IMPERATIVE OF CIVIL RELIGION IN RESOURCE CONTROL AND POLITICAL RESTRUCTURING IN NIGERIA

Ikechukwu Maxwell Ukandu, PhD
Department of Religious Studies & Centre for Peace and Development
Veritas University, Abuja
+2348068208363; ukandu_imax@yahoo.com
DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.12803.12324
&
Ogiri, Happiness Kodichinma
Institute of African Studies,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka
+2348036599474
DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.12803.12324

Abstract

Nigeria's return to civilian rule or democratic governance since 1999 signaled hope to a number of her citizens, especially ethnic nationalities. Since this democratic dispensation, ethnic nationalities have been at the centre stage of agitations for one form of reform or the other. Perceived injustices, corruption, nepotism, hegemonic assertions, religious fanaticism and triumphalism, and a wide range of insecurities have spelt doom for the country. In fact, there is a surge in economic stagnation, political instability, and lack of societal peace in Nigeria. To come out of these quagmires, demands for economic resource control and political restructuring have saturated public discourses in recent times. Regrettably, very little attention has been given to formation of loyal and patriotic citizens that will run and enjoy these economic and political reforms. Although, copious literatures abound on various aspects of resource control and political restructuring, not much has been done on civil religion component in Nigeria. Our aim therefore is to investigate the imperative of civil religion as an essential accompanying variable in the resource control and restructuring of Nigeria. The research methodology adopted was both descriptive and explanatory. The method of data collection was derived from secondary sources gotten from books, journals, newspapers, and policy reports. Observation as a primary source was equally employed. The data gathered were analyzed descriptively and sociologically. The paper observes that without patriotic and loyal citizens, resource control and restructuring may as well be a mere structural change and superfluous without accompanied individual transformation to sustain it. The paper concludes that civil religion, resource control and restructuring are an inseparable social trinity for a robust nation-building in Nigeria.

Introduction
It is a well established fact that the Nigerian State is saddled with a number of perennial challenges owing principally to the nature of her emergence. The country's political history is a tale of one battle for supremacy by one identity group or the other. In this sense, ethnic and religious groups have featured conspicuously. Separatist agitations from across Northern, Southern, Eastern and Western regions of the country are attestation to the persistent and protracted nature of these issues and how they pose a threat to the survival of Nigeria.

Nigeria's return to civilian rule or democratic governance since 1999 signaled hope to a number of her citizens, especially ethnic nationalities (Ukandu, 2019). Since this decade-long democratic dispensation, ethnic nationalities have been at the centre stage of agitations for one form of reform or the other. Perceived injustices, corruption, nepotism, hegemonic assertions, religious fanaticism and triumphalism, and a wide range of insecurities have spelt doom for the country. In fact, there is a surge in economic stagnation, political instability, and lack of societal peace in Nigeria. To come out of these quagmires, demands for economic resource control and political restructuring have saturated public discourses in recent times.

Regrettably, very little attention has been paid to the formation of loyal and patriotic citizens that will run and enjoy these economic and political reforms. Although, many have written on various aspects of resource control and political restructuring, but not much has been done on civil religion. Our aim therefore is to investigate on the imperative of civil religion as an essential accompanying variable in the resource control and political restructuring of Nigeria.

The research methodology adopted was both descriptive and explanatory. The method of data collection was derived from secondary sources gotten from books, journals, newspapers, policy reports, and observation. The data gathered were analyzed descriptively and sociologically.

Religious Demography of Nigeria: A Tale of Pluralism
Nigeria like most West African countries is home to three major faith traditions. They are the indigenous African religion, Islam and Christianity. The indigenous

African religion is an ethnic religion and it cuts across the entire African continent and has remained resilient among Africans in the diaspora. Although, differences abound on the mode of religious practice in the various African societies, yet, they all share common similarity and basic features in their organization, spirituality, morality, worship and taboos amongst other religious belief and behaviour. Thus, traditional religion is an essential part of life of each ethnic group in Nigeria (Ugorie, 2009). The implication is that all the major ethnic groups in Nigeria have their peculiar brand of traditional worship, as there was and still is the Igbo Religion, Yoruba Religion, Tiv Religion, Urhobo Religion, and so forth.

Apart from the traditional religions that litter the African continent, perhaps in their thousands as they are organized at community levels, Islam is equivocally the first foreign religion to establish her presence in Nigeria from the northern axis during the 11th and 14th centuries respectively. This was principally done through the import of Islamic traders, scholars, teachers, pilgrims and preachers from the northern parts of Africa (Dzurgba, 2010); also the sub-Sahara trade influenced the spread of the Islamic faith. From the 14th through the 18th century AD, Islam had already taken root in Hausaland and in the Kannem-Borno kingdom. It took the efforts of the Islamic reformer and fundamentalist, Usman Dan Fodio in the 19th century both aggressive revival and violent proselytization to make the bold stamp in the entire northern Nigeria, with greater social, cultural, political, economic, legal impacts on the people.

In the 15th century AD, an era in Europe characterized by the quest for external lands and exploration for economic revival and sustenance, the gospel message was carried to Benin in southern Nigeria by the Catholic Diocese of Lisbon (Ugorie, 2009). Although, this missionary attempt was not successful in the sense of taking cultural root among the indigenous peoples of Benin, due to inadequacy in methodology among other social forces. However, in the 19th century a second attempt was made by a Methodist missionary, Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman in the year 1842 (Ugorie, 2009).

Subsequently, the Anglican Church, Roman Catholic Church and others continued with persistent missionary evangelism. The spread of the Christian message took place in Southern Nigeria's major towns and cities. With Jesus Christ as its founder and the Holy Bible as the authoritative source of ethical codes for Christians, the religion is universal in scope and missionary in focus. Dzurgba (2009:15) has it

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that, "Christianity came with western education, medicine, skills for developing indigenous languages, welfare services and other aspects of western socialization".

On the religious dynamics of Nigeria, the Pew Forum has it that, is perhaps the most intensely religious in the world. As "Nigeria is often portrayed as a country where the religious demography is static-everybody is religious, everybody belongs to one faith or the other" (Butterflies and Wheels, 2011). There is both internal and external religious pluralism in the country. There is no one version of ATR, Islam or Christianity in the polity.

The challenge is how to coordinate the religious sector and its agencies for a robust national development in the face of intolerance and religious manipulation for political ends. Little one wonders as Illega (2001:6) avowed that, "Toy with religion and before you know it all the political and economic achievements are doomed to the flames" thus, affirming that religious pluralism can be a major challenge to security of lives and property if not properly harnessed.

Beyond Pluralism: The Dysfunctional Nexus between Religion, the Economy and Politics in Nigeria

There is no doubt that Nigeria is the religious capital of the world even though no particular universal faith tradition of repute originated from the country. Rather, her long years of involvement and doggedness in foreign religious practices has distinguished the multi-national state as a notoriously religious one. According to Falola in Ilesanmi (1997: IX),

> Religion in Nigeria is as diverse as its people, with millions of people subscribing to varieties of Islam, Christianity, and local religions. This diversity is both a source of strength and weakness. There is strength in the choices that individuals make, and in the beauties of religious self-presentations. However, one weakness has become obvious: pluralism endangers political stability.

A major source of political instability, retardation of economic gains and clog to social progress has been the dysfunctional expression of organized and plural religions in Nigeria. Thus, the issue is beyond the reality of mere religious pluralism as an essential component of a diverse and multicultural society. In fact, efforts aimed at confronting the challenges facing an enduring democratic culture

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have been undermined by religious fanaticism and insecurity, which continue to undermine efforts at leading the nation out of the socio-economic and political doldrums (Oduwole and Fadeyi, 2013).

From a conflict perspective, there is no gain saying that religion in its elusive sense has featured as one of the challenges of democracy in Nigeria. There has been a long list of cases of violent eruptions in the country with religious overt or covert expressions. In fact, fundamentalists from both Islam and Christianity have contributed in no small way to the country's insecurity and stability. According to Lewis (2002:5) "religious assertions, particularly that instigated by fundamentalists of both major faiths, has (sic) incited growing tensions and violence since the return of civilian rule in 1999". In fact, he added that "religious antipathy is one among many dimensions of instability in the country".

Lewis (2002:1) further opines that, "Nigeria has experienced a palpable intensification of religious polarization over the past decade, manifest in political mobilization, sectarian social movements, and increasing violence". Lewis (2002) concludes that though, "the causes of strife vary, as do the belligerents, but there is a prominent religious dimension in much of Nigeria's recent turmoil".

For Ejeh (2007) cited Akah (2018) Nigeria is not a united country because of the level of religious conflicts in her domain. The country has demonstrated a high propensity for religious conflicts in the past decades and even in contemporary times. Akah (2018) describes this as,

> a dramatic rise in the incidents as well as the ferocious and volume of destruction if lives and property that have accompanied the tension and animosity that have been generated in the relationship between religious groups in the country. These incidents of hostilities in different parts of the country have shaken the very foundation of peaceful disposition, and threat to unity.

Ethnic conflicts and the politics of religious affirmation serves as cautionary reminders of the divisive potential of identities in state characterized by cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. Like Nigeria, many of these plural societies have to address with renewed urgency the dilemma of how to reconcile, the compulsions for national integration and the tolerance of differences that is imperative for the building and preservation of viable states (Ilesanmi, 1997).

Resource Control in Nigeria:
It is a well known fact that Nigeria is endowed with vast human and material resources. The country has been repeatedly described by social critics, public commentators and development experts as rich though her citizens are very poor. In fact, majority of Nigerians live far below the poverty line of $1 per day (₦360). Pre-independence Nigeria was a society of a wide range of agricultural and agro-allied products.

The discovery of oil in Nigeria should have been a source of complimentary revenue to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and a means of foreign income. Regrettably, the exploitation and exploration of crude oil led to the neglect and relegation of agriculture to the background. It did not take time before the national economy was reconfigured around this black gold and the cheap or free money it has placed in the hands of those running the economy and their cronies. Resultantly, there is a progressive disregard for hard work, a surge in unemployment, hunger, poverty, and prevalence in a wide range of injustices especially as the fluctuation of international oil prices and recession bites harder. The national economic life of the country over the last four decades has been tied to aggressive exploration and exploitation of crude oil in the Niger-Delta region. Contemporarily, the Niger-Delta is a composition of about ten (10) states. They are six (6) from the South-South (Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo, and Rivers), three (3) from the South-East (Abia, Imo and Anambra) and one (1) from the South-West (Ondo) geo-political zones of the country. Together they contribute more than 80% of Nigeria's national wealth and foreign exchange.

Years of political and economic marginalization, environmental degradation, bad governance and policy inconsistency by the government, and the divide and rule policy of the oil companies led to emergence of militancy in the Niger Delta in the early 2006. The crisis in the Niger delta region arising from the activities of different militant groups operating in the region has brought about some negative implications, not only on oil production and other economic activities, but also on governance in general (Ejibunu, 2007 cited in Nwogwugwu, Alao and Egwuonwu, 2012, p 23).

The disparity between the rich and the poor continually increases and nothing seem to be done to close such gaps despite the fact that workers are still laboring

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hard and working for their capitalists' business owners. Within the context of federalism,

Political Restructuring in Nigeria:
No doubt, restructuring has become a topical issue in Nigeria today. From all angles, Nigerians are advocating for the restructuring of the country for several reasons, some because the federal government being the "Big Brother" among the three tiers of government which has been vested with so much power. Based on these structural imbalance, a lot of Nigerians are calling for restructuring where more powers will be devolve to the regions or states, giving them autonomy to develop and managed their own resources in all ramifications leaving the center to be saddled with more sensitive issues such as foreign affairs, currency, military, etc.

There is no doubt that Nigerian has been perceived as a federation without federalism. Though the concept federalism has faced serious crises of conceptualization, this is because as Elazer (1977) said "there have been several varieties of political arrangements to which the term has been properly applied. Based on the above, the concept has varieties of definitions. One of the propounding fathers of the concept Wheare () says that federalism means the method of dividing powers so that general and regional government are each within a sphere, coordinate and are independent. He noted the principles of federalism to include the division of powers among levels of government with regards to their respective functions.

According to Livingston (1956) federalism is a reflection of inherent diversity in a society. It is a system fashioned to hold different nations together in a state, while still allowing each a degree of autonomy in certain areas. It is a principle which allows a system of government whereby sovereignty is constitutionally divided between the central government and the constituent units. Most fundamental in federalism is the fact that it must allow the constitutional division of powers between levels of government. On the contrary, Nigeria federalism is such that all power belongs to the center with little or nothing happening at the federating units. Is this a true federalism? This is the major reason why Nigerians are clamoring for restructuring, devolution of powers, etc.

It is improper to find a federal polity with defective sense of collective identity and distributive politics. Restructuring in this context is aimed at correcting perceived

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structural defects and institutional deformities (Enweonwu, Eze and Onyejegbu, 2018).

Some Challenges of Restructuring in Nigeria
Lack of Common Ground or Divergence on the Concept:
There is some controversy or divergence on the term. No generally agreeable meaning has emerged. In fact, a wide array of personalities have commented on the issue, for example, former Chairman of Southern Senators' forum, Senator. Hope Uzodimma at the Southern Senators' Retreat in Calabar optimistically expressed that "structuring Nigeria will guarantee national integration". According to the lawmaker, there is no better time to address the issue of restructuring the nation than now. Some were entertaining the fears that national survival may be threatened. But to the lawmaker the current structure carrying our federalism, if not adjusted to assuage the fears of those who believe that it does not guarantee equity and justice may even pose a greater threat to the oneness of the nation.

Dr. Chris Ekiyor a formal President of Ijaw Youth Council said "National unity can only be attained if Nigeria is restructured" he opined that national unity can only be attained if the country was restructured and the principles and tenets of true federalism practiced to accommodate all sections of the country. Also, while supporting and reacting to President Muhammadu Buhari's broadcast that the unity of the country is not negotiable and a settled case, he was of the view that those calling for restructuring are not necessarily asking for a break-up of the country.

He was also quick to affirm that the political and social infrastructure of the country needs a total restructuring. "We are calling for restructuring of the country and true federalism because it will promote national integration, resource control and development. Again he stated, "What I mean is that the current agitation in different parts of the country will not be there if we were practicing true federalism, call it restructuring or national integration" in other words, there exist a gap that must be filled.

Still on the issue of restructuring, His Eminence, John Cardinal Onaiyekan the Catholic Archbishop of Abuja, call on the federal government to change the rule of governance in addition to yielding to the calls by Nigerians to restructure the country.

The Nigerian celebrated noble laureate, Prof Wole Soyinka said Nigeria was over-centralized and that the present concentration did not allow the expression of the true will of the people. According to him, "paddling the idea of 'restructuring the mind' was a dishonest, cheap and trivializing an issue of such importance as it affects the development and security of the nation" he said "my own position is that people shouldn't allow themselves be put up by those who try to cheat on the expression 'restructuring.' Soyinka further maintained thus "it doesn't matter by what name we call it. We all know that this nation was deconstructed and what we live in right now, as a nation, is not allowing structuring that expresses the true will of Nigerians" (Soyinka, 2017).

Formal head of state, General Yakubu Gowon, says there is nothing wrong with restructuring the country, provided it is done within one Nigeria context. Gowon maintained that restructuring is very much in order to avoid a situation where one section of the country is highly advantaged leaving others at a very low pace. Or a situation where some states is too large and powerful as to pose a threat to the unity of the country. He further added that the call for true federalism by some Nigerians was also not a bad idea, as long as it was done within the context of the nation's unity (Gowon, 2016).

Senator Ike Ekeremadu, the former Deputy Senate President of Nigeria, says restructuring Nigeria is inevitable for the all-inclusive advantage it will confer on federating units and enhancement of national unity. The lawmaker stated that restructuring is not the same as exclusive resource control. Under restructuring arrangement, the federating units will have more control over their resources and there would always be an equalization fund to ensure that every region thrives above a reasonable threshold. We cannot continue to do the same thing that has failed us for more than half a century and expect a different result.

Power Imbalance and Limitation on Development:
The first ground of argument against the current structure of the Nigerian federal state is the lopsidedness and unitary nature of the country. Although three lists exist that captures the business of government. Yet, the distributions of values are overbearingly tilted towards the federal government having monopoly over a good number of items. The contents of the exclusive, concurrent and residual lists will attest to that.

In fact, too much power and resources are located at the centre thereby making the state economically unproductive, uncompetitive, indolent, politically weak, disunited and unstable (Enweonwu, Eze and Onyejegbu, 2018). Federal might has been deployed arrogantly and the demands of justice have been neglected or swayed in-line with federal powers. The unitary nature of Nigeria's federalism has spelt doom for national survival and retarded the gains of the vast natural and human resources in the polity.

This current structure is understood as not serving the interest of any section in the Nigeria well. It is like something done to keep every other person down even when they have all that it takes to turn around their economic and political future. With the continuous and dogged dependence on crude oil, accompanied by the pitching of our fiscal policies and national economic planning on same, the Nigerian state seem to have limited their potential for true social progress, economic growth, and political stability. At the immediate past concluded National Conference in the year 2014, many persons spoke against the structural foundations of the country but regrettably they prevailed not.

Political Instability and Insecurity:
It is a known fact that for decades now quality leadership has become unattainable and a mirage in Nigeria, consequently they are bound to be persistent clamor for restructuring across the nation. The inability of Nigerian leaders to find lasting solution to the business of governance and better approach to leadership devoid of selfishness, favoritisms, corruption and insincerity to a large extent has necessitated the call for restructuring of the Nigerian federalism.

On attainment of her independence in October 1st 1960, Nigeria assumed a federal status. Being Africa leading economy and most populous nation, Nigerians are neither happy nor satisfied with the current political economic structure in place, they are not happy with the 1999 constitution which for many is a brain child of the military. One among the reasons being that so much powers are vested on the federal government, making the states and the local government dependent on the federal. However, despite all the negative images painted of her as a failure in the African continent, the country's relative ability to successfully manage issues that had turned her peers' culturally diverse nations with particular reference to Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia and Sudan apart remain a plus to the nation. The success has been attributed to the doggedness of the average Nigerian

citizens to manage effectively with all the interwoven ethnic and socio-cultural as well as other related disuniting forces facilitated by the special structure of the federation since the Nigeria civil war which replaced the hitherto three strong and vulnerable ethnic regions with the current 36 States.

Corruption:
Corruption is one fundamental challenge in Nigeria. It has manifested and continues to manifest itself virtually in all spheres of the country's national life. It has taken the centre stage of the national bane to sustainable development in the Nigerian state. This is because it is both systemic, widespread and a thriving culture. The canker deeply threatens the socio-ethical and politico-economic fabric of the Nigerian society.

Corruption hampers and retards economic prosperity, political stability, and impoverishes the poor by undermining the effectiveness of foreign direct investments and aids in national development. PWC (2015) reports on the impact of corruption in Nigeria as lowering governance effectiveness, especially through smaller tax base and inefficient government expenditure. The report similarly reports that an estimated 8% of Nigeria's tax revenues in the Gross Domestic product (GDP) as being very low when compared to majority of countries. Corruption in Nigeria results in a very weak investment and grossly hinders human capital development since people, especially the poor, are unable to access quality healthcare and education.

*Nationalism***:**
Enweonwu, Eze and Onyejegbu (2018) have it that, "Despite the 1914 amalgamation of the northern and southern protectorates by Lord Lugard, people from different ethnic groups are yet to accept a common identity as Nigerians". They further observe Nnonyelu (2001:145) cited in Enweonwu, Eze and Onyejegbu (2018) posits that,

> Nigerian citizen…see himself first as a member of a clan, more interestingly as a member of an ethnic nationality. Rarely, does he regard himself as a Nigerian, except if the sharing of the national cake occupies prime position in the agenda of national discourse. Even then, his greatest qualification is his ethnic identity.

The place of origin or ethno-religious background of a person has been central to identity-based privileges and immunities in Nigeria. General social life and

economic relations often captures and reflects this reality. Admittance, appointment, allocation on the one hand, and discrimination, deprivation, and destruction of a person or group are similarly decided based on these considerations. In fact, Enweonwu, Eze and Onyejegbu (2018) avow that, "political parties, political participation, appointments and employments are viewed and handled with ethnic, religious and political biases."

Civil Religion: A Socio-political Overview
Jean-Jacques Rousseau was instrumental for the coinage of this socio-political terminology, civil religion. In Chapter 8, book 4 of his *The Social Contract* published in the year 1762 utilized the term "to describe what he regarded as the moral and spiritual foundation essential for any modern society" (Wikipedia, N.d.). In his conceptualization, Rousseau intends civil religion as a form of social cement that will help to unify the state by providing it with sacred authority.
He outlines the simple dogmas of civil religion:
1. Deity
2. Life to come
3. The reward of virtue and the punishment of vice, and
4. The exclusion of religious intolerance

Whether considered a folk religion or a political culture of a state, the concept has a long history in the sociology of religion. It has featured as a societal wide practice or by a segment of it, or by leaders within a society. Since it is not an established religion, it is operated mainly by political leaders who are unconnected to any official clergy in organized religions.

The popular expressions of civil religion include the invocation of God in political speeches and public monuments, the quotation of religious texts on public occasion by political leaders, the veneration of past political leaders, the use of the lives of these leaders to teach moral ideals and commemorating great leaders of the past or historic events, the religious gathering called by political leaders, the use of religious symbols on public buildings, the use of public buildings for worship, founding myths and other national myths, expressions of reverence for the country or the constitution (Wikipedia, n.d).

Among public commentators and media practitioners on political and social affairs, civil religion or civic religion, as it is alternatively called, is presented as a

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wide range of public ritual expressions of patriotism of a sort practiced in all countries (Wikipedia, n.d). Using the American model, the Sociologist Bellah

> identified an elaborate system of practices and beliefs arising from America's unique historic experience and religiosity. Civil Religion in the U.S. was originally Protestant but brought in Catholics and Jews after World War II. Having no association with any religious sect, Civil religion was been used in the 1960s to justify civil rights legislation. Americans ever since the colonial era talk of their obligation both collective and individual to carry out God's will on earth. George Washington was a sort of high priest, and the documents of the Founding Fathers have been treated as almost sacred texts. With the Civil War, says Bellah, came a new theme of death, sacrifice and rebirth, as expressed through Memorial Day rituals (Wikipedia, n.d.).

According to Bellah cited in Marcus (2017) it is a collection of beliefs, symbols, and rituals drawn from American history and institutionalized in a collectivity that function not as a form of national self-worship but as the subordination of the nation to ethical principles that transcend it in terms of which it should be judged. Bellah notes that, Americans' strong self-identification with these values motivates them act in self-sacrificial ways, sometimes to the point of fighting wars to safeguard their country. Their civil religious beliefs inspire self-sacrificial behaviours (Marcus, 2017).

The American Revolution was the main source of the civil religion that has shaped patriotism ever since. As historians have noted, the Revolution produced a Moses-like leader (George Washington), prophets (Thomas Jefferson, Tom Paine) and martyrs (Boston Massacre, Nathan Hale), as well as devils (Benedict Arnold), sacred places (Valley Forge), rituals (raising the Liberty Tree), flags (the Betsey Ross flag), sacred holidays (July 4) and a holy scripture (The Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and the Bill of Rights) (Albanese, 1977 cited in Wikipedia, n.d.).

Every country has a civil religion of some sort, one that creates common values and certain kinds of tolerance. To the British it is the game of soccer. For the Indians it is cricket. For the South Africans, it is rugby. These sports or elements have been used to create a climate of nation building and co-existence.

Imperative of Civil Religion in Resource Control and Political Restructuring in Nigeria:
Chronic and Pervasive Corruption:
In contemporary Nigeria, there is social restiveness, widespread poverty and economic backwardness, and chronic political instability worsened by systemic and deeply entrenched corruption among elites and the masses. The vast majority of civil servants and private business owners and operators in the country are familiar with corrupt practices and actions as they take to activities that clearly depict their lack of love, care or concern for the Nigerian state.

Enweonwu, Eze and Onyejegbu (2018) observe that, "the level of corruption in the country poses serious challenge to the clamour for restructuring. A lot of Nigerians from all works of life believe that the current Nigerian federal structure needs restructuring". The situation in Nigeria has gone so bad that Enweonwu, Eze and Onyejegbu (2018:280) observe that, "the best constitution on the world will not do any good for Nigeria if the people that are supposed to implement it are corrupt and morally bankrupt".

Nation building:
Indeed, things fall apart when the centre can no longer hold. A number of efforts have been put in to ensure an integrated Nigeria society. The establishment of Unity Schools, National Youth Service Corps and the Federal Character Commission three major attempts to build the Nigeria state, yet to no avail. According to the calls of Federal Character Commission (FCC) we are informed that,

> Again we need to observe the federal character principle as enshrined in section 14 (3) of the 1999 constitution when making federal appointments. The whole essence of these is to ensure that the various states of the federation have equal representation in the government at the federal level. This will bring to an end the fear of domination by any state or group from any state in the affairs of government. Otherwise federal character will be an avenue of bringing mediocrity into the system and at the same time remain an instrument of cheating without explanation.

Thus, Adibe (2017) observes that,

> Nigeria's nation-building processes seem to be mired in deep crisis, which feed into the crisis of underdevelopment in the country to

create an existential crisis for many Nigerians. For many young people, a way of resolving the consequent sense of alienation is to retreat from the Nigeria project into idealized primordial identities (p. 10).

Patriotism and Loyalty:
The worst hit by this foundational defect is seen in the height of disloyalty and poor sense of belonging to the Nigerian project. Lack of patriotism by citizens of the country coupled with the precarious mode of governance that often reflects ethnic and religious affinities have meant that the nation building process is not yielding the desired result.

Nigerians from various works of life have conducted themselves in ways that clearly shows that their allegiance is to various primordial sentiments such as religion and ethnic groups. Loots from the state treasury accessed through the public service are allocated to religious groups and community members. People are helped or shown favour depending on such affiliations. This brings to limelight the issue of good or responsible citizenship in Nigerian context. People still see themselves first as Muslims or Christians, as Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Tiv or Ijaw before seeing themselves as Nigerians. Thus, justifying the saying attributed to Awolowo that Nigeria is a mere geographical appellation.

Recommendations:
Firstly, it is often said, that good followership begets good leadership. No doubt, so much dependence on informed citizenry and proper political engagement in governance. Thus, there is every need to groom leaders and political elites with a pluralistic understanding and a truly nationalist vision and passion.
Secondly, past political leaders and fallen heroes should be properly studied, understood and messages or import extracted from their lives, times and strides. A robust civil education that is sensitive to our historical past, contemporary experience and our desired future is required.

Thirdly, national monuments are to be given a new emphasis and pride of place in the country. Conscious and sensitive political leadership is required beyond the call for participatory governance and restructuring as it were.

Fourthly, national reconciliation and forgiveness is urgent in the Nigerian polity. Previous attempts at transitional justice should be concluded and newer ones conducted to promote national healing.

Also, our legislative arm of government has its own share of responsibility. Timely legislative framework for all these will go a long way to save the country from peril. In the enthronement of a civil religion in Nigeria constitutional provisions, a platform would have been set for transformational and sustainable change.

In addition, various media houses and their regulators should all be carried along and given a central mandate in this project that can see a re-birthed country with a truly national spirit. The National Orientation Agency (NOA) and sundry agencies are to equally champion this task.

Religious leaders are to be duly sensitized and oriented to understand the import and urgency of this idea to the national survival of Nigeria. This is because it may not be difficult before some of them may construe the venture as blasphemous, anti-Christian or un-Islamic and as such ungodly. Thus, religious fanatics and violent extremist may better be oriented on the necessity of this political philosophy that promotes pluralism in an obviously multi-national state. This is to ensure that they do not mass mobilize, advocate through protest against this seemingly saving grace ideology.

Concluding Remarks

The paper observes that without patriotic and loyal citizens, resource control and restructuring may as well be a mere structural change and superfluous without accompanied individual transformation to sustain it. Civil religion is the missing link in the resource control and political restructuring mix. In this sense, it is the third strand that make-up this inseparable social trinity.

Like President Donald Trump affirmed within the first few months of his administration, American civil religion is used to shape our national identity using religious narrative or customs. He observes that it is "…the most profound force for creating a shared national identity".

The paper suggests the adoption of civil religion would culminate in unrestrained loyalty given to religions be transferred to the Nigerian state. When this is done,

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the problem of disregard for the country by her citizens which has bred and continues to breed disaffection for the country would be curbed.

It is envisaged that responsible and responsive citizens would emerge from among her population with a heightened sense of patriotism shown at various levels of personal, interpersonal, administrative and governmental interactions and duties in the country. Civil religion, resource control and restructuring are an inseparable social trinity in Nigeria.

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