



Towards Achieving National Integration in A Heterogeneous Nigerian Society: A Theological Reflection on Romans 9:25-26

Dr M.O. Oyetade and Mrs. Esther Adeola Femi-Olubi
Department of Religions, University of Ilorin
1droyetademich@gmail.com/oyetade.mo@unilorin.edu.ng
2thecrownedqueen247@gmail.com

Doi: <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.104.27>

Abstract

Over the last few decades, several problems have been militating against Nigeria as a nation. This is because Nigeria is a mixture of many ethnic groups and diverse religious orientations. Those problems range from the religious crisis, poverty and ethnocentrism to socio-economic, political and academic issues. The objective of this paper is to unearth the havoc ethnocentrism has caused socially, economically, politically, educationally and religiously in Nigeria. The study employed a historical and exegetical approach as its methodology. The paper found that ethnicity and religion are key issues in national integration that political elites use to camouflage their incompetency, corruption, leadership failure and loss of political interest. The consequences are various ethnic conflicts, prejudices, religious crises, insecurity and agitation for separation and secession which do not augur well for national integration and development. Paul the Apostle in Romans. 9:25-26 presents a theological thought that could serve as a panacea as to how a heterogeneous Nigerian society can be integrated with people of different races and social classes peacefully. The paper concludes that the nation should apply the principle that delights to take those who are "not my people" and make them "my people" to achieve national integration in Nigeria. The paper, therefore, recommended restructuring the federal system of government, driving equity and fair distribution of appointments, placing less emphasis on religion and ethnicity on official documents and harvesting sports solidarity for national integration to give way for development to thrive at the state and local levels and permeate all-inclusive living theology.

Keywords: Romans 9:25-26, National Integration, Nigeria, Heterogeneous, Ethnocentrism.

Introduction

Nigeria is a state that is 63 years old since independence from colonial rule. It has a population of roughly 220 million and 93 million voters. There are numerous challenges based on ethnicity which are worrying and the underlying causes include structural factors, political factors, economic and social factors, and cultural and factors relating to how diverse groups are perceived by one another. Onyenechechie (2008:200) gives two reasons for the perennial problem of ethnicity in Africa, including Nigeria. The first is what he describes as "man's corporate pride, stemming from the weakness of man's sin nature." In this, each tribe views itself as better off than others. Secondly, some ethnic disputes are also informed by the past action of the European powers which imposed contestable borders on many African nations. These borders are widely contested through armed conflicts.

Despite these causes of ethnicity in Nigeria, over the years we have not been able to overcome this problem. It, therefore, implies that the perennial tribal conflicts occurring in the country indicate that we have not been able to manage a heterogeneous Nigeria society well



because each tribe still tries to gain prominence over the other on socio-political, academic, economic and religious issues. Wilson (1971:16) rightly views that “the problem of tribalism denies the conceptual egalitarian nature of the human society and rather insists on tribal projection”. Adeyanju (2010:29) argues that the problem of ethnocentrism makes it difficult to galvanize Nigerian people into a nation based on common shared understanding and the outcome of the phenomenon consists of bitterness, sentiments, oppression of the minority, socio-cultural and religious fundamentalism, open fracas, marginalization, the hegemony of political and religious power, display of tribal superiority, political dictatorship etc. in our national polity. Against the background situation of ethnocentrism in Nigeria, Paul the Apostle in Romans 9:25-26 presents a theological thought that could serve as a panacea to how a heterogeneous Nigerian society can be integrated with people of different races and social classes peacefully. According to the Apostle Paul, at first, only the Jews were considered by God to be “my people.” He also adds that the Gentiles who were not God’s people became sons of the living God through faith in Christ. It then means that the achievement/accomplishment of integration of Jews and Gentiles never happens in a vacuum, the uniting factor is faith in Christ.

Olawoyin (2006:25) opines that one of the major plagues affecting Nigeria and indeed many nations of Africa, is ethnic chauvinism as it will be termed in this paper, “ethnocentrism”. This, together with religious chauvinism/exclusivism is even sapping the very life of the nation. In popular thought, both are assumed to be intertwined with the geography of the country. The traditional assumption, which is still prevalent, is that the northern part of the country is prevalently Hausa/Fulani in ethnic composition and is decidedly Islamic in religion. The eastern part of the country is Igbo in ethnic composition and is decidedly Christian in religion, while the west is Yoruba in ethnic composition but with Christianity and Islam as the religions. This traditional assumption is of course false. The fact, however, remains that, both ethnic chauvinism and religious chauvinism are threatening the existence of the nation. The latter is not our concern in this paper, but rather the former. Ethnic chauvinism had been troubling Nigeria since its inception. This problem was the root cause of the civil war of 1967-1970. In Nigeria, the February and March 2004 riots and killings in Plateau and Kano States were mainly caused by ethnic chauvinism, although the religious factor was emphasized (Human Right Watch Report 2005:7). The irony of this problem is that it pervades even the Christian church. The Christian church which by its essential nature must be ethnic chauvinism free is rent through and through by the same problem...” “(Galatians3:26-28) ...” “(Ephesians 2:13-18)”. This may not be surprising when it is recollected that the church is composed of saved sinners. But it should be remembered that one of the traditional and classical marks of the true church is holiness. Yes, the fact that the church belongs to Christ and was established by Him is what makes it holy; but holiness even in practice is what she should aspire to. In this paper, the focus is not on holiness but on the catholicity of the church as her classical mark in acceptance of all people.

The argument of the paper, then, is that ethnic pluralism is the ideal that is expected of the Christian church and the beauty of a nation too. Thus, ethnocentrism which is currently predominant and is destroying the church and the nations is contrary to the essential nature of the church and nations. The paper begins the argument in the next section by looking into the exegesis of Romans 9:25-26, this is followed by clarifying and justifying the concept of ethnocentrism.

An Exegetical and Theological Study of Romans 9:25-26: A Preamble

Romans 9:25-26 in the original concept, and passages from Hosea 2:23; 1:10 refer to the spiritual restoration of Israel. Pious Jews considered all non-Jews (Gentiles) as being ceremonially unclean. They thought of themselves as pure and clean because of their national heritage and religious ceremonies. Unger (1978:526) asserts that, before Christ’s



coming, Gentiles and Jews were kept apart from one another. Jews considered Gentiles as unclean before God. According to Hale (2007:565), Paul finally finds in Israel the principle that God is a saving, forgiving, restoring God who delights to take those who are “not my people” and make them “my people”. Paul then applies this principle to the Gentiles whom God makes His people by sovereignty gratifying them into a covenant relationship with Him. Only Christ, therefore, breaks down the walls of prejudices; reconciles all believers to God and unites us in one body. According to Stott (1994:274), the inclusion of the gentiles is a marvelous reversal of fortunes by God’s mercy. The outsiders have been welcomed inside, the aliens here become citizens, and the strangers are now beloved members of the family.

Exegesis of Romans 9:25-26

In Greek: v.25. *Hoos kaí en toó Hooseeé légei Kalésoo tón ou laón mou laón mou kaí Teén ouk eegapeeméneen eegapeeméneen* v.26 *Kaí éstai en toó tópoou hoú erréthee autoís Ou laós mou humeís ekeí kleetheésontai huióí Theoú zoóntos* (Aland, and et.al., 2007:423).

In English: Romans 9:25 as He also says in Hosea, "I will call those not My people, My people; and those not beloved, Beloved." 26 And it shall be, in the place where it was said to them. "You are not My people; there they shall be called sons of the living God." (MKJV)

Keywords studies

Calling *Kaléso*

Bauer (1979:286-87, 502-4) argues that turning to Romans 9:25, Paul opens his paraphrase with *kaléso* rather than *eroo*, introducing the theme of the election. *Eípón* in the LXX is the generic “speak, say” word in Greek, whereas *kaleo* means more specifically to call, name, or invite. Particularly in Paul, it often means to “choose for receipt of a special benefit or experience,” those chosen by God effectively for salvation. Scholars like Seifrid (2007:647; Schreiner (1998:547); Dunn (1988:2:571); Moo (1996:621); Fitzmyer (1993:573) agree that the change, which was certainly Paul’s addition, plays on the double meaning of *kaleo*, both to name and elect. The insertion of “call” emphasizes the salvific meaning present already in Hosea. *καλέω* (*kaleo*) also appears at least once, and possibly twice, in Romans 9:26. Schreiner (1998:530) agrees and Seifrid (2007: 647) gives an extended defense of the view that some text variants replace *erréthee autoís* (it will be said to them) with *ean kleetheésontai* (they will be called).

Surprisingly, it was not considered uncertain enough for discussion in Metzger (1994:32), although the former is preferable. Later in the verse, however, Paul certainly uses *kaleoo*, following the LXX. The Greek translators change *Eel-chaay* (it will be said to them, ‘children of the living God’), into *ekeí kleetheésontai huióí Theoú zoóntos* (there they will be called children of the living God) (Hosea 2:23). The change probably does not indicate that the LXX wanted to emphasize the salvific election of God, but it does show that in the second Century CE, scholars understood Hosea to refer to God calling out a people for himself. Hence, the text fits well with Paul’s usage of it. According to Wright (2002:10:643), Paul emphasizes that God not only calls by name but that He is effectually calling the Gentiles into salvation. Both Jews and Gentiles are invited to respond and become children of God. Herman Ridderbos (1975:236) points out that neither Jew nor Gentile became God’s people by their own doing, but even their faith “is the fruit of the effectual, divine call.” The aspect of being called out, beginning in Hosea but made explicit in Romans 9:25-26, is key to Paul’s discussion of predestination and God’s gracious election throughout Romans 9.



Love and Mercy *agapao and eleeo*

According to Bauer (1979: 315, 5-6), Paul makes another interesting change at the end of v.25, replacing *eleeo* in the LXX with *agapao* is usually translated, as “show mercy,” while *agapao* is a wider word expressing genuine love or interest in another’s well-being. The position of Seifrid (2007:647) is that the Hebrew *racham* (show mercy) is roughly equivalent to *eleeo*. Thus, some interpreters deny that Paul refers to Hosea’s daughter (No-mercy) at all. They claim Paul instead omitted that portion of text at the beginning and added a reference to loving someone who is not loved, seen as Hosea’s wife, to the end of the quote. But even elsewhere in Hosea, the LXX uses *agapao* to translate *racham*, and the parallel to the beginning of Hosea 2:23 is clear.

Calvin (1960:214) and Hodge (1972:326) both seem unaware of any alternative view. Schreiner (1998:527) suggests *agapao* was in Paul’s copy of the LXX, which Moo (1996:612) also considers likely. Better is Dunn (1988:572), who says Paul translated *agapao* himself, and the LXX variant in Vaticanus B is a later Christian insertion. Dunn’s reason for Paul’s change—that he wanted to keep mercy only used in a positive sense—seems highly unlikely, however. Hence, according to Seifrid (2007:647), Paul simply makes a free translation of the MT and is referring to Hosea’s daughter. While not altering the referent, Paul’s change to *agapao* may have some significance, however. God’s faithful love for his people runs throughout the book of Hosea, as he takes back his people despite their unfaithfulness to him. While not certain, it does seem likely that by *agapao* Paul intends to refer to the entire message of the book of Hosea. The NT also uses *agapao* more to refer to God’s covenant—and even sacrificial—love for his elect, and as such it emphasizes Hosea’s point that God is the one acting to redeem his people.

Translations of *yee°aameer* It shall be said

Of interest are the two *niphal* imperfects, *yee°aameer*, the first is rendered in the LXX as *erréthee*, an aorist passive indicative of *ereoo*. The second is *kleetheésontai*, a future passive indicative from *kaleo*, as noted above. For the second *yee°aameer* to be translated as a future passive in both Greek and English makes good sense. Arnold and Choi (2003:2) state that, The Hebrew imperfect also indicates ongoing action in some sense. Hence the idea of being called “children of the living God,” is probably best seen not as the one-time proclamation of being a part of the family, but as God’s ongoing keeping of his people. However, the imperfect can also simply refer to an event that will imminently happen, without ongoing implications after that.

According to McComiskey (1992:29), in addition to the tense, both verbs offer the slight difficulty of lacking an explicit subject. Grammatically, it is possible for the third person singular *niphal* to be either reflexive or passive, and to refer to some generic message “it will be said,” or to something specific. It appears most likely that both verbs are impersonal passives: “it was said / it is being said / it will be said,” and English translations all understand them this way. However, Arnold and Choi (2003:2) argue that the first is much more difficult. A Hebrew tense generally associated with ongoing and future action is translated by a Greek one generally associated with completed and /or past action!

Three options for a Hebrew imperfect in this grammatical construction are future, customary, or progressive. In the context of Hosea, progressive seems most likely. Thus, Hosea is making the point that the people are now being declared that they are no longer God’s people, and they will remain in this state until he calls them “children of the living God.” Why the LXX translators chose a perfect indication remains elusive. Because Paul quotes the LXX verbatim, it is hard to know what significance he makes of the difference between the MT and LXX. Certainly, however, he matches Hosea’s idea that the Gentiles have continuously not been God’s people, but a change is now taking place.



The Place *tópoo*

Both the positive and the negative “saying” happened in a location not explicitly defined by the text; although the way we identify this place in Hosea will impact how we understand Paul’s reference to it in Romans. There are as many interpretations of the place as interpreters with options including Jezreel, but Jerusalem, is the choice of Fitzmyer, who sees this passage as a call for the northern kingdom to return. However, as argued above, according to (Fitzmyer, 1993:273), Hosea emphasizes God’s election (indicative) in this passage, not a command to return (imperative). All of Palestine, the place of exile, and even that Hosea prophecies directly of the Gentiles scattered throughout their various places. Hodge (1972:327) applies the Hosea verse directly to the Gentiles. It does not apply to a return to the land, or the church, but that “wherever in the heathen world people were regarded as aliens, now they are called children of God.” Jezreel only makes sense if one denies that Hosea is not only referring to the destruction that has already taken place in 733BCE but also predicting the coming exile of the whole northern kingdom. Thus, this view should be rejected. Jerusalem makes even less sense in Hosea’s original context, as he speaks primarily to Ephraim and not Judah. The place of exile is an interesting possibility and would be the best place if both *niphal* imperfections discussed above are taken as futures, but this is unlikely. Charles Hodge’s application directly to the Gentiles, denying any immediate fulfilment, does not seem to do justice to Hosea’s focus on Assyrian exile. The remaining option, which is preferable, is that Hosea speaks of Israel generally as “the place.” Hosea is prophesying in Palestine, speaking of widespread destruction that is coming on all God’s people who have turned away, and hence all of Israel, makes the most sense. This also has implications for the place of restoration.

The immediate fulfilment is merely a return from captivity to Palestine, but Hosea also has in mind a full, reunited Israel all coming to the land. Even here in Hosea, Jewish interpretation foreshadowed an eschatological gathering of the Gentiles to Zion along with the return of the Jews. Thus, we come to what the place means in Paul’s use of Hosea in Romans 9. Dunn (1988:572) perhaps gives Jewish exegetes too much credit for recognizing a Gentile fulfilment and salvation of the nations, especially when connected here to being called, “children of the living God.” Nevertheless, his point is valid that it is in some form present here, and other passages do make explicit the Gentiles being gathered into Zion. Battle (1981:115-29) claims that a few continue to see Romans 9:25-26 as referring to Israel, a literal end-times fulfilment of the Jews coming to Christ in Zion rather than Gentile conversion, but the clear contrast with vv.27-28 dismantles that view.

A second view according to Hodge (1972:327) is that Paul changes the meaning of place, and it means merely all the Gentile nations, from which God will call his people. Moo (1996:613), takes the same position, writing, “Concerning the Gentiles: it is in the land of exile, the dispersion, that God will call out a people for himself”. But the “wherever the Gentiles are” interpretation probably overstates the significance of “place,” fueled by an LXX text variant indicating Paul added *ekeí*. Some LXX manuscripts do not include *ekeí*. But the textual support suggests that *ekeí* is original and was in Paul’s version. Additionally, Paul copies the rest of the verse verbatim, and it seems unlikely that he would add in a word that only created more confusion. Fitzmyer (1993:573) agrees with this conclusion, although he goes further to say that *ekeí* has no significance to Paul and is merely a part of the quote. According to Wallace (2000:150-1), Instead, the “place” in Paul’s quote should not be seen as a geographic reference, but merely that “even there were” a couple of other textual issues relating to the “where” are relatively clear, and unlikely to affect exegesis. The genitive relative pronoun *Ou* is replaced by the dative *oó* and the Latin translation of Irenaeus (c.395). Schreiner (1998: 528), remarks, “The replacement of *ou* with *oó* is so awkward that it can probably be considered a mistake in which the last letter of *topoo* was repeated”. Schreiner (1998:528) adds that God’s people are cast off but they will be restored.



In summary, while Hosea immediately focuses on the return from exile, he also foreshadows the promised gathering of the Gentiles to the land. While Paul deemphasizes the aspect of coming to Palestine, his reference to the Hosea verse to the election of the Gentiles fits within the original scope of Hosea.

Collective

One of the striking features of Romans 9:25-26 is that the passage not only addresses the calling of individual Gentiles but that God is calling them out to be his unique people group and indeed they are His nation or *laos* (Nicolaidis, 2010:4). In Romans 9:26, as Paul quotes from the LXX of Hosea, he refers to “them,” and “ye all.” Plurals appear in both the Hebrew and Greek of Hosea 1:10b / Romans 9:26. In Hebrew, *laahem* (x2), *°atem* and *B-neey* are plural, and in Greek, *autoís humeís kleetheésontai* and *huioí*. The plurals bring out an emphasis, not only on the mass of people, but of a special collection, as seen in context of the collective singular references. All the Gentiles Paul is referring to are identified in Hosea 2:23 / Romans 9:25 with the persons of *lo°-amiy* and *Lo°-Ruchaamaah*, as well as *haa* (her) which referred to Israel (and possibly Gomer). Finally, the strongest collective sense appears in the way the word *laos* (people) is used. It denotes the chosen race, the royal priesthood and the holy nation of God (Nicolaidis, 2010). “The term *laikos* is etymologically derived from Laos, the semantic significance of which is the idea of the people of God, the pleroma of the church. After all, the Church cannot be theologically conceived in terms of superior and inferior classes, but only as a unity, as one body; nor can it reflect secular structures based on power and divisions, but the inner life of the Holy Trinity, which according to Christian dogmatic tradition, is unity, communion, love and sharing” (Vasiliades 1988:n.p, quoted in Nicolaidis, 2010: 2). As George Guthrie (1981:750) points out, the biblical conception of being a people meant an exclusive and well-defined community. In modern usage “‘people’ generally denotes and aggregate number of individuals. It tends to lack identity.” But in the New Testament, a basic notion is a collective people group unified by their belief in the risen Lord, the nation or *laos tou Theou*- the Nation of God (Nicolaidis, 2010). Hosea and Paul use “people” to show that God is calling out for himself not merely a collection of individuals, but a cohesive community united by faith in him. God’s people are a family, and even the Gentiles are invited to join.

Sonship

Wolff (1974:27) argues that, turning now to the end of Hosea 1:10 / Romans 9:26, God does more than create a people for himself; he calls them his children. In Hosea 2:23 God calls “ my people,” but here he says, “children of the living God.” This means much more than just being God’s people again and being restored to the covenant; instead, Hosea is saying that God will pour out his tremendous blessings and increase, reflecting both intimacy and protection by his power. Those who are children of God are distinct in the way they have been personally called out from the nations to be the special objects of God’s affection. When Paul speaks of believers as children of God, Ridderbos (1995:198-9) states that, he is not doing something completely new. Instead, the promise of sonship is found here in Hosea. As Seifrid (2007:607) mentions, sonship is Paul’s primary category for talking about salvation, and so the quote was very convenient for him. While the people God calls is collective, and many have interpreted sonship the same way, with the nation of Israel as the son (singular) of God, Hosea emphasizes a different point here. The plural *B-neey* shows that Hosea sees believers, individually, as children of God.

Hence, when Paul uses the same sense in the NT, he is only making more explicit what Hosea understood before. What makes Paul original is that he applies the language of sonship to the Gentiles. While Jews had been called children before, and the Gentiles were foreshadowed by Hosea’s prophecy, not until this last dispensation were the Gentiles also welcomed into the most intimate of relationships with Yahweh.



The Relationship between Ancient Jews and Gentiles

According to Walker (1960:1214), among the Jewish sects, the concept of Jewish-Gentile hostility was more or less a statement of faith. The Essenes believed that *i basileia tou theou* (the kingdom of God) was meant for them alone while the apostate Jews and the generality of the Gentiles were predestined for fiery destruction in the eschatological world. For the Zealot, the Gentile overlords, precisely the Romans, should not only be seen as enemies alone but paying taxes to them constituted an abomination. The Jews had forgotten that their call was missionary in nature and they rather looked down on their prospective converts with a derogatory attitude. They never allowed the Gentiles to enter the main hall of the temple; there was a conspicuous sign over the temple door to alert non-Jews about this caution. According to Russell (1987:382):

They (the Gentiles) were regarded as unclean, with whom it was unlawful to have any friendly intercourse. They were the enemies of God and His people, to whom the knowledge of God was denied unless they became proselytes, and even then, they could not... be admitted to full fellowship. Jews were forbidden to counsel them (the Gentiles), and if they (the Gentiles) asked about divine things, they would be cursed. All children born of mixed marriages were bastards.

During Jesus' days and ministry on earth, He, however, differed in his Jewish-Gentile relationship. He taught that God is for all Nations. He dined and wined with the destitute, the poor and sinners. His historic parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37 is meant to inculcate the need to build a peaceful, loving and ecumenical spirit in people generally on earth. Jesus was out to reconstruct a society where everyone would be accessible to equal rights and privileges as far as the privileges of the kingdom of God were concerned. His Jewish disciples were greatly surprised when Jesus told them: "My house is a house of prayer for all Nations" (Mark 11:17). In the Jewish socio-religious worldview, the gentiles should not form part of God's Commonwealth.

Effect of Ethnocentrism on National Integration

According to Burns (1958: 21). There are well over 400 tribal groups in the country. And that these tribal groups and numerous tribes, great and small, speak different languages, worship various gods and differ one from another in manners and customs. It is in light of the above statement Post and Vickers (1973: 11ff) describe Nigeria as "a conglomerate society". In Nigeria, we have three prevalent ethnic tribes which are: the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Yoruba in the West; while the Eastern region is dominated by Igbo people. Unfortunately, the major and minor tribes are often in hostilities and collisions with each other and these have negative effects on the Nigerian polity. Some of the ethnic tribes view themselves as being born to rule over other tribes who should bow to them through unquestionable subservience. Some feel that their religion and culture are better than those practised among other tribes. In recent times, Adeyanju (2010: 40) argues that resource control, political dominion and militancy now form part of the problems causing animosities between the people-groups in the nation. They attack others on the pages of newspapers and sometimes come out with arms and ammunition against one another. The effect of these attacks is telling on the socio-political development of the country. It's worth noting that, the problem of ethnicity often disrupts national and inter-tribal peace.

Narrating the ordeal of the civil war, Rex Niven (1970:3) laments that:

Nigeria has been torn apart by a cruel war. This peaceful and prosperous country has been ravaged in one of its most progressive and populous



regions. Men and women have been confronted with a ghastly reality of battle in a country where the sound of arms fired and the flash of blades bared in anger had been for long unknown.

Ethnocentrism threatens our national unity. In other words, self-assertion, self-seeking and ethnic arrogance against other tribes results in national disintegration. According to Damola Olatunde (2006:77) ethnocentrism has caused Nigeria to lose decades of development because it has slowed down growth in economies on a per capita basis. The lives of people who would have helped to move the country forward in every sector are lost in several preventable ethnic statements. Consequently, upon that, the gap between the poor and the rich becomes widened in situations of ethnic discrimination.

Adeyanju (2010: 44) opines that the problem of ethnicity in Nigeria is taking a new turn almost every day. Different major tribes now think of the possession of a frontal body to check the excesses of perceived adjacent people-group(s). Such bodies including Egbesu Boys (fighting the cause of Ijaw people in their struggle against the Itshekiri community in the Niger Delta), Oodua People's Congress (OPC, believed to be advancing social justice for Yoruba people), Arewa People Congress (APC, at the vanguard of Hausa-Fulani hegemony in the North) and Movement for the Actualization of the state of Biafra (MASOB) in Igbo land) among others.

Nigerians are so divided along religious and ethnic lines that an average Tiv, Igbo, Hausa or Yoruba person first thinks of himself as Hausa or Igbo before thinking that he is Muslim or Christian. This division is seen in almost everything we do. It's seen in:

- (1) Appointments into key offices such as heads of MDAs, the legislature, executive, judiciary, armed forces and para-military agencies, etc.
- (2) Employment into key government offices of NNPC, down to the universities. Many Nigerian Federal Universities have gone tribal and tend to talk less as being state universities.
- (3) Recruitment into the military/para-military agencies also shows some division..
- (4) Admission into institutions of higher learning, military institutions, unity schools and even course allocation (e.g. medicine, pharmacy, engineering, nursing, etc.) are all based on religion and ethnicity. This accounts for the declining standards and examination misconduct that has been institutionalised in the school system. Admissions are given on religious/ethnic grounds and not on merit. Academic staff are also recruited most times on religious/ethnic grounds. Vice-chancellors' lists are often full of candidates based on religious/ethnic sentiments because they want to please the powers that be or their principals.
- (5) Marriages are also done according to religious and ethnic lines.
- (6) Formation of political parties in Nigeria for long has been on religious/ethnic lines. The Northern People's Congress (NPC) and the National Party of Nigeria (NPN) were parties for the Muslims and later APP because of Governor Ahmed Sani Yerima who was a member and supporter of the Sharia Law. Other political parties formed on religious and ethnic linings include Action Group (AG), Tiv Progressive Union, Middle Belt Peoples Party (MBPP), Middle Zone League (MZL) and Birom Progressive Union (BPU). The present case of Muslim-Muslim or Christian-Christian tickets is ongoing in Nigeria as the 2023 election approaches.
- (7) Hangmen Death Warrants are signed (or not signed) by Governors based on religious or ethnic sentiments. Thus, while the death warrants of some convicted to die by hanging is quickly signed, others are not signed for many years depending on their religious and or ethnic leaning.

Consequently, the first hurdle in the path of national integration in Nigeria has been a regenerative breed of selfish politicians and greedy political gladiators who seize power through the barrel of the gun or through stolen electoral mandates. As they compete for



power, prestige and associated benefits, the political elites in a bid to secure the support of members of their own ethnic/religious groups accentuate ethnic/religious differences and demonise members of other ethnic/religious groups. For instance, during the first Republic, in Benue State. J.S. Tarka came home and informed Jato Aka that he had the ambition of liberating the Tiv from the tyrannical rule of the Hausa. He received his spiritual blessings and left. But when he failed, he mobilised his ethnic group and led a revolt against the ruling Political party Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) whose members were nicknamed among the Tiv as Hausa. However, during the second republic the same J.S., Tarka pitched camp with the Hausa in a bid to become the president of the country. A dream he never achieved.

Secondly, corruption has so permeated the entire fabric of the state that the issues that cause disaffection among ethnic nationalities in the country include poverty, hunger, illiteracy and its attendant limited opportunities, unemployment, marginalisation, infrastructural decay, homelessness and lack of access to quality health care are products of corruption. Rather than look to the West to find solutions for corruption, Nigeria should begin to look to the East (Asia) where capital or severe punishment is meted out on corrupt state officials. A skewed federal system as it is being practiced in Nigeria today and this is another challenge for national integration.

The fear of losing control by the ruling class is another issue standing in the path of national integration in Nigeria. For many years now, the people of Nigeria have continuously canvassed for an opportunity to hold a national conversation to address the present political configuration called Nigeria, but all to no avail. Nnoli and Nwagwu have contended that the ruling class in Nigeria inherited a state structure and has left it without any form of modification or moderation up until now. According to Nnoli and Nwagwu (2013: 80), instead, the ruling class is preoccupied with the use of state paraphernalia for accumulating surplus without producing this surplus. The resultant contradiction is an institutionalised myopic and visionless ethnic-centred leadership with a separatist and particularistic political outlook.

Onifade (2013: 80) argues that federalism as it is presently practiced in Nigeria suffers because of a lack of fiscal federalism, over-centralisation of power at the centre, laidback or non-viable states, and absence of state police, among others. More importantly, federalism in Nigeria has failed to guarantee national integration on one hand and yet fails to guarantee local rule on the other hand. According to them, although Nigeria does not have a better option for democracy, it cannot continue to administer the polity based on the existing federal arrangement. This calls for restructuring. Again, Onifade (2013: 80) further argues that the lack of political will to do the right thing by the political leadership has remained one reason why the country has continued to flounder in the 'sea of confusion' and is tottering on the precipice of religious and ethnic division. Another hurdle to realising national integration in Nigeria is the existence of weak institutions of the state. It seems these institutions are kept weak to further the political and economic fortunes of the ruling class. In Nigeria, it is 'criminal to be honest and honest to be criminal'. Such weak, embryonic, sterile, insensitive and amoral characteristics of state institutions have further tilted Nigeria to the precipice. Not only that, according to Onifade (2013: 81), a lack of fairness, justice and equity in the country with regard to resource allocation and distribution, power sharing, enjoyment of fundamental human rights and punishment of criminals who hide under political umbrellas or bunkers created by the ruling class takes the country backwards with regard to national cohesion efforts. When leaders engage in all these, they use ethnicity and religion to cover up so as to enjoy the applause of their support groups to the detriment of national integration.

Insecurity: Nigeria has serious security challenges ranging from poverty, unemployment, kidnapping for ransom and or rituals, terrorism, armed banditry, Fulani herdsmen attacks on farmers, human/drugs trafficking, as well as social vices such as prostitution, commercial sex, cultism, etc. In fact, one cannot quantify the number of people kidnapped in Nigeria apart



from the Chibok school girls and Leah Sharibu who has remained in captivity for not renouncing her faith.

Indeed, Afolabi (2015:45) states that, crises regarded as religious are mostly triggered by ethnic socioeconomic and political interest. The 1st military coup d'état by major Nzeagu where Sir Ahmadu Bello the Sardauna of Sokoto was killed had religious/ethnic colouration. Similarly, the killing of major General Aguiyi Ironsi the then military Head of State in a bloody coup on 29th January, 1966 was said to be reprisal attacks by the Northern military for killing Sir Ahmadu Bello, a Muslim leader from the North by a Christian Army, Major Kaduna Nzeagu from the South. Religion was undoubtedly one of the factors that led to the Biafra war (1967-1970) that claimed over 600,000 lives.

Other issues that have given birth to the tension between Christians and Muslims include:

- (a) The formation of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)
- (b) The inclusion of Nigeria in the Organisation of Islamic Conference. (Christians see this as a ploy to Islamise Nigeria).
- (c) The introduction of Sharia Law. Indeed, the implementation of Sharia Law in some states brought about religious unrest, violence and led to the annihilation of some Christians.

The Efforts of the Government in Achieving National Integration in Nigeria

i) Constitution

Nigeria has a constitution that describes the rights of every citizen which makes them equal in the country irrespective, of religion, ethnic groups or geographical background. According to Gidado (2004:228), a constitution refers to the fundamental laws and principles, which describe and dictate the manner by which a state is governed. It usually contains all institutions and organs of government. It also contains their powers, functions and very basic legal descriptions of what a constitution is. Moreover, the Nigerian Constitution in section 17: Social Objectives, subsections 2(a) states that: "every citizen shall have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law" while 3(a) states that "All citizens without discrimination on any ground whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunities to secure suitable employment" (Federal Republic of Nigeria, [FRN] (.32-33). However, in practice just as Goubadia (2003:29) observed:

Tensions generated by the application of constitutional provisions which in one breath proclaim one Nigeria nation and citizenship and, in another, give free rein to factors that can reinforce ethnicity and fragmentation in the polity. Alongside creation of one Nigerian citizenship is the emphasis on states and local governments of origin depending on the circumstances end up in ethnicity.

He further explains that the result of this fragmentation takes the form of preferential policies by states and in discrimination against other Nigerians, so called non-indigenes, with respect to state civil service employment and promotion, admission to state educational institutions and public procurement and contract awards contrary to constitutional provisions regarding common and equal Nigerian citizenship rights. At various times, moreover, claims for preferential treatment of state indigenes in federal institutions located in their states of origin have also been asserted in a number of states.

ii) Formation of Political Parties

The government does not allow political parties to be formed based on ethnic considerations. Each political party is required to show a fair representation in each of the states of the federation and the federal capital territory. This is aimed at achieving national integration of



various ethnic groups who ought to come together and reason as a political party with national interests considered rather than ethnicity. Section 48 of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) states that the Senate shall consist of three senators from each state and one from the FCT, Abuja. The Senate is composed on the principle of equality of states which is dominant feature of federating units that guarantees equality of status for the component states.

According to Sections 221-223 of the 1999 constitution (as amended) all political parties, the officials and the pattern of party politics must be national in outlook. The essence of these provisions is to avert the emergence of regional or sectional political parties that would definitely represent sectional interests and therefore be antithetical to national unity. This noble objective is difficult to achieve, though, a good strategy, it appears at the end of the formations, that the parties are expressing their ethnic interest at a later stage as the three major ethnic groups of Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo while the minority ethnic groups align to any of the majority. An attempt was made by the then military government during the General Ibrahim Gbadamosi Babangida's regime to solve the problem of formation of political parties based on ethnic groups by introducing a two-party system in the country in 1989. The parties formed and sponsored by the then military regime were the Social Democratic Party (SDP) and The National Republican Convention (NRC), and this was a bold step by the government in the right direction of national integration. One is made to think that the civilian rule would have continued with two party systems not necessary bearing the same names. However, the parties should not be more than two in the interest of national integration. Nevertheless, it appears that even within the same party, ethnic and religious politics became noticeable and inevitable, so even a one-party system would not necessarily be void of ethnicity and religious considerations and sentiments.

iii) Establishment of Federal Capital Territory

The creation of new Federal Capital was seen as an integrating effort. To this Nkom submits:

National integration was meant to be facilitated by the location and creation of the new Federal Capital at Abuja. A place, to all intents and purposes, fairly equidistant from the farthest parts of Nigeria. It was meant to be a home for all Nigerians -a melting pot of some sort. How far it has been able to achieve this is yet to be determined. It is hoped that the city will offer some hope as the place to begin the process of national integration (Goubadia, 2003:32).

How this has helped to achieve national integration is still questionable. However, the truth remains that in the federal capital many Nigerians are made to live together and learn about each other and live together as one nation. This is likely to further enhance national integration. A casual observation would only show the two capitals for the nation. One for the north and one for the south.

iv National Youths Service Corps (NYSC)

Ahmed and Dantata (2016:8-9) opine that, the National Youths Service Corps (NYSC) was created by Decree 24 of 22nd May, 1973 and successfully launched by General Gowon on June 4th 1973. This scheme requires that all Nigerian youths who are thirty years and below who have successfully completed their first degree at any university in Nigeria and abroad to be called upon to serve in the service corps for a duration of one year. This was aimed at bringing Nigerian youths together under a single umbrella, with the objective of instilling in them those virtues of dedication, patriotism and national consciousness without which no country or people can be truly developed. Also without this young people cannot have the desire to aspire to be future leaders of this nation. The NYSC scheme has the added advantage of fostering inter-ethnic and interstate understanding which is absolutely essential



for successful nation building. However, with the current insecurity status of the country this approach may not succeed Uche Umeh-uche and Chigozie Okonkwo observe that the status of the National Youth Service Corps as an instrument for national unity has been queried in the event of the gruesome murder of corps members during the post 2011 election crisis and the sectarian violence perpetrated against hapless corps members by the Boko Haram Islamists in some Northern states of Nigeria. They further explain that many Nigerians have called for the outright repealing of the NYSC Act. They cited Afe Babalola and Okochie to support their argument that national unity cannot be brought about by sending students to states where security of lives cannot be guaranteed. It requires more than sending hapless youth to premature death. Although, the NYSC was instituted as an instrument for national unity, events of the past few years have resulted to frantic calls for the scrapping of the programme because it has become an object of mockery and rejection. It is not a surprise that because of the harrowing experiences of the corps members they do not preach the “gospel of national unity”. This is a huge drag to the efforts at national unity; given that these groups of Nigerians are the future of the nation (Onifade, 2013:78-79).

v) *The Establishment of Unity Schools*

Another way of enhancing national integration is the establishment of federal schools otherwise referred to as unity schools in all the states of the federation. At least two federal secondary schools are established in each state and admission into these schools is expected to cut across all states and ethnic groups in Nigeria. Equally, the appointment of staff to these schools and colleges is supposed to follow the federal character. This is intended to achieve togetherness, cultural and religious integration. This approach too has its own problems as the children from the educationally disadvantaged states and poor family background are often discriminated against instead of being properly integrated.

vi) *Federal Character Commission*

Another effort to promote national integration is the establishment of Federal Character Commission with the quota system as a principle to ensure that in every federal government establishment each state of the federation is represented in the sharing of national resources so that ethnic/religious marginalisation is avoided. Hitherto, it was alleged that the Yoruba dominated the federal civil service. "Igbo dominated the police, while the Hausa/Fulani dominated the army. The nearness of southerners to Lagos, the federal capital as well as perhaps the unwillingness of literates from the north at the time to accept federal appointments, due to better opportunities in their region, all aided disproportionate recruitment" (National Teachers Institute, 2007: 216). Recruitment in the federal civil service, military, admission into federal universities is now based on a quota system. The Federal Character principle is, in part, designed to deal with the problem of imbalances, marginalisation and discrimination. According to Majekodunmi (2013:68), the question then arises as to whether the principle can be rightly used to address the problem of discrimination in the composition and conduct of public institutions and affairs and ensure effective integration of various sections of the Nigerian society. This has achieved much to date but it appears as Nnoli (2008: 385) has pointed out, there are pitfalls in the implementation of a federal character. Ethnicity has become widespread. He observes that in the past it was limited to relations among language groups, today it has led to ethnic like antagonisms within language groups. He concludes that with a federal character, “the country is not only faced with the prospect of polarisation at the national level but also at the regional and local levels”.

vii) *Sports*

The cultural diversity of Nigerians appears to have vanished when it comes to games and sports. The national teams that represent Nigeria have membership drawn from different religious and ethnic groups in the country and Nigerians at home and those in the diaspora cheer for the teams as Nigerians. One is tempted to think that the national games and sports



festivals are the very best avenues for national integration, and of course the government sponsors sports in the country for the purpose of national integration. This approach also has the limitation of fully reflecting the federal character as the selection of team members is sometimes perceived to be biased and not based on talent and skills for each game or sport and in any case, not all states have hosting capacity for national sports festivals.

viii) National Festivals

The organisation of national festivals like Democracy Day, Independence Day and national sports festivals are equally good avenues for enhancing national integration. The Nigerian people are made to come together to celebrate these on yearly bases both at the grassroots and national levels, and this stirs up the positive spirit of nationalism.

ix) National symbols

An entity is identified by symbolic expressions. Nigeria has national symbols that help remind us that we are of one identity and of course also speak to the notion of national integration. "Every Nigerian identifies with the 17 nations through the national symbols. These consist of the National Flag, Coat of Arms, National Pledge, National Anthem, Constitution and the Nigerian Currency. The national identity is more or less a psychological or spiritual quality which unites the people of a nation" (National Teachers Institute, 2007: 216). Nigerians should therefore show greater and proper respect for the national symbols not just in times of celebrations but at all times and everywhere.

x) States and Local Government Creation

The demand and desperation for the creation of states and local government councils in Nigeria over the years has been provoked by ethnic marginalisation. In Benue state for instance, the Tiv ethnic group is the most dominant group in the state. It has been producing the civilian executive governors since the creation of the state. In the second Republic the chief executive was Aper Aku, in Third Republic it was Moses Orshio Adasu, in the Fourth Republic it was George Akume, after which was Gabriel Suswam and today is Samuel Ortom.

The Idoma who are a minority ethnic group in Nigeria have been crying foul play over the political marginalisation in the state. They feel the way out is the creation of 'Apa State' a project they have been upon for a long period now. This is just one case out of several calls by minority ethnic groups for 'other' state creation in the country. While one would think that the Idoma do not condone discrimination and marginalisation, since the return to civilian rule, Igede have not produced a senator from zone C to which the Idoma are the majority. This is in line with what Nnoli (2008:386) had earlier noticed that state creation does not permanently solve the problem of the people who still feel marginalised, as each exercise has given rise to the demand for more states. The National Assembly had over 30 demands from different ethnic groups in the country demanding states of their own when proposals were made for the creation of more states in the country. Ahmed and Dantata had observed with surprise that state creation has increased the nation's disunity and sense of alienation. Non-indigenes are treated little better than aliens in states other than their own. Even if they so wish, non-indigenes cannot integrate where they work, pay their taxes and may even have been born. Restrictions are placed on the rights to own property: they tend to be confined as they were previously during colonial times in specific residential quarters (Sabon-Gari), which constitute easy targets in case of social, religious, and communal unrest. In the field of education, non-indigenes are required to pay higher school fees in some states (Nnoli, 2008:12).

A close look at the efforts by the government shows that much effort has been made to overcome religious divisions and ethnicity but with very little success. Therefore, the main problems tearing Nigeria apart, are still religion and ethnicity. The paper now addresses the issue of religion and the challenges posed to national integration in Nigeria.



Towards National Integration in a Heterogeneous Society in Nigeria

This paper posits for unity and drives the belief that national integration in Nigeria has bright prospects and therefore makes the following suggestions:

- i. Restructuring: The Federal System of Government should have less powers. More revenue should be allocated to the states. Funds should be shared with the local Governments directly and the office of the chairman of a local Government should be rotational so that all ethnic groups and districts would benefit from the office. Again, we need only one Legislative House (House of Representatives) to cut down on needless expenditures.
- ii. The Need to de-emphasize religion and ethnicity on official documents as for example when completing official forms for employment, admission etc. For instance, the Nigerian passport has no such items in it. Religion must embrace peace, morality, unity, love, humility and forgiveness religiously.

We need to focus more attention on the role of political parties in Nigeria. It is through political parties that Nigerian leaders emerge. Political parties must ensure inclusivity and avoid religious and ethnic sentiments that are deleterious to unity. Political parties should ensure internal democracy and avoid dirty politics and nasty happenings such as political language, rigging, thuggery and violence. There is a need for the Peace Accord Committee headed by Gen. Abdulsalami to continue to function in all elections. The peace committee should ensure that all stakeholders and political parties sign a peace accord before every election and abide by it. Sanctions should be applied where this fails. There should be sincerity and genuine rapprochement in inter-religious dialogues. The committee on inter-religious dialogue must work harder to ensure peaceful coexistence between the two principal religions and other minor ones.

Enhancing the *esprit de corps* for national unity: *Espirit de corps* is a term referring to the unity and solidarity shared by the military and para-military and in general groups that have some positive team-spirit of solidarity within them. This friendship cuts across all military and para-military formations, religious and ethnic groups. If all Nigerians embrace this culture, irrespective of their religion and ethnic grouping, this will foster national integration in the country. Harvesting sports solidarity for national integration in Nigeria is also important. During sports competitions especially football, all Nigerians unite despite their religious and ethnic affiliations to support Nigerian players and this type of comradeship should be embraced in all situations to enhance national integration in the nation. Leaders at all levels should be people who are versatile, with a sound educational background in public administration. The leaders should be competent and knowledgeable who have a known academic history in an area of specialization where their skills are required. A system where a school certificate holder heads the public office making policies for the educated could most likely never lead to peace and national integration.

There is undoubtedly a need for equity/fair distribution of federal and state appointments. As the Nigerian Constitution states, the federal character principle should be applied in all situations relating to political appointments, recruitment in the military/para-military, employment in all government offices, admission into unity schools, etc. Religious leaders should define their doctrines in the light of the present realities. Change is constant and therefore the prophets and leaders should relate with God in such ways that will receive new messages that would address the myriad of problems posed in contemporary Nigerian society. Government should forge a strong policy against religious fundamentalism in the country and alien preachers should abide by them when they come to preach in the country. Again, government at various levels should give equal considerations to all religions. They



should not over protect one religion against another. They should however, check against excesses by the adherents of the aggressive alien religions. Another effort put in place for national integration is inter-ethnic marriages. According to Nyamibo, (2015:41), inter-ethnic marriage encourages national integration. When this occurs, there is cultural integration whether consciously or unconsciously. It grinds down the fears that these ethnic groups might have been nursing before. All the social institutions should work towards encouraging inter-ethnic marriages in Nigeria as weapon against disunity in the country. Very importantly, the church should encourage marriage across ethnic groups wiping away the ethnic fears and dichotomies. The church is the leading agency in propagating inter-ethnic marriage. In this regard it appears the Pentecostals are leading groups in propagating inter-ethnic marriages.

The Role of Christians' towards National Integration in a Heterogeneous Society in Nigeria

Albert (2001:31) recognises religious institutions as one of the stakeholders in settling ethnic conflicts. According to him: "Religious organisations perform significant roles and crystallise community conflicts...Through their sermons, religious leaders can help to make their congregations see the need for peace and to pursue the course of peace. The doctrine of non-violence is contained in most holy books around the world; religious leaders could help their followers to make better use of such letters of the Bible and the Quran".

In the words of Stott (1994: 26), nothing could impact world peace as the new creation in Christ. Through Jesus Christ, God is recreating us in His own image in true righteousness and holiness. This in return should bring about a new society which is based on a classless society. It is this new society that will have in-dwelling knowledge of God that teaches people to love what is good, hate what is bad and to consider one's Maker in every decision taken in this physical life.

Kelly (1967: 158) is quite right when he asserts that the voice of the church is no longer the only voice speaking to the world; there are other secular and often erroneous voices. These secular and erroneous voices would only create trouble and anarchy when the Christian voice is silent in the Nigerian polity. Therefore, Christian folks are called to herald God's forgiveness for fallen humanity through the finished work of Christ because through the message of forgiveness belligerent ethnic groups can be reconciled since true forgiveness begins with the realisation of a personal peace with God. According to Jones (2000: 17) "Forgiveness aims to restore us to communion with God, one another, and with the whole creation. We are not created to be isolated or self-enclosed individuals, and God's forgiveness aims at reshaping the house for faithful relationships".

Nigerian theologians are called to task in this area. One agrees with Atowoju (2004:79) who asserts that Christian leaders and theologians are the consciences, mouthpiece and watchmen of God like the ancient prophets inter-alia, Isaiah, Amos and Paul. Atowoju states that Nigeria needs people like Desmond Tutu of South Africa, David Gitari of Kenya; Cresford Chitemo of Tanzania, Adoniya Sebunungir of Rwanda, Janani Luwum and Festo Kivengere of Uganda who endeavoured to route cruelty out of their countries and rather planted seeds of peace. Christians in Nigeria are therefore encouraged to contest for all elective positions in the country's political system. The motive is not to secure a chance to embezzle public funds, but rather to influence national integration in a heterogeneous Nigerian society. Moreover, the Bible teaches that there should not be any discrimination in terms of sex, ethnic group or race, hence all are members of the body of Christ: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3.28). In the light of this conviction, church membership cuts across different ethnic groups in the country where members are regarded



and recognised as brothers and sisters. Priests are transferred to serve in different states and in diverse Bishoprics regardless of their ethnic background. This Nyamibo (2015: 42) sees as a giant step in national integration. However, this notion too has some problems and challenges that need to be addressed as some priests are asked to go back to their ethnic groups and preach there.

Conclusion

This paper has shown the havoc ethnocentrism has caused socially, economically, politically, educationally and religiously in Nigeria. The political elites and fundamentalists use religion and ethnicity to create sentiments, and prejudices that lead to ethnic and religious conflicts with attendant negative consequences that constitute a threat to national integration. The study found that Nigeria will continue to deteriorate as long as we encourage ethnocentrism, corruption, leadership failure and failed political interests. The paper concluded that the nation should apply the principle that delights in taking those who are "not my people" and make them "my people" to achieve national integration in Nigeria. The paper, therefore, recommended that Nigerians should eschew and deemphasize tribalism, and ethnicity and permeate all-inclusive living theology. Variety, they say, is the spices of life. It is time for us as Nigeria to make the best out of our cultural and ethnic diversity, so as to save our nation together because we have only one Nigeria that has the potential to lead Africa.

References

- Adeyanju, J.O. (2010). Towards Achieving Peace in a Multi-ethnic Nigerian Society: A Theological Reflection on Ephesians 2:14-16, *UMCATC Journal of Theological Studies*, 7 (October), 28-55.
- Afolabi, O.O. (2015). The Role of Religion in Nigerian Politics and Its Sustainability for Political Development, *Net Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(2), (May), 39-55.
- Ahmed, I. K. & Dantata, B.S. (2016). Federalism and National Integration: The Nigeria Experience, *Historical Research Letter*, 53, 8-13.
- Albert, I.O. (2001). *Introduction to Third-Party Intervention in Community Conflicts*, Ibadan: John Archers
- Arnold, B.T. & Choi, J.H. (2003). *A Guide to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*, New York: Cambridge U.P.
- Atowaju, A.A. (2004). Corruption in Nigeria: A Theological Response, *Ogbomosho Journal of Theology*, 9, 54-80.
- Battle, J.A., Jr. (1981). Paul's Use of the Old Testament in Romans 9:25-26, *Grace Theological Journal*, 2, 115-129.
- Bauer, W. (1979). *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Burns, A. (1958). *History of Nigeria*, 7th ed., London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., ed.
- Calvin, J. (1960). *The Epistles of Paul the Apostle to the Romans and Thessalonians*, Translated by R. Mackenzie. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.



- Dunn, J.D.G. (1988). *Romans*. 2 vols. WBC 38A, 38B. Dallas: Word.
- Fitzmyer, J.A. (1993). *Romans*. AB 33, New York: Doubleday.
- Gidado, M.M. (2004). "Minority Rights Guarantee under the 1999 Nigerian Constitution" in Guobadia, D.O. and Adekunle, A.O (eds) *Ethnicity and National Integration in Nigeria, Recurrent Themes*, Lagos: Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies.
- Goubadia, D.A. (2003). *Ethnicity and National Integration in Nigeria: Recurrent Themes*, Lagos: Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies.
- Guthrie, G. (1981). *New Testament Theology*, Downers Grove: IVP.
- Hale, T. (2007). *The Applied New Testament Commentary*, Colorado: David C. Cook Global Mission.
- Hodge, C. (1972). *A Commentary on Romans*, Geneva. Carlisle: Banner of Truth Trust.
- Human Right Watch Report (2005). *Revenge in the name of Religion: The Cycle of Violence in Plateau and Kano States*. [Available online at <http://www.hrw.org/english/docs>].
- Jones, L.G. (2000). "Crafting Communities of forgiveness, *Interpretation*, 54(2), 11-25.
- Kelly, G.A. (1967). *The Christian Role in Today's Society*, New York: Random House.
- Majekodunmi, A. (2013). Federal Character Principle as a Recipe for National Integration in Nigeria: An Overview, *International Journal of Advanced Research in Management and Social Science*, 2, 65-84.
- Metzger, B.M. (1994). *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd edition. New York: American Bible Society.
- McComiskey, T.E. (1992). "Hosea." *Pages 1-238 in vol. 1 of The Minor Prophets*, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House.
- Moo, D. (1996). *The Epistle to the Romans, NICNT*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Nicolaidis, A. (2010). 'The Laos tou Theou – an orthodox view of the "people of God"', *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies*, 66(1).
- Nnoli, O. (2008). *Ethnic Politics in Nigeria (2nd ed)*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension.
- Nnoli Iheanacho & Nwagwu qtd in Onifade, C. A. & Imhonopi, D. (2013). Towards National Integration in Nigeria Jumping the Hurdles, *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, 78-99.
- National Teachers Institute, (2007). *Special Teacher Upgrading Programme, Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) Course Book on Social Studies Year 1*. Kaduna: NTI, 2007.
- Niven, R. (1970). *The War of Nigerian Unity*, Ibadan: Evans Brothers.



- Nyamibo K. (2015). "The Role of the Church in National Integration in Bulya T. Abul N. Pawa, T, Iqurav, S. T. (eds) *Towards One Hundred Years of Nigerian Integration Issues and Challenges (1914-2014)*, A Publication of School of Arts and Social Sciences, 2015.
- Okwullu, H. (1984). *Church And State: Nation Building and Human Development*, Nairobi: Uzima Press.
- Olatunde, D. (2006). *Deliverance from Poverty: A Religious Approach to Managing Poverty in Nigeria*, Oshogbo: Bewas Publishing Co.,
- Olawoyin, S. (2006). Theological Significance of Ethnic Pluralism for the Christian Church in Nigeria, *UMCATC Journal of Theological Studies*, 4, October 2006, 25-33.
- Onifade, C. A. (2013). Towards National Integration: Jumping the Hurdles, *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(9), 75-82.
- Onyenechechie, T. (2008). *Rethinking Christianity in Africa*, Lagos: Adecrown Publishers.
- Post, K. & Vickers, M. (1973). *Structure and Conflict in Nigeria 1960-1966*, London: Heinemann Educational Books.
- Ridderbos, H. (1975). *Paul. An Outline of his Theology*, trans. John Richard DeWitt, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Russell, E. (1987). "Gentiles" in Douglas, J.D. (ed.), *New International Bible Dictionary*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Seifrid, M. A. (2007). "Romans." in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament Pages 607-94*. Edited by G. K. Beale and D. A. Carson, Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.
- Schreiner, T. R. (1998). "Romans". *BECNT*, Grand Rapids: Baker.
- Stott, J. (1994). *The message of Romans*, Leicester: Intervarsity Press.
- Unger, M.F. (1984). *The New Unger's Bible Handbook*, Chicago: Moody Press.
- Vasiliades, N.P. (1978). *Christianismos kai Anthropismos*, Saviour Publications: Athens.
- Walker, W.L. (1960). "Gentile" in *Buttrick, G.A. et.al (eds). International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* vol. 2, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans.
- Wallace, D. B. (2000). *The Basics of New Testament Syntax*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan.
- Wilson, H.L. (1971). *Achieving Pan-African Unity*, London: Oxford University Press.
- Wolff, H.W. (1974) *Hosea*. Translated by Gary Stansell, Hermeneia. Philadelphia: Fortress,
- Wright, N.T. (2002). "The Letter to the Romans," in *The New Interpreter's Bible*, Nashville: Abingdon.

Conflict of Interest Statement: *The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.*



This article is open-access and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Licence.

The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.