Involvement of the Anglican Church in Nation Building and Political Development in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The Anglican Church in Nigeria has a rich history spanning over 180 years. Here is a brief overview of its journey during this time: In 1842, the first Anglican missionaries arrived in Badagry, Nigeria, which was then a British colony. The study depended on secondary sources of data information and its findings influenced the study conclusion and study recommendation.

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INTRODUCTION

Anglican Church in Nigeria: 180-year Journey. The Anglican Church in Nigeria has a rich history spanning over 180 years. Here is a brief overview of its journey during this time:

In 1842, the first Anglican missionaries arrived in Badagry, Nigeria, which was then a British colony. The first church was built in 1852, and by 1864, the first diocese, the Diocese of Sierra Leone, was created. Nigeria was eventually separated from the Diocese of Sierra Leone and became its own entity in 1893, with the creation of the Diocese of Lagos. Throughout the early 20th century, the church continued to expand its presence in Nigeria, with new dioceses being created and new missionaries arriving to spread the Anglican faith. By the 1950s, the church had become a major force in Nigerian society and played an important role in the country’s struggle for independence from British colonial rule.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In 1979, the church became autonomous with the creation of the Church of Nigeria (Anglican Communion), which was recognized as a province of the Anglican Communion. This move allowed the church to have greater control over its affairs and to better serve the needs of its members. Since then, the Church of Nigeria has continued to grow and evolve, with new dioceses being created and a greater emphasis being placed on outreach and community service. Today, the church is one of the largest Anglican provinces in the world, with an estimated 20 million members and over 170 dioceses. Throughout its history, the Anglican Church in Nigeria has faced many challenges, including political instability, economic hardship, and religious conflict. However, through it all, the church has remained a steadfast source of hope and inspiration for millions of Nigerians, and its journey over the past 180 years is a testament to the resilience and strength of the Nigerian people.

METHODOLOGY

Nigeria as a Political Unit

Nigeria is a country located in West Africa and is the most populous country on the continent. It gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960 and has since been a federal republic with a presidential system of government. Nigeria is divided into 36 states and one Federal Capital Territory, each with its own government and administrative structure. The country operates a three-tier system of government consisting of the federal government, state governments, and local government councils. The federal government is headed by the president, who is both the head of state and head of government, and is made up of three branches: the executive, legislative, and judiciary. The executive branch consists of the president and his cabinet, while the legislative branch is made up of the National Assembly, consisting of the Senate and the House of Representatives. The judiciary is made up of the Supreme Court, Court of Appeal, and High Courts.

The country’s political history has been marked by periods of military rule, ethnic and religious tensions, and corruption. However, since the
country's transition to civilian rule in 1999, Nigeria has made significant progress in strengthening its democratic institutions and improving governance.

Today, Nigeria is a member of several international organizations, including the United Nations, the African Union, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The country's economy is the largest in Africa and has a diverse range of industries, including agriculture, oil and gas, telecommunications, and manufacturing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Christian Missionaries in Nigeria's Politics

1. Role of the Christian Missionary Society in Nigeria’s Political Development

Christian missionaries played an important role in the development of Nigeria's political landscape, particularly in the early days of colonial rule. The missionaries came to Nigeria in the 19th century, with the primary goal of spreading Christianity and establishing schools to educate the local population. However, they also had a significant impact on the political development of the country. One of the most significant contributions of the Christian missionaries was in the area of education. They established numerous schools across the country, which provided basic education to the masses. The education offered by these schools laid the foundation for a new generation of Nigerians who were more literate and better informed about their rights and responsibilities as citizens.

The Christian missionaries also played a critical role in the fight against slavery and other forms of human rights abuses. They condemned the slave trade and worked tirelessly to end it, often at great personal risk. Their efforts helped to raise awareness about the evils of slavery and contributed to the eventual abolition of the slave trade. In addition to these contributions, the Christian missionaries also played a role in the political development of Nigeria. They encouraged the establishment of representative government and helped to lay the groundwork for Nigeria's eventual independence from colonial rule. They also played a role in promoting democracy and human rights, advocating for the rights of the poor and marginalized.

In summary, the Christian missionaries played a vital role in the development of Nigeria's political landscape. They contributed to the education of the masses, fought against slavery and other human rights abuses, and helped to lay the groundwork for representative government and democracy. Their legacy continues to shape Nigeria's political and social landscape to this day.

2. Role of Christian Missionary Society (CMS) in Nigeria’s Nation Building

The Christian Missionary Society (CMS) played a significant role in the nation-building process of Nigeria, particularly during the colonial era. The CMS was a British-based missionary society that established a presence in
Nigeria in 1842, and their primary objective was to evangelize the Nigerian population.

One of the key ways in which the CMS contributed to nation-building was through the establishment of schools and the promotion of education. The CMS founded several schools across Nigeria, which provided education to both Christians and non-Christians alike. These schools played a crucial role in the development of Nigeria's educational system, which is now one of the largest on the African continent.

Additionally, the CMS also contributed to the development of Nigeria's healthcare system. The society established several hospitals and clinics throughout Nigeria, which provided medical care to the population. These healthcare facilities were particularly important in combating diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis, which were prevalent in Nigeria at the time.

The CMS also played a significant role in the translation and dissemination of the Bible into various Nigerian languages. The society's missionaries worked tirelessly to translate the Bible into local languages, which helped to promote literacy and the use of indigenous languages.

Furthermore, the CMS played a role in the political development of Nigeria. The society's missionaries were instrumental in advocating for the abolition of the slave trade and the promotion of human rights. Their efforts played a role in shaping the political discourse in Nigeria, which ultimately led to Nigeria's independence from British colonial rule in 1960.

In conclusion, the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) played a crucial role in Nigeria's nation-building process, particularly in the areas of education, healthcare, language, and politics. The society's efforts laid the foundation for the development of Nigeria as a modern nation-state.

The Anglican Church and Nation Building

The Anglican Church and Nation Building as a Political Development in Nigeria have intersected in various ways throughout history. Nigeria, a country with a diverse ethnic and religious composition, has experienced significant political and social challenges since gaining independence in 1960. The role of religious institutions, including the Anglican Church, in nation-building efforts has been both influential and controversial.

a. Historical Background: The Anglican Church has a long history in Nigeria, dating back to the arrival of the first Church Missionary Society (CMS) in the early 19th century. The church played a crucial role in the spread of Christianity, education, and healthcare, particularly in the southern regions of Nigeria. Its influence grew as it established schools, hospitals, and other social institutions, contributing to the development of the country.

b. Historical background of the Anglican Church in Nation Building in Nigeria: The Anglican Church played a significant role in nation building in Nigeria during the colonial and post-colonial periods. Here is a historical background of the Anglican Church's involvement in nation building in Nigeria.
c. Introduction of Christianity: The Anglican Church's presence in Nigeria can be traced back to the mid-19th century when Christian missionaries arrived from Britain. In 1842, Henry Townsend, a Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionary, established the first Anglican mission in Badagry, Lagos. The church's primary objective was to spread Christianity and provide education to the local population.

d. Spread of Education: The Anglican Church established numerous schools throughout Nigeria, particularly in the southern regions. These schools played a vital role in educating the local population and promoting literacy. The CMS established schools such as CMS Grammar School in Lagos (1859) and CMS Girls' School in Lagos (1869). These institutions produced many of Nigeria's early political leaders, professionals, and intellectuals.

Anglican Nigeria’s Political Tools

1. The Tools for Political Development Employed by the Anglican Church in Nigeria in the Last 180 Years

The Anglican Church in Nigeria has been involved in political development over the last 180 years, and it has employed several tools and strategies to achieve this. Here are some of the tools and strategies that the Anglican Church in Nigeria has used for political development:

a) Educational and Social Development: The Anglican Church in Nigeria has been involved in education for over a century, establishing schools and colleges throughout the country. The church has used education as a tool to promote political development by training young people to be leaders and advocates for social and political change. One significant contribution of the Anglican Church to nation-building in Nigeria is its involvement in education. Mission schools, many of which were established by the church, played a pivotal role in providing formal education to Nigerians, especially during the colonial era. These schools produced educated individuals who later became leaders in various sectors, contributing to the country’s development. Anglican Church in Education. The Anglican Church has played a significant role in educational and social development throughout its history. From its origins in England in the 16th century, the Church of England (the formal name for the Anglican Church) has been involved in establishing and supporting educational institutions, promoting literacy, and advocating for social justice. Education has always been a central focus for the Anglican Church. In the early years of the Reformation, the Church of England emphasized the importance of translating the Bible into English and promoting widespread literacy. This commitment to education continued as the church established schools, colleges, and universities throughout England and its colonies. For example, the establishment of Oxford and Cambridge universities can be traced back to the influence of the Anglican Church.
Anglican missionaries also played a crucial role in spreading education globally. During the colonial era, Anglican missionaries established schools and universities in various parts of the world, particularly in British colonies. These educational institutions provided access to education for local populations, including indigenous communities, and contributed to the development of literacy and intellectual growth.

In addition to education, the Anglican Church has been actively involved in social development. Inspired by Christian teachings on social justice and compassion, the church has been at the forefront of advocating for social reforms and addressing social inequalities. Anglican clergy and leaders have been involved in initiatives such as

b) Moral and Ethical Influence: Religious institutions, including the Anglican Church, have also played a role in shaping the moral and ethical fabric of Nigerian society. The church's teachings and values have helped instil a sense of social responsibility, community engagement, and ethical conduct among its members. These principles, when practiced by individuals in positions of power, can positively impact nation-building efforts. The Anglican Church has played a significant role in the moral and ethical influence in Nigeria since the arrival of Christian missionaries in the 19th century.

The Anglican Church, which is a member of the worldwide Anglican Communion, has a significant presence in Nigeria. The church has been actively involved in various aspects of Nigerian society, including education, healthcare, and social services.

In terms of moral and ethical influence, the Anglican Church in Nigeria has been vocal on issues such as corruption, human rights, and social justice. The church has used its platform to speak out against corruption and other forms of social injustice in the country. It has also been involved in advocating for the protection of human rights, including the rights of women and children.

The Anglican Church in Nigeria has also been actively involved in promoting education and literacy. The church has established many schools and educational institutions across the country, providing access to education for many Nigerians who would otherwise have been unable to afford it.

Additionally, the church has been involved in providing healthcare services to communities across the country. The church has established hospitals and clinics that provide medical care to people who may not have access to healthcare otherwise. The Anglican Church in Nigeria has been a source of moral authority in the country. The church has used this authority to speak out on issues such as corruption, human rights violations, and political accountability.

The Anglican Church has played a significant role in the moral and ethical influence in Nigeria. Through its various programs and activities, the church has worked to promote social justice, human rights, education, and healthcare. Its efforts have had a positive impact on the
lives of many Nigerians, and the church continues to play an important role in the country's development and progress.

c) Advocacy: The Anglican Church in Nigeria has also been involved in advocacy on behalf of marginalized groups such as women, children, and the poor. The church has used its influence to advocate for policies that promote social justice and equality.

d) Mobilization: The church has also been involved in mobilizing people for political action. The Anglican Church in Nigeria has used its network of churches to organize rallies, marches, and other forms of peaceful protests to demand political change.

e) Interfaith Dialogue and Reconciliation:
The Anglican Church in Nigeria has played a significant role in interfaith dialogue and reconciliation efforts within the country. As one of the largest Christian denominations in Nigeria, the church has actively engaged in promoting peace, understanding, and cooperation among different religious groups. The Anglican Church has been involved in interfaith dialogue initiatives aimed at fostering better relations between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. It recognizes the importance of open and respectful communication between religious communities to address misunderstandings, promote tolerance, and build bridges of understanding.

The Anglican Church in Nigeria has also been involved in interfaith dialogue as a tool for political development. The church has engaged in dialogue with other religious groups to promote peace, unity, and understanding.

In summary, the Anglican Church in Nigeria has employed various tools and strategies for political development, including education, moral authority, advocacy, mobilization, and interfaith dialogue.

f) Political Engagement: The role of the Anglican Church in political engagement has varied over time and across different regions of the world. However, historically, the Anglican Church has had a significant influence on politics in the United Kingdom and other countries with Anglican roots. In the United Kingdom, for example, the Church of England is the established church, meaning it has a constitutional role in the governance of the country. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the senior bishop of the Church of England, is a member of the House of Lords, the upper chamber of the UK Parliament. This gives the Anglican Church a direct voice in the political process.

The Church of England has also played a significant role in social and political movements throughout history. For example, in the 19th century, Anglican clergy were involved in the campaign to abolish slavery, and in the 20th century, the church was active in the struggle for civil rights. In addition to its direct involvement in politics, the Anglican Church has also used its moral authority to influence political discourse and decision-making. This has often taken the form of public statements on issues such as poverty, social justice, and human rights.
However, the Anglican Church's role in political engagement has not been without controversy. Some have criticized the church for being too closely aligned with political power, while others have accused it of not doing enough to speak out on important political issues. Overall, the Anglican Church has had a significant impact on politics in countries where it is present, both through its direct involvement and through its influence on public opinion and discourse. The Anglican Church has occasionally been politically engaged in Nigeria. Church leaders have spoken out on socio-political issues, advocated for social justice, and played mediating roles in times of crisis. However, the church's involvement in politics has also been a source of controversy, as it has led to divisions and tensions within the church and raised questions about the separation of church and state.

The Anglican Church, also known as the Church of Nigeria, has had a significant role in political engagement in Nigeria, a country with a significant Anglican population. The Anglican Church in Nigeria is one of the largest Christian denominations in the country, with millions of followers. One notable way in which the Anglican Church in Nigeria has been involved in politics is through its leaders' active participation in political discourse and advocacy. Anglican bishops and other church leaders in Nigeria have frequently spoken out on social and political issues, including corruption, human rights, and good governance. They have also criticized government policies that they believe are detrimental to the interests of Nigerians.

The Anglican Church in Nigeria has also been involved in electoral politics, with some of its leaders contesting for political offices. For example, in the 2019 general elections, several Anglican bishops vied for positions in the Nigerian Senate and House of Representatives. Moreover, the Anglican Church in Nigeria has been involved in efforts to promote peace and reconciliation in the country, particularly in areas affected by conflicts. The church has been actively engaged in interfaith dialogue and has also played a significant role in promoting peaceful coexistence among different ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria. However, the Anglican Church in Nigeria's role in political engagement has not been without controversy. Some have accused the church of being too closely aligned with political power, while others have criticized its leaders for making partisan statements that they believe do not reflect the views of all members of the church.

g) Challenges and Controversies: The Anglican Church, like other religious institutions, has faced challenges and controversies in its role in nation-building. Nigeria's religious diversity, with a significant Muslim population, has occasionally led to tensions and conflicts. Additionally, debates have arisen regarding the church's role in politics and whether it should focus primarily on spiritual matters or actively participate in governance. Anglican Church's Nigerian Challenges. The Anglican Church has played a significant role in Nigeria since its arrival in the
country during the colonial era. Over the years, the church has been involved in various challenges and controversies in Nigeria, including:

Political Controversies: The Anglican Church has been involved in political controversies in Nigeria, including the 1964 census crisis, the 1966 military coup, and the 1979 presidential election. During these crises, the church spoke out against the government's actions, which sometimes led to tension between the church and the government.

Corruption: The Anglican Church has also been vocal about corruption in Nigeria, which is a significant challenge in the country. The church has spoken out against corrupt practices and called on the government to take action to address the issue.

Ethnic and Religious Conflicts: Nigeria is a diverse country with many ethnic and religious groups, and the Anglican Church has been involved in efforts to promote unity and peaceful coexistence between these groups. The church has also spoken out against violence and advocated for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

LGBTQ + Rights: The Anglican Church in Nigeria has been vocal in its opposition to LGBTQ+ rights. In 2018, the church announced that it was cutting ties with the Episcopal Church in the United States over differences in theology, including the issue of same-sex marriage.

Women's Rights: The Anglican Church has also been involved in discussions about women's rights in Nigeria. In 2017, the church launched a campaign to end gender-based violence and promote gender equality.

Overall, the Anglican Church has played a significant role in addressing challenges and controversies in Nigeria, particularly in the areas of politics, corruption, and ethnic and religious conflicts. However, the church's position on issues such as LGBTQ+ rights and women's rights has been a source of controversy and debate.

Peace Building and Reconciliation: In a country that has experienced sectarian tensions and conflicts, the Anglican Church has worked towards peace building and reconciliation. It has actively sought to resolve disputes, mediate conflicts, and promote peaceful coexistence among different religious and ethnic groups. The church’s leadership has often spoken out against violence and advocated for peaceful resolution of conflicts.

Advocacy for Religious Freedom: The Anglican Church has been vocal in advocating for religious freedom and the protection of the rights of Christians and other religious minorities in Nigeria. It has raised concerns about instances of discrimination, persecution, and violence against Christians and has called for justice and equality for all Nigerians, regardless of their religious affiliation.

Education and Awareness: The Anglican Church has played a crucial role in promoting education and awareness about different faith traditions. It has organized seminars, workshops, and educational programs that aim to enhance understanding and respect among
Christians and people of other religions. By fostering religious literacy and encouraging dialogue, the church has contributed to reducing religious stereotypes and promoting harmonious coexistence.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
The study concluded by noting that the specific activities and involvement of the Anglican Church in interfaith dialogue and reconciliation may vary across different dioceses and local communities within Nigeria. The church’s role in promoting peace and reconciliation is part of its broader mission to proclaim the Gospel and work towards justice, love, and unity in society.

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on interfaith dialogue and cooperation between religious institutions in Nigeria. The Anglican Church, along with other Christian denominations and Muslim organizations, has played a part in fostering understanding and reconciliation among different religious communities. These efforts contribute to nation-building by promoting unity and peaceful coexistence.

It's important to note that the role of the Anglican Church, or any religious institution, in nation-building is complex and multifaceted. While it has made positive contributions in areas such as education, social development, and moral influence, challenges and controversies also exist. Ultimately, the success of nation-building efforts depends on a combination of factors, including political stability, good governance, economic development, and the active participation of various societal actors.

FURTHER RESEARCH
This research still has limitations so further research needs to be done on this topic “Involvement of the Anglican Church in Nation Building and Political Development in Nigeria.”

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