent to which the nature of this relationship influenced the experience of violent conflict within Jos, Nigeria, especially from 2001 to 2010.

This study argues that when there is a confusion of roles and lack of clarity in their relations, whereby it facilitates violence and inhibits the development of the people, thereby denying them fullness of life (John 10:10 NIV). Only when Church and State understand and use power, “as being everywhere, diffused and embodied in discourse, knowledge, and ‘regimes of truth,’ making us what we are, and not concentrated, not possessed, not coercive or an instrument of coercion, not concentrated in structures, not episodic, not sovereign, and not an act of domination” (Foucault, 1998:63-68), will their relations be constructive and foster the well-being of all the citizens of Jos, Plateau State. Power ought not to be construed as a negative force that is utilized to discriminate and exploit the powerless, but should be a positive and constructive force that promotes the well-being of all within society (Foucault, 1991:194). If the exercise of power fails to promote life through peaceful and common participation of all its citizens in the decisions that affect their well-being, it inevitably becomes destructive.

Based on the research question that undergirds the study, I utilize a systematic literature reviews method to assess the existing literature on church-state relations with special emphasis on relevant literature from the Nigerian context, covering the colonial and post-colonial contexts, as well as the wider sub-Saharan African context. The study explores the historical models of church-state relations that have emerged from the history of Western Christianity as a background to explain how they promoted or inhibited peace-building in their contexts. This served as a sign-post to the evolution of the nature of church-state relations that existed between the COCIN and the Plateau State during the colonial and post-colonial periods of Nigeria’s history.



The study is a critique of the prevailing model of church-state relationship in the socio-political and economic context of the Nigerian State. The aim was to assess the extent to which it promoted or inhibited peace-building in Jos, and how it influences their current relations and peace-building process in the State. In search of an improved peace-building process in Jos, the study suggests a *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-state relations as an alternative African model for relations between religions and Plateau State as a replacement of the extant Church and State model that has served only to foster violence.

**Key Terms:** *Africa; Church of Christ in Nations; Church-State Relations; Colonial; Critical Solidarity and Distance; Jos; Kadung; Missio-Political; Missio-Dei; Nigeria; Peace-Building; Plateau State; Pluralistic Society; Post-Colonial; Suum-Ngi; Social Reconstruction; Violent Conflict.*

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

In order to be consistent with the use of key terms throughout this study, each concept needs to be defined and analysed to ensure that they communicate with clarity the deep meaning that is intended by each term used.

**Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN):** This is a regional Evangelical Mission-founded church denomination in Plateau State, Nigeria, founded in 1904 (Gutip, 1998:2-3). It was founded by the British Branch of the Sudan United Mission (SUM) (*The Light Bearer*, 1907:2-4, Gutip, 1998:3-6; Goshit, 2013:2-3). Its original *Hausa* (Nigerian local language) name was *Ekklisiyar Kristi A Sudan* (EKAS) (Church of Christ in the Sudan). It was later changed to *Ekklisiyar Kristi A Najeriya* (EKAN) (Church of Christ in Nigeria) (Gutip, 1998:3-4). In 2013, its name was changed again to *Ekklisiyar Kristi A Kasashe* (EKAK) (Church of Christ in Nations) because it had spread beyond the borders of Nigeria to other African countries and Europe, including the United Kingdom (Goshit, 2013:2-6). This study critiques this church in the context of its institutional expression based mainly in Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria.

**Colonial:** This term is used in this study in the context of the foreign rulership over a people by an imperial power (2012, Lesmore, 2015; Lenshie, *et al.*), which, in this case, refers to British colonial rule over Nigeria from 1900 to late 1960.

**Post-colonial:** The prefix “post-” in ‘post-colonial’ refers to a historical relation, to a period after colonialism as a chronological progression. Post-colonial opposed to the philosophical concept of hermeneutic interpretation, is used in this study to refer to Nigeria’s Independent era after the close of colonial rule (Lenshie, *et al.*, 2012:43). In this case, it refers to the period of Nigerian Independence from Great Britain from 01 October 1960 to 2015.

**Jos:** Jos is the capital city and the administrative headquarters of constituent Plateau State, Nigeria, known for its tin mining activities as early as the eighteen-century (Plateau State Gazette, hereafter PLSG, 1976). The discovery of tin and columbite on the Jos plateau informed the colonial economic interest and the migration of

Hausa/Fulani Muslims from Kano, Sokoto, and Katsina to Jos, whom the colonialists brought to work on the tin mines (PLSG, 1976). Jos is a pluralist city with 84.5% Christians, 12% Muslims, and 3.5% Traditionalists (Danfulani, 2006:6-8). Its native name was “Gwash” but when the colonial administrators brought in the Hausa/Fulani from the core north to work on the tin mines of Gwash, they mispronounced “Gwash” for “Jos” (Plateau State Indigenous and Development Association Network hereafter PIDAN, 2012:3-7, PLSG, 1967), which constitutes part of the intractable violence between Christians and Muslims in the city (PIDAN, 2012:7-8). It is used in this study as the immediate context and centre of violence from 2001-2010.

**State:** The term is used in this study in the context of Max Weber’s understanding, which sees it as “a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” (1968:54). John Bennett also offers a similar definition: “an institutional political system in which ultimate power and authority are located, which are necessary for maintaining law and order to give conscious direction to the life of a society” (Bennett cited in Wogaman, 1988:12). However, when used in this study it refers specifically to Plateau State as a constituent political unit of the sovereign State Nigeria.

**Church:** Ecclesiologically, the church has been defined by Huns Küng (1967:xi, 80, 81) as “the pilgrim community of believers...a new community of called-out-ones” (1967), and “an eschatological community of salvation.” The term is used in this study as a physical and institutional expression of what David Bosch (1977:15-17) refers to as “church organized,” or “alternative community” called to promote social justice by holding the State accountable to all that give life to society. The Church in this context is ordained to live and preach peace especially in a pluralist society such as Jos by engaging in critical solidarity and distance from oppressive structures.

**Missio-political Critique:** This is being used in this study as the main framework or lens of evaluating and critiquing the relationship that exists between the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) and the Plateau State within the context of violent conflict in Jos. *Missio-political* in this context refers to the wholesome and life-giving agenda of God which is all-embracing, and in which the church is called to participate (Bosch, 1982:179). *Missio-political* is holistic because it constitutes the entire on-

going liberating package of God for the world politically, economically, socially, culturally, and religiously so that the church is equally called to participate in all these to the extent that social justice is maintained (Bosch, 1982:179). Allan Boesak (2005:135-154) has defined what constitutes the *missio-political* mandate of the church as the “critical involvement in all the affairs of the state as a responsibility to witness and to promote God’s justice, peace, and meaningful life for all the people in the society.” *Missio-political* participation not only calls for church’s involvement, but it also calls for the church’s critical distance from all dysfunctional policies that may tend to promote life-denying policies (Boesak, 2005:154). One could equally add that *Missio-political* constitutes the entire intention of God for creation, which the Church is called to promote by participating actively in all affairs that are life-giving to all people without discrimination.

**Critical Analysis:** This is being used as a strategy of carefully examining, judging, and scrutinizing the large pool of existing literature on Church-State relations and the historical models of Church-State relations while expressing approval or disapproval as to whether they work or fail to work as expected in accordance with the mission of God in the world (Turnbull, 2010:46, 348). This strategy is aimed at arriving at a more constructive model of church-state relations that is more life-giving for the COCIN and the Plateau State.

**Violent Conflict:** This refers to violence which can be interpersonal, inter-group, or structural in nature. It is used in this study to refer to any conflict that involves the infliction of injury to persons or property, or structural violence expressed in the denial of human rights by unlawful means that result in exploitation and oppression of the weak by the strong (Phelps, 1992:21). Conflict itself can be expressed as disagreement, strife, struggle, controversy, antagonism, opposition, and resentment between two or more interests (1992:22). In this case, the decade of violent conflict in Jos, Nigeria was both interpersonal and inter-group because of competing interests over economic domination by the majority, identity, and religious sentiments (Imo, 2011:246). Colletta Kurunziza (2003:v) also argues that “violent conflict results from the experience of poverty, lack of vision, unmotivated staff, limited resources, lack of transparency and accountability, inequality, ethnic, and political discrimination.” In

this way, Nkurunziza agrees with M. K. Gandhi, who describes poverty as the worst violence (cited in Wallis (2002:61).

**Pluralist Society:** A pluralistic society embodies the phenomenon of diversity in all of the different spheres of life: religious, cultural, political, and ethnic in nature, or all of these put together (Newbiggin, 1989:14). Therefore, a pluralist society is a situation where, as understood by Leslie Newbiggin (1989:14), “peoples of many ethnic origins and many different religious commitments and cultural orientations live together in our cities sharing public life”. One important insight contained in Newbiggin’s definition of religious pluralism is that “religious pluralism is the belief that the differences between the religions are not a matter of truth and false, but of different perceptions of the same truth...” (1989:14). When people of different religious and political affiliations recognize that their religion or political party is one of the many and not the absolute, it helps to curtail unhealthy competition and religio-political violence among the citizens in a given society. Therefore, pluralism may contribute to violence in society not because there are many religions but because religious people become intolerant of others and claim superiority over them.

**Peace-building:** This term is used within this study to describe a deliberate effort by Church and State to strengthen the prospects of internal peace by decreasing the likelihood of violent conflict (Tobias and Kleing, 2002:35-36). Peace-building is geared towards enhancing indigenous capacities of a society to manage conflict without violence. It focuses on a wide range of activities which have bearing on the social, psychological, and economic environment at the grassroots (Raiser, 2013:439). Without intensive involvement of ordinary people at the base of their society to build strong foundation for civil society, even if negotiation between conflicting parties takes place at the official level it may not result in positive peace-building at the base (Galtung, 2006:446).

**Religion:** A normative definition of religion is difficult because there are many religions with varying codes and dogmas, but also because of its deeply experiential nature. Michael Haralambos (1980:453) defines religion as “the belief in the supernatural” but Roland Robertson and Melford Spiro (cited in Haralambos, 1980:453), have critiqued this definition by arguing that the definition has failed to

incorporate the idea that the supernatural forces have some influence or control upon the world. Accordingly, they have added to the definition, whereby religion can refer to the existence of supernatural beings or beings which have a governing effect on human life, as well as the possibility of bringing harm or assistance to bear. Since religion focuses on absolutes, Jeff Haynes (1999:197) rightly notes that “it can generate potent danger.” Karl Marx, being critical of what religion does to society, offers the well-known definition of religion as “an illusion which eases the pain produced by exploitation and oppression...a sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions...an opiate to dull the pain produced by oppression (Marx cited in Haralambos, 1980:460).

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## **GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>ATR</b>	African Traditional Religion
<b>BP</b>	Benue Plateau
<b>CAN</b>	Christian Association of Nigeria
<b>CBATI</b>	COCIN Bible and Agricultural Training Institute
<b>COBATI</b>	Conflict Prevention and Management Centre of African Leadership Forum
<b>COCIN</b>	Church of Christ in Nations
<b>CPMCALF</b>	Conflict Prevention and Management Centre of African Leadership Forum
<b>EKAN</b>	Ekklesiyan Kristi A Nigeria
<b>EKAS</b>	Ekklesiyar Kristi A Sudan
<b>FNF</b>	Friedrich Naumann Foundation
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>PIDAN</b>	Plateau Indigenous and Development Association Network
<b>PLSG</b>	Plateau State Government
<b>PLSGPE</b>	Plateau State Government Policy on Education
<b>PLSGS</b>	Plateau State Government Structures
<b>SUM</b>	Sudan United Mission
<b>TEKAN</b>	Tarayar Ekklesiyoyin Kristi A Sudan

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCING THE STUDY: SETTING THE STAGE**

### **1.1. Introduction**

The central focus of this study focuses on examining the understanding and practice of Church-State relationship within a particular regional State of Nigeria that has been affected by violent conflicts from 2001-2010. The second objective is to engage a missional critique of the ways in which the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) faith community has identified, harnessed and utilized peacebuilding resources within the pluralist community of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, to facilitate fullness of life.

This opening chapter will develop by tracing the history of the evolution of Church-State relations with particular reference to how the Western worldview through colonization informed the separation of the two entities. The motivation and context of this present study is also discussed in the chapter. As far as the context, this study will review the birth of the Nigerian State, its ethnic Constitution, its constituent political units, as well as provide a brief overview of the inter-religious violence that has beset the country. This context will be narrowed down to Plateau State and its Local Government Areas showing the ethnic Constitution of each Local Government Area. The peaceful nature of Plateau State before the violence and its religious diversity will be highlighted including a brief overview of how the violence erupted from 2001. The chapter will also highlight the COCIN and its strategic position within Plateau State. Included also will be the research problem, hypothesis, research question and research objectives. Finally, the scope and limitation of the study, as well as a summary of the literature reviews will be provided.

### **1.2. The Evolution of Church-State Relations**

With regard to the evolution of Church-State relations, it is pertinent to briefly present an overview of how they have evolved within the local and regional context.

### **1.2.1. The Concepts of ‘Church’ and ‘State’**

Unless I state otherwise, when I use the concept of ‘Church’ in this study, I refer primarily to its usage as an institutional expression of governance within the socio-political environment of a society in which it is located and not necessarily to the ecclesial body of believers who meet for Divine worship in a particular space or locality, or the global organic body of believers in Christ who claim eschatological identity (Küng, 1967:81; Bosch, 1977:12-13). In the same way, when I utilize the concept of ‘State’ in this study, denotes a territorial political community for which there is an independent government, but is not sovereign in and of itself (as in the case of Plateau State); but rather is a constituent political entity, accountable to the sovereign State of which it is part (Pick, 2011:3).

### **1.2.2. The Phenomenon of Church-State Dynamics**

Tarnas (1991:171) has argued that “Church-State dynamic evolved from the complex evolutions of the Western Mind which took over the Medieval Christian world view.” Here, Tarnas seems to imply that the classical societies of ancient Greece up to and including the Greco-Roman world did not experience Church-State dynamics or religion and politics as separate entities until the era of persecution (Marriott, 1927:54; Baker, 1959:1; Boer, 1976:12-13; Kraut, 2002:208). This was because they were more like Nation-States, operating as theocratic societies (Marriott, 1927:55) where the religious and political spheres were united in the governance of public affairs. The phenomenon of Church-State dynamics emerged when the European powers began their process of colonization of other regions of the world. For example, when the Romans conquered the Greeks in 63 BCE and replaced their classical culture with Christian and Roman Religious culture; this process set the stage for the emergence of the modern world view. It can be argued that the different religions that existed within the Roman Empire were quasi-State departments that offered an underpinning spiritual support for the socio-economic and political development of the Roman Empire (Boer, 1976:13-14). As Tarnas (1991:159) confirms, “when the Romans colonized the Greeks, Christianity replaced classical culture...as the Roman culture became Christian, Christianity became Roman.” Accordingly, this period became the cradle of Church-State dynamics, facilitated later by three important historical epochs: (i) Colonization, (ii) the European Renaissance, and (iii) the Copernican (Scientific) Revolution and the

corresponding rise of secularist humanism across Europe (Tarnas, 1991:123-131). These were not Church-friendly movements, forcing instead the Church to withdraw and create a space for itself distinct from the Empire.

Within the African context, the Church-State dynamic prevailed in the previously Western colonized Nation States, especially countries within the Sub-Saharan African region such as Nigeria. The British-religio-political influences upon Nigerian society ensured the dominance of a Euro-centric *missio-cultural* brand of Christianity on the southern regions of the nation State. The other dominant religions within Nigeria are Islam which dominates the northern States as well as the wide-spread prevalence of African Traditional Religion (ATR).

### **1.2.3. The *Missio*-political Identity of Church and State**

The principal focus of this study is the Christian religion and to a lesser extent, Islam both being monotheistic faiths with a zeal to enforce allegiance to one God according to their different understandings. This dynamic has created an environment of intolerance of other groups who have different religious beliefs (Raiser, 2013:11-23). Since this study seeks to examine the quality of the relationship between the COCIN and Plateau State relationship within Jos, from 2001-2010, it will employ a *missio*-political lens through which to interrogate the ways in which the nature of this relationship influenced the process of peace-building within the context of violent conflict. This framework is informed by an understanding of the Church along with the State, each existing to serve different roles as life affirming instruments that fulfil God's purpose (*missio-Dei*) as expressed in the mission of Jesus who came to offer fullness of life for all creation (John 10:10) (Keum, 2013).

The *missio*-political identity and vocation of the Church and State refer to the quality of their relationship as they work together for the common good of the community and how that flows together with the *missio-Dei* for the world (Hewitt, 2012:34). The desire for the total well-being of all creation, inclusive of the human community, is central to the understanding of the *missio-Dei* (Bosch 1982:178). Jesus in his ministry and mission declared that the coming kingdom of God calls for restoring the dignity of all creation (Luke 4:18-19; John 10:10 NIV). In this regard, Boesak argues that, "in the Reformed theological tradition there is

not a sphere of creation that falls outside the concern of the Lordship of Christ” (1988:20-25). Boesak’s position is that the participation of the Church in the mission of God is all-embracing, a result of which should be Church’s involvement in the sphere of politics. These submissions imply that the Creator is continuously sustaining his entire creation towards a life-giving purpose. The desire of the Creator is that all of creation enjoys a constructive and peaceful social order in a world where justice and peace reign eternally.

In this present study, I employ theories of Church-State relations to interrogate the COCIN’s relationship with the Plateau State in Nigeria in the context of violent conflict in the city of Jos, and its environs. Within the context of Jos, Church and the State are strategic institutions that shape how society is structured and managed to facilitate good governance. According to Hunsinger (2006:352), the Church and State are in symbiotic relationship because:

The Church needs the State to create the orderly preconditions for the Church’s proclamation and witness, and the State needs the Church to remind the State of its divinely appointed origin, limits and goals, therefore the State best serves the Church by remaining the State and the Church serves the State best by remaining the Church.

However, this symbiotic relationship is not an end in itself but instead are a means to an end, otherwise their symbiotic relations becomes selfish and destructive to the needs and welfare of the entire society. Hunsinger (2006) only addresses the constructive roles that both institutions play in society without mentioning any of the negative aspects of such a relationship that can be detrimental to peace building within the different societies. However, as Raiser (2013:103) has pointed out, both institutions engage in a cut-throat competition for power and influence with the intention of transforming the context in which they operate, a process that often can be destructive to the common good of society. Raiser’s critique of Church-State relations identifies therefore that they constitute complementary and contradictory realities. Pilgrim (1999:187) thus postulates:

The Church and State live in uneasy tension. On the one hand, they can be mutually supportive of one another as long as the State fulfils its beneficent role as administrator for the common welfare. On the other hand, the Church is obligated to discern the temptations to idolatry from the State and its lack of concern for the good of human communities it serves. The Church rejects all idolatrous claims of the State as demonic.

However, Pilgrim’s argument implies that as long as the State fulfils its role, the Church will naturally fulfil its own role. Within the context of Jos this perspective does not work because the behaviour of Church and State seems to suggest that they may be inherently competitive

and inclined to accumulate and utilize power in a way that does not work towards the common good of all its citizens.

Because religion and politics are practically ideologies of social order, they are potential rivals. Either can claim to be the guarantor of orderliness within a given society and therefore the ultimate authority for people's allegiance. Such claims may embody an extraordinary degree of power that gives each institution the right to offer moral sanctions for life-and-death decisions. When political or religious systems of governance seek to rule by themselves without accountability, it reduces the role of the other to the periphery of the society. Since religion tends to claim the fundamental source of power and authority that goes beyond human authority, it has claimed at different periods in history to be the measure of the legitimacy of all forms and structures of governance (Haynes, 1996:6-7). On the other hand, political ideologies such as secular nationalism also make absolute claims to power, including the control of religion. However, even in settings where there is a complete integration or absorption of religions into the State system (Caesaropapism)<sup>1</sup> it does not necessarily guarantee social order and good governance.

This study thus argues that the nature of Church-State relations which exists between the COCIN and the Plateau State does not adequately engender peace building and this constitutes a contributing factor to the violent conflict that engulfed Jos from 2001-2010. To counter this, an alternative model of Church-State relations is necessary in the context of Jos, Plateau State that works for the common good of all.

### **1.3. Motivation/Rationale for the Study**

#### **1.3.1. Identifiable Research Gaps**

The motivation for this study emerged from identifiable gaps in my (2003) MTh. Dissertation entitled: Saint Ambrose's Theory and Practice of the Ministry of Clergy: Its Relevance and Lessons for the Church in the Twenty-first Century, (Unpublished M.Th., Dissertation, and

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<sup>1</sup> Simeon Eboh, in his (1984) book, *Church and State Relations in Nigeria: A Juridical Survey of the Church-State Relationship from 1960-1983*, utilizes the term "caesaropapism" which he understands to mean a system of government in which the supreme royal and sacerdotal powers are combined in one lay ruler. This means that a lay person combines royal power and priesthood in and of her/himself like that used by the emperor to rule Constantinople during the Roman Empire.

Jos: Theological College of Northern Nigeria (TCNN) / University of Jos, 2003). Here, I presented the *missio*-political identity and vocation of the Church as it sought to meet its inner ecclesial needs and yet deliberately disregarded the socio-economic and political responsibilities of the Church in the society. Ambrose ministered during the period when the Church sought its freedom from the State (Boer, 1976:130). This led him to challenge State officials on many issues of justice; however in so-doing, he was not always fair to the State because he portrayed the Church as being better than the State in its approach to matters of justice, which was not necessarily true (Boer, 1976:130). When his perspectives are applied to the context of Jos, one can also identify the need for the Church to be more critical of how the State dispenses justice and the need for the Church to be held accountable in its stewardship within the nation. Accordingly, this study argues for a broader understanding of the *missio*-political identity of the Church's vocation which incorporates witnessing to both the socio-economic and political spheres of life.

### **1.3.2. The Prevalence of Violence in Jos**

A second motivation for undertaking this study is linked to the socio-political and religious context of Plateau State, Nigeria. Being an indigene, I have seen many lives destroyed as a result of intractable violent conflicts between communities comprising of Christians and Muslims in the city of Jos. My initial naïve perception was that the Plateau State, being a majority 'Christian State' would not experience such religious conflicts because of my assumption that the State was predominantly Christian. However, even within Christian-dominated nations of Africa such as Rwanda and South Sudan, Christians take-up arms and slaughter one another (Gifford, 2012:48-49). The concept of a 'Christian State' usually refers to a political State where leaders pass laws based on a Constitution that affirms Christianity as the preferred religion of the State, giving it a privileged status over other religions because the majority of its residents are Christians (Wogaman, 1988:167-8). In such a political environment, the Church and the Bible occupy positions of great influence in setting standards for national values. However, within the context of Jos this understanding of a 'Christian State' is called into question because it was incompatible with the reality of perennial violence that enveloped the society that claimed over 5,000 lives and destroyed property worth millions of dollars with more than 800,000 people being displaced, fleeing to

neighbouring States (Danfulani 2006:5; Higazi, 20011:14-15; Ambe-Uva 2010: 6-8; Igboin 2012:18-20).

Regarding the statistics of how many people lost their lives in the violence during the successive years, scholars have given varying breakdown of the statistics of destruction to human lives in Jos on a yearly basis: In 2001, 1,000 people were killed (Higazi, 2011:15); over 1,600 people lost their lives in 2004 (AmbeUva, 2010:6-9); more than 500 people were killed in 2008 (Human Rights Watch, 2005), and in 2010, 992 people lost their lives in the violence.<sup>2</sup> Danfulani and Fwatshak (2002:243) argue that in 2001 alone, more than 3,000 people died in the violence in Jos, while another unidentified source<sup>3</sup> agrees with Higazi that from 7-13 September 2001, 1,000 lives were lost in the violence in Jos. When these figures are put together, they virtually add up to the general figures given above. This alarming death rate specifically informed my choice of 2001-2010 as the time-frame for this study. Indeed, 2001-2010 as a decade of religious violence called into question the role of religion within the society, especially when the Church seemed to remain silent during this entire period of bloody violence.

According to Dalat (2008:2), people were killed or burned to death as if they were victims of a natural disaster, but the tragedy was caused by Nigerians themselves. Human Rights Watch (2004) reported that women and men of the Red Cross that responded to the human-created disaster could not cope with all the dead bodies because the stench of death was so overwhelming that eventually vultures descended upon the city of Jos and stayed for months devouring the human corpses. The city that was known nationally for its peaceful status was quickly transformed into a war zone that had lost all respect for human dignity and life itself. This wanton destruction of life was carried out by people who used God's Name and claimed to be religious, raising serious questions about the role of religion in nurturing the deadly violence.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Available at: <<http://creepingsharia.wordpress.com/03/08/nigeria-muslims-slaughter400-500christians-in-latest-jos-crisis/>>, [Accessed 13 October 2015].

<sup>3</sup> Available at: <<http://www.hrw.org/reports/2001/nigeria1201.pdf>>, [Accessed 13 October 2015].

<sup>4</sup> Plates 1 and 2 in the Appendix present gruesome photographs of the human tragedy in Jos that has resulted in the death of hundreds of its citizens within an environment that accommodated a toxic mixture of religion and politics.



Although religious and political institutions in general claim to promote peace and harmony in societies where they serve, their toxic and corrupting mixture within the Nigerian context has empowered those that wish to use religion and politics to achieve a specific self-seeking political agenda even if it requires the use of violence. Describing the cause of this negative role of religion, Raiser (2013:138-141) argues that:

Religions are responsible for endangering social peace because of their competition on who has the power to shape the social order...religions encourage domination of human beings by human beings...Where the symbolically based power of religions is transformed into antagonistic political power, it loses its authority rooted in transcendence and becomes the ideological legitimization of sectional interests. It thus becomes subordinate to the friend-enemy opposition and violates the basic precept of the Golden Rule. All religions face the temptation of using their symbolic power as an instrument to exercise political domination up to and including legitimizing violence.

Politics and religion need therefore to renegotiate their relationship for the sake of the legitimacy of the social order (Raiser 2013:142). Raiser further pleads for the culture of dialogue for peaceful co-existence to be deliberately intensified by religious leaders through proximity to the people at the grass roots (2013:143). In the researcher's experience as a Church leader he has observed the impact of violence on the lives of many people and the need for his leadership in burying many innocent citizens. In addition, the loss of so many lives and the resultant upheaval in their communities brought additional financial pressures on the Church budget to provide relief materials for the internally displaced persons.

### **1.3.3. Wider Exposure to Literature on Church-State Relations**

The third and final motivation for this study is to be found in my wider academic exposure to fresh thinking from contemporary scholars on different theories of Church-State relations. In John C. Nwafor's (2002) *Relationship between Church and State: The Nigerian Experience*, a justice model is introduced in which it is argued that the Church and State are responsible for social justice and the promotion of peaceful co-existence in the Nigerian pluralist context. It was Rose Uzoma's perspective in her (2004) *Religious Pluralism and the Stability of the Nigerian State* that triggered and informed the choice of this study. It was Benson Igboin's (2012) work: *The Re-awakening of the Prophetic Vocation*, which explored what Church and State can contribute for the wholesome development of society. Finally, Allan Aubrey Boesak's (2005), *The Tenderness of Conscience* (2005) offered the theoretical framework of critical solidarity and distance as a model of Church-State relations in the South African

context where religion and politics played both positive and negative role within the environment plagued by social inequality and violence also influenced my critique of the Nigerian context. This was specifically relevant because Boesak uses the violence unleashed by the apartheid system to address the plight of the suffering people which similar socio-political situation in Jos, Nigeria.

#### **1.4. The Context of the Study**

The specific focus of this study examines the *missio*-political character of the Church-State relationships in Jos as expressed in the relations between the COCIN and Plateau State, and how it facilitates peace-building or otherwise in times of violent conflicts. However, a brief overview of the general religio-political context of the sovereign Nigerian State will first necessary so as to understand why violent conflicts have become a common scene in Jos, Nigeria.

##### **1.4.1. The Birth of the Nigerian State**

The Nigerian State is a West African country that was constituted in 1914 when the former northern and southern Protectorates were amalgamated by the British colonial representative Frederick Lord Lugard (Gutip 1998:19, Oyediran and Agbaje 1999:11, Imo 2011:239-240). The country was colonized by the British colonial power from 1900 to 30 September 1960. Nigeria gained its political Independent from Great Britain, 01 October, 1960 and established a Federal Republic in 1963 with Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe and Abukar Tafawaf Balewa as the first Governor General and Prime Minister respectively (History of Nigeria 2013:28).

The post-colonial administration has since split the four initial regions into “the thirty-six constituent States of Nigeria” (History of Nigeria, 2013:28). These thirty-six constituent States have been further divided into 774 local government areas in an attempt to facilitate good governance of the State at the local level. However, the intention to provide good governance by sub-dividing the political structures of the country seems not to have yielded sufficient positive changes because the restructuring seems to have created more demands on the resources that cannot meet the needs of the people. This competition has also given rise to

a situation where religion is being used by the elite of the society to achieve their political goals. The political map of the country that is presented below identifies the constituent States that make up the country as well as its boundaries with other African countries.



Figure 1.1. Political map of Nigeria showing its thirty-six constituent States<sup>5</sup>

#### 1.4.2. The Ethnic Constitution of Nigeria

Nigeria is described by Fatokun (2013:315) as “the giant of Africa” because its inhabitants are estimated at 170 million according to the 2010 National Census (Fatokun 2013:315). The population is made up of numerous ethnic groups. Nigeria has between 250 and 450 ethnic groups, the major groups that dominate the country being Igbo, Yoruba and Hausa/Fulani (Fatokun, 2013:316). Nigeria’s multi-ethnicity implies competition and conflict as natural concomitants of population growth. It was the ethnic complexity of Nigeria that was a

<sup>5</sup> Political map of Nigeria, 2000, <<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nigeria/>>, [Accessed 24 June, 2015].

contributing factor for the splitting of the original regions into States with the aim of recognizing important minority groups in the country (History of Nigeria, 2013:36).

### 1.4.3. The Nigerian State and its Constituent States

The diagram below in Figure 1.2 below illustrates the Nigerian State in the context of a unity of territorial political community that makes it a sovereign State (Pick 2011:3; Epelle, 2010:7). The language of State is also used in relation to the political institution in which ultimate power and authority are located to maintain order and to give legal and good governance to the life of a society (Bennett cited in Wogaman, 1988:12). A constituent State indicates the smaller political units that make up the “Nigerian Sovereign State” (Pick, 2011:2-3). The constituent States are regional political units that are part of the Nigerian State without enjoying full sovereignty on their own. The outer circle of the diagram in black represents the Nigerian State; the constituent States are represented by the smaller circles. Plateau State which is the central focus of this study represents one of these constituent States.

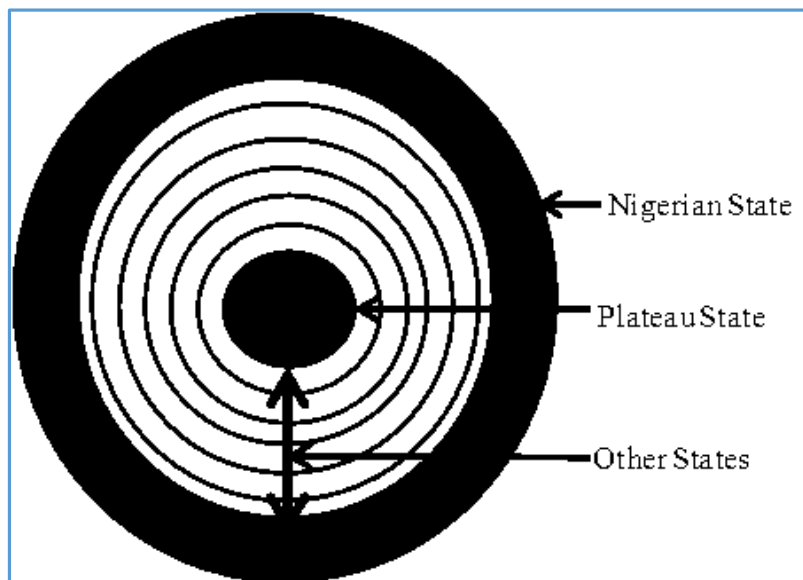


Figure 1.2. A diagram illustrating the Nigerian State and its political units or constituent States

#### **1.4.4. A Brief Background of the Inter-Religious and Political Violence in Nigeria**

Nigeria has witnessed a series of inter-religious and ethnic violent crises since independence in 1960 (Ibikwe, 2012:18; Imo 2011:241). During its years of being an Independent State, Nigeria was ruled by a military regime for twenty-seven years, (Oyediran and Agbaje, 1999:11-14). The multi-ethnic identity of the population within the context of an environment shaped by violence has resulted in Nigeria being described as the most deeply divided country in Africa (Uzoma, 2004:651; Lenshie and Abel, 2012; Ibrahim, 1994:11-12; Danfulani, 2006; Ambe-Uva 2010; Ostien 2009; Higazi 2011:6-8). It can be argued that this description of Nigeria is legitimate because socio-political, religious and economic divisions surface at every level in society. The root cause of these divisions is linked to the legacy of colonialism bequeathed by political and Christian missionary's attitudes before Independence that encouraged divisive politics among the traditional rulers (Adetunji 2013:351-354). Adetunji (2013:353) laments that Nigeria has lost every hope of unity because of instability within the country. The divisions within the nation are manifested in three major areas: politics, religion and ethnicity (Ambe-Uva, 2010:24-26).

The fragmentation and disunity within the country is visible within different ethnic and affiliations. As a result, the interplay of religion, politics and ethnicity complicates issues and has a negative influence on the process of peace-building (Ambe-Uva, 2010:2-6). This scenario may have been exacerbated by the post-colonial sectional and discriminatory political elite, who failed to embrace diversity and promote co-existence among the different sectors of society in their political leadership.

It was the administration of General Yakubu Gowon that divided the regions into States in order to acknowledge minority ethnic groups and promote unity (Adesina, 1973:487-496; Danbazau, 1991:16-19). However, it failed in its intention and the minority ethnic groups in question abused their economic and political power by oppressing other groups that were without political clout (Dalat, 2009:256). The division of Nigeria into constituent States therefore heightened the unhealthy competition between the diverse ethnic groups in the country. These ethnic divisions also exposed religious differences that exasperated tensions between religious institutions and the State (Ojo, 2008:112-14).

Against this background, Ishaku (2009:153) predicted that Nigeria may face disintegration as a sovereign State. His prediction was based on the religio-political events ranging from the activities of *Boko Haram*<sup>6</sup> to the blatant disregard for the Nigerian Constitution by competing political actors. Twelve out of the thirty-six States have so far instituted *Sharia Law*<sup>7</sup> as the ‘State religion’ in a country that claims to have a secular Constitution. Consequently, the unity of the Nigerian State is at high risk if this process of disintegration is left unchecked (Ishaku, 2009:155). The apparent inability of the Nigerian government to tackle the *Sharia Law* issue and *Boko Haram* activities reveal fundamental weaknesses in the capacity of the State.

The lack of unity within the government embodies the wider division within the nation because the instigators of divisions are also part of the decision-making bodies of the country as argued by Igboin (2012:18). Unless these instigators become peace-builders and promoters of national unity then the problems will persist.<sup>8</sup> The former Nigerian President, Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan has admitted to the presence of instigators of violence in his cabinet but he did not name them nor were they ever punished (Igboin, 2012:6-7). His weakened authority exposed the incapacity of the Nigerian government to find the political will to overcome violence (Dalat, 2008:10; Igboin, 2012:3). The deteriorating religio-political environment seems to suggest that it is important for the Church and State to sow seeds of peace-building that will germinate and mature to facilitate a culture of peace across the country. The Latin American Archbishop, Oscar Romero argued for a “Vision for Peace and Justice” within a world context that was plagued with violence:

A vision of a world which reflects the reign of God, and where justice, peace, truth, freedom and solidarity prevail. A world where the dignity of the human person, made in the image of God, is paramount. A world that does not know what exclusion, discrimination, violence, intolerance or dehumanizing poverty are, but rather a place where the goods of the earth are shared by all and creation is cherished for future generations. It is a place where all people, especially the poorest, marginalized, and

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<sup>6</sup>According to Adelani *et al.*, (2012:493-495), *Boko Haram*, from the local Hausa/Fulani language commonly spoken in northern Nigeria, means Western education is forbidden.

<sup>7</sup> *Sharia Law*, as described by Ibrahim Suleiman in his book: *The Islamic State*, cited in Matthew Hassan Kukah (1993:115) refers to the system of religious laws enshrined in the Qur’an and followed by Muslims. *Sharia Law* is adopted by Muslims in order to make the Word of *Allah* supreme, to bring unbelief and tyranny to naught, to bring dignity and honour to Muslims and save them from having to live under the influence of an un-Islamic power. Küng (1986:41-42) also posits that the interpretation of the *Sharia Law* was the right of the *Ulama*, the experts in religious law among the Sunnis, and the *Ayatollahs* among the Shi’a.

<sup>8</sup> Drawing on Igboin’s perspectives there are entrepreneurs in Nigeria, who seek to benefit politically and economically from violent conflicts. Igboin categorizes these people as perpetrators or instigators of violence for political gain.

oppressed, find hope and are empowered to come to the fullness of their humanity as part of the global community (Romero cited in Neufeldt, *et al.*, 2002:4).

However, Romero's dream may never materialize because some forms of religious expression have embraced extreme political and religious agenda in Nigeria. Accordingly, Nigeria is in dire need of what the late Martin Luther King Jr., the American Baptist minister, activist, humanitarian, and leader in the African-American Civil Rights Movement dreamed about as the "beloved community":

I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals a day for their bodies, education and culture for their minds, and dignity, equality and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centred men have torn down, men other-centred can build up. I still believe that one day humankind will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and non-violent redemptive goodwill will proclaim the rule of the land (King Jr., cited in Chunakara 2013:68).

In the current political and religious climate in Nigeria, King's dream sounds illusory because those who should have called the political powers to account for their disorderly behaviour seem to be benefiting from the oppression of the people. Therefore, national transformation will be difficult to achieve in Nigeria if the Church's *missio*-political identity and vocation does not experience a radical transformation (Ezikwesili, 2013:4-6). This would require the Church to remain true to its participation in the *missio-Dei*, and begin to hold the oppressive structures accountable to social justice. But how can this be done when in the wider Christian community of Nigeria where some of its more affluent and influential Pastors travel all over the world in their private jets (*Vanguard*, 05 July 2014)? Could it be argued that this situation may be contributing to negatively shaping the violent context of Jos, Plateau State?

#### **1.4.5. Jos Plateau State**

Jos as the capital of Plateau State lies in the Middle Belt region of Nigeria (Nwafor 2002:12). Plateau State was created on 03 July 1976 by the Murtala Mohammed regime, from the former Benue-Plateau that in turn had been established in 1967 by the Yakubu Gowon regime (Gutip 1998:13). According to the 2010 Census, the population of the State stood at 3,178,712 (Higazi 2011:3-4, PIDAN, 2012:20). Plateau State takes its name from the Jos high plateau that dominates the State's topography (Higazi 2011:3). The State occupies a land mass of 30,913 sq. km, and lies some 1220 metres above sea level (PIDAN, 2013:34). There are over 30 registered ethnic groups in the State, not counting minor ones (Higazi, 2011:5-6).

In 1996, Nassarawa State was split off from Plateau State (Higazi, 2011:5) and received its own capital, Lafia. Hence, Plateau State was a much larger geo-political region when it was created in 1967.

It ought to be mentioned that Plateau State was initially created by the colonial government as part of the northern geo-political region; but the post-colonial Federal Government of Nigeria restructured the regions created by the Richard Committee created in 1948 into constituent States and later into geo-political zones (Barnes, 2007:594). Plateau State is no longer part of the northern Region (PIDAN, 2012: 34-36) but part of the Middle Belt. The State now belongs to the Middle Belt as one of the dominant Christian States in this region (Barnes, 2007:592), along with Benue, Taraba, Nassarawa, Kogi, and Kwara (Kukah, 1993:x-xii). All the States within the Middle Belt are dominated by Christians (Kukah, 1993:xi-xiv). Plateau State, again, forms the largest Christian-dominated State among these States, which puts it at risk because of its geo-religious position<sup>9</sup> because while the entire Middle Belt is made up of minority ethnic groups (Barnes, 2007:594), it also lies in-between the south and north, which is made up of majority ethnic groups. While the southerners claim the State religiously as Christian, Muslims in the north also want to assimilate the area (Kukah, 1993:xiv). Plateau State, apart from its cool weather and scenic beauty (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002:243), serves as a magnet for migrants and refugees because some Muslims who are uncomfortable in the Christian south migrate to Plateau State, whereas some Christians who are uncomfortable in the Muslim north migrate to Plateau State, creating tension through religious and political rhetoric (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002:243).

#### **1.4.6. The Local Government Areas of Plateau State and their Respective Ethnic Groups**

Higazi (2011:4-8) describes the population of Plateau State as being multi-religious as well as multi-ethnic, with over thirty registered ethnic groups (2011:6). However, the report of the

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<sup>9</sup> Located between the south and the north, the Plateau State is being pulled from both directions: By the southern Christians religiously and by the northern Muslims geographically. Christians in Plateau State seem not to be satisfied with the way the Muslim north treats them, so they prefer the southerners, which the northerners do not like. But the literature is clear about how the northern elites maltreat the non-Muslims in the north. Ladi Shehu, a prominent Christian politician once remarked to Journalists: “People from the upper north were Okay, they were proper northerners, and if you are a Muslim, well, that improves your position, but if you were from the Middle Belt, you were another class of northerner” (Kukah, 1993: xi).



Plateau Peace Conference of 2004 (cited in Modibo, 2004:4) provided more comprehensive data including non-registered ethnic groups, thus putting the total number of ethnic nationalities in the State at fifty-four. Each of the seventeen local government Areas within the State have no less than three different ethnic groups. These ethnic groups constitute the original inhabitants in the respective local government areas. The Plateau State Gazette<sup>10</sup> data on ethnic and religious distribution of the population within the seventeen local government areas of the State that excludes other Nigerians who have migrated to the State for socio-economic and other factors. Accordingly, the ethnic groups that fall under this local government are:

- i. **Jos North and Jos South LGC:** Berom, Hausa/Fulani, Anaguta, Afizere, Buji, Yoruba, Igbo, and Irigwe (Christian majority).
- ii. **Barkin Ladi LGC:** Berom, Hausa/Fulani, Gashish, and Igbo (Christian majority).
- iii. **Ryom:** Berom, Ateng, and Hausa/Fulani (Christian majority).
- iv. **Bokkos LGC:** Ron, Mushere, Kulere, and Hausa/Fulani (Christian majority).
- v. **Mangu LCG:** Mwaghavul, Pyam, Bijim, Kadung and Hausa/Fulani (Christian majority).
- vi. **Pankshin LGC:** Ngas, Kadung, Mupun, Fier, Takkas, Nyeleng, Tambes and Hausa/Fulani (Christian majority).
- vii. **Kangke LGC:** Ngas, Tal, Taroh, and Hausa/Fulani (Christian majority).
- viii. **Kanam LGC:** Boghom, Taroh, Kantana, and Hausa/Fulani (Muslim majority).
- ix. **Bassa LGC:** Imoh, Rendre, Iregwe, Myango, and Hausa/Fulani (Christian majority).
- x. **Langtang North LGC:** Taroh, Hausa/Fulani, and Igbo (Christian majority).
- xi. **Langtang South LGC:** Taroh, Hausa/Fulani, and Igbo (Christian majority).
- xii. **Wase LGC:** Hausa/Fulani, Taroh, Jukun, Kwala, Kadung, and Mwaghavul (Muslim majority).
- xiii. **Mikang LGC:** Yom, Taroh, Tal, Montol, and Hausa/Fulani (Christian majority).
- xiv. **Qua'an Pan LGC:** Doemak, Pan, Quan, Myernyang, and Hausa/Fulani (Christian majority).
- xv. **Shendam LGC:** Goemai, Ngas, Taroh, and Hausa/Fulani (Christian majority).
- xvi. **Jos East LGC:** Afizere, Berom, and Hausa/Fulani (Christian majority).

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<sup>10</sup> Plateau State Gazette, 2004:1; Plateau State, Nigeria's Most Endowed State, <<http://www.plateaustategov.org/history/>>, Adapted and updated by Dan Inusa, University of Jos Nunet.

The above statistics are not exhaustive as there are other ethnic groups that have migrated from other parts of Nigeria into the Plateau State, as well as other minor ethnic groups that have been assimilated by some of the major ethnicities in various areas (Ostien, 2009:28).

This present research study has not been able to obtain detailed statistics relating to the religious groups in the various local political constituencies because of the sensitivities associated with religious conflicts. Accordingly, it has become an offense to discuss detailed religious statistics (2006 National Census Bylaws: 23-26). Hence, the list that is presented here represents approximate data and cannot be accepted as being exact. However, they present a fair representation of the complex nature of Plateau State.



**Figure 1.3.** Map of Plateau State and its seventeen local government areas (Modibo 2012:3).<sup>11</sup>

#### **1.4.7. The Plateau State before the Violent Conflicts**

Prior to 1980, Plateau State was considered to be a peaceful and hospitable environment (Danfulani 2002:2). The Federal Road Safety Commission of Nigeria named the Plateau State the motto “Home of Peace and Tourism” (Danfulani 2006:2, Ambe-Uva 2010:2-3). However, after the 1980s, Plateau State began to lose its acclaimed peaceful status because of incidents of religious violence that occurred between Christians and Muslims. Since the mid-1980s, the Plateau State has experienced violence that began among some of its ethnic groups

<sup>11</sup> Available at: <<http://www.plateaustategov.org/history/geo-info.html/>>, [Accessed 18 May 2015].

that ultimately changed the environment into one tainted by religio-political violence (Danfulani, 2006:4-8). Higazi (2011:12-16) notes however that the violence in the Plateau State is the result of complex factors ranging from ethnic, religious, political, and land issues.

#### **1.4.8. The Religious Diversity of Plateau State**

Danfulani and Fwatshak (2002:246-249) argue that Plateau State is a pluralist State and the inhabitants of Jos, in particular, whose population Danfulani puts at 800,000 to 100,000 are made up of Christians, Muslims, and African Traditional Religionists, with the majority population being Christian (2002:249). Out of the sixteen governors (military and civilian) that have ruled the State, only five have been Muslims (PIDAN, 2012:33). These five Muslims were given the opportunity to govern because they were military men imposed on the State by the central Nigerian government (PIDAN, 2012:36). All civilian governors of the State have been Christians. No followers of African Traditional Religion (ATR) have ever governed the Plateau State since its inception as what happened in Benue-Plateau State in 1967 (PIDAN, 2012:34). Modibo (2012:3-6) provides the following statistics regarding political power sharing in Plateau State that indicates the Christian domination of the political arena:

The incumbent Governor and his Deputy are Christians. The House of Assembly which consists of twenty-one elected members has only two Muslim representatives. Of the seventeen Local Government Chairmen [*sic*], only two are Muslims. The Executive Council which consists of eighteen Commissioners has two Muslims only. Out of twenty-eight Permanent Secretaries in the various Ministries and Parastatals, only two are Muslims. All the three Plateau's Senators are Christians, while the eight Representatives to the National House of Assembly have only two Muslims (2012:3-6).

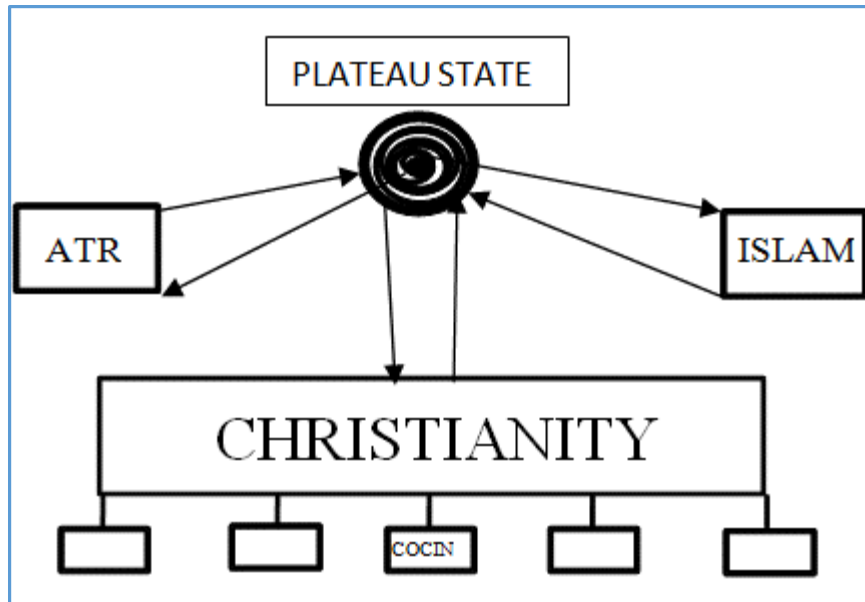
Modibo however, omits to emphasize a controversial aspect of the Nigerian Constitution that determines the rules for political power sharing must be based on one's status as an indigene or a settler as opposed to being citizen (2012:4-5). Within the Muslim-dominated States of the northern regions, Christians are not allowed to share political power in the system of governance (Ostien, 2009). This undemocratic practice is not conducive to peace-building.

Christianity and Islam are the main religions in Plateau State with the COCIN being the main Christian denomination (Datiri, 2013; COCIN President's Speech at Synod, 2013:4). The nature of the relationships between religions and State indicates that the different religious

institutions compete for political influence and control and the COCIN appears to exert the most influence when compared to other denominations (COCIN President's Speech at Synod, 2013:4). This scenario places the COCIN in a strategic role within society where it can use its position of influence for selfish reasons or for the common good of the society in the ways it competes with and enters into conflict with the State (2013:4-5).

Figure 1.4 below presents the religious plurality of the Plateau State and the dynamics of the relationship between religions and State. Arrows pointing to Plateau State highlight the competition for control of the State and its resources that exist among its religious groupings. Arrows pointing away from the State indicate the State's interest in using the religious institutions for their own political ends. The State is interested in this kind of ecclesial partnership because it serves as protection from criticism by the Church with its powerful constituency that would otherwise weaken its political authority (Boesak, 2005:169). Within this State, there exists an inherent conflict between the State and the religious groups over who has the power to shape the social order. Such an underlying conflict also exists among the religious groups themselves over who should have the most significant political influence with the Government of the State. As a consequence, the quest for power, as postulated by Raiser (2013:132-134), is at the centre of this competition.

The unhealthy relationship between Church and State can lead to an incestuous co-habitation of religious institutions with oppressive political structures which in turn may lead to loss of prophetic witness of Church to the State. In turn, this may result in an environment that facilitates corruption and weakens the development of the State.



**Figure 1.4.** A constructed diagram illustrating the religious diversity of Plateau State, Nigeria

#### **1.4.9. An Overview of the Violent Conflict in Jos from 2001-2010**

Violent conflicts first erupted in Jos on September 7, 2001 and have increased regularly up to 2010 (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002:4-7). The acts of violence in 2001 followed a demonstration staged by some Christian youth who opposed the appointment of Mohammed Muktar (a Muslim) to public office because of what they identified as his unacceptable human rights record, referring to his behaviour in his former public service job (Danfulani and Fwatshak 2002; Ambe-Uva, 2010; Ostien, 2009:40). The Christian youth were able to successfully influence the decision of the State to revoke Mohammed Muktar's appointment and eventually replace him with a Christian appointee. Accordingly, this political action exposed the complex nature of the Church-State relationship in Jos (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002:6-7). This thesis argues that the complex and contradictory influences that shape the Church and the Plateau State relationship in Jos have, to some extent, contributed to creating an environment where violence is used as a tool to settle differences between religious groups and other parties. The conflicts in Jos which have lingered over years have claimed thousands of lives and property worth millions of dollars has been destroyed (Higazi, 2011; Ambe-Uva, 2010).<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> See Plates 1 and 2 in the Appendix.

#### 1.4.10. The Church of Christ in Nations

The Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) is an evangelical denomination formed as a result of the nineteenth-century evangelical missionary advances into Sub-Saharan Africa (Fatokun, 2013:349). It was founded by the Sudan United Mission (SUM), led by Dr. Karl Kumm and his three companions (Ambrose H. Bateman, John Burt, and Lowry Maxwell) in 1904 (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:6). The Sudan United Mission (SUM) was itself the result of a combined effort by missionaries from different mainline denominations in Europe that organized themselves to respond to serious challenges in the Sudan that involved the Christianization of indigenous tribes who were being overrun by Muslims (*The Light Bearer*, 1907:12-13; Gutip, 1998: 4-6; Goshit, *et al.*, 2013: 2-5). The missionary body included Anglicans from Great Britain, the Christian Reformed Churches from the US, the Lutherans from Denmark and the Dutch Reformed Church from South Africa (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:7). The mission came into existence primarily to “rescue” indigenous tribes from perceived spiritual “darkness” and from the clutches of Islam by bringing to them what they considered was the light of the gospel of Christ (2013:7-8). This suggests that their evangelization strategy was not based upon mutual respect, but instead devalued the traditional religious beliefs and lifestyle of the African people in their mission objectives. It could be argued that their motives might have led—at least in some degree—to become religiously and culturally insensitive in their approach towards Islam. Such western religio-cultural insensitivities towards other cultures were common among nineteenth-century evangelical missionaries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Bediako, 1995:191-198; Gray cited in Kalu 1980:14-16). Across contemporary northern Nigeria, the Fellowship of the Churches of Christ in Nigeria that were founded through the activities of the Sudan mission became the Christian group most affected by the Islamic terrorists known as *Boko Haram*<sup>13</sup> (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:12).

Out of the 3.1 million inhabitants of the Plateau State, 84.5% are Christians, 12% are Muslims and 3.5% are African Traditionalists (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002, Higazi, 2011:6). Of the 84.5% Christian, 65% are COCIN members (Datiri, 2013:16) with various other Christian denominations making up the remaining 35%. Datiri (2013:17) also reveals that the Plateau State Civil Service is dominated by COCIN members who occupy 80% of the positions. Similarly, followers of the COCIN also dominate governmental structures making

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<sup>13</sup> According to Philip Ostien (2009:6-8), *Boko Haram* is Hausa language (commonly spoken in northern Nigeria), which also means “western education is sin or forbidden.

up 80% of members of the Executive, 85% of the legislature and 80% of its judiciary (Datiri, 2013, Bewarang 2013:24). The dominant position of the COCIN denomination was affirmed by the former COCIN President who in a speech during his last Synod meeting described the COCIN as synonymous with Plateau State:

Mr. President Sir, Plateau people love you and will continue to love you with prayers and best wishes. It is on record that COCIN members across Nigeria as well as the wonderful people of Plateau State voted overwhelmingly for you in the 2011 general election. As you know, the seat of COCIN is in Plateau State, and its patriotic people are predominantly COCIN members, thus making Plateau State synonymous with COCIN...the Presidency will not forget COCIN very easily...COCIN has not only been at the door of the presidential villa but right inside the villa. The name "COCIN" and what it stands for will not be strange to the Nigerian President and most of the several State Governors (COCIN President's Speech at Synod, 2013:2).

The above speech can be interpreted to mean that there was not only intimate co-habitation between the COCIN and the Plateau State that may have worked against the contributions of other religious groups, but that there was also conflict and competition between the COCIN and the Plateau State.

## **1.5. Research Parameters of the Study**

### **1.5.1. The Research Problem**

The main research problem that informs this study seeks to identify and critique the nature of Church-State relationship that exists between the COCIN and the Plateau State in the context of violent conflict in Jos. The study seeks to investigate why Christian youth could have successfully opposed the appointment of a Muslim to a political position (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002:248). What could have been the reason that informed their opposition and why the State government yielded to their reaction and later replaced the Muslim (Modibo, 2012:3-6)? What nature of Church-State relationship exists between the Church and the State that seemed to work against a Muslim's appointment to public office in a pluralist context of Jos?

The study takes into account the *missio*-political identity and vocation of the Church and its implication for the well-being of the entire residents in the society. This missional perspective regards the Church and the State as having different roles but relates as strategic partners that

co-operate for the well-being of the society. Within the context of Jos, the critique of the Church-State relationship is also aimed at examining the extent to which the nature of the relationship has influenced the violent conflicts among the citizens of Jos between 2001 and 2010. Since the State is responsible for promoting social order, the missional role of the Church as a very important religious institution within the Nigerian society ought to focus on fostering peaceful co-existence based on a culture of dialogue, religious tolerance and peace-building (Gawerc, 2006:447; Raiser, 2013:4-5).

### **1.5.2. The Hypothesis**

The hypothesis that guides this study argues that an unhealthy relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State became a significant contributing factor for the violence that engulfed the city of Jos from 2001-2010. This relationship inhibited an effective, fair, just, and equitable discharge of peace-building measures in the State (Ostien, 2009:16-18; Modibo, 2012:4-6). The silence and inactivity of the Church in the conflict appears to be linked to its questionable relationship between the Church and the State. This argument is based on the premise that when Church and State maintain a mode of relationship that is questionable, it can facilitate violence among its citizenry.

In spite of Plateau State's public commitment to good governance the violence that affected the city of Jos, it also suggests that there are important variables at work in the society that influence the nature and the intensity of the conflicts (Ambe-Uva, 2010:12). In view of this, the hypothesis guiding this study argues that:

**The violence that engulfed Jos between 2001 and 2010 was fed and exacerbated, to some extent, by an unhealthy Church-State relationship between the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) and the Plateau State which inhibited effective counter measures and the building of peace.**

The missional identity of the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) as a local evangelical denomination would suggest that it should be pro-active in missional vocation in promoting tolerance by mediating peace building and reconciliation between the different groups in



conflict within the society (Hewitt 1996:11; Haralambos and Holborn, 2008:399; Jain, 2012:194). Religion that is non-life-giving can become a threat to the social order by creating and facilitating the escalation of violence<sup>14</sup> in the society (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008:399).

### 1.5.3. Key Research Question and Sub-Questions

The key research question that guides this research is as follows:

**To what extent has the colonial and post-colonial Church-State relations between the COCIN and the Plateau State served to foster peace-building and peaceful co-existence among the residents of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria from 2001 to 2010?**

This question calls for the search of relevant literature on Church-State relations and informs the choice of a systematic literature review as the method of identifying the necessary documents. Linked to this key research question are the following sub-questions:

- i. What are the key *missio*-political factors that have shaped the COCIN and the Plateau State relationships from the period of British colonialism in Nigeria?
- ii. What is the nature of relationship that has developed between the COCIN and the Plateau State, Nigeria?
- iii. In what ways has the relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State fostered peace-building in Jos, Nigeria?
- iv. What would be a possible Afrocentric Church-State model of relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State that would be more life-giving and contribute to improve peaceful co-existence among the residents in Jos, Nigeria?

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<sup>14</sup> Violence as used in this context is usually the result of rivalry promoted by extremists and fundamentalist religious and political leaders and followers.

#### 1.5.4. The Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine whether, and in what ways, the nature of relationship that exists between the COCIN and the Plateau State facilitates or inhibits the process of peace-building among the residents of Jos. This objective may be achieved through the following steps:

- i. A systematic analysis of the key *missio*-political factors that have shaped the Church-State relationship in Nigeria since the period of British colonialism. The idea is to explore the religio-political roots or colonial and missionary legacies that might have shaped Church-State relations in Nigeria generally and the COCIN and the Plateau State in particular.
- ii. A critical examination of the colonial and post-colonial nature of relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State in Nigeria. This may also demand that historical models of Church-State relations that have emerged from the history of Western Christianity be explored to see what they have offered in terms of the promotion of the wellbeing of the citizens in their respective dispensations.
- iii. A critical evaluation of the ways in which the post-Independence nature of Church-State relationship that exists between the COCIN and the Plateau State may or may not advance and/or inhibit peace-building measures and deconstruct the policies and ideologies responsible for the life-denying violence in Jos, Nigeria. These perspectives will serve as signposts to critique the post-independence nature of the relations that the COCIN and the Plateau State have practised and also help identify the possible peace-building measures that are needed.
- iv. Postulating a possible Afrocentric model of a Church-State relationship between the COCIN and Plateau State. This will involve deconstructing the dysfunctional policies and ideologies that shape the Church-State relationship that exists between the COCIN and the Plateau State, which manifested in violence among the residents of Jos. An alternative Afro-centric and more contextual model is needed to equip the two institutions to improve peace-building and peaceful co-existence in Jos, Nigeria.

- v. Analyse several broader issues concerning the constructive and destructive roles that religion can play in the society. This analysis will include how the State can misuse religion for the legitimizing of oppressive policies and structures that may trigger violence instead of promoting peaceful co-existence. Emphasis will be given to ways in which the COCIN has used its relationship with the Plateau State to promote or to threaten social solidarity and heighten tensions with other local religious groups by its actions.

## **1.6. Scope and Limitations**

This study is limited to the *missio*-political critique of the nature of Church-State relationship that exists between the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) and the Plateau State, in the context of violent conflict in Jos, Nigeria. Although the study alludes to the violent conflicts that to place between Christians and Muslims in Jos from 2001 to 2010, it also seeks to address issues surrounding what constitutes constructive Church-State relations, and how this serves to facilitate peace-building and the wellbeing of the residents within the pluralist context of Jos. Although the study is about Church-State relations within Nigeria, the primary focus is restricted to a particular Church and State in a particular context, namely, Plateau State and the COCIN. This means that the study will not focus on the nature of Church-State relations between the COCIN and other States within Nigeria as well as those outside Nigeria. Using the *missio*-political lens to critique the nature of the COCIN's relationship with the Plateau State will involve the need to interrogate issues of socio-economic and political nature that affect the local people experiencing fullness of life.

## **1.7. Literature Review**

There is no intention to give an elaborate literature review section in this study because the entire study is based on the systematic review of literature. This means that the exclusion of a detailed literature review as a separate section in the study is deliberate. Accordingly, this section will be restricted to but a brief review of the key scholars that have interrogated the subject of this present study:

- i. The Journal of the Sudan United Mission: *The Light Bearer*, 1907, 1952, and 1970, provide the primary information on the COCIN-State relations during the colonial period. These volumes identified contradictory positions of the COCIN's policy of relations with the State, namely: Church-State separation, and Church-State partnership respectively. Both of these appear under the heading: Christian Influence in Government (1907:65, 1970:34).
  
- ii. Jan Harm Boer serves as stand-alone-scholar in this study in the area of colonial and missionary information concerning Church-State relations in northern Nigeria. In his (1979) book, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in Colonial Context: A Case Study of the Sudan United Mission*, (Amsterdam: Roppi), Boer provides much about the missionary interactions with the colonial administration and how it shaped Church-State relations. He also highlights the missionary theologies and understanding of colonialism, which shaped the COCIN's perception of politics and the State. In his (1984) book, *Missions: Heralds of Capitalism or Christ?* (Ibadan: Day Star Press), Boer argues that the SUM failed to teach their converts about politics until it was near the time of Nigerian Independence when they realized that the religio-political and economic interest of Christians and the Church would be absent or minimal in the political arena that they misinform them (Christian converts) to get involved in politics to defend Christian interests. If this is what happened, one could well-argue that part of what constitutes an uncritical relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State that appears to feed violent conflict in the State, emerged from poor *missio*-political political legacy from the Western missionaries. Even though Boer (1984:5-7) seems to provide justification for the poor political education to be influenced by dualistic philosophy which affected the missionaries, this justification is hardly convincing because the same mission provided religio-political support for the colonialists in their political programme by painting colonialism as a divine arrangement (1984:30-34). Therefore, if the SUM lacked socio-political expertise, how did they know that colonialism would lead to a better Africa? This situation tends to support the argument that the SUM deliberately refused to train their converts in politics as a political strategy to create a space for their home government (Great Britain) to control and colonize the Nigerians. Could this serve as a signpost to the nature of relations between the COCIN and the Plateau State? In his (1984) article, "The Politico-colonial Context of Missions in northern Nigeria," (*Calvin Theological*

*Journal* 19/2, 167-191), Boer maintains that the nature of Church-State relations between the COCIN and the State was shaped by the legacy of the colonial period in which the SUM with its British heritage was influenced by the prevailing thought on Church and State relations that evolved in that society during the early twentieth-century. Again, the question is how long will the COCIN and the Plateau State continue to repeat this colonial/missionary model of Church-State relations? Why is it that the COCIN and the Plateau State have been able to change almost every structure of their respective institutions, yet have failed to reconstruct the Church-State model? Indeed, the COCIN and the Plateau State have had enough time to adjust or reconstruct dysfunctional models that they inherited from the colonial powers/Western missionaries.

- iii. Harry R. Boer's popular (1976) textbook: Harry R. Boer, *A Short History of the Early Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI) serves as a primary resource to understand how the historical models of Church-State relations in the West have evolved with special focus on the Greco-Roman model and the Constantinian model (Boer, 1976:42-53). This text has revealed how the historical development of Church-State relations models evolved from the Greco-Roman period down to the Reformation era, which I have used as background to understand the development of the COCIN-Plateau State relations. Boer (1976:45-53) shows how each of the models failed to cater for the wellbeing of the poor citizens. The Roman Empire persecuted Christians for failing to worship the State, but the underlying reason was that Christians were poor and uninfluential citizens in the society (1976: 42-47). Minority groups were always victims of Church-State relations; this became worst during the time of Constantine because the persecuted Church became a persecuting Church against the minority religious groups in the society (1976:137-146). The Reformation period did not do better either; this is because Martin Luther and John Calvin divided the society into Church and State as if there were no other religious groups in the society (Dillenberger, 1962:349). The question remains then, how, and to what extent were the poor and minority groups protected by these models? Could it be a similar situation within the COCIN and the Plateau State, Nigeria?
- iv. John C. Nwafor is also an important scholar for the study. His (2002) book, *Church and State: The Nigerian Experience*, (London: Transaction Publishers), serves as a

key resource for the nature of Church-State relations in Nigeria. Although he tends to focus more on the Roman Catholic Bishops (Nwafor, 2002:130) than the larger Church community, his views nevertheless serve as a signpost for the Church-State relations in the country. Nwafor has discussed at length the juridical relations of religion with the State in Nigeria, which helps one to know that Nigeria, though constitutionally a secular State, is struggling with religious violence (2002:97-98). However, his over-emphasis on the role of the Roman Catholic Bishops in the promotion of social justice (2002:3-131-186), instead of addressing the role of the entire Church in relation to the State in Nigeria leaves much to be desired. This speaks volumes about the fact that when the Church is divided along denominational lines, it tends to affect its relationship with the State. As each Church denomination competes for a space in the State, its critical vocation may become compromised.

- v. Philip Ostien's on-line article "Jonah Jang and Jasawa: Ethno-religious Conflict in Jos, Nigeria: Muslim-Christian Relations in Africa," (*Muslim-Christian Relations in Africa*, August 2009)<sup>15</sup> is important to this present study because it not only focuses on the nature of Church-State relations, but also delves deeper into the relationship between the key political leaders in Jos and the religious groups across the Plateau State (2009:15-28). Ostien's position on the politico-religious climate in Jos also clearly reveals the rate of competition between religious groups and politics in the State (2009:4-6). If State governors themselves, who are expected to serve as custodians of peace and justice, can take the centre-stage in discriminatory campaigns against sections of their citizens (Ostien, 2009:17-19), the situation becomes unfortunate for the other minorities in such contexts. In this situation, one may expect the Church to speak out and hold the State accountable for social justice, but if the Church is silent, one cannot help but conclude that there may be an uncritical relationship extant between the Church and State.
- vi. Allan Aubrey Boesak in his (2005) book: *The Tenderness of Conscience: African Renaissance and the Spirituality of Politics*, (Stellenbosch: SUN Press) offers himself as an instrumental lens for critiquing the nature of Church-State relations that exists

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<sup>15</sup> < [http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=1456372/](http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1456372/)>, [Accessed 13 November 2015]. Available at: <[http://www.sharia-in-africa.net/media/publications/ethno-religious-conflict-in-Jos-Nigeria/Ostien\\_Jos.pdf/](http://www.sharia-in-africa.net/media/publications/ethno-religious-conflict-in-Jos-Nigeria/Ostien_Jos.pdf/)>, [Accessed 13 November 2015].

between the COCIN and the Plateau State. His theory of critical solidarity and distance was found relevant and indispensable for this research because of his critique of the South African apartheid context, where the denial of human rights and equality were glorified. This is related to the religio-political context of Jos, where, because of the controversial Constitution, minorities are discriminated against because they are said to be settlers and must go back to where they belong if they want to enjoy their human rights (Danfulani, 2006:7-14). Boesak's call for critical solidarity and distance from oppressive structures is relevant for the COCIN if the Church lives up to its *missio-Dei*. Where the Nigerian Constitution tends to mislead the State and diverts its attention from protecting all residents, the Church ought to be critical of that policy. This is because the Church is not dependent on the country's Constitution for its prophetic vocation, but rather on what the *missio-Dei* dictates by which the, "eternal outreach of Creator, Liberator and Sustainer to the created cosmos in which the Church can participate" (Bosch, 1992:114-115). The State may claim Constitutional controversy for its failure but the Church cannot.

vii. Jesse N. K. Mugambi has produced a number of texts important to this present study. Three in particular should be mentioned: *From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Theology after the Cold War*, (Nairobi: English Press, 1995); *Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, (Nairobi: Action Publishers, 2003), and his chapter entitled "Theology of Reconstruction," pages 139-149 in *African Theology on the Way: Current Conversations*, edited by Diane Stinton, London: SPCK, 2010,) serves in this present study as other lenses for critiquing the COCIN-Plateau State relations in the context of violence in Jos. The reconstruction lens presupposes that Nigeria as a country has failed and become fragile (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2008), hence the need for reconstruction. Mugambi calls for reconstructing colonial and dysfunctional ideologies that tend to characterize Church-State relations in Africa because they tend to divide people and cause violence (1995:xv). Mugambi's position serves to counter any tendencies of continuous blaming of the colonial/missionary factors for African Church-State failures.

viii. David Jacobus Bosch in his (1991) seminal work: *Transforming Missions: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Missions*, (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books), is key to offering the main framework of a *missio-political* critique that undergirds this present study. According to Bosch, the *missio-Dei*, is the original intention of the Creator to provide

for the total well-being of creation (1991:114-116). God's intention is for the holistic wellbeing of not only some, but the entirety of creation. This calls for the Church and the State to cultivate a leadership that is geared towards achieving it. When the Church embraces its *missio*-political mandate properly, it goes a long way to guide the State towards the promotion of social justice and an accountability for all (1991:115). The mission of God is all-embracing and does not treat people on the basis of being a settler or an indigenes.

- ix. Roderick R. Hewitt's (2012) book: *Church and Culture: An Anglo-Caribbean Experience of Hybridity and Contradiction*, (Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications) was found very helpful because of his understanding of Church and culture and the theology of inculturation. This lens reveals the fact that when religion and local cultures are not at home with each other and tend to produce hatred instead of love and peace in the society. When the Christian faith is treated as a foreign commodity, it becomes a curse instead of a blessing to the people; this is the point at which religion fails people and ends up destroying lives and property. An inculturation of the Christian message creates an awareness that God loves all people and that Christianity has not come to divide them.
- x. Two important local publications should also be mentioned: Nanwul Gutip's (1998), *Church of Christ in Nigeria: Birth and Growth*, (Jos: Crossroads Communications), and that of Zaphaniah Goshit, Pauline Lere, Bitrus Tang'an, John Longkat, and Nanwul Gutip, eds., *History of the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN) 1904-2013*, (Jos: Hamtul Press Ltd., 2013). Together, these two books have offered important insights into the local history, establishment and development of the COCIN. However, the two scholars have relied more on the historical aspect of the Church than its relationship with the State. Accordingly, they have argued that the founding Western missionaries meant well for the local people by carrying the Christian message and establishing education and healthcare facilities to supplement the efforts of the State (Gutip, 1998:4-12; Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:1-6).
- xi. Finally, I have exhaustively consulted other unpublished sources such as minutes of COCIN Synods, letters, Speeches of its various leaders at official functions, as well as official records of visits between COCIN leaders and the State elites.



## 1.8. Structure of the Thesis

This study is divided into eight constituent chapters:

- i. **Chapter One:** In this opening chapter I have set the stage by introducing the study. Here, I have discussed the background of the study, including my motivation for the study, its context, the research problem and hypothesis, as well as the research questions that will guide the study. Also included in this chapter has been the scope and limitation of the study, a brief literature review of the key scholars since the entire study is focused on systematic literature reviews and the research objectives.
- ii. **Chapter Two:** In this second chapter I will focus my attention on the theoretical framework that will be utilized in approaching the present study. The main framework that undergirds this study is a *missio*-political critique of the nature of Church-State relations that exists between COCIN and the Plateau State. In this framework, I will utilize Boesak's theory of critical solidarity and distance, to converse with a theology of social reconstruction, as well as Church and culture and the theology of inculturation.
- iii. **Chapter Three:** Here, I will lay out the research design and methodology I have utilized in the study. This will be based on the key research question that undergirds this study and the systematic literature review used as the means of data collection for the study. By so-doing, the key research question set the parameters (i.e., the colonial and post-colonial periods) for the types of literature that I have both accessed and reviewed.
- iv. **Chapter Four:** In this chapter I will trace the models of Church-State relations that have evolved within the context of the beginning of Western Christianity from the time of the Ancient Greco-Roman world through to the contemporary era in order to determine how well they have served the people of their periods. This information will serve to critique the colonial/missionary model of Church-State relations that emerged between COCIN and the Plateau State.

- v. **Chapter Five:** Here, I will evaluate the religio-political and economic factors that shaped the development of Church-State relations during the colonial period in Nigeria in general and COCIN-Plateau State in particular. This is aimed at determining the extent to which the politico-colonial and missionary legacies contributed in shaping Church-State relations and its implications on peace-building and the promotion of the wellbeing of the citizens.
- vi. **Chapter Six.** In this chapter I will evaluate the post-colonial search for peace-building measures in Jos by using the theoretical frameworks to critique the understanding and practice of Church-State relations between COCIN and the Plateau State.
- vii. **Chapter Seven:** In this chapter I postulate the contextual *Suum-Ngi* model of Church-State relations as an alternative Afrocentric Church-State model of relations between COCIN and the Plateau State. The chapter argues that the *Suum-Ngi* model has the potential to foster better peace-building measures that could serve to improve peaceful co-existence among the warring factions in Jos. *Suum-Ngi* emphasizes and the recognizes the common humanity that binds all human beings together regardless of what they might have constructed for themselves. Consequently, it possesses important ingredients to serve as a model for religions and State because most religions within the African context embody *sum-ngi* as a model for peaceful living since all religious people are first human beings before they constructed their preferred religions.
- viii. **Chapter Eight:** In this chapter, I will present the conclusion of the study as well as identify its contribution to the production of new knowledge. Finally, I give some sign-posts for future research work.

## 1.9. Chapter Summary

In this opening chapter I have sought to set the stage for the study. I began by stating the motivation for the research that included personal, professional and academic interests.

In referencing the prevalence of violence and destruction of life within the context of Jos, Plateau State, Nigeria, I called into question the *missio*-political mandates of the Church and State within the context by examining the ways in which their relations have or have not facilitated violence and contributed to peace building. I briefly outlined the research problem and the accompanying research questions and objectives of the study that will require an appropriate contextually relevant theoretical framework and methodology. I concluded the chapter by providing clarity on the scope and limitations of the study.

In the chapter which follows, I will explore the theoretical framework that undergirds the present study. I will reference the *missio*-political lens through which the study will be critiqued. This will be informed by three contextually relevant supporting theories for the effective construction of the framework, namely: social reconstruction, critical solidarity and distance, and Church and culture.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### 2.1. Introduction

A theoretical framework has been described by Mouton (1996:xi) as:

The relevant pre-existing lens grounded on existing body of theoretical and empirical knowledge that is pertinent to the research problem at hand, and stands as a guide to the on-going research.

It also constitutes an indispensable aspect and guide to any meaningful scholarly research. Since knowledge is continuous and inter-connected, a theoretical framework serves as a stepping stone for linking on-going research to an existing body of knowledge that has been successfully applied to explain a similar phenomenon in the past, which strengthens the process and conclusion of the present study (Peil, 1982:9-12). Without a theoretical framework, it becomes impossible to determine the nature and parameters of the existing literature to be reviewed and the hypothesis that is to be derived and proved (Mouton, 2013:91-92). This means that a theoretical framework is indispensable for any attempt at scientific research. Maluleke (2000:50) illustrates the indispensability of a theoretical framework in scholarly research with an analogy: “Leaving theoretical framework out of research is tantamount to entering a war zone without ammunitions.” This is a valid observation because the reliability and validity of any research for knowledge hangs on the theoretical framework used.

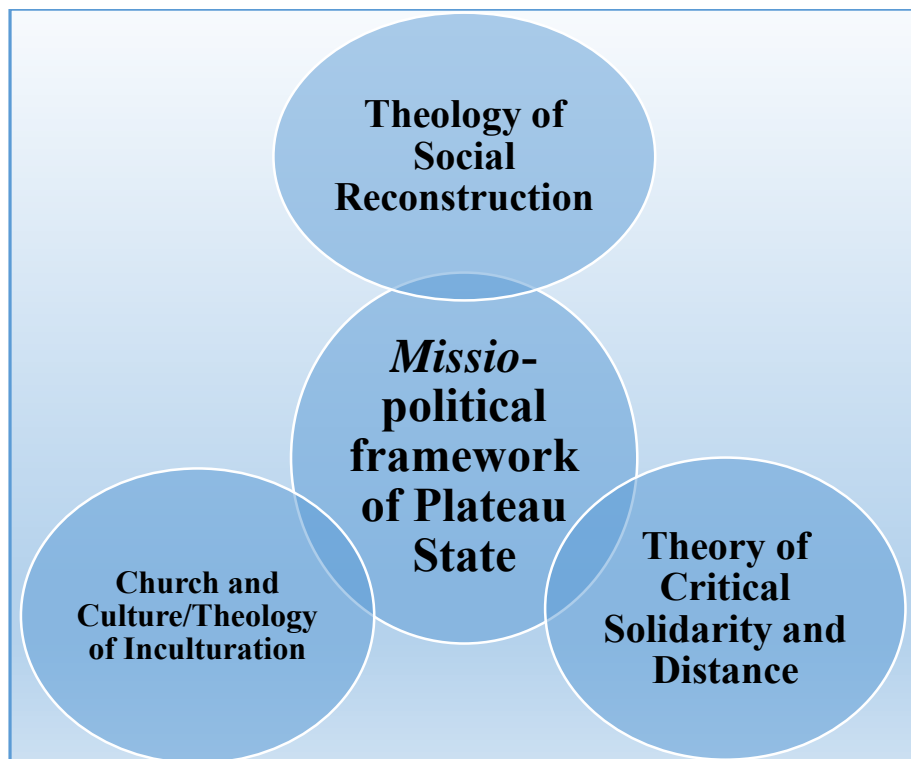
The fragility of the Nigerian State increased significantly from the time the military took power in 1966 (Adesina, 1973:486-487). However, since amalgamation, Nigeria has functioned as a deeply-divided State (Danbazau, 1991:9-16). In view of this, Nigeria has fallen victim to what Rotberg (2002a:126-128) has described as the characteristics of a failed State:

Rise of criminal and political violence, loss of control over borders, rising ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural hostilities, civil war, use of terror against own citizens, weak institutions, and deteriorated or insufficient infrastructures. Others are collapse of health system, rising level of infant mortality and declining life expectancy, end of regular schooling opportunities, declining levels of GDP per capita, wide spread of preference for non-national currencies, basic food shortages

leading to starvation, leaders who destroy the economic and political fabric of the country, and questionable legitimacy.

Where the Church collaborates with the State in syphoning public resources for the benefit of the Church, it participates in deliberately weakening the State instead of being prophetic to promote social justice for all.

In order to identify and critique the relationship that exists between the COCIN and the Plateau State on the basis of their *missio*-political vocations, the principal theoretical framework is informed by Mugambi's theology of social reconstruction conversing with Boesak's theory of critical solidarity and distance and Hewitt's Church and culture perspectives on the role of inculturation in equipping the Church to bear authentic witness within a culture. The diagram below illustrates how the supporting theories converse with each other and with the main *missio*-political framework:



**Figure 2.1.** Flow Chart of a *Missio*-Political framework and its supporting theories

## 2.2. The Theoretical Framework

### 2.2.1. The *Missio*-Political Lens

A *missio*-political perspective invites the Church's missional identity, vocation and witness to converse positively and critically with the political objectives of the State and its citizenry to work for the common good that facilitates fullness of life for all. For the Church to either withdraw from or engage the State in an uncritical manner means compromising its *missio*-political vocation. The *missio*-political mandate leaves out any tendency toward a symbiotic relationship with the State because the missional identity of the Church necessitates that it holds the State accountable to social justice (Bosch, 1977:12). According to Bosch (1977:12), by the Church having a *missio*-political responsibility to the society, this means that:

No political solution has any revelation background—not even democracy. The Church has to direct critical questions at all suggested political solutions. Jesus, who was motivated by compassion in all his dealings with humanity, offers the Church a criterion for determining whether a particular government is good or bad.

Boesak agrees with Bosch by arguing that “critical solidarity and distance is the Church's eternal vigilance on the political activities of the State until justice and peace reign in the society” (2005:155-156). In view of this, when the Church's ministry and mission become oppressive in its understanding, structures and praxis, then it compromises its allegiance to the *missio-Dei* (1991:7-8). The *missio*-political identity and vocation of the Church, according to Hendericks (2006:330) necessitate that the needs of the people are viewed as holy and that the Church must take sides to ensure that these needs are met. Therefore, a *missio*-political perspective calls on the Church to constructively to take part in all the affairs that are life-giving to all residents within the society while shunning everything that is life-denying or militates against the common good (Wallis, 2013, 2014: 4-26). A *missio*-political vocation is not a decision of the Church but it is the content of the liberating and restoring mission of God placed in the hands of the Church for the sake of the wellbeing of society. It is from this perspective that a *missio*-political lens is being utilized as the framework for critiquing the nature of relations that exists between the COCIN and the Plateau State. A *missio*-political lens finds expression in theories of social reconstruction, critical solidarity and distance, and Church and culture/theology of inculturation, all of which are being used in this study.

### 2.2.2. The *Missio*-Political Mandate of the Church

The critique of the relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State will be framed through the use of a *missio*-political lens to interrogate their competing, contrasting and complementary identities and vocation within the public sphere of Jos. Thorogood (1988:12-16) maintains that the Church is not a political institution in the world; however, the world sets the missional agenda of the Church and thus cannot function as a casual bystander or spectator in the public sphere. Through its life and work, the Christian community must bear witness to the mission of Christ who came to offer life to all creation (John 3:16). Ball (2006:399) argues that the Church fulfils its divine mandate by proclaiming the Lordship of Christ. Its missional mandate is to enable the Word of God to be incarnated in the world. The Church acts as the visible presence of Christ's work for the salvation of all creation and its role in the world cannot therefore be restricted to the private sphere of life (Cummins, 1964:1420).

The Church must therefore stand for social values that are consistent with the good news that it proclaims, and to put the concrete needs of human beings before abstract causes (Ball, 2006:362-363). In practical terms, this means that the Church should give priority to those who are socially and economically vulnerable and ensure the political responsibility of all citizens, regardless of race, creed, sex, or class, through freedom of conscience and political judgment, the separation of powers, and freedom of speech for all (Pilgrim, 1999:115). Therefore, if the wellbeing of the community is healthy, then the Church and State will take the credit; but if it is dysfunctional, then both institutions bear the blame (Igboin, 2012:7-9). This implies that the manner in which the Church relates to, or cooperates with, the State in discharging their respective responsibilities may affect the community's well-being. Raiser (2013:4-5) classifies "the particular responsibility of the religious traditions" as:

Being advocates of a culture of dialogue and peace...the preservation of a sustainable order in which peoples and nations are able to co-exist...they serve as custodians of the foundations and rules that maintain order and provide protection from chaos and self-destruction.

The Church's missional identity values diversity within community and a commitment to a culture of non-violence and respect for life, tolerance and truthfulness, solidarity, a just economic order, equal rights and a wholesome partnership between men and women (Raiser, 2013:5). The relationship between the Church and the politics of the State can be negative as a result of an unhealthy competition for power (2013:2). Lenshie and Abel (2012:2) also

suggests that this negation condition is possible when the State and Church develop exploitative and discriminatory relations when they compete for power that causes discord rather than peace-building. Accordingly, Raiser (2013:2) argues that:

Religious differences and tensions are among the key reasons for the civil conflicts and disputes of the recent decades. In view of this, religion is a highly problematic factor in the political arena and, thus, needs to be neutralized as far as possible and kept out of the political process.

The Church's role in the society must facilitate the positive reconstruction of all elements of life that negate against the well-being of all creation. However, there are some forms of fundamentalist expressions of faith that are intrinsically hostile toward the State structures that can be viewed as competing or threatening to the integrity of the State (Beck 2010:54). The Church's contribution to peace building within society therefore requires clarity in its missional identity and vocation that does not divert its attention into non-productive competition for power with the State in the public space (Raiser 2013:2). K ung (cited in Raiser 2013:2) states that "there [will] be no peace among the nations until there is peace among religions." This is a pertinent observation as it relates to the Nigerian context because if part of the social function of religion is the promotion of peace, then its propensity to fostering violent actions among its followers must be critiqued.

Whether the Church plays a constructive or destructive role within the society depends on how its adherents are equipped to engage with the State institutions and the wider society (Haralambos and Holborn 2008:408). Accordingly, the *missio*-political mandates of the COCIN and the Plateau State call into focus the quality of the leadership and the nature of the policies they adopt and enact that are fair, accountable, and transparent in their response to the needs of the people.

### **2.2.3. The *Missio*-Political Mandate of the State**

Ferguson (2004:120) describes the task of the State as the maintenance of justice and peace within its national borders, and when necessary, if no other peaceful method can be employed, appropriate but limited force can be used. Political authority exercised by the State is regarded as a divine appointment that exists for the community's well-being. Raiser (2013:120), argues that:



The central task of the State and politics, in the classic paradigm of the sovereign nation-State, is the maintenance of law and order. Sovereignty in external relations means the right to enforce national interests, if necessary by using military force and to ward off any interventions and interference in internal affairs.

Therefore, politics, whether it is tied to State institutions and the struggle for power, or to the daily life of common citizens and the way they want or do not want to live, is aimed at creating social order for the sake of promoting the common good (Raiser 2013:21-22). Arendt (1998:46) also points out that politics encourages and prepares the stage for the free participation of all citizens in decisions that affect their destiny as a community. Civil society is the sphere where the practice of good governance focuses on constructing the social order in a manner that advances the total well-being of the community. The State remains faithful to its mandate only when it creates an environment where every citizen finds fulfilment and fullness of life (John 10:10 NIV). Anything short of this amounts to oppression and the denial of human rights which serves to foster violence among the citizenry. For the State to successfully fulfil its mandate, the prophetic vocation of the Church and other religious groups becomes necessary (Igboin, 2012:4-6). The State can also fail to be objective and fair with regard to how it shares resources among its citizens and non-government institutions. If resources are misused to form political alliances that will consolidate its power-base at the expense of other citizens, which may result in the destabilization of peace within the community (Ishaku 2009:30-31). In situations where the State takes sides with one particular section of society, or with other religious organizations, while neglecting others, this too may result in violence. People usually react negatively to governmental acts of injustice that compromise social justice, fairness, peace, and integrity for the benefit of all its citizens (Raiser 2013:5), especially when government policies tend to favour one section over others.

#### **2.2.4. A Theology of Social Reconstruction**

In order to ensure that the *missio*-political lens can contextually engage with the subject of this study, three additional complementary Afro-centric theories are employed to strengthen the interrogation of the subject. The first input comes from Jesse N. K. Mugambi, a renowned Kenyan theologian who in the mid-1990s advocated for a theology of social reconstruction as a new paradigm for theorizing and practicing theological critique within the diverse African religio-cultural contexts (1995:2). This had come about because of the fundamental political changes that had followed the political independence of a number of African Nation States

during the 1960s and 1970s, and was partly informed by the argument that religion and politics are intimately linked within African societies. Where there exists a healthy, critical and respectful relationship with the State, then society may experience peace and well-being. However, when the relationship sours and becomes dysfunctional then society generally becomes unstable. Mugambi's theology of social reconstruction calls for a re-organization of those unhealthy modes of relationships, policies and structures which promote marginalization and discrimination among the citizenry that may lead to violent acts that destabilize society. This theory also calls for the promotion of common political, economic, and social participation by the entire citizenship.<sup>16</sup> In the context of Jos, where political and religious leaders exclude and alienate minorities and label them as "settlers,"<sup>17</sup> this necessitates an in-depth process of social reconstruction because of the ongoing threats to peace with the society. Mugambi (1995:12) defines "reconstruction" as an engineering concept that denotes the re-working or restructuring of something that has become dysfunctional in order to make it function once again. The concept of remaking the social order to function better becomes an important lens to critique the relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State.

Mugambi's contribution strengthens the *missio*-political lens and offers African contextual hermeneutics important insights concerning how contemporary States experience social conflict. As a result, this can become a transformative reality when in partnership with religious institutions that embrace theologies of social reconstruction. Mugambi laid the theological foundation for his theory by comparing the first-generation of African Independence leaders to the lack of team leadership in the Hebrew Bible story of Moses whom God used to liberate the children of Israel from Egypt (Exod.10:1-6; 18:13-23 NIV). Although Moses recognized some deficiencies in his leadership through his inability to communicate well with the people, he was hesitant in using others like Aaron, whose gift in public speaking was better than his own (Exod. 18:18 NIV). Mugambi argues that African leaders within the Church and State also engage in autocratic and non-participatory models of

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<sup>16</sup> "This theology should be constructive rather than destructive, inclusive rather than exclusive, integrative rather than disintegrative, pro-active rather than reactive, complementary rather than competitive, program-driven rather than project-driven, people-oriented rather than institution-oriented, participatory rather than autocratic, regenerative rather than degenerative, future sensitive rather than past sensitive, co-operative rather than confrontational and it should consult rather than impose" (Mugambi, 1995:v).

<sup>17</sup> The term 'Settlers' is popularly used to refer to those who or whose parents and grandparents came from elsewhere and stayed in Jos, whose descendants have lived all their lives in Jos and know of no other place of origin. The term is coined not only to label them but to leave them out in the rain by excluding them from participation in the life of the community.

leadership and governance even when they claim to embrace Western ideologies of democracy and its accompanying social and economic structures of capitalism that promote political domination, racial oppression, economic exploitation and cultural imperialism within contemporary Africa. Although Mugambi approaches the need for social reconstruction from the realities of the wider African context, his Kenyan socio-political context may have informed his perspectives. Instead of using an African theology of liberation as his model of critiquing African society, he postulated an African theology of social reconstruction as a corrective counter-measure (Mugambi, 2010:141). Indeed, Mugambi identified an African theology of liberation as possessing certain weaknesses such as “colonial domination, racial oppression, economic exploitation, cultural imperialism, and cold war manipulations” (2010:141). Consequently, Mugambi offered the theology of social reconstruction as a better and more relevant alternative for the African context to deconstruct self-centred and lone-ranger type politics inherited from the colonial ideologies which have become dysfunctional and life-denying for the African context and its communal life. A theology of social reconstruction provides therefore a lens for reconstructing dysfunctional policies of discrimination, marginalization, exclusion and the exploitation of minorities (Mugambi, 1995: xv). Mugambi calls therefore for the promotion of a communitarian community identity among Africans (*cf.* Joubert and Alfred, 2007:3), where each member of the community, whether in the minority or majority group, becomes involved in the affairs of the community. This is linked to a *missio*-political framework as informed by *missio-Dei*, a framework which calls on the Church and State—especially in pluralist religious societies—to work for the common good.

Mugambi’s background seems to reveal that disunity, domination, and discrimination threatened the unity of the Church in Kenya and prevented it from being the exemplary missional community that should proclaim good news (Mugambi, 1995: xiv). However, it could be argued that Mugambi has left unaddressed the contributions of the Church to the creation or resolution of social crises within society.

Furthermore, this study is aware of the criticism which Mugambi’s theology of reconstruction has received from scholars. Tinyiko Maluleke’s criticism stands out strongly against Mugambi: He cautioned Mugambi against any pretentious claims to final theologies (1997b: 6-8). He further observed that all theological and philosophical systems are tentative and subject to change or revision. The issue of pedagogy and differences between liberation and

reconstruction formed part of such criticism against Mugambi. To these, Mugambi responded in his second book (*Christian Theology and Social Reconstruction*, 2003:61-67), though he claims that his first book (*From Liberation to Reconstruction: African Christian Theology after the Cold War*, 1995).

As to what differences exist between liberation and reconstruction and what processes either of these utilizes, Mugambi responded in his second book by outlining and explaining that liberation and reconstruction were not mutually exclusive; rather they were complementary and related; liberation is always followed by reconstruction and not the other way round (2003:61). Concerning their differences in processes, Mugambi responded that while the process of liberation is a process is a period of war, reconstruction is a process of laying down arms and taking on building implements and tools for building (2003: 61).

Secondly, liberation and reconstruction are socio-political processes with history and specific contexts. The actors in the processes are ordinary human beings determining to liberate themselves from the oppressors. Religious commitment often provides the motivation and the rationalization of the struggle; but the results are expected in history. Failures are expected in the process and do happen because not all struggles for liberation are successful; and even those which succeed are partial (2003: 62).

Thirdly, in the processes of liberation and reconstruction, the distinction between theology and ideology is often blurred because oppressors use religion to justify their oppressive regimes. As the oppressed organize their process of liberation they formulate their own interpretation of religion, which provides legitimation for their struggle (2003: 62).

Fourthly, liberation and reconstruction never reach perfection because they are human processes bound to be militated against by manipulations and miscalculations. Fifthly, the processes of liberation and reconstruction within the same community involves all sectors of the population, including religious leadership. Finally, at the pedagogical level, the symbols, models and tools for inculcating commitment to liberation are different from those needed reconstruction. Liberation requires dialectics of war; while reconstruction requires dialectics of nation building (2003: 63). While the task of liberation requires people who operate like war commanders, reconstruction requires all people within the community to participate (2003: 74-75), here reconstruction requires social consciousness (2003: 75).

On the one hand, the pedagogy of liberation focuses on: concentration of war, focuses on the oppressor, sees the oppressed as objects, sees the oppressor as center of power, emphasizes

on destruction, focuses on industry of weapons, focuses on regimentation, based on central command, uses hierarchical leadership, and emphasizes on competition (2003:75-76).

On the other hand, the pedagogy of reconstruction focuses on concentration on peace, focuses on the liberated agent, sees the liberated as subjects, sees the liberated as center of power, puts emphasis on rebuilding, focuses on industry of implements and tools, focuses on decentralization, focuses on personal initiatives, emphasizes horizontal leadership, and emphasizes cooperation (2003: 76). In all these processes, Mugambi sees the Church at the center of reconstruction because of its proximity with all sectors of the community.

In spite of the shortcomings of his theory of social reconstruction, it remains a relevant lens for this present study, because Mugambi calls for reconstruction beyond the religious circles to include all other sectors within the society (1995:2). This multi-disciplinary application makes the concept functionally relevant for critiquing the Nigerian context where numerous factors combine to feed violence in Jos (Modibo, 2012:6-8; Ostien, 2009:16-18; Danfulani, 2006:4-7).

Another African scholar whose insights give credence to Mugambi's theory of social reconstruction is that of Kinoti, (1997:225). Kinoti argues that the Church in Africa should be more relevant, contextual and purposive in its missional engagement with Africans. Kinoti also urges African theologians to start creating a suitable theology for Africans as a matter of urgency:

We may be inspired by the biblical narrative of Nehemiah's reconstruction of the wall of Jerusalem. We may be motivated by the urgent need to pick up the pieces of our lives. We may be desirous to restore the image of the corporate life of our communities as we visualize the image to be. Some may even be literally in the middle of reconstructing their houses recently burned down by arsonists for political reasons. Whatever our individual circumstances here and now in Africa, the cry is...restore (Kinoti, 2010:226).

Mwaura's (2010:128) perspective on the theology of social reconstruction is determined from the academic discourse on human identity. She argues that in all human beings there is a common humanity that should be the unifying factor above any other social constructs. Africans should therefore return to their heritage of community-identity instead of emphasizing ideologies that cause division among them (2010:128). Accordingly, the Church and Christians in pluralistic communities should engage in dialogue with peoples of other faiths if they are to be faithful to their missional identity that advocates: salvation, liberation, peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, justice, and equity for all of God's people (2010:129).

The vital ingredients of social reconstruction that could be applicable to the Jos context should include the promotion of social justice, political participation by all sectors of its citizenry, fairness and respect for human dignity, life-giving policies, promotion of dialogue between the warring parties, tackling of the root causes of violence through the eradication of poverty at the grassroots level, eradicating unemployment among the youth, and the re-awakening of the prophetic voice by the COCIN (Raiser, 2013:142-143). In this study, I argue that the policies of Plateau State tend to encourage divide and rule of its inhabitants, and are thus in serious need of a radical change that will facilitate the cultivation of a culture of accommodation between the indigenes and the settlers (Tobias and Klein, 2003:18). In short, if the COCIN must be true to its *missio*-political identity and vocation, then it has little option but to encourage the one-ness of humanity bound in their common origins, essence, and destiny despite religious and political diversity (Lusa, 2010:23).

Through its strategic position within the State, the COCIN is particularly privileged to hold the State accountable to function in the interest of the common good of all (Boesak, 2013, 2014:24-24). If the Plateau State Government is to cultivate an attitude of impartiality within the pluralist environment then, “good governance is pre-requisite for the existence of peace, respect for human rights, and social progress” (Ruwa 2001:8). Social reconstruction, in line with the *missio-Dei*, calls for social justice in order to promote just peace among all of the citizenry. Acceptance of the social construction theory of Mugambi would mean that the COCIN needs to remain vigilant in its advocacy of equality of all before the law so that those that live on the margins of society are not exploited by those who have access to economic and political power and resources. (Hunsinger, 2006:352).

The social reconstruction theory of Mugambi implies that the COCIN remains true to its participation in the *missio-Dei*, which also requires it to be non-supportive of those policies of the State that are life-denying. The COCIN needs to be pro-active in resisting the temptation of collaborating with oppressive policies by speaking out against such policies as well as maintaining a critical distance from the undue benefits of oppression. A proper understanding of its *missio*-political mandate calls on the COCIN to work for the fair treatment of all sectors of its citizenry. In Mugambi’s theory of social reconstruction, this leads into the second supporting theory of critical solidarity and distance that is argued by the South African theologian, Allan Aubrey Boesak. This theory stands as the best out of the

supporting theories that support the main framework of mission-political critique because the two others operate within its scope; and promotes its scope.

### **2.2.5. Theory of Critical Solidarity and Distance**

Allan Boesak is concerned about how Christianity (Church) that came to South Africa came as a department or spiritual counterpart of the colonial government. He describes how the Church co-habited with and identified wholly with the colonial agenda without “prophetic calling and no critical distance nor critical presence in the society (2005: 134). He further laments what he calls “the criminal appropriation of the land, the genocide of the Khoi and San, the destruction of whole cultures and the enslavement of people, indigenous and imported, which was not only permissible but unavoidable and absolutely necessary for colonial project, and therefore the will of God (2005: 134).

In view of the above, Boesak’s theory of critical solidarity and distance emerged from the role of the Church within the society of his South African context and experience of apartheid regime. Boesak’ thesis focuses on the silence of the post-apartheid Church in South Africa (2005: 133). Boesak builds his theory on Trevor Manuel’s idea of incarnating God in the context of South Africa, which means that the Church ought to maintain its prophetic, kingly, and priestly role of promoting social justice in the society instead of dancing to the tune of oppressive apartheid government. This is a call for continuation of the good work which the Church stood for during the struggles for independence. (2005: 133).

Boesak blames the established Churches for failing to create prophetic instance; instead, only missionary societies whom he regards as prophetic minorities created such prophetic instance. Instead, the established Churches continued to find biblical justifications for slavery and racism in the South African society (2005: 134). The Dutch Reformed Church appears to be the target of this criticism because of its use of Romans 13 to promote slavery. In his call to the prophetic minorities to continue the good work that they did during the struggles for liberation, Boesak alluded to the report of the Foundation for Peace and Justice:

We believe that the Church still has political responsibility in the sense that we should continue to seek the Lordship of Jesus Chris over every area of life. The prophetic task of the Church is not yet over and must be fulfilled at least as vigorously now as in the past. Moreover, when a new government is in place we shall have to be as clear as we tried to be vi-sa-vis the white minority regime. The watch word here is “prophetic faithfulness”. We shall also have to continue to respond to calls from the community to act with them in order to address the wrongs in our society (Director, Foundation for Peace and Justice, 1989: 90).

The above background shaped Boesak's theory of critical solidarity and distance which is being utilized as a supporting theory to critique the role of church-state relationship that has turned destructive to the citizens in Jos, Nigeria.

Boesak (2005:168-169) has written exhaustively on issues of social justice for the oppressed in the South African society and the wider African context. The concept of critical solidarity challenges the Church not to withdraw from its social responsibilities, but instead should refrain from participating in all forms of injustice in the society (2005:157). Critical solidarity is therefore grounded in the Church's mandate to witness and promote justice, peace, and meaningful life for people in the world. As with Mugambi, his approach to issues of social reconstruction calls on the Church to practice its mission with a critical solidarity and distance towards any oppressive structures as a way of being faithful to the mandate of the *missio-Dei*, that calls for fullness of life for all (2005:165-166). Boesak sees the Church as ordained by God to hold the State accountable to the rigours of social justice and the well-being of the entire society.

Boesak's theory of critical solidarity and distance was nurtured and evolved out of religio-political experiences within the South African context (2005:24-25). His struggle as an anti-apartheid activist in the United Democratic Front (ADF) taught him about the dynamics of domination, oppression, marginalization, the denial of human rights and dignity, and discrimination (2005:167-168). Boesak resisted the oppressive White oligarchic regime with an alternative vision of society that valued unity and equality of humankind that is advocated by the Christian message of justice and love for the neighbour (2005:169-170). The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) during the period of apartheid rule (1948-1994) served as the religious institution that offered theological legitimacy to the oppressive White regime. Boesak himself being a reformed theologian was passionately critical in his condemnation of the theological and moral illegitimacy of the policies of exclusion practiced by the Church and State (2005:141-143).

Bosch, a member of the Dutch Reformed Church, had earlier argued within the Apartheid context that the *missio-Dei* mandate of the Church is liberating news therefore cannot be used to legitimize oppression (Bosch 1991:7-8). Boesak therefore argued for a *missio*-political framework of critical solidarity and distance to inform how Christians and the Church should



relate to oppressive State/Church institutions that rule through oppressive structures. Critical distance affirms the legitimate right of the Church to hold the State responsible for the wellbeing of the wider society (Boesak, 2005:134-135). Molefe (cited in Boesak 2005:169), also posits that the Church must reject the incestuous co-habitation with any government institution because it will make it to fundamentally compromise its mission. According to Boesak:

Leaving the State to its devices is not forgivable. It deprives the State of understanding its vast possibilities and its own limitations, the exciting heights its power can achieve, and the fearsome boundaries beyond which its power cannot, dare not, go. It deprives politics of the wholesome confrontation with spirituality and the call to radical conversion. It deprives politicians of the always necessary reminder that they are not God, but servants of God for the good of the people. It deprives most of all, the powerless and the voiceless of their voice and their future. At the end, it will deprive the nation of the redemption of its soul. The Church is called to be a prophetic, healing, critical, and eschatological presence. No political sea can change that, though it is no easy task (Molefe cited in Boesak, 2005:169).

Therefore, critical solidarity and distance will serve to question the manner in which the COCIN has demonstrated its ministry and mission within Jos and how has it has sought to address unjust policies of the State. The COCIN's missional credibility will therefore be determined by its capacity to demonstrate whether its *missio*-political engagement has employed the dynamics of critical distance in developing its relationship with the State and whether it has resulted in the promotion of peace-building and overcoming violence in Jos.

The result of the strategic position that the COCIN holds in the Plateau State (Datiri, 2013:18) could result in its numerical strength becoming the cause of missional weakness. The nature of its relationship with Plateau State makes the COCIN vulnerable and runs a grave risk of compromising its missional integrity because of its inability to maintain a critical distance from the State.

As a consequence, the COCIN's attitude towards the conflicts in Jos raises serious questions concerning its relationship with the State (Commins, 1964:1419). Has the COCIN been able to offer prophetic guidance to the State to act justly to all of the inhabitants of the State whether they are Muslims, Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and Atheists (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008:407)? The theory of critical distance invites the Church to speak out against injustice and not to collaborate with oppressive structures. Accordingly, Boesak's critical solidarity and distance framework serves as a vital lens for examining the nature of the relationship that exists between the COCIN and the Plateau State because it too calls for

holding the State and Church accountable to serve the common good of all its citizens. However, just as social reconstruction is not possible if the Church fails to maintain its critical solidarity and distance from the State, critical solidarity will also require that the Christian message is effectively appropriated in the culture and contexts of the people. When the Christian message takes on indigenous roots within the local context, then its capacity to transform lives is heightened. However, when it remains a product controlled by external forces, then its efficacy within the local culture is severely restricted. In view of this, a third conversation with Hewitt's perspectives on Church and culture (2012) and the challenge of inculturation offers an afro-centric critique of the process by which the Church's witness to the Christian message within a cultural context can make it life-giving and meaningful. Christians and Muslims cooperate fully within their local contexts in matters relating to their cultural celebrations such as inter-religious marriage, seasonal festivals, community development efforts, business transactions, and come together to give a joint response to natural disasters; however, when it comes to religious disagreement, they take up arms against each other is a signpost that the Christian message has not taken root in the culture (Adetunji, 2013:316-319).

It could be argued from the above that even the manner in which the Christian message is handled and understood by local people may result in it becoming life-denying and source of sorrow instead of life and blessing whenever it remains a foreign commodity to the local people and culture. Even the manner in which Christian was brought to many parts of Nigeria could facilitate denial of life among its converts if not properly rooted in the local cultures. For example, Asetunji (2013: 354) noted how a Western missionary threatened a local chief with Chritianity during the pre-colonial Nigeria, when he stated: "War is often a means of opening the door for the gospel to enter a country. A sword of steel often goes before a sword of the spirit." This clearly shows that there is no such thing as a "pure Christian gospel" anywhere; therefore, inculturation is inevitable if Christianity is to maintain its life-giving posture.

#### **2.2.6. Church and Culture**

Coming from the background and experience of churches within the Anglo-Caribbean and Jamaica in particular, and how the practice of slavery by the Eurocentric forces destroyed the Jamaican culture and human dignity, Roderick Hewitt laments and calls for proper

inculturation of the gospel in every culture. He laments how the gospel and cultural explorations within these churches occupy very little, if any, significance in the global study of the sociology of religion (2012: xvii). Hewitt is of the view that, to a great extent, the historical development of Christian Churches in Jamaica has contributed to the emergence of new ways of understanding and practicing the Christian faith that is more attuned to its African heritage (2012: xvii).

From his immediate local context, Hewitt argues that the phenomenal rise and impact of Pentecostalism and Rastafarianism in Jamaica constitute a fundamental break with the inherited dominant Eurocentric worldview (2012: xvii). From this, one could argue that though Hewitt focuses more on his immediate local context, it is worth noting, as he also argues, that this exploration recognizes that the process of inculturation is not limited to local experiences (2012: xvii). It implies that there are also international ramifications because of globalization. Each culture is able to incarnate the gospel in unique ways that impact on other cultures to reveal fresh understanding of the Christian faith among the local receivers (2012: xvii).

The choice of Hewitt's theory of inculturation as one of the lenses for this study is informed by the similarity of his context to Jos, Nigeria, where colonial factors played destructive roles in treating human dignity and respect resulting to many forms of resentment and conflicts. Hewitt dwells elaborately on the history of the encounter between colonial and missionary forces who sought to dominate and demand the local culture to either give way or absorb into the Eurocentric culture.

In an attempt to resist the overthrow of their culture and identity, Rastafari culture has evolved as a contemporary shaper of Afrocentric identity and counter cultural critique through its integrative language, religion and music (201: xx). The Rastafarian culture emerged as an African indigenous response that challenges ideas about life because instead of European image of Christ, their message portrays the Emperor of Ethiopia, a black man, as the true and living God who has returned as the messiah (2012: xx-xxi). Whether this culture was genuine or not, it is interesting to note that in the struggle for liberation, the relationship between theology and ideology becomes blurred (Mugambi, 2003: 62). Since the white colonialists used religion to oppress the Jamaicans, the Jamaicans responded by formulating their own understanding of Christianity in search of liberation (Mugambi, 2003: 62). The level of damage caused the Jamaican culture and people is described by Patterson as quoted by Hewitt:

The permanent, violent domination of naturally-dishonoured persons...the process by which the system of slavery sought to humiliate and undermine the African's sense of self and connectedness with others and one's own community. "Slave" was used to describe the Africans in the Caribbean to deprive them of any cultural, ethnic and national identity that would affirm them as persons to be valued (2012: 3)

"If the gospel is to be understood, if it is to be as something which communicates truth about real human situation...it has to be communicated in the language of those to whom it is addressed and has to be clothed in symbols which are meaningful to them. And since the gospel does not come as a disembodied message, but as a message of a community which claims to live by it and which invites others to adhere to it, the community's life must be so ordered that it "makes sense" to those who are so invited" (Comblin, 1977: 141). For the gospel to be effective, it must be lived out within the cultures of the individuals that it wants to encounter. The Christian faith is essentially a cultural phenomenon and cannot exist except in cultural forms (Hewitt, 2012: 14). John Waliggo also describes inculturation of the gospel in a beautiful manner:

Inculturation asserts the right of all people to enjoy and develop their own culture, the right to be different and live as authentic Christians, while remaining truly themselves at the same time. It makes Christianity at home in the culture of each people, thus reflecting its universality. It becomes a prophetic and liberative movement which rejects colonial Christianity and proclaims the liberty of all peoples to serve God within their own basic worldview, thus eliminating the constant danger of dualism or dichotomy in their lives (cited in Hewitt, 2012: 17).

With this brief background from which Hewitt approaches theology of inculturation from experience, the choice of his perspective is relevant for this study because of its similarity with the way in which religion is being used destructively in Jos, Nigeria.

As an Afro-Jamaican theologian, Hewitt (2012: 18) argues that the Church's witness to the Christian gospel within a culture involves an on-going process (inculturation) to make Christ and his liberating message better understood and lived by people of every culture in a meaningful way, locality, and time. Unless the Christian message becomes life-giving within the context and culture of a people, it remains foreign, enslaving and destructive to their local social and cultural interactions. Hewitt, defines his theology of inculturation as:

A way of doing theology that deliberately seeks to interpret the Christian faith from the perspectives of the socio-cultural contexts and historical life experience of different peoples, and to challenge society with the Gospel message (2012:17).

In this situation, the Christian message transforms culture and is also transformed by the culture in a way that the Christian message is reinterpreted anew (Hewitt, 2012:17). Hewitt seems to suggest a mutual transformation between the two forces (i.e., the gospel message and the culture of the people), but it is this mutual transformation between the gospel message and the cultural contexts and experience of the people that may not always be constructive. Shorter (1988:11) defined inculturation theology as follows:

The incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question (this alone would be no more than a superficial adaptation) but becomes a principle that animates, directs, and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a 'new creation.

Any superficial adaptation of the Christian life and message by the Church without it taking deep root in the different cultural contexts of the people to whom it is brought will prove in the long term not to foster fullness of life because it ceases to be faithful to its *missio-Dei* vocation. Since the Christian gospel that the Church communicates must be incarnated within the cultural contexts of the people, one can suggest that there is no "pure gospel" that exists because all expressions of its message are contextual experienced. However, according to Hewitt (2012:17-18), great sensitivity and care is needed when the Church transports the Christian message across different cultural contexts. Each time the process of inculturation must begin anew, involving local people who can honestly interpret the Christian message of good news into appropriate cultural meaning systems. When this fails to take place, the people's comprehension and practice of that message can become non-liberative. The purpose of *missio-Dei* is to liberate people from all systems that dominate and oppress them; this includes religious or political institutions that use power unjustly to dominate and oppress others even if they claim that the same Christian message justifies their unjust actions.

Within the pluralist-religious city of Jos where religious and ethnic identities dominate politics, the members of the COCIN can be viewed as threatening by other religious groups if their expressions of the Christian gospel results in discrimination against those who do not belong to their group. Accordingly, the inculturation of the Christian message of God's love must be influenced by fidelity to the *missio-Dei* which demands the radical transformation of all cultural practices that bequeath death instead of life. The inculturation process must be constructive, liberating, restoring, caring and promote healthy communication between the

Christian gospel and people's cultural experiences in a manner that affirms the promised fullness of life that is at the core of the *missio-Dei*. According to Hewitt<sup>18</sup> there are:

Two deceptive, deadly, infectious and attractive viruses offered by all extremist religious groups; these are certainty and superiority, once infected one becomes addicted and dangerous to oneself and others. Ideologies and theologies that foster 'certainty and superiority' are dangerous because their ultimate goal is to seek political and economic benefits and powers. These become instruments of greed that are used to oppress others.

While these theories are being used to critique the relationship of COCIN and the Plateau State, I am nevertheless aware of the unique contextual differences of Nigeria and will make adjustments where applicable. These theories offer important benefits of promoting peace-building by calling for the deconstruction of oppressive, marginalizing, discriminatory, and exclusionary structures and policies that feed violence and deny people the opportunity to be human. The issue of equal rights and justice are central issues that must challenge the COCIN to exercise its critical solidarity and distance from those of the State's life-denying policies that justify oppression. Social reconstruction, critical solidarity and distance, and the inculturation perspectives of Church and Culture are important lenses for this study. However, as Kuyper has argued, great care must be taken in how the Church relates to the State and the local culture because:

The goal of Christian social and cultural action is not to confessionalize society. What we want is a strong confessional Church but *not* a confessional civil society nor a confessional State...By its influence on the State and civil society the Church of Christ aims only at a *moral triumph* (italics in the original), not at the imposition of confessional bonds nor at the exercise of authoritarian control (Kuyper cited in Bratt, 1998: 197).

One of the temptations of the Church is to make the society Christian as if its message can be forced on people in the society. Kuyper's perspective is valid because in the Nigeria political context, the different States or regions are influenced by the dominant religion within that State, be it Christianity or Islam; and wherever religious minorities are present, the religious majority dominates them (Danfulani, 2006:12-20). It is within this contradictory setting of religion and politics that the *missio*-political relationship of COCIN with the Plateau State in Jos is being critiqued by this study.

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<sup>18</sup> Available at: <[https://www.facebook.com/hewittrod/posts/10153222336321810?notif\\_t=like/](https://www.facebook.com/hewittrod/posts/10153222336321810?notif_t=like/)>, [Accessed 5/4/2015].

### 2.3. Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I have sought to explain the theoretical lens and accompanying theoretical framework that I will use to interrogate my research. Through the use of a *missio*-political lens with three supporting theories to complement and strengthen the framework, the central ingredients I have identified and analysed will serve as key resources to critique the relationship between the Church and State in the Nigerian city of Jos. The three supporting theories of (i) a theology of social reconstruction, articulated by the Kenyan theologian, Mugambi, (ii) that of critical solidarity and distance by the South African theologian-activist, Boesak, and (iii) the dynamics of Church and culture by Roderick Hewitt present essential components of the *missio*-political discourse.

In the chapter which follows, I will focus on the methodological approach that I utilized for this present study. Being a non-empirical study its main access to information was generated through a systematic review of all of relevant literature through various libraries, databases and research engines. Accordingly, I will seek to explain how this methodology was utilised in the process of collecting and analysing the data for this research project.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN: METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

#### 3.1. Introduction

The preceding chapter discussed the theoretical framework and its indispensability in producing critical research. It used three supporting theories within a general *missio*-political framework to approach the study. The theoretical framework served to guide the review of literature and the choice of hypothesis for this study. It ought to be stated from the onset that because of the sensitive nature of this study which deals with violent conflict in Jos, and how resentments are still high among the warring factions, empirical method of data collection may not yield the desired outcome of the research; this limitation as well as the key research question, has informed my choice of literature reviews as method of data collection instead.

In view of the above, in this third chapter, I will focus on the methodology based upon a critical analysis of literature that I chose through a systematic review method of identifying relevant data that could contribute in answering the key research question for the study. In what follows, I will supply a brief overview of the systematic review and the rationale for choosing this method.

The literature utilized in this methodological inquiry revealed that the method can either take a “purist form” where a comprehensive search is made of all evidence through extensive searches of multiple databases or a “pragmatist form” where “it is possible to conduct a systematic review of only one database—albeit accompanied by supplemental searches as long as this is done systematically and with transparency over the methods used and acknowledgement of the systematic review’s limitations (Bambra, 2009:17). Strech and Sofaer (2011:120-122) caution that while either of these can still be called “systematic review,” they have their respective strengths and limitations. This is in agreement with Bambra’s (2009:17-18) observation that on the one hand, “while the purist form of systematic reviews has the advantage of covering a wider scope of evidence or information, it has a disadvantage of being too costly, energy-demanding, and time-consuming.” While on the



other, “the pragmatist form of systematic reviews saves time, cost, and energy as its strength but it risks the missing of potentially relevant studies or information.”

In this study, the pragmatist form is preferred because of its determination to adhere strictly to the systematic-ness of data collection. One database has therefore been identified as the main source of data collection to be accompanied by supplemental searching of relevant texts, academic peer-reviewed journals, website citations, archival materials, conference papers, and minutes of Church synods, speeches from Church leaders, Church newsletters, and Church reports and news coverage of major events (Bambra, 2009:17).

Following the methodological logic postulated by Wilson, *et al.*, 2010:15-16), this chapter also presents the details of the study process that has been followed and also justifies the data collection procedures and analysis (2010:16). Also included in this chapter is the essential background to the fundamental guidelines which are common in the various approaches to a systematic review methodology, as well as the supplementary hand-search methods used within the main methodology.

### **3.2 An Overview of the Systematic Review Methodology**

Systematic reviews, according to Sleep and Clark (1999:307):

Represents one method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing available evidence relating to a single phenomenon.” By this definition, Jennifer Sleep and Elizabeth Clark imply that systematic literature reviews is “a rigorous and exhaustive process for searching and appraising both published and unpublished literature on a specific phenomenon or question (1999:307).

Systematic reviews has been said to differ from traditional literature review methodology in that it adapts and adheres to a strict scientific design so as to make it comprehensive and yet minimize the chance of bias and ensure reliability (Arksey and O’Malley, 2005:22-23).

Arksey and O’Malley (2005:23) further note that:

Systematic review is a method that focuses on a well-defined question which helps to set the parameters where appropriate study design can be identified beforehand because it aims at providing answers to questions from a narrow range of quality assessed studies.

The peculiarity of this method lies with its systematic-ness which Bambra (2009:17-18) attributes to its attempt to:

Systematically locate research both published and unpublished, and critically evaluates them on grounds of relevance and predetermined methodological criteria; and combines the results of the various studies and subjects them to scientific scrutiny in order to give a summary of the best evidence to answer the research question (Bambra, 2009: 17-18).

In line with Arksey and O'Malley, Kitchenham, *et al.*, (2007:vi) argue that:

Systematic review is a method of evaluating and interpreting all available research relevant to a particular research question, topic, or phenomenon of interest with the aim of presenting a fair evaluation of a research topic through the use of trustworthy, rigorous and auditable methodology.

Some scholars agree that the systematic reviews as a method has a long history because even though its systematic-ness was not emphasized at the beginning, some of its techniques and features were used by educational researchers to search, retrieve, and synthesize literature in a number of different ways (Slavin, 1996; Lipsey and Wilson, 1993; Davies and Schulman, 2000/2007; Petrosino, *et al.*, 2000; Torgason, 2003). While Chalmers, *et al.*, (1989) traces the history of systematic reviews to researchers of medicine and agriculture in the eighteenth-century, Slavin (1986) and Petticrew and Robert (2006) argue that “systematic reviews originated with educational researchers.” However, both opinions agree that educational researchers only used some of its techniques and features like “meta-analysis” and “research synthesis” but the phrase “systematic reviews” was a recent one that was initially used in medical research (Slavin, 1996; Torgason, 2003). It clearly shows that the method is fairly new in the field of social sciences research such as theology. The systematic review method serves to foster objectivity in research by its rigorous nature of synthesizing evidence from primary researches made, a process which has informed my rationale for choosing it for this study.

### **3.3. Rationale for Choosing the Systematic Review Method for this Study**

A research methodology serves as a roadmap or architectural design that guides the process of data collection and the general flow of the study and protects the process towards reaching the right destination (result) to answer the chosen research question(s). Systematic literature reviews has been presented as “a research method in any given study that guides the researcher by pointing him or her to the way of gathering relevant data” (Sleep and Clark,

1999:307). Accordingly, a research method does not end at data gathering but it serves as a ‘guide’ throughout the research process and ensures that the right outcome is achieved. On the rationale for choosing systematic literature reviews as a method, Fink (1993:3 cited in Okoli and Schabram) observes that:

Systematic literature review can be done for personal intellectual reasons or in order to understand what is currently known about a topic but one is not ready to embark on primary study.

Mulrow (1994:35-40) agrees with Fink that:

For a reliable outcome and valid knowledge to emerge, a single study should not be considered in isolation but positioned within the totality of research in a given field to give a more complete picture of the phenomenon.

Against this background, systematic literature reviews as a method has been chosen because it is the best method that allows the tracing of relevant literature on the nature of Church-State relations between the COCIN and the Plateau State, Nigeria, during the colonial and post-colonial history of Nigeria, as well as the extent to which the nature of that relationship served to foster or inhibit peace-building among the citizens of Jos. This approach also enables the revisiting of the State-Church relationship paradigms that have been suggested by scholars and thereby build on the ground that has already been raised. Accordingly, this was the most relevant method that could provide the tools to answer the research question in this study.

Baxter and Jack (2008:545) argue that a “systematic review is significant to conceptually determine the factors that lead to the realization of or inhibition and stagnation of a phenomenon from realizing its objectives.” The hypothesis of this study argues that the nature of the relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State is a phenomenon that has failed to promote peace-building among the citizens in Jos because of their uncritical solidarity; a situation which has contributed to the intractable violence among the citizens in Jos from 2001-2010. The rationale for choosing this method serves to answer the research question after the published and unpublished studies on the subject covering the specified periods were systematically reviewed, synthesized, and analysed.

Drawing upon Kaunda’s argument for the validity of systematic literature reviews as a method for theological studies (Kaunda, 2013:18), it is necessary to integrate the relevant research evidence and thereby present the evidence, seeking to resolve uncertainties about the

nature of the relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State. The systematic literature reviews method became necessary to locate, appraise, and synthesize studies that have been made on Church-State relations or religion and politics in Nigeria and the wider sub-Saharan countries so as to facilitate an analysis of the factors for and against peace-building within Jos. The study calls for adherence to a procedure for the synthesis of research that is held to a high standard of objectivity, systematic review and rigor, in order to arrive at a concrete evaluation of the phenomenon (Cooper and Hedges, 1994:13).

The systematic literature reviews method will also help to make sense of the large body of information that has been accumulated over the years by scholars of religion and politics on the issue of Church and State because the method has the ability to manage potentially “unmanageable” amount of information (Petticrew and Robert, 2006:3).

### **3.4 Methodological Procedure**

I adopted such a specified and rigorous procedure by which to examine and synthesize existing research by carefully applying a specific contextual technique (Arksey and O’Malley, 2005:22-25).

The flow of systematic literature reviews begins with an observation of a phenomenon which serves to provoke a question (Sleep and Clark, 1999:310) which I as the researcher aims to answer. In this study, the phenomenon so observed refers to the decade of violent conflict that engulfed the city of Jos, from 2001-2010, and the seeming inability of the COCIN and Plateau State to use dialogue to curb said violent conflict and restore peace between the warring parties. In view of this, the observation prompted the question:

**To what extent have the colonial and post-colonial Church-State relations between COCIN and the Plateau State served to foster peace-building among the citizens of Jos, Nigeria? In another way, what historical factors could be responsible for this violence?**

Subsequently, the question also served to determine the parameters of the research as well as dictating the kind of literature and studies to look for (Sleep and Clark, 1999:307) in order to

correctly answer the question. The research question also helped to fulfil the requirement of systematic literature reviews which is supposed to be as thorough as possible in identifying primary studies that are suitable for answering the research question (Arksey and O'Malley, 2005:24; Kaunda, 2013:20).

Having preferred the pragmatist form of systematic literature reviews to the purist form, its formal procedures which involve searching for the main and relevant studies from one named electronic database to be accompanied by supplemental searches such as checking references, citations, and hand-searching relevant academic peer-reviewed journals, and various archival materials have been followed strictly (Bambra, 2009:16). A search was made of databases from various libraries in Nigeria and South Africa as well as online search engines, the ATLA Religion database, World Council Churches Peer Review Journals, Globethics, Wiley Online library, and Google Scholar. I found that the ATLA Religion Database offered more relevant studies; as a result I subsequently used it as the sole database. The strategy followed in searching for relevant studies was developed from the key phrases or concepts from the key research question that guides the study (Arksey O'Malley, 2007:24; Strech and Sofaer, 2011:123).

In step one, the key phrases which were searched included: "Church-State relations in Nigeria during colonial period," "Church-State relations in Nigeria during the post-colonial period," "Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN)," "Jos, Nigeria," "Plateau State," "Nigeria," "Benue-Plateau State," "Peace-building in Nigeria," "peace-building in Plateau State, Nigeria," "violent conflict in Jos, Nigeria," "*missio*-political," "mission" and "pluralistic society."

In the second step, the key phrases that I searched were names of the four pioneer indigenous pastors of COCIN: "Bali Fallang," "Toma Tok Bot," "Damina Bawado," and "David V. Lot."

In step three, the phrases searched were names of the COCIN's founding missionaries: "Herman Karl Wilhelm Kumm," "Ambrose H. Bateman," "John Burt," "Lowry Maxwell," "H. G Farrant," and "William M. Bristow."

In step four, the key phrases searched were former names of the COCIN in the *Hausa* language, which is the common medium of communication in region where the mission

focused its work: “Ekkliisyyar Kristi A Sudan (EKAS),” “Ekkliisyyar Kristi A Nigeria (EKAN).”

In step five, the key phrases searched were names of the British High Commissioner in charge of northern Nigeria during the colonial period and the first indigenous governor of Plateau State: “Fredrick Lord Lugard” and “Joseph Gomwalk.”

The first level of literature search was from the ATLA Religion Database which yielded a total of 15,775 references. Out of these, 102 articles were included in the final selection. Because of the sheer volume of data discovered, the recommendation of Kaunda (2013:20) that the entire process of systematic review methodology should be conducted by two or more researchers is a sensible one. Based upon the strategy used in this study it is indeed advisable that future researchers using the systematic literature reviews method should consider co-opting research assistance to facilitate the process.

The second level of literature search was the supplemental hand-search of relevant academic journals (Arksey and O’Malley, 2005:24), the COCIN’s *The Light Bearer* being the major and earliest publication of the Sudan United Mission (SUM) concerning its activities in northern Nigeria being first published in 1907 (*The Light Bearer*, 1907; Goshit, Lere, Tang’an, Longkat, and Gutip, 2013:4-8). Another key Journal that was hand-searched was Ambe-Uva’s *Identity Politics and the Jos Crisis: Evidence, Lessons and Challenges of Good Governance* (2010).

The supplemental hand-search helped to trace those articles and journals that covered the colonial and post-colonial history of Nigeria and especially Plateau State. The hand-search strategy also enabled me to search the COCIN and Plateau State’s historical and political archives respectively in Jos. Concentrated attention was given to the boxes that focus on policies on religion and politics or Church-State relations, speeches by COCIN’s leaders, minutes of fund raising, and video coverage files covering official functions of the Church from both the colonial and post-colonial periods. The archival materials were particularly relevant because they revealed the nature of relations between the SUM and the colonial administration in northern Nigeria when COCIN and Plateau State were still part of the northern region of Nigeria, and were yet to attain the status of the COCIN and the Plateau State (*The Light Bearer*, 1907).

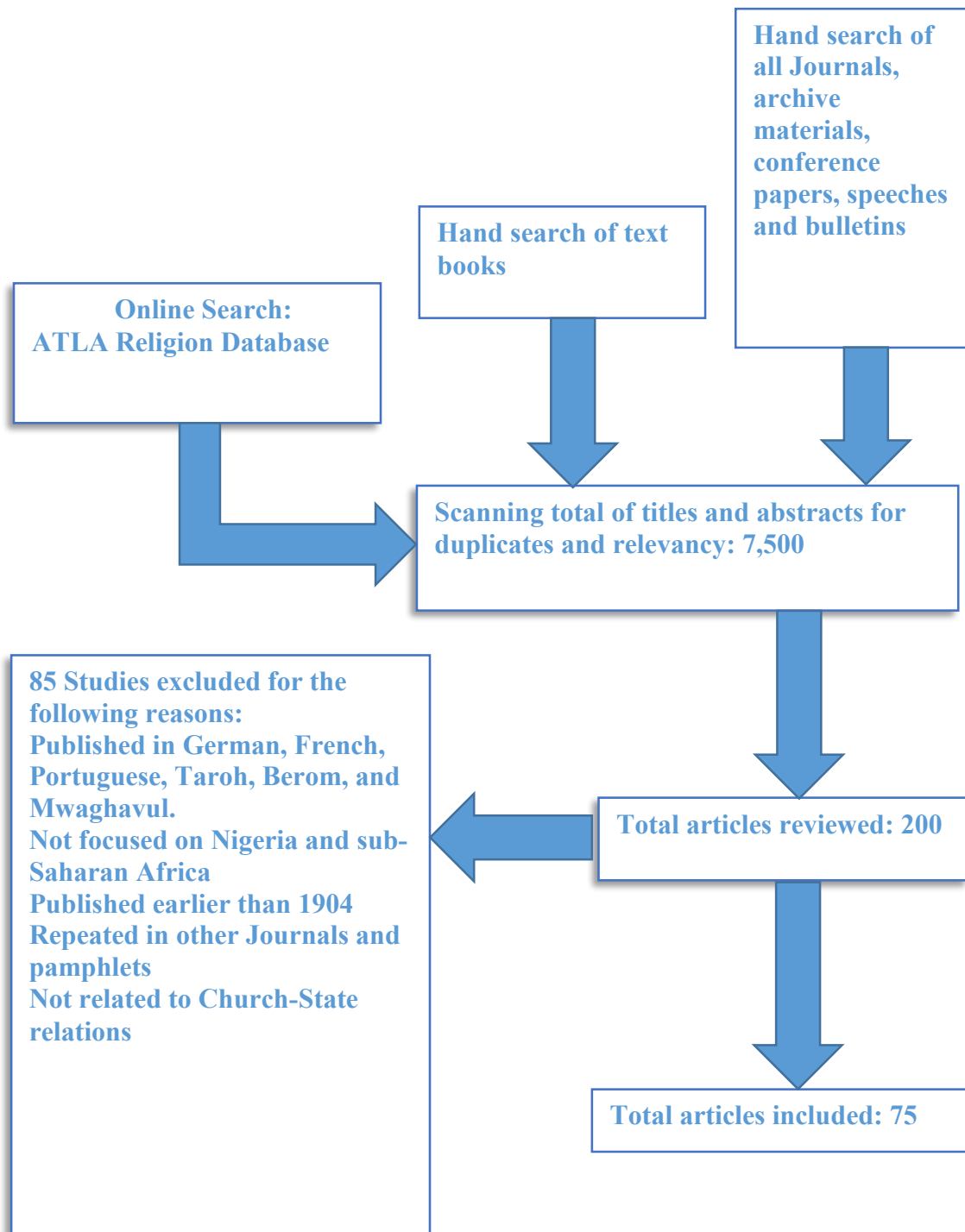
A further hand-search was executed for books from the libraries of University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, University of Jos, Nigeria, Theological College of Northern Nigeria, and the library of Plateau State's University, Boko, Nigeria. These data sources yielded a total of 450 references including the boxes from the archives, out of which 30 were identified as the study progressed and were treated as part of those accessed from the online database (Kaunda, 2013:21-22).

Inclusion and exclusion of primary studies was the third level. This study was premised and restricted to publications in English and *Hausa* languages; *Hausa* is the *lingua-franca* that is spoken by the majority of the ethnic groups who live in the middle belt to the northern part of Nigeria, where the SUM's missionaries established their mission stations from 1904-1907 (*The Light Bearer*, 1907:2-4). Most of their publications were in the *Hausa* language because English was not common because of the restriction of missionaries and their schools from this region by the colonial administration (Metuh, 1986:28-30). The study is also focused on Church-State relations or religion and politics in Nigeria within the context of violent conflict in Jos, Nigeria. All the published and unpublished studies that were accessed in these two languages and which focused on relations between Church and State within the context of Nigeria and some wider sub-Saharan African countries and fell within the period between 1904-2014 were carefully consulted so as to select potentially relevant materials based on their abstracts and titles (Wilson, *et al.*, 2010:16). All peer reviewed journals and articles on Church-State relations, religion and politics, and religious violence in Jos were included. Drawing on Arksey and O'Malley's procedure (2007:24), "full texts of these studies were retrieved and their qualities assessed for a final decision on whether to include or exclude them."

It implies that many articles, books, archival materials, and Church pamphlets that were published or unpublished in German, French, Portuguese, Taro, Berom, and Mwaghavul were excluded because I could not access them linguistically. Materials on Church-State relations or religion and politics that were not primarily focused on Nigeria and immediate sub-Saharan Africa were also excluded. All duplicate studies and reports of the same studies in different Journals were equally excluded from the reviews. All published and unpublished studies that were published before 1904 were excluded from the review because they

addressed different issues other than the COCIN and Plateau State. Figure 3.1. below represents key information about the inclusion/exclusion criteria used for this study.





**Figure 3.1.** Flowchart of study selection (inclusion/exclusion)

Adapted from Kaunda (2013:22)

A total of 200 studies were selected for review from the initial 7,500 studies. After a careful and critical reading of these studies, 75 studies were again selected for inclusion in the review.

The fourth level was data extraction which forms the core of systematic reviews (Pawson, Greenhalgh, Harvey, and Walshe 2004:23). Based on my research question, after all the relevant studies were identified, an extract was systematically scrutinized and the applicable information from each study was extracted. Data extraction in systematic literature reviews, as argued by Sleep and Clark (1999:308), “must ideally be extracted by at least two independent reviewers who should then agree on a final version through consensus.” Involving two independent reviewers is important because the essence of systematic review is to minimize bias and drawing a wrong conclusion (Sleep and Clark, 1999:307; Oakley, 2005:429; Strehl and Sofaer, 2011:125). Again, this study concurs with the argument of Sleep and Clark (1999: 307) that “a second reviewer be co-opted to select and critically appraise studies independently and extract the relevant information in order to limit bias.” Future researchers who intend to use the systematic literature reviews method are therefore advised to consider the option of co-opting second reviewers (Bambra, 2009:16).

According to Pawson, *et al.*, (2004:23):

Systematic reviews normally proceeds by lining up primary studies that have made it through the quality filter, fine-tuning the set characteristics through which they are compared, combing through each study to extract precisely the same nugget of information from each source and recording them onto standard grid.

Following the procedures above, the studies which met the inclusion/exclusion criteria were systematically summarized and then subjected to vigorous appraisal in an integrative way in order to show how the study holds together (Kaunda, 2013:23). Baumeister and Leary (1997:109) have therefore argued that:

Literature must be summarized and presented in a way that makes its relationship to the whole study integrative and its themes explicit [*sic*] in this kind of literature presentation, critiquing of primary data is critical because it is the essence of systematic reviewing.

In view of the above, it is only when the reviewer digs deeply into the primary studies and listens deeper than what is printed on the outer pages of the texts that their messages emerge clearer for analysis. The critique of primary studies called for digging deeper than simply

offering a descriptive analytical method which involves the use of mutual framework to all relevant studies in an interpretative analytical method. The interpretative method becomes necessary because a phenomenon can only be fully understood through subjective interpretation and not just description (Kaunda, 2013:23). Livesey (2006:4) argues that:

Scientifically, it is admitted that there may be many interpretations of the same phenomenon, but they also maintain that these interpretations are in themselves part of the scientific knowledge.

Concerning the necessity and relevance of interpretative approach, Gadamer (1960/1989:267-269) opined that:

A person who is trying to understand a text is always projecting. He [*sic*] projects a meaning for the text as a whole as soon as some initial meaning emerges in the text. Again, the initial meaning emerges only because he/she is reading the text with particular expectation which is constantly revised in terms of what emerges as he/she penetrates into the meaning and is understanding what is there [*sic*]. A hermeneutically trained consciousness must be from the start, sensitive to the text's alterity. But this kind of sensitivity involves neither 'neutrality' with respect to the content, nor the extinction of one's self but the foregrounding and appropriation of one's own fore-meaning nor prejudice.

In the data extraction, the historical and textual analyses of investigation is used especially in chapters four and six which focus on the critique of the missio-political factors that shaped Church-State relations between the COCIN and Plateau State during the colonial and post-colonial periods (Ahanotu, 1977:335).

This method reveals how economic matters have influenced Church-State relations to the detriment of the society because it has always been life-denying to the citizens (Kumm cited in Boer, 1983:172-173). Having investigated the common themes during the successive periods of the development of Church-State relations, and having consecutively assessed complementarily with the circumstances between the COCIN and Plateau State, it would seem to suggest that political and economic power have been militated against critical solidarity and distance between the COCIN and the Plateau State.

The fifth and final stage was to synthesize the evidence (Kaunda, 2013:25). In synthesizing the data, particular attention was paid to the relevant and recurring themes and theories of the Church-State relationship, comparing them with the COCIN and Plateau State, critically analysed them to form the basis for an alternative model of Church-State relations for the COCIN and Plateau State.

The missio-political lens that is supported by additional theories of social reconstruction by Mugambi (1995:xv), critical solidarity and distance by Boesak (2005:169), and Church and culture by Hewitt (2012:17), served as the interpretative tools to synthesize, analyse, and interpret the findings about the nature of relationship that exists between the two institutions within the general purpose of what the local Church and the State are called to be, and to do in serving the well-being of the society.

The social reconstruction focuses on the need to renew, rework, restructure, reshape, reorganize, reconstruct, and resuscitate those dysfunctional policies and ideologies that have marred the relationship of the two entities, making it life-denying for the citizens in Jos, Nigeria. On the other hand, the theory of critical solidarity and distance calls on the Church (COCIN) to engage the State and hold it accountable for the well-being of the citizens in Jos. Human right, dignity, and equality need to be respected in accordance with the *missio-Dei*. Finally, Church and culture perspectives on inculturation offer an important tool for exploring the extent to which the Church seeks to communicate and establish message of the Christian gospel with deep and authentic roots within the local culture of Jos. The assumption is that when the Christian message is not rooted in the people's culture, it runs the grave risk of mis-educating and mis-evangelizing the people. All the theories call on the Church and State to implement their missio-political mandates as contained in the *missio-Dei*, which focuses on respect for common humanity before the Creator and the need to uphold it for the well-being of the citizens.

In view of the above, this study will postulate an alternative Afro-centric model of Church-State relations, which locates all human beings within the context of a common origin, sharing a common essence, and heading to a common destiny; hence the need to respect each other despite religious, political, cultural, and ideological differences. This will serve as a signpost to prod the COCIN and the Plateau State in the process of deconstructing the existence of any life-denying ideologies, and to serve as an alternative model that will foster peace-building among the citizens. All these lenses are geared towards what Kaunda (2013:25) refers to as a “praxis-oriented and call for change for the better in society” because they are:

Systematic and praxis-oriented and seek to find alternative symbols, myths, images, analogies [worldviews] within African culture as effective grounding for envisioning

[better future of Church-State relationship between the COCIN and Plateau State]. They could also be considered as relational-and-life praxis-oriented that call for transformed relationships that reflect equity, justice, transparency, participation, and affirmation of life by rejecting death-dealing ideologies in the society. They emphasize the inter-relationship in the society of human beings and nonhuman creation. [They] are conscious of “multi-cultural” and “multi-religious” contexts, they are culture-sensitive and [nationally] dialogue oriented. Such is the kind of perspective that has been maintained throughout the study (2013:25, italics in the original).

The missio-political vocation and mandate of the Church and State as embodied in the praxis of *missio-Dei* is all about just and life-giving relationships among human beings and the entire creation (Lusa, 2010:24). The achievement of this nature of relationship calls for the urgent reconstruction of dysfunctional ideologies by the State, a response of critical solidarity and distance from oppressive structures that are informed by inculturation of the Christian message within the local cultures. In the pluralist context of Jos, there must be an effective use of religion in a manner that brings constructive social change in society instead of using it for destructive and discriminatory purposes that results in the breeding of violence and death among the citizenry.

### **3.5 Chapter Summary**

In summary, this third chapter, being the methodological chapter, has provided the overview of the chosen methodology for the study: systematic literature reviews. The rationale for choosing the systematic literature reviews as a research methodology for this study was based on the understanding that it provides the critical tools to answer the research question. It also serve as a roadmap in guiding the search for the relevant literature and how to analyse and synthesize the large pool of literature that fell within the parameters of the research question and met the eligibility criteria.

The methodological sequence was also presented showing the four major steps of the method from the observation stage, formulation of the question, rigorous search for literature, data extraction, synthesizing the result, and drawing a conclusion.

The flowchart indicating the inclusion/exclusion criteria is also included to show the rigour of literature search and selection.

Finally, I gave the explanation on how the methodology fit into the three principal theories used in this study, and their application on the COCIN-Plateau State relationship.

In the chapter which follows, I will give attention to the different models of Church-State relationship that have emerged within Western society and which have been influenced by Christianity. Three such models will be used to interrogate how the COCIN-Plateau State relations have evolved.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MODELS OF CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS THAT EMERGED WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF WESTERN CHRISTIANITY

#### 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter I will focus on the survey of the different models of Church-State relations that have emerged and evolved over the period of Western Christianity. I will aim in this chapter to explore the nature and circumstances that characterize how these models promote or inhibit conflict resolution and peaceful co-existence in pluralist contexts.

The rise of Christianity and the emergence of the Church in the Greco-Roman world have been accompanied by tensions and at times strategic alliances between the two competing powers. From the Greco-Roman world era up to the present modern period, various models of Church-State relations have emerged. The intention here is not to cover all the models in this chapter, but to present important examples of how the Church-State relations have functioned in different periods and different contexts. Three of the models are identified as examples because they represent major paradigms in the development of Church-State relations.

The Greco-Roman model, emerged within a context where religion and State had been treated as one according to Baker (1959:1). In the fourth century CE according to Boer (1976:106), ‘the Constantinian model’ emerged when religion (Christianity) was used as a political weapon to strengthen the system of governance of the empire by the first ‘Christian’<sup>19</sup> emperor (Wand, 1937:123). The final model emerged during the Protestant Reformation and was championed by Martin Luther and John Calvin during the sixteenth century (Dillenberger, 1962:364). This was the period when the Church-State ‘marriage of convenience’ that was initiated by Constantine and guided Church-State relationship for

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<sup>19</sup> I put *Christian* in quotation marks to indicate that history scholars differ on the actual conversion of the emperor given the political environment and his motive for declaring Christianity the *religio-licita* (legal religion) (Wand, 1937:123-124) of the empire. Some scholars have criticized him for using Christianity as a means for political ends.

many centuries, was called into question by the reformers. During this period, the Lutheran model (Two-kingdom model) and the Calvinist model (Theocratic model) will be examined.

#### **4.2. The Greco-Roman Model**

Prior to the Greco-Roman political era, the Greek world was dominant (Wand, 1937:124; Boer, 1976: 1). Religion and the State existed together and were expected to promote the well-being of the State and its citizens. The development of Church-State relations during the Greco-Roman period was shaped threefold, by a Roman imperial agenda, Greek thought and Jewish religious and cultural traditions (Wand, 1937:125; Boer, 1976:1-2). The Greeks saw both Church and State combined as an ethical institution, which focused on promoting the common good of the *pólis*.<sup>20</sup> Richard Kraut (2002:208) argues that “religious Temples were built using public money because religion was not separated or regarded as sacred from the profane.” Priests were paid from the public fiscal because religion was almost a department of the State. The Greeks upheld justice and equity in their religio-political culture. Everyone was thought to be equal in the community and deserved fair treatment by the religio-political culture (2002:208). However, during the time of Aristotle, it is claimed discrimination against women, children, labourers, and harlots replaced the just and equitable religio-political culture as women were excluded from State participation because Aristotle thought that their faculties were not developed enough for social functions (2002: 214-215).

The Roman Empire includes peoples from different nationalities and ethnicities including Palestine, which became a province in the empire in 63 BCE (Boer, 1976:1). Christianity evolved out of the history and religion of the Jews who lived in Palestine. Although conquered by the Romans, the Greeks continued to influence the philosophical construct of the people’s lives in the empire (Wand, 1937:124-126). While Roman power and law controlled the military, political, social, and economic life of the people of the empire, Greek thinking (i.e., philosophy) influenced intellectual discourse in education and therefore shaped the religious posture of the empire (1937:126).

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<sup>20</sup> The Greek word polis [πόλις], (*lit.*: ‘city’) originally referring to the ancient Greek city-states (Baker 1959:1-23), broadly denotes citizenship or a body of citizens.



Greek thinking gave rise to various religions forms, including: nature religion, mystery religion, and state religion (Boer, 1976:1-3). These religions were expected to foster the prosperity of the State and satisfy the uneducated citizens while philosophy satisfied the educated class. These religions still had strong political aspects because they were chiefly meant to make sacrifices to the emperor, who was regarded as a god. The emperor was a symbol of order and prosperity of the State. As a consequence of this, religious devotees were expected to make sacrifices to him as a means of serving the common good of the society (Muthuraj, 2008:351).

The Roman Empire with its diverse cultural and religious practices found that unity lay in its ability to control its citizenry. To achieve the unity in the empire, all religions were to direct their worship to the emperor or face persecution (Muthuraj, 2008:352). Although the various religions were allowed to worship in their temples, all sacrifices were required to be offered to the emperor. This meant that any religion that failed to comply was regarded as an unlawful religion in the empire for refusing to promote the interests of the State (2008:354). This *scenario* set the stage for the nature of Church-State relations that prevailed during this period. The followers of the young Church with their Jewish monotheistic heritage risked being classified as participants in an illegal religion (2008:356). Church-State relations became hostile Christians were treated as second-class citizens because of their refusal to worship the emperor was treated as an act of treason (2008: 356).

The Jews received special status and were exempted from worshipping the emperor in order to keep peace in their geo-region. According to Boer:

Their population was so large that they were found in all regions of the empire, they were prosperous, they were well organized by common bonds of race and religion, and they were influential people in the society even though their monotheistic religion prevented them from complying to worship another god (1976 43-45).

Boer further noted that “the Roman Empire was careful not to offend important people in the empire” (1976: 45).<sup>21</sup> However, the minorities were subjugated under them (Barnes, 2007:598). In view of the preferential treatment given to the Jews over Christians, and how the State marginalized Christians, it appears that Church-State relations during the Greco-Roman period worked against the interests of the poor, the marginalized, and the common

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<sup>21</sup> This point will be further explored in the chapter in relation to the situation in northern Nigeria where the colonial government also treated the majority Muslims as special people with special status because they were believed to have a well-developed system of administration (Gaiya, 2004:352-355).

citizens because they were attracted to religions that were critical of the State (Boer, 1976:103-105).

As people of other nations embraced Christianity, its difference from Judaism became even more pronounced. The Jews also resented those from their community that converted to Christianity, regarding them as heretics because they did not follow the laws of Moses (Boer, 1976:45) Christianity was therefore declared *religio-illicita* (lit: an illegal religion in the empire) (Muthuraj, 2008:356). The Church experienced persecution because its attraction to the marginalised peoples within the society threatened the authority of the official religious and political power.

From 64 CE, the Church became outlawed with Christians becoming victims not necessarily because they opposed the State, but because they were classified as people that gave their allegiance to another authority instead of the State. It was not until the fourth century CE when Constantine came to power that the status of the Church changed (Muthuraj, 2008:357). It could therefore be argued that the Greco-Roman Church-State model served for the good of the powerful but for the masses of the people, it did not.

### **4.3. The Pre-Constantinian Period**

Before Constantine came to power, the Roman Empire was seriously characterized by political division and a series of wars among the powerful (Wand, 1937:130-134). However, amidst these wars, many people were becoming Christians so that the Christian population was expanding very fast and with a concomitantly strong resolution not to worship the State (Muthuraj, 2008: 354). As Christian influence grew across the empire, the poor and uninfluential fell victims of socio-economic and political circumstances while the rich business class celebrated with the State elite. This could also be seen as the marginalization of minority religious groups within pluralist contexts. This situation mirrors to some extent the context of the Plateau State where minority religious groups also appear to be marginalized because they are said to be settlers and non-indigenes (Mwadkwon, 2001:58-59). As a consequence, Church-State relations during the Greco-Roman period down to the pre-Constantinian period failed to promote the well-being of the entire citizenry.

Marginalization and suppression of the poor became normative and institutionalized State policies that tolerated no perceived threats to its hold on power.

The next period and model to be discussed is that of Constantine which began in the fourth century CE that functioned without any significant improvement in building social justice and peaceful co-existence between the poor and the rich (Wand, 1937:134). In this case, the Church, was co-opted as a strategic partner with the State in further marginalizing minority religious groups under the pretext of purging the State of paganism (*cf.* Boer, 1976:101-102). Although the model is largely attributed to Constantine, this model spilled over and influenced Ambrose of Milan after Constantine.

#### **4.4. The Constantinian Model**

In the fourth century CE, through the intervention of Constantine as Emperor, the Roman State brought an end to the persecution of the Church. Constantine had to overcome many external and internal threats to his political power in the empire (Boer, 1976:106). The entire empire was divided along political interests that left the poor at the mercy of political opportunists and technocrats. Motivated by his desire to unify the empire, Constantine declared Christianity, not only as a legal religion but the official religion of the State (1976:100-105). Constantine's strategy (*cf.* Edit of Milan in 313 CE) (1976:138-139) provided more security for Christians by aiding the Church and clergy with public grants from the State. This followed his purported vision on the eve of the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 CE which he saw a sign of the cross and heard a voice telling him to use it (enter into partnership with) in order to defeat his enemies (1976:102-104). As a result Constantine fought under the protection of the Christian God. Whether or not Constantine truly converted to the Christian faith is not the concern of this study. The concern is rather his partnership with the Church to consolidate State power across the Roman Empire.

As the Roman Emperor, Constantine sought peace with the Church by returning all Church property that was confiscated during the period of persecution (Muthuraj, 2008:350). He also relieved the clergy from civic duties and built Churches for Christians. The Church ceased to be an enemy of the State and instead became an ally of the State. Church membership that

had previously been regarded as a threat became advantageous so that many rich people opted for the ministry (Boer, 1976:134).

The question that was left unanswered was why many people of high social status within the society opted for Church membership and to enter its ministry. The Church became an open community that welcomed all classes of people: the poet, the philosopher, the artist, the politician, the military officers, the architect, and the banker worshipped openly together with the labourer, the farmer, and the trader but only the rich could agitate for entering the Church ministry as clergy (Boer, 1976:134). The Church therefore became very influential and important in the society because it was no longer persecuted. Accordingly, Christianity became a popular civil religion.

While the earlier pagan emperors saw the State and the pagan religions as a unifying factor, Constantine saw the Church and State as the unifying factor and other religions as a threat to the State and its power. The pagan emperors built pagan temples, Constantine built Churches; the pagan emperors supported Roman priests, Constantine supported Christian clergy; pagan emperors suppressed Christianity, Constantine suppressed paganism and heresy; the pagan emperors persecuted Christianity, Constantine, along with the Church persecuted non-Christian religious groups (Boer, 1976:135, Muthuraj, 2008:350). The Church and State elites entered into what Stout (1999:178) describes as a “marriage of convenience” in which the Church was reduced to something like the chaplaincy of society:

With the Church was freed from State persecution, its prophetic voice became muted within the society as it became more absorbed with inner-ecclesial controversies about doctrines rather than critical involvement with the daily struggles of life faced by the ordinary people within the society (Stout, 1999:175).

In the model of Church-State relations under Constantine, the power of the State would be used to enforce decisions agreed to by the Ecumenical Council (Boer, 1976:139). Ecclesiastical Bishops had the right to settle disputes between Christians in their courts, and have their decisions enforced by the laws of the State (Stout, 1999:176). Church leaders and the State elite became allies in maintaining the social stability within society. While the State was busy creating a Church-State, the Church was busy creating a State-Church, a situation which Karl Barth describes as “the particular problem of the Constantinian shift” (Barth cited in Stout, 1999:177). The Church as an ally of the State lost its critical voice in agitating the State to keep its responsibility to care for the socially and economically weaker members of

the society. By so-doing, actions of injustice and violence against minorities within the society failed to trigger corrective engagement by the Church (Fernandex, 2004: xi-xii).

Every religion has the potential for injustice and oppression of others when it uncritically cooperates with a State that is not consistent with just and ethical behaviour. In pluralist contexts, as Barth has argued (Barth cited in Stout, 1999:178), there should not be a national or State Church tied to the interests of any particular government. An important lesson emerging from the above situation is that no Christian society can exist in isolation to the influences of other competing ideologies. In the same manner, no government can genuinely claim to be authentically Christian in its identity and practice (Stout, 1999:179).

The Constantinian model of Church-State relationship influenced the erosion of the spiritual integrity of the Church, which in turn resulted in the rise of the persecution of those that the Church regarded as non-Christian and heretics (Muthuraj, 2008:350). The Church eventually became lazy and over-dependent on the State to provide for its material needs. Church leaders became very influential within the society. The former persecuted the persecuting Church. With the social and economic privileges that came in being a State Church, the status seemed to inflict an intentional amnesia of their past history of once being a persecuted community. They persecuted Christians that did not follow strict Church doctrines and people of other faiths. The Constantinian model of Church and State relations therefore failed to promote the common good for all citizens because of their discriminatory and corrupting policies. It could be argued that the ‘marriage’ between Church with the State when Constantine made Christianity as a legal and official religion of the empire did not result in any fundamental change in improving the situation of the poor and uninfluential members of the society. Rather, the Church was co-opted to strengthen the power base of the influential elites. The persecution of the poor during this era continued but the target group was changed. Other religions groups were deemed to be threats and were duly persecuted (Boer 1976:136-138; Maluleke 2010:152).

The emerging Church that resisted the temptation to worship the State in the pre-Constantinian period radically changed course during the Constantinian era of the fourth-century CE. This experience of Church-State relations seems to suggest that the kind of leadership that the Church adopts or practices contributes to the model of relations that it maintains with the State. This is most obvious when the Church does not adhere to a

principled and theological understanding of Church-State relations. Each leader that comes on board may relate to the State based on personal motivations and interests that may easily succumb to intense political pressure of the State leadership.

Bishop Ambrose of Milan made some efforts to set down some principles that separated the powers of the Church from the State (Maluleke 2010:152). However, his actions were motivated by the Church's desire for power and control of the State. He alluded to the principles of the original and primitive State by declaring that:

The original and primitive State was purely democratic, like the community of birds, wherein 'the laws are common to all and are observed by all with common devotion'; wherein 'what is lawful and unlawful is the same for all without exception'; and wherein 'all share the same dwelling place, obey the same ordinances, and take part in the same counsels...all people observed their turn in working and in ruling; and none were perpetual workers or perpetual rulers. It was truly an ideal State. But lust for power in human beings led to monarchy, because when they had obtained their ruling turn, they refused to lay it down. This ended in degeneration of the State. Monarchy, thus, is a declension from the ideal State and was brought about by lust for power. Since the lust for power is sin and of the devil, monarchy is a consequence of sin (cited in Muthuraj, 2008:52).

Ambrose's policy sounded as a champion of justice and objectivity, which he regarded as central to the legitimate State, but he was equally either unconsciously or consciously pulled by the same lust for power even though he declared that:

The piety of justice is first directed towards God; secondly towards one's country; next towards parents; last towards all (cited in Muthuraj, 2008:352).

The piety of justice as being first directed towards God was Ambrose's tactful way of subjecting the State under the Church, which was a continuation of Constantine's Church-State model. Nevertheless, Ambrose actions seem to support the impression that he did much better than the Constantinian model of Church-State relations in promoting social justice and the wellbeing of all its citizenry.

Ambrose also classified the Church as being too good to be associated with what was merely a human institution (State) and therefore he tried to subject the State to the Church without emphasizing their distinct spheres of operation (Boer 1976:148-149). Although he spoke out against social injustice in the society, he was unfair to the State in many instances (1976:150). Again, power was the core issue when Ambrose challenged the Emperor Theodosius that: "God has given the palaces to the Emperors; they should leave the Parishes

to the Bishops” (1976:148-150). Ambrose did everything within his power to subject the State to the Church’s authority through his theological argument that:

God must be preferred to State or country; religion must be preferred to patriotism; the community of the Church must be preferred to the Roman people; an absolute sovereign has a duty to God; the emperor is subject to the divine laws; the emperor, more than ordinary human beings, is under obligation to obey the supreme Lord; he is indebted to God alone for his empire and victories; for the emperor is at the head of the Christian laity, and is a son of the Church and must submit to the authority of the Church (Ambrose cited by Muthuraj, 2008:353).

Ambrose postulated two views of Church-State relations: First that the State should be dependent on the Church; second, that the Church is independent of the State, and hence the State should not interfere in the matters of the Church. According to Ambrose, the Christian State had two functions:

Protecting the Church against her great enemies, heresy and paganism. Second, that it was the duty of the State to call for general councils of the Church, and to endorse and implement their decisions while lacking the right to interfere or influence the formulation of the decisions, nor has the State a right to interfere in what has been decided (Ambrose cited in Muthuraj, 2008:353).

Just as the State used the Church during the time of Constantine to achieve its political ends, the State was being used during the time of Ambrose by the Church authorities to enforce Church policies and marginalize groups that opposed the policies of the Church within the general society.

Constantine and Ambrose could well be accused for using religion to subjugate the people for political ends as well as to oppress groups in the empire that were considered to pose threats to their authority. Muthuraj (2008:368) accuses Ambrose of injustice against minorities by using the State to oppress those that were said to be heretics and followers of non-Christian (Pagan) religions. Accordingly, he misused the Church’s authority to influence the State to deny the rights of minority religious groups in the empire. The root cause of the political tension between Church and State can therefore be traced back to Constantine’s strategy for political expediency and the donation of landed property to the clergy which Cairns (1996:189) considers to be the seed of political tension between the Church and State.

The lust and competition for power by the religious leaders with the State continued into the tenth century CE when the German emperors were humbled by having to make the difficult journey across the Alps to meet the Pope of Rome to re-enforce the notion that emperors

were not sovereign in their nation in religious matters pertaining to the Church and the religious life of the people (Muthuraj, 2008:368; Cairns, 1996:189-190).

All these events exposed the controversial issues concerning separation between religious and State authorities. When it came to the functions of the State, the Church sought its protection and deposition of heretics and dealing with other religious threats and challenges. However, the playing fields were not level because the State was denied the right to interfere in Church affairs (Ambrose cited in Muthuraj, 2008:354). There was no reciprocity in the relationship. This attitude serves as a warning and a signpost to indicate caution that dominant religious institutions within society are prone to misuse their power and influence so as to exert corrupting favours from the State and to misuse its authority within the society for narrow political ends that discriminate against other groups.

The Constantinian model down to the time of Ambrose also failed to promote social justice in the society because marginalization and exploitation of the minority groups was a common occurrence in the society. The dynamic of the State co-opting the Church against minority religions seemed to run throughout. These models of Church-State relations will feature again during the discussion on the relationship of the COCIN as the dominant religious group in the context of Jos, Plateau State. It will be argued that part of the deteriorating socio-economic and socio-political conditions of the people points to the nature of Church-State dynamics with has a long influential legacy that goes back to the Constantinian model of the fourth-century CE.

#### **4.5. The Reformation Model**

To a large extent, the Protestant Reformation was a watershed event in the relationship between Church and State. The formation of the Lutheran Church in particular has within its body politic, missio-ecclesial perspectives on what constitutes the quality of the relationship that ought to guide the Church and State relationship in the course of discharging their responsibilities to its citizenry. When the Protestant Reformers emerged in the sixteenth-century, they called for a radical separation between Church and State. The Protestant Reformation gave rise to various models of Church-State relations, of which two will here be



examined: The two-kingdom model conceived by Martin Luther and the theocratic model proposed by John Calvin.

#### **4.5.1. The Two-Kingdom Model**

Martin Luther is responsible for the two-kingdom model of Church-State relations. In his *Luther's Works*, Stephen Phiri (2010: 23) noted that Luther presented his model of Church-State relations under the heading: “Temporal Authority: To what extent it should be obeyed” (1523). Luther used several terms for the State: Civil law, Temporal Authority, and the Sword (1523:81). He referred to the Church as “kingdom of God,” but he located both State and Church in God’s plan. Luther divided humanity or “the children of Adam [and Eve]” into two kingdoms: one of God under Christ, and the other of the world under the civil authority. Those who belong to the kingdom of God are those he called ‘true believers,’ while unbelievers<sup>22</sup> belong to the kingdom of the world (1523:83). For Luther, the two kingdoms have their respective functions delegated to them by the same God.

##### **4.5.1.1. The Kingdoms of this World**

According to Luther’s perspective, God is the one who ordains kings, magistrates, and all other human authorities to restrain evil people from perpetrating their evil designs in the society. This kingdom is necessary because there are evil people in the world (1523:85). If all people were believers, there would be no need for this kingdom because it would serve no purpose since true believers do not need the law because they already do what the law requires by the power of the Holy Spirit that dwells within them. However, in practice this understanding is not supported by the actions of some members of the clergy who have participated in violence against women and children as reported in the Rwandan genocide and Roman Catholic priests involved in acts of paedophilia (O’Brien, 1988:91-93; Redmond, 1993:230-237). One could argue further that if Christians do not need the law, why did God give laws? Luther would equally respond that the reason why God gave so many laws to God’s people was to restrain them from the wickedness of their “outer man” (human nature)

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<sup>22</sup> Unbelievers, according to Martin Luther, in this context, refers to those who do not believe in Jesus Christ. To him, unbelievers include all non-Christians in the world. This needs to be defined because everyone believes in something; and there are hardly unbelievers in the world.

since believers still constitute inner and outer parts (physical and spiritual) (Luther, 1523:89). Furthermore, Luther cites the Apostle Paul's first letter to Timothy to show that laws were not meant for believers but for unbelievers, but since both of them still live together, laws were necessary to hold sinners accountable (1523:90-91). This meant that temporal authority is ordained to promote external peace by restraining human wickedness from prevailing in the world.

#### **4.5.1.2. The Kingdom of God**

For Luther, those people who are not Christians belong to the kingdom of this world and are therefore considered to be under the law (Luther 1523:91-92). Luther emphatically believed that the majority of people are under this kingdom (1523:93). Because unbelievers are considered to naturally engage in evil works, God provided a different government for them to restrain them from doing evil. If this were not so, Luther believed that men and women would harm each other because of wickedness. Luther asserts that law and gospel are needed in the world and therefore no one should aim at ruling the world by the gospel or civil laws alone (1523:103). This meant that if any State wanted to apply Christian principles alone in political governance, it must first fill the world with real Christians before doing so (1523:104). Also, if any State suppresses Christian principles in political governance, it must be conscious that civil laws alone are inadequate in leading peaceful life in the society. According to Luther, the gospel and the sword<sup>23</sup> are needful in society. In line with this, Bonhoeffer (1955:335) posits that:

Luther provided a reason for the existence of the State or government both as a coercive power and as protector of outward justice.

One may argue that the two-kingdom model only served to address persistent problems that existed between Church and State relations that resulted from the Constantinian model. However, Luther's perspective does not seem to allow space for the Church to participate in social transformation. This is partly the reason why Pannenberg (1977:127) argued that "Luther's model cannot be regarded as the final and decisive word for Christian theory of politics," because it does not seem to treat salvation as holistic. One does not even know

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<sup>23</sup> *Sword* in this context refers to the Temporal Authority and its legitimate monopoly on the use of force to control and regulate the practice of wickedness in the society. Luther used Temporal Authority, Law, and Sword inter-changeably in his Two Kingdom-Doctrine to refer to the State (1523: 104-106).<sup>7</sup>

where to put the demarcation between the two kingdoms. Luther's model seems to have influenced a pietistic approach to the State, and closed all the doors for those believers who wanted to serve God in the secular realm. The model is hardly realistic in a world where Christian vocation is needed to help restore justice and peace in contexts of conflict. The model finds a fierce opponent in the Calvinist approach which tends to put all spheres of this life under the Lordship of Christ (Barth cited in Stout, 1999:176-178). Barth also counters the principles of the two-kingdom by asserting that:

Political systems were attempts undertaken by men in order to secure the common political life of man by certain co-ordinations of individual freedom and the claims of the community by establishing the laws with power to apply and preserve them (Barth cited in Stout, 1999:175).

Barth's position may be informed by his Calvinist tradition which tends to put the State under the spiritual authority of the Church, as will be discussed below.

Luther's model has little space for the Church to participate in the peace-building process in secular society. It is the responsibility of the State to deal with peace-building because it has allotted the promotion of external peace-building activities to the State alone, while the Church is said to constitute people who automatically cultivate the art of peaceful living. By this, it implies that Luther subordinated the secular to the spiritual, which means placing the Church over the State. The two-kingdom model also fails to recognize that the Church is only one of the religious organizations in the secular realm (Fernandex, 2004:xi-xii). Luther's perspectives have also failed to take into account that religious institutions, including the Church, have contributed to instability within societies. It was the socio-economic factors that set the context for the peasant war and the sufferings of the common people that characterized the Protestant Reformation period. In addition, the Semitic races served as a warning that one must be suspicious of Luther's Church and State model (Dillenberger, 1962:345-456). This is especially relevant for any attempt in the twenty-first century to appropriate Luther's perspectives on Church and State relations. According to Fernandex, Luther "did not know that in the dawn of the twenty-first century, religion (Church) would emerge as a vital political force or that theocracies would compete to compete with authoritarian systems and liberal democracies" (2004:xi-xiii). This model denies the role of the Church to participate in the social function of society. If humanity is divided between Church and State, where are the other religious groups to be placed? The ideology of this model reduces the role of other religions as subservient to the agenda of the Church. In the

context of religious plurality and cultural diversity this becomes a recipe for fostering social instability within the State. The model leaves much to be desired because of its implied agenda of seemingly advocating that Christianity be recognised as the sole legitimate religion in the world. If this is the case, then it is exactly one of the root causes of religious radicalism in the twenty-first century. The non-recognition of others and their existence in society is at the root of much violence. Although Hovland (n.d:68) argues that “the Church in pluralist contexts ought to defend the right of other religious groups.” Such reasoning seems to lack practical demonstration in pluralist societies. This model is therefore seriously dysfunctional in the twenty-first century context because most societies no longer operate theocratically. However, in the pluralistic context of Jos, Plateau State’s, the Church and State relationship seems to function as a throwback to Luther’s two Kingdom model that resulted in the exclusion of others and therefore produced instability within the State (Ostien, 2009:16-18). It could be therefore argued that no single Church-State model of relations could become normative universally because all must become open to constant critique.

#### **4.5.2. The Theocratic Model**

The theocratic model of Church-State relations as advocated by John Calvin emerged in his major (1536) work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion* Book IV, Chap. XX, under the heading *Of Civil Government*. Calvin introduced and argued for a “Christian Polity” (Phiri, 2010:24). Calvin taught unquestionable obedience to the secular authority whose duty was to safeguard external expression of righteousness (McLellan, 1997:46-47). As with Luther, Calvin left the responsibility of promoting what Luther called ‘outward peace,’ which he called an “external manifestation of righteousness” to the secular authority (1997:47). For Calvin, internal religion was left in the hands of the Church; but he did not take the separation between the spiritual and secular spheres to the extreme like Luther. He later realized that the relation of civil to spiritual authority was potentially one of close co-operation (1997:47-48). In view of this realization, Calvin concluded that both institutions were closely aligned. However, Calvin subordinated the State to the Church so that both secular and ecclesiastical representatives derived their authorities from God; while their close relationship was aimed at promoting the kingdom of God (Lonang, 2012:1).

If by 'kingdom of God,' Calvin also meant the Church like Luther did, then this laid the foundation for his theocratic model. One could argue that since the Church practically controlled the State by imposing Church principles on the State during Calvin's time, he was influenced by the religio-political environment to postulate the model. The theocratic model, therefore, makes the State a department of the Church and the Church dictates what the State can do. This model practically implies that the State exists to serve the purpose of the Church in the world by promoting external peace for the cause of righteousness. Both Luther and Calvin could be accused of subordinating the State to the Church. This further implies that all other religious groups in society should join the State in an indirect pursuit of the interests of the Church. It means that the State adopts Church principles in governing the State.

While it may be valid to argue that both the Church and the State exist by the reason of serving God's purpose in the world, care must be taken not to divide humanity into Church and State; or subordinate the State with its diverse groups under the Church. The Theocratic model has the potential of religious fundamentalism because it seems not to accommodate and celebrate religious pluralism in the world. Calvin's call for unquestionable obedience to the State could infer that the State exists to serve the Church effectively. As with Luther's two kingdom model, Calvin's theocratic model exhibits many shortcomings for pluralist contexts in the twenty-first century.

Central to the failures of the Church and State models discussed above is the misuse of power by both institutions. Samuels (2006:8-10) has argued that:

For sustainable peace, the governance framework will have to be more inclusive and build up broader stakes of participation in the peace-building process" (and that) "the search for institutional structures that encourage moderate behaviour is a crucial aspect of governance structures in post-conflict environments, and is widely viewed as a key to preventing the return to conflict. The pure majoritarian democratic model is generally considered unsuited to conflict-prone and divided societies.

For the Plateau State and the COCIN to work for improved co-existence among the residents of Jos, Nigeria, human rights and dignity ought to be respected through socio-political and economic inclusion. The Carnegie Commission on Preventing Daily Conflict (*Preventing Deadly Conflict*, 1997 blog), in its Final Report suggests that:

In societies with deep ethnic [and religious] divisions and little experience with democratic government and the rule of law, strict majoritarian democracy is self-defeating. Where ethnic [and religious], identities are strong and national identity

weak, populations may vote largely along ethnic lines. Domination by one ethnic [or religious] group can lead to a tyranny of the majority.

This thesis argues for an alternative model of Church-State relations that may lead to better peace-building processes in the pluralist context of Jos that draws together all in conversations across their different traditions and ideologies.

#### **4.6. Chapter Summary**

This chapter has undertaken a brief examination of selective models of Church-State relations that have emerged in the history of Western Christianity. This background information serves to shape the nature of the interrogation of the COCIN-Plateau State relations in Nigeria. An overview of the Greco-Roman, Constantinian, and Protestant Reformation models of Church and State relations reveal how they have evolved in relation to religio-political dynamics with the different contexts. However, all of the models have fundamental weaknesses because of the use of power that does not promote the common good of all. In the name of Church and State relations, the persecution of others who are considered to be a threat to powerful authorities was tolerated to the benefit of both the State and the Church. The models claimed to promote the well-being of the people in the society. However, it was the influential elites within the nation that benefited through the promotion of their own interests more than the poor and the weak who were generally denied their rights. The misuse of power by the dominant Church in partnership with the State also resulted in serious discrimination against other religious groups within the society and marginalizing them to function on the margins because they are excluded from participating in shaping policies that affect the lives of the people.

Finally, the colonial/missionary model of Church-State has been given a full chapter because the literature has revealed some important colonial/missionary factors that shaped Church-State relations in Nigeria generally, and COCIN-Plateau State relations in particular. The chapter which follows will focus on the colonial/missionary model.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### COLONIAL/MISSIONARY MODEL: DEVELOPMENT OF CHURCH OF CHRIST IN NATIONS-STATE RELATIONS IN NIGERIA

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter continues the conversation on the models of Church-State relations by examining that which emerged during the Enlightenment period and directly informed the development of the modern missionary movement. Accordingly, it was the work of SUM missionaries that directly influenced the religio-political context that contributed to the emergence of the colonial/missionary model of Church-State relations that developed between the COCIN and the Plateau State within the wider politico-colonial development of Nigeria. This chapter begins by surveying the colonial contributions towards the making of Church-State relation in Nigeria.

The Nigerian society was not a homogenous nation before colonization. What is today Nigeria is a product of amalgamation in 1914 by the British colonial decisions (Salawu, 2010:345, Uzoma, 2004:650-654). Nigeria emerged from the fetters of colonial rule in 1960 with influential competing centres of political power. It is interesting to note that the Christian and Islamic presence in Nigeria is more domineering than in many other parts of the world. The creation of Nigeria as a sovereign State began with the emergence of regional States and powerful political elites who took up the 'reins of power' with many unresolved relational problems from the colonial period. These included such as issues as gender justice, ethnic tensions, and unhealthy religious competition; all of which came to the fore in their struggle for power and the control of natural resources (Lenshie, 2012:49).

The development of Church-State relations in Nigeria can be traced back to the British colonial strategy and its impact on the relations between Christians and Muslims in the development of the Nigeria as a sovereign State. The response of the SUM and other missions to the colonial strategy served a critical milestone in the development of Church-State relations in Nigeria (Boer, 1979, 1983, 1984:34-40). The colonial strategic interest and objective was to get ultimate loyalty from the locals against the Arabs and other foreign

powers that were competing for the control of Nigeria. Absolute loyalty was sought by the British to foster their colonial objective of unity which would facilitate the British colonial government's economic goals and political allegiances. However, while the southerners did not vehemently resist colonialism and its objectives, the Muslims in the north resisted because they already had their Caliphate in place (Kukah, 1993:1-8). The colonizers had to offer a concession to the Muslims indirectly through their Emirs, and to keep Christian missions off their domains (1993:14). This concession did not go without affecting Christian missionaries and their activities in the north because they were prohibited from evangelizing and converting Muslims (Adesina, 1973:489-490). This enabled the Muslims to accept British colonialism on the basis that the British colonial government signed an agreement to prohibit all Christian missionary activity among the Muslims (Adesina, 1973:490).

The preferential treatment demanded from the British colonial government by the Muslim leaders (Adesina, 1973:491) was not only meant to protect and promote Islam as the dominant religion of the region, but to strengthen their political advantage. Part of the terms of agreement demanded that no non-Muslim should rule over Muslims, while Muslims were free to rule over non-Muslims (1973:490). Indirectly, this arrangement served as denial of equal rights and justice for all.

This chapter will therefore argue that the colonial strategy and objective set the stage for the unhealthy nature of Church-State relations in Nigeria. Central to this examination of Church-State relations in Nigeria will be the interplay of religion, ethnicity and politics and their roles in fostering violence and or peace-building within the city of Jos.

## **5.2. The British Colonizing Strategy Conversing with Nigerian Cultures**

Nigeria became a unitary nation State in 1914, when the southern and northern provinces merged together as one nation (Adesina, 1973:482). However, this was not strictly a unitary nation, but an association of ethnic, linguistic and cultural groups with their different independent geographical diversities (Schwab, 2004:43). Although each province is made up of diverse ethnic groups with their unique way of life and traditional religious practices, they learned over the centuries of living with diversity to accommodate the other with their



differences. With the arrival of Europeans and the implementation of their divisive policies of colonial rule,<sup>24</sup> the different ethnic groups were forced into a new political arrangement of false unity, a phenomenon which Schwab describes as “an artificial creation” (2004:9). Although the diverse ethnic groups did not always live harmoniously with each other before the coming of British colonialism, the arrival and policies of the new colonial master exasperated the problem.

### **5.2.1. The Colonial Policy of Indirect Rule that Shaped Church-State Relations in Nigeria**

British colonialism in Muslim-dominated northern Nigeria used a model of governance that contributed to a slower rate of socio-economic development than the governance model used in the Christian-dominated southern regions of the country. (Barnes, 2007:594-598) In the northern regions, the Muslim Emirs offered themselves as partners and became embedded within the colonial system and acted as proxies for their British colonial masters. They used this apparent intentional strategy of cooperating with the British colonialist to prevent Christian missionaries from making further inroads to evangelize their (Muslims) territories. This strategy of indirect rule benefited the British colonial rulers because it enabled them to gain control of the region without much difficulty through the agreement made with the Muslim Emirs (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:25-26). The British colonial government in Nigeria gave preferential treatment to the authority of the Muslim Emirs<sup>25</sup> and placed all other local traditional African leaders in the northern region under their delegated control (Barnes, 2007:595). This strategy resulted in the promotion of Islam in the north as the dominant religion and consequently contributed to policies that undermined and discriminated against the spread of missionary Christianity and the Church as an institution. Christian leaders and traditional leaders were required to submit to the political authority of the Emirs (2007:596). This had negative consequences for State and Church relations and because the Christian community viewed their situation as discriminatory and unjust and it remains a key

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<sup>24</sup> Divisive colonial rule in this context refers to the British policy of indirect rule where they ruled the Muslim northern communities through their local Muslim rulers; but they ruled the southerners directly. This policy was divisive because it railed against Christian missionaries and the progress of the Christian message in northern Nigeria. It not only pitted Muslims against other religious groups, but the policy also forcefully subjected non-Muslim communities to come under Muslim rulership, creating superior/inferior competition between them (Barnes, 1968:34-35).

<sup>25</sup> “Emirs” are Muslims’ paramount political rulers, who are also held as religious authorities in Nigeria.

contributing factor to the ongoing poor relations between the Christians and the Muslims that became a conduit for violence to be used in response to perceived entrenched oppression (Barnes, 2004:60-65). However, as Ikenga-Metuh (1986:37) has argued, local Christian missions have also contributed to the rejection of external Christian missionaries coming to the north because they presented Christianity as a foreign religion, while Islam became inculturated<sup>26</sup> into the way of life of the local people. Consequently, the entire political scenario in the north was shaped by the strategic alliance between the colonial government and the Muslims on one hand, and the minority Christian community and other African indigenous religions on the other. This research thus argues that the historic legacy of injustice helped to create the destabilizing conditions of political instability in the northern part of Nigeria which today the *Boko Haram*<sup>27</sup> is exploiting to achieve their objective of creating an Islamic State (Awojobi, 2013:330-331; Lesmore, 2015:151). Hence, the colonial policy of indirect rule contributed to the underdevelopment of northern Nigeria and the general insecurity of the region (Ojo 1985:15). Ekineh (1997:24) posits that the northern part of Nigeria also lagged behind politically, economically, and socially, because of the lack of Western education which is the price that Muslims had to pay for the rejection of Christian missionaries and the enjoyment of indirect rule (Ojo, 1885:25).

Although Muslim leaders offered political leadership in the northern regions, their governmental civil service was dominated by southerners who were mostly Christian and considered to be better educated to manage the administrative affairs of government offices (Ekineh, 1997:25; Ojo, 1985:14). This dichotomy and apparent contradiction in the political affairs of the north cultivated a toxic environment of resentment and mistrust between the Muslim-dominated northerners and Christian dominated southerners that had negative consequences for future Church-State relations (Gutip, 1998:46).

### **5.2.2. The Politics of Divide and Rule**

British colonial policy in Nigeria resulted in the displacement of people from their ancestral homes and facilitated inter-tribal and ethnic tensions According to Schwab:

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<sup>26</sup> The term 'Inculturated' in this context is an outsider-culture or concept that has taken root and is at home with the local understanding of the local people.

<sup>27</sup> The militarist group, *Boko Haram* lit: "western education is forbidden," refers to the Nigerian-based Islamic fundamentalist group, which began in 2009 with a strong bias and even hatred for western civilization.

Nigeria was undone by societal ethnic, and religious conflict that played havoc with politics, culture, and peoples' lives. Still the contemporary profile of the country was actually drawn at the time of British colonial rule when the separate domains of the territory, parts of which once incorporated expansive kingdoms with complex systems of government, were abruptly thrown together as an artificial creation, where union was so sudden, that the British, who created it have often doubted whether it could survive as a political entity (2002:43).

This perspective confirms that the multi-ethnic nature of Nigerian society that functioned for centuries in competing kingdoms with different systems of governance was transformed by the British into a foreign-designed hybrid concoction of different territories which were legally structured into a unitary State. Multi-ethnicity does not necessarily serve to bring division among Africans because Africans have for centuries lived in harmony with different ethnic groups, speaking different languages and embracing different religions. However, the British colonization and missionary movement brought with it an ideological commitment that promoted Western individualistic culture as a prerequisite for promoting economic and educational development. This ran counter to the *Ubuntu* corporative community building bias of Nigerian tribal societies (Fatokun, 2013:346). When the European powers began the “scramble for Africa”<sup>28</sup> from 1884-1885, they did so without any sensitivity towards the diverse cultures of the Africans, carrying out their policy of divide and rule by pitting communities against each other (Young, 1994:104-106). Within the context of Nigeria, at the time of its Independence, the colonial policy of divide and rule had created deep animosities, suspicions and fears between northern and southern leaders, with one side worried about being dominated by the other:

As things are, it appears Nigeria will be governed all her life by Northerners who were once the most backward people in civilization. If we allow Northerners to govern us, then in about ten years from now Nigeria will only be regarded as Northern land –and thus all our birth rights sold to the backward set of people...I fear our being controlled by a dictatorial type of government such as can be seen in all the Muslim countries today. We shall all be subject to control by feudal lords who rule by Muslim decree...This means we shall be ruled by whatever the Koran says...My fear about Nigeria is very great now. I don't know what will be the end of the crisis. There is no peace all over the country. This is the result of the selfishness of some of our political leaders. My greatest fear for the unity of the country is disunity among tribes as a result of clamour for power by greedy politicians ('Free 1964' cited in Diamond, 1988:76).

The above perspective identifies the selfish behaviour of politicians who benefitted from the divide and rule policies that contributed to instability within the society. The Nigerian Prime

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<sup>28</sup> The 'Scramble for Africa' took place in the Berlin Conference in Ghana in 1884-85 and refers to the colonial event where the Western Powers shared out the countries of the African Continent among themselves to be colonized for socio-economic and political reasons (Diamond, 1988:50).

Minister, Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, (1960-1964) claimed that greedy politicians were the worst threat to the unity of Nigeria and that the biggest obstacle to national unity was not to be rooted in the cleavage of Nigerians to their different ethnic communal groups, but rather to “the clamour for power by politicians” (Balewa 1961 cited in Diamond, 1988:76). The fundamental weakness of British colonial policy in Nigeria was the intentional desire to discourage the development of a common or shared national identity between northerners and southerners. This Achilles heel fostered poverty, instability and underdevelopment of the country that was later exploited by local leaders who were immature and addicted to the accumulation of power for selfish advancement and not in the interests of holistic national development. Nwabueze offers a poignant critique of the British colonial policies in Nigeria:

The British Colonial government did in Nigeria discourage, initially at any rate, such a policy of social integration. Southerners living in the North were segregated in separate strangers’ quarters outside the walled periphery of the native towns. As a result, contact between the two peoples lacked that degree of closeness and intimacy necessary for the fostering of a consciousness of a common national identity and the opportunity for promoting mutual understanding through a shared communal life was lost (Nwabueze cited in Ojo, 1985:16).

This thesis postulates that the failure of British colonial policy to build national unity among Nigerians does not excuse post-Independent Nigerian leaders of their dismal record of continuing and expanding divide and rule policies that are responsible for the contemporary State of disunity, under-development, poverty, and violence within the country. It is therefore an invalid and dishonest argument to continue blaming the effect of British colonialism after more than fifty years of Independence for the contemporary socio-economic and security conditions within the country that allowed over 200 female students in Chibok on 14-15 April 2014, to be kidnapped by *Boko Haram* (Bagaji, *et al.*, 2012: 33-37).

### **5.2.3. Missionaries and the Colonial Government’s Collaboration against African Cultures**

The colonial project along with its accompanying ally of Christian missionaries came to Nigeria in the nineteenth-century. The literature informs that the first Roman Catholic missionaries (Portuguese) came to Nigeria as early as 1509 (Adetunji, 2013:345), while the Protestant-Evangelical missionaries came later in 1842, paving the way for the British colonialists who followed in 1861 (Adesina, 1973:484). They annexed Lagos which was not completed until 1914 (1973:494). According to Boer, both institutions arrived in the country

with an agenda for promoting of the British understanding and practice of colonization, civilization, conversion, and the Christianization of the “heathen” (1984:171). These constitute the agenda items of their political, commercial, and military objectives. Missionary H. W. Karl Kumm, the founder of the COCIN (*The Light Bearer*, 1907: 1-4; Gutip, 1998:3-6; Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:2-5), describes colonialism in a favourable way because according to his understanding, the missionaries and colonial masters had a similar agenda:

A country is a “colonial” where the dynamic is in foreign hands, nourished by a foreign capital, directed by foreign personnel, inspired by foreign spirit of enterprise, primarily directed toward foreign interests. A “colonial” country is therefore a country...of which people and land are, in the last instance, instruments and means for foreign purposes, and where foreign decisions determine the peoples’ destiny” (Kumm cited in Boer, 1984:170).

The British colonialists needed the missionaries to use Christianity to prepare the Africans with the Christian gospel so as to make governance much easier for them (Boer, 1984:53; Barnes, 2007:591). Indeed, the early missionaries shared a disparaging view of Africa:

Africa was a dismal picture of utter darkness without any redeeming features at all; there is a land in this wonderful world, called ‘The Land of Darkness...dark are the bodies of people who live there, darker are their minds, and darker still are their souls—the great land of darkness (Kumm, 1907:15; Boer, 1984:125).

This sounds like pride, but it could as well be an expression of shock at what was happening in the pre-colonial missionary era in terms of slavery and other inhuman practices. Both the missionaries and colonial masters refused to see through their biased colonial lens what was positive about African culture and religions. For example, as Kumm argues, the curse of Ham (Gen. 9:24-29 NIV) was meant for the African condition because:

For centuries and millenniums Africa has been in the grip of demons. Chains have bound it, chains of superstition and idolatry, chains of ignorance and physical slavery...hell, where Satan has his seat (van den Berg, 1956:80).

This is a deadly demonstration of paternalism by a Christian missionary. However, as Goshit, *et al.*, (2013:3-6) have argued, Kumm painted Africa the way he did because he wanted to draw the attention of his British partners and financiers to the African project. Whichever way one looks at it, one would also expect the mission to criticize the excesses of colonialism, which is lacking from the SUM’s agenda and relations with the British colonialists.

In contrast to Africa whose cultures were considered of the devil, Europe was presented as the haven of light, liberty, and civilization. Kumm insisted that the developed countries in the

West became what they were through the bible and Christian influence. He concluded therefore that northern Nigeria needed an education based on “Christian European principles because there was need to uphold the integrity and humanity of ideals of which Christian civilized nations were so justly proud” (1910:129). The highest of virtues were attributed to the West, especially liberty and justice. Britain was regarded as the purest example of these virtues because she outshone all other nations with: justice, faithfulness, honesty, and liberty that were valued more highly in Britain than any other State on earth (1910:130). Boer (1984:172) posits that:

It was only a small step from such attitudes to approval of the colonial enterprise as a divine task imposed upon the Christian West by God himself. Africa had to be brought into the kingdom of God. Mission and colonialism were thus lumped together.

It could therefore be argued that the missionary movement in Nigeria was also a colonial project. The colonial leadership and missionary institutions engaged Africans with a death-dealing pride and arrogance that led to the stripping of the local Africans of their traditional culture. Missionary Rooker represented this proud colonial ideology when he states:

How strangely England was compelled to take over the Sudan! Was there no divine purpose in this occupation? And could England be so selfish as to let the River of life flow by the Sudanese without pointing them to its healing water? O no! A thousand times no! To restore justice to the oppressed, to set the captives free, to help men and women to live in peace and comfort, to educate them in gentle arts and science—that is the noble aim worthy of an English administration (Rooker cited in Boer, 1984:173).

Christian Missions from Great Britain were to be regarded as indispensable partners in the British colonial project in Africa and therefore necessary for its development and maintenance (Boer, 1984:176). The missions gave colonialism a divine stamp of approval and acceptance evidenced by the way Ruxton expressed this perception:

It was well within God’s plan to establish his kingdom. The natives of the Sudan, we are told, have come under our rule, so that we...might bring them under the rule of the kingdom of God. So shall the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ...may the kingdom of our Lord be extended in our time over all peoples of Africa...to His glory, their salvation, and England’s honour (*The Light Bearer*, 1934:266).

The missionaries served to make the arrival of British colonialists less reprehensible to the Africans because of their comparatively close relationship with the local people. Christian missions also had a strategic interest in wanting to halt the advance of Islam throughout the rest of Nigeria. However, there were also political and economic aspects to their activity. The British were not ignorant about the rich natural resources present throughout the African

continent and it was their strategic intention that these resources did not to fall into the hands of other Muslim-competing nations. The colonial policies made it legally mandatory that the local ethnic groups that owned these commodities must provide them for the services of the British Empire (Boer, 1984:176). This partnership between the colonialists and the Christian missions left entrenched negative and positive political and ecclesiastical legacies within Nigeria. The symbiotic relationship between the colonial government and Christian missions has influenced Farrant's description of the relationship as "complementary" (1984:176). One is therefore not surprised at the instructive statement that was published at the headquarters of the SUM (i.e., the founders of the COCIN). It unapologetically stated that:

They should exercise full cooperation with the government, and...that agents of the SUM should endeavour to inculcate in the minds of their neighbours ...principles of loyalty to government and obedience to its demands (*The Light Bearer*, 1970:64-65).

However, according to Kumm, this was just a mask by the SUM because while they supported colonialism, they also remained aloof from outright direct participation in politics (1970:57). Kumm consistently argued that colonialism would one day help Africa occupy a responsible and respected position in the council of nations, the parliament of humankind (1970:197). As for the SUM, their perspective on British colonialism described it as:

A form of imperialism based on divine mandate and designed to bring liberation to—spiritual, economic, cultural, and political—by sharing the blessings of the Christ-inspired civilization of the West with a people suffering under satanic forces of oppression, ignorance and diseases, effected by a combination of political, economic and religious forces that cooperate under a regime seeking the benefit of both ruler and ruled (Boer, 1984:177).

Their founding perspectives laid the foundation for what I would argue to be a compromising Church and State relation framework that has weakened the contemporary missional response of COCIN to the governance and societal challenges within the context of Jos where it serves.

#### **5.2.4. Colonial Resource and Human Exploitation**

Colonial politics were based on an economic structure, for colonialism was at base a political and economic arrangement (Boer, 1984:167-168). The British were primarily and predominantly interested in West Africa not only for political reasons, but rather as the source of large, cheap and freely available raw materials as well as a market for its British-manufactured goods reimported back to Africa (Fatokun, 2013:348). A colonial government was established to protect these economic interests especially when they were threatened by

cutthroat competition from other foreign firms in Nigeria (2013:348). For example, the presence of French and German commercial interests within the West African region received the security support of their respective national governments. Accordingly, the British government was also pushed to support and provide similar protection for its commercial interest (Boer, 1984:168). One could argue that the death-dealing violence that emerged within northern Nigeria can be attributed not only to the political discriminatory policies by the Muslim majority administration against Christian minority residents, but also because of the competition by commercial trading interests that sowed seeds of division and insecurity among the local people (Boer, 1979:302). It could be further argued that although as a political system, colonialism caused great damage to the development of the Nigerian economy, the policies of the British missionaries also helped shape the environment in which British economic political interests thrived (Boer, 1984:171). The colonial socio-economic strategy must have also shaped the deeply-divided (Call, 2008:35-40) nature of the Nigerian State.

### **5.3. Nigeria as a Country**

The socio-political, religious and economic construct of Nigeria from the period of colonization to the post-Independence period has bequeathed intractable problems that affect nation building (Barnes, 2010:16-18). The name ‘Nigeria’ was coined by British Journalist, Mrs Flora Shaw, the wife of the British colonial administrator when the northern and southern regions were merged in 1914 by Frederick Lugard (Crowder, 1973:23). The name was derived from the River Niger, one of the two main rivers that run through the country. The other is the River Benue (Political map of Nigeria, 1967). This means that Nigeria is a colonial representation and definition of Nigerian people as people with black skin as the Latin adjective “niger” from which it is derived is a variation of the Spanish and Portuguese noun, “negro” or “black.”<sup>29</sup>

Nigeria is commonly regarded as the most populous African country with a population of 170 million people, but also as the most deeply divided country (Higazi, 2011:26-28). As a consequence, any theological research has to find its point of departure within the historical

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<sup>29</sup> Countries and their Cultures, <<http://www.everyculture.com/Ma-Ni/Nigeria.html>>, [Accessed 16 October 2015].



experiences of the Nigerian peoples. Such a theology will also reflect the historical legacy of the Nigerian religio-political context. It ought to be remembered that colonialism left destructive legacies in Nigeria because of what happened to the traditional cultures including the religions of Africans. This study focuses primarily on the context of Jos which is located in the northern region where the Plateau State is located. The northern region has evolved since the 1990s to become an unstable region<sup>30</sup> of Nigeria because of the socio-economic deterioration and continuing religio-political violence. It is within this context that an understanding is sought on the effects of the colonial and western mission's policies in the development of the COCIN-Plateau State relationship within Jos (Larger and Ukiwo, 2007:4). PIDAN (2012:6-8) has argued that before the colonial period, the various ethnic groups living around the Plateau State lived together under the guidance of their traditional religions and cultures which focused on the dignity of the human person and community life (Uzoma, 2004:5651). The traditional religions of Nigeria, as with most polytheistic African religions such as *Shirih*,<sup>31</sup> embodied an all-inclusive attitude to other religious beliefs. The notion of the one and only true religion or the one and only one God is absent from their world-view (Ikenga-Metuh, 1986:35). It could therefore be argued that Nigerians exercised greater tolerance, hospitality and openness to other religious practices before the arrival of the monotheistic missionary brand of Christianity and Islam.

More than 250 ethnic groups lived around the Middle Belt, where Plateau State is located, and co-existed with their competing political and economic interests (PIDAN, 2012:23-26). These are governed within four different regions (South, North, East, and Midwest). These regions are characterized by religious differences with the north being dominantly Muslim, while the rest being dominated by Christian and traditional religion (Barnes, 2006:42). These provinces existed as separate kingdoms where religion and politics did not fundamentally divide them because traditional religions are not essentially competitive in nature but accommodative. For the Plateau State, the indigenous ethnic groups are Berom, Afizere, and Anaguta, all of which had similar cultures and practices were held together until Islam and

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<sup>30</sup> The instability of the northern region is informed by factors ranging from multi-ethnic posturing in the north-central to educational backwardness compared to the south. This is further compounded by religious sentiments between Christians in the north-central and the Muslims in the core north (Gaiya, 2004:355-357).

<sup>31</sup> *Shirih*, according to Audu Lusa (2010:54) is sun-worship among the Kadung ethnic group in Nigeria. This religion holds that all people regardless of religious affiliation, race, colour, geographical location, and language, belong together because the sun shines on every human being without discrimination. *Shirih* is a belief that all religions are under the same sun, therefore, none of them is better than others, and hence, there is no need for comparison and competition between them.

Christianity came in the eleventh and nineteenth-centuries respectively (Adesina, 1973:484; Danfulani, 2006:45). From its inception, the colonial project co-opted the partnership of religious institutions to achieve its objectives. This, we shall argue, contributed to unhealthy Church-State relations in Nigeria, and Jos in particular.

Dalat (2009:34) argues that lack of the equitable sharing of economic resources is at the root of all the conflicts that threaten the unity and hinder the progress of Nigeria. This lack of the fair and equitable sharing of resources has fuelled the growing inequality and corruption promoted by greedy individuals who wield State power and want instant material gratification. Yamsat (2001:18-25) posits that:

Nigeria has more economic resources than what all of its citizens need but that most of them live in abject poverty because a few individuals take more than their fair share.

Yamsat (2001:6-8) also reiterates that:

Because Nigerians seem to be religious in the extreme as well as poor, the few and powerful rich people use religion to exploit the poor by applying so-called “money-pray-politics” after which they empty the State coffers to replenish their accounts.

It can therefore be argued that this excessive greed among political elite is responsible for the life-denying economic injustice which forces the Nigerian masses to live in perpetual poverty. The two competing religions seem to have failed to promote economic justice in the country because they appear to be more concerned with competition for power and domination of the public space (Lesmore, 2015:153-154). The situation seems also to be exacerbated by legacies of unwholesome missionary theologies, which may be responsible for poor attitude towards politics in general among Christians. The *missio*-political mandate of the Church needs political engagement but where it is not understood, it becomes destructive.

#### **5.4. Missionary Theologies that Undergird Church-State Relations in Nigeria**

As we have seen, British colonialism deliberately divided the identity and witness of the Church in Nigeria. This was visible in the theological divisions between the SUM missionaries concerning the theology that undergirded their Church-State relations because some missionaries were pro- or anti-government colonial policies that harmed human development. Those Church leaders that were aligned to the dominant political order also

nurtured their members to obey and support the *status quo*. However, there were those Churches that perceived the colonial government and the majority Muslim community to be in strategic partnership and therefore nurtured their members to resist such alliances (*The Light Bearer*, 1950:391). The theology that emerged was based upon sectarian interests and therefore unhealthy for peaceful economic development within the pluralistic society such as Nigeria. J. H Farrant, the SUM's field secretary, pleaded for safeguards in the national Constitution to protect the Christian minorities within the north, but since it was not possible, he concluded that:

The most reliable protection for minority is its strength of character and stability of purpose. As far as northern Nigerian Christians go, their progress will depend much more upon their fidelity to Christ than on safeguards in the Constitution" (*The Light Bearer*, 1919:57:87).

It could thus be argued that the missionaries were theologically unwise in the restricted Christian virtues that were taught to converts without any in-depth theology that conscientized them for active engagement in the political affairs of their communities. The SUM by default failed to develop a theology that engendered positive critical engagement with the two dominant religio-political forces within the north, namely: Muslims and the colonial political environment (Boer, 1984:185). However, there were some Christians who showed an interest in politics and took the initiative to oppose the injustices coming from the Muslim community (1984:185). The main Achilles' heel of the missional/theological heritage bequeathed by the SUM to the COCIN could be summed up as one that nurtured and narrowed down Christian political interests so as to safeguard British colonial interests (Boer, 1984:185). This policy deliberately restricted political concern to a narrow focus in a country where the Church missional identity and vocation called for engagement with wider societal issues (Boer, 1984:185). Therefore, according to Boer:

Is irrelevant theology where Christians are encouraged to play politics only to defend their own interests has also informed why the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) tends to speak out only whenever it perceives a threat from Muslim, but in between, CAN has been largely dormant and silent (1985:185).

This scenario paints a picture of the SUM that is both contradictory and ambivalent towards politics in Nigeria. The deep and entrenched suspicion of the Islamic agenda in the north has resulted in a perception that the SUM is anti-nationalist because of its anti-Islam concerns. Their rhetoric also feeds into the perception that nationalism was working against what they felt was God's gift of the missionary Church to Nigeria to save it from Islam. The SUM's contradictory political theology could best be described as one that opposed colonial politics

that favoured a majority Muslim north, while being supportive of colonial policies in the south that favoured a Christian majority. Accordingly, the SUM viewed the colonial project as a “gift from God” as long as it worked to the benefit of Christian missions. The wider wellbeing of the nation in which the economic order was under colonial strategy that bred inequality, injustice and under-development was not part of their theological critique of the colonial ideological system (Boer, 1984:186).

The paradox was that the missionaries thought that the Christian gospel they carried would be a positive force for liberation and justice to what they regarded as a “dark continent” (*The Light Bearer*, 1950:45). This theological perspective gave priority to inner ecclesial concerns rather than postulating the outer transformation of the environment in which people live so as to give them fullness of life.

Their conservative Euro-centric evangelical theology and political ideology with its dualism worldview underpinning offered an escapist spirituality to the people; not one that fostered societal well-being (Boer, 1984:187).

According to Rookmaker (1970:453), this dualism ideology constitutes:

A view that this world is good, but yet has autonomy of its own. The world of faith, of grace, of religion is the higher one, a world for which we have need of God’s revelation. This is where our aims and affections should beset. But the lower world, the world of men, the world of nature, can be understood by reason, and here reason reigns. It is as such non-religious, secular. Here there is no difference between Christian and the non-Christian, as both act according to the natural laws of thought and action.

The ideology that underpinned the SUM’s theology sought to divorce their religious obligations from their artistic, scientific, political, social and economic participation in their various cultures. Rookmaker (1970:34-35) warned that:

When Christians—even devout ones—separate these concerns from their religious life, they are unwittingly giving in to this long western philosophical tradition...the Christian must show his Christianity by avoiding immorality of some sort.

Accordingly, this two-tier structured worldview prevented the SUM from submitting their understanding and practice of capitalism and colonialism to theological scrutiny because it accepted the dominant Western philosophical tradition of rationalism in the so-called secular areas of life.

The Nigerian Church leaders have inherited this deficient dualistic worldview from the missionaries. The Church now struggles with problems it hardly understands because of its uncritical acceptance of this worldview without exposing it to theological critique and that of

the more life affirming indigenous knowledge systems of its local context (Boer, 1984:6). The contemporary shift by the Nigerian Christians for active involvement in politics seems to have emerged as a reactionary move because of Muslim political pressures—not because of a better reading of the bible and the development of sound political theology (1984:190). Accordingly, Boer offers a damning critique of the Nigerian Church:

The following features are now characteristics of the Nigerian Christian community: They are on guard with respect to perceived Muslim threats. They are a community shackled to the capitalistic order. They are proud of their sons and daughters who do well in the system, even though they all suspect that success is usually the result of compromise of, if not outright disobedience to, Christian principles. They publish their periodic communiques against various forms of corruption in high places, but they are careful never to mention names, places, and dates, for that would bring us too close to the home. We moralize and teach obedience while we fail to analyse the system (s) within which we live and work. They discipline believers from among the poor for breaches of personal morality, but they do not do the same to prominent members who are involved in political misconduct or financial misconduct (1984:190).

This scenario has given rise to unhealthy Church-State relations in the country because religion and politics have been death traps for its citizens, to such an extent that the overt and covert oppression of its citizens has become acceptable. The Church has found itself as a beneficiary of the corrupt *status quo* and therefore cannot find the inner strength to disengage from it in order to gain the political, economic and spiritual ethic to resist the life-denying forces of corruption.

It may be that it is the endemic high level of poverty in the north of the country that has made it possible for prosperity preachers to turn their brand of religious practice into an economic asset and a political instrument. Religion is exploited to such an extent that the poor are not only getting poorer but are denied the right to life. Lenshie (2012:50) describes how the Nigerian masses are affected:

Religion today instead of serving as a source of healing sickness, hunger, and poverty, and stimulating tranquillity and peaceful co-existence among human beings, is used to cause sadness. It is bringing pain instead of relief, hatred instead of love, division instead of unity, sadness instead of joy, discrimination and destruction instead of accommodation and development. This is especially true between some adherents of Islam and Christianity. Nigeria has its own share of these negative phenomena. Ethno-religious conflict has become a matter so serious and devastating that it can now be seen as a harbinger of the danger of a crisis such as those that have engulfed the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and Liberia.

One might ordinarily expect that religious pluralism would lead to greater unity and stability as these are the traditional functions of religion. But the Nigerian situation is in a category of

its own where religion has been used in two destructive ways: (i) as a means of acquiring political power, and (ii) as a way of exploiting the masses economically through false theology. Nigeria, after setting out as a State that was meant to be secular, is thus today compromised by the existence of politico-religious alliances that create an unstable environment that facilitates violence.

The colonial/missionary factors discussed above form the wider environment from which COCIN-State relations developed. This necessitates an examination of the factors that influenced the development of COCIN-State relations in Nigeria during the colonial period (1907-1960).

### **5.5. Politicization of Religious Demography: Christians and Muslim Perceptions**

Demographically, although the 1991 and 2006 censuses did not ask about religious affiliation because of its sensitive nature in the country (Gaiya, 2004:354), the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (2010:19), estimates of the numbers of Muslims and Christians in the country and their varying perceptions of each other. According to the 2003 Demographic and Health Survey, for example, Muslims constitute 50% of the population, while the 2008 DHS figure gives 45% and the Nigerian Ministry of Health estimates the percentage in 2008 to be is 50% (Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2010:19). The data on traditional religions is difficult to research because of its non-institutional mode of existence. In general, reliable Nigerian religious statistics are not easily available because of the sensitive nature of religion in the country. However, the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life (April 2010:4-9) has given Muslim and Christian perceptions of each other as shown below:

<b>Opinions on Major Issues</b>	<b>%</b>
Christians who want the bible to be made the official law of Nigeria	70%
Muslims who want <i>sharia</i> to be made the official law of Nigeria	71%
Christians who express positive views of Muslims	53%
Muslims who express positive views of Christians	63%
Christians who know little/ nothing about Islam	54%
Muslims who know little/nothing about Christianity	63%
Christians who attach violence to Muslims	38%
Muslims who attach violence to Christians	13%
Nigerians who say religion is very important in their lives	87%
Nigerians who have less concern about religion	13%
Christians who believe that government treats them unfairly	21%
Muslims who believe that government treats them unfairly	18%
Nigerians who want political leaders to belong to their own religious beliefs	83%
Nigerians who accommodate political leaders with different religious beliefs than their own	61%

**Figure 5.1.** Christians and Muslim perceptions of each other in Nigeria

For the northern part of Nigeria where Jos is located, Paden (1986:743-744) reveals that:

Before 1967, Muslims constituted 73% of the population of northern Nigeria; Christians constituted 2.7% while the Animists constituted 24.3%. In 1963, the population of Christians showed some increase so that Muslims were 71.7%; Christians were 9.7% while the Animists were 18.6%.

The 1991 census, which disregarded the religious factor, gave a conservative population figure of 88,514,501 (Ihemebgulem and Osabgemi, 1999:205-206), out of which 41,324,869 (53%) was the total population of northern States including the federal capital Abuja. Patrick Johnstone's *Operation World* figures on religious statistics for northern Nigeria in the 2001 edition give the following:

Out of the 58,800,000, Muslims constituted 29,446,000 (50%); Christians constituted 17,094,000 (29%) and the Animists constituted 12,260,000 (21%) (Cited in Gaiya, 2004:354-355).

One can only imagine what constitutes the 2015 data on these religious groups that exist within the most ethnically and religiously pluralistic part of Nigeria (Gaiya, 2004:355). With this data one would expect that increasing social injustice would give rise to increasing economic justice, that would eventually lead to social instability but the opposite seems to be the case.

## **5.6. Economic Injustice in Nigeria**

Economic injustice in the country has in part been blamed on the Church where preachers mislead the citizens with promises of economic prosperity leading them to accept their poverty as a spiritual failure rather than as the result of corruption in governance (Oluwatofunmi, 2013:357-358). The prosperity preachers lull the people into a false state of fatalism while they themselves are enriched from the resources of the people. The Church has not given an inadequate response to issues of social injustice but has instead become an agent of injustice. The *missio*-political identity and vocation of the Church necessitates that it should address issues of injustice within the society, but the behaviour of some of its leaders belies this, flying around the nation in their private jets while many of their members live on the economic margins of society. (Igboin, 2012: 24; Oluwatofunmi, 2013:358). While the Church and State need to cooperate for the common good of society (Wallis, 2013, 2014:34-36), their unhealthy alliance has proven destructive for Nigeria and its economy. The ruling elites use their alliance with influential religious leaders to entrench their hold on political power because they mutually look about each other's interest (Oluwatofunmi, 2013:359). Many religious leaders in Nigeria who should speak out against injustice on behalf of the masses are themselves manipulated by the elites, either for reasons of personal gain, or to safeguard their sponsorship for Church projects (2013:359). Those religious leaders that do not succumb to the dominant religious political paradigm and are critical of the economic injustice manifesting in life-denying corruption in Nigeria are few. One such leader is the Most Rev. Peter Akinola, the immediate past-primate of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), who was not afraid to challenge the former President Muhammadu Buhari to tackle corruption practically:

If the president must probe, then he must probe everybody but that will be a tough political and moral decision for him to take. My stand is that if we are serious about fighting corruption, if we are determined to make people accountable, if we are serious about probity and transparency, do we need any evidence than people living



above their income? When a person is putting on ground what is worth his entire lifetime earning within four years, what other evidence do you need? The law has to be changed...Unfortunately, our laws are weak. I think there was a case of a person who stole billions of naira from the Police Pension Fund and was sentenced to N750,000 fine or three years imprisonment. Should that continue to be our sense of justice? Can that solve the problem of corruption in Nigeria? One thing you don't fail to notice is that almost everybody in government is building mansions across the country...such culprits should rot in jail" (*The Guardian*, June 09 2015, blog).

Akinola is critical of the oppressive structures in Nigeria by challenging corrupt practices as well as the entrenched culture of impunity that feeds social injustice. He further laments:

I want a better Nigeria where Christopher, Benjamin, and Suzan can live anywhere they choose without being molested; a Nigeria where Amodu, Mohammed and Jibril can live anywhere they choose unmolested. I want a Nigeria that will be to me a sign of progress...I want a Nigeria that when I want to change my passport or to renew it, I won't have to go to the Immigration office. I want a Nigeria that I do not have to know anybody before I get services, where everyone matters (*The Guardian*, June 09 2015 blog).

Akinola has touched on the factors that foster economic injustice in Nigeria, but he waited until he was out of office to articulate such critical comments. This suggests that the leaders that are in office are deliberately mute in addressing the important issues affecting the lives of the ordinary people, because of political expediency.

The former World Bank's Vice-President for Africa, Obiageli "Oby" Ezekwesili, has equally lamented the unjust economic situation of Nigeria, blaming the religious leaders for the unjust and oppressive State of the economy in Nigeria:

Double standards and practice of instant gratification within the Christian community is responsible for inhibiting the fight against corruption in Nigeria. The need to curb the incessant spate of double standards and instant gratification within the Church is very germane, if the fight against corruption will be won in Nigeria. God is looking for sincere men and not just position-seeking individuals who will lead the change against corrupt practice that has continued to paint the country dark among the comity of nations...Nigeria will not change until the Church goes back to the tenets of true biblical teachings on holiness and righteousness across the public and private sectors of our country (Ezekwesili, 2013:4; Prov. 14:34 NIV).

Again, she too waited until she was out of office to make her critique of government. Accordingly, the value of her critique has been weakened because of these inconsistencies. However, she is nevertheless correct in her contention that individualism and the desire for expanded production of private capital has conspired to destroy the economy of Nigeria. This

attitude has denied Nigerians the humanness (*Ubuntu*<sup>32</sup>) that calls for being brothers and sisters to be each other's keepers. Money and personal fame have replaced the dignity of humanity in Nigeria.<sup>33</sup> Both State and Church may be guilty of the economic injustice that prevails in Nigeria, which has not only failed the poor but has also resulted in the life-denying violence that has destroyed many lives and create thousands of internally displaced people. The situation in Nigeria is one where political leaders and lawmakers formulate laws that only favour themselves and their networks of close contacts (Salawu, 2010:345-350).

Akinola confronted the Nigerian lawmakers concerning their unlawful decision on what they take as their monthly salaries:

How much is an average university professor earning? How hard does he work in terms of teaching and research? Can their work be compared to that of politicians, who simply go there, make noise for two or three times a month, and earn the kind of money they are earning? Is it justifiable in any way? The money the politicians are earning cannot be justified in any way. But, because they make the law, they suit themselves. They abuse the privilege of the power that they have by putting themselves above other Nigerians. They should make laws that put Nigerians as the centre or focus of attention, not themselves...Their salary should be completely restructured to reflect the level of work they are doing vi-sa-vis the economy (*The Guardian*, June 09 2015, blog).

Another report in *The National Inquirer* Blog (2013:1) deplored the deteriorating condition that:

By estimation, according to international analysis, Nigeria is meant to be one of the most prosperous nations in the world owing to its staggering production of about 2.4 million barrels of oil every day and with the price of oil pegged at \$93.61 a barrel (before now). This means that the country earns a whopping \$2.24 billion income a day, and this is just from crude oil sales. With its geo-political power and economic resources, it is doubted if any country would have the power and financial might to change the course of black/African civilization like Nigeria had the leaders not been corrupt. Nigerian citizens are the worst treated in the world with the recent research saying it's the worst place for any baby to be born especially in this year 2013. Where are all the monies?

Adekoya argues that:

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<sup>32</sup> Lovemore Mbigi, *The Spirit of African Leadership* (2005: 69), *Ubuntu* is a Zulu concept that means 'personhood', but the term seems to have equivalents in other African ethnic groups: In *Shona* it is *Unhu* and in both *Tswana* and *Botho*, *Ubuntu* means the essence of being human, and it is a positive perception of African personhood. It refers to the collective interdependence and solidarity of communities of affection.

<sup>33</sup> Nnoli (1978:108) laments the Nigerian economic situation "...during the pre-colonial times, family system with its emphasis on welfare and social responsibility rather than individualism and its ethic of an individual as his brother's keeper is common to all Nigerian people...production was organized to satisfy definite biosocial needs rather than being dictated by the desire for expanded production of private capital."

63% of the Nigerian population lives in extreme poverty while a Nigerian senator takes home roughly 1.1 Sterling Pounds every year in salary plus benefits. The MPs must make do with nine hundred thousand Sterling Pounds. In comparison, David Cameron earns 142,500 Sterling Pounds Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. Nigerian lawmakers fly first class, lodge in priciest rooms at the fanciest hotels and live in Beverley Hill-style mansions, all at the public's expense.<sup>34</sup>

The entrenchment of economic injustice has been difficult to reverse because, according to Adekoya:

In Nigeria's fiercely hierarchical and materialistic society, it is easy for top politicians to discredit criticism of their lifestyle from those below them on the social ladder: by simply implying that it stems from envy. It hardly helps that there have been numerous cases of members of civil society who used to lambast politicians' earnings—only to be co-opted by the establishment and promptly reverse their views.<sup>35</sup>

Economic injustice in Nigeria appears to be fed by factors such as: ethnic, religious, and regional clashes, economic imbalances, pervasive poverty, inequality, unemployment, political conflicts, lad-based conflicts, perceived injustice in resource (petrol) control (UNDP/ECA, 2011: 24-25). Where power is misconstrued as a weapon of coercion, the socio-economic condition of the poor becomes worse. One could infer that divisive factors are responsible for Nigeria's failure as a State from the current president, Mohammadu Buhari's inaugural speech when he declared that:

I intend to keep to my oath and serve as President to all Nigerians. I belong to everybody and I belong to nobody (*The Vanguard*, May 29 2015, p. 2).

### **5.6.1. The Destructive Use of Power over Economic Issues**

The unhealthy use of power is a major facilitator of economic injustice in Nigeria. Power has come to be identified with the acquisition of wealth. According to Weber (1991:78), power is understood as:

The ability to carry out one's will despite resistance, where others only have to comply and conform has constituted an ideology where the State is regarded as constituting men dominating men; and supported by legitimate violence.

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<sup>34</sup> <<http://www.theguardian.com/commentfree/2015/may/29/muhammadu-buhari-lavish-lifestyle-nigeria-elite/>>, [Accessed June 1 2015].

<sup>35</sup> <<http://www.theguardian.com/commentfree/2015/may/29/muhammadu-buhari-lavish-lifestyle-nigeria-elite/>>, [Accessed June 1 2015].

This destructive idea of power sees power as based in institutions that are meant to dominate the citizenry. The use of power by Nigerian political and religious leaders is in serious need of a comprehensive transformation that relinquishes those features that disempower ordinary peoplepower. As Foucault (2003:342) can argue:

Power should not be used as an instrument of coercion because power is not a monopoly of the few, but is diffused and embodied in discourse and knowledge.

Foucault also challenges the notion that power is wielded by people or groups by way of “episodic” or “sovereign” acts of domination or coercion. Instead, it must be dispersed as “power is everywhere” and “comes from everywhere” because power is neither an agency nor a structure (1998:63).

By his understanding of power, Foucault conforms to that of Tillich and Arendt who described power respectively as:

Community expressing its intrinsic power in the positing of justice and people’s support lending power to the institutions of a country, a continuation of the consent that brought the laws into existence to begin with...All institutions are manifestations and materialization of power. They petrify and decay as soon as the living power of the people cease to be, and to uphold them” (1971:99; 1970:42).

Arendt further argued that:

When we say of somebody that he or she is ‘in power’, we actually refer to his or her being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name—without the empowering group, power vanishes—power is not equal to strength, not found in an individual characteristic or quality, it is bound to the social relationship and develops in communication and cooperation; therefore power is not related to violence. They are opposites! Violence occurs where power is in jeopardy but left to its own course it ends in power’s disappearance (1970:44).

Within the context of Jos, Plateau State when power is wrongly construed, it leads to economic injustice and the destruction of community through endemic violence. Hence, when Church and State relations become dysfunctional, it creates an environment in which economic injustice and corruption thrive because both of them use power destructively. Economic injustice in the country has in part been blamed on the role of Church and State relations where some influential preachers have formed alliances with corrupt political and economic systems to exploit the vulnerable poor who are seeking solutions to their life’s problems. The context of injustice is usually fed by poor governance and corruption that misleads the citizenry with promises of an economic utopia (Oluwatofunmi, 2013:357-358). While the prosperity preachers lull the masses into a state of fatalism, they themselves turn to

the political and economic elites for their share of unethical wealth. Consequently, an inherent state of contradiction exists between the religious leaders and the political leaders of the regional and national States of Nigeria because the religious institutions and their leaders that are that are supposed to be nurturing a nation that is built on high political and ethical standards allow themselves to be manipulated for the narrowly greedy agenda of the minority elite within the Church and State (2013:359). In the process, some Church leaders have gone as far as to press their members to vote for their political allies who reward them with gifts such as houses or vehicles that are presented to them as bribes during “thanksgiving services to express ‘appreciation to God’” (2013:360).

The older Churches that are linked to the European missionary heritage were developed with systems of governance that would hold their clergy and members accountable through recognized systems of discipline. As traditional denominations declined and independent Churches emerged with Charismatic/Pentecostal leaders known as Bishops, Apostles and Prophets, offering health and wealth, discipline and accountability among their clergy seem to lack institutional accountability to discipline those leaders that misrepresented the ministry of the Church with their behaviour. Even among some of the clergy from the older Western mission-founded Churches in Nigeria, they are also losing control over their local pastors because some give their allegiances to the ruling political elites in order to benefit from the scarce economic resources for their local agenda. This high level of social and economic inequality within the nation has resulted in many of these Churches being unable to pay their pastors adequately, during harsh economic times. According to Oluwatofunmi, partisan politics and avarice has overtaken everyone (2013:360). Ezekwesili, has lamented the economic situation of Nigeria, blaming religious leaders, and especially Church leaders, for the unjust and oppressive state of the economy in Nigeria:

Double standards and practice of instant gratification within the Christian community is responsible for inhibiting the fight against corruption in Nigeria. The need to curb the incessant spate of double standards and instant gratification within the Church is very germane, if the fight against corruption will be won in Nigeria. God is looking for sincere men and not just position-seeking individuals who will lead the change against corrupt practice that has continued to paint the country dark among the comity of nations... Nigeria will not change until the Church goes back to the tenets of true biblical teachings on holiness and righteousness across the public and private sectors of our country (2013:4).

It could be argued that from the pre-colonial period when slavery by the Arabs tended to deny Nigerians socio-economic equality, the socio-economic conditions of Nigeria have

hardly changed since Karl Kumm, the founder of the COCIN highlighted the prevalence of corruption within the colonial structures of the society (Kumm cited in Boer, 1984:170; *The Light Bearer*, 1907:12). This situation seems to perpetuate itself in the post-colonial period as is demonstrated below.

### **5.7. Comparing the Post-Colonial and Colonial Political Oppressions**

Comparing the colonial and post-colonial political experiences, the experience of Independence for many Nigerians may be described as the exchange of one form of political oppression for another. The attitude of many Churches, linked to the Western missionary movement, was very supportive of the British Government approving the political Independence of Nigeria. However, the different ecclesial leaders failed to offer an in-depth critique of the lingering anti-nation building ‘divide and rule’ colonial policies that were bequeathed to the young independent nation. Ekineh (1997:70-80) states that, during the Independence ceremony, the retired Reverend Franklin Opuwari of the St. Augustine Anglican Church in Lagos ended his sermon as follows:

Nature put us Africans far away from the civilization of Greece, Egypt, Rome, and the Christian Church... We and the rest of Africa South of Egypt did not benefit from the civilization which had flourished since more than two thousand years ago. Then fortunately, the British came; and within my own time, they have catapulted us from the age of darkness into this wonderful modern age-the age of peace, the arts, of science, and technology. I saw part of the beginning, and now, I thank God that he has allowed me to see the end...praise be the Lord (Opuwari cited in Ekineh, 1997:80).

This statement reveals a deep colonial enslavement of the mind that requires postcolonial emancipation. Opuwari has bought into the European discourse on Africa that separates Egypt from the rest of Africa by implying that its ancient civilization is the product of its relationship with Europe. The development of Egyptian civilization throughout its long history has never been without active socio-economic intercourse with the wider African Cultures. Nigerians achieved their independence through their just struggle against colonialism and it was not a gift granted by Great Britain. Therefore, the ministry and mission of the Church within the new independent nation context was expected to give critical solidarity in their prophetic role within the nation by promoting national unity and anti-corruption that are the fruits of divisive politics that thrive on corruption. If the colonial administration saw Nigeria as a burden that they surrendered then the newly independent government was well-aware of the socio-economic and religio-political and security

challenges. On the other hand, one voice within the Church described it as an ‘age of peace’ (Ekineh, 1997:82). This perspective seems to gloss over the hard realities that the newly independent nation faced and it therefore could be argued that sections of the Church were part of the crisis right from the beginning. However, in a sermon that was preached soon after Independence at a Church where the worshippers focused on the restoration of peace in the Niger Delta region, the preacher stated that:

During the colonial era, the country was not free, but we all know that the people were free; they could say their minds on any matter. Now the country is free, but the people are not free. I cannot preach to you and express my feelings about the Military Government and its brutality. In this country, only sycophants are happy...but God of Abraham will deliver us (cited in Ekineh, 1997:80).

The preacher offered a stinging critique of the political order in his comparison of the colonial era and that of the independent nation under the governance of military government. He identified the loss of freedom under the military government as the greater threat to the nation’s well-being. These divergent views of what was happening within the nation reveal divisions within the Church and among Church leaders. While some Church leaders saw peace, others saw an acute denial of freedom of expression. Barth states that a confused and divided Church would not be morally effective in giving positive guidance to the State (Barth cited in Hunsinger, 2006:362). The systematic theft of the nation’s resources by corrupt colonial and independent governments ensured that the nation remained underdeveloped and the poor denied of resources that were intended for their development (Ekineh, 1997:80-81). The prophetic voice of the Church has been missing from the general political development of the nation because the religious leaders themselves were competing for political and economic power, benefits and privileges. No systematic ecumenical policy of how the Church and other religious groups should engage with the State was developed in Nigeria (Ekineh, 1991:81). The Churches themselves were divided, the different denominational groupings sought to address State matters according to their own terms and interests that proved to be ineffective. This lack of an ecumenical and interfaith common agenda on national issues has had a negative effect on the peaceful co-existence of the citizens in the country. I quote at length the gravity of the problems that the nation faced in remaining and developing as a united nation, which was aptly described by the president, Nnamdi Azikiwe, in a national broadcast that took place in 1964:

Fellow country men and women, we have taken a dangerous road which if not stopped at once, will make the crisis in the Congo look like a child-play...whether our beloved Nigeria will continue to remain united as one country or will disintegrate into minute principalities depends on two factors: whether our politicians would

desist from inciting our communities to liquidate themselves, and whether our politicians would cooperate so that the law abiding elements in this part of Africa will experience free and fair elections...should our political leaders, after bearing all the above factors in mind, prefer to crucify the unity of this country on the Golgotha of their inordinate ambitions for naked power, then hundreds and thousands of Nigerian patriots, who sacrificed dearly for its unity and its freedom, must take note and pass this information to posterity. In which case, it would be an irony of history that the liquidation of our national unity occurred after we had become free from political bondage that lasted almost a century (cited in Ekineh, 1997:94-95).

The threat to Nigeria's identity as a unitary State that was present in that early post-Independence period is still a very present threat to the contemporary Nigeria where its sovereign Constitution is constantly abused by regional States (Ekineh, 1997:97). The threat is also heightened by the role that influential religious ideology plays in regional State politics. One could therefore question whether some of those that fought for independence did perhaps compromise their allegiance to upholding Nigerian unity by promoting their allegiance to their competing religious ideology. If the colonial administration failed by privileging some regions above others, then it could be argued that the leaders of independent Nigeria are also failing by allowing some Nigerian States to opt for a State religion that acts against the social cohesion of the nation. Nigeria has therefore become more divided during the post-Independence era than the colonial era because what seems to hold the country together is very tenuous and nothing but territorial boundaries.

For the sake of emphasis, Nigeria could equally be labelled as a "failed State" characterized by what Blanco (2012:70-77) described as:

Fragility and lack of capacity of the State structures or the bad governance of them as source of both insecurity and under-development. The State fails when it no longer perform basic functions required for it to pass as a State. These functions range from the provision of welfare and security to the border patrol and the rule of law enforcement.

Further characteristics of failed States as enumerated by Nshirimana (2014: 21) include:

Rise of criminal and political violence, loss of control over borders, rising ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural hostilities, civil war, use of terror against own citizens, weak institutions, deteriorated or insufficient infrastructure, collapse of health system, leaders destroying economic and political fabric of the country [through corruption], exploitation of the poor.

Most of the characteristics mentioned above seem to be responsible for the life-denying violence in Nigeria in general, and the city of Jos in particular. To overcome this State failure or fragility, the Nigerian State needs to utilize what Ghani, *et al.*, (2005, 2006a, 2006b cited



in Krasner and Pascual, 2005:153-163) identified as ten features of Statehood that have to be accomplished in order to overcome fragility and guarantee State stability. These are:

- i. A legitimate monopoly on the means of violence;
- ii. Administrative control;
- iii. Sound management of public finances;
- iv. Investment in human capital;
- v. The creation of citizenship rights and duties;
- vi. Provision of infrastructure;
- vii. Market formation;
- viii. Management of the assets of the State;
- ix. Effective public borrowing;
- x. Maintenance of rule and law.

Policies which tend to exclude others from common participation can only perpetuate State fragility. This is because experience shows that attempts at State-building which ignore or oppose hybridity will encounter considerable difficulty in generating effective and legitimate outcomes. The strengthening of central State institutions is unquestionably important, but if this becomes the main focus it threatens to further alienate local societies by rendering them impotent in shaping their development and thereby weakening their sense of local responsibility for overcoming problems and developing the local ownership of solutions (Ghani, *et al.*, 2006a and 2006b). The marginalization of minorities by any State begins the process of its failure. Likewise, the inability of the State to treat all sectors of its citizens within its jurisdiction as equals also contributes to the weakening of the State.

### **5.8. Competition for Superiority between Christianity and Islam Weakened the State**

Based upon the above observations, the intolerant behaviour of some of the extreme followers of both Christianity and Islam in Nigeria has contributed to the instability of the Nigerian State. Their claims of exclusivism and superiority over all other religious faiths and the desire for national dominance constitute the fundamental cause for hostility between the two religions. They have served to foster disunity and hatred among Africans and their cultures and religions which are always ready to create a space for others to co-exist

(Oluwatofinmi, 2013:346). As Christianity and Islam struggle for supremacy, particularly, in northern Nigeria today, one can only remember what some of the COCIN founding missionaries said concerning the fate of minorities in the northern region:

If we do nothing now, the Churches [and the minorities] will feel grieve about our silence...it is our objects to make the minorities and the Church to be heard in the State, advocating for the things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report. The most important and reliable protection for minorities is their own strength of character and stability of purpose. As far as the Christian minorities in northern Nigeria are concerned, their progress will depend much more upon their fidelity to Christ than safe-guards in the Constitution (Farrant cited in Boer, 1984:92-94).

The contradictory attitude of the SUM towards politics was self-evident. On one hand, it openly welcomed and supported British colonialism; and on the other, refused to become involved in nurturing the quality of representational politics that served the people (Boer, 1884:179). This attitude may flow with their Protestant-Evangelical faith that saw the work of politics as being unholy activities. However, some prominent members of the SUM such as Bristow, Maxwell, and Farrant (1945:234; Gutip, 1998:4-6) refused to follow this narrow political understanding and engagement and openly called for the Church to become actively involved in the political reality of its members. It could be argued that the SUM feared political domination by the Muslims, where mission schools in the north served a strategic role in their agenda of using Western education as a lure to increase Christian influence. However, as Boer (1984:179) has argued, Christians in the north who received such education did not become politically conscious to respond to the political development constructively because they were misinformed to play politics only for the defence of Christian interests.

The COCIN initially emerged from the SUM as EKAN,<sup>36</sup> as a way of contextualizing the name of the Church. The COCIN's position on Church-State relations that emerged out of its SUM-legacy adopted a contradictory policy that embraced partnership and separation (Datiri and Bewarang, 2013). This contradiction may signify a complete lack of a theologically-informed and mature position on Church-State relations. The official documents of the Church have not revealed any approved position of the Church in relation to its relationship with the State. The leaders of the Church seem to present personal opinions on the subject rather than positions that emerged from in-depth reflections by the corporate body of the

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<sup>36</sup> EKAN is acronym from the *Hausa* language commonly spoken in northern Nigeria. The acronym stands for *Ekklisiyar Kristi A Nigeria*, meaning "Church of Christ In Nigeria" (COCIN). This name was changed again in 2013 to "Church of Christ In Nations" (COCIN) because of its spread beyond Nigeria to other African countries (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:2-6).

Church. This is unfortunate because it leaves much to be desired on how the Church relates with the State and politics in the absence of a well thought out theological position. This leads me to the development of the Church's relations with the State.

## **5.9. The Development of COCIN-State Relations in Nigeria**

### **5.9.1 The Colonial Period**

The colonial/missionary factors discussed above did little or nothing to foster constructive COCIN-State relations in Nigeria. It should be noted that 'State' in this context refers to the colonial administration that was in power in Nigeria from 1900-1960) and not the later Plateau State. Apart from the allegation of a dualistic philosophy heritage that nurtured a type of Evangelical theology (Boer, 1983:180-181), that avoided social participation and discouraged their converts from political participation (Boer, 1983:182-183), one of the COCIN's historical documents (*The Light Bearer*, 1908:5-7) has identified that other colonial/missionary factors may have been responsible for the Church-State model of relations that existed between COCIN and the Plateau State. These factors include the tendency of the State to have favoured one religious group (Muslims) over others (Christianity and African Traditional Religionists) Indeed, through its policy of indirect rule, and the Great Prohibition which prevented Christian missionaries from evangelizing and socializing with the Muslims and non-Muslim communities under them (Muslims) this may be correct (*The Light Bearer*, 1908:34; Gutip, 1998:4-6; Gaiya, 2004:358; Barnes, 2004:66).

Another factor was the nature of the political instruction given by the SUM missionary leaders to its converts, asking them to get involved in politics in order to defend Christian interests (*The Light Bearer*, 1908:32; Boer, 1984:186-187). This had negative religio-political consequences for a pluralist context like Nigeria with two dominant religious groups. The COCIN religious leaders act in defence of their community's interest while the Muslim leaders act in the interests of their religious community. The selfish competition by the leadership of these two religious groups has to a great extent contributed to the social insecurity within the society (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002:423-425).

Turaki (1982:45) and Kukah (1993:3) argue that these factors that influenced the development of COCIN-State relations developed when the Church leaders recognised that the leaders in the northern State did not apply justice equally between the Church and the Muslim organizations. The State chose to marginalize Christianity and the influence of the Church in society. On the other hand, the State promoted Islam by subjugating non-Muslims under the leadership of Muslim Emirs (Boer, 1983:186). It could as well be argued that these factors shaped the COCIN's attitude towards State during the colonial period, but it also sets the stage for COCIN-State relations in the post-Independence period. During the colonial period, the SUM structure gave birth to the COCIN nurtured on an ideology of dependency. Thus, even after independence, the COCIN continued to rely on the SUM for the support and sustenance of its social services until the SUM finally left the country. The COCIN had not developed into a self-financing institution and therefore switched their dependency to the State for financial aid so as to sustain its schools and healthcare facilities.

The Sudan United Mission (SUM) made frantic efforts to establish schools and healthcare facilities for the COCIN and the Plateau State to promote education and health for the people of Plateau State. These educational institutions raised most of the political elite not only for Plateau State, but for the entire Middle Belt Region of Nigeria. This could be said to be well intended by the missionaries. However, the COCIN did not only inherit schools and health facilities alone, but the embittered relationship between the colonial government and missionaries over the policy of indirect rule in the north was also inherited. But the COCIN did not take the embittered relationship far because it needed the cooperation and financial aid from the government to sustain these schools and health facilities. One could also argue that the COCIN's decision to fall back to the State for support ought to be blamed on the colonial/missionary inability to teach their converts about socio-political and economic pursuit.

### **5.9.2. The Post-Colonial Period**

After Nigeria became independent the separation model for the Church-State relations that operated during the colonial period was replaced by a Church-State partnership model (*The Light Bearer*, 1970:36; Datiri, 2013). This model was aimed at lessening the financial constraints faced by the COCIN after the departure of the SUM and to get the members of the

Church more engaged in participating in the political development of the State (*The Light Bearer*, 1970: 38; Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:153). One of the past presidents of the COCIN stated that:

In the past, the Church was lukewarm in political affairs like elections and electioneering campaigns in Nigeria. However, the ever-growing destruction of lives and property at any electioneering campaign has made the Church to be focused and interested in what the State and its statutes are doing, so as not to get more Churches burnt and more members dying or such unnecessary clashes. The Church and its leadership cannot involve [itself] in partisan politics, but it cannot shy away from politics and what happens in the political arena or the corridor of government since they affect the Church either for good or bad (Yamsat, 2011:v).

This perspective seems to give other reasons for the shift from a separation model to a partnership model in the post-colonial period. Apart from the desire for financial support from the State, the COCIN wanted to use its position as the numerically strongest Church in the State to achieve political and economic dividends such as providing support for the many secondary schools that the COCIN inherited from the SUM (Datiri, 2013, Bewarang, 2013:4-6). Its strategy to obtain State support for its projects was strengthened by the presence of many of the political elites of the State being members of the COCIN (Bewarang, 2013:4-7). For example, three democratically elected governors and one military State governor have been members of the COCIN since its inception in 1967 (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013: 139-145). The situation between the COCIN and the Plateau State could be compared to two branches of the same vine because the State operations are also dominated by members of the COCIN.

## **5.10. Chapter Summary**

In this chapter, I have presented the colonial SUM missionary model of Church-State relations and how it shaped COCIN-State relations in the post-Independence era of Nigeria. The divide and rule policies of the colonial powers laid the foundations for instability in nation-building, thereby sowing the seeds of division between the Christian-majority southern regional States and the Muslim-majority northern regional States. The consequences of this harmful policy continue into the post-Independence era and are still pose a major threat to the political unity of the country. The policy also weakened the African traditional leadership model of governance that resulted in a negative impact on the peaceful co-existence of the people.

Both Christianity and Islam also contributed to the destruction of traditional African culture by demanding allegiance to the dominant culture and worldview that their missionaries brought with them. The abuse of African hospitality meant that Christianity and Islam became strategic participants in creating the environment for African to become more open and accepting of colonialism. The missionaries of both religions also served as agents of the colonial system of governance. In addition, both the missionaries and colonial agents engaged in their project for the economic objective of mobilising commodities for the British economy that resulted in the further impoverishment of the local people. This economic model created an environment in which inequality thrived through oppressive economic, political and religious structures. Power that becomes the monopoly of the few endangers community life and creates an environment for violence among its citizens to thrive.

The missionary praxis of the SUM that influenced its members to developed a negative perspective towards political engagement also ill-equipped the Church to develop positive *missio*-political ethics for the nation. Instead, an unhealthy competitive relationship evolved between the two dominant religions and their influence over State policies. The SUM legacy on political participation equipped the COCIN in the independence era to embrace dysfunctional Church-State relations that one could describe as uncritical partnership<sup>37</sup> with the State.

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<sup>37</sup> Uncritical in the sense that the Church is unable to maintain a critical solidarity and distance from the State; instead, its leaders are always eulogizing the State even when the masses of the people are groaning and languishing in poverty and violence.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE SEARCH FOR PEACE-BUILDING IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COCIN AND THE PLATEAU STATE

#### 6.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that the factors that shaped Church-State relations between the SUM and the Plateau State during the colonial and missionary period included policies which inhibited the process of peace-building and also set a precedence for the Church-State model that emerged during the post-Independence era. This chapter focuses on the search for peace-building in Church-State relations between the COCIN and the Plateau State between 2001 and 2010. The critique, through the missio-political lens, argues that the Church's missional engagement with the State should facilitate peace building especially within a pluralist society. If the missio-political engagement is defective then it becomes a contributing factor to nurturing violence, especially among religiously plural communities. Central to the mission of God are ethical values such as, a just-peace, justice, love, compassion, fairness, equity, accommodation of diversity, socio-political and economic inclusion, tolerance, fair sharing of resources, and respect of human rights.

I begin this chapter by considering the Plateau State's policy on religion in the light of what the law declares about the kind of relationship that should exist between the State and the various religions. This will be contrasted with the COCIN's policy and practice of relating to the State after the departure of the SUM. The dominant position of the COCIN in the State as the largest Christian group has called into question its position of influence to shape its relationship with the State, and its influence on peace-building in Jos. This will necessitate following the money trail of the COCIN's current sources of financial income that are needed to service its different social institutions and to find out the extent to which it depends on the Plateau State for its financial support. The core question to be answered will be:

**“To what extent the relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State has or has not facilitated peace-building?”**

The surge in violent conflicts within Jos, Plateau State from 2001-2010 is the essential backdrop to interrogate the Church and State peace-building measures. This critique will begin with an examination of the policies of both the Plateau State and the COCIN concerning Church-State relations in general, and how these have shaped their relationship in particular. I will also take account their missio-political identities and vocations and whether the relationship has fostered peace or promoted violence among the citizens in Jos.

## **6.2. The Plateau State's Policy on Religion**

The Plateau State derives its policy on religion from the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as the sovereign State. According to the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999 section 10 as amended), “the Government of the Federation or of State shall not adopt any religion as State Religion.” This suggests that:

every person in Nigeria shall be entitled to freedom of thought, conscience and religion, including freedom to change his or her religion or belief, and freedom (either alone or in community with others, and in public or private) to manifest and propagate his [and her] religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance (1999 §38).

Based on the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Plateau State's policy on religious matters, as published in the *Plateau State Gazette* (hereafter PLSG), allows for the religious freedom for all residents (PLSG, 1967). Theoretically, under this law there is no need for any religious group or institution to deserve any special or preferential treatment from the State. The State is supposed to adopt a neutral position in relation to all religions. Because it is a constituent State, subject to the Nigerian sovereign State, Plateau State (PLS) ought to maintain a policy of religious freedom for all its citizens (PLSG, 1976:13-15) as enshrined in the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999). According to the PLSG, the State does not legally promote or oppose any given religion or religious institution within its jurisdiction (PLSG, 1976:13-16). In addition, the Plateau Indigenous and Development Association Network (PIDAN) (2012:78), posits that:

Since its inception in 1976, Plateau State was created on sound historical socio-cultural values as envisioned by the founding Fathers with the aim of providing a levelled-play-ground for all residents.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> *The Plateau Indigenous Development Association Network*, (Jos: Jos University Press 2012:78-79 shows that the Plateau State was built to be truly an accommodative and integrative environment with an ethos of peace and



Accordingly, the Plateau State's policy on religion is neutral and is consistent with the Nigerian Constitution. What remains to be uncovered is whether or not this policy is translated in practice. The PIDAN (2012:79) reveals that the State is religiously neutral in so far as every resident in the State is free to practice her or his religion without State interference. However, religious freedom does not only mean freedom of worship but also should reflect whether the diversity of religious groups are equal participants in the socio-economic and political life of the State. The policy implies that the Plateau State is officially bound to the principle of the separation of Church and State and this should be reflected in its relations with other religious institutions, for example with the COCIN (PIDAN, 2012:99, PLSG, 1976:16-18).

The policy on religion with the State implies that the Plateau State should not entertain any special relationship with any religious institutions because the State policy does not allow for any religion to be adopted as a State religion (PIDAN, 2012:99). Its position is one of strict neutrality to all religions that are present in its domain (Nigerian Constitution, 1999 Sect. 10 (3), PLSG, 1976:78; Nwafor, 2002:40). Hence, the policy on religion does not permit the State to entertain a close relationship with any religious organization in the State. Doing so would amount to a breach of the Constitution. Any tendency by the State to promote one religious group above another in a pluralist context would imply disrespect for justice and equality of all religions, and ultimately for peace, thereby calling the State's political identity and mandate into serious question. This policy is constructive and life-giving given the diverse and pluralist context of Nigeria and Plateau State. The development of any healthy Church and State relationship necessitates all religious and irreligious residents are treated justly and fairly regardless of their creed. It also calls on the State to exercise neutrality with respect to people of faith without favouritism or the preferential treatment to anyone. Where these tenants are not observed, it amounts to disrespect for the Constitution and the policy of the State regarding religions.

That said, the narrative of Church and State relations in Jos suggests that the situation leaves much to be desired. It has been reported by Ostien that two governors of the State, Joshua

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stability where every Nigerian, irrespective of creed or ethnic inclination, would reside and conduct his or her affairs without hindrance. This noble vision was sustained so that the State earned a unique position as the undisputable "Home of Peace and Tourism" in Nigeria, an affectionate sobriquet based also on the people's warm hospitality and receptivity. Quite apart from emerging as a bastion of peace and stability, the Plateau State began to blossom and flourish as a strategic melting pot of diverse ethnic nationalities and cultures.

Dariye and Jonah Jang have served as active instigators of marginalization against the Hausa/Fulani minority religious groups in their pronouncements, that identified them as being “non-indigenes,” “settlers,” and “tenants” in the State (2009:17-19). These minority groups are said to be treated as such because they are non-indigenes in the State. This is not only an issue being faced by Plateau State alone but has being identified as a national problem that calls for an amendment in the Constitution of the country as a whole (Danfulani, 2006:4-8). Ostien, quoting from the 1979 Constitution of Nigeria (2009:3-4), also blames most of the ethno-religious violence in the various States of Nigeria on the Constitutional controversy by arguing that:

The underlying problem is the Constitutional alleged rights of indigenes, meaning roughly “earliest extant occupiers” to control particular locations, as opposed to the rights of “settlers” or “strangers” or more generally “non-indigenes”, defined as everybody who came later...Religious differences is secondary, although it adds fuel to the fire when things go wrong...The Particular locations indigenes and settlers fight are the 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs) into which Nigeria is now divided...At the end, the fighting is about access to resources controlled by the federal, State, and local governments, through which 80% of Nigeria’s revenue flows. Administration of all these resources is by a system of “indigene certificates” issued by local governments, which is restricted to indigenes of a given local government.

Ostien (2009:4) attributes this to the complete failure of the Nigerian State to provide safety and support networks for its citizens based on ethnicity. The Constitutional controversy may explain why the dominant Christian community in Jos argued that:

Until the problem is given a Constitutional solution, the hospitality of the people of the State should not be abused by settlers who make outrageous and bogus claims for rights and privileges which do not exist anywhere else in the Federation (Danfulani, 2006:7).

The quarrel is that there is need for change in the Nigerian Constitution because its silence on some of the challenges being faced in the States has contributed to the development of divisive policies that the governors make by taking sides against some sectors of their residents in their States. When their political Statements are mixed with sectarian support of their own religious groups then the social environment becomes primed for violence. When political exclusion reigns against members of particular religious groups to the extent that Christian youth could demonstrate against the appointment of Muslims for political positions in the State on the grounds of alleged unethical records, then peace building is compromised by the State (Danfulani, 2006; Ambe-Uva, 2010:14-20). The negative perception that seems to exist against the Muslims in the State seems to be connected with the strategy of “keeping Muslims out” of key offices of the State in response to “getting even” with the Muslim-

dominated States in the far north and their ill-treatment of Christians (Danfulani, 2006:45-46). Stating the objective and accommodative function of the State, Hunsinger argues:

A secular authority ceases to be legitimate when it violates the freedom it ought to safe-guard and destroys justice and peace. In cases where government becomes liars, murderers, and incendiaries and wishing to usurp the place of God to fetter the conscience, to suppress the Church and become itself the Church of the Anti-Christ, active resistance is the best response (Hunsinger, 2006:364).

Similarly, Ruwa (2001:20-27) posits that:

The basic responsibility of government anywhere is the maintenance of social order, while the Church is to ensure that human rights, peace, and public morality are upheld.

The State belongs to all of its residents and its fundamental duty is to promote and protect the interest of all its citizens in a pluralist society. In view of this, the Plateau State should be seen practicing what Kuyper (2006:309) proposes for governments in pluralist societies which should practise impartiality in its support and operation of institutions. By this standard, the government should treat the religious institutions in the society impartially. Hence, if the government decides to fund any school, it should impartially fund all State-registered schools regardless of their religious heritage as long as they have met all of the other required legal standards. The State should look beyond religion because its calling transcends religious boundaries. In keeping with Barth's thought, Mbigi argues that African leaders should lead the way based on the principle of "appropriate and inclusive African *Ubuntu*" with the emphasis on human dignity and respect:

Cultivation of stakeholder inclusion and accountability, principle of stakeholder interdependence/accountability, principle of consultation/inclusion of minority opinion, principle of collective team work and service to community, principle of common participation/community spirit, principle of value creation, sharing for brotherhood of humanity, and principle of compassionate governance, creating a fair society for all without discrimination (Mbigi, 2005:197).

In view of the above, in a pluralist society such as the Plateau State, the best policy concerning religion is one of neutrality. If this principle is not translated into practise, the result will be a mockery of law which feeds violent conflict within the society. Zainah Anwar, a Muslim rights activist in Malaysia offered a depressing commentary on the crisis of governance in his country that aptly speaks to the crisis in the Plateau State:

I am beginning to feel as if this country and its rakyat (the local currency) are being crushed and pummelled by wrecking balls. The wrecking ball of race and religion, of insatiable greed, of desperation to stay in power, of never-ending sense of

entitlements, of unpunished crimes and abuses, of ideology over rational thinking, justice, and fair play.<sup>39</sup>

### 6.3. The COCIN's Policy on Church-State Relations

Being an Evangelical Church by theological tradition, the COCIN appears to have no developed theology on Church-State relations. As discussed in chapter five above, the SUM opted for a reactionary approach by encouraging its new converts to keep away from party political engagement. Consequently, the new members were not equipped with the mature political tools because the SUM did not develop any pro-active models of Church-State relations (Boer, 1984:27-30). In the post-Independence era, the COCIN Church-State policy seems to have been affected by the legacy that was bequeathed by the SUM. This means that the COCIN has failed to fashion a mature policy and theological position concerning its relationship with the State.

Over the years, the COCIN adopted two contradictory models for its relations with the State. The first model reflected a separation between Church and State (*The Light Bearer*, 1908:20-24) that evolved into a model of Church partnership with the State (1970:34-35). The dates of the two contradictory models correspond to two widely differing periods of the Church's engagement with the State, namely the colonial and post-colonial (independent) periods.

In chapter four above, an outline was presented of the interactions of the SUM and the COCIN with the colonial State in which the separation model was used to guide the relationship of the Church with the State. The colonial administrators and the SUM deliberately did no groundwork for peace-building activities among the citizens in Plateau State because of the "Great Prohibition" (Barnes 2010:442). There was no cordial relationship between the two entities that could have encouraged such an initiative. However, this situation changed dramatically after Nigerian Independence when the colonial administration and the SUM gave way to an indigenous government and to the COCIN as the succeeding Church (Gutip, 1998:24; Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:152).

When independence came, the separation model for the Church-State relations was replaced by a partnership model (Datiri, 2013) that was aimed at lessening the financial constraints faced by the COCIN after the departure of SUM (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:153). The financial

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<sup>39</sup> <<http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2015/10/support-malaysia-pm-najib-dwindles-scandal-151002085606445.html>>, [Accessed October 03, 2015].

problems faced by COCIN forced the leadership to move closer to the State, which would allow them to apply for financial support to sustain educational and health institutions. The financial predicament gave rise to a different symbiotic and critical relationship between the Church and State as argued by Goshit, *et al.*, (2013:153; *cf.* Gutip, 1998:28-30). The COCIN and the Plateau State have maintained a relationship similar to what Tsele (Boesak, 2005:169) describes in the South African context as a “cohabitation with government.” In other words, there is unhealthy relationship that does not centre on the missio-political vocation of the Church. As pointed out earlier, it was the imperative of economic needs that drew the COCIN into a closer relationship with the State. Expediency rather than critical reflection on developing a life-affirming relationship was adopted. Accordingly, one should not expect the State to take on additional financial burdens that were once the responsibility of the COCIN for simple altruistic reasons. Therefore, the State must have envisaged that some benefits would be gained by its political interest and financial support. Pertinent questions must therefore be asked. These include:

- i. Why did the State take on some of the COCIN’s financial burden?
- ii. What are the current missio-political factors that sustain this type of relationship?
- iii. What benefits accrue to the State from the COCIN that nurture and perpetuate the relationship? What about other religious institutions?
- iv. What does the COCIN-State relationship imply for peace-building in Plateau State?

Questions of this nature will guide us as we discuss what scholars have to say about the nature of the current relations between the COCIN and the Plateau State.

The Church and State are not called into a common natural, nurturing, and non-critical partnership simply because though they serve the same society. Indeed, their mandates are distinct and their partnership ought to be critical rather than nurturing a symbiotic relationship for their own mutual benefit. This argument supports Kumalo’s argument (2014:23-25) that, although the Church and State are both called to promote the wellbeing of the community, they address the problems of the community from different perspectives. In

other words, the Church-State partnership can only work if each performs its specific role in their respective efforts to promote the wellbeing of the society.

Even after the COCIN established a partnership with the State, it still demonstrated politico-phobia either because of negative experience with its colonial “Great Prohibition” heritage (Barnes, 2007:595-598, Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:160) or its Protestant-Evangelical apolitical position (Boer, 297:20). One of the past presidents of the COCIN regretted the politico-phobia<sup>40</sup> of Christians, when he seems to refer to the COCIN as follows:

In the past, the Church was lukewarm in political affairs like elections and electioneering campaigns in Nigeria. However, the ever-growing destruction of lives and property at any electioneering campaign has made the Church to be focused and interested in what the State and its statutes are doing, so as not to get more Churches burnt and more members dying or such unnecessary clashes. The Church and its leadership cannot involve [itself] in partisan politics, but it cannot shy away from politics and what happens in the political arena or the corridor of government since they affect the Church either for good or bad (Yamsat, 2011:v).

This Statement appears to suggest that had the political violence had not affected the COCIN negatively, it would have remained apolitical, maintaining its lukewarm attitude concerning the affairs of State—including, it would seem—matters of social justice and peace-building. This does not put the Church’s public functioning in a favourable light. Igboin (2012:8) emphasizes the political function of the Church in society as follows:

The Church must confront the world around the Church and interpret the fundamental symbols of its faith in light of the contemporary context. This contemporary context is feeling the impact of an emerging post-modern mind accompanied by a global future consciousness - the consciousness of a potential avalanche of disasters about to thunder down upon us. We need the faith that can face the future.

Igboin’s argument implies that an apolitical Church may not serve well the needs of society. On the basis of the above-mentioned speech by the former COCIN president, it would seem that the raft of political crises have placed the COCIN in an opportune space to develop an informed missional model of participation in politics in order to perform its *missio*-political mandate for the good of society.

A critique of the vision and mission statements of the COCIN that was developed (2012:3) is necessary in order to determine whether it is consistent with the partnership model. An

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<sup>40</sup> I use politico-phobia to refer to COCIN’s fear of political involvement. This fear seems to have been instilled in the first converts by the SUM who did everything to discourage political involvement among their converts. Jan Boer attributes this fear to the spirit of Evangelicalism (1979:26).

organization exists for a particular mission, expressed in its mission and vision statements and evidenced by its relations with other organizations in the society. One other factor that is likely to influence the relations of the COCIN and the Plateau State is its strategic position as a major Christian denomination in the State (Datiri, 2013; Bewarang, 2013). Care must be taken by dominant religious groups within society because they have, as revealed from the evolution of Church-State relations, always aligned with oppressive structures to marginalize the minorities. One could, therefore, argue that when a religious group is privileged to be strategic within a given society, it either becomes a source of sorrow or blessing to society depending on how it handles its *missio*-political vocation.

#### **6.4. The Strategic Position of the COCIN in Plateau State**

In chapter four above, I referred to the intolerance of numerically-dominant religious groupings within a religiously-pluralistic society towards other religious minorities. During the era of Bishop Ambrose (cited in Muthuraj, 2008:354) he tried to make religious orthodoxy of Christianity the dominant religion of the empire in the fourth-century and this had negative consequences on the minority religions. The State was used to oppress minority religions by the elimination of State subsidies to the minority religious groups as well as the destruction of their temples (2005:354). A similar situation appears to apply to the COCIN's strategic position in a pluralist Plateau State where the leaders of this Church tend to equate the COCIN with the State (COCIN President's Speech at Synod, 2013:4-6). For example, in his opening speech at the dinner that was organized to encourage the political elite to give funds for the construction work on its Karl Kumm University in Jos, and attended by prominent members of the federal and State governments—many of them products of the COCIN's educational institutions—the COCIN President addressed the then President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, Goodluck Ebele Azikiwe Jonathan who was a guest of honour in the following manner:

As you know Mr. President, the seat of COCIN is in Plateau State, and its patriotic people are predominantly COCIN members, thus making Plateau State synonymous with COCIN...COCIN has not only been at the doorstep of the presidential villa but right inside the villa. The name "COCIN" and what it stands for will not be strange to the Nigerian president and several State governors in Nigeria...I want to thank the governor of Plateau State, Jonah David Jang, for his support and partnership with COCIN in our endeavours, especially the Karl Kumm University project. We continue to enjoy the favour of our members in the national and State assemblies, our senior citizens, retired military and civilian, have been very helpful in advising the

Church and its leadership on issues of security of the Church and its property (COCIN President's Speech at Synod, 2013:2-6).

The COCIN President's speech as well as the audience in attendance gives an insight into the nature of the relationship between the COCIN and the State that will be further revealed in some detail in the course of this chapter. If the leader of the Church within a pluralist society could make such a claim that the Church was synonymous with the State, then it clearly demonstrates the nature of relationship between the Church and the State that is either symbiotic or competitive. His reference to the COCIN as synonymous with the Plateau State underscores his perception of the intimate nature of the extant relationship between the two institutions. The statement could also imply that the COCIN is in competition with the Plateau State government, or that the COCIN 'owns' the Plateau State. It could also mean that Plateau State 'owns' the COCIN, as the preferred religion of the State. The situation does hint at some sort of rivalry between the COCIN and the Plateau State as regards the use of power to govern the State. Even though the literature does not overtly state this, it seems to imply that the Church leader puts his religious institution on a par with the State and therefore indicates the competition for administrative power that underlies their relationship (Raiser, 2013:50-59). Pilgrim (1999:187) argues this point further, when he writes:

The Church and State live in uneasy tension. On the one hand, they can be mutually supportive of one another as long as the State fulfils its beneficent role as administrator of the common welfare. On the other hand, the Church is obligated to discern the temptations to idolatry from the State and its lack of concern for the good of the human communities it serves. The Church rejects all idolatrous claims of the State as demonic.

The implication of Pilgrim's argument is that the Church and State are critical partners, engaged in critical solidarity but keeping a distinctive distance of non-interference into each other's affairs (Boesak, 2005:168-9). There is, however, no such thing as a permanent agreement or relationship between them. Amiable relations will always depend on the direction that the State takes in dealing with issues of justice and the well-being of people within the society. This accentuates the need for the Church to express critical solidarity to promote the wellbeing of the community and to avoid a relationship that is too close and thus does not allow for objective scrutiny. From the earliest history of the development of Church and State relations, there seems to be little constructive value for the general welfare resulting from any closeness between them. Wherever an intimate relationship existed between them, this always led to compromise of their mandates resulting in endangered peace and peace-building initiatives for the common good. As a consequence, Tsele's argument is significant:



We must run away from incestuous co-habitation with government, for not to do so will be suicidal to our mission as the Church. To be in alliance with the persecuted political movement is one thing, but to become its ally in government is another...Are we useful tools...in the hands of political organizations, remembered only when needed, or do we have our own agenda? (Tsele cited in Boesak, 2005:169).

The above submission explains that there are some limits posed to the relationship between the Church and State. In one of COCIN's unpublished pamphlets, it is stated that the Plateau State government structures (e.g., executive, legislature, and judiciary) are dominated by followers of the COCIN (reports from COCIN Regional Churches, 2013:12). The literature reveals that of the 3.1 million people in Plateau State, 85.5% are Christians (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002:234) of which 60-65% are COCIN members (COCIN Vice President, 2013). The COCIN vice president confirms that 85% of the executive arm of Plateau State government is made up of COCIN members; 80% of the legislature and 83% of the judiciary belonging to the COCIN; 75% of the permanent secretaries belong to the COCIN, while COCIN followers constitute 70% of local government chairpersons and 80% of the entire body of civil servants of the State. Instead of the Church strengthening and encouraging communal power among its citizens, it is itself drawn into competition for power (Raiser, 2013:120-126). Moltmann's view of the changed nature of the Church in general is confirmed by this competition for power between the COCIN and Plateau State:

Our Churches have become bureaucratic, vertical in organization, overly clerical in identity, planned and directed from above, militating against any conditions necessary for the congregation to come of age (Moltmann, 1988:14-15).

Moltmann's position seems valid because it appears as if the Church is so fed up with being society's conscience that it wants to take over the State's power (Raiser, 2013). Such a Church it can be argued is unclear and confused about its missional identity, vocation and witness within the State if it seeks to take over the core responsibilities of the State. Instead, according to Boesak (2005:167-169), it is mandated to collaborate with, and to be a critical partner of the State.

In the partnership between the COCIN and Plateau State, the Church leaders gave the impression that its status with the society gave it the right to decide how the Plateau State should be governed. One gets the impression of a scenario in which the State takes directives from the COCIN for the day-to-day running of its political affairs and its policy decisions. It also appears as if the State leaders were comfortable with the model of the relationship

because it offered political benefits of getting the Church's support and influence (Ishaku, 2009).

The Church and State relationship that the COCIN and the Plateau State created produced an unhealthy and un-just political partnership that worked to the detriment of good governance because it unjustly diverted State resources to the COCIN without a proper transparent process of accountability that would allow other religious groups to equally apply for access to State resources.

This study argues that while it is undeniable that all non-governmental organizations (NGOs) within the society do have some relationship with the state because all of them are stakeholders in the promotion of the welfare of the society, it is not true that any form of relations tends to promote the welfare of the society. The thrust of this thesis is not denying relationship between Church or any other social institution with the State; rather it is a critique of the existing model of relationship because as the literature reveals, it has become dysfunctional and life-denying, which the researcher has termed "unjust relationship".

My argument, on the one hand, is that the existing relationship between the two entities is unjust because it has failed to include all the sectors of the society and to promote the politics of inclusion. A just relationship ought to treat all citizens as human beings who deserve to be treated as humans. Such a relationship ought to create room for all the citizens to participate in the socio-economic and political decisions that affect them. Such a relationship ought to see the Church utilizing its prophetic voice effectively to hold the State accountable to justice instead of equating itself with the State as its synonym. Such a relationship does not discriminate against some sectors of the society whether they are indigenous or settlers because the State is supposed to be father to all; while the Church's mandate is universal without ethnic or cultural boundaries.

On the other hand, Church-State relationship becomes unjust when the two, either by commission or omission, tend to co-habit in a manner that leaves other groups or minorities out in the rain. What does it imply for peaceful co-existence when one out of the many NGOs begins to equate itself with the State in a pluralistic context like Jos (COCIN President's Speech, 2013: 4-6)? Does it not mean that the evil of the State also become the evil of that NGO? Does it not mean that the particular is in conflict with the state as well as the other NGOs? How can the Church which is called to be the conscience of society become the

synonym of the State? A Church that becomes a synonym of a State also becomes an enemy of the enemies of the State.

Therefore, I argue that the existing relationship between the two entities is unjust because it resembles a Constantinian model where the Church and State collaborated and discriminated and exploited the minorities in the society under the pretext of purging the society of paganism (Boer, 1976: 109-116). This came out clearly in the literature when the Church remained silent when two consecutive governors of the State made discriminatory statements against some sectors of the society calling them “tenants” (Ostien, 2009: 14-16). The literature also reveals that the minority groups are sidelined and excluded from socio-economic and political participation in the State (Modibo, 2012: 2-6). Any Church-State relations that falls short of critical solidarity and distance constitutes what this study calls “unjust relationship” because it also falls short of carrying every citizen along towards promoting a life-giving community or society.

The paradox is that whereas the COCIN’s leaders were happy with receiving the resources of the State, they did not equally accept responsibility in sharing in the blame for the State’s failures in meeting the basic needs of the society. Therefore, if the leaders of the COCIN who represented the Church in negotiating the relationship with the government seem to view the Church as equal to the State in status and thereby fashioned a symbiotic relationship. The resulting model of Church and State relations was fashioned without wider ecumenical involvement and therefore opens the issue of using majoritarianism as an ideology to build relations within a pluralistic context, which, according to Muthuraj (2008:382), can lead to religious fanaticism and violence when it follows a Constantinian or Ambrosian model (Boer, 1976:138-140; Muthuraj, 2008:352). It further indicates a kind of power that the COCIN sought with the Plateau State and indirectly with the federal government in Abuja, which can only be based upon preferential treatment at the expense of others. Consider the further assertions of the Church leader that:

COCIN has not only been at the doorsteps of the presidential villa but right inside the villa; the name COCIN and what it stands for will not be strange to the Nigerian President and several other Nigerian State governors (COCIN President Speech, 2013:6).

This comment by the COCIN President epitomises the depth of the incestuous State and Church relationship that evolved within the Plateau State. How can the Church be synonymous with the State? This contradictory model became a recipe for future conflict

because it embodied an unjust system of allocating State benefits to a religious body at the experience of other groups within the society. Furthermore, the competitive nature of any State system for power also ensured that its political strategy would be one of seeking to control the Church for its own political objectives. This is exactly what Gifford argued against when he noted that Christianity cannot be equated with any system of government:

Christianity cannot be equated with any system of government, including democracy, but must remain critical of all social order...Christianity can exist and flourish within any political or cultural system; paradoxically, the Church has to be on its guard especially, when it exists within cultures which seem most congenial, in these, Christianity is most in danger of losing its critical and prophetic character...Christianity should not be used to give any political legitimation, on the contrary, it is part of Christian witness within the political sphere to evaluate all political systems prophetically from the perspective of the reign of God (1995:48).

In view of the above statement, one wonders whether it was the COCIN president or the Plateau State governor who was really in charge of Plateau State political matters and as such accountable to the President of the Republic of Nigeria? The scenario presented above indicates that either of them can represent the State in the presidency, given the fact that the COCIN president identified the COCIN's status as being equal to that of the State (COCIN President's Speech at Synod, 2013:2). Since the Church cannot be synonymous with the State, one may surmise that the relationship is a description of two diverging and contradicting powers. Hence, it would only be a matter of time before serious conflicts developed between the two competing powers that were unclear about their strategic identity and vocation within the society. This model of relationship reflects wider issues of dysfunctionality within the State that threatened peace building and bred various acts of violence and perceived injustice by religious and State institutional powers. In his speech, the COCIN president also expressed his appreciation for the government partnership with the Church in the execution of some of its projects:

I want to thank the Governor of Plateau State, Da Jonah David Jang, for his support and partnership with COCIN in our endeavours, especially the Karl Kumm University project. We continue to enjoy the favour of our members in the National and State Houses of Assemblies, our Senior Citizens, retired Military and Civilians have been very helpful in advising the Church and its leadership on issues of security of the Church and its property (COCIN President's Speech at Synod, 2013:3-4).

In 2010, at the time of this speech, the COCIN was in need of financial support for the establishment of the Karl Kumm University in Jos. Its dependence on government assistance for this purpose is another factor that served to consolidate the intimate relationship with not only Plateau State on this occasion but with political office holders from other States who

were COCIN members. Accordingly, the COCIN president used the fundraising dinner to praise the Hon. Yakubu Dogara, from another State:

I thank Honourable Yakubu Dogara, member representing Tafawa Balewa in Bauchi State in the National House of Representatives who has been supplying cement for the Karl Kumm University (COCIN President's Speech at Synod, 2013:3).

The COCIN's ambition to establish a university is apparently based on the perception that the public universities are not of very high academic standard because they are under-resourced. The COCIN sought resources from the State to build its own institution while the educational institutions of the State remained under-resourced. However, the COCIN has never seen this inadequacy as an opportunity to challenge the State to make public higher education and education in general a priority. Instead of addressing the failures of the Nigerian educational system it opted to establish its own tertiary institution that will require a vast amount of resources. Considering the close relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State, one might conclude that the Church is in close partnership with those who are responsible for the failure of public universities. The Church should have been aware that the resources sought for the Karl Kumm University project would be diverted from government funds that should have been used to raise the standard of public universities.

The Church's missional identity calls for speaking out against oppressive structures and not to retreat into pietism and empire-building where there is no place for the poor (Bosch, 2011:90). According to the former President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania:

The Church should accept that the development of people means rebellion...unless we participate actively in the rebellion against those structures and economic organizations which condemn men/women to poverty, humiliation, and degradation, then the Church will become irrelevant to man (Nyerere 1970, cited in Hastings, 1976:89).

If the Church is to be recognised in any society as the moral conscience of the society then part of its function is to oppose oppressive policies and structures. Such a rebellion does not take place in the context of disobedience to authority, but of disobedience to oppressive structures that deny citizens a life of dignity. The COCIN is not the only Church denomination in Plateau State nor is it the only religious institution.<sup>41</sup> Plateau State is not meant to benefit only one particular religious institution or one religious group but it belongs to non-religious people as well. Given that a particular religious groups dominates the society does not justify the neglect of other religious group by the State; rather it ought to bring to

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<sup>41</sup> See chapter one above.

bear the principles of the kingdom of God to promote the wellbeing of the entire citizenry. Unless the State is equally involved in similar relationships with other religious and non-religious institutions, its intimate partnership with the COCIN cannot but impact negatively on peace-building measures in the State because public resources are channelled into one direction to the detriment of others. Moltmann (1988:13-17) cautions the Church against tendencies to discriminate within society by arguing that “Christian proclamation should intervene in the real political world in a critical and liberating way, and should not be limited to the private concerns of the pious citizens” in which case Christian proclamation could lead to violence among its citizens.

Perceptions of a symbiotic relationship between the COCIN and Plateau State are strengthened by the public honouring of some State officials and politicians for making financial contributions to the Church (COCIN President’s Speech 2013:4-6). Such practises create conflict and bitterness because it leads to the suspicion that the Church, for political reasons, favours some members over others. In a pluralist society, any close relationship with the State elite by religious groups could generate unhealthy competition because the society also contains those who do not identify with any religious group. It could be argued that the strategic status of the COCIN seems to give it the privilege of co-habiting uncritically with the State. This is recognised in cases where the Church is seen benefiting from its close relationship with the State while the masses of the people languish in poverty unleashed by corruption in governance. Maluleke lamented the deep involvement of the Church in government in South Africa because it impeded the prophetic vocation of the Church:

When the Church is too involved in government, its voice would not be heard in the social landscape of the country. Priests and Theologians have “jumped ship” and become politicians, Civil Servants and Business people. So that fact of the Church that was prophetic is now in bed with government. The leadership appointment of the Church has connections with politicians so that the Church has become a training ground for politicians to use and abuse (Maluleke, 2010:150).

Maluleke is correct in his critique because where critical solidarity and distance characterize Church-State relations, the Church would not enjoy such co-habitation with the State. This argument does not mean that the Church should have nothing to do with government, but such involvement should not be one that leaves others disadvantaged or compromises its prophetic vocation.

## 6.5. Special Recognition Accorded to State Officials by the COCIN

During the dinner for top political leaders, organized by the COCIN to raise funds for its university, the COCIN executive committee, through its president, announced the decision of the Church to honour some politicians among those in attendance.<sup>42</sup> He went on to say:

We appreciate you for your support for the cause of peace and peaceful co-existence in northern Nigeria, even in the face of provocations from unpatriotic elements. We appreciate you for your manifest revolution and massive funding of the University. Finally, distinguished gentlemen, let me say that COCIN individually and collectively appreciates you, and look forward to a strong strategic partnership towards the development of a university where products are God-fearing, professionally sound and available for service to their mother-land...one of our key mandates has been the relationship mandate and by the grace of God we have improved on this (2013:11).

Apart from official events whereby recognition is accorded to distinguished politicians, the speeches of the COCIN president reveal that there are also occasions when the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria invites him for undisclosed functions as he testifies:

Since the last General Church Council (Synod), I have had the privilege of being in company of President Jonathan Good luck four times for one reason or the other. I thank him for recognizing COCIN and inviting me on occasions. The Nigerian presidency will not forget COCIN very easily. The security issues facing the Church generally and the North-Eastern States have been adequately presented to him and I believe that in no distant future there will be positive result for those States (COCIN President's Speech at Synod, 2013:4).

The manner in which the president presented the situation seems to almost put the Church leader in the position of "chief security officer of the State." Ordinarily, a Church leader would speak to the State security officer or governor about insecurity in society because the State is responsible for the safety of its citizens. It could amount to a breach of protocol when a Church leader usurps that responsibility while the State governor sat right beside him at the dinner. This scenario underscores the underlying conflict between the Church and the State over the use of power with the society (Raiser, 2013:120).

Another indication of the closeness of Church and State is recognised in the frequent invitation of the governor of the Plateau State to the synod of the COCIN, a scenario that

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<sup>42</sup> In his Presidential speech at Synod, (Jos, 2013:9) the COCIN president gave special recognition to some distinguished personalities among those present who had strongly identified with COCIN's efforts to establish the Karl Kumm University. Each of these was important for the COCIN as they willingly offered themselves to the service of the university and they will, according to the president, by the grace of God, continue to stand by the Church as a model university is built that will be admired by all. Specifically on behalf of the executive council, he was pleased to inform them that, for a start, five structures of the university would be named in honour of five guests present at the dinner and later other persons would be similarly honoured. This was besides sponsored and endowed facilities that would automatically be named after the involved persons, so specified or approved by the COCIN or the Governing Council of the university when it takes off.

Pochi (2013:20) refers to as an act of courtesy extended to the State leader. However, Pochi (2013) goes on to note that the governor uses such opportunities to obtain political benefits from the Church at election time because he knows that, once he is endorsed by the leadership of the COCIN, his success of being returned to office is guaranteed. The Church seems unable to distinguish between showing respect for authority and compromising its prophetic identity. Its failure to engage in missional critique of oppressive structures but quick to embrace uncritical solidarity that benefits only the Church and those that are politically connected. The Church has never been called to engage in uncritical support of the State because doing so would lead to a loss of capacity for peace-building and eventually to violence becoming the order of the day (Maluleke 2010:152; Tobias, 2003:22).

This model of partnership works against the common interest of the State because the partnership may involve diverting State resources to maintain such a partnership. One could also argue that this partnership seems to foster prophetic silence on the side of the Church. The COCIN and the Plateau State is sustained by the mutual exchange of resources and votes during election time which is a form of corruption. The Church-State partnership was so close that the outgoing president of the COCIN, in his bid to sustain the partnership, went and officially presented his successor to the Plateau State governor to ensure the continuation of the partnership (COCIN Video Coverage File, 2010). A Church that maintains critical solidarity and distance, and lives by the principles of the mission of God could not enjoy such intimacy with the State in the pluralist context of Nigeria.<sup>43</sup>

A few weeks after the official introduction of the in-coming COCIN president to the governor of Plateau State, the governor made time to pay an official visit to the COCIN president in his office in Jos to congratulate him on his nomination and election and to seek the approval of the Church leadership for a thanksgiving, wedding anniversary, and birthday service for his family in a particular congregation in his home parish (COCIN's video coverage file, 2013). The governor also used the occasion to ask the Church's permission to perform the dedication ceremony of the uncompleted parish structures at Du, pledging to sponsor the completion of the Church buildings (COCIN's Coverage File, 2013).

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<sup>43</sup> For a photograph of this introduction, see Plate 4 in the Appendix.



The governor has always sponsored the Christmas Carol services of the COCIN Headquarters Compound Church since he became governor of Plateau State in 2007 (COCIN News Letter 2007). These engagements are further proof of the involvement of the governor of the State in COCIN's activities and *vice versa*. What does the State governor have to do with commissioning religious structures? Such cohabiting relations between the COCIN and the Plateau State official would become a matter of deep concern for other Christian denominations and religions within the State that would classify such incestuous relationships as unjust and corrupting because of its potential to divert State resources for the development of one particular religious institution within the pluralist context of Plateau State.<sup>44</sup>

It should not be forgotten that the intimate relationship between the COCIN and Plateau State was originally informed by economic factors when the COCIN became unable to sustain itself.<sup>45</sup> The situation has evidently not improved because all the above interactions between the Church and the State point to economic issues surrounding the establishment of the Karl Kumm University by the Church. Even before plans for the university came up, the COCIN had depended on the State's intervention for running its educational institutions (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:153).

It could be argued that the SUM bequeathed to the COCIN a model of being Church that was non-self-financing. Its missional model was built on dependency. As its policy of financial dependence has apparently not solved the Church's economic problems one wonders whether the COCIN's sources of financial income actually do consist. The ongoing costs of running its various institutions have drained the Church to the extent that it led the COCIN into its special relationship with the State.

## **6.6. The COCIN's Sources of Financial Income**

The COCIN's Constitution (2013:18 as amended) reveals that COCIN has four main sources of financial income. The vagueness of this Constitution states: "offerings, thanksgiving, gifts and grants, devices, bequests and legacies...and any other sources as may be approved by COCIN." This spells danger for the Church because it gives no clarity in regard to what other

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<sup>44</sup> See Plate 6 in the Appendix for a photograph of the governor's visit to the COCIN leader.

<sup>45</sup> See chapter three above.

sources are approved or not approved by the Church. Vague policies usually create space for error in an organization like the Church where accountability is supposed to be a watch-word. Among the sources of income are:

- i. Weekly Sunday offerings, thanksgiving, and tithes by members.
- ii. Gifts, grants and donations.
- iii. Devices, bequests, and legacies.
- iv. Any other sources as may be approved by the Church (COCIN Constitution, 2013:18).

Although the launching of funds is not specifically mentioned as a source of income, in practice it seems to be the usual way of raising capital for the realization of projects in the Church. In fact, the establishing of funds appears to be one of the most common ways used by the COCIN to consolidate its partnership with the State and fund raising is a common occurrence in Churches as noted by Musa (2009:158). Although Musa is not specifically referring to the COCIN, his observation applies. Since the COCIN does not outline other sources that are approved or disapproved by the Church, it is difficult to know what they are. The question remains as to why those other sources are not named so that a reader of the Constitution can perhaps form an idea of the yardstick by which the suitability of a source of income can be judged.

## **6.7. Partnership in the Areas of Education, Healthcare, and Social Services**

### **6.7.1. Education**

COCIN has pioneered the establishment of educational institutions in the Plateau State after the SUM in 1934 had begun to found such institutions in Gindiri (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:138-150). The colonial government did little more than pay lip service to education (Yamsat, 2009:2-4). They were busy protecting Islam through their “Great Prohibition” policy and they

did not see the need for a Western model of education in the north of Nigeria. However, one positive outcome of the “Great Prohibition” policy for the Plateau State was education (Bakare, 2013:324). The prohibition of missionary work in Muslim areas enabled the SUM to focus on the Middle Belt, where it established educational and healthcare institutions (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:3-5). Accordingly, most of the ruling elites in the Plateau State are products of these institutions (now COCIN schools) as the COCIN president recently emphasized in his speech to Synod:

COCIN is not only proud of the educational institutions it has established and nurtured, it is proud of the quality and numbers, and spread of its products or graduates found all over the world. Surely, the roll call of accomplished professionals and first class academicians from the Gindiri institutions has constituted the inspiration to commence the establishment of a University to accommodate our teaming secondary school leavers (COCIN President’s Speech at Synod, 2013:3).

It is true that the COCIN’s educational institutions have contributed massively to the economic development of the Plateau State as they are all-embracing and holistic in their approach (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013). This is besides the fact that they were among the first schools founded in that part of the country (*The Light Bearer*, 1970:24; Gutip, 1998; Goshit, *et al.*, 2013). These institutions have also absorbed the large pool of unemployed graduate young people that would otherwise be roaming the streets because of lack of employment opportunities by the State. The State acknowledges this by giving subvention to these institutions that ordinarily does not reach the institutions (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:153-154). Educational services constitute the principal area of the partnership between the COCIN and the Plateau State. Since most of the elites in the State have passed through the COCIN educational institutions, they usually return annually for a reunion service to express their appreciation of the COCIN investment in their development (Gindiri Mission Compound Golden Jubilee, 1984:34).

At the same time, most of the ruling elites have their political constituency in areas where the COCIN institutions are present and this serves to further strengthen the Church-State partnership (Yamsat, 2009:2). The COCIN’s Department of Education is expansive, dealing with units and schools ranging from nursery schools to tertiary institutions. They are part of the body of mission schools that stand out as the best sought after educational institutions in Nigeria. It is paradoxical that, while mission schools have produced most of the elites, especially in Plateau State, these graduates have failed to advance transparency and accountability in government (Dalat, 2009:30). This may imply that the Church’s *missio-*

political mandate to the society has focussed primarily on providing social services to the society. It could therefore be argued that it is the COCIN's involvement in these services that facilitates an uncritical co-habitation between the COCIN and the Plateau State because of the fundamental need for financial resources to maintain and further develop the institutions that offer these important social services. A very important question then is whether it is possible for the Church to provide social services for the society and still hold the State accountable to social justice? The COCIN faces a missional dilemma to find a balance that allows it to engage in social services to the society without compromising its missional mandate through its partnership with the State.<sup>46</sup>

This thesis argues that the economic model of mission development by the SUM created these service institutions that were bequeathed to the COCIN. However, the financial unsustainability of the institution was not adequately assessed in their development. The SUM grew its mission through these institutions without the understanding that resources would need to come from external sources so as to sustain the work. Thus, it may have been natural for the COCIN to turn to the Plateau State for its financial support. Its institutions gave the State some of the best educated persons to administer its system of government. It is paradoxical that in the formation of these graduates for service in the public sector there are so many questions being raised about corruption among State officials and the call of the public for transparency and accountability in the handling of State resources and the need for political and economic ethic and good governance. Kumalo's testimony concerning John L. Dube applies here when he argues that:

When talking about J.L Dube, what comes to mind is one who brought a constant dialogue between religion and politics (Christianity in this case to be specific). In South Africa, he represents the genre of mission educated African elites who used both their religion and education not for their own selfish ends but for their people. These are people who were not satisfied with a religion that promised pie in the sky, and who sought an education that enabled them to get better jobs for themselves and their families. Rather, he saw religion as a tool in his hands that he could use to untangle the chains of oppression, to fight the oppressor with his own weapon (bible) which he used to rebuke the oppressor for preaching brotherhood and sisterhood while practicing racism at the same time (2012:114).

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<sup>46</sup> See Plate 7 in the Appendix for a photograph of the graduates of the COCIN Gindiri Theological Seminary, which is its highest institution for ministerial formation and theological education. The photograph depicts the first group who graduated with the Bachelor of Divinity Degree in 2004 (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:150).

Kumalo's perspective argues that those who were privileged to have passed through missionary schools ought to reciprocate by promoting social justice. This is the only way to show that they have not failed the Church and its message of peace and justice.

The Church's quest to launch a fund in order to establish a university offers no guarantees that that university will produce graduates with higher moral and ethical standards to address the social ills plaguing the society. Therefore, partnership in the area of education may not be a bad thing in itself but when the products of these institutions (both secular and theological) fail to promote social justice and peace-building, the partnership fails to engender peace building within the pluralist context.

### **6.7.2. Healthcare and Social Services**

Healthcare is another field where Church and State work together in partnership. The COCIN's contributions in this area encourages diverse interactions to take place with the State including the seconding of personnel and the supply of industrial training, funding and medicines by the State to voluntary healthcare institutions (CCDP, 2013). The COCIN's health institutions in the Plateau State include Vom Christian Hospital (VCH), established in 1920 by the SUM (Gutip, 1998:24). Vom Christian Hospital is in active collaboration with the Jos University Teaching Hospital and the Plateau State Epidemiology, Consultant Family Physicians are some of the expert services rendered in the hospital (2013:183). Goshit, *et al.*, (2013:184) regrets the current financial situation of the hospital:

While it is difficult to prevent the movement of staff from one organization to the other in a dynamic society like Nigeria, the case of Vom Christian Hospital is a bit worrisome in the sense that many of the staff leave as a result of non-payment of salaries for as long as three months. Added to this is that the salaries are low when they are compared to that of their counterparts in government hospitals. It was reported that in 2012 about 120 Staff Nurses and Doctors left their employment for that of government. However, the cheering news is there are still long serving Staff, between 17-30 years and above who, for the sake of the gospel, are still in the service of the hospital. More so, the Church has a plan to merge with the Karl Kumm University Teaching Hospital.

Consistent with its investment in many educational institutions, it appears from the above information as if the COCIN has over-expanded itself beyond its capacity to provide social services to the society. The Church had drawn close to the State at the time of its independence from Great Britain in order to secure financial aid to service its institutions

because and mission policy of Church governance had not achieved the goal of becoming financially independent. It appears therefore that the COCIN has been overreaching itself through its social services and this has affected the quality of the services that are on offer. If employees are overworked or underpaid, the staff will not stay and the hospital will become a bad example for the wider society (Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:184). This will make the Church look like an unjust and oppressive structure within society.

The following are the different healthcare institutions that the COCIN operates:

- i. COCIN Hospital and Rehabilitation Centre (CHRC) Mangu was established in 1950 by the SUM and became a fully-fledged hospital in 1976 catering for those in the region suffering from leprosy and similar skin problems.
- ii. The COCIN Community Development Programme (CCDP) in Panyam began in 1959 when the initial Faith and Farm was started by Peter Batchelor (Bachelor, 2007:234; Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:187-188).
- iii. The COCIN Rural Health Programme (CRHP) which is found in almost all the COCIN local Churches across the State was founded in 1966 to reach out to people at the grassroots level.
- iv. The COCIN AIDS Awareness and Care Programmes (CAACP) in Jos was initiated in the early 1990s to cater for those infected with HIV and AIDS in and outside of the Church (COCIN Centenary, 2004:12; Gutip, 1998:24; Goshit, *et al.*, 2013:171-172).

Although the COCIN has its qualified doctors who serve in all these healthcare institutions, it also uses government's medical personnel who offer their services on a temporary basis through the Christian Health Association of Nigeria (CHAN) which mediates between the Church and the State (CCDP Pamphlet, 2012:6). The community usually depends on the COCIN health and social services when government hospitals embark on strikes for better working conditions—which is a very common phenomenon in Nigeria. This State and Church partnership in healthcare is very constructive in that government uses the Church healthcare facilities in rural areas to serve the needs of the local people. The COCIN's

activities in the fields of education, health, and social services have therefore served to consolidate the closer relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State, but whether this relationship is all constructive is another thing. The statistics of the COCIN's healthcare and educational institutions is shown in the Figure 6.1 below:

1	Nursery/Primary Schools	97
2	Secondary Schools	30
3	District Bible Schools	10
4	Theological Seminaries	3
5	A University in progress	1
6	Agricultural Training Centre	1
7	School for the Blind	1
8	School for the Handicapped	1
9	Community Development Programme Centre	1
10	Major Hospitals	3
11	Primary Health Care Centres	25
12	Micro-finance Bank	1

**Figure 6.1.** The contribution of the COCIN in providing social services in Plateau State (Gutip, 1998:67).

Because most of these educational and healthcare institutions are located within the Plateau State, they serve to consolidate the close Church-State relations between the two institutions because of the government's grant-in-aid financial support system that is available to sustain the COCIN social services and the also because many of the political elite in the State benefit from the services of the different institutions.

### **6.8. The COCIN Pastors and the State Elite**

When the politicians go on electioneering campaigns within the State seeking votes for their election to political office it often becomes a corrupting affair between them and local pastors who mortgage their votes and support for gifts to benefit their Church and community (Danladi Musa 2009:85). Musa further posits that many pastors are in the habit of organizing

fundraising activities in these periods, even if they are not involved in any specific Church project because the general tendency is: “Give us our due now before you get lost in the offices” (2009:85). One could argue that, by analysis, when pastors target electioneering periods for accessing money from aspiring politicians, the politicians are usually willing to give them money as an investment, for by sponsoring Church projects they will garner positive dividends of voter support on election day. The consequences of this is that pastors severely weaken their moral and prophetic voice when these politicians abuse their office, and such compromised pastors become silent and fail to address the situation because of fear of being labelled a compromised subject. Another danger seems to be that the Church can be perceived by the public to be a corrupt force that leads politicians to abuse and steal public resources.

Politicians are aware that pastors command the respect of their Church members and the wider community in which they are located and that they can influence the people they should vote for. As a result, many COCIN pastors seem to have become closely allied with politicians for the wrong reasons (Musa, 2009:86). Musa (2009:86) is of the opinion that most pastors show interest in politicians only when they are seeking financial assistance for individual Church projects such as Church buildings, vehicles for evangelization tours and pilgrimages to Jerusalem, but they find it difficult to pray for these politicians or call them to order when there is need to do so. The situation has opened opportunities for politicians who are not faithful to the teachings of the Church but who attend their functions to obtain political legitimacy in the eyes of the Church’s followers. This situation also adds to the woes of the COCIN-Plateau State relations because of the COCIN’s strategic and dominant position in the State. One could infer from this that politicians who want to win elections in the State cannot do so without patronizing the COCIN pastors and members. This unethical environment has put the Church in a more favoured and preferred position in the State, but has compromised its prophetic identity, vocation and witness for justice in the pluralist context of Jos.

#### **6.9. The COCIN Leaders adopt State Language in their Functions**

In order to advertise its influential status in the State, the President of the COCIN does not appear to approve of other older mainline Churches issuing “Pastoral Concerns” or “Pastoral



Letters” to address societal concerns that affect the delivery of justice and equity. Rather like the Governor of the State, the President of the COCIN also presents a “State of the Nation” address (COCIN President’s Speeches, 2008-2013). No clear reasons are given for the changes in the use of language by the Church leaders. One can only assume it is done to affirm the leading role of the Church in the State. The common use of language with the Plateau has demonstrated how deep the Church has sunk into uncritical solidarity with the State. The Church does not have a nation to address but it speaks with confidence when a State of the nation address is delivered by its president.

#### **6.10. The COCIN Leadership Structure Compared to that of the State**

The leadership and administrative organizational structure of the Church seems to pattern itself along the lines followed by the secular State. This could explain the orientation of patterning itself to operate like an official parastatal organization. Moltmann (1988:15-16) argues that “the Church can still be in relationship with the State if its structures and politics look like that of the State.” In view of this, it is likely that if a Church develops an intense relationship with the State, the risk is high that it will seek to mirror its institutional structures on those of the State. This perception has led me to examine the leadership structure of the COCIN.

The COCIN has a very complex leadership structure and administrative protocol. The COCIN Constitution (2013:9-10) mentions the following seven levels of administrative structures:

- i. The congregational committee (cc),
- ii. The local Church council (lcc),
- iii. The regional Church council (rcc),
- iv. The provincial Church council (pcc),
- v. The executive council (ec),
- vi. The general Church council (gcc),
- vii. The board of trustees (bt).

In the headquarters of the Church are the offices of the president, the vice president and his protocol officer, the general secretary, and the deputy general secretary who form the management committee of the Church (COCIN Constitution, 2013:11-16). Other leaders at the headquarters are various directors of administration and human resource and development, education, health and social services, evangelism and Church growth, information and communication technology, finance, internal audit, and security (COCIN Policy and Conditions of Service, 2008:12-14; COCIN Constitution, 2013:11-17). All of the directors have their personal secretaries and portfolios with official stipends attached to them (COCIN General Conditions of service, 2008:16-18). The infrastructural facilities and leadership structures of a Church speaks a lot about the position of the Church in the society. They mirror a government ministry or department with similar patterns of bureaucracy. The Church even possesses an officer for security that seems to pattern a government ministry/department for national security! What is left to distinguish a Church from the State when it has similar administrative structures and policies as the State? All of these factors reinforce the perception that the COCIN functions like a quasi-state body in how it projects its identity, vocation and witness. Its organizational and physical structures resemble that of the State.<sup>47</sup> Out of the eight COCIN directors, only two are women who are also not ordained ministers. The unequal presence of female leadership in a largely female majority membership Church speaks volumes on the subject of gender justice within the Church and its missional responsibility to address the subject within the wider society. The COCIN's leadership structure seems to give priority in governance though its identification of where authority and responsibility rest within its administrative structures. Clear lines are drawn to give clarity to each area of work, just as is available within the civil service. The strength of this model also holds the possibility of its weakness. Within the government, such systems of administration are regularly accused of being impersonal and out of touch with people's felt needs. The Church can ill afford to be similarly accused of being impersonal in responding to the needs of people.

The COCIN is the only Church denomination within the State that runs its own micro-finance bank (Light Micro-finance Bank) which is open strictly to the COCIN members alone (COCIN Constitution, 2013:13-17 as amended). This investment in micro-financing by a religious body that is accessible only to its own members raises some important issues. What

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<sup>47</sup> See Plates 8 thru 14 in the Appendix for photographs of the COCIN Administrative Headquarters in Jos, Nigeria and some of its key leaders.

would have motivated the State to approve a micro-financing Church run organization to serve only its own members within a pluralist environment? Is this not discriminatory and therefore a recipe for sowing seeds for future tensions within the society? The complex top-heavy administrative and leadership structure also indicates a degree of over-institutionalization of the Church. This model of governance will absorb a lot of financial resources to maintain itself and thereby prevent sufficient financial resources from being made available to fund the development and growth of the ministry and mission of local Churches. The strong centralized structure suggests that less emphasis is placed on resourcing the Church to grow and develop as an organic body of believers whose lives are a positive influence on society (Bosch, 1983:2-3).

One could therefore conclude that the post-colonial Church-State model between the COCIN and the Plateau State has overinvested in mega structures to demonstrate the strength and power of the competing and complimentary institutions that in the opinion of this present researcher has done little to facilitate peace-building in the State. One recurring factor seems to be its adoption of a State model of governance that focuses on the maintenance of its status and power rather than the renewal of its missional engagement. The COCIN's strategic and dominant position within the State might work towards weakening its critical missional engagement in the State because of this unhealthy co-habitation.

This critique seems to suggest that the COCIN cannot have it both ways. It cannot continue to enjoy the benefits of access to State privileges and the resources of the State to subsidise its social services and at the same time exercise missional responsibilities in challenging the State in areas where it has failed the people. It is not an easy option for any Church to maintain critical solidarity and distance from the State. A Church that is favoured by the State will tend to be slow to promote social rights and justice because it runs the risk of losing State patronage. This is illustrated in the COCIN's slowness in its missional response to the Plateau State's strategy in marginalising minority groups where they are addressed as "settlers," "non-indigenes" and "tenants" even though the Constitution of the State advocates the equal treatment for all of its citizens. In view of this, one does not need to look far to know that this model of relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau is defective and may be functioning as a conduit for encouraging violence in the State. Hence, this thesis argues that the reality of violence in Jos can be linked to an uncritical relationship between the COCIN/Plateau State that seems to facilitate inequality in the disbursement of State resources. This model will need to be replaced with an alternative model as a step towards

peace-building that is aimed at encouraging both the COCIN and the Plateau State to formulate and embrace life-giving policies. Accordingly, Imo (2011:253-254) expects these two important institutions to foster the good governance of society:

Religious leaders on the one hand should teach their members who hold political power to ensure that they do not infringe on public order and the democratic rights of fellow citizens in the name of religion. Dialogue should be organized annually for representatives of religious affairs. On the other hand, the State should promote and protect those activities of religion and religious people that help to build the national cohesion and stability, and avoid any action that tends to contradict those values that constitute the basis of the legal and social structure of democracy. In effect, the State should not allow the violation of human dignity and human rights in the name of religion. When religious activities appear to conflict with human rights and the public interest and the public interest, the State ought, above all other things, to respect the democratically expressed will of its citizens.

Church-State relations must therefore be aimed at promoting the wellbeing of all its citizens.

### **6.11. Chapter Summary**

This chapter attempted to analyse the constructive contribution of the COCIN through its provision of education and healthcare facilities, which complemented the efforts of the State. In the 1970s, when the Federal Government took over most of the missionary schools, the governor of the Plateau State, being a COCIN member, prevented most of the schools from being taken over, which would have given the State an upper hand in owning mission schools. However, this action created an unjust relationship between the two institutions because it led to a situation where the COCIN dominated the State machinery through its educational institutions that produced graduates that occupied many of the State offices and therefore acted in ways to protect the Church's interest.

The Plateau State's policy on religions claims to provide a free space for all religious practices and groups within the State in accordance with the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. However, the practise of this policy seems to be contradictory. The many ways in which the Nigeria's Constitution has been interpreted by State officials has contributed to some of the death-dealing ethno-religious conflicts in Nigeria especially those issues linked to indigene/settler issues which tend to undermine a united understanding of a common citizenship. In situations where rules linked to socio-political and economic participation of citizens are used to distinguish between those classified as indigenes and

others as settlers then they serve as conduits to nurture ethnic tensions within the State. The Church's mission is called to serve all people regardless of their ethnicity and cannot follow the State in discriminating against its residents because of their ethnicity. The Church cannot obey unjust laws that inhibit peaceful co-existence and deny the fundamental human rights of the citizens. Indigene/settler discriminatory policies therefore destroy peaceful co-existence within society. Akinola's challenge to President (Muhammadu Buhari) at his inauguration stresses the need for him to work toward achieving a Nigeria that is life-giving to all sectors of its citizenry without any discrimination of ethnicity, religion, and political affiliation.<sup>48</sup>

I want a better Nigeria; a Nigeria where Christopher, Benjamin, and Suzan can live anywhere they choose unmolested; a Nigeria where Ahmodu, Mohammed and Jubril can live anywhere unmolested. I want a Nigeria that will be to me the mark of progress. I want a Nigeria that when I want my passport or to renew it, I do not have to go to the Immigration's office. I want a Nigeria in which I don't have to know anybody before I get services. A Nigeria where the system works; a Nigeria where public officials are courteous and respectful of the citizens. Can he do it? I pray he does. But it will be by actions not by utterances; it will be through concrete policy and not by propaganda.<sup>49</sup>

Unless the COCIN is able to reform itself and gain the necessary missional integrity to challenge the Nigerian government to review the controversial elements in the Constitution, that are being misused by the States then the Constitution will continue to be used to justify oppression of some of its citizens. Having constructive policies in place, and yet, being unable to translate them into practise runs the risk of making Nigeria a dysfunctional State where laws cannot be trusted to be dispensed fairly .

The COCIN's Church-State relations are influenced by two inherited and contradictory models of Church-State relations: Church-State-separation during the colonial period and Church-State-partnership during the post-Independence period. The COCIN occupies a strategic position of influence in the State that is not afforded to other religious groups. This privilege seems to work for the mutual benefit of both institutions. This unjust relationship undermines the promotion of building a just society at peace with itself. A more life-affirming relationship which is informed by a more indigenous African knowledge systems of State formation within a religious plural environment is therefore needed to address the issue. Such a model is proposed in the chapter which follows.

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<sup>48</sup> See Chapter Five, above.

<sup>49</sup> See *The Guardian*, 09 June 2015

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### TOWARDS A *Suum-Ngi* MODEL OF RELIGIONS-STATE RELATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF PEACE-BUILDING IN NIGERIA

#### 7.1. Introduction

Having examined the model of Church-State relations that exists between the COCIN and the Plateau State in the previous chapter, in this chapter I will propose a *Suum-Ngi*<sup>50</sup> model of religions-State relations that could serve as an alternative and contextual model of building a more just relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State that would be better able to facilitate effective peace-building among the residents in Jos.

A *Suum-ngi* model emphasizes the common *humanity* of all people, which means that it is relevant for all kinds of ideologies in the society.<sup>51</sup> It also serves to argue that when all religions cooperate in search of peace-building, it leads to what Galtung calls “positive peace” (1975:282-304), The Nigerian cry for peace calls for improved religions-State relations that is based on what will unite all sectors of the residents together. A *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations seems to function as a context for such relations.

The incessant violence that has overtaken the residents of Jos, Nigeria presupposes that the historical models which have emerged from the history of Western Christianity are not adequate to promote peace in Jos as some are dysfunctional and others were constructed for different contexts and respond to existential challenges of that time. The model of relations between religions (including the COCIN) and the Plateau State have, in fact, prevented peace-building among the residents of Jos and this has resulted in a decade of violence,

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<sup>50</sup> *Suum-Ngi* according to Audu Lusa (2010:2-4) is a *Kadung* ethnic group’s term which means the essence of being human. *Suum* means human being, but when the suffix *ngi* is added, it refers to essential humanity. It refers to common humanity, which is found in every human being regardless of sex, race, ethnicity, religion, culture, and social class. The common humanity emerges from humanity’s common origins, common, essence, and common destination as is found in the Kadung’s creation worldview. *Suum-Ngi* carries the feeling of community and solidarity. It serves as a sign-post for life-giving relationships across every social construct.

<sup>51</sup> Much of what is written in this chapter with regard to *Suum-Ngi* relies upon a recently-published essay I co-authored with Rev. Chammah Kaunda. See, Pokol and Kaunda (2015).

leading to the loss of thousands of lives and the destruction of a large amount of property.<sup>52</sup> The dignity and quality of human life has been sacrificed on the altar of unhealthy relations between the Church and politics. Hence, the aim of this chapter is to introduce a *Suum-Ngi* approach that is more contextual and humane and which may effectively deconstruct the existing dysfunctional model that excludes, marginalizes and discriminates against minorities in the State.

The aspects to be discussed in this chapter include the explanation of the *Kadung* creation worldview and how *Suum-Ngi* emerges from it. In addition, an explanation will be offered as to the responsibilities constructed for male and female by the worldview, and how it seems to create a space for gender inequality. In addition, the *Suum-Ngi* notion of peace will be discussed and its relevance for religion and State relations. This will be followed by a *Suum-Ngi* model of religion-State relations being suggested for the COCIN and the Plateau State. The chapter will also postulate a *Suum-Ngi* theology of peace for the COCIN in Nigeria and its relevance in peace-building. A peace-building process will be examined that includes political and economic inclusion, good governance, development, and security of life and property. Finally, an integration of the *Suum-Ngi* notion of peace in the curricula of religious training institutions will be proposed as a measure towards effective peace-building in Plateau State.

## **7.2. Definition**

*Suum-Ngi* is a compound word from the *Kadung* ethnic group in Nigeria. The prefix *Suum* refers to a human being generally regardless of sex, nationality, race, gender, class, or religious affiliation. When the affix *ngi* is added, it means humanity, the essence of being human. *Suum-Ngi* puts all human beings at the same level without any discrimination on the basis of social constructs (Lusa, 2010:13). It serves therefore in this chapter to advocate peaceful co-existence among people in religious plural and violence-prone contexts such as Nigeria and the Plateau State in particular. *Suum-Ngi* sets out to counter all those oppressive elements that encourage uncritical solidarity between religions and the Plateau State and those elements that undermine what it means to be human. Discrimination is life-denying as it disempowers, deprives, denies and dehumanizes, preventing human beings from reaching

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<sup>52</sup> See chapter one above.

their full capacity of human life and breeding violence among citizens (Kowtal in Chunakara, 2013:71).

*Suum-Ngi* is also proposed in this chapter in line with Bosch' notion of the *missio-Dei*, which he describes as the mission of God in the world, aimed at promoting well-being and peaceful co-existence in society (Bosch, 1991:114). It seeks to uphold and promote the well-being of the human society through the recognition of the common humanity that binds them together. A *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations serves to affirm that African wisdom and philosophy offers worldviews and mythologies that may constructively promote living in harmony, togetherness and peace. A *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations emerges from a creation myth or the worldview of the *Kadung* minority ethnic group in Plateau State, Nigeria. The group is located in Pankshin Local Government Area of the State. Etymologically, '*Kadung*' means a better place to settle (Lusa, 2010:12-14). Paradoxically, this demonstrates that the Plateau State communities have in their cultures what it takes to live in peace but they may not know or may not want to use them because they have been brainwashed by Western and Arab worldviews. This is why this study adopted the theology of inculturation as one of its lenses so as to call for making the Christian message relevant to the cultures of the people of the Plateau State, Nigeria.

*Suum-Ngi* locates all human individuals in a position of caring for each other. It aims to promote unity in diversity and the welfare of the community. It challenges all forms of discrimination and violence among human beings and it seeks to uphold the principles of the kingdom of God which are love, forgiveness, cooperation, equity, compassion and, because of their common heritage, the celebration of community. *Suum-Ngi* and other African wisdom tropes and philosophies may attest that peaceful living is inherent in the culture of Africans but because they have allowed in foreign social constructs many of which have been imported and forced upon them to determine how they treat each other, peaceful living has given way to life-denying violence.

In his zeal to uphold African wisdom, Oladipo (2003:343) discourages African Christians from thinking that the West delivered Christ to them "bound hand and foot" and that there existed no values in Africa—such as its communal spirit—that could help to explain the Christian message. To align with Oladipo one might argue that, unless Africans free themselves from foreign ideologies and allow Jesus to be African, Christianity will not make sense to them. The continuing treatment of Christianity as an imported commodity



contributes to life-denying policies as it makes even members of the same family take up arms against each other as a result of religious and political diversity.

Oladipo (2003:343) regards the process of Africanizing the gospel as “delivering Christ from Christianity.” He implies that the kind of Christianity that is practiced by most Africans is foreign to Christ’s ways because it feeds violence instead of peace. However, it is commendable that many African theologians are beginning to revolutionize Christian theology by bringing it back to their contexts. Deuoyo (2013:53-54) illustrates life-giving African community as *Mang-Djala* among the Cameroonians as one of these African philosophies that are constructive for healthy Religions-State relations:

Human beings are always struggling for a better life, whether in a spiritual or a material sense. From this perspective, achieving the common goal comes to be understood as living life in its entirety in the company of all those who, at any given time, are witnesses to the human story of their epoch, whether good or bad. They participate in the living experience amongst and together with others.

Of course, human beings are struggling for a better life by living together because they are gregarious by nature. Why they struggle is because they tend to forget their common humanity, lose their dignity, and destroy themselves by allowing social constructs to divide them. To appreciate the rich meaning of *Suum-Ngi* it is important to reflect on the *Kadung* mythology of creation.

### **7.3. A *Kadung* Creation Worldview**

The COCIN and the Plateau State, Christians and Muslims in the State, indigenes and settlers, and all the minority ethnic groups in Jos need to reflect and consider their common heritage as human beings for the sake of realizing a closer and more peaceful community. Community living in and of itself is an expression of what it means to be human. By adopting a *Suum-Ngi* model of Church-State relations, it builds on the above concepts by arguing that our human-ness<sup>53</sup> does not come from community-living but our desire to live in community comes from being human; sharing a common origin, common human essence and moving forward to a common destination. Responsible and meaningful community living is dependent on essential humanity or human-ness, an inherent responsible and dignified quality inherited from our Creator for all human beings. This is why any relationship model that aims

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<sup>53</sup> I here use the term ‘human-ness’ to refer to the ‘essence’ from which human beings are made while ‘humanity’ refers to the community of human beings.

to restore peaceful living must focus on humanity before community. We are human not because we live in community, but we live in community because we are human. Although other creatures such as locusts live and move together in groups, they may not possess the essential and inherent sense of responsibility toward each other that human beings exhibit by caring, protecting, forgiving, reconciling, and helping each other (Pokol and Kaunda 2015:235).

Human beings were created human before they began to live in community. It is not community-living that determines humanity. The argument is that people live in community because they are human beings and not necessarily that they are human beings because they live in community. One may not imagine human beings who find peace in living alone; even those who engage in violence against each other may still need each other when the violence ends. However, community is also inherent in humanity because it finds expression and meaning only through community. This understanding is important for Church-State relations because the citizenry ought to be treated fairly as essential human beings before any other. The fundamental truth is that whether religion or State, politics or ethnicity, these are constructed institutions that tend to interfere with the dignity of natural human beings. Church and State do not create human beings. They are just stewards of the Creator's world, which puts them at the service of humanity to promote wellness and peace.

The term 'worldview' has been defined as the complex of beliefs and attitudes of a group concerning their origins, organization, structures, nature, religion, and interaction in the universe with particular reference to human beings (Ikenga-Metuh, 1987:45-50). A worldview tries to answer questions about the origin and nature of humanity and its place in, and relationship with, the universe (Uchendu, 1965:74). Balcomb (2013:598), defines worldview as "the templates that govern the social construction of a symbolic universe or paradigms in which a certain kind of knowledge is allowed." He goes on to note that "the worldviews of a culture often constitute the essential identity of that culture." A worldview can also be understood as the expression of an ethnic group's understanding of itself in relation to its Creator, how it facilitates its corporate and harmonious existence, and how to keep it alive from generation to generation. A *Suum-Ngi* worldview serves therefore as a lens through which the *Kadung* ethnic group views humanity as an organic whole that holds human beings together regardless of what happens to them or where they belong in social status and race (Lusa, 2010:11). Originating from a common origin gives them a common

essence of being human, inherited essentially and equally by all right from creation, and being nurtured by all human beings, which prompts them to live in community. *Suum-Ngi* argues that treating humanity as a product of community negates the common essence of humanity because community is dynamic and relative. One community differs from another community; therefore, making community the basis of humanity will leave us with a relative humanity, which is not the case. Humanity is the basis of community; while community living is only an expression of being human, both can be the basis of each other because neither of them is complete without the other.

#### **7.4. *Suum-Ngi* Emerging from the Creation Worldview**

The term ‘worldview’ has been defined as “the complex of beliefs and attitudes of a group concerning their origin, organization, social structures, nature, religion, the world, and general interaction in the universe with particular reference to human beings (Ikenga-Metuh, 1987:45-50; Pokol and Kaunda, 2015:238). Balcomb (2013:598) also defines worldview as:

The templates that govern the social construction of a symbolic universe or paradigms in which a certain kind of knowledge is allowed...worldviews of a culture often constitute the essential identity of that culture.

Accordingly, this may enable them to adopt survival abilities or such worldviews that may endanger life-giving relations which then serve to infringe on their basic human rights.

The concept of *Suum-Ngi* comes from the creation worldview of the *Kadung* ethnic group in Plateau State, Nigeria. (Lusa, 2010:4). *Suum* means human being generally without any indication of male, female, indigene, settler, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or atheist. It means human being in general. Being male (*Imorom*) or female (*Iyih*) is something that comes after one is already created *suum* (human) (2010: 5-6). When the suffix *ngi* is added to *suum*, it becomes *Suum-Ngi*, which means the essence of being human (2010:7). It also implies that *Suum-Ngi*, the essence of being human, is what counts, not *imorom* (male) or *iyih* (female) because these are mere social constructs and manifestations of the same *suum* (human being).

The *Kadung* ethnic group believe that human beings and all other creatures originated from one wild yam plant. From this plant, they share a common origin, common essence, and are

moving forward toward a common destination (Lusa, 2010:12). This further demonstrates the inherency of community through which common ground can be found and defined. While woman and man originated from the tuber of the Yam plant, other creatures originated from its vine and leaves (2010:16). They believe that the yam grew so large that part of its tuber got exposed to the sun. The exposed part of the tuber eventually changed colour and taste and eventually metamorphosed into male and female human beings. That both of them emerged at the same time may imply that they inherently metamorphosed as a single community and not as an individual. This means that the community does not originate from the human being but is an undergirding principle of humanness. Consequently, human-ness does not exist with the community and the community does not exist without human-ness. Where there is conflict and injustice there is no human-ness; and where there is no human-ness there is no community.

The exposed part of the yam plant produced a male human being, while the covered part produced a female human being (Lusa, 2010:18). The two parts of the same yam tuber that are regarded as the origins of man and woman are also regarded as origins of strength and weakness: the male is identified by physical strength because the exposed part that produced him suffered from the heat of the sun and became stronger; while the female is identified with weakness because the part that produced her was always covered and did not suffer (2010:34). These differences do not matter because the one-ness of the yam plant and its tuber is what constitutes every reason for harmony and peaceful living among the creatures. The male and female have responsibilities that reflect their physical qualities. These distinct responsibilities are meant to facilitate their mutual relationship (2010:23).

#### **7.5. The Responsibilities of Female and Male**

Because he was deemed stronger, the male was responsible for using his strength to provide security and protection for the female. The female's responsibilities as an insider are restricted to internal and domestic functions within the home; while the male plays external roles (Lusa, 2010:50). Eventually, this mutual relationship developed into marriage between them (2010:23). This worldview is reflected in the way the *Kadung* people build their houses: the husband's room is always at the entrance of the house; while the wife's room is always right inside the compound. When a husband and wife sleep on the same bed, the husband is

always at the front to protect his wife towards the wall (2010:16). That one is there to protect the other is not to be exploited because the Creator ordained complementarity for creatures to enjoy in their relationship (Adu, 2012:22).

As man and woman continued their relationship, other creatures eventually originated from the vine and leaves of the same plant (Lusa, 2010:17). Accordingly, Lusa (2010:17) reveals that the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation is a symbiotic one because they originated from the same plant. There is, therefore, no hierarchy or precedence among human beings and other creatures because, like a chicken and an egg, it is difficult to tell which one comes first, and which one is better than the other, which also illustrates how humanness and community function (Adu, 2012:3-4). As the tuber depends on the leaves and the vine for its growth, so the vine and the leaves also depend on the tuber for survival. This network of relationship implies that there is essential harmony and mutuality in creation. Human beings and the environment share life together and rely on each other. For this ethnic group, peace is not peace until there is harmony between human beings and the physical environment (Lusa, 2010:24). There are particular forests in the land that are never tampered with because tampering with them is believed to lead to the outbreak of deadly diseases in the community (2010:34). Some diseases are also treated by bathing with water from the streams in such forests (Adu, 2012:34). This implies intimate human relations with the environment and with each other. This worldview comes close to what the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (cited in Chunakara, 2013:84) argues:

To commit a crime against the natural world is a sin. For humans to cause species to become extinct and to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation; for humans to degrade the integrity of the Earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the Earth of its natural forests, or destroying its wetlands; for humans to injure other humans with disease; for humans to contaminate the Earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life with poisonous substances: these are sins.

The physical environment is bound up with human existence and survival because they complement each other, and whatever happens to the environment affects human life (Lusa, 2010:24). A *Suum-Ngi* notion of peace, views peace as a situation where there is a proper and life-giving relationship between human beings and the physical environment. The fact that they originated from a common origin, sharing common essence, and are more forward to a common destination calls for a relationship of caring, protecting, and loving each other. The human family is expected to exhibit a more intimate relationship with each other because they originated not only from the same plant, but the same tuber (Lusa, 2010:21).

Critics may raise questions as whether this worldview favours men over women, and whether it justifies patriarchal superiority and societies. It ought to be remembered that variety is part of the beauty of creation; The Kadung's *Suum-Ngi* would regard such questions as a tendency to deny the one-ness of the yam plant and its tuber. Unless it is proved that some parts of the plant were better off than others (which is not), hierarchy has no place in creation because whatever originated from the same source carries the same essential quality and dignity. *Suum-Ngi* does not see reasons for destructive hierarchy and relationships in creation. Religion does not change humanity; indigeneity does not add to our humanity; settler-ship does not reduce our humanity; ethnicity does not reduce our humanity; political affiliation does not reduce our humanity. In fact, *Suum-Ngi* implies that it is not religions that make us human, but we are religious because we are first human; and our essential humanity has no diversity because of our common origins, common essence, and common destination (Pokol and Kaunda, 2015: 234). Our stereotypes and discriminations are our own creation.

*Suum-Ngi* emphasizes the 'one-ness' and 'same-ness' of the plant, regardless of its separate parts, as a basis for 'one-ness' and 'same-ness' among human beings and the creation (2015:239). This ought to facilitate the promotion of peaceful living across all diversities of people. The fact that the male, female, and other creatures originated from distinct parts only justifies variety and distinction in creation not differences (Lusa, 2010:19). Provided everyone plays their essential roles and respects the other's role, peace reigns. Impotent and destructive hierarchy comes in only when people use their essential quality and responsibility selfishly and disregard others. The idea is that peace-building ought to start from treating each other on the basis of our common humanity as viewed by the *Suum-Ngi* worldview. If we recognize our essential one-ness and respect that one-ness, social constructs such as religion, politics, and indigene/settler will never lead us into taking arms against each other.

Such a worldview and retrieval of culture tends to justify African patriarchal society and the exploitation of women. Care must therefore be taken otherwise instead of fostering peace-building, it may work the other way round. What happens to husbands who are protected by their wives? What about single parent-females who have their own houses, who protect them? It is even an over-statement to say that males are stronger than women. Therefore, while the *Suum-Ngi* worldview offers an important analogy for African model of Church-

State relations and theology of peace, one ought to be careful about its implications on gender issues.

Nevertheless, *Suum-Ngi* as a community building model it contributes to formulating a healthier model of religions-State relations because it emphasizes the essential one-ness of humanity based on a common humanity above what human beings have constructed for themselves. The world is characterized by life-denying conflicts and this is rooted in humanity's deviation from and denial of a common *Suum-Ngi* (*lit.*: humanity) (Adu, 2012:25). *Suum-Ngi* tends to call for the reconstruction of destructive social constructs by arguing for a return to the recognition of our common humanity. Below is a sketch of a diagram where *Suum-Ngi* as creation worldview emerges:

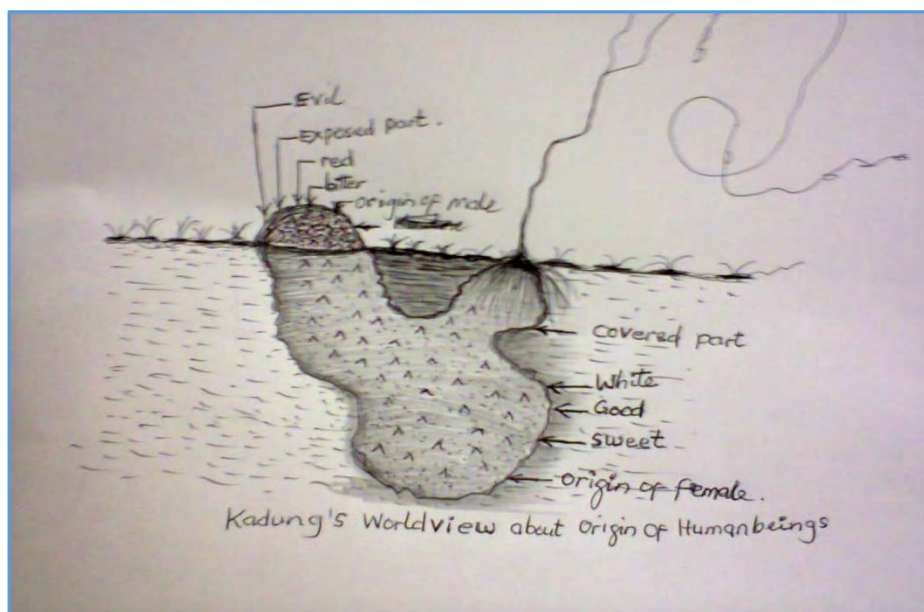


Figure 7.1. A tuber of a wild Yam: The *Kadung*'s worldview about the origin of human beings (Lusa, 2010: 20-24)

## 7.6 The *Suum-Ngi* Notion of Peace in Religions-State Relations

*Suum-Ngi* maintains that since all creation originated from the same origin, they share a common origin, common essence, and are moving towards a common destination (Lusa, 2010:20). These common grounds give creation equal standing, equal identity, and equal dignity (Adu, 2012:2). The basic implication of this is that every human being possesses a common humanity, a common origin, common identity, common dignity and equity, based on humanity or human-ness. It implies that what makes human beings what they are, is not

what they do, but what they are essentially. It also means that being a Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, or African Traditionalists does not matter because none of these can make anyone more or less human. Our basis of living in peace should therefore be our common origins, common essence, and common destination. The poor and the rich are all human; white and black people are all human; the indigenes and the settlers are all human; whatever we have chosen to be, can be changed; but our essential humanity cannot be changed or replaced. Hurting the fellow human being, therefore, means denying them humanity and hurting one-self (Lusa, 2010:26).

The concept of *Suum-Ngi* is similar to what Martin Luther King Jnr. calls the “single garment of destiny” (King Jr., cited in Chunakara, 2013:67). These profound natural and organic common grounds call for peaceful living. This notion of peace speaks volumes against social constructs that divide us. Human beings are so tied together that whatever happens to one happens to all. The statement by the first President of the Republic of Ghana (Kwame Nkrumah) demonstrates this truth about human one-ness:

The forces making for our unity far outweigh those which divide us. There is no time to waste because we are running against time in Africa. We must unite now or perish since no single African State is large or powerful enough to stand on its own...The independence of Ghana is meaningless until it is linked with the total liberation and unification of Africa (Nkrumah's poster, blog).

Although Nkrumah made this statement in a political context, it is true that there is more that unites human beings than there is that divides them. Selfishness, greed, and hatred are not primarily against social values but against a commonly shared humanity. When people take their eyes from their common origins, common essence, and common destination, they begin to value social constructs above their common natural and common origins, essence, identity and dignity (Lusa, 2010:57). This deviation seems to be the source of all conflict and violence in society. Mother Teresa (cited in Wallis, 2014:129) once remarked that “if we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other [and for each other].” *Suum-Ngi* serves as a reminder that despite what human beings have made of themselves and constructed for themselves, they still have a common ground that binds them together (Lusa, 2010:34). As a worldview that focuses on peaceful living, *Suum-Ngi* is always sung as a reconciliation poem in *Kadung* land:

Suum-ngi shan gama, ip-boh gong-gong maghi piagha wor kap mora. I-yan bbaghaka magha ko yaba sogha rami dhalla dha kap mora, I-kop diag-diag magha mu kopsora na mu dara sogha rami shembella; Adimori yighi lishem ni'm; I sha dusa bbeh, adusa shiri, a dusa kaal, a dusa yallagha, a dusa gallura, a dusa wondon; wo wari araghat,



wo kena dha araghat; ko gha wo yah a mujana, kogha wo yah dhak, suum shiri yighi didam ni'm; anak-mori ghat; adimori ghat; arama dhalla mora ghat; tom mori ghat, dhaksara mori ghat. Awamaghi dhalla miwomi sha dhak ni; nungvya nikapsana shadhak.

[Humanity is more than a joke; it is so deep that it can cover all of us; it is wide enough to provide space for each one of us; it is high enough to accommodate every one of us regardless of our different sizes. Our origin is like a chameleon; some of us are red, some as black, some are white, some are yellow, some are blue, some are green, some are mixed, but all from the same origin, and rushing to the same destination. As human race, we are like termites, coming from one mother and one father. We have the same space to occupy, common responsibilities to accomplish, and common challenges to face. What peaceful relationship cannot do for us, violent conflict and division cannot do for us either] (Lusa, 2010:60).

*Suum-Ngi* puts human beings in the same boat and at the same level. One can change religion, political association, cultural identity, and social status, but no one can change their humanity. The argument here is that if our understanding of what constitutes a neighbour does not transcend our ethnic, religious, and political boundaries, we debase our common humanity and we create a situation that will lead to life-denying crises. M. K. Gandhi (1914:438-439) argues that:

All creatures are of the same substance as all drops of water in the ocean are the same in substance. I believe that all of us, individual souls, living in this ocean of spirit are the same with one another with the closest bond among ourselves. A drop that separates soon dries up and any soul that believes itself separate from others is likely destroyed...In all situations of conflict, there is something in the opponent that can be appealed to—not only common humanity but... that of God in man...no one can be utterly and finally an enemy because no one is without that divine spark within them...people may consider themselves to be our enemies, but we should reject such a claim.

Gandhi is right because no matter how much we tend to hate one another, we cannot take them away from their Creator. Religion appears to be the worst enemy against our common humanity in this century. In a recent sermon entitled, “See if you can find a man among you,” (Scottsville Presbyterian Church Sermon, 21 June 2015), Hewitt commented that all religions are guilty of terror. He went on to argue that:

God is not the enemy of your enemies. He is not even the enemy of his enemies. When God hates all the same people that you hate, you can absolutely be certain that you have created him in your own image...All forms of dehumanization, demonizing those who differ from you, treating your neighbour as the other, and claiming that God is on your side alone...fanatical claims of absolute truth. Doubt-free, no question asked, an uncritical confidence that one understands such absolute truth absolutely...Blind obedience to totalitarian, charismatic, and authoritarian leaders or their views that undermine moral integrity [are responsible for violence].

Hewitt's perspectives constitute a paradox of the highest order when religion becomes the source robbing humanity of peace when it ought to be that which unites them. Wallis (2005:203) also expresses the unity of humanity which religion ought to promote:

Love for the neighbour is recognition of the oneness of the human race, created by God "like members of a body". It is the fraternal affection which proceeds from the regard that we have when God has joined us together and united us in one body, because he wants each of us to empty himself or herself for the neighbour, so that no one is addicted to his or her own person, but that we serve all in common. The "neighbour" extends indiscriminately to every person, because the human race is united by a sacred bond of fellowship...To make any person my neighbour, it is enough that he or she be a human being...out of this come two consequences : first, "any inequality contrary to this arrangement is nothing else than corruption of nature which proceeds from sin". Second, out of this flows the radical demand for socio-economic justice.

If the understanding of neighbour does not transcend our ethnic, religious, and political boundaries, then it debases our common human-ness and a situation is created that may threaten life itself.

### **7.7. The *Suum-Ngi* Model of Religions-State Relations**

*Suum-Ngi* serves as an alternative African model of Church-State relations because of its emphasis on the essential one-ness and unity of human beings. *Suum-Ngi* calls for accepting people without conditions and tolerating their shortcomings and sufferings under their unacceptability (Buttelli, 2015:142). It does not regard people from the viewpoint of social constructs but on the basis of who they are essentially (Lusa, 2010:24). It does not treat people based on whether they are indigenes or settlers; poor or rich, from the same political party or not, from the same religion or not, but common humanity is what counts (Adu, 2012:26). It departs from other African philosophies and wisdom tropes because it goes back radically to locate the human bond of unity in creation.

*Suum-Ngi* is a contextual worldview that is local to the COCIN and the Plateau State in Nigeria. It is not foreign, but is part of the culture of the people of Plateau State. Focusing on humanity and its essential dignity as normative ground for peaceful living, *Suum-Ngi* calls on the Church and State to treat citizens based on humanity's common origins, common essence, and common destination that are inherent in every human being. Hence, wherever and in whatever community an individual finds her/himself, his/her identity and dignity remain

unchanged because of the commonality of origin, essence and destination are constant to all humanity (Lusa, 2010:58). For the Church and State to uphold the common humanity of citizens in their relationship, Nkurunziza (2003:299-301) argues that:

There ought to be economic justice, social justice, political justice, gender justice, ethnic justice, and environmental justice because these factors are tied to what it means to be human.

Human-ness and community are undergirded by difference and not sameness. Difference is the essence of community. A *Suum-Ngi* model of Church-State relations affirms that Muslims are human before they practise Islam; Christians are human before they practise Christianity; Hindus are human before they become Hindus; African traditional Religious practitioners are human before they practise their faith, the unreligious are human before they reject religion; the common ground to all of them is humanity, which the Church-State relationship ought to utilize in treating them equally. The three conditions: common origins, common essence, and common destiny are not deposited in human beings in varying proportions; each human being has these conditions equally. Hence, *Suum-Ngi*, for the sake of common humanity, calls for a peaceful relationship based on love, compassion, kindness, forgiveness, reconciliation, tolerance, accommodation of others, service, to one another, caring for one another, and dialogue of life (Lusa, 2010:44). Discrimination against others on the basis of religion and politics is a negation of the one-ness of humanity. Religion and politics do not make humanity; it is the other way round.

A *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations re-enforces the theology of incarnation which sees the Creator coming to identify with human beings and their common humanity (John 1:1-11 NIV). The entire redemptive agenda of the Creator (*missio-Dei*) is linked to his incarnation, not only in the world, but in sharing in our common humanity (Phil. 2:5-9 NIV). The implication of the Creator's incarnation is that humanity is no longer a human essence alone, but the Creator is also involved. This further implies that the Church stands in critical solidarity and distance (Boesak, 2005:169) with the State to see that all people are accepted and treated fairly based on common humanity as the Creator would accept them without discrimination (Acts 10: 34-35; Gal. 3:26-28; Eph. 2: 11-22 NIV). Why the Christian religion exists is because the Christian message of peace and unity of human beings has to be proclaimed. What is the content of the Christian message? God himself is its content. How do we know this? In Jesus of Nazareth, God took human form, shared in our humanity, and

tabernacled with us (John 1:11 NIV). The unity of the human race undergirds a *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations.

### **7.8. Toward a *Suum-Ngi* Theology of Peace for the COCIN in Nigeria**

When the Church fails to grasp the message of peace that is just as the basis of its ministry in the world, the Church also misses the direction to implement its missio-political mandate. This also tends to affect its relations with the State. God's vision is life-centred for all people to live in fullness of life with dignity, equality and respect, regardless of class, gender, religion, political affiliation, economic status, race, indigene, settler or ethnicity (WCC, 2011:19).

The framework of social reconstruction represents an appropriate afro-centric lens through which the residents of Jos may call into question all those dysfunctional elements that deny them fullness of life within their society. Any religious group/institution that makes racism, social inequality or chauvinism central to its missional identity and vocation can scarcely expect to be taken serious when it undertakes political advocacy within civil society for justice, freedom, and peace (Hunsinger, 2006:409). Social reconstruction theory therefore requires that both the COCIN and the Plateau State cultivate policies that are life-giving to its citizens. Gifford (1998:344-346) argues that the Church must carefully monitor how power is exercised within the State, how accountable the political leadership is, how transparent decision making is, whether its Constitution is observed, what subsidies are given to organizations and how equal opportunities are for internal advancement. These are important measures that the COCIN should embrace within its life and work to determine its missional effectiveness.

While a *Suum-Ngi* model of Church-State relations is intended for the COCIN and the Plateau State, the model also applies to the entire Church in Nigeria because of the common peace challenges facing the nation. The Church has no hiding place anywhere other than engaging in the public space actively, participating in the mission of God by radically planning for a just-peace to prevail. Hendricks (2006:328-329) argues that:

When Christians sow the seed of peace and love and justice, they will grow and provide shade for all. This is the only way that the kingdom of God can transform the governments of this world—by consistent words and consistent deeds.

The entire mission of the Church ought to be viewed as liberating and reconstructing because as Kaunda (2013:558) argues:

God is on the mission in Africa in order to demonstrate God's liberating and reconciling love and consequently humanize the social order by overcoming inhumanity that human beings brought on others.

Whatever is not of peace is inhumanity to humanity. The ministry of the Church needs to transcend mere "powerful declarations" by her "powerful leaders," while their members are trooping to refugee camps for safety. For example, Ojo (2008:121) declared that:

We must not be content to chant hymns and say prayers while the crisis deepens...There must be a change of thinking and attitudes towards life and responsibility for the condition of our nation and society. The great need of Christians in Nigeria is to realize that they are responsible for the present crisis because of their indifference and inactivity when they have the mighty gospel to solve the crisis.

This declaration sounds promising but the crises have kept overwhelming the Nigerians. The Church was able to understand that the crises were attached to issues of poverty, ignorance, illiteracy, corruption, and under-development, which is attributed to transgression as Ojo (2008:121-122) has further reiterated:

However, more than the internal factors that weigh on our economy is the fact that our woes are due to our national transgression against God. For how long will these continue? It would continue, so long as the Church permits it to continue, so long as the Church remains insensitive, so long as the Church forgets she is light of the world...The Church in Nigeria is grossly delinquent on the prophetic ministry or warning and judging the nation. Rather than do this, some of us legitimize the actions of men who go and plunder the State treasury and run to us for help and prayer.

The Church also claims that:

We must realize that the present revival and move of the Holy Spirit all over Nigeria is not only for Nigeria, but God has chosen Nigeria as the base from which He is going to invade other West African countries with the gospel of liberation and deliverance...God intends that Nigeria should be the beacon of the gospel in Africa. The mantle of leadership in Africa...falls on the Church in Nigeria. It is for this reason we are little bit prosperous...For deliverance does not lie with shrewd politicians, renowned economists or learned educationists, but in the men and women, who would revert to the old but most potent strategy of evangelism (Ojo, 2008:122).

Given all these claims by religious leaders, why has peace remained elusive in Nigeria? Are these pronouncements backed with actions? Why are these plans failing to achieve peace in Nigeria? What kind of sermons are these pastors delivering from their pulpits? What space do they create for dialogue with other faiths in their pluralist contexts? Are they equipped for peace-building? Oye (2007:4) has argued that "the source of a river is better than the river itself because it determines how the river goes," the Christian and Muslim religious training

institutions need to be equipped properly with peace-oriented disciplines if religious leaders are to be more active in promoting life-giving Church-State relations.

In this chapter, I therefore advocate for the mainstreaming theology of peace (based on *Suum-Ngi*) in the curricula of all religious training institutions in the nation in general, and in the Gindiri<sup>54</sup> Theological Seminary (owned by the COCIN) and the Qur'anic schools in Plateau State.

It is not enough to have the richest pastors and loudest religious leaders in the country who claim to lead the African Continent to set the Church's missional agenda. The Nigerian masses may be tired of "powerful declarations" and promises of heaven on earth, which do not reflect on social justice and peace in the nation. Indeed, such religious leader want to sit comfortably under their own fig trees (Boesak, 2005:167-169) and live peacefully in their own houses instead of refugee camps (Okediji, 2005:48-53). Religion exists for humanity, and not for itself. It does not prophesy into its own waist-coat-pocket (Reeve, 1984:45-46). It is not of the world, and must be seen to be doing what it is meant to do.

Peace-building issues are worth giving up all other projects for until peace prevails. Other things can wait (Pokol and Kaunda, 2015:235). Unless religions-State relations are viewed through the lens of the one-ness of humanity, social constructs will continue to challenge the human society forever. A *Suum-Ngi* model of Church-State relations challenges all social constructs that seem to determine how human beings regard each other. Since social constructs place us differently from one to another, they work against the promotion of life-giving community living in our societies (Lusa, 2010:44).

In view of this, religions and the Plateau State ought to relate according to the principles of *Suum-Ngi* in such a way that all the residents in the State, regardless of religion, race, indigene, settler, political party affiliation, ethnic and cultural background, are all treated primarily as human beings, sharing a common origin, common essence, and are passing to a common destination (Adu, 2012:23). It ought to be said that a *Suum-Ngi* model calls for the promotion of the well-being of the residents and the preferential treatment for the poor and the weak in the society. It calls for compassion, justice, forgiveness, equality, love, mercy,

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<sup>54</sup> *Gindiri* is a suburb within Plateau Region of Nigeria, where the early missionaries settled in the early 1930s. Within this suburb is also a cluster of secondary schools belonging to the Church of Christ in Nations (COCIN). This old missionary compound has produced most of the elite for the State because of its long history and location within the center of Nigeria.

and common participation in the community for the benefit of all residents without discrimination because human beings are all the same.

However, the question is whether the religions of the twenty-first-century still have any moral fortitude to hold the State accountable for its patent lack of social justice and equity given the kind of power hunger and religious fundamentalism that rocks the world today. Impotent by social constructs such as religion, ethnicity, sectionalism, politics and even racism have worked against what common humanity does for the society. If our foreparents were regarded as “pagans,” or “traditionalists” could live in relative peace with one another through the principles of *Suum-Ngi*, the current sacrifice of peace on the altar of Christianity and Islam calls into question whether these “foreign religions” and their ideologies (Boer, 1984:27-18) have engaged constructively with our African culture or not. Unless we see religion as promoting life instead of sacrificing life to promote religion, we shall all perish as fools (King Jr. in Chunakara, 2013:67).

#### **7.9. *Suum-Ngi* and the Peace-Building Process in Jos, Nigeria**

Mother Teresa (cited in Wallis, 2013, 2014: 129) argues that “if we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other.” Lord Strang (cited by Gawerc, 2006:435) notes that “in a world where war is everybody’s tragedy and everybody’s nightmare, diplomacy is everybody’s business.” These quotations imply that the causes of violent conflicts in our societies are rooted in our inability to recognize our common humanity and failure to work together. Issues of political exclusion, under-development, bad governance, economic exclusion, and religious discrimination are rooted in our want to discriminate against others we think are different from us (Mwadkwon, 2001:45). The term ‘peace’ has been defined in various ways by specialists in the field. Gawerc (2011:438) notes that:

Peace as a term is contested. Colloquially, by government and the academia itself, peace is often defined negatively as the absence of war and physical violence. This is problematic, not least of which is that peace is often defined differently by different groups in a conflict.

The obvious problem with the definition of peace as the absence of war and physical violence is in its omission of structural injustice, which is also a form of violence.

In order to define peace in a broader and more positive way, Galtung (1975:282-304) differentiates between negative and positive peace by positing that:

Whereas negative peace is the absence of direct violence (people being killed), positive peace also includes absence of structural violence (people dying as a result of poverty) and cultural violence (factors that blind people to injustice or allow them to rationalize it).

Hence, while “the negative peace of order and the cessation of direct violence” may not be compatible with justice, “the positive peace of reconciliation and psycho/social healing” for the most part presupposes it” (Gawerc, 2011:439). How can positive peace be realized in society? What does it take to achieve the absence of direct violence and war inter-personally and in the structures of society? Could positive peace be achieved within a short time? What are the processes involved in working for positive peace? Such peace as a positive must involve a long-term planning; hence, we turn to peace-building. All these are important questions that deserve constructive answers.

### **7.10. Peace-Building**

Peace-building becomes a priority only where humanity is valued above their differences. It becomes optional when human life is under-valued and violence becomes a means of political achievement by the powerful. To achieve what Galtung (1995:265) calls “positive peace” requires peace-building measures that address the factors that facilitate direct violence as well as structural violence. Galtung (1995:223-265) also sets out a tripartite typology making a distinction among peace-keeping, peace-making, and peace-building. He explains that “peace-making is a negotiation process that takes place between decision-makers directed towards reaching an official settlement or resolution to specific conflicts. Peace-keeping involves third-party interventions to keep apart warring factions or groups and thereby maintain the absence of direct violence or reduce it. Peace-building involves a wide range of activities focused on the social, psychological, and economic environment at the grassroots level. From this, the aim of peace-building is to create a structure of peace that is based on justice, equity, and cooperation, thereby addressing the underlying causes of violent conflict so that it becomes less likely in the future (Gawerc, 2011:439). This means that most of what the Nigerian government is doing to restore peace in the country only amounts to peace-keeping instead of peace-building. Peace-building cannot be achieved through the use of force.



Positive peace is based on justice and equity and is an important aspect of peace-building. This is because justice may even demand that there is conflict so that positive peace may be restored. In view of this, Gawerc (2011:439) argues that it may not even be proper to stop direct or structural conflict if it is at the expense of justice. Furthermore, the best way to guarantee the durability of any agreement is to be pro-active and allow for higher participation by the conflict groups. This means that conflict itself can work in a constructive or destructive way depending on whether it leads to social justice or not (Lederach, 1997:1-30).

Peace-building ought to be pro-active and patiently pursued because it is tied to justice for all. It is not reactive to violence but is something that ought to be planned for in the budget by the State and religious groups. Peace-building focuses on the transformation of unjust social relationships and addresses the root cause of conflicts (Lederach, 1997:1-30). Peace-building envisions a world that is free of exclusion, discrimination, violence, intolerance or dehumanizing poverty, where the goods of the earth are equally shared by all and creation is cherished for future generation. It is a place where people—especially the poorest, marginalized, and oppressed—find hope and are empowered to come to the fullness of their humanity as part of the global community (Neufeldt, *et al.*, 2002:4).

The difference that peace-building brings is the emphasis on relationships. This it does through two central themes: peace-building is both relationship-centred and a participatory process. Rather than just looking at specific ways of improving food production or build new houses, peace-building focuses on relationships with partners and programme recipients as an integral part of establishing lasting peace in violence-prone areas (Lederach, 1997, 2001). Peace-building is more than just providing poor people with resources or relief materials, it includes healing relationships that have been broken (Lederach, 1997:2001).

The Plateau State, through its instrument of governance, has the responsibility of putting in place long term measures that address structural issues that concern the basic needs of its citizens. It has been argued that one of the greatest shortcomings of the contemporary peace processes is that it fails to address the bitterness (including the memories and images), and the sources that generate it (Gawerc, 2011:437). In view of this, it has also been argued that “as civilians are so deeply involved in the structures of war, they also need to participate in efforts to prevent and end wars” (2011:441). This makes peace-building more relevant for

violent conflict contexts like Jos where populations in conflict need to take part in every effort that is meant to prevent and end the violence.

Peace-making and peace-keeping will contribute less in such situations because they do not address the root causes of violence. Peace-building recognizes that without intensive grassroots activities and a strong foundation built for civil society, negotiations at the official level of employing the military to keep peace will not bring just-peace and justice (Rasmussen, 1999:37-45). The literature makes it clear that solutions must be adopted by local actors and it cannot be forced from above or imposed by the outside (Lederach, 1999:23-26). This reminds me that the deployment of the military as a Special Task Force by the Nigerian government to maintain peace is out of place because violence cannot be solved through violence. This strategy may only create negative and temporary peace because there is no provision for addressing the root causes of the violence.

Peace-building is required because positive and lasting peace must address the underlying causes by involving the top, the middle, and the grassroots in finding lasting solutions to violence (Gawerc, 2011:441). Peace cannot be imposed from the outside, for the actors in violent conflicts need more than orders to lay down their arms. Instead, they need structures that restore their trust and acceptance of one another. Accordingly, Kelman suggests that:

For a positive peace in an area [like Jos] that has a long history of war, there needs to be amongst the communities, mutual acceptance, cooperative interaction, a feeling of security, space for human dignity, the institutionalization of a mechanism for problem solving, and finally, broad reconciliation (Kelman, 1999 cited in Gawerc, 2011:442).

Marshall and Gurr (2005:77-79) also suggest that “for the peace-building process to be sustainable for more than a short interlude, relief, recovery, reconciliation, and social and economic development must be integrated into the actual settlement.” In view of the importance of grassroots development as an important aspect of peace-building in the Plateau State, a *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations demands that a number of factors need to be addressed by religions-State relations so as to restore peace in the violent context of Jos.

Where a *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations is observed as a model of relationship, political exclusion will give way to political inclusion. Political inclusion means that every person has access or a voice in the political running of their lives, the decisions that affect them and their welfare. The central message of *Suum-Ngi* is the common humanity of all

residents in the political community regardless of their differences. This implies that people treat each other on the basis of the “Golden Rule.”<sup>55</sup> Niebuhr (cited by Douglas 2006:412-433) believes that the problem of human nature is self-interest expressed in humanity’s desire to control and rule over others. He argues that this desire leads to selfishness in every human being, which tends to impede peaceful community living. Niebuhr also maintains that human selfishness is also exhibited by human groups because it is deeply seated in human nature, where even education and religious instruction cannot erode the selfish nature in human beings (2006:433). This selfishness also translates into human pride and collective egoism which is the source of structural injustice militating against the collective interest in society. Consequently, conflicts among human beings are not merely conflicts driven by the need to survive. The will to possess power fundamentally places human beings in conflict with each other (2006:434). Niebuhr further explained the political nature of human beings by positing that:

The conflicts between men [and women] are thus never simple conflicts between competing survival impulses. They are conflicts in which each man [and woman] or group seeks to guard its power and prestige against the peril of competing expressions of power and pride. Since the very possession of power and prestige always involves some encroachment upon the prestige and power of others, the law of love becomes necessary for community living to work (Niebuhr cited in Douglas, 2006:420).

Although Niebuhr appears to have a negative perception of human nature, his realistic position holds true for human nature. When we know what human nature is—particularly as it applies to the desire to control or exercise power—we come to realize that denying other people political participation is tantamount to denying them their humanity. The desire for power is connected to self-identity, which is deeply seated in all individuals and groups, finding its fulfilment in socio-political and economic participation. Anthony (cited in Pellauer, 2006:328-348) has argued that to deny people their right to vote, (and by implication, accessing the means of survival and identity), is to reduce them to the level of a slave. Niebuhr’s position on human nature ought to enable us know that what we value as individuals is the same with what others are entitled to, which is the message of *Suum-Ngi* (Lusa, 2010: 4-6; Adu, 2012:7), *Ubuntu*, (Mbigi, 2005:69), *MangDjala* (Deuoyo, 2014), and *Ujamaa* (Oladipo, 2003) all of which are models of religions-State relations. Accordingly, as Martin Luther King Jr. could confirm:

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<sup>55</sup> The principles of the ‘Golden Rule’ as recorded in Matthew 7:12, and seems to underlie all religions, demands that people treat each other on the basis that they would want to be treated. This is rooted in the truth that whatever is beneficial to one human being is the same with other human beings because of their common humanity.

Everyman [*Sic*] is somebody because they are children of God. When we truly believe in the sacredness of human personality, we won't exploit people, we won't trample over people with the iron feet of oppression, and we won't kill anybody (King Jr., cited in Jackson 2006:454).

King Jr., further wonders:

If all persons are equal before the creator, how can they be treated as unequal before the State or the wider society? (King Jr., cited in Jackson 2006:454).

Political exclusion is, therefore, an act of injustice, described as:

Wilful blindness to the image of God in others...an immorality that treats men and women as means rather than ends, and thereby reduces them to things rather than persons (Jackson, 2006:454).

Political exclusion also leads to economic exclusion because human beings need both in order to live fulfilled life. One could argue that greed for unhealthy power and ill-gotten wealth is at the centre of all life-denying policies and the exploitation of other human beings. Indeed, until greed gives way to the promotion of the common good, socio-political and economic exclusion will keep fuelling violence.

Economic inclusion according to a *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations speaks for economic justice in the community where everyone ought to have access to the means of survival and economic satisfaction. In contexts such as Nigeria, where political participation is linked to economic participation (Ostien, 2009:34-36), denying people political participation also means discriminating against them economically. As Nkurunziza (2003:299) has argued:

Deep rooted conflicts can easily explode to deadly violence if the involved parties disagree on powerful factors: Identity and unequal distribution or sharing of the economic, social and political resources within a given society.

Disputes over access to and ownership of territory, material, economic and natural resources are some of the dominant sources of conflicts in Nigeria (Igboin, 2012:16-17). Resource-based conflicts are bound to increase as a result of the growth in population and environmental degradation and the potential crisis because of food security, loss of land fertility and increased land segmentation due to high population (Nkurunziza, 2003:299-300). What Nkurunziza postulates may not necessarily be as a result of a literal resource scarcity, but the methods of sharing the resources, where because of greed, some people fail to treat

others as human beings by discriminating against them as “settlers,”<sup>56</sup> thereby creating artificial resource scarcity and poverty in society.

Access to economic power in Nigeria is constitutionally designed in such a way that the Federal Government allocates money to its citizens through the State and local governments (Ostien, 2009:34). This means that those who are in charge of these structures have direct access to the resources, while those who are denied political participation automatically do not access the resources. According to Mwakwun (2001:58-64) and AmbeUva (2010:44-51), why they are denied political and economic participation is because they are deemed “settlers.” The question is whether these “settlers” are recognized as human beings or not. Do they contribute to the economic development of the State? Do they pay taxes? Do they participate in building the State? If they do these things, excluding them from enjoying the benefits of Statehood amounts to injustice and by extension, denial of their essential humanity. This argument applies to all States where citizens are excluded and discriminated against because they are deemed ‘settlers.’ Yet, who is not a settler? When will the “settlers” return to their original Nation States? By the time that everyone is repatriated to their original Nation States, what kind of world will we have? Only through good governance, based on the principles of *Suum-Ngi*, can these destructive and divisive policies be turned around for the better.

Good governance according to the *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations advocates for a system of governance where every sector of the society is given fair treatment based on the political space available to them. Good governance, according to Peter, *et al.*, (1997:i-iv) argues that “good governance focuses on integrity; it is not corrupt, not unfair, transparent, and integrity feeds into efficiency and effectiveness of the entire process of governance.” The entire essence of Church-State relations is to achieve good governance, where the citizens are at the centre of administration or governance and not a target of governance. Akokpari (2004), quoting from Jeffries (1993:27) also describes good governance as “a system of administration that is democratic, efficient, and development-oriented.” However, the World Bank (1981, 1999) has argued that:

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<sup>56</sup> According to Mwakwun, 2001:58-60), as opposed to the indigenous people, settlers are those whose parents or great-grand-parents migrated to a community. Settlers are politically and economically excluded because they are said to return to their places of origin if they want socio-political and economic inclusion. This is a gross abuse of common humanity because people have constructed a condition that is valued above the common humanity that ought to bind them together in peace.

Good governance as transcending democratic set-up, frequent elections, and respect for human rights to include judicious use of resources, promotion of the private spheres as well as developing and nurturing formal and informal relations between government on the one hand and civil society, non-State entities and the international community, on the other hand

These arguments tend to imply that Church-State relations that fail to promote good governance stand in need of being reconstructed to make them functional.

The absence of good governance seems to be at the root of the violent conflict in Nigeria in general, and Jos in particular (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002:423; Danfulani, 2006:12; AmbeUva, 2010:50-51). Good governance, according to Akpokpari (2004: 243), “is a system of administration that is democratic, efficient and development-oriented.” AmbeUva (2010:51) adds the thought that, “in the absence of good governance, the ruling elite recourse to ethnic, regional, and religious appeal, thereby inflaming primordial identities of the masses.” AmbeUva further stresses that only a leadership that is transparent, accountable, and rises above primordial identities will be able to enhance the peaceful co-existence of both settlers and indigenes in Jos (2010:51).

According to Epelle (2011:110), true democratic principles remain elusive in Nigeria with Jos at the flash-point of conflict since democracy returned in 1999. Indeed, Jos has never experienced peace because of the government’s inability to provide a level-playing field for all its residents. When power is construed as an instrument of destructive coercion, governance becomes immoral and impotent. A diffusion of power is necessary to prevent oppression because it is axiomatic that a disproportion of power leads to injustice no matter how it is mitigated (Niebuhr cited in Douglas, 2006:424). The lack of good governance is responsible for the concentration of political and economic power in modern societies, which then facilitates a surge in injustice within the society, while a diffusion of power is needed to deconstruct this. Good governance:

Promotes participatory democracy, maintains human dignity, promotes cohesiveness, promotes equitable distribution of resources, promotes the rights of citizens to vote, promotes power sharing, and accommodates different opinions. Other principles of good governance include promotion of peace and unity, educating citizens about their rights, and promotion of economic participation (Ruwa, 2003:30-36).

Ruwa (2001:9) equally enumerates several other principles of good governance which one could equate with the principles of the kingdom of God, which the Church ought to encourage and promote:

Accountability, honesty, justice, trust, worthiness, diligence, integrity, responsible leadership, preferential treatment for the poor, and respect for human rights.

One could argue that these principles ought to constitute what the Church ought to use as yardsticks for holding the State accountable to social justice. Whenever the Church plays itself into the hands of the State it amounts to engaging in uncritical relations with the State. The Christian faith becomes a lived reality only when it includes a commitment to struggle for a transforming liberation of women and men in society (Ruwa, 2001:19). Bad governance however:

Denies separation of power, denies political and economic participation, promotes disunity among citizens, lacks transparency and accountability, promotes abuse of human rights, manipulates electoral processes, promotes entrenched corruption and culture of impunity, mismanages public resources, discriminates against minorities, promotes growing rate of insecurity, and unemployment among the youth (Ruwa 2001:36).

One could equally argue that once there is a denial of human dignity, it feeds bad governance. This is because human dignity ought to be the essence of governance and every form of leadership. Authority is necessary for the unity of the State or society because its role is to ensure the common good of the society. Church-State relations constitute the use of constructive authority for the provision of expected socio-economic and political expectations of the governed (Ruwa, 2001:27). It is because of the role of Church-State relations in promoting good governance, without which the use of power becomes destructive, that this study has critiqued the deathly silence of the COCIN over lack of good governance in Plateau State, Nigeria. Nkurunziza (2003:307) also argues that:

While good governance reduces levels of violent conflicts in the country, community, and organization, poor governance is a breeding ground for confrontation and armed conflicts. Where leadership or governance discriminates, it sets the society in flames.

Nkurunziza (2003:310) goes on to state:

To prevent conflicts from escalating to the level of violence, both the Church and the State leadership should be enlightened in terms of vision, creativity, and flexibility so that the emerging issues differences can be addressed in a constructive and creative manner for the benefit of all.

Good governance is therefore a pre-requisite for the creation of peace, respect for human rights, and social progress (Ruwa, 2001:8). Indeed, it takes non-sectarian parents to keep a peaceful family. Parents who regard some of their children as tenants are building a lasting platform for violence because where justice is denied, violence takes over. The situation in which political leaders champion discrimination against sections of their residents by calling

them 'settlers' creates a conflictive atmosphere and is a recipe for public violence. If leaders fail not only to protect those who are regarded as settlers, but actively participate in discriminating against them (Obasanjo cited in Ostien, 2009:17-18), one can only imagine the extent to which citizens would handle foreigners in such societies. Good governance embraces everyone including foreigners. Part of the violent conflicts in Jos, Nigeria, is confirmed to be orchestrated and fuelled by top political leaders including the governors of the State (Ostien, 2009:16-24). This situation is uncalled for because it only demonstrates the political immaturity of politicians in the art of governance. Accordingly, Samuels (2006:3) argues that:

Despite the fact that transition to democracy have been shown to be highly destabilizing and conflict prone, and that democratization without careful understanding of the pressures on the society can create conflict in itself, democratization should still be considered the best governance structure for long term conflict cessation.

This argument appears valid but when democracy is misconstrued as governance restricted to indigenes and against settlers, then democracy is on the way to losing its true meaning. Democracy is about the equality of human beings and their human rights. In the immediate post-conflict environment, the adoption of true democratic principles can assist in the resolution of the struggle for power by providing an internationally acceptable standard of who is entitled to govern. This standard is based on an open and fair competition for power, structured around the popular vote. Moreover, conflict-mediating structures and increased opportunities for participation should encourage the non-violent resolution of conflict (Samuels, 2011:3). Democracy depends on the functioning of fair and free electoral processes. However, in the Plateau State, where according to Ostien (2009:4-8), elections are always marred by manipulation, democracy becomes a smoke screen behind which the minorities are marginalized and exploited by the majority. A major challenge of governance in Nigeria lies in the ability of the State to formulate policies that will eradicate discrimination among its citizenry. This is because the violent conflicts that have engulfed the nation since independence are ethno-religious and political in nature (Egwu 2005 cited in Ostien, 2009:7).

The Nigerian State stands in need of total reconstruction in all the areas mentioned above. What Mugambi advocates for social reconstruction would take Ghani, *et al.*, (2005, 2006a, 2006b), ten features of nationhood that have to be accomplished in order to overcome State fragility and guarantee its stability. These are:



- i. Legitimate monopoly on the means of violence;
- ii. Administrative control;
- iii. Sound management of public finances;
- iv. Investment in human capital;
- v. Creation of citizenship rights and duties;
- vi. Provision of infrastructure;
- vii. Market formation;
- viii. Management of State assets;
- ix. Effective public borrowing;
- x. Maintenance of rule of law.

However, to achieve these features, a separation of power is also needed in religion. For example, when religion plays its role properly, it tends to facilitate the above principles of Statehood. Experience shows however, that attempts at State-building which ignore or oppose hybridity will encounter considerable difficulty in generating effective and legitimate outcomes. Strengthening central State institutions is unquestionably important, but if this becomes the main or only focus it threatens to further alienate local societies by rendering them passive, thereby weakening both a sense of local responsibility for overcoming problems and the local ownership of solutions (Ghani, *et al.*, 2005, 2006a, 2006b).

Discrimination on the basis of place of origin is strange to the concept of *missio-Dei*, which emphasizes responsible and caring community living (Deuoyo, 2014:64-68). It is therefore unfair and inhuman to involve all citizens in the economic contribution of society and then exclude some of them from the economic decisions that affect them on the ground, simply because they are deemed settlers (Ostien, 2009:16-18). Rapacious and imperial systems of leadership that force people into debt and dispossession of their political, economic, and human rights need to give way to a natural community. Joubert and Alfred (2007:3) describe this process as being:

Similar to an organism, and individual people and groups are its organs. The organs of a healthy organism have different tasks and functions...yet, they all belong to the same organism. When living in such an organism, people gradually stop living according to principles of comparison, competition, [and place of origin], and start living according to principles of supplementing and supporting each other...All co-workers that are solidly a part of the community are connected to the communitarian

'I' and they can therefore access survival abilities that they would not have as individuals.

Over two decades ago, Mugambi (1991:36) also stressed that:

Reconstruction is the new priority for African nations in the 1990s. The Churches and their theologians will need to respond to this new priority in relevant fashion, to facilitate this process of reconstruction. The process will require considerable efforts of reconciliation and confidence-building. It will also require reorientation and retraining.

It can thus be argued that reconstruction remains a priority for African nations in the twenty-first century as not much progress appears to have been made since the early 1990s. This theory is used to examine the COCIN's strategy to connive and collaborate with the Plateau State that compromises its missional and prophetic witness. Any form of relationship between the Church and State that contributes to the exploitation of State resources that are meant to benefit everyone need to be reconstructed. Social reconstruction serves therefore as a lens to expose the true nature of the relationship between the ecclesial and the political institutions in the Plateau State and its contribution to engendering violence among its citizenry.

Mugambi's missio-political perspectives on Church and State relations is also advocated by Hendricks (2006:325), who argues that both institutions are accountable to a higher authority that calls for people's needs to be treated as holy.<sup>57</sup> For example, within Jos, issues concerning the wellbeing of minority groups, the denial of access for settlers to the resources of the State are usually facilitated by religio-political policies that promote political exclusion and participation. Roshni (2012:293-294) argues that the social role of Christians is to love their neighbours and to promote policies that allow migrants to one day become neighbours. He advocates that migrants have to be welcomed and protected by the Church because all human beings are citizens in God's household where they have equal rights and duties. It could indeed be argued that the COCIN's relationship with the Plateau State is constructed on practising the politics of exclusion which appears to be similar to what the Muslim majority in the northern part of the country does to Christian minorities (Danfulani, 2006:18-20). Both religious institutions have put the narrow interests of their constituencies above that of the wellbeing of the society as a whole. By so-doing, they have compromised the future stability

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<sup>57</sup> According to Gwamna (2008:45), the root meaning of the word "holy" in the original Greek language means that which is set apart for godly use; anything separated, consecrated and held in respect as having a connection with divinity.

of the nation State and run the risk of unleashing uncontrollable forces that employ violence to achieve their objectives. The COCIN should therefore move beyond its self-seeking missional agenda and embrace a *missio-Dei* centred agenda that embodies a high standard of human rights towards all social groups because it is called to the ministry of reconciliation and forgiveness which is the only condition that justifies the Church being salt and light to the world (*cf.* Matt. 5:13). To break this violence breeding a religio-political system of ‘divide and rule,’ a different way of thinking is needed in Jos that can nurture peace-building.

Ostien (2009:7) is of the view that getting rid of discrimination by the government in Nigeria is impossible because everybody does it and has it. But getting rid of discrimination may be impossible only when Nigerians continue to value social constructs above their common humanity that ought to bind them together as one people. Good governance is required to change discriminatory mentalities which are life-denying. For example, one instance that seems to show the absolute absence of good governance in Jos is that of the Peace Conference after the 2004 violence, called to reconcile the warring factions and rebuild peace in Jos. In this conference—which needs to be quoted at length because of its revealing insights—only key stake-holders were invited to discuss the way forward for peaceful co-existence among the residents of Jos. The resolutions arrived at during the conference as cited by Ostien and Danfulani were:

1. The Conference discussed the problem of Jos and re-affirmed the conclusion of the 1994 Fiberesima Commission, which identified the true indigenes of Jos as Afizere, Anaguta and Berom.
2. Delegates also advised that all peoples should learn to be proud of where they come from and to associate themselves with their places of origin.
3. The Conference felt that with proper understanding of one another, integration and assimilation will ultimately come without intimidation and antagonism.
4. The 1999 Constitution recognizes that every citizen has the right to contest for any elective position...but appointive positions anchored on representation should be done within the ambits of the Federal Character principle based on indigene-ship.
5. Local Governments should only issue Indigene Certificates to indigenes of the respective Local Governments in Plateau State, as defined by the Conference.
6. Other Nigerians who may be non-indigenes in a place should be issued with Residence Certificates backed by law.
7. The Federal Government should include a definition of indigene in the Constitution...such a definition should be mindful of the minority rights as well as consistent with the Federal Character.
8. Non-indigenes should desist from making frivolous demands on issues that are not their heritage, but the exclusive preserve of the indigenes, notably traditional ruler ship and traditional rites of indigenous communities.
9. To allow for effective integration, assimilation and development, indigenes are not to discriminate against other Nigerian citizens, but should embrace them (2006:9-12; 2009:16-18).

Given the resolutions aimed to restore peace outlined above, one hardly sees where justice issues were raised.

The fact that people at the grassroots were not present to voice out the real cause(s) of the violence makes the conference less than peace-building. All the resolutions seem to continue to blame the victim(s) because the settlers still had no place in the socio-political and economic space of the State. Sale Bayero, a Fulani herdsman, is reported to have lamented the level of discrimination meted against them by the Plateau State Government during the violence:

Any society that refuses to be just and fair shall become a jungle where only jungles justice shall operate like the case of Plateau State today...So if you turn your State into a jungle State, this is what you get...we regret the unjust attitude of the State and the media for being silent when hundreds of Fulanis and their kinsmen were massacred. When our people were being killed, we cannot remember seeing Governor Jang, the Gbong Gwom<sup>58</sup> Jos, the Commissioner of Information, the members of the House of Assembly of the areas, neither did anyone say a word on our behalf...We observe with great dismay the outright taking of sides by the government (Osagie, *The Guardian* May 10 2010).

This is an indication of the absence of good governance because if this allegation is confirmed, it means that only the indigenes deserve justice while those regarded as settlers can be killed. The lack of good governance also promotes under-development, especially at the grassroots where the so-called 'settlers' constitute the majority. According to Samuels (2011:9), good governance:

Is able to build sustainable democratic institutions in peace-building. The design of the Constitution seeks both to create new democratic institutions to assure their protection in the longer term. Unless they are carefully designed and implemented, democratic institutions can ferment conflict in sharply divided societies like Nigeria. A poor governance framework will undermine the sustainability of peace. It can exacerbate the fault lines, divisions, and tensions in society; entrench conflict-generating electoral or governance models, or provide basis for contesting the government.

Democracy itself may not work if respect for human rights and human dignity is not upheld.

Development according to Oye (2007:4) is defined as a military term:

When the enemy surrounds a community in an attack, the community is said to be 'enveloped', but when the community or some third party is able to create an opening

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<sup>58</sup> *Gbong Gwom* the royal title given to the *Berom* Paramount Traditional ruler who heads all the other traditional leaders in Plateau State.

for the citizens of the community to escape the attack, the community is said to have been 'de-enveloped' from that which kept them under siege.

From this, one could conclude that development is a broad term that includes liberation, deliverance, redemption, and freeing people from all that denies them freedom and life. People at the grassroots are 'enveloped' by poverty, ignorance, injustice, oppression, and diseases of different kinds. These under-development factors keep them from realising their full potential as human beings. Accordingly, they turn to blame each other for their plight—leading to making themselves cheap recruits for violent conflicts (Nkurunziza, 2003).

Poverty enslaves because it renders people vulnerable and gullible to anything that occupies their minds and hands. Under-development and poverty at the grassroots is responsible for violent conflicts that have engulfed Plateau State over the years (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002:432). Klein and Klein (2002:27) note that:

Violent conflicts find fertile grounds in the exhaustion of renewable natural resources, stagnation of development, divergent ethnicity, and crises of power in the States.

Hungry people may be angry people because basic human needs cannot be negotiated. M. K. Gandhi is quoted by Reeve (1984:102) as saying that "to a hungry man or woman, God himself is reluctant to appear except in form of food." On the other hand, religions are responsible for ensuring that human rights, peace, and public morality are upheld. The Church has to speak when government fails to promote the common good of its citizens. The Church has to speak out against political dictatorship and all threats to civil and religious freedom and co-existence of its citizens. However, it takes a model of religions-State relations that stands where God stands and sees human beings as one to do this objectively (Boesak, 2005:169). The role of religions in the affairs of the society can best be implied from Antonio's submission that:

If a religion does not begin by undermining the bases of an unjust system, then it cannot claim any connection with the biblical concept of religion. For as the prophets and Jesus made it clear, the bible sees religion as a concrete practice of justice. Authentic acceptance of God means accepting a God who impels people to construct a more humane and fraternal world and to eradicate every trace of oppression. If one worships God who does not do that, one is worshipping a false god or idol (Antonio, 1980:2).

As the people of God, built on the values of the kingdom of God and centred on justice, peace, dignity of the human person, righteousness, truth, love, the special treatment and care of the marginalized (Ruwa, 2001:5) should be central in religions-State relations. For religions to ignore poverty and oppression, violence, injustice, and economic backwardness which causes impoverishment and depression in the society is to make themselves

meaningless (Nkrumah, 1988:44). It could as well be argued that wherever people are reduced to abject poverty, everything goes in terms of what they will do in search of survival.

The grassroots need to be developed just as the cities because there is no difference between the humanity of those at the grassroots and those in the cities. If a government becomes so divisive that it marginalizes the settlers and denies them common participation in the life of the society, despite their contribution to the State, this speaks volumes about whether the settlers may have basic necessities such as potable water, electricity, good roads and grazing land for their livestock.

This is virtually the reason why local farmers and the Fulani cattle breeders are always clashing and causing violence in Nigeria (Mwadkwon, 2001:23-43). The government needs to recognize people at the grassroots according to their occupations in a way that they pursue their vocations without trampling on each other's freedoms. Government used to keep government land reserves where cattle breeders graze their cattle, but most of these former reserves have now been turned into private farm lands while government remains silent because of their indirect support of these illegal actions. The cattle breeders are thereby left at the mercy of the farmers.

Part of the gross under-development at the grassroots includes unemployment of school leaving young people without much hope of finding a job. The machinery of governance is continuously dominated by the older folk, who keep rotating the offices even when they seem to have become too old and unproductive. The youth with all their fresh ideas and academic qualifications are roaming the streets. This pool of unemployed youth feeds selfish and aggrieved politicians with mercenaries for violence when they lose elections (Phiri, 2000:796). The unfortunate condition is decried by Mohammed Hamisu, "If government fails to engage us with something to do, *Boko Haram* will engage us" (*The Guardian*, 23 May 2014). Therefore, peace-building is focused on grassroots development. When those who are used to cause disaffection and serve as mercenaries during violence are properly engaged in meaningful occupations, they will have less attraction to violence. When they are properly educated and informed about social values that are community-based, they will love each other. Development is said to be the first line of defence for a collective security system that takes prevention seriously because it makes everyone secure; but corruption or poverty is the bane and cause of violence in many societies (Francis, 2005:7). The quality of political

leadership can be measured by the degree to which leaders are able to direct social reconstruction without destabilizing the society which he or she leads (Mugambi, 1995:13). This calls for radical resistance to greed because greed has costly consequences for the wholesome development of human communities (Hewitt, 2013:112).

Security in this context includes safety of life, property, and acceptance as human beings. When people are secure, they tend to think more deeply on those things that make sense to them and how to plan their lives. Insecurity destabilizes every initiative and creativity of people because they live under perpetual fear. Insecurity is an enemy of development because the two cannot co-exist together. The current situation in Nigeria has made its citizens live in separate settlements and operate separate markets (Muslims and Christians) (Danfulani and Fwatshak, 2002:423), a situation that does not auger well for development to flourish. Insecurity also leads to poverty and food insecurity.

In post-conflict peace-building, it is widely acknowledged that the provision of security is the *sine qua non* of peace-building, and increasingly that the building or rebuilding of public institutions is key to sustainability. However, a successful political governance transition must form the core of any post-conflict peace-building mission (Samuels, 2011:1-2). In line with Samuels's position, governance transition may also call for a constitutional review because when the constitution is controversial, it feeds discrimination and violence. The constitution may also encourage the preferential treatment of indigenes at the expense of settlers; but no successful society is successful without settlers, especially in the globalized world with millions of migrants on the move. Peace is what the world is crying for. Nothing seems to work because whenever people are insecure, everything else comes to a standstill.

This chapter also argues for the *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations to be rooted within the various religions and the Plateau State elite, as well as in religious training institutions, where religious leaders are "manufactured." Indeed a *Suum-Ngi* notion of peace needs to be mainstreamed in their curricula. When religious leaders grasp the idea of a peace based upon a *Suum-Ngi* worldview, this will permeate all sectors of the society because it will influence the political elite who wield State power and in the religious communities. The irreligious may not benefit from this but how many of them are there in society? If the majority of religious and political leaders are conscientized about the need to regard people based upon *Suum-Ngi*, then the irreligious may also be influenced positively.

### **7. 11. Integrating *Suum-Ngi* in the Curricula of Religious Training Institutions**

The *missio*-political role of religion, especially, in pluralist Nigeria, is to infuse the individual members of society in which it operates with the ideals of the Golden Rule and to challenge the political elite with the same message for the sake of peaceful co-existence (Phiri, 2000:782). Oye (2007:4) observes that “the source of a river is better than the river itself because it determines how the river goes.” In a similar way, religious training institutions are the source of religious leaders. In other words, what religious leaders say and teach in their congregations is determined by the content and methodologies they learn from their time in seminary. Training institutions have some level of responsibility to equip religious leaders for public peace-building. Consequently, mainstreaming a *Suum-Ngi* notion of peace in the curricula<sup>59</sup> may lead to life-affirming Church-State relations.

This applies to all religious groups who have formal training institutions because *Suum-Ngi* also nurtures the principles of the Golden Rule which seems to be common to all religions. For Christians and Muslims to fulfil this mandate successfully, their religious leaders ought to be well equipped with the tools for doing so. The contention is that religious groups must resist being made irrelevant by the political parties and elite that have mushroomed in religious pluralist Nigeria, and instead, focus their resources on teaching and challenging members and leaders of these organizations to integrate the Golden Rule into their political practise (Phiri, 2000:783). If the training institutions where religious leaders are raised do not provide them with adequate skills for promoting love and peace, this will be impossible. Love is said to be “the transforming ground of our life together” (Bryant, 1996:40). Love, for Gandhi, was “a potent instrument for social and collective transformation” (1996:44).

Where there is love, peace flows; religious groups have all the privileges and opportunities for promoting love and peace in Nigeria because they continue to spread rapidly in the country. This means that they can reach and influence more and more people at the grassroots

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<sup>59</sup>The term ‘curricula’ is the plural of curriculum. Fafunwa (1974: 210-211) defines curriculum as “a set of learning experiences open to learners under the guidance of schools.” He goes further to expand it to include the content of all values that a society cherishes and passes it from generation to generation. In this context, seminaries have their curricula which are the total contents of learning experiences used in equipping pastors and other lay leaders of the Church. Such curricula are expected to be holistic, covering relevant disciplines that will enable their products to actively respond and address social challenges that confront societies.



level (Phiri, 2000:796). The influence of love and peace at the grassroots is critical to promoting a just-peace because it is at this level that people are recruited for violence by political opportunists (2000:796). Churches and Mosques also have the political elite in their congregations as members. Accordingly, they ought to use such opportunities to communicate the values of peace and self-less love to those elites who are the ones that reject election results and cause violence by mobilizing grassroots people (2000:796). All these opportunities that the religious groups have to spread the message of peace will be futile if our common humanity is not given priority in our relationships.

It is pertinent to connect a balanced curriculum with self-less love because my lived experience in the seminary has helped me to understand that even when religious institutions want to mainstream courses such as Christian-Muslims relations in their curricula, students tend to avoid them because of anger. Nevertheless, such courses need to constitute ‘core courses’ and made mandatory to check this problem. Religious bodies ought to transcend “familiar love”<sup>60</sup> to concrete and sacrificial love that calls for loving the neighbour and the enemy (Matt. 5:43-48 NIV). Just-peace is implicit in *Suum-Ngi* as it calls for Church-State relations that treat people as human beings and not according to social constructs. The Church has the resources to promote a just-peace by reconstructing the curricula of its seminaries to equip pastors with the tools for promoting a just-peace.

Because most religious leaders in Nigeria are products of seminaries and Qur’anic schools (Oye, 2007:4); what they do and how they do what they do depends on these training institutions and their curricula. Some of their sermons and teachings are full of anger, hatred, vengeance, and resentment:

Enough is enough! We do not have a third cheek to turn! The Sermon on the Mount is not for this age! Mohammed was a murderer! Mohammed is an anti-Christ! While God sent His Son into the world at the moment when the Roman Empire was at the height of its glory, the Devil sent his prophet to an ignorant people with no heritage of either law or literature, to whom the Koran is easily a miracle! If you vote for a Muslim in the forthcoming elections, you have betrayed Jesus Christ and His Church (Miller cited in Barnes, 2004:65).

The same thing goes for Islamic schools where scholars are trained. A theology of peace ought to be mainstreamed in Qur’anic Schools to equip Islamic preachers with the skills of

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<sup>60</sup> I used “familiar love” in this context to refer to “professed love” which is never translated into action. This is love that is cheap and non-sacrificial. Love that is sacrificial extends to even those who may be different from us. Familiar love is hypocritical because what is professed as love is contradicted by action.

promoting a just-peace in the course of their preaching. Pronouncements such as the following are not pro-peace perspectives on life at all:

Have nothing to do with the *kafirs* (infidels) because Allah has ordained that we eliminate them or asked them to pay the required tax if they want to stay with us, to ascribe a son to *Allah* is the worst idolatry, those who oppose *Sharia Law* are infidels (Nasir, 2004:34).

What Nigerians need is to see religion as a means of promoting community living as Onabanjo (a Muslim) has argued:

I come from a part of the country where, within the same family, you have got Muslims, Christians, Pagans, and it does not mean anything. My father was from the Anglican Church, my mother a Catholic; my children are going to the Catholic Church; that is their business. But I know that we all practice religion, and we live by the principles of the Golden Rule (cited in Kukah, 1993:123).

The destructive comments from preachers of religion in the name of the Creator are signposts of an imbalanced training curriculum in the various training institutions. To rectify this situation, mainstreaming African theology of peace in the curriculum of the seminaries and Qur'anic Schools is necessary.

Integrating a *Suum-Ngi* theology of peace in the curricula of religious training institutions is aimed at equipping pastors and theologians with tools in order to be effective in engaging in the process of peace creation and conflict resolution. It is aimed at ensuring that theologians and future pastors who are trained are able to deal with the peace-challenges in their parishes and the wider society. If the Church is to fulfil its aim of being an agent of peace, unity, and reconciliation in a deeply divided Nigerian society, integrating peace theology in the curriculum of Gindiri Theological Seminary is inevitable and this is relevant and consistent with the new global challenges and needs of the global agenda. Mainstreaming a *Suum-Ngi* theology of peace in the curriculum also means radically overhauling the whole purpose, aim and content of theological education, including the methodologies and processes by which learning takes place. The impotent values and cultures of the local context need to be deconstructed and reconstructed by going beyond the mere addition or subtraction of peace-related courses on the existing curriculum to supplanting the impotent ideologies. Djomhoue (2013:642) refers to the underlying impotent ideologies as a “hidden curriculum.” The “hidden curriculum” ought to be replaced with more life-giving and pro-peace mind-sets that accommodate all people according to the values of the kingdom of God (Matt. 9:50; Rom. 14:19; 1 Cor. 7:17; Eph. 2:14; Heb. 12:14 NIV).

Mainstreaming a *Suum-Ngi* peace theology in the curriculum involves the deliberate and collective reformulation of a public policy concept of transforming the entire theological enterprise by assessing the different implications for just-peace and peace-building in society (Djomhoue, 2013:643). It offers a pluralistic approach that values diversity in religious, political, and ethnic groups—a strategy of concrete steps towards policies and programmes that give birth to something new in political, economic, and religious spheres so that diverse groups benefit from just-peace (2013:644). Mainstreaming a *Suum-Ngi* theology of peace means hatching, causing, inducing, provoking, exciting, and stimulating new thinking leading to the reformulating and reformation of theological education based on a just peace informed by an African worldview, which is both relevant and life-affirming for a pluralist Nigeria (2013:644).

The call to mainstream a *Suum-Ngi* theology of peace in the curricula of religious institutions is not only necessary but a prophetic stance. This argument is also justified by the social realities in Nigeria, which Awoniyi (2012:502-505) describes as:

The Nigerian plurality calls for African theology of peace to promote inter-religious dialogue; the desire for better interaction between the religious groups; the promotion of just peace in the country; the promotion of unity of humanity; the rise of religious extremism; the politicization of religion by politicians for political ends, and the endemic religious exclusivism, particularity, and unhealthy competition between Muslims and Christians, need to be corrected through an African model of peace that focuses on the one-ness of humanity.

Martin Luther King Jr. also describes the global woes that justify a search for peace:

Through our scientific and technological genius, we have made of this world a neighbourhood and yet we have not had the ethical commitment to make of it a brotherhood or sisterhood. But somehow, and in some way we have got to do this. We must all learn to live together as brothers and sisters or we will all perish as fools. We are tied together in a single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatsoever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until others are what they ought to be. And others can never be what they ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This is the way the universe is made; this is the way it is structured (King Jnr. cited in Chunakara, 2013:67-68).

Nigerian's need religions that are proactive in promoting peace instead of being only reactive when violence takes place. Being pro-active means that the Church radically reconstructs its ministry in such a way that it focuses on peace-building. This should be seen in every aspect of its programmes and institutions. There should be nothing within Church ministry that

excludes peace-building. It is hardly justifiable for a nation such as Nigeria, where almost everything portrays religious colouration, to be a victim of religious crises. God cannot be competed for because God cannot be owned by any religious group.

For the Church, to exercise a critical distance to the State while fulfilling its responsibility towards its citizenry inevitably means speaking out against State policies that promote discrimination and exploitation. The promotion of social justice in society constitutes the inescapable *missio*-political mandate of the Church. Boesak's theory of critical solidarity and distance is therefore relevant to the Nigerian and Jos context where oppressive policies that foster alienation and engender coercive violence are prevalent. For example, policies that give more religio-political recognition and status to indigenes than settlers function just like apartheid laws once did. Should the COCIN be found supporting such oppressive policies then it too would have seriously compromised its ministry and mission.

Nwafor (2002:106-108) emphasises that the *missio*-political responsibility of the Church in Nigeria is to make citizens more confident, more courageous and conscious of their rights and duties in order to be socially responsible, creative and useful. These duties constitute the urgent challenge of the Church in Nigeria, a country where human rights have been abused by those who hold the reins of State power. Wole Soyinka (1996) the famous Nigerian playwright and poet has reinforced the views of ordinary Nigerians when he states that the Church in Nigeria should take a stand against the exploitation and impoverishment of the common citizen.

For the Church and State to become positive agents of peace-building within Jos, in addition to an indispensable commitment to social reconstruction, they must also embrace a healthy conversational relationship of critical solidarity and distance. Likewise, in order for the Church to nurture its *missio*-political identity and witness, it should embrace a contextual theology of inculturation that can effectively appropriate a life giving praxis of the Christian message that meets the felt needs of all the people within Jos.

The central message of inculturation that makes it a relevant lens for critiquing the relationship of Church/State relations in Jos is based on the notion that when the Christian message is not rooted in the cultural context of people, it tends to enslave rather than liberate by destroying any culture that fosters peace-building. Inculturation is aimed at enhancing the

people's understanding of the liberating message of the Christianity as argued by Waliggo (cited in Hewitt, 2012:17).<sup>61</sup> Inculturation offers itself as an important lens for critiquing how the COCIN uses religion within the socio-political and economic context in her relations with the State. If the Christian gospel is truly good news, it should foster peace-building and social change. The lack of proper inculturation of the Christian gospel within the context of the people can lead to religious fundamentalism that escalates intra- and inter-religious violence within society (Jain, 2004:399).

When Church leaders fail to confront corrupt State officials, on the grounds that they may be their relatives or persons that make significant contributions to Church funds, then it implies that the church has been compromised by narrow political and economic motives. Indeed, when the Church fails to appropriate positive elements within a local culture because of a missionary legacy of prejudicial bias against cultural meaning systems that emerge from indigenous roots, then the Christian message of hope and salvation loses its capacity to go deep into the local culture. When the SUM or the COCIN welcome financial aid from the State to maintain its schools, the State came in to rescue the Church, but the Church did not realize that it was also handing over its prophetic voice with her schools to the government (Ahanotu, 1977:335-336; Igboin, 2012:4-5). As a result, the Church bought itself into an uncritical relationship with oppressive structures to the extent that its prophetic voice became severely compromised.

It is true that when religion is placed above human life, it becomes a curse and destructive to that which it is supposed to protect. Integrating peace theology in theological education and ministerial formation is pertinent because it may curtail some of the religious excesses that have overtaken the country. When the Church in Nigeria reorganizes its training institutions by integrating peace theology in the curricula, its pastors and other leaders will be better equipped to create more space for a just-peace to take root in a pluralistic Nigeria.

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<sup>61</sup> Inculturation asserts the right of all people to enjoy and develop their own culture, the right to be different and live as authentic Christians, while remaining truly themselves at the same time. It makes Christianity at home in the culture of each people, thus, reflecting its universality. It becomes a prophetic and liberating movement, which rejects colonial Christianity and proclaims the liberty of all peoples to serve God within their own basic worldview, thus, eliminating the constant danger of dualism or dichotomy in their lives (Waligo cited in Hewitt, 2012:17). When religious matters divide families to the extent of taking arms against one another and inflicting injuries or taking lives (particularly among Christians), it calls into question whether the liberating Gospel has taken root within their culture or it has come to them as a foreign divisive force to divide them.

The above argument is justified by the realities in Nigeria, which Awoniyi (2012:502-505) describes:

The Nigerian plurality calls for *Suum-Ngi* to promote inter-religious dialogue; the desire for better interaction between the religious groups; the promotion of just-peace in the country; the promotion of unity of humanity against the rise of religious extremism; the politicization of religion by politicians for political ends, and the endemic religious exclusivism, particularity, and unhealthy competition between Muslims and Christians, need to be corrected through an African model of peace that focuses on the one-ness of *humanity*.

Nigerians need religions-State relations that are not only reactive when violence takes place, but pro-active. This means that the Church needs to radically reconstruct its ministry in such a way that it focuses its attention and vision on peace-building. This should be seen in every aspect of its programmes and institutions. There should be nothing in religious affairs that excludes peace-building. It is hardly justifiable for a nation such as Nigeria, where almost everything portrays religious colouration, to be a victim of religious crises. *Suum-ngi* philosophy or world view comes close to Rastafarianism, which ought to be alluded to as a similar Afrocentric model:

### **Rastafari and black hermeneutic model**

*Suum-ngi* model of religions-state relationship, as an Afrocentric model, comes very close to yet another Afrocentric model that ought to be alluded to: Rastafari and Black Hermeneutic model. In terms of history, Rastafarianism was a religious and cultural movement that originated among the Black Jamaicans. It has its roots in the philosophy of Marcus Garvey but generally, it emerged as Black Jamaicans' reaction to Western colonialism and domination of the Blacks in the 1930s (*Encarta Premium*, 2009). However, since the early sixteenth century, the history of Jamaica has been associated successively with slavery, Christian Evangelism, colonialism and neo-colonialism, which gave rise to numerous revolutions, riots and various other forms of social unrest. Black Jamaicans have always lived in a constant state of resistance, a mentality that gave birth to, in the early thirties, a Jamaican religion (Rastafari).

### **Basic Teachings of Rastafarianism**

Marcus Masiah Garvey is believed to be the brain behind the origin and development of Rastafarianism because of his prophetic utterance concerning the Black King to be crowned in Ethiopia. Ras Tafari Makonnen was to be the Emperor of Ethiopia, who was subsequently

deified as “the living God” or the “Black God of Africa or the Black race” (*Encarta Premium*, 2009). Among the earliest Evangelists of Rastafarianism were Joseph Hibbert, Archibald Dunkley, Ferdinand Ricketts, Vernal Davis, and Leonard Howell. All of them preached and upheld the dignity and return of the oppressed Black Jamaicans to Africa, the Promised Land.

Rastafarianism takes its origins from Ethiopianism, and ancient ideological matrix, created from and around the name Ethiopia originating from Black worlds (Shepperson, 1968: 249). This was inspired by the “Ethiopian references in the bible which had a liberating promise and which, when contrasted with the indignities of the plantation bondage, showed the Black man [and woman] in a dignified and humane light (Shepperson, 1968: 249). To the Ethiopianists, “Ethiopia” had a broader meaning than the present East African country. Formally known as “Abyssinia, Ethiopia referred to Africa, the home of the Black race, where all the Blacks in diaspora and under captivity to the whites shall return (Shepperson, 1968: 249, Stewart, 1988: 280).

Ethiopianists ideology advocated the purity and greatness of Africans in reaction to white Christianity which conveyed the image of primitive, pagan, and hideous Africa (Stewart, 1988: 283). African consciousness developed and gave rise to many Pan-African preachers who were of significant importance in the early twentieth century Jamaica. Therefore, either Pan-Africanism or Ethiopianism was a dream of returning to Africa, the original land of the Black race where peace and human dignity would reign among the oppressed Blacks.

### **Similarity between *Suum-ngi* and Rastafari**

Apart from the fact that both ideologies are Afrocentric, they also look forward to a common origin: the Rastafarians look to Africa or Ethiopia while *suum-ngi* believes that all human beings are returning to their common origin; wild yams tuber (Pokol and Chammah, 2015: 7-9). In the context of this study, both ideologies advocate a return from human crises to where life-giving community is found: *Suum-ngi* proposes a return to common humanity or humanness, while Rastafari advocates a return to Africa as the Promised Land where the oppressed Blacks will be free. While *suum-ngi* regards yams tuber as creator, Rastafari regards Haile Salessie as God of the Blacks, the redeemer. *Suum-ngi* is postulated in this study as an alternative Afrocentric model of religions-state relations in search of peace-building within the violent conflict in Jos from 2001-2010. This also falls in line with how the Rastafarians

postulated Rastafarianism in search of liberation from white oppression and domination. Whether these two are ideologies or not, Mugambi has argued that in the context of liberation, the difference between ideology and theology becomes blurred (2003:62). So Garvey advocated “Look to Africa for the crowning of a Black King, he shall be the redeemer” and *Suum-ngi* advocate: “Look back to humanity, sharing common origin, common essence, and moving back to common origin”. Again, Rastafarians stress the supremacy of life because human nature is very important and should be preserved and respected and protected (Owen, 1973: 167-170, Jagessar, JPIC, and Rastafarians, 1991: 15-17). They also uphold the sanctity of nature and the environment just as *suum-ngi* which ties human life to the environment (Pokol and Chammah, 2015: 9-11).

### **Dissimilarities between *Suum-ngi* and Rastafari**

Despite their similarities, there are also dissimilarities between the models being discussed: First, while *Suum-ngi* calls for the entire human race, regardless of skin colour, to consider *humanity* as the common denominator that binds them all together and utilize it as a basis for peace-building (Pokol and Chammah, 2015: 8-9), Rastafari calls only the Black race to return to Africa, which may not be a common denominator to the entire human race. However, as Roderick Hewitt argues (2012: xx), “Rastafarianism is a response to the white domination as well as a shaper of Afrocentric identity and a counter cultural critique through its integrative use of language, religion and music”. Hewitt further argues that Rastafarianism has emerged as an indigenous response that challenges ideas about life. Instead of the European image of Christ, their message portrays the Emperor of Ethiopia, a Black man [or woman] as the true and living God who has returned to earth as the messiah (2012: xxi). Both ideologies have a lot for African Christianity to learn from.

Second, while *suum-ngi* calls for equality of humanity and equal treatment, Rastafari advocates for a shift of position where the Blacks will now take the superior place occupied by the whites. In this case, one could argue that *suum-ngi* has an all-inclusive perspective while Rastafari focuses on a local place and section of the human race. However, both of them have a place in African Christianity and the need to recognize the dignity of humanity. Whether it is in Jamaica alone or the entire human race, injustice anywhere is injustice everywhere (King Jr. cited in Pokol, 2009: 18).



## 7.12. Chapter Summary

In this chapter I postulated and argued for the adoption of a *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations. I explained that a *Suum-Ngi* worldview emerged from the *Kadung* ethnic group of Nigeria as a creation worldview. This worldview stressed the common human-ness of all human beings as the basis of peace-building and living in peace across every form of diversity that human beings have constructed for themselves. Accordingly, this model may serve as a life-giving model because of its contextual nature and emphasis on that which is common in every human being. However, there are limitations with this understanding because of the implications on gender justice that must be handled with great care because it may encourage patriarchy.

The historical models of Church-State relations arose in the history of Western Christianity and therefore seemed to have failed to foster peace-building in Plateau State, Nigeria, and therefore a more contextual model is needed. Religions and the Plateau State seem to have relations based on unjust models which have only served to facilitate discrimination against the minority groups and feeding violence among its citizens.

The main argument for postulating the *Suum-Ngi* model is that it offers a more contextual model that is common and accessible to all the communities in the Plateau State. The model calls for consideration of our common humanity, common origins, common essence, and common destination as basis of treating each other justly.

The chapter also argues that *Suum-Ngi* is related to the entire redemptive agenda of the Creator because it is linked to the incarnation of the Creator sharing in the common humanity of us all, which the Church ought to emulate and proclaim by word and action in its relations with the State. The unity of humanity ought to inform all models of Church-State relations because no single human being can survive the challenges of this world alone. Mugambi's (1995:ix) argument becomes relevant for understanding the principles of our common humanity:

It is clear that in this spaceship-earth, we ought not to behave as if anyone of us could jump out and survive alone. In this space-ship-boat-earth cruising on a perilous ocean of space, none of us ought to puncture the bottom or try to jump out—we have all to sail together. The 'us' versus 'them' syndrome is self-destructive because there is only one side for all of us to join—either mutual reconstruction or mutual destruction—the winner versus loser dichotomy is unrealistic and inappropriate in the

African situation. Africa needs winner versus winner configurations, in which all contestants participate for future reconstruction, having learnt from the error of their past involvements.

Only if people remain conscious of their essential unity as human beings can violence begin to lose its grip and give way to a just peace and the establishment of a life-giving community. Conflicts may remain but destructive violence must come to an end so that all Nigerians can live in peace.

Finally, for a *Suum-Ngi* model to be effective and more life-affirming, an integration of *Suum-Ngi* is needed in the curricula of the major religious institutions of training, where religious leaders are produced. This is aimed at equipping religious leaders with tools that are relevant for promoting a just and public peace in the Plateau State, and the nation in general. *Suum-Ngi* also serves as a context and reminder for good governance as expressed in the socio-political and economic participation of the residents. Grassroots development and security of life and property are also aspects of *Suum-Ngi* because when people are recognized as human beings, they deserve attention wherever they are. The model is also relevant to the entire Church in Nigeria because being a pluralist context, religious training institutions have a responsibility to produce pro-peace leaders to facilitate peace-building across the nation.

The chapter also alluded to Rastafari and black hermeneutic model because of its similarity and Afrocentric nature. Both ideologies call for the recognition of human dignity and respect as a means of peaceful living in the community of humanity.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### SUMMARY, RECAPITULATION AND CONCLUSION

#### 8.1. Introduction

In this concluding chapter, I will summarize the research objectives as well the method and the outcome of the research. The appropriation of a *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State relations will also be provided as well as contribution of the study to knowledge. Sign-posts for future research will also be suggested at the end.

This study has focused on Church-State relations with particular emphasis on identifying and critiquing the relationship between the COCIN and the Plateau State, Nigeria, within the context of violent conflict in Jos. The research problem that guided the study sought to identify and critique the nature of relations that existed between the COCIN and the Plateau State with the aim of assessing the extent to which it fed the experience of violence in Jos. The hypothesis that was set to be proved in the process of the research stated that:

**The violence that engulfed Jos from 2001-2010 was fed, to some extent, by an unhealthy Church-State relations between the COCIN and the Plateau State, which inhibited effective counter measures and building of peace.**

The main objective of the study sought to examine whether, and in what ways, the nature of Church-State relations that existed between the COCIN and the Plateau State facilitated or inhibited the process of peacebuilding among the residents of Jos. To fulfil these objectives, the *missio*-political factors that shaped Church-State relations in Nigeria since colonial and post-colonial periods were systematically analysed. A critical evaluation of the colonial and post-colonial natures of Church-State relations between the two entities was also undertaken.

A *missio*-political critique was utilized to interrogate the nature of relationship that exists between the COCIN and the Plateau State and to further examine how the COCIN and the Plateau State relate in implementing their mandates of God in Jos. The framework was undergirded by the theoretical lens of social reconstruction as championed by Mugambi, the

theory of critical solidarity and distance by Boesak, and the theory of Church and culture that is embodied in the theology of inculturation advocated by Hewitt. All the theories intersected and offered a tri-polar lens within the *missio*-political framework of Plateau State, through which the COCIN and Plateau State relations are examined. They argued that the missional identity and vocation of the COCIN necessitates that they practice critical solidarity with the State but must also embrace a critical distance from any life-denying policies of the State which discriminate against minorities. The Plateau State ought to cultivate the art of good governance by ensuring that its personnel and systems of administration, resource allocation and distribution are carried out fairly and justly in the pluralist context of the city of Jos, because the State is called to serve all its citizens without discrimination on the basis of religion, political affiliation, race, class, or ethnicity, indigenes, and or settlers (Hendricks, 2006:325; Ambe-Uva, 2010:51; Bayero, 2010:1).

## **8.2 Recapitulation**

The study sought to answer the key research question that guided it:

**To what extent have the colonial and post-colonial Church-State relations between COCIN and the Plateau State served to foster peace-building among the residents of Jos, Plateau State?**

In the purist form of systematic literature review method that was utilised, the relevant textual data from the ATLA Religious Database, Archival materials from the Plateau State and COCIN's archives, hand-searched published and unpublished sources were identified, reviewed, and analysed that involved a large body of literature on Church-State relations within the parameters set by the key research question. Particular emphasis was given to literature within Nigeria and the wider sub-Saharan Africa.

The review, evaluation, and analysis of the literature in general revealed interesting information concerning the different models of Church-State relations that had emerged from the development of Western Christianity. Out of the many models, ultimate focus was centred on the Greco-Roman model, Constantinian model, and the Reformation model, as strategic examples of the various models. After briefly analysing each of them, their strengths

and weaknesses were pointed out in order to identify those elements that may contribute peace and those that may not. Consistent with all of the models is that they are attractive to the political and religious elites in the society to usually oppress the poor, uninfluential, and the minority groups within society.

These three models served to examine the development of Church-State relations in Nigeria with particular emphasis on the COCIN-Plateau State relations. In mapping the early development of the colonial and missionary relations that unfolded within Nigeria's diverse cultural quilt, the instruments of divide and rule colonial policies and the policy of indirect rule in northern Nigeria, which tended to separate the northern States from the southern States based on exploiting differences linked to religion, politics, and ethnicity were identified. The colonial policies therefore sowed the seeds of division, which affected Church-State relations. Muslim and Christian communities also used their religious divisions as fertile grounds for competition for religio-political supremacy. Christian missionaries belonging to the SUM, the majority of which are focused in northern Nigeria and the Middle Belt (Barnes, 2007:593-598), were prevented by the colonial State evangelising in Muslim rule areas and this colonial restriction on missionary work among the Muslims influenced the SUM/COCIN Church-State-separation model of relations during the colonial era.

The colonial era missionary theologies also played an important role in shaping Church-State relations. The SUM, being Protestant-Evangelical by theological tradition, did not teach its converts how to participate in politics but to withdraw into their own 'safe' space of engagement. It was not until the time of Nigerian Independence from its former British colonial masters that the policy changed in order to defend the interests of the Church. This was the continuation of a reactionary response that opted for an incestuous partnership that did not reflect the constructive principles of politics within a pluralist context such as Nigeria.

The missional legacy of the SUM resulted in a financially-dependent COCIN that could not sustain its educational and healthcare institutions financially on its own without grant-in-aid support from the State. This led to the change of relations from Church-State-separation to Church-State-partnership. This model of partnership was built primarily on the need of State financial support and thereby disabled the COCIN to maintain a critical solidarity and distance from the State and to hold the State accountable to justice. By so-doing, its model of

securing financial support from the State created a relationship of co-habitation between the two institutions that was unjust to other institutions in the State.

Another important issue that emerged from the literature had to do with what could be classified as factors that suggest discriminatory behaviour and bad governance by State officials that also belong to the COCIN. Especially in a pluralist society, the government must be transparent in governance and be neutral and accommodative to all its citizens. When this is absent, then community members may resort to violent methods to obtain justice.

The State elites failed to realize that community is a natural breeding ground for trust and solidarity, which can only be destroyed through violence (Joubert and Alfred, 2007:2-3). Joubert and Alfred further argue that: “If this humus is missing, the uprooted human beings become violent” (2007:3). The sense of community is lost when leaders who are supposed to promote solidarity become participants in divisive policies that result in violence. Joubert and Alfred (2007:3) further state that:

A natural community is similar to an organism, and the individual people and groups are its organs. The organs of a healthy organism have different tasks and functions; the liver acts different from the kidney and the brain acts different from the heart, and yet they all belong to the same organism. When living in such an organism, people gradually stop living according to principles of comparison and competition, and start living according to principles of supplementing and supporting each other. The system could not work otherwise...As the organism emerges, a new mental-spiritual subject develops: the communitarian ‘I’. This ‘I’ is at a higher level order in the spiritual hierarchy of life than the individual ‘I’. The communitarian ‘I’ contains knowledge and the power of all individual ‘I’s’. All different organs that are solidly a part of the community are connected to the communitarian ‘I’ and its mental-spiritual powers, and they can therefore access survival abilities that they would not have as individuals.

The violent conflicts that erupted in Jos from 2001-2010 were linked to religio-political (Christians and Muslims) and socio-economic factors. The COCIN failed to mediate peace through dialogue of life between the warring factions in the State. Instead, the literature seems to reveal an incestuous kind of relations between the COCIN leadership and the State. The Church-State failed to include all sectors of society in life-giving policies and decisions that concern their human dignity and rights. It amounts to denial of their human-ness as well as peace-building and co-existence in society. In view of this, the two institutions that were meant to protect and promote the well-being of society became part of the problem that contributed to the destruction of life because of the uncritical and corrupting nature of the

relationship which facilitated acts of discrimination against its citizens and the marginalization of its minorities.

The development of COCIN-State relations witnessed nothing fundamentally different from those models that emerged from those developed and practiced in early Western Christianity. When Church and State relations fail to focus on promoting social justice, it feeds violence. This became evident when the Plateau State and the COCIN practised policies that resulted in the marginalization of non-indigenes; justice is then denied and violence becomes an option. In view of this, this thesis has argued that an alternative model is urgently needed which can be more contextual and relevant for the COCIN and the Plateau State. Such a model should be deeply embedded in the cultural context of the people so as to foster a meaningful peace-building process for all the residents of Jos, Plateau State.

Accordingly, this study has postulated a *Suum-Ngi* model of Church-State relations for the COCIN and the Plateau State to serve as an alternative model that can be more life-giving and accommodating because it calls for the recognition of a common humanity as binding upon all people regardless of what they have constructed for themselves in the society. The *Suum-Ngi* model states that people are human beings before they chose to belong to any religion, political party, social class, or those who have rejected or abandoned religion. The *Suum-Ngi* model emphasizes that all human beings come from the same Creator, share a common origin and essence and move towards a common destination, where each person shares a common humanity with equal dignity, equal identity, equal rights and an equal standing before their Creator. The recognition of a common humanity seems to be the only way to stop detrimental social constructs from dividing and denying us a peaceful co-existence. A Christian is no more human than a Muslim; a European settler is no less human than an indigene; an African Traditional religionist is no less human than any of these. I further stress that the *Suum-Ngi* model might also serve to remind the COCIN and Plateau State that religion and politics can be chosen and can be changed, but humanity and human-ness cannot be changed. They are non-negotiables. One may leave one religion or political party and still find another, but one cannot lose the essence of what it means to be truly human through religious violence and find another life.

The *Suum-Ngi* model that is postulated for the COCIN and the Plateau State serves to support Moltmann's position on what makes a political society:

What holds a political society together is the actual process of politics. Politics allows persons and groups that have differing aspirations to live together in relative peace and to cooperate in limited ways for the sake of specific benefits. Whenever politics seeks to be more than this, it inevitably becomes far less. This process is what makes a political society. Political societies are where there is distribution of power or sovereignty to a plural number of centres of initiative and are forced, thereafter, to create a social unity through that process of conflict, negotiation, and compromise which we call “politics.” [Only] non-political societies do not seek to distribute power to a plural number of centres of initiative, but tend to rely on a single centre of initiative (e.g. a strong president, a dominant political party [or religious group] or a technological elite) to wield power and to establish social order (Moltmann 1974:97).

A political society is meant to be life-giving because it focuses on the diffusion of power and the promotion of the common good of all. When people’s dignity and rights are denied in a pluralist society such as Plateau State, Nigeria, where some sections of its citizenry were denied socio-political and economic participation on the basis that they were foreigners, it amounted to denial of their essential human-ness and violence becomes an option for the marginalized.

The *Suum-Ngi* model also calls for peace-building measures which include the political and economic inclusion of all its residents to enable them to experience what it means to live fully as human beings. Political and economic justice calls for good governance, which will ensure that development of people is given its proper priority. Development in this context means the liberation of people from all life-denying challenges that make people resort to violence in the society. I made a case that development was the first line of defence because it makes people secure. Development also ensures the security of life and property of all residents. I also advocated for the integration of the *Suum-Ngi* model of peace in the curricula of religious training institutions and theological formation schools to equip religious leaders and preachers with the proper tools for peace-building among their members for improved co-existence in pluralist contexts. Some of the things that facilitate religious radicalism and intolerance in a society may be taught or excluded from the curricula or religious training institutions, which leads to little or no inter-religious dialogue. This appears to inform the reason why religious leaders preach and teach hatred to the members. It could also be argued that the *Suum-Ngi* model of religions-State could also be integrated into Church Constitutions and Youth Programmes because the youth are usually the perpetrators or victims of violence. One can further argue that the model could as well be enshrined within the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the curricula of all tertiary education institutions in the country as part of a civil education programme.



That said, there is no claim that the *Suum-Ngi* model of religious-State relations will automatically or magically solve the problem of violence in Nigeria but it has the potential for doing so as a culturally-based resource for life-giving relations that transcend mere social constructs (Deuoyo, 2013:209). This research offers the model as a contribution that may facilitate the process of peacebuilding among the warring factions in Jos, Nigeria.

### 8. 3. What Should Church-State Relations Focus On?

It is my suggestion that, apart from the need to appropriate the principles of *Suum-Ngi* in order to promote good governance in the Plateau State for the common good of all its residents in Jos, peacebuilding ought to move to the centre of Church-State relations. This is to facilitate a realization in the city of Jos according of the world envisioned by Archbishop Oscar Romero:

A vision of a world [*or Jos*] which reflects the reign of God, and where justice, peace, truth, freedom and solidarity prevail. A world [*or Jos*] where the dignity of the human person, made in the image of God, is paramount. A world [*or Jos*] that does not know what exclusion, discrimination, violence, intolerance or dehumanizing poverty are, rather a place where the goods of the earth are shared by all and creation is cherished for future generations. It is a place where all people, especially the poorest, marginalized, and oppressed, find hope and are empowered to come to the fullness of their humanity as part of the global community (Romero cited in Neufeldt, *et al.*, 2002:4).

Wherever there is life, there is hope for a better future. As a Church, the COCIN may do well to rework the nature of its relations with oppressive structures because, as Romero once declared against El-Salvadorian oppressive structures:

It is time to recover your consciences and to obey your consciences rather than the orders of sin. The Church, defender of the rights of God, of the law of God. Of human dignity, the dignity of the human person, cannot remain silent before such abomination. We want the government to take seriously that reforms are worth nothing when they come about with so much blood. In the name of God, and in the name of this suffering people whose laments rise to heaven each day more tumultuously, I beg you, I ask you, I order you in the name of God: Stop the repression!<sup>62</sup>

Martin Luther King Jr.'s dream serves as a relevant sign-post that may guide COCIN-Plateau State relations for a better and peaceful future:

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<sup>62</sup> [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-dear/honoring-oscar-romero-of\\_b\\_7342546.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/john-dear/honoring-oscar-romero-of_b_7342546.html) [Accessed 21 May 2015].

I have the audacity to believe that peoples everywhere can have three meals in a day for their bodies, education for their minds, and dignity and freedom for their spirits. I believe that what self-centred men [and women] have torn down, men [and women] other-centred can build up. I still believe that one day mankind [or humankind] will bow before the altars of God and be crowned triumphant over war and bloodshed, and non-violent redemptive goodwill will proclaim the rule of the land (King, Jnr., cited in Chunakara, 2013:68).

Finally, one can argue that the religio-political and socioeconomic problems that independent Nigeria faces cannot be totally blamed on colonial legacies. The dysfunctionalities within the nation are also created by the insatiable greed that the model of governance and economic system brings with it, controlled as it is by privileged elites. The rise of *Boko Haram* and the perennial acts of violence that threatens to make the country a failed State are linked to factors created by acts of poor governance because of the endemic corruption by State officials. Fifty-five years of self-determination has been long enough for the independent government of Nigeria to improve on the colonial failures. Accordingly, the continuous accusation of colonialism for Nigeria's continual failures is uncalled-for.

Church-State relations ought to focus on building peace through engendering good governance. The paradox of more religions more violence ought to give way to life-giving community living. The rate at which religious violence seems to overtake the world today would make one believe what Mani (2012:162) argues about the proliferation of religions and violence:

As religions become more important in the lives of hundreds of millions of people, the political power generated by this commitment will either lead to a more peaceful world or to a more violent world, depending on how that power is utilized. De-radicalization programs, interfaith initiatives, or peace-making courses are well intentioned but grossly inadequate. Religious leaders need to acknowledge and reverse their inherently violent beliefs and practices, and assume responsibility as peace-builders.

Religious violence is not justified anywhere in the world because if religion is all about the will of the Creator, it will not do anything less than promote the wellbeing of all the citizens wherever they are. However, because religious people especially leaders, have hijacked religion for the selfish purposes of greed for power and avarice, religion is almost no longer good news to the common people. Mani (2012:163) further argues that religious authorities ought to prioritize justice over power. Mani therefore calls on them to integrate what they dominated and rejects and laments this situation:

Today, the alliance of religious authorities with political and economic elites and neglect of spiralling poverty and inequality is both unacceptable and self-destructive

for religions. Studies have shown that inequality between groups—horizontal inequality—is a major underlying cause for war. The desperate or outraged may revolt against corrupt elites...More often, elites deploy disproportionate force to avoid redistributing wealth and power as in apartheid South Africa or Syria. By ignoring or exonerating injustice in their cosy relationship with political and economic power, religious authorities are facilitating, abetting, and fuelling conflict when they should be mitigating conflict, fostering equity and justice, and building peace. Speaking out against injustice will be uncomfortable initially for religious establishments and leaders because they may fall from political favour but, at last, they will be upholding their founding values and contributing to just peace and sound governance.

My desire is for the COCIN and the Plateau State to revert once again to become integrators that serves societal inclusion (Mani, 2012:163), by overcoming their dysfunctional past and creating equal space for all the citizenry of Jos, regardless of their religious, political, or ethnic affiliations. Church-State relations ought to accord equal treatment to the marginalized groups treated as inferior within their own religious and political ideologies because common humanity has put all of us on the same level. Religion ought to be pro-life and resist any move towards death-dealing relationships with oppressive structures. Mani (2012:166) notes that:

Today, as humanity gropes for meaning in a sea of violence, it is essential that religious institutions and leaders reclaim this missing link of religion and urge their followers to above all pursue self-examination. Lack of consciousness and suppressed unconscious urges underlie violent acts...Religious leaders ought to inspire their faithful to raise their consciousness and take responsibility for their conduct. This may strike them as a diminution of their religious authority, but is essential in both reducing violence and deepening faith.

He goes further to argue that:

Such conscious and engaged spirituality could provide foundations for peaceful governance; such revitalized religions would merit renewed attention within international relations as agents of positive change.

It ought to be argued that for religion to return to its traditional and constructive role of promoting social justice and peace, religious leaders must cultivate a fresh consciousness and check their sinful nature of co-habitation with oppressive powers.

St. Teresa of Avila decried a similar situation during the sixteenth century that speaks relevantly to religious institutions today:

Why this great war between the countries—the countries—inside us? What are all these insane borders we protect? What are all these different names for the same Church of love we kneel in together? For it is true, together we live, and only that shrine where all are welcome will God sing loud enough to be heard (St. Teresa of Avila cited in Mani, 2012:166).

In the twelfth century CE, Basra Rabia also argued for religious harmony, which religious groups of this century can learn from:

In my heart, there is a temple, a shrine, a mosque, a Church, where I kneel. Prayer should bring [religion] us to an altar where no name and no walls exist". With these arguments from past women of faith, one wonders whether religions are needed in this century when more lives and property are destroyed than saved. Therefore, religion, if unexamined and blindly followed, can cause untold division and violence and justify tyrannical governance. But if examined and sought consciously, they can bring solace, wisdom, and grace to humankind and become pillars of peaceful governance (Rabia cited in Mani, 2012:166).

Unless religious institutions follow the way that promotes the wellbeing of its citizens and their property, they may not be needed because they seem to have lost relevance. It is my prayer that the COCIN and the Plateau State, Nigeria, will listen to these voices for the benefit of their citizens in Jos, and the entire Nigerian State so that Church-State relations will recover from uncritical relations with the State and practise its *missio*-political vocation. It is hoped that more studies of this nature will be conducted in the future to promote good governance for the wellbeing of Nigeria's citizens. The present study will offer some signposts for such research in areas not yet covered as a means of the continuous search for peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. Before that is done, this study has contributed to knowledge in some ways as explained below.

#### **8.4. Contribution to New Knowledge**

This research study has made the following contributions to new knowledge with respect to the dynamic of Church and State Relations in Nigeria today.

- i. Through the adoption of the systematic literature review method, this study has unearthed some critical religio-political factors that informed unhealthy<sup>63</sup>Church-State relations in Nigeria's past. This is attested by the literature on the religio-colonial collaboration and associated legacies that served to constitute grounds for an unhealthy socio-economic and political competition among the Nigerian population.

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<sup>63</sup> In this context, unhealthy Church-State relations between Church and State serves to foster the discrimination and marginalization of other religious groups. When the Church and State engage each other in a marriage of convenience for some symbiotic benefits, they tend to leave others out in the rain. This relationship becomes unhealthy because it fails to serve the *missio*-political agenda of the Creator.

- ii. An important factor that has had a negative impact on constructing life-giving Church-State relations in Nigeria is linked to the reactionary politics to Christian engagement in colonial politics that were promoted by the SUM missionaries among their converts that shun political engagement. However, during the era of Independence, there has been a change in policy that promoted a partnership that was incestuous and endorsed sectarian interests to the detriment of the wider pluralist society.
- iii. This research study has confirmed that Church-State relations, although meant as a constructive role in the society, can become a fertile ground for life-denying conflicts and the destruction of community. When these relations deviate from its primary mandate to the pursuit of selfish ends and power, it tends to become a curse and a source of sorrow to society. This is to say that when Church and State confuse their *missio*-political roles, whatever model of relations they adopt feeds violence among its citizenry.
- iv. This study confirmed that the failure of the State to promote and maintain law and order in society and that all religions and their claim to absolute truth and certainty engage in sectarian practises that lay the foundation that influence the use of violence to resolve issues linked to perceived acts of injustice (Hewitt, 2015; Fernandex, 2004:xi-xii). The unhealthy competition between Christianity and Islam for political influence and numerical growth has contributed to life-denying acts of violence. The desire for power and control seems to be at the root of unhealthy Church-State relations because power itself seems to be misunderstood by both institutions. Power ought not to be construed as a monopoly of some structures for coercive ends, but power ought to constitute what Foucault regards as, “a major source of social discipline and conformity including whatever promotes social justice and peaceful living in the society.”<sup>64</sup> Treating people as human beings focuses on the fact that humanity is common to all, regardless of what the people have constructed serves to promote peaceful living. This informs the reason why this study has postulated an Afrocentric model of Church-State relations for the COCIN and the Plateau State. This model is contextual and seems to be more life-giving than others that have

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<sup>64</sup> Available at: <<http://www.powercube/foucault-power-is-everywhere-/>>.

emerged in the history of Western Christianity. The *Suum-Ngi* model of Church-State calls for looking beyond social constructs because everyone was human before choosing to belong to social groups.

- v. Finally, the study contributes to knowledge by asserting that there may be no such thing as a single and normative model of Church-State relations that is relevant to all contexts in both time and space. Church and State are social constructs which are dynamic and diverse in contexts. Hence, the need for a more contextual and Afro-centric model of Church-State relations which is linked to the common humanity of all peoples and unites them despite their artificial differences in Jos, Nigeria. *Suum-Ngi* may be the only model that serves wherever people are able to recognize their common humanity as a basis for human relations above social constructs. This model serves as an alternative model, not only for the COCIN and Plateau State, Nigeria, but for the sub-Saharan African region where the community spirit can be stronger. The model possesses the potential for a more representative and inclusive Constitution building process that can result in the Constitution favouring free and fair treatment of each other through greater political equality, more social justice provisions, human rights protection, and stronger accountability mechanism (Gawerc, 2011:6). Consequently, this study strongly suggests that since every context is unique in time and space, constructive and potent models of Church-State relations depends on whether it works for the context or not. In other words, the given context ought to determine which model works.

### **8.5. Identifying Signposts and Gaps for Future Research**

In the course of this study, I have made a rigorous and systematic review of the literature. Accordingly, I have identified several areas that offer themselves as fertile grounds and gaps for future research work:

- i. The current resurgence of religious radicalism in Nigeria will affect the *missio-political* mandate of the Church and State relations constitute room for further research. Can institutional religions continue to be prophetic in the society given their current nature and competition for power with the State in the public sphere? It is not

just about competition for power but that the symbiotic relationship is quickly replacing the critical and prophetic relationship because of the impact of economic globalization on religion and its diversion to focus on the acquisition of materialism.

- ii. The type of space available for constructive Church-State relations in democratic regimes compared to military regimes. Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as “government of the people, by the people, and for the people” (cited in Haralambos, 1980:135), which means that democratic regimes are people-centred with greater measure of freedom of expression than military regimes; what does the future hold for prophetic religions in democratic contexts where people themselves decide on who become their leaders? Institutional religious leaders seem to find themselves as gatekeepers for politicians who come to them for votes. Religious leaders also engage closely with political elites who come to lobby for votes by sponsoring religious projects. Democratic regimes seem to provide more space for co-habitation between Church leaders and the political elites and less prophetic vocation from the Church. This may not be the same under military regimes since people’s votes do not determine who rules. The effectiveness or otherwise of Church-State relations may depend largely on the nature of the political regime on the ground. For example, violent conflicts were less in Jos Plateau State until the country returned to democracy in 1999. One could equally argue that *Boko Haram* would not have emerged during the period of the military regime in Nigeria; yet, this is not the case with the resumption of political democracy where everything seems to go.
- iii. Within the context of Plateau State, the potency of Church-State relations seems to be dependent on whether the political apparatus of the State is dominated by particular religious groups. It appears that whenever those who wield political power of the State in pluralist contexts are dominantly from the same religious group or Christian denomination, it tends to impair the prophetic voice of the given religious group or Christian denomination because of the familiarity of spirit and discrimination against the other. Could this not be a sign that one of the reasons why Church-State relations fail is when the State elites and religious leaders in that State belong to one and the same religious group in a pluralist context?

- iv. Democracy and African culture seem to offer little space for constructive Church-State relations because it appears that Africans find it more difficult to let go of power or to criticise their kinswomen and men when they are in power. This is clearly demonstrated for example in the context of Zimbabwe, Angola, Uganda and Burundi, all of which practise a form of democracy that guarantees their State President absolute power and silences dissenting voices by rule of law (Haynes, 1996:108-109). The sad truth is that many religious institutions, including the Church seem not to be the best examples of a democratic society.
- v.
- vi. This present study raises the viability of creating and defending a State (a territorial political sphere) as a Christian State or Muslim State in a pluralist context such as Nigeria. This is because the theme of owning States by the two competing religious groups in Nigeria keeps coming up strongly in the literature. To what extent do Nigerians appreciate and are ready to maintain the pluralist nature of their country? Are they willing to continue as a pluralist nation? If not, how does it affect Church-State relations and peace-building in the pluralist context? By the time that Nigeria becomes a Christian or an Islamic State, where will democracy be?

## **8.6. Some Concluding Remarks**

The extent to which Nigeria functions as an independent Nation-State requires further study. The literature appears to suggest that Nigerian Independence since 1960 has simply resulted in an exchange of one oppressive regime by another. This further raises the important question as to whether it is justifiable for Nigerians to continue to blame the past British-colonial government for the failures of the Independent government or not? It is hoped that future researchers will be able to address the above gaps as these issues have direct bearing on the nature of Church-State relations in the country in general and the Plateau State in particular.

Coinciding with most of the State elites being products of its schools and from the same Church (COCIN), the intimacy between them begins to reduce the Church's ability to maintain critical solidarity and distance from the State. Some of the political elite who have had the opportunity to be State Governors have demonstrated clearly their divisive and



marginalizing policies against minorities. This tendency started giving rise to a co-habitation between the Church and State which has seen them leaving other sectors of the society out in the cold. This was discovered to be at the root of violent conflicts in Jos from 2001 to 2010. As a consequence, the way forward for a more life-giving and constructive Church-State relations between the COCIN and the Plateau State seems to lie with scholars making systematic research into the subject such as this one, which may serve to deconstruct the life-denying relations and remind the two institutions about their *missio*-political mandate to all sectors of society. Religion and State are good things because they have the mandate to promote the wellbeing of its citizenry; yet they have also been a source of much pain and sorrow to humanity because the participants have used them destructively. The rise of religious fundamentalism may be bold handwriting on the wall that the Nation-States may revert back to a theocracy in the next century. The twenty-first century is a victim of religio-political related crises with a cloudy future for the nature of Church-State relations. There is a need to shift from Church-State relations to a Religions-State relations model underpinned by traditional wisdom and the philosophy of *Suum-Ngi* in which all religious and non-religious traditions have equal validation and legitimation by the State, and that all humanity can have equal participation in the affairs of the nation, enjoy equal access to its national resources and make an equal contribution in the life of the nation without feeling side-lined or marginalised.

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## **APPENDIX**

### **LIST OF PLATES**



**Plate 1**

Mass burial of victims of the violent conflict in Jos, Nigeria

(Source: HRW, 2001)



**Plate 2**

Corpses of victims of violence in Jos, Nigeria

(Source: HRW, 2004)



**Plate 3**

Christian women demonstrating in search of peaceful co-existence in Jos, Nigeria  
(Source: HRW, 2008)



**Plate 4**

The outgoing COCIN President introducing his successor to the Plateau State Governor  
(Source: COCIN Video Coverage File, 2010)



**Plate 5**

A combined team of Christian and Muslim women demonstrating for peace in Jos, Nigeria  
(Source: HRW, 2008)



**Plate 6**

Governor Jonah Jang visits the COCIN president in his office  
(Source: COCIN Video Coverage File, 2010)



**Plate 7**

The first group of COCIN Theological Seminary Graduates, 2004  
(Source: COCIN Video Coverage File 2004)



**Plate 8**

The COCIN Secretariat Headquarters in Jos, Nigeria  
(Source: COCIN Video Coverage File 2010)



**Plate 9**

The COCIN Director of Human Resource and Development, Rev. Ishaku Afan  
(Source: COCIN Video Coverage File, 2010)



**Plate 10**

The COCIN Director of Health and Social services, Dr Emmanuel Kuden  
(Source: COCIN Video Coverage File, 2010)



**Plate 11**

The COCIN Director of Evangelism and Church Growth, Rev. Paul Mangkam  
(Source: COCIN Video Coverage File, 2010)



**Plate 12**

The COCIN Director of Internal Audit, Mrs Rabeca Tingyong

(Source: COCIN Video Coverage File, 2010)



**Plate 13**

The COCIN Director of Finance, Mr. Yakubu Dutse

(Source: COCIN Video Coverage File, 2010)



**Plate 14**

The COCIN Director of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), Mrs. Gyarta Pofi

(Source: COCIN Video Coverage File, 2010)