

## **Attitudinal and Conceptual Considerations of the Church in Nigeria, in respect to Environmental Management**

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**Abstract:** The paper examined some attitudes, as well as mental considerations of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Church in Nigeria, in relations to its environment. The paper enunciated some attitudes of the church in Nigeria and how same had indulged in attitudes that violated and polluted the environment. The research further explained what was meant by technology, in relation with the church and how that had negatively robbed off on the environment. The paper had no doubt that technology could be positively beneficial if properly deployed, yet it reasoned that the existence of technology had been over exploited and grossly mismanaged by the Church. Accordingly, this was clearly against the intentions and dictates of the bible, which had proposed that every creation was beneficial and good. The paper also dwelled on the description of the environment and how it had been meant to be maintained and nurtured. It brought out the implications of ill-treating the environment by the Church through its unwholesome attitudes. The paper suggested a number of standard ways through which the environment could be fairly treated by the Church, even while it continued to make use of modern technology to propagate its beliefs. This research, therefore attempted to expose some of the attitudes practiced by the churches in Nigeria, which constituted environmental abuse.

The researcher adopted the descriptive technique, employing both primary and secondary sources of information to elicit information and to discuss his presentation. The qualitative (oral) source of information was purposively selected to include professionals who are vast in their fields, dating back to several years. On the other hand, relevant literatures and books were used as secondary source of information.

From the research, it was discovered that unknown to the people, the Church do contribute to environmental pollution. There is a direct relationship between what the Church does and how the environment reacts. The finding is that, although the attitudes of the Church could negatively impact on the environment, such however may be on the minutest level. The research also found that, such negative attitudes pass unknown with the members of the public.

**Key words:** Environment, Pollution, Church, Nature, Attitudes, Religious, Nigeria

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Lynn White, while trying to trace the origin of environmental degradation opines that Judeo-Christian monotheism, because of its essentially anthropocentric attitude towards nature, is the ideological source of the modern environmental crisis.<sup>1</sup> White's theory analyzed his argument in a simple syllogism:

- i. W1. Christianity leads to anthropocentrism
- ii. W2. Anthropocentrism leads to environmentally damaging behaviours
- iii. W3. So, Christianity is the origin of environmental crisis

In line with the above postulation, this research will attempt to understand how Churches, through their attitudes have been contributing to environmental pollution/degradation. Research has shown that many of the Churches do actually violate the laws on environmental pollution when building their houses of worship. In addition, it is confirmed that most times, such places of worship do not pass the National Environmental Impact Assessment Evaluation.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, in such instances they usually do not observe such approved noise levels which is set at 60 decibels, during the day, 35 decibels at nights and 35 decibels for hospital areas at both day and night.

In addition, most Churches are often built too close to residential houses. In another instance, adequate parking spaces are usually not provided for, therefore, leading to traffic congestions and or snail driving on our major roads, while majority of the churches refused to plant trees, which are very necessary for the ecosystem, as they have tendency to even absorb noise being generated amongst other advantages.

Again, Environmental Protection Agency, with its State branches throughout Nigeria had severally advised

sed Churches against such environmental abuses and on few occasions had had to lock up the disobedient churches. Staffers of the Ministry of Environment were usually met with stiff opposition by the offending churches whose parishioners normally viewed them as Anti-Christ.

In line with this subject matter, it has become a great concern for the various governments in Nigeria and for some informed members of the public, that Churches are very much fond of using unapproved sites and buildings as their places of worship. To that extent, compliance level of the churches to having their building plans approved has not been too encouraging, especially on the part of the Pentecostal churches whose tradition is to take off from temporary sites. Furthermore, when such cases are found out, they are usually directed to move to their permanent sites.

It is on record that there had been instances when Churches had attempted to change the content and structure after getting the approved building plans. To that extent, the relevant Ministry usually corrects such building mistakes and later designs from the foundation level and would normally advise that they adhere strictly to the approved building plans. Most often, churches do not observe the State's Law of 40:60 percent of land occupations.<sup>3</sup> What this means is that churches and schools are mandated to ensure that they build on the 40 percent of their total land mass, while allotting the remaining 60 percent to recreational such as sports fields, vehicular and human traffic maneuverings.

The erroneous conception of the churches usual for erring churches is to think that they are being asked to waste their precious space/land. Incidentally, the States' laws provide enough demands to keep the environment habitable with such provisions as not allowing houses to be built in areas considered as environmentally unfriendly. The law requires that houses are not built within 100 meters required setbacks from roads and streams. For the violators of these laws, their churches could be demolished by the Ministries of Land and Housing, while working in tandem with the States' Ministry of Environment.

The experience regarding environmental pollution by Churches is a generalized one in most of the Christian dominated States of Nigeria. Mostly, the state governments have been having running battles with various institutions like the religious houses and small scale business owners over noise and other pollutions. For instance, Lagos state government had to decide to enforce its laws on this menace. The decision has led to many churches, mosques and business centres caught in the web of the State's law. The Lagos State government was motivated to take action because it got to know that 60 percent of its residents are either technically or partially deaf on account of noise pollution.<sup>4</sup>

It is surprising to discover that the most culprits of the act are churches and religious houses. In its determination to give vent to the law against noise and air pollution, the Lagos State Environmental Protection Agency (LASEPA) has sealed off many of such offending churches, and with a promise to continue to seal off more in coming days and months.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the problem is overwhelming and has resulted in denying residents of the neighbouring churches not being able to have their deserved night sleep and rest after a day's hard work. The implications are too obvious for anybody to ignore. The researcher's reference to Lagos becomes relevant in this instance as Lagos has become a pace setter for all other states in Nigeria and especially for the South West States.

On a number of occasions, the peace of some communities had been disrupted by having outright clashes or at best skirmishes between the inhabitants of the local communities and the churches. The complaints have always been against harassments, intimidation, noise making, open defecation, traffic obstructions and erecting buildings on water ways/drainages. For instance, a row had broken out between a Lagos community of *Ifako Titun, IfakoIjaye* Local Government and some Pentecostal Churches in the neighbourhoods which had dragged on for a long time, until the government of Lagos intervened before each party sheathed their swords.<sup>6</sup> The most interesting aspect of the story is that even Christians were on the side of the Muslims who opposed the noisy activities of the churches. Thus, it could not be said to be borne out of religious sentiment, but a matter of objectivity and reality.

Again, in Kaduna State; Governor Ahmed El-Rufai had had to come out with executive bill titled "A Bill to Substitute the Kaduna State Religious State Preaching Law of 1984" so that he could restore some level of sanity into the society. The bill was aimed at empowering the State government to regulate, supervise, handle, oversee and control all religious activities of both the Christians and Muslims in Kaduna.<sup>7</sup> It was intended that the proposed law would foist draconian sanctions on anyone or a group of people who runs afoul of it: all religious services, including revivals or church services and presumably the Salat Al-Jumah by Muslims on Fridays, usually conducted on open grounds must henceforth be conducted inside the church buildings or mosques.

It further spelt that any sponsored preacher; Nigerian or foreign, from outside Kaduna State, must obtain a permit whose validity terminates at the end of the event for which it was issued. To some extent, one may be tempted to dismiss the proposed law with a wave of the hand because it appeared to be restricting religious freedom and free movement of Nigerians, but then if viewed from the stand point of the vulnerability of the minority religious groups and the antecedents of religious clashes that had occurred in Kaduna State and in the Northern States of Nigeria prior to this time, one may be tempted to go along with the proposed law.

Somehow, there is the need to bring a balance between the two opposing religious forces (Christians and Muslims) in terms of maintaining a decorum in their very fragile relationships which have the capabilities of easily tilting overboard at any slightest provocation, such as in the instances of noise making, traffic obstruction, and other forms of environmental pollution that may be violated from time to time; by either of the parties, but more especially by the Christians because of the nature of their proselytizing and evangelizing activities. Other States of Nigeria, no doubt have a lot to learn from these States (Lagos and Kaduna) earlier discussed in her quest to maintain a harmonious and healthy society.

Some people may argue that Churches do not contribute to environmental degradation. On the other hand, another school of thought would argue that, although the Church often contributes to environmental degradation, such however, may be considerably low and of no major significance to degrade the environment. The two arguments may not take into cognizance the depth and magnitude of what is often referred to as environmental degradation. In addition to the widely accepted opinions on what constitutes environmental degradation as the researcher had earlier brought out in the introductory part of this study, the researcher's understanding of what is referred to as environmental degradation is broad based and therefore could encompass so many variables of human activities that destroy the green house and deplete the atmosphere through emissions.

It equally includes such activities that destroy the arrangement of natural order below the earth and even includes outward features that tamper with the aesthetic beauty of the physical environment. Environmental degradation is the abuse of the environment, not only by a particular section of the Universe, but by virtually every one in the micro community. Whether or not the violation is huge on the part of the Churches, the fact remains that some recognizable and appreciable level of damage is being done to the environment, and everyone is a culprit. To that extent, the church would not be exonerated as this research would reveal as it progresses.

What then do we understand as the environment? A proper understanding of the environment would as a matter of fact shed light on how badly we have been managing it. It will also make us to refocus our attention on what we should henceforth be doing right.

### **Description of the Environment**

The term environment could be defined as the physical space and the surroundings in which man lives or resides. This space where man does live is usually located in a specific place and setting. If viewed from the biological sense, the environment could mean those elements outside an organism. That means anything that is found outside of man himself. Man has always lived in the midst of other things within a specific location. The totality of this is what is referred to as the environment.<sup>11</sup>

Sociologically, the environment could be sub-divided into different constituent parts; such as the social environment, economic environment, physical environment, political environment, religious environment and cultural environment. All of these interplay in the entire relationships which are moderated within the same environment at any given time. The relationship is characterized by constant socialization and interaction between the constituent bodies. Therefore, what affects one affects the others as far as the environment is concerned. If the process of socialization and interaction are positive, the impacts would as well be positive and vice versa.

To this extent, man has shown himself as the most efficient causative agent in the organ of interactions with his innovative inventions from simple cultural artifacts and implements such as knife, wheels, plows, wind mills, dams, compass, clock, pesticides, and printing press amongst others, which have transformed and influenced our social and natural environments.

It is on this basis that attitudes are molded and judged as good or bad, depending what comes out of the relationships and also depending on the various perspectives through which such are viewed and understood in the course of their interactions.

### **Environment and its Ethics**

At this juncture, it becomes relevant to delve into environmental ethics, which is an arm of philosophy that examines the concepts of right or wrong in human actions, vis-à-vis the Church and in this instance, in relation with its environment. According to Ojomo,

Ethics is a normative study of the principles of human conduct to justice and injustice, good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice. It questions what ought to be done and the extent to which there is justification for a past action that had been done.<sup>12</sup>

Environmental ethics as a sub unit of ethics is therefore concerned with issues of responsible personal conduct with respect to natural landscapes, resources, species, and non-human organisms. Broadly speaking, therefore, it could be interpreted to include questions of responsibility toward natural environments.<sup>13</sup> Environmental ethics is the discipline in philosophy that studies the moral relationship of human beings to, and also the value and moral status of the environment and its non-human contents.<sup>14</sup>

Environmental Ethics concerns itself with issues that relate to the good or bad evaluation of human activities on the environment. It is a field in applied ethics that asks fundamental questions about humans and the en

vironment.<sup>15</sup> Environmental ethics emerged as an academic sub-discipline of philosophy in the early 1970s when it challenged the traditional anthropocentrism.<sup>16</sup> Environmental ethics is a study concerned with the value of the physical and biological environment. There are a couple of reasons which could be cited for the introduction of environmental ethics. They include the following:

### **New Effects on Nature**

As a result of new technological breakthroughs, which have impacted tremendously on the environment, there is the need to bring up a defense for the abused environment. From time to time the environment has come under attack, through fresh explorations and exploitations, thereby leaving the environment a victim of its achievements. Some of the effects created by the outcome of technological inventions, on the environment are the major enemies confronting the wellbeing of mankind as well as that of nature today.

More interestingly, remedies and solutions being proffered seem to have gone beyond the control of man as more inventions are usually required to solve a particular problem, with the implications that more side effects are generated. So, the cycle of domination, abuse, and destruction continues.<sup>17</sup>

### **New Knowledge about Nature**

Modern science has brought in unprecedented new knowledge, which hitherto had not been known. For instance, nobody had thought of a relationship between deforestation and burning of fossil fuel and the level of availability of carbon dioxide. So, because human activities are changing the environment, there is therefore the need to think of acceptable ways, by the way of ethical control, through which the relationship between man and his environment could be moderated.<sup>18</sup>

### **Expanding Moral Concerns**

There is a latent argument that non-living things such as trees, hills, rivers, land and others also do have their rights which could be violated and or abused. This thinking is novel and contrasts the old believe that such things did not have rights.<sup>19</sup>

To this extent, it becomes imperative to consider the different shades and classifications of environmental ethics. Therefore, Anthropocentrists are mainly concerned about human beings as they assign intrinsic value to human beings alone. In other cases, they attach greater amount of intrinsic value to human beings than to any non-human things.<sup>20</sup> Environmental ethics is a diversified discipline which could be subdivided into five categories of school of thought: anthropocentrism, animal liberation/right theory, biocentrism, ecocentrism and eco-feminism.<sup>21</sup>

However, in the light of this research, there is the need to explain what environmental degradation is. It is the deterioration and abuse of the environment through depletion of resources such as air, water and soil. It is the destruction of the ecosystems and the extinction of wildlife. The UN International Strategy for Disaster Reduction defines environmental degradation as the reduction of the capacity of the environment to meet its social and ecological objectives and needs for the development of the human society.<sup>22</sup> The major areas of crisis of degradation are: agricultural activities and industrial pollution; agrochemical and waterways pollution; and developmental degradation.

Also, environmental degradation, according to High Level Threat Panel of the United Nations Organization, is one of the Ten Threats in humanity, which can easily lead humanity into extinction if not properly monitored and controlled. This is because it is a process through which the natural environment is compromised in some way, reducing biological diversity and the general health of the environment. The process can be natural, but in most cases, it is accelerated or caused by human activities. It is about the violence done to natural order, especially by the scientific and technological activities associated with man's innovations and ingenuity.

Furthermore, environmental degradation could be a potential source of poverty for mankind where such is deliberately acted out of pressure by the people, either because of trying to eke out for themselves means of livelihood for survival, most often through un-relented exploitations of the environment, or it is sometimes caused by natural occurrences. In the process of exploiting the environment, man degrades it and as a byproduct, also pollutes it. The whole thing comes in a chain of action and reaction. So, when we discuss environmental issues, we are invariably talking about its abuse, degradation and pollution in one sweep.

Environmental pollution is a global issue which affects both developed and developing countries and has suddenly become topical and prominent for quite some obvious reasons which bother on the effects of such identified issues on humanity, its survival and its general wellbeing. Every now and then the planet earth is abused, degraded, exploited and generally left vulnerable to several other human attacks. To the discerning minds, it is certainly not a good development, more so that the quality of human life is intrinsically dependent on the quality of its environment.

Judging by both empirical and spiritual evidences available, one could say that environment is meant to be protected, nurtured, tendered, and maintained in a sustainable manner. Therefore, the management of this pre

carious situation would require taking specific actions by the global and local policy makers in designing programmes, setting standards and taking actions to curb the sources and effects of environmental pollution.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, what obtains is the reverse, as the environment is constantly abused. The level of abuse and degradation vary from place to place, society to society, country to country and continent to continent, largely depending on the level and nature of human activities that take place in such places earlier identified. The summation of this is that; gradually the earth is being turned to an uninhabitable place in the universe. Slowly and steadily human activities are edging out good health, quality and safe living out of planet earth. This began several centuries ago without notice until very recently when the effects were becoming really pronounced. As aptly captured by a Columnist in Newswatch,

In fact, a new report revealed that the earth is warming faster than ever in recorded history. This report is based on an analysis of temperature and precipitation data recorded from 2001 to 2010. Michel Jarraud, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), asserted that Global warming acceleration in the recent decades was unprecedented as rising concentrations of heat trapping greenhouse gases are changing our climate, with far reaching implications for our environment and our oceans, which are absorbing both carbon dioxide and heat. He further stated that Natural climate variability, caused in part by interactions between our atmosphere and oceans means that some years are cooler than others.<sup>24</sup>

The most available effects are global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, oil spillage and deforestation amongst others. A United Nations report on climate change has predicted that the majority of those who would be affected by climate change are those whose activities do not necessarily contribute to global warming especially Africa, the poor and the weak, throughout the world as well as communities that are subjected to discrimination. The report stated that the impacting global warming would directly affect crop yield reduction, consequently leading to higher prices. Climate change will also make it difficult for developing countries such as those in Africa to climb out of poverty, and will create poverty pockets in rich and poor countries.<sup>25</sup>

The universality of human interactions has turned the world to what is often called global village, with its attendant repercussions on human wellbeing. It is very easy for a pollution generated thousands of kilometers away to reach another part of the world in a matter of days and sometimes; even in hours. This no longer makes the universe safe for living.

It is interesting to note that no part of the world is exempted from this crime of environmental pollution/degradation. Of course it may be argued that the level of culpability of different societies vary owing to a combination of factors such as their level of industrialization, technological sophistication, population density, scientific experimentations and many other related reasons.

In the midst of this gloomy picture posed by climate change, it is doubtful if Nigeria is rightly positioned to confront the consequences of climate change. It is important to know what Nigeria, has in stock to deal with the present resultant extreme weather conditions, and the consequent deforestation as well as so many other potential crises that may arise in the nearest future as a result of climate change.

Many times, causes of environmental degradation and climate change might be simple cultural/traditional practices such as bush and garbage burning, urban noise from human and vehicles, open defecation, stream/river defecation and bathing, gas flaring, burning of incenses and candles; and indiscriminate burial at homes. While the developed world is guilty of environmental degradation through the various abuses of technology, nuclear energy, mineral explorations, scientific research and experimentations, the developing world, may be less guilty in sophistication in their environmental degradation pattern. It appears that African countries', Sub-Sahara's contributions to global environmental molestation owe largely to their high level of ignorance and poverty, low level of industrial and technological developments, political conflicts, and including international economic pressures.<sup>26</sup> It is disheartening to know that in Sub-Sahara Africa, people who live in rural areas most often lack essential amenities such as portable water supplies, adequate lavatories and proper energy use.

The resultant effect of that is that streams and water ways are constantly polluted with human waste thereby exposing the people to waterborne diseases such as dysentery, typhoid and cholera. By extension, resultant, excessive use of fuel wood and constant bush burning which are very common practices in traditional Africa increase air pollution affects air quality adversely and depletes the forest and other natural habitats.<sup>27</sup> It could be said that, the contributions of traditional Africa to environmental exploitations/crises are crude and may not be of equal significance when compared with the contributions of the developed world. To overcome this menace, there has to be a concerted effort by all and sundry at checking it in all its ramifications.

### **Functions of the Environment**

Sociologists have identified three main functions of the environment accordingly:<sup>28</sup>

i. Provision of resources essential for life. The environment provides very essential resources for life for life to become enjoyable and the environment conducive to live within. Such basic essentials include water, air, and the raw materials used to build houses and create shelter, transportation, food and other things needed to make life functional.

ii. It serves as waste dumps. In the course of his daily activities, man generates a lot of waste every day. Over a long period, these wastes become huge and they come in their different forms, such as body waste, garbage, and sewage. The wastes are conveniently absorbed by the environment, except in instances when such has been carelessly mismanaged by man, such that they become too inundating for the environment. This is when they become pollution.

iii. Serves as the house for the environment. It plays the role of a house to man and all other living species. The environment has become our home where we carry out all our activities. This is because man cannot live in a vacuum. Therefore, if it is practically impossible for man to live in isolation from the environment, and in the course of the relationship, certainly there would be impacts created on one another, then there is the need for us to examine the fallouts of such interactions. The resultant effects of the relationships are usually devastating on the environment as consequences of human exploitations, thereby more often than not culminate in environmental pollution/degradation and abuse of nature.

### **Environment and its Management**

Environmental management has never been of so much concern to the human race than now. This is because of man's loss of grip over the management of his natural environment. This did not come by accident, but by the willful, deliberate and sometimes unconscious activities of mankind to explore and extract the natural environment to his fullest advantage, thereby bringing the environment to its knees. But first, what is referred to as the environment?

What we often referred to as environment in nature is the external physical world or our surroundings. Environment could thus be described as the natural endowments that nature has provided to aid the living of the human race in an interwoven manner, thus making us interdependent on one another. These include the trees, rivers/ocean, air, different species of animals, plants and fishes in the wild and waters respectively. Nature has created us to depend on one another for our general good health and adequate survival.

Therefore, any obstruction/disruption in the chain of interdependence would bring inconvenience to either of the parties. Resulting from these relationships, man tends to feel the brunt in the distortion more, than any of the species which are neither fully conscious nor completely possessed with the ability to drastically and violently react to the changes around them because of their level of living. On the other hand, man becomes the greatest beneficiary of the benevolence accruing therein from prudent management of the environment. In fact, the quality of life enjoyed by man could be directly linked to how well he treats his environment.

To this extent, environmental management could be described as being primarily concerned with any action taken by the society to prevent the decline in the quality of the environment as well as its improvement.<sup>29</sup> Meanwhile, the Federal Government of Nigeria promulgated the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (FEPA) Decree 59 of 1992 which stipulates as follows:

- i. establish programmes for the prevention, reduction, and elimination of pollution of the nation's air, land and inter-state waters, as well as national programmes for restoration and enhancement of the nation's environment
- ii. establish such environmental criteria, guidelines, specifications or standard for the protection of the nation's air and inter-state waters as may be necessary to protect the health and welfare of the population from environmental degradation
- iii. establish such procedures for industrial agricultural activities in order to minimize damage to the environment from such activities
- iv. maintain a programme of implementation of environmental criteria, guidelines, regulations and standards and monitoring enforcement of the regulation and standards thereof, etc.

By and large, environmental management is all about protecting, and restoring our degraded environment, through the formulation of appropriate laws and provision of adequate monitoring of same directed at preserving a good environment. In the process, it would make use of relevant technology available, if the objective must be attained. However, the best way to manage the environment is to, in the first instance; do as much as possible to forestall its degradation, as experience has shown that, it is very costly and time consuming to remedy any wrong or damage done to the environment. In that case, we must; as a matter of fact, know what the environment is. This knowledge is required because the environment stands largely at the centre of the discussion. The environment is either the beneficiary or the victim of all human activities, good or bad, as the case may be.

### **Environmental Pollution/Degradation**

These are outcomes/consequences of damages done to the environment by man in the course of his absolute dominance of the universe. They often arise because of man's belief in total over-lording of his environment, arising either from his spiritual opinions that everything has been created for his enjoyment, or stemming from his myopic belief that nature has created things in an in-exhaustive abundance. But from experience, it has been realized that these are erroneous beliefs.

To this extent, man has inflicted a lot of damage to his environment and made himself to experience so

much loss and damage. As a result, our water has been polluted and are no longer safe for drinking and for household use. The air we breathe is heavily polluted in an unprecedented manner, such that the human race has been afflicted with all sorts of strange diseases. Our lands are contaminated and therefore bring out toxic produces, which we in turn feed on, to the detriment of our good health. Man's advanced technology has been a harbinger of one joy and ten sorrows. Evidences have shown that man has lost grip over the management of his environment, therefore culminating into untold and unprecedented consequences.

To say that our environment has been badly abused/degraded is to state the obvious. From whatever aspect of the society is focused on, there are concrete evidences that such is being abused. Environmental abuse ranges from burning of refuse/bush burning, blockage of river courses, open defecation, noise generation, traffic obstruction, deforestation etc. On the more sophisticated level, we consider nuclear energy production and its varied applications, exploitation of the deep mineral resources, technological inventions and their attendant implications among many others.

The type of environmental abuse recorded in a specific environment goes with the level of their scientific and technological developments. Therefore, there are usually differences in the scale and type of the degradation recorded to the environment between the developing and the developed worlds. The bottom line however is that, irrespective of the type of the society, environmental degradation is the same and its implications to the biomass is the same, in spite of the fact that the rate of degeneration may be fast or slow as the case may be. That does not in any way reduce its negative impact on the environment, though.

### **Sources of Environmental Degradation**

Today's problems of man as they concern environmental degradation are mostly caused by human factors. In some few instances though, we have had natural occurrences which threatened man's immediate environment and the entire ecosystem. Yet, if such is basically traced, it would be found traceable to man's remotest activities. In the light of this; therefore, the following could be adduced as the immediate causes of environmental degradation:

#### **Population of the Environment**

The unimaginable increase in population, translates to more exploitation of the resources and overstretching the use of such. On another hand, it could result into more generation of wastes, and as wastes grow in amount and quantity, their nature changes. For instance, insecticide, plastics, heavy metals, toxic trace elements etc., are rapidly generated. This comes with such a consequence as acid rains, amongst others.

#### **Over-Exploitation of Natural Resources**

As a result of large concentration of human biomass in the neighbourhood of 6 billion, there is overstretching of the available resources over land, plants and trees. Hitherto, forests would naturally be cleared to accommodate more human beings. More virgin lands would be opened up for cultivation to be able to adequately feed the huge population. In the process, large amount of vegetation and trees would be destroyed to be able to satisfy the needs of man. All this have direct impact on the ecosystem.

#### **Man's Dangerous Inventions**

In the course of his search for attaining self-sufficiency and stability of his environment, man has employed the use of science and technology towards taming and controlling the environment. As at today, magnificent inventions have been made, and made available for the use of all and sundry. To a large extent, these technologies do have positive and negative impacts on the environment. Thus, man has produced hazardous chemicals such as DDT, Chloro-fluoro-carbons (CFCs), and other man made radioactive substances.

To a large extent, production of these chemical substances are beneficial to mankind either in controlling the pests on their farms, generate power to ameliorate the harsh environmental conditions and in the case of radioactive substances, are made to generate power and even activate weapons of mass destruction, if and when the need arises. But, they often become problems when they are over used, abused and or proliferated, thus making them unmanageable. Their effects could be devastating on the ecosystem and the entire environment. They end up degrading and polluting the environment.

Nature has been in abundance for mankind, in terms of provision of fresh air, fresh water, landscapes, virgin lands, thick and green forests etc. As it is, if well nurtured and cared for, nature is able to adequately sustain man for as long as he in turn respects his environment. The experience is however not too pleasant to narrate, because of the careless way man has been handling his environment while attempting to eke out a living and make life beautiful for himself. Most of the abuses had arisen from exploitation and exploration of the environment, resulting in excessive activities without any organized attempt of reclamation, such that the environment has been left devastated.

Therefore, the cycle continues as nature has been reacting, violently fighting back through silent and so

metimes reckless attacks on the fundamental existence of man in form of environmental pollution, degradation, resulting in greenhouse emission, climate change, erosion, global warming, and depletion of the ozone layer, earthquake, species extinction, changing extreme weather conditions and desertification amongst others. One would be tempted to say that a gloomy picture is being painted as regards the management of the natural environment by man, and it also could easily be said that fears are unnecessarily being expressed.

### **Environmental Conservation Mandate**

If man must survive within the ecosystem, there is an urgent need for him to place a priority on environmental conservation, as nobody can deny the fact that our lives revolve round one another. The fact that degrading the environment erodes the very basis of our economic development and that the poor often buy short term survival at the price of longer term sustainability, then that calls for a closer look at the way we manage our environment, for a standard living.

Poor or even non conservation of the environment would bring to naught all the efforts of man at making life easy for himself through the invention and production of cutting edge technologies. There is therefore the need to do proper environmental accounting, such that we would not only be solving the contemporary environmental problems, but would also be identifying those things that are needed to be maintained for sustainable development of our economic activities.<sup>30</sup>

By and large, protecting and conserving the environment would invariably amount to individual communities and countries having in her customary laws, well entrenched issues relating to the protection of the environment and as much as such should exist internationally, on environmental matters that cut across nations and borders. Our failure to do what is right and expected of us as man as pointed out in the above obligations towards managing and conserving the environment, would without exaggerations result into some damming consequences for humanity. We should therefore try to justify whether or not the concerns being raised here, are genuine in this research work as indicated hereafter.

This research will therefore attempt to discuss a number of ways through which the Church actually deplete and pollute the environment.

### **Noise Pollution**

It is known that noise is a serious and veritable source of pollution amongst some Churches in Nigeria. Noise is usually taken for granted in this part of the world, whereas the Churches in Nigeria engage in several ways of generating noise. Churches beat drums and clap vigorously, sing at the top of their voices, play the gongs, guitars, speakers and other heavy musical equipment, all simultaneously, without any concern for public health. As if that is not enough, most, if not all the churches own generators of one kind or the other, ranging from very noisy and smoky to the moderately noisy and less smoky ones. The generators which are used to power the churches' electrical and musical instruments are major sources of different pollutions. Generators produce both noise and combustion fumes which pollute the environment.

Many of the churches do this without taking into cognizance the danger the practice portends for the health of their neighbours and the general public at large. To worsen the matter, many of the churches flagrantly disregard warning against avoiding making a noise at sensitive hours of the day/night as they play their musical instruments without any concern to public health even at very odd hours of the day. This definitely comes with a lot of implication as armed robbers, thieves and burglars usually seize those moments of organized confusion to have field days carrying out their operations as they exploit the situation to forcefully break into houses without being heard or detected.

It has become a usual thing for Churches to blare their speakers and public address systems at whatever hour of the day and irrespective of the size of their congregations. It is a common practice to see pastors shouting hoax at the top of their voices even when they are on public address system and when speaking before a small congregation at an ungodly hour of 12 am. Their argument has always been that they are trying to reach as many sinners as possible, even within the confines of their home. They have failed to realize that, what they are doing is costing the general public a lot of harm. The outcome of carrying out Godly affairs at ungodly hours is unbecoming of the churches in Nigeria.

The level of damage this practice has done to public health is unquantifiable. Most often, workers who had gone all day to fend for their livelihood, hoping to retire to the comfort of their homes to have a good night rest, suddenly find themselves confronted with this rude and crude noise. The situation becomes more intolerable where there are two or more churches within the vicinity. This is a common occurrence in all the States of Nigeria, where a good number of the churches are located within residential areas of the communities. What is even more interesting is that the violators carry on their public disorder with impunity.

The result of this is sleeplessness and its attendant health implications such as high blood pressure, insomnia, deafness, insanity, and so many other health defects, public unrest and factional disagreements. The researcher marvels at the paradoxical situation in this type of pollution, as evidenced by the active involvement of ver



y important personalities, politicians, educated and government functionaries as violators. Most of the time, top government functionaries and those who matter in the society are seen worshipping in such churches under such unpleasant noise pollution at both day and night. In fact, such categories of people, when they are not founders, they are pastors, choir masters and even prayer warriors in those churches.

### **Use of Outdoor Venues for Evangelism/Revivals**

Closely related to the above type of pollution is the indiscriminate use of school fields, open arena and other available outdoor posts as temporary crusade grounds. Most often, such places are located deep into the residential areas. Such programmes would usually last for a couple of days and nights and are most times characterized by loud singing, accompanied with all the various forms of musical instruments, and with the sole objective of keeping the people who are far from the venue abreast of the developments and the gospel. This attitude is further compounded by the unplanned urban settings of our cities and towns in Nigeria. This makes the practice very irritating and intolerable.

Against this backdrop, a female resident of Ado-Ekiti told this researcher that on occasions when the *Ori-Apata* (hilltop) situated at Adebayo area in Ado-Ekiti was used for crusades, it was always a problem for her to sleep.<sup>31</sup> Her reason was that using *Ori-Apata* as a venue for revivals and crusades was very unsuitable and discomforting, because it was located at the heart of the neighbourhood of Ado-Ekiti. She said at her old age she would not wish anything of such for herself. Corroborating the earlier interviewee's experience was a technician who operates a mechanic workshop by the foot of the hill. He said the most annoying thing about the use of *Ori-Apata* for Christian worships was how worshippers recklessly polluted the environment with urine and feces in an open defecation during night services. According to him the reason was that, there were no provisions for public conveniences by the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) which owns the prayer site.<sup>32</sup>

### **Churches on Water Ways/Canals/Drains**

It is not uncommon to find Churches deliberately erecting buildings along waterways and canals in Nigeria. There could be a number of reasons why they do this. First, it starts from the low cost and affordability nature of such lands to the churches. Usually such lands are cheap to acquire for the struggling Church Founders who will readily claim that God has called them into the Ministry. Second, it could also be spiritual for some Church denominations especially as it relates to the white garment Churches which make regular use of flowing streams during their deliverance services.

To this extent, it is a common sight to find particularly the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) builds its worship centers on the river banks and waterways for the reason of accessibility and convenience. The most complex is when the churches decide to build on small drains, which they usually and nonchalantly regard as harmless. As time passes, they then come to the realization of the dangers that action poses not only to their buildings and worshippers but to the entire environment alike, when the channels naturally revolt against the diversions and obstructions.

Obviously, it is needless to emphasize that such buildings become vulnerable to flooding, thereby exposing their worshippers to unimaginable dangers. We have had cases where some State Governments had had to demolish worship centres obstructing waterways in order to ease the flow of water, as well as reduce the dangers posed by such reckless acts. It is the argument of some of these churches that, their worship centres are built in such areas because it is in the belief and doctrine of their churches to do so. This is entirely another topic for discussion.

### **Church Cemeteries**

Earlier in this work, the researcher talked about environmental degradation as including the disruption of the aesthetic beauty of the physical environment. It has been discovered that majority of the churches in Nigeria do not make provision for burial spaces for their deceased members, even though they are fully involved in their burial programmes. In a few instances where the Churches (Mainline Churches) do provide church cemeteries, such are usually overgrown with bushes, do not have their graves well marked, not painted and are most often not fenced up with iron gates. They are just carelessly left open and unattended to as if they don't matter to the environment.

This neglect has caused some environmental problems, such as the bushy burial grounds being used as hideouts by local criminals to plan and launch their nefarious attacks on the neighbourhood. In some instances, spiritual propitiations had been found offered to the dead members buried on church grounds, as a continuation of the traditional ancestors' worship beliefs. In some extreme cases, the remains had been clandestinely exhumed by unknown men for ritual purposes and body part business. Sometimes, the graves are eroded during heavy downpours. To this extent, the reaction of the Christian communities in most States of Nigeria is to prefer to bury their dead relations at home and at other designated private burial sites in order to guarantee the safety of the remains of their loved ones. Unfortunately, even those private and home burials are most often not well planned a

nd decently organized enough to be encouraged. Of course in a way, this arrangement of home/private burials seem not to be consistent with the teaching of the bible and the very nature of Christianity that was handed over by the missionaries, which advocated for proper and respectable treatment and disposal of the remains of Christians, preferably done within Church premises or at public cemeteries.

Although it is arguable that the missionary position on provision of public cemeteries does conflict with the cultures and traditions of most Nigerians, who will normally prefer to bury their dead at homes, yet it is a phenomenon that should be reconsidered in view of the fact that; such a native cultural belief of burying the dead is at variance with Christianity and utterly negates the teaching of Christianity on life and death. The practice of burying the dead at homes appears dirty, encourages ancestors' worship and does remove the aesthetic beauty of the environment where such is practiced. Most often, these burials are done near dug wells at homes. If we believe that anything lying on the surface of the earth or buried, will eventually find its way to the depth of the earth, then there is a great reason for concern that such would sooner or later leach through the soil and pollute the underground water and invariably constitute dangers to public health.

The concern stems from the fact that, firstly, the residuals from the remains would eventually find their way to the water table. Secondly, most Christian corpses are usually embalmed with strong chemicals to preserve the remains. In that case, not only will the residuals find their ways to the underground water, but that the chemicals used for the embalming will as well do. This can rightly be described as environmental pollution. This is where the Church in Nigeria ought to intervene, by creating joint cemeteries dedicated to their Christians in a particular community. It is commendable and noteworthy to mention that, some Mainline Churches in some States still maintain their old tradition of owning and maintaining Church cemeteries. However, most of the times, as has been discovered in the course of this research, they are neglected and poorly kept therefore becoming homes to hoodlums as well as to people of unsound mind.

To corroborate this was an Anglican clergy who reiterated that the Anglican Church, by tradition was very concerned about having an unpolluted environment. While responding to the researcher's enquiries, he disclosed that sometimes when trees in the premises of the churches were all fell, it was majorly because they had become very old and were consequently posing imminent dangers to the surrounding buildings, graves and humans alike. This researcher was reliably informed that usually, such fell trees were promptly replaced with new trees.<sup>3</sup>

However, the most pertinent point here is that, the tradition of Churches maintaining cemeteries was introduced to the Anglican Church by the European Missionaries, but later developments pitched the tradition against the culture of the people of the area who prefer to bury their dead within the family compounds.

In the same vein, a Baptist clergy disclosed that he stopped the practice of using the church compound as a cemetery, because according to him, it had become a dirty habit since the church had become the center of the town. He therefore advised that, local communities should get public cemeteries at the outskirts of their towns. The researcher observed that in most of the churches that maintain cemeteries, such had been poorly kept. It was also discovered that they were most often kept clean with the use of herbicides.

### **Parking Lots**

The provision of Parking Lots/garages is a rare occurrence in churches' environment in Nigeria, save for the mega churches. It is a common sight to see vehicles menacingly parked by worshippers in and around church premises in major States of Nigeria. In Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State for instance, very few churches could claim to have deliberately designed parking lots for their members' vehicles as part of their master plans. The resultant effect of that is that, access roads are often blocked, thereby hindering free flow of traffic, and therefore creating scenes of pollutions of carbon monoxide from the exhausts of the snarling vehicles, sometimes minor and even major accidents are recorded as a result of poor parking habits. The major reason for the lack of provision of parking lots is that, churches, often than not pay less attention to adequate space while carrying out architectural planning and designing of their worship centres.

Furthermore, most churches prefer to look for strategic areas of the major cities to erect their buildings. Many reasons which include: accessibility, commercial viability, population density of the areas, amongst others, are determinant frontline considerations for making site choices. Invariably, most churches end up being cited in areas where they would never be able to provide all the necessary facilities that such congregations would require. The optimum performance/action by these Churches towards avoiding traffic congestions and environmental pollution which could arise from lack of parking lots is the presentation of Church traffic marshals and security volunteers. They are usually seen on Sundays or on any other day designated for special church programmes, controlling the traffic coming in and out of the churches.

There are however limits to what these young volunteers can do in the face of limited traffic management training and experience, acute shortage of space and equipment. Usually, they soon get overwhelmed and end up looking helpless when the vehicles begin to park by the road sides. The resultant effect of that is traffic congestion on the major roads connecting the Churches and which are regularly plied by the public. It is unthinkable

e for a commuter to be held up in traffic for minutes in Ekiti State where vehicular traffic is assumed to be low on the major roads.

This position was corroborated by a resident of Ado-Ekiti, who said that the diversion of traffic from Fajuyi Park to Henry Dallimore Street in Ado-Ekiti, due to the ongoing construction of the overhead/flyover bridge at Fajuyi Park area had made the area in question become unbearable for commuters, especially on Sundays when the Churches around Dallimore had their services. According to him, The Apostolic Church and the Christ Apostolic Church, Oke-Iye, which are both cited on Henry Dallimore Street did not have good parking spaces, causing their members to always park their vehicles dangerously and provocatively along the road. Accordingly, this certainly was the reason why there was constant traffic snarls anytime the Churches organized services, programmes and events.<sup>34</sup>

Certainly, this is a major cause of environmental pollution in most cities and States in Nigeria. This is very evident especially in urban centres of Ekiti State, such as Ado-Ekiti, Ido-Ekiti, Aramoko-Ekiti, Omuo-Ekiti, and Ikere-Ekiti amongst others, where major roads are characterized by steeply ends, narrowness and dangerous bends. All this inhibit free flow of traffic, and eventually culminates into an increase in the emission and release of smoke/fumes into the environment.

### **Reasons for Degradation Concerns**

By now, scientific investigations have revealed the attendant fallouts and incontrovertible consequences of environmental pollution, as they affect the wellbeing of mankind. As a result of environmental pollution, the entire cosmic order has been changed and some of its negative impacts include poverty and suffering, diseases and afflictions, famine and crop failures, erosion and flooding, changes in weather conditions and desertification.

Obviously, the entire universe is currently struggling with the fallout of environmental pollution/degradation, such that it is almost becoming mankind's undoing. The atmosphere is definitely no longer as peaceful as it used to be. Recent weather conditions attest to the fact that there have been sharp changes in the seasons; characterized by either too much of rains; resulting in flooding, or extreme heat waves and cold as the case may be amongst other environmental changes. Mankind no longer feels safe in the universe which has become hostile and unfriendly, as against what nature initially provided. But, do we have nature to blame for this? No, we have ourselves to blame for not being caring enough with nature and to have for a long time cheated/mistreated the environment with impunity.

Many societies, especially in Nigeria which hitherto entirely depended on nature to practice agriculture, now find it very difficult to successfully practice same due to environmental pollution and degradation of the ecosystem. The ecosystem has had more than its fair share in the mismanagement of its environment and contents. Some will argue that we need not bother ourselves about environmental issues; after all, nature has a regenerative capability. To these minds, it should not be a thing of fear for man to maximally tap into the available resources of the environment as they belong to everybody. This researcher thinks this position is misplaced as the rate of replacement, when compared to the rate of regeneration is grossly falling short. More so, the amount and quantum of waste, damage and palliation that are being visited on the environment are far becoming unmanageable, and as such pose, great threats to the survival of the environment and man.

It becomes evident that in a matter of time, that the ecosystem may just be irreparably damaged by our ambitious activities as we have begun to notice of late in global climate change, global warming and their attendant implications. It should be understood that there could not be environmental crisis without a cultural and spiritual crisis. Therefore, the most important and least avoidable, of the consequences of environmental crisis resulting from our collective cultural and spiritual failures are that, we cannot safely consume the food we labour to produce and safely breathe the air around us without reasonable amount of fear.

We may be taken aback by the magnitude of the dangers we have created around ourselves and contending with every day. It is gradually dawning on man that the end of nature<sup>35</sup> is impending and closer than ever thought. The most frustrating aspect of it is that, it does not appear as if human race have any clear cut programme in place to stop the danger, other than the quick fixes such as clean, technical and clean solutions to the problems. It is probable that man has some technical solutions to some specific needs, but most often they are highly intellectually complex and inventive. In fact, it could be summarized that the world now has more to deal with, from the fallouts of the inventions of the Descartes and Newton.

To this extent, we really have a lot to fear, more so that the world's hope on technology to deal with the problems has fallen short of expectation as every problem it has set out to solve, has usually been followed by more unresolved problems. What then should we be doing to conserve our environment? The human race does have a lot of assignment towards conserving the environment, as would be clearly brought out subsequently.

## II. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The Churches must be made to stop the use of mounted public address systems at odd hours. They should further be discouraged from using heavy musical equipment which are commonly mounted and placed purposively at strategic corners of the churches with the aim of achieving maximum outreach within and outside the church. Churches should be barred from mounting their usual two horned speakers. These practices amount to abuses and unwarranted attacks on the peace of their innocent members of the public.
- ii. Churches must be made to observe their respective state's approved noise levels (decibels), for day time as well as for the night times. For the sake of emphasis, acceptable noise levels per decibels for day is 60, while that of the night and hospitals areas (day and night) is 35. To ensure compliance and proper monitoring of churches' activities, the Christian Association of Nigeria as well as its other five component blocs should ensure that all churches are appropriately registered with them, while CAN, the umbrella body should ensure that discipline is well entrenched amongst its members.
- iii. Governments and their relevant agencies must always ensure that Churches obtain approvals for all church buildings and including all other developed property of the churches such as schools and business shops, which are sometimes built within the church premises and attached to some churches' buildings respectively.
- iv. The State governments and their agencies must ensure that churches observe the recommendations of Federal Ministry of Housing and Urban Development on land use/development specifications. This has earlier been discussed. Therefore, government officials should ensure that government rules are neither disobeyed nor circumvented by the churches during constructions, as against what is currently obtainable.
- v. State Governments should ensure the enforcement of relevant laws which regulate the abuse of the environment. In order to achieve this, government agencies should not shy away or be intimidated by the churches from sanctioning those of them that engage in habits which are not environmentally friendly. Churches which violate laws on environmental pollution should be promptly sanctioned by the state accordingly.
- vi. State Governments should draw proper master plans and layouts for the major towns and cities in the state. This should clearly demarcate areas set aside as educational, residential, business, hospitals and religious. To make it workable, residential areas should be serially replicated with other composite groups except for the religious, which does not have to be replicated like others, but may translate to having three or more neighbouring areas of residences sharing an area of religious facilities and territories. This is to avoid it being too remotely located away for the worshipper and yet, making it accessible to the religious practitioners. In addition, both major and minor canals/waterways should be mapped out on paper and on sites, so as to prevent people or organizations such as churches from building/constructing edifices along their banks. Blocking the canals/waterways constitutes major environmental hazards to the public.
- vii. Federal and State Government agencies should be empowered by legislations to be able to enforce minimum standard environmental ethical behaviours on the Churches', in such cases as acquisition of adequate land space for citing a church, planting of trees within the premises and compulsory demand for building of perimeter fences, especially for those churches located within densely populated neighbourhoods as stipulated by the urban and regional planning laws of the various States.
- viii. Government should embark on sensitization slogans through the Ministry of Environment to churches in order to dissuade them from regularly using herbicides and other harmful chemicals. Rather than use herbicides, cutting of grasses should be encouraged.
- ix. Churches should be enforced to embrace the attitude of tree planting within their vast premises.
- x. All State Governments should enforce all churches to provide sufficient conveniences for their members and in accordance with the strength of the church. It is not enough to half-heartedly provide conveniences, but such must be so done in commensurate with the population and strength of the churches in question.
- xi. The government should work in tandem with the religious blocs/CAN to ensure that all the churches are not only registered with Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), but also do same with the appropriate blocs and with the Christian Association of Nigeria, for proper monitoring of their activities.
- xii. Government should liaise with the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), as well as the five different blocs to bring about the required discipline towards attaining environmentally friendly attitudes in the church.
- xiii. Respective State Governments should as a matter of urgency; set up a task force for the purpose of policing the environmental unethical attitudes of the churches, with a view to bringing them to account for their abuses. In such instances, penalties would be easy to administer on erring Churches.
- xiv. Approvals must be sought and got from the State governments for establishing Churches. Such approvals must be renewable from time to time as would be dictated by the government (may be 5 years). Renewals must be subject to adequate and satisfactory compliance of the Churches concerned to the State's Rules of Engagement.
- xv. Appropriate government agencies should regularly educate the Church leaders on the need to inculcate

sustainable healthy environmental attitudes through discussions, seminars, symposiums, workshops, dialogue and refresher courses, using the appropriate relevant agencies of government. This is very important and should therefore be made a prerequisite for establishing and maintaining Churches. Churches make a lot of money from their spiritual endeavours/enterprises. Their wares are spirituality, and their gains are stupendous tax free financial profits. This is clearly evidenced in the flamboyant life styles some church founders engage themselves in, even to the chagrin of their members.

Therefore, it may be a reasonable idea if Federal and State governments engage the Churches on robust diplomacy and discussions; on how to impose tax on the churches and generate more money for the state. This becomes an issue considering the fact that, proliferation of churches; in itself potentially constitutes environmental pollution, especially when their attitudes are not environmentally friendly and acceptable.

However, this step must be taken with extreme caution in order for it not to be misconstrued as an assignment against Christendom. This is where the state government would need to seriously tap into the leadership structure of the church, even though the links appear to be weak. Notwithstanding, they would be of great help and would be ready to assist the state, if they see transparency, goodwill and unbiased intentions behind the scheme.

Once the government succeeds in committing the churches financially to the project of creating and maintaining a healthy environment, it would be an easy task for it to redirect the focus of the church to issues bordering on the environment.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

From the foregoing and from the various investigations that this research had embarked on, certainly; the church is an important, proximate and loud section of the Nigerian nation. Therefore, whatever it does, overtly or covertly constitutes a major impact on the entire society and such would invariably have trickle-down effects on the people, and by and large the larger society. It is unfortunate that before now, the thought that churches could pollute the environment was far-fetched as it had been widely thought that the environment could only be polluted by companies, and the multi-national industries. Therefore, if the Church is understood from the point of the church being the total people/congregants and population of Christians, spread across a particular space and environment, and in this instance, then it could be assumed that wherever Christians are located in Nigeria, they could be referred to as the Church. This is not minding the various denominations and church blocs they may belong to. The implication of this is that, their behaviours and attitudes towards the environment in this respect are regarded as representing the attitudes of the collective church (body of Christ), either in their private or in their public lives.

The outcome of this research, has adequately proven that not only could churches abuse the environment; they certainly do pollute the environment in multidimensional ways. Therefore, if individuals, churches, corporate bodies, political territories/spheres such as third, second and first world countries; are simultaneously polluting the environment, it can then be safely said that, irrespective of the unequal and low degrees of contributions by the component parties, they are all equally guilty of committing the same offence of environmental degradation, in spite of being so done in varying levels of high or low.

The performance of any functional society and its environment; must as a matter of fact be measured on the percentage level of the total wellness of its citizens, in conjunction with other available variables; such as the availability of physical infrastructures, private and public conveniences, functional education, good healthcare facilities as well as other viable economic resources for its people. The totality of these parameters/variables measured; would decide whether or not a society is effectively functional and progressing. This is the reason the Church and the State governments must be concerned on how well the environment is managed and treated.

In conclusion therefore, on the long run; all ill treatments of the environment by the church, no matter how infinitesimal and inconsequential they may be considered, would still constitute abuse and they invariably would add up to the overall problem of environmental degradation, gradually resulting in pollution and global warming and with all its attendant implications. In this instance, no one is exempt, no one wins and everybody is a loser in the fight of maintaining a conducive and healthy environment for all to live.

The Church should therefore be interested in protecting its environment, because invariably the church and the society are intricately and indissolubly linked to each other. They both exist and operate within the same environmental space. The religiosity of the congregants could be positively tapped into by the religious leader, such that their massive and obedient members, would be properly educated on the acceptable ways of nurturing their immediate environments, while the church on its part should lead by example on how well the environment should be best treated.

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