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TOPIC: RELIGION AND POLITICS IN NIGERIA: THE WAY FORWARD.

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BY

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to everlasting living God for his unshakeable love toward my family. Dedicated to my country Nigeria, especially my beloved and dearest parents chief MR AND MRS Michael Ik. Njom for bringing up to this stage and their financial support. It also goes to my loving sister chinenye Njom and my little brothers dedicated to all that wishes me well.
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Great acknowledgement is made to God Almighty who made it possible for me to be among the great lions and lionesses in this great institution.

To my caring parents who struggle for my success and wonderful friend and brother Oduala Ikenna.

Finally, to my honorable lecturer Dr. Mrs. Madueme.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

From time immemorial, politics and religion have been two important cultural variables that influence activities of societies all over the world.

In this regard, by politics we mean the act of gathering. By government we mean that indispensable process found in Nigeria through which the laws and values of Nigeria are formally enacted, codified and enforced. Government is unique among social institutions of man in that it typically has Nigeria consent to use force to slave complicate with us norms (laws)

On the other hand, religion means man’s awareness and recognition of his dependent relationship on a transcendent being. The wholly order to expressive in human activity. Through beliefs, worship and ethical behaviour. Every religion in relation to politics functions as a catalyst to man’s ultimate problems.

However, both religion and politics differ greatly in objectives and methodology. While government uses force mainly to attend its objectives, in relation to common good of all the citizens, and persuasion as a secondary means, religion mainly used appeals to lure people in to action, and force as a last resort.

Religion gives individuals their most comprehensive ideas about reality and meaning of events. Scriptures and oral tradition narrate.

The origins of the world and prescribe appropriate actions and attitudes in response to the cosmic order. Politics on it own is among the most important or activities that has been explained and legitimized by religion.
Historically and culturally, political order has been linked to a religious cosmogony and political hardship then acquired a sacred status. For instance the story of the sun goddess, Amaterasu links the creation of the Japanese archipelago and the founding of the imperial dynasty, while the Chinese empires were said to derive their powers from a mandate heaven.

The Hebrew scriptures made no distinction between sacred and civil laws obligation in the community simply rest on a covenant between God and the people. During the era of reformation, European peasants used the religious change to demand a new order in politics. In the same vein, today Japanese politicians debate the place of traditional Japanese Shinto in state ceremonies.

The historical relationship between religion and politics includes differentiation, conflict as well as legislation. Religions are identified by their power to his inspire the attitudes and commitments that the political order requires. However historical changes may diminish the authority of a particular religion or sweep it aside completely but they can’t eliminate the need for a center of devotions and enthusiasm that sustains moralities in a people. Religious, traditions introduced into new areas can be relics of cultural and political transformation. For instance when Christianity was introduced in parts of Asia, it has turned modernization there further more the exodus account of the Decalogue ten commandments and the covenant with the Israelites foretold portaged God’s over lordship over the people of Israel. The Israelites picked up directives from the commandment and the code of covenant in the land, and his laws joined all the people together as far as their societal living and interaction are concerned. This no doubt was the of the interaction a political situation whereby the sovereign is the political head as well as the religion head, at the sometime.
In the context of this, Yahweh is no doubt the sovereign lord as well as the religious head in so far as his wills are contained in the covenant. The basis of directives as well as morality social sciences, religions organization are part to the social structure religions values part of the genuine culture; religious motivation part of the individual character.

Everywhere religion is closely connected to family structures; through this societies form their culturally designated way in which socialization so carried out and personal support made available. These fare time are so vital that no society leaves them to individual initiative and in virtually every instance they are supported by the religious system. This is particularly true especially in those societies where kinship system is the center of social organization. equally, the ethical norms governing interpersonal behaviour within the family are often given religious sanction. Example “honour father and mother” as contained in the ten commandments through all these positive development of the society is enhanced and both the leaders and the led live happily.

However, secularizing religions maintain an unproblematic relationship of legitimization and support for the political order. These forms of religions have continued to provide a distinctive sense of indignity for a people as a whole. To this end, traditional forms of hindusim and shinto despise extensive changes through history. In all religion provided the comprehensive explanation and orientations that enable people to understand their place in the politics order as part of the ultimate reality in which the live and act.

In the traditional societies of Africa, religion so no doubt given its pride of place in relation to the political order in Nigeria in the traditional Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo kingdoms, the combination of political role with religious
role by the emirs obas, and obas in the daily piloting of the affairs of these kingdoms leaves no doubt that the two cultural variables are quite indispensable to Nigeria. Furthermore, among the social hesitation of Nigeria where the cultural life of the people unfolds itself, religion is seen to blend with politics in conjunction with other institutions in enhancing the well being of people. However by social institution, we mean complex of norms cluster of folkway was which are knit together for the accomplishment of a giver task, an institution exists to sire one or more needs of Nigerians and the individual that live in it Normally, five main institution usually exist. They include, family, politics (government) economy, religion and education.

SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS.

FAMILY: concretized in a more or less permanent association of a man and woman in marriage for the birth and socialization of children

ECONOMY: provides laws for the production and distribution of goods and services and manpower.

POLITICS: (Government): provides laws for the enforcement of order in the country and security of life and property.

RELIGION: provides supernatural laws, sanctions and motivations that give meaning to the present values and aspirations of the country. Education: provides for the presentation and transmission of the culture of the people. Ti can be formal or informal.
CHAPTER TWO

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS:

2.1 POLITICS

By politics is meant the science or art of governing. By government is meant that indispensable social organization established in every society, for the purpose of formally creating, codifying and enforcing the laws and values of a particular society. Going furthermore on this, Glennaserts said that:

Government is unique among social institution sum that it typically has societies approval in using force to security compliance with its laws. Government usually operates on three levels with respect to Nigerian these includes the executive arm, the judiciary and the legislation. The executive arm, implements policies made by the legislature.

In Nigeria the executive arm comprises the Army, the police and civil service. The legislative has the sole responsibility of making laws in the country. In Nigeria the legislature is known as the Ional Assembly. The judiciary includes the law courts.

It has the sole responsibility of interpreting laws.

2.2 RELIGION:

MANY: scholars define religion in many ways while some of the scholars argues that there is no one definition that is acceptable to them. This is partly because many products of various disciplines attempt the definition
of religion from the preview of their faith and orientation. Added to the above is the fact that religion itself deals with invisible and spiritual beings that cannot be subjected to empirical observation metuh (1978:13) summarized this problem of definition that this problem is partly because the object of religion is invisible and the spiritual beings who are not subject of observation are conceived in different ways by different people.

Besides the study of religion interest people with a widely differing interests as theologian anthropologists, psychologists and sociologists each of who see it from different perspective. religion could be defined subjectively and objectively Arinze (1970:8) explain thus, subjectively, religion is the very consciousness of dependence on a transcendent being and the very propensity or inclination to worship. Objectively, religion is a complex of truths, laws and rites by which man is subordinated to the transcendent being.

From the sociological point of view, religion is that part of culture composed of shared beliefs and practices which not only identify the supernatural and the sacred, and man’s relationship to them but that which also relate them to the known world in such a way that the group is provided with moral definitions as to what is good and what is bad.

Going by this definition religion is seen as an interacting element of Nigeria it involved a group and not necessarily an individual. It also involves share group belief in the supernatural in the sacred and everything connected with it.
Religion is constantly changing. Norms of religion change from time to time.

Religion is cumulative. In this sense, it means that religious of man groups has its roots in the distant past. New religion normally uses the cultural base of past generation to build up. In this regard it may be said that every religious system is solidly built on tradition.

Religion is man made. This means that man is the bearer and perpetuator of religion on earth.

Man has made cultural objects, which are religious in nature. Such objects like the Christian cross. The star and moon of the Moslems; the Ikenga symbol of the traditional religionists serve as another dimension, in which religion is seen as the function of its function in solving crucial and ultimate human problems, in this regard Yinger defined religion as a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with ultimate problems of human life. It expresses their refusal to capitulate to death. To give up in the face of frustration to allow hostility to tear apart their human association.

For Yinger all man (those in the corridors of political power inclusive) in one way or the other need some absolute value to live by. These values must be such that they are able to address themselves to the ultimate problems of human existence. That is problems of life and death and intensive human sufferings. Yinger went on to claim that scientific investigation and empirical knowledge are unable to solve these problems. Religion is the one thing that addresses itself to these problems and gives positive answers to people’s needs in arise periods.
Religion also encourages religious groups not to give up and reassures them of salvation from both internal and extramural dangers. Even in the case of the religious people who devote their invite lives and time to some worldly noble causes like scientific investigations on loyalty to a group (often a political group). Yinger still believe they will not give man that deceived fulfillment which religion gives in the face of drifter.

1.4 NIGERIA

Otherwise known as federal republic of Nigeria, Nigeria is the longest of west African coastal states with a population of over 140, (355,258) million 2006 population census. Nigeria is also the largest of any other country in the continent of African in population. She an area of 923, 113 square kilometers. And is the 36th largest state on the continent.

LOCATION:

Nigeria is approximately located between 4° and 14° north and 3° and 14° east. The territory extends to about 1,050 kilometers from north south and about 1,900 kilometers east west. She is boarded on the south by gulf of Guinea, in the west by republic of Benin, on the North by Niger republic and on the last by republic of Chad and Cameroon.

Modern Nigerian before in 1914 when the two protectoral of northern and southern Nigeria were merged. She became independent on October 1, 1960 and in 1963 adopted a republican constitution.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS.

Nigeria is a member of several international organizations united organization, organization of African unity, economic community of West African states, the common wealth of nations organization of petroleum expecting communities, civil liberties organization, the non-Aligned movement and others.
LANGUAGE:
Nigerian’s official is English since there are over 200 different languages spoken by the different ethnic groups in the country.

DRAINAGE
Nigeria has three major drainage areas: Niger Benue Basin, Lake Chad basin and gulf of Guinea basin with rivers Benue and Niger (after which the country is named) as the principal rivers.

CLIMATE
Nigeria has a tropical climate with wet and dry seasons. There are however three climate patterns which are distinguished a tropical wet climate in the south east with uniformly in the temperature and heavy rainfall distributed throughout the year tropical wet and dry climate in the North and west and the dry climate in the far north.

Two air masses—the equatorial maritime and the continental dominate the climate. The equatorial maritime is associated with the rain barring south west monsoon which comes from the ocean while the tropical continental is associated with the Harmattan a dry and dusty wind from the Sahara rainy season in the south east from March with ember while in the North, it lasts from mid May-September.

TEMPERATURE
Temperature and humidity remain relatively constant through the year in the south. However considerably seasonal changes occur and the daily temperature range changes as well.

PEOPLE AND POPULATION
The great diversity of people and culture. In Nigeria is largely due to the location of the country at the meeting point of transcontinental migration routes from north to south west to east and south east to northwest. There are
over 200 ethnic groups in the country each with its own customs, traditions and language. The larger groups include the Hausa and Yorubas, the Yoruba and the Igbo, other prominent by less numerous groups are the Edos of Benin city, the Ibibios in the forest belt, Tivs and Nupe in the middle belt and the Kanuris in the Chad basin.

**Racial and Religious Groups:**

Nigeria is a country of black-skinned peoples. The people of the savanna zone in the north tend to be taller than those of the forest belt of the south. Arab penetration into the Chad basin had resulted in much racial mingling, the shuwa Arabs and the kanuris of this region are of mixed Negro and Arab origin. Equally intermingling had also occurred in the south particularly in the coastal ports of Calabar and Warri where many Syrians and Ziroppean traders settled in the last 70 or 80 years. Religiously, much of the country was originally atheist in its beliefs, worshipping idols.

As at 1963 census, about 47% of the people were Muslims and 35% Christians with the remaining few ones as African traditional religionists. The greatest concentration of Muslims is in the north where 72% of the population profess Islam.

In the Yoruba Christians are slightly high in number and in the eastern states they (Christians) make up about 77% of the population.

The main Christian groups are the Roma-catholic, British Methodists, Anglicans, and American Baptists. There is how ever religious freedom as entrenched in the constitution of the land.

**JUSTICES.**

The Nigeria legal and judicial system is subject to regional variations, particularly between the largely Muslim North and the Christian influenced south. However, there are three codes of law which are recognized in the
country. These are customary law, Nigeria statute law and English law. Customary laws are administered by Native courts, which are usually presided over by persons with no formal legal education excelling in the case of Alkali courts while the judges have to undergo formal training in mush law.

Customary courts have different grades with grade A court serving as courts of appeal for cases from grades B, C and O courts. Nigerian statute laws include much of the legislation enacted by the British colonial administration most of which has since been revised.

In addition to Nigeria statues, English laws are used in the high courts and magistrates courts. There is a high court for each state in Nigeria and Supreme Court for the federation.

MANAGEMENT OF THE ECONOMY.

The Nigerian economy is mixed economy giving room for both into private and public section in the management of the economy. The private sector is made up of private business man and the inventors. The public section is the government.

GOVERNMENT

Nigeria is currently under civilian government called democracy. Democracy is a system which gave periodic opportunities for the masses to choose their leaders. Nigerian government is under civilian which is known as democracy which gave room for every member of Nigerian citizen to contribute on the development of the nation. Nigerian government is government of the people, by the people and for the people.

Nigeria operates a federal system of government with three tier system federal, state and local governments. Powers are shared according to exclusive, concurrent and residual lists, matters in the exclusive list includes;
Defense external affairs, Aviation, immigration railways postal services. Some key roads. Telecommunication energy currency mined and power, customs and exist duties.

Matter in the concurrent list includes, education health daring. Agriculture, residues list contains chieftancy and local affairs. The federal government has powers in the exclusive.

CHAPTER THREE
THE INTER RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN POLITICS AND RELIGION NIGERIAN EXPERIENCES

3.1: POSITIVE RELATION.

The marriage between politics and religion dates from continuity. Social scientists have noted possible areas of interactions and their effect on human activities. They observe that in a strict homogeneous culture society. Religion and politics interacts biefficial activities. Their religion is highly integrative, supporting and legislative political and cultural values and institutions. In this situation the existing religion becomes the state religious and enjoys political support. Many ancient kingdoms and empires like the Egyptians, Babylonians, Phsian and Roman Empires subscribe to this form of relationship. Equally, the Jewish perception of theocracy is concretely nurtured in this types of interaction. Moreover, in a highly stratified society like India. Religion is often used to sub serve political needs and expirations of the ruling an order which places them at the apex. Existence and activities of religious specialist in this type of society makes it difficult for political leaders to relegate religion to the background. There are other situations where religion is separated from political organization. This brings the issue of socialism to fore. The political power is totally in religious matters, for the common good of the citizens. Rationality often
takes the form of either supporting religion generally without presentation treatment to any particular religion or withdrawing support to religious groups while ensuring the constitutional impart of citizens. This situation is typical of most secured on states of the world like America. In this regard with respect to "church and state relations in the United States" Ronald B. Flowers observed that ... a circular states establishes neither atheism nor religion as its official creed. On the contrary the constitution man dress that the government circular precisely in other to avoid discriminating among citizens on the basic of religious faith. Generally, socially, religion binds people together and gives them a strong sense of social solidarity and social obligation. It is also confess sacred values to people's social laws, values and social institution and makes them mandatory with internal sanctions. For in the Old Testament the human and social laws of man are said to come from God who entered into a covenant with the Israelite. Equally, Allah and consified in the Moslem coran and habit refund the Moslem social and human laws as sacred by the devotee of Islam, since these laws are dictated to prophet Mohamad. In the Nigerian content in the political lead of the numeral was also the religious leader of its people. His duty is to ensure that the commandment of the Allah is obeyed in his territory. This account for the great power which eriguied. Furthermore, prior to the introduction of missionary all universal religions like Christianity, the traditional religion of Africa enjoys political patronage. Each ethnic group embraces it as part of the cultural heritage. For instance, clean the Yoruba kingdom of Nigerian; the Orba who is the political leader is also the religious leader at the same time. The Orba performs sacrifices from time to time in other to appease the ancestors and Odudua. The performance of this is very importance as it is the source of Orba's power, respect legitimacy, solidarity, bases of unity and
progress of the people. The Igbo on their own thought generally had no kings yet were not left out. Few towns like Onitsha has recognized chief the Obi of Onitsha who is at the helm of affairs at the monarchy. To this respect, from the sociological point of view the Onitsha Monarchy is the autocratic. The Obi is a repository of religious, social, political and economic power. As custodians of the traditions and custom of the Onitsha clan, he exercises a priestly role as an intermediary between the living inhabitant and their ancestors. He is therefore, a personification of divinity as he is regarded thus.

Indeed, these types of relationships show clearly the complete identity between religion and politics. In these traditional African societies, social laws and values are given religious in perpetration. They are said to be routed in God the creator of humanity and human society. These social laws and values are often spelled out for the traditionist in certain things, which the society forbids and which must never be done without incurring the wrath of the invisible beings of the African world.

3.2 NEGATIVE RELATIONS

Negative relationship between politics and religion often takes the form of intolerance on the part of the political group, towards religion. In this situation those important roles of religion to politics are greatly over emphasized and politics is organized to eject religion from the society that is supporting a particular religious to the detriment of others.

However, with respect to this, the Nigerian government under generate Babangida manifested this wholesome fear which in 1986, it secretly turned the country’s 17 years observer position into that of full membership of the organization of Islamic conference. When the news of alleged deal filtered into ears of Nigerians, voices of decent became right
from well intentioned citizens especially the Christians. To this regard, one scholar succinctly observed:

"...The Oic issue is an aid test of Babangida wisdom and commitment to the course of Nigerians political stability unity and peace with possible exception of the Nigerian civil war, no other issue has so far threatened the peace, unity and stability of this country more than the O.I.C. issue. This deal has divided Nigeria political citizen into two major religious camps Islam and Christianity with the Moslems highlighting the benefits of membership while the Christians saw the deal as a calculated attempt to Islamism the entire nation. Notwithstanding, the heterogenous native of the country. Curiously enough the military government did not make any categorical official statement on the issue.

This has however, had tremendous negative impart on the nation, resulting to religious confusion and riot of imaginable degrees which have for a number of times taken a grate tell on both the human and material resources of the nation. Equally, another issue which since to bother on religious intolerance is sharia issue the sacred law of Islam. Since this law regulates the entire life of a Muslim, should be placed side by side with the seculars laws of the state.

Also should non-Muslims in areas of Muslim domination bound by such laws. This issue has been one of divided loyalty to the national constitutional laws and religious of the nation. This issue certainly carrying the 1988-89 constitution assembly, changed with the responsibility of drafting the nation's constitution for the butched things republic. It nearly destabilized the proceedings of that assembly.
CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

4.1 SUMMARY

Politics and religion are two important cultural variables that influence men in society. They are admittedly quite natural to man. They help each other positively or negatively, depending on the way and manner each is conducted and regarded in relation to another. Religion, especially where it is well regulated by wise and sound constitutional laws operated by open-minded politicians, contribute positively to the building of the nation as it legitimacy to the government. To Nigerian in general, it discourages certain policies that does not favour common good. On the other hand, where these positive impact of religion are over emphasized especially in a heterogeneous society like Nigeria, where lip service is paid to religion by the political system, religion is always a burning issue and equally creates tension, disloyalty distrust and anarchy.

4.1 RECOMMENDATION:

Religion and Politics are certainly two indispensable variables in any cultural set up. There so indispensable that any distraction of one affects to other adversely.

In the Nigeria context, in order to enhance a positive relationship and mutual co-existence between politics and religion so that their positive impacts will contribute immensely in building.

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camps—Islam and Christianity, with the Moslems highlighting the benefits of
membership while the Christians saw the deal as calculated attempt to
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country. Curiously enough the military government did not make categorical
official statement on the issue. This has however had tremendous negative
impact on the nation, resulting to religious confusion and riots of imaginable
degrees which have for a number of times taken a great toll on both the
human and material resources of the nation.

Equally another issue which seems to border on religious intolerance
is the Sharia issue the Sacred law of Islam. Since this law regulates the entire
life of a Moslem, should it be placed side by side with the secular laws of the
state? Also should non-Muslims in areas of Muslim domination be bound by
such laws? This issue has been one of divided loyalty to the National
constitutional laws and religions of the nation. This issue contains came up
in the 1988-1989 constituent assembly, charged with the responsibility of
drafting the nation’s constitution for the battered third republic. It nearly
disestablish the proceedings of that assembly. The nation-state and
maintaining the machinery of government and society at large talking into
consideration the heterogeneous nature of the nation, religious matters
should be well regulated by wise constitutional laws and operated by
statesman, selfless and open-ended politicians. More over the government
should initiate a national campaign on values of pluralism of ideas and
beliefs in addition, it should seriously affirm that Nigeria is a secular state,
as provided by the 1979 constitution with regard to religion, civil and social
life of Nigerian citizens which they provided that every person shall be
entitled to freedom of conscience and religion including freedom to change
his religion or beliefs and freedom to manifest and propagate his religion in
worship, teaching, practice and observation.

Furthermore, government should if possible establish an ecumenical
school to be run by expert drawn from various religions groups in Nigeria.
This school should be run on a short run basis for present and future
politicians civil and religion leaders.

The accent in this school should be placed in dialogue with different
religions. It is hereby envisaged that the acceptance and the
implementation of these suggested programmes of action will in no small
way enhance the interaction and relationship between politics and religion,
positively, for the benefit of all sundry in this our heterogeneous nation.
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