

Enhancing Sustainable Development In Nigeria Through Submission To Civil Authority: Lessons From Romans 13:1-7

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Abstract

The Church's approach to Sustainable Development (development that satisfies the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy theirs) has often neglected the role of the citizens. Using hermeneutical method, this paper argues that accentuation of obedience to civil authorities, taught by Paul, would go a long way in enhancing Sustainable Development in Nigeria.

Keywords: Sustainable Development, submission, Church, authority, leadership, followers.

Introduction

Sustainable Development, defined as development that satisfies the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy theirs, is on the front burner among the issues that affect the environment, governance, and the future of the physical world. As such, it has been given enormous attention in the past few decades. The response of religion, Christianity in particular, to this call has been expressed in a plethora of studies. Peter Gichira (2009) evaluated the role of the All Africa Conference of Churches in the conservation of forests in Africa. Alfred Ngoma (2013) developed a biblical framework for sustainable development in Africa, using the Reformed Church in Zambia as a case study. Agnes Acha (2015: pp. 38-65) accentuated the gender-friendliness of Genesis 1-3 for sustainable development in Africa. Clara Iwuoha (2015: p. 80-96) called for good leadership and accountability as catalysts to sustainable development. ObajiAgbiji and Ignatius Swart (2015: pp. 1-13) reappraised the role of Christian religious leadership in social transformation that has the potential to engender sustainable transformational development in post-military Nigeria. Komi Hiagbe (2015: pp. 164-179) called the Church in Sub-Saharan Africa to "ensure in its membership hard work, discipline, saving and a culture of investment towards the future" (p. 177). Also, in an earlier published article (2016: pp. 15-29), the researcher drew the attention of the Church in Nigeria to the imperative of her full participation in sustainable development, a call drawn from an understanding of the kingdom of God as not only futuristic, but already inaugurated by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in the light of the New Testament; while J. Marava (n.d.: pp. 19-33) called for a refocus on the undermined role of the clergy in influencing sustainable development.

From the studies highlighted above, the role of the Church in sustainable development so far is not in doubt. The recurring approach has been using the Scripture to condemn poor leadership which has been seen as the bane of development in Africa. For instance, Agbiji and Swart (2015) argue that

whereas the important role of an unjust global economic order and other contributory factors to the problem of poverty and underdevelopment in Nigeria should not be underestimated, poor leadership should by and large be held responsible for the lack of sustainable transformational development in Nigeria.

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Leadership is critical to development; but, as suggested by the title of Hurwitz and Hurwitz' book on followership (2015) "Leadership is half the Story", leadership is not the only bane to development. Crawford, Dawkins, Martin & Lewis (2018) regret that, "when a crisis emerges, the focus is often solely on the leader(s), with little consideration of the followers who elect, appoint, and support the leaders (p.271). One does not need to look too far to realise that, even in Nigeria, the role of followers (the electorate) in cooperating with the leaders to ensure the much needed sustainable development has largely been played down on in the Church's action towards such development. As Hurwitz & Hurwitz (2015) have argued, "capable followership can also act as a counterbalance to poor or even disastrous leadership" (p.36).

One cannot deny the fact that corruption has become endemic in the Nigerian society (Agbiji & Smart, 2015: pp. 3, 4). It can therefore be concluded that even if good leaders emerge, overhauling a system that is already used to deeply entrenched disobedience to civil authorities would be a difficult, if not impossible task. It is therefore necessary for the church to, in addition to other approaches, accentuate the New Testament teaching on submission to civil authorities for the actualization of the Millennial Development Goals. Using Paul's famous text on submission to civil authorities (Rom. 13:1-7), the historical critical method of exegesis shall be used to explore the text, while evaluative model of African Biblical Hermeneutics shall be used to apply the text to the context. The aim of this paper is to show that sustainable development can be enhanced in Africa through the submission of the citizens to the laws of the land, especially those laws that have to do with conservation of the earth's resources.

Sustainable Development in Nigeria Today

According to the report *Our Common Future* by Ms. Harlem Brundtland, sustainable development is defined as development that satisfies the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy theirs. This report, published in 1987 by the United Nations World Commission on Environment and Development, insists on the need to protect the diversity of genes, species, and all terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems in nature. This is possible in particular via measures to protect the quality of the environment, and by the restoration, development, and maintenance of habitats that are essential to species. This implies the sustainable management of the use of the animal and plant populations being exploited. In other words, it is the rational management of human, natural, and economic resources that aims to satisfy the essential needs of humanity in the very long term. In the year 2000, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by 189 member countries of the United Nations including Nigeria, with a view to fast tracking key developmental issues in Nigeria which include increasing the availability of basic life sustaining goods, raising the standard of people's living as well as expanding the range of economic and social choices. A set of eight goals to be achieved by 2015 was adopted by the United Nations which were: to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and

empower women; reduce child mortality; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development (Torado & Smith, 2011).

Some factors have been identified as obstacles to achieving sustainable development in Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs) like Nigeria. Adejumo and Adejumo (2014) identify them as: short term priorities of such governments, corruption, lack of qualified people to develop and implement alternative technologies due to a poor educational system, and lack of education about finite resources (p.43). Despite the effort of the Nigerian Government to enhance sustainable development, the above stated factors have been her bane in this direction. It is necessary to reiterate that corruption, stated by Adejumo and Adejumo above, both causes and is caused by citizens' non-submission to civil authorities, a cankerworm that this paper is out to address.

Consideration of the Text: Romans 13:1-7

Greek Text

Πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθω. οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐξουσία εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ θεοῦ, αἱ δὲ οὐσαι ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι εἰσίν. ὥστε ὁ ἀντιτασσόμενος τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ δι' αταγῆς ἀνθέστηκεν, οἱ δὲ ἀνθεστηκότες ἑαυτοῖς κρίμα λήμψονται. οἱ γὰρ ἄρχοντες οὐκ εἰσὶν ἐν φόβῳ τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργα ἀλλὰ τῷ κακῷ. θέλεις δὲ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι τὴν ἐξουσίαν· τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποίει, καὶ ἔξεις ἔπαινον ἐξ αὐτῆς· θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονος ἐστὶν σοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν. ἐὰν δὲ τὸ κακὸν ποιῆς, φοβοῦ· οὐ γὰρ εἰκὴ τὴν μάχαιραν φορεῖ· θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονος ἐστὶν ἐκδικῶς εἰς ὀργὴν τῷ τῷ κακῷ πράσσοντι. διὸ ἀνάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι, οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν. διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ φόρους τελεῖτε· λειτουργοὶ γὰρ θεοῦ εἰσὶν εἰς αὐτὸ ὑπὸ τοῦτο προσκαρτεροῦντες. ἀπόδοτε πᾶσιν τὰς ὀφειλάς, τῷ τὸν φόρον τὸν φόρον, τῷ τὸ τέλος τὸ τέλος, τῷ τὸν φόβον τὸν φόβον, τῷ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν τιμὴν.

Transliteration

Para psucheexousiaishuperechousaishupotassesthoo. Ou gar estinexousiaei mee hupotheou, hai de ousaihipotheotetagmenaieisin. Oostehoantitassomenos tee exousia tee toutheoudiatageeanthesteeken, hoi de anthesteekotesheautoiskrimalempsontai. hoi gar archontesoukeisinphobos too agatho ergo alla too kakoo. Theleis de mee phobeisthai teen exousian. To agathonpoiei, kai exeisepainon ex autes. Theou gar diakonosestinsoieis to agathon. Ean de to kakonpoiees, phobou. Ou gar eikee teen machairanphorei. Theou gar diakonosestinekdikoseisorgen to ko kakonprassonti. Dioanagkeepotassesthai, oumonondia teen orgeenalla kai dia teen suneideesin. Diatouto gar kai phorousteleite. Leitourgoi gar theoueisineis auto toutoproskarterountes. Apodotepasintasopheilas, too ton phoron ton phoron, too to telos to telos, too ton phobon ton phobon, too teen timeen teen timeen.

English Translation (RSV)

1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

2 Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval,

4 for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer.

5 Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience.

6 For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

7 Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honor to whom honor is due.

Exegesis of the Text

Historical and Literary Contexts

The letter of Paul to the Romans was written from Corinth toward the end of his third missionary journey, around AD 56 when Rome was the largest and most important city of the world, and anti-Christian persecutions had not yet begun. It was addressed to the saints in Rome, a mixed group of Gentiles and Jews who had migrated to Rome from various parts of the Mediterranean world. Paul had not as yet visited the church at Rome when he wrote the epistle (Jensen, 1981). Among Paul's reasons for writing was the desire to tell them of his plan to visit them and enlist their support for his proposed tour to Spain. The letter would also pave way for Paul's personal visit by giving instructions to the Christians regarding the basic truths of salvation and Christian living. So, he sets out the revelation of the righteousness which is from God by faith alone in chapters 1-4, the life promised for those who are righteous by faith in chapters 5-8, the unbelief of men and the faithfulness of God in 9:1-11:36, and the obedience to which those who are righteous by faith are called in 12:1-15:13 (Cranfield, 1985). It is under this last section that the text falls.

In the text (13:1-7), Paul exhorts that every person should be subject to the governing authorities. The injunction to be in subjection to the higher powers, while important in every country, would have a special force in Rome, where the Government would rigorously repress any religion which tended to run counter to that of the State, and especially Christianity, for Christians were largely regarded as a Jewish sect, and propaganda considered in any sense to be Jewish would be suspected as being of a revolutionary tendency. There was also danger, no doubt, that Christians might entertain wrong notions of the kingdom of Christ and its present relation to the kingdoms of this world (Vine, 1976).

Analysis of the Text

Πᾶσα ψυχή ἐξουσίαις ὑπερεχούσαις ὑποτασσέσθω.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities

The most interesting expression in this section is *let every person be subject*. It is often assumed that the Greek verb translated 'be subject' means 'obey'. But the Greek verb used is not the obvious verb to use to express that meaning. It seems virtually certain that in the present verse what Paul is enjoining is no uncritical obedience to whatever command the civil authority may decide to give, but the recognition that one has been placed below the authority by God and that it therefore has a greater claim on one than one has on oneself, and such responsible conduct in relation to it as results from such a recognition.

οὐ γὰρ ἔστιν ἐξουσία εἰ μὴ ὑπὸ θεοῦ, αἱ δὲ οὖσαι ὑπὸ θεοῦ τεταγμέναι εἰσίν.

For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God

The word translated as ‘authorities’ here is the word *exousia* (the same word used to describe the manner of Jesus’ preaching: ...*as one having authority*). *Exousia* is a compound word made of *ex* (‘from’ or ‘out of’) and *ousia* (the present participle of the verb ‘to be’, referring to the concept of being, the substance or essence). This word for authority therefore means, “from the substance, or out of the essence” (Sproul, 2000). The first statement *there is no authority except from God* stresses the absolute supremacy of God, while the second, *those that exist have been instituted by God* stresses the fact of God’s power to exercise His authority in setting up and removing rulers.

ὥστε ὁ ἀντιτασσόμενος τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ τῇ τοῦ θεοῦ διαταγῇ ἀνθεστήκεν, οἱ δὲ ἀνθεστηκότες ἑαυτοῖς κρίμα λήμψονται.

Therefore he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment

This is far-reaching. Whoever resists the existing authorities resists what God has put in place, thereby resisting God Himself. It is therefore natural that it be followed by *those who resist will incur judgment*. Whether the judgment is divine or human is not specified. What seems to be referred to is the punishment inflicted by rulers as ministers of God.

οἱ γὰρ ἄρχοντες οὐκ εἰσὶν φόβος τῷ ἀγαθῷ ἔργῳ ἀλλὰ τῷ κακῷ.

For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad

It should be borne in mind here that the authorities in question are God-ordained. To that end, they are not expected to be a terror to good conduct but to bad, and are to be obeyed to that extent. It is to this end that Vine argues that, “though Nero was ruling when this was written, the unrighteousness of his tyranny and his acts of persecution are not in view in this statement. What is enforced here is the duty of the civil authority in the discharge of its regular functions, which punishes wrongdoing and favours right...” (Vine, 1976: p. 187).

θέλεις δὲ μὴ φοβεῖσθαι τὴν ἐξουσίαν: τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποίει, καὶ ἔξεις ἔπαινον ἐξ αὐτῆς. ***Would you have no fear of him who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval***

This follows after the preceding, stressing that people who obey the authorities of the day have no need to be afraid. Rather, they are always bold and ready for every good work. The approval here, however, does not mean that for every good deed done, a citizen would have a special commendation from government. What it rather means is that, in avoiding the wrath of authorities, one receives approval.

θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονος ἐστὶν σοὶ εἰς τὸ ἀγαθόν.

For he is God’s servant for your good

This means that the service rendered by the authority is for the welfare of the subjects. The rightful exercise of authority, therefore, has immense beneficial effect upon the society in general.

ἐὰν δὲ τὸ κακὸν ποιῆς, φοβοῦ· οὐ γὰρ εἰκὴ τὴν μάχαιραν φορεῖ· θεοῦ γὰρ διάκονος ἐστὶν ἔκδικος εἰς ὀργὴν τῷ τὸ κακὸν πράσσοντι.

But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer

A sword was actually worn by emperors and magistrates as an emblem of their power of life and death; hence the metaphorical use of the phrase here. Wilson advances two reasons for the sword: in order to effectively discharge its duty, and to defend its frontiers. By the first, he is referring to capital punishment of offenders (Wilson, 1976: p.212).

διὸ ἀνάγκη ὑποτάσσεσθαι, οὐ μόνον διὰ τὴν ὀργὴν ἀλλὰ καὶ διὰ τὴν συνείδησιν.

Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath, but also for the sake of conscience

Here Paul hits a point that sets the Christian apart from other keepers of the law: he does it not just to avoid punishment, but because he has a higher law within that keeps him from wrongdoing. This kind of attitude ensures that eye-service and sycophancy (where people try to please the authorities in order to gain favour or just to avert punishment) are eschewed. It also ensures that, whether the agencies of the law are available or not, one does what he ought to as and when due.

διὰ τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ φόρους τελεῖτε· λειτουργοὶ γὰρ θεοῦ εἰσιν εἰς αὐτὸ τοῦτο προσκαρτεροῦντες.

For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing.

The word 'tribute' (*phoros*), was especially the yearly tax levied on persons or real property. The real ground of Christians' payment of taxes is their knowledge of the place of civil authority in the divine purpose. Jesus advocated this in Mark 12:13-17. *For the authorities are ministers of God...* is a reminder that it is as God's servants, and therefore as those whose claims must not be rejected or evaded, that the authorities demand the payment of taxes and dues. Here is presented a New Testament concept of governance: that the authorities are also ministers of God, as long as they remain under the supreme authority which is God's.

ἀπόδοτε πᾶσιν τὰς ὀφειλάς, τῷ τὸν φόρον τὸν φόρον, τῷ τὸ τέλος τὸ τέλος, τῷ τὸν φόβον τὸν φόβον, τῷ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν τιμὴν.

Pay all of them their dues, taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due.

To drive home his points, Paul emphasizes that Christians are not supposed to be debtors; they should endeavour to give everyone their due. In our present culture in Nigeria where those in authority are openly confronted, insulted and spoken ill of, this has a great message for God's called-out ones, to the end that they be reverent, civil, sensitive, courteous and respectful people.

Application: Issues around Christian Submission to Civil Authorities in Nigeria

The fundamental question that arises from the discourse on submission to civil authorities is, “what happens when the authority in question goes against the authority of God, that is, when they demand obedience to matters that are clearly not in sync with God’s will?” Wilson (1976) clearly states that “when the demands of the state are in conflict with the law of God, the resistance to them becomes a positive duty for the Christian” (p. 209). For Cranfield (1985), “Paul has in mind, of course, an authoritarian state, in which the Christian’s ‘subjection’ to the authorities is limited to respecting them, obeying them so far as such obedience does not conflict with God’s laws, and seriously and responsibly disobeying them when it does” (p.321). Botha (2001) further expatiates this type of disobedience: “This disobedience should remain ‘submissive’, however, in that subordinates ought not revolt but should accept the penalty provoked by their disobedience” (p.66). Oderot (2014) has a divergent opinion. He asserts that “St. Paul lived under the rule of Nero, a tyrant by every standard, yet he tells us to submit to the governing authorities...therefore, obedience to them is biblically mandatory...” (pp. 20, 21). In the opinion of the writer, now that democracy has taken over the continent of Africa, this issue cannot properly be interpreted the way it was interpreted by Paul’s first audience, seeing he had an authoritarian state in mind. In Nigeria, for instance, it is rare for the President to promulgate and enforce a law without wide consultations. However, even though the mandate lies with the people, they are to obey what they have agreed upon through their elected representatives. Besides, when it comes to laws that affect sustainable development, most of them do not have oppressive tendencies and are meant for the good of the society, hence the need to obey them.

Another question is, “Are all governments really ordained by God?” Sproul (2000) asks, “Does it mean that Hitler’s and Stalin’s governments were ordained of God?” His answer is, “First of all, behind this statement is the absolute conviction of scripture that God is the Lord of history...there is a certain sense in which even Hitler’s regime was ordained of God, in the sense that it could not happen without the Lord of history’s permission” (p.212). This has a profound lesson for Nigeria: that a sitting leader does not belong to one’s religious conviction does not mean that God has not ordained him for that position. Even when there is fraud in the electoral process, the emerging leader is to be seen as the one God has ordained, until proven otherwise. This issue rests more on the sovereignty of God than man’s opinion.

Areas of Submission to Civil Authorities Relevant to Sustainable Development

Submission to civil authorities enhances development, peace, harmony and the overall wellbeing of any given society. There are areas of this submission that are particularly relevant to sustainable development.

1. Payment of Taxes: There are Christian leaders who, in one way or the other, encourage the Christian public to refuse to pay their taxes whenever it is sensed that government is using the taxes to support what they (such Christian leaders) judge to be improper. Sproul (2000) supports this position: “when the tax is just, it is my moral obligation to pay that tax. If the tax is not just, then I am not obligated to pay it” (p.224).

However, the writer's opinion is that since payment of tax is fundamentally right, citizens should not fail to pay their taxes for any reason. There are better ways of channelling the citizens' grievances to the appropriate quarters through the elected representatives, especially in an ideal democracy. When taxes are paid, Government is empowered to embark on projects which would enhance sustainable development.

2. Obedience to the Laws of the State: It is not uncommon to see professing Christians, including members of the clergy, violating the laws of the state with reckless abandon. Such Christians have not come to terms with the biblical injunction to submit to the authorities. After all, the laws of the state are for the good of the citizens. The continuing degradation of natural forests, overexploitation of almost all marine fish stocks and unabated bio-piracy are examples of the effects of misguided policies and patterns of consumption. Unfortunately, in spite of the regulations against lumbering in our forests in order to check deforestation, people still use forest products illegally. This endangers the possibility of future generations accessing such trees.

Indiscriminate hunting is also an issue. Recent reports have it that a lot of animal species are presently endangered in our eco-system. If the situation is not checked, it will definitely engender an imbalance in the eco-system. What the government is saying in this regard is simple: endangered species should not be hunted.

The most common violation of laws regarding sustainable development has to do with environmental pollution. For instance, despite several legislations against industries being sited close to residential areas, we find our cities littered with industries that emit gases that endanger the biosphere. One wonders whether the authorities are not aware of such situations. Again, despite the enforcement on the use of refuse bins in vehicles, road users still throw refuse off the windows of vehicles. All these constitute pollution to and degrade the environment.

The development of gay relationship in today's world also endangers the future of any nation in the sense that, if not contained, it will reduce the population of the world drastically (procreation, even with modern medical technology, will be endangered). Meanwhile, it can be argued that, although the population of many nations needs to be reduced, a drastic and disproportionate reduction would be disastrous as it would leave the earth with less manpower to tend it. Gay relations of any form have been criminalized in Nigeria, but one wonders to what extent the legislation can be enforced or is being enforced at present. Here again, submission to civil authority is the answer.

Another cardinal aspect of duties of citizens to a state is the maintenance of law and order in the society. In recent times, that of Nigeria has been threatened at a very disturbing rate, especially by the activities of insurgents and militants in Nigeria. War degrades the environment – the soil, the air, minerals, aquatic life etc. If citizens of the country are law-abiding, most of the aftermaths of war will be avoided and the environment will be preserved.

3. Knowledge of the Law: the promotion of a 'personal gospel' as against a holistic gospel (such that encourages Christians to see the earth as God's kingdom, thereby being situation-aware and relevant to the environment) has been a bane to development in a variety of ways. It is part of submission to the authorities for one to be aware of government policies in order to partake effectively in them. One cannot obey or submit to what he is not aware of. Meanwhile, it is said that ignorance of the law is no excuse for

its violation. Another danger of not being informed is that such a person that lacks information tends to swallow whatever treatment is meted on him without reasoning. This is far from the submission prescribed in the text. Paul, for instance, widened the frontiers of the gospel because he knew and could defend his rights.

4. Maintenance of Work Ethics/Culture: the impact of unethical and criminal practices in the public sector is unsupportable in the development of nations... one does not need to look too far to see that work culture has eroded in many quarters in the Nigerian workforce. People go late to or even stay away from work; many are not satisfied with their pay (so, they patronise bribery and corruption). These and many more ills show that the motivation for work for many Nigerians is unfortunate and lopsided. Most people go to work because of what they hope to get from it (which is not bad on its own); the problem is that they are not really concerned about what they can put in. This is an unfortunate situation which the writer calls the 'hireling' mentality. Abiding by the ethics of one's work are part of his civil duties to the state, and when they are not observed, the results include: churning out of substandard goods and services, inconsistency in administration, and bribery and corruption, all of which constitute a bane to sustainable development.

5. Respect: the last verse of the text (verse 7) says to render to all men their due. Leaders everywhere are meant to be respected. In fact, Lasserre (1962) quoting Karl Barth, defines submission as "not a matter of being the subject of a person but of respecting a person in the position he occupies" (p.224). When leaders are respected (rather than being openly confronted, abused and insulted as is common in Nigeria), they are given the moral and psychological backing to take the people they are leading forward. Apart from this, it gives a good image to the state in the world's eyes, thereby attracting foreign favours and investments. This, of course, boosts sustainable development.

6. Prayer: if the concept of submission to civil authorities can also be interpreted as one's duty to the state, then it is pertinent to note the place of prayer in the development of a nation. I Timothy 2:1-2 reads: "First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way." According to Kasali (2006), the Bible sees the Church as having three functions in relation to the state: a priestly function (the Church must pray for those in authority), a pastoral function (the Church must provide teaching, counselling and direction to the authorities and to those governed), and a prophetic function (rebuking the state when it turns against God or acts unjustly) (p.224).

Conclusion

The extinction of some animal species, imbalance in the eco system due to depletion of some elements that are now irreplaceable, irregular disposal of waste and many other challenges stare the world at the face today. But the issue of enhancing a kind of development that will not only meet today's needs but pave way for tomorrow's needs to be met, has received responses from several fields of study to which it continues to lend itself. It has also been deeply appreciated that nature was given to humanity to tend, a

responsibility which humanity cannot shy away from. In the light of the above, religious proponents have also developed theologies that defend the sustainability of the earth's resources for posterity's sake.

It cannot be denied that what people believe affects and informs their actions and in-actions. Sustainability without faith in a creator (whether Christian or non-Christian) is endangered to become ethically superficial and trivial (Vogt, n.d:n.p). If there is an organized community which at the moment is part of the foundations of democratic field of tomorrow, it is the Church, in the generic sense rather than institution sense (Timothy, 2010). When people put their belief that the earth belongs to God the creator and is held in trust for Him in practice, it makes them do their best to leave the earth better than they met it. In the same way, when people believe that they owe their leaders submission under God, they go about their daily assignments with the consciousness that the leaders are God's representatives, and submission to them not only boosts their conscience but helps to balance the spiritual and physical structures that God has put in place. This is why Christian denominations should teach and preach submission to the government of the day to their members. The Church must also play her prophetic role by way of rebuking the authorities of the state whenever oppressive tendencies and anti-developmental laws are being promulgated.

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