


Pentecostal church and politics: Interdependent instruments of God's mission in Africa



Author:

Titus M. Ingaboh¹ 

Affiliation:

¹Department of Theology,
Faculty of Theology,
North-West University,
Potchefstroom, South Africa

Corresponding author:

Titus Ingaboh,
titusmakusi@gmail.com

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The debate about the interdependence or the dichotomy between the church and the state or politics is not new. The discourse is neither over nor something that will pass any soon. Both perspectives provide concrete reasons depending on the viewpoint from which an individual is writing and arguing. Both the ecclesia and the state or politics enjoy social capital. Of the two, however, the Church's social capital is resilient and consistent, unlike the political capital which is seasonal and only rigorous in the pursuit for political position.

In recent years, there is an immense emergence of Christianity that blend charismatic practices and African religiosity. An increased pursuit of political leadership is being witnessed by the church leadership and the secular community. One of the motivations has been the derivatives from the positions, which are mainly monetary and honourability. This can be linked to a struggle to meet a status threshold set and determined by a postmodern society which the clergy and the political leader must uphold. Anyone who lives below that 'standard' does not fit that position. It is for this reason that both the church and state or politics has been commercialised. The commercialisation aspect resulted in the two competitive entrepreneurial enterprises. Thus justice has been retailed to commercialisation and consumerism.

This article therefore firmly holds the possibility that church and state or politics have common elements that, if reworked, can become tools in the mission of God. The assumption is that both institutions are reviewed as organs and not organisations because, as organisms, they are both fit for transformation into suitable instruments for the mission of God. Institutional reforms are dictated by the reformed human resource. This article leans towards the interrelationship between the Pentecostal tradition and the state or politics in viewing their role in doing justice to the mission of God. Thus a comparative framework fits this work.

Contribution: The interdependence of the church and political enterprise is exposed to a constructive critique and further writing. It has advanced affirmed the comparative methodology as a ongoing study alternative.

Keywords: Church; Politics; Geopolitics; Classical Pentecostalism; Contemporary Pentecostalism.

Introduction

Hendricks' supposition and question (2006) are that:

[I]f Jesus was a political revolutionary, what were the political issues and conditions of the world of his birth that he was responding to and sought so fervently to change? (p. 13)

This is a good place to start. The debate about whether the church and politics oppose or interrelate is endless. Much of scholarly effort has gone into it which has produced good work on the subject. This article is concerned about the existing disconnection and relegation of the role of the two which seems to have left the community of believers or nominal citizens manipulatively vulnerable. The question of who should either critique or confront the other is the aim of this article. Is the church called to shepherd? Yes, indeed. Has politics been called to shepherd? It is confirmative. In case of role contradiction, ecclesial shepherding takes precedence, because it provides a framework of the task. It is arguably so because the political enterprise is an extension of the church in the public space. That is to say, the existence of a weak church begets a weak political enterprise. On the other hand, politics that seem strong without the church, produces politics of compromise, use and dump politics, politics of corruption, or tribalism, which leads to human and ecological degradation.

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In the writer's view, there is compromised Pentecostalism in Kenya. This will be explained later. Classical Pentecostalism, which offered a framework for the Pentecostal movement, seems to have died in the late 1980s and mid-1990s. What exists now is a form of Pentecostalism conveyed in the conduits of the prosperity gospel. This kind is mainly characterised by the concepts of consumerism, material competition, manipulation of the believers and so many sideshows. The church seems to seek favours from the political enterprise, and such favours seem to have a negative impact in the long run. This can be termed ecclesia-politics propaganda.

Thus, this article addresses such pertinent issues including the influence of classical Pentecostalism in relation to contemporary Pentecostalism, the mutuality of church and politics, the response of Pentecostalism on geopolitics, the quest of where the problem is, and the way forward.

A comparative methodology applies to this work, because it seeks to enhance an understanding of the society, in this case the ecclesial and political, by placing their familiar structures against each (Esser & Vliegthart 2017:2). In comparative study, the framework is primarily to compare dissimilar systems (eds. Bray, Adamson & Mason 2014:19–21) to establish the approach on a common concept. Thus, this article perceives church and politics as interdependent tools in the mission of God. This article therefore establishes the duo's approach to the mission of God, especially in their implementation of justice.

Classical Pentecostalism versus contemporary Pentecostalism

Classical Pentecostalism emerged from the Azusa Street Revival. This movement was characterised by a lack of racial separatism, and leadership that was derived from various social classes and races (Hunt 2002:8, 9). This brings a sense of human equity that can be equated to the divine justice of God with his fair dealing with humanity and the entire creation. The approach by classical Pentecostalism perceived the future of Christianity with a collective view of the community of believers. That could explain why the new structures of industrial society of inequalities in the late 19th and early 20th centuries inarguably facilitated the emergence of the classical Pentecostal movement (Hunt 2002:9) to try and reinstate God's image and design in humanity that the inequalities were out to taint.

Both the classical and contemporary Pentecostal streams share huge theological emphasis. However, the focus is not to explore theological content. Notable tensions within the movement were noted in the early 1950s (Horn 1989:5). The main cause of the breach is connected to the unorthodox style which tied financial prosperity to extraordinary fundraising methods with a strong emphasis on physical healing (Horn 1989:5). The position that the gospel provides for financial prosperity is a leading conduit to complacency and

willingness to embrace any means that would lead to financial benefit. This simplistic attitude is equivalent to a race for wealth and wellness, which disintegrates the boundaries of justice for both humanity and the entire ecosystem.

Kenya's geopolitics as a career is known for its huge financial remunerations upon entry. The lifestyle is highly appealing and worthy of endeavouring. Its appeal, which is not limited to financial rewards and honourability, are attractive to both the citizenry and the clergy in a rush to make a good living out of it. The extreme of it is when a few individuals, especially the clergy, relegate prosperity teaching to fundraising methodologies like the evangelist, Allen. Allen held prosperity as not part of Christ's blessing to all believers, but as a custodian of charisma given to him to allocate to others. Thus, to him, prosperity was linked to the doctrine of God (Horn 1989:35).

The Clergy Association of Kenya (CAK) is one of the Pentecostal umbrellas aimed at empowering the clergy. CAK currently has 445 bishops and pastors. In one of the WhatsApp chats, Robert Kamau (2023) gives some attributes he perceives as attractive about early Pentecostalism. They include an emphasis on the church as being for born-again believers guided by the Holy Spirit, expression of strong brotherhood and sisterhood, lived holiness and abhorred sin, eagerness for the second coming of Christ, marital sanctity, and detachment from money, wealth and power by perceiving life through the love of God. In his opinion, he argues that the teaching of most of the Pentecostal preachers today is contrary to the former. Additionally, he raises questions such as the following: What happened?; and Why are they going back to what the reformers rejected?¹ The dilemma is a call to rethink contemporary Pentecostalism.

Mutuality of church and politics

Social scientists and revolutionaries have perceived religion as 'a conservative influence' (Johnston & Figa 1988:32). The conservatism spoken of, tends more towards positivity, as opposed to negative implications of what religion entails. In a sense, on matters of preservation and push for justice, the church as a prophetic institution is not called to 'conserve social orders that have stratified inequalities of power, privilege and wealth' (Hendricks 2006:28–29). That is, the church cannot share in the destabilisation of the state of affairs by random and coerced ratification of political injustices and inequalities. The church has a missional transformative mandate to call out the synchronised status quo, by calling the leadership and the practice of politics to sound accountability. The church is in a quagmire when it fails in its role. This speaks to the recent call by the political elites to have the government of Kenya urgently regularise the operations of the church and other religious institutions (Danflow 2023). If the church falls at the feet of any political government, who will save and regulate politics?

1. Robert Kamau's message (2023) posted on the wall of Clergy Association of Kenya. He compares the current Pentecostals with the early Pentecostals.

The relationship between the church and politics is a complex one (McBrien 1984:57). Such complexities are complicatedly tied together. In a scenario, political leaders recruit pastors for their political ambitions, and pastors, on the other hand, campaign for political positions (Afolayan et al. 2018:v). This, in itself, leaves the congregation split on the application of the principle of universal suffrage (Kenya 2010) which is a constitutional right. Because the electorate attaches meaning and commercial value to the power of the vote, the highest bidder, either the pastor or the politician, gets it. This can be termed as ecclesia-political propagandism. Propagandism demonstrates the characteristics of coercion and the 'threat for the power elites posed by an educated and informed populace' (Pedro-Carañana et al. 2018:9). The element of coercion postulates maladies of deteriorating compromised democracy. Democracy has been commodified so that the rich and the powerful trade on the weak, the poor, and the less fortunate. In ecclesial and political contexts, power is controlled through monetary commodification.

A religious framework is depicted from the 'beginning of beginnings' through the biblical narrative, as God instructs man on inter-relationality and management of the ecosystem. The biblical narrative unfolds first implicitly then explicitly, with the reign of God who graces humanity with both dominion and co-creational accountability obligation. Glimpses of the first human governance are implied in such verbs as 'rule over, fill the earth, and subdue it' (Gn 1:26–28). This is not a subjugation of God's autonomy, but an extended invitation of humanity into the mission of God. Underpinning the invitation is an intended working relationship between God and man that would inform the success of the mission. This demystifies the enlightenment spirit of deism that stems from the role of heterodoxy – an issue in the emergence of modernity (Hudson, Lucci & Wigelsworth 2016:1–4) and seems to have sneaked into the postmodern space. It brings a sense that God did not just leave the world to govern itself – he is involved. A closer study of the Bible reveals God starting a journey with man in the Garden of Eden which will end in the city in Revelation 22. This speaks to the constant visits of God at Eden before fall, for administrative and consultative governance, his incarnation in the person of Christ, and presently through the Person of the Holy Spirit. The first Adamic 'rule' and 'subdue' is a missional invitation to bring creation under the rule and shalom of God. The fall of the first Adam subjected creation, human governance, and politics at stake. The second Adam restores the fallen order through the new covenant of grace that his manifesto articulates as the restoration and the practice of justice and revitalisation of the oppressed (Lk 4:18–19). The mission is passed on to the disciples, who are to make disciples of all nations under his authority (Mt 28:18). That does not mean negating the secular authority but working in partnership. The disciples are the direct salt and bearers of light; thus, representatives of Christ in and to the world (Mt 5:13–15). The concern of God with the Hebrews in the exodus encounter can be viewed as a political event in the sense that political and economic oppression of the people of God by a

foreign nation could be observed. This is political colonisation. The epitome of the political nature of the exodus experience is recorded in Exodus 3:7–8. Considering the response of God to the oppressed Hebrews is indicative of his firm support of justice and liberation which are the foundation of the biblical faith. The Hebrews' outcry is more of a socio-political identity as opposed to a religious identity (Hendricks 2006:15).

In the missional instructions, the expectation is 'shine your light before others ...' (Mt 5:15). Okullu (1974:1) understands that God is at work in the world beyond the church's boundaries. If the phrase 'world beyond' would retain the context of Okullu's discussion; it fits the assumption that public politics is included. If this is the case, ecclesial theology needs to open its doors for and to the public space. We can refer to this as 'ecclesial-theological political inclusivity'. Such inclusivity is purposeful. The God that Okullu presents, is one whose work includes confronting the political world, because human beings are political, and God created them with a political inclination when he declared them free agents to choose the tree from which to eat the fruit in the Garden (Gn 2:16). Politics entails human life in the public space where religion, culture, society, economy and governance meet for dialogue (Yong 2010:xiv). Rationally, politics brings two things to the fore which are critical: It is classical and practical, which postulates essential pillars that concern social capital. They include the founding of the state, the acquisition and maintenance of justice, citizenry, democracy and peace (McBrien 1984:57–58). It is inarguable that the church and political enterprise can exist for each other.

The church provides politics with ethics and personnel; it thus plays a very critical role in political space. The teaching of the church feeds the public with moral standards, decorum and the decency needed in playing balanced politics. This is very important, because the church becomes accountable and intentional in its biblical teaching and instructions. Uganda's history of independence speaks to this argument. Upon independence in 1962, President Milton Obote applauded the revolutionary teaching of the church that became a factor in the acquisition of political independence. However, later he blamed the church for dwelling too much on celebrating its achievement at the expense of offering guidance (Okullu 1974:2). In the 1970s, Okullu (1974:2) commented on the sluggishness of the church in offering guidance to African nations in their need to rework their national aspirations. It is arguable whether the church has overcome the slowness in its response to governance and political issues.

A common question asked is about the relationship between prayers offered by the church and the quest for political positions by the political players. The duo display unique encounters either contrary or in collaboration that need not be assumed. Whether this is to be relegated as a sanitisation process of the secularised politics characterised by propagandist theory, it is a debate worthy of engaging. McDonagh (1979:543) describes interdependence of the prayer and politics as both sounding proper and puzzling.

It is proper, because prayer is the heartbeat of ecclesial life and existence and it is puzzling, because prayer elevates the church beyond the level of politics. However the church relates to political life through its teaching and the diverse social services it renders to the community. Politics rooted in prayer and ecclesial teaching is to replicate the church's services in how it plays its politics in the public space. In other words, it is expected that a political career becomes a public theology informed by and rooted in prayer and biblical teaching. In Tan's view (2014):

[T]he enfolding of the world into Christ in the practice of prayer presumes straight away that Christian prayer calls for an awareness not just of one's own needs or salvation, but also for an alternative political witness of an alternative polis. (p. 375)

Additionally, Christian prayer encloses or rather includes the secular world into another polis: the body of Christ (Tan 2014:375).

It is inarguable that the ecclesial means of graces are essentially important and contribute to the nature of politics, because they provide the framework for constructing politics of justice and benevolence. In saying so, it can be noted that reconstructive politics helps to construct the legal frameworks through which ecclesial functionalities are operationalised. Thus, each checks the other in providing the needed balance in dealing with both human and eco-systemic issues. Consequently, there should be no war of belittlement, intimidation and negative profiling of the two functions. It is absurd that the continent of Europe, which participated in the Christianisation of Africa, is now resorting to dichotomising church and state while during Christianisation and abolitionism of Africanism they made church and state or politics inseparable. Králik's allegation (2006:12) about the move by many politicians' clamour for the separation of the church and the state in Central Europe, is a clarion call to the African church and states against liberalism. His (Králik 2006:21) argument that the maturation of the separation is just a matter of time, is an incommensurable trend. While the trend may be out to shape the global church and state politics, the thinking of the African Church and States should be contrary to this, so that it will remain the revivalist salt and light in the world that is growing immensely dark.

Pentecostalism on geopolitics

Global capitalism has remarkably influenced the growth and spread of Pentecostalism. What underlies capitalism is not just monetary, but it also impacts how leaders understand the functionality of the church (Padwick 1991:411). The 'spirit of capitalism was nationalism'; thus, nationalism, as a virtuous dynamism, motivated modern economic growth (Greenfeld 2009:58). Nationalism and political enterprise are subservient to each other in their operationalisation. They both inform the economic framework of a nation as opposed to the spirit of propagandism which betrays the growth of democracy. It is inarguable that politics and economics are inevitable forces and determinants that are shaping the 21st

century and beyond. Contemporary capitalism rooted in individualism, private ownership and liberalised forces of the market determines the process and apportionment of resources, and it has prevailed over communal socialism (Albert 2009:v). This is the economic and political backdrop – a context in which the church, the Pentecostal tradition in this case, is located and expected to function.

The church in Kenya is either mainline or Pentecostal. The former is more structural, and the latter is loosely structured. Comparatively, the polity of the former posits an established ecclesial government as opposed to the latter. The functional outplay of the two traditions shows diverse responses to the public political enterprise. However, the focus here is the response of Pentecostalism to political issues. The common question usually asked is whether the church should be involved in political activities. If in the affirmative, what should be the role and how should the role be executed? These questions are pertinent, especially on how the church should centrally position itself in matters of political enterprise and, at the same time, remain spiritual.

Pentecostalism is known for its experiential upward mobility, which has triggered a higher desire for political engagement (Yong 2010:8). The philosophy of 'upward mobility' is a strong current and seems to underlie the pursuit of health and wealth in the Pentecostal movement. Okullu's (1974:7) question of whether we are looking for cooperation between the state and the church or conformity is very important. Given the current state of Kenyan politics, conformity, as opposed to cooperation, is predominant, especially among Pentecostal preachers. Political rallies, campaigns, political conscience, and prayers offered by the clergy, can better be described as soothers. The aim is to sanitise and whitewash political actors instead of preserving the status quo. The clergy must engage in transformative politics that may attract social reconstruction. However, dissatisfaction comes when the clergy leans towards the political state of affairs.

In the pursuit of Pentecostal relations with and in politics, it is imperative to underscore the fact that the 'political essence of Pentecostalism is context-bound'. This is informed by the fact that spiritual and political delineations are shaped by geo-cultural factors that bring such continental and contextual variations (eds. Afolayan, Yacob-Haliso & Falola 2018:4). The concern about the sense in which Pentecostalism is powerful as political spirituality through the lenses of political and spiritual magnitudes intermediated by its 'postcolonial context in Africa' (eds. Afolayan et al. 2018:4) speaks volumes on their dichotomised coexistence with secular politics. Can this be termed as compromised spirituality? The response depends on the ecclesial and political alignment and intention.

Pentecostalism has been described as a 'fluid community' (Martin 2004:3) in matters of biblical interpretation. Their fluidity informs their engagements in religio-political spaces. The zeal and resilience, demonstrated in their political

enterprise, are dimensionally charismatic. The assumption to engage is claimed by the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Zambian Pentecostal theologians are a good case in point. They interpret the 'State House as a seat of spiritual power' and the centrality of the altar is critical so that the President cannot become powerful devoid of the altar, because the Presidency derives power from the altar (Kaunda 2018:7–9). This is indicative of a church stretching into the heart of national politics and governance.

One of the main callings of the biblical prophets was to back social and political changes in the society, and they could never uncritically support the status quo (Hendricks 2006:28). Prophetic voice is never supposed to be conformist. The government of Kenya, (for the period 2022 to 2027) under the Presidency of William Samoei Ruto, experiences a seamless relationship with the church, the Pentecostal model in particular, which puts the church and state politics in harmony. The threat, however, is conformism. The open doors of the State House have been a privilege to Bishops and pastors for prayer visits which are seen as spiritual interventions and conscience in matters of leadership. Gathogo (2013:212) well describes this as 'emerging Christianities', a characteristic model of Christianity that blends charismatic practices and African religiosity. His trace of such trends speaks to the paradigm shifts in the relationship between the church and the state. While the Pentecostal emphasis was recognised by the second President of Kenya, Daniel Moi (1979–2002), as a supportive system, such recognition was limited to offering a prayer in political and public gatherings (Gathogo 2013:212). Kenya has, however, experienced a radical paradigm shift in the church, especially Pentecostalism and state politics since 2007 to date. Competitive candidature from the church and secular space for higher political leadership has immensely increased. Whether the motivation is the transformation of the society and citizenry or not is a question of time. A few examples are cited. Bishop Pius Muiro contested for Presidency in 2007 on Kenya Peoples' Party (KKP) but lost. Bishop Margaret Wanjiru contested for Starehe Parliamentary seat the same year and won. In 2022, she contested for the Nairobi Senatorial position but lost it (Gathogo 2013:212). The latest clergy to contest for Presidency in the 2022 Presidential race is David Wahiga Mwaure, a lawyer by profession and ordained clergy (Benita van Eyssen 2022). The observable political and ecclesial landscape has glaring and remarkable proof that Afro-Pentecostalism is a strong wave and a brand that is influencing and informing the framework of Christianity, the church and politics in contemporary Kenya. Comparatively, the Zambian and Kenyan 'theology of State House' (Kaunda 2018:7) plays a noteworthy function in the Pentecostal model in the two contexts.

Where is the problem?

It is inarguable that, for centuries, religious institutions kept close contact with the nuclei of political powers and with much caution bequeathed their blessing. However, with

the new trends, including the wave of State secularism, the church became exceedingly apolitical, but indirectly supported political order by remaining indifferent to the political conflict (Johnston & Figa 1988:32). Okullu (1974:7) sees a huge confusion in the relationship between the church and the political state. He precisely argues that, in such a confusion, both Christians and politicians have always referred to Romans 13 to induce submission to the existing authority. The extreme result would be when politicians demand beyond their share as the church, on the other side, become subservient. Being apolitical is not a solution in a society that is rooted in a political culture. Maintaining a non-participant or adopting a silent policy is problematic, because it is equated to absconding the mandate. Christ calls the church into the 'world' and not be of the 'world'. A close study of Christological proclamations in the gospel depicts the kingdom of God as an exclusively worldly realism (Hendricks 2006:22). Christ envisions a transformative kingdom in matters of economy and justice in his keynote address in the Jerusalem temple (Lk 4:18–19). Elsewhere, Jesus insisted on righteousness (Mt 6:33) in the world, a virtue of inter-relation. Righteousness can be equated to justice. On one hand, righteousness is a mono-dimensional personal moral concern, and on the other hand, justice indicates more than a personal pioussness to a rounded and mutual social righteousness (Hendricks 2006:18).

A huge percentage of the missional view and polity of the church in Kenya is of a high missionary orientation. In East Africa, for example, the kind of Christianity planted, emphasised soul curing as the primary role of the church. Matters of the social life of the people and politics were classified as sinful and outlawed. Thus, Christianity was founded on a Hellenistic ideology of disembodied souls which falsified matter (Okullu 1974:2). The same ideology keeps sneaking in the current operationalisation of the church and politics. In Kenya, the political carrier is entrepreneurial in the sense of the commercial goodwill attached to it. Thus, it is attractive both to the secular and the ecclesial community. A weak balance in the approach of the church and politics has diluted the role of the two institutions. In such a contradictive imbalance, the political carrier takes precedence. Okullu (1974) comparatively observes correctly, yet worrisome, that:

[M]any staunch Christian men who found themselves torn apart between their political convictions and their loyalty to the Church finally took politics and became rebels of the Church in some cases to this present day. (pp. 2–3)

A question may be asked as to what could be the problem that the church and the political enterprise seem to compromise their role which lead to societal vulnerability. One of the renowned Kenyan politicians and a Member of Parliament argues in favour of the fact that the political crisis being bred in the churches. In his view, a pastor would use the shortest time, no more than 10 min, to preach the Bible and comparatively allocates much time to the politicians (Nzamwa 2013).

It is inarguable that there is an urgent need to call for the conversion of both the church and the state political enterprise back to their respective roles. The church seems to have sided with the political elites. Surprisingly, politicians have warned churchmen only to pray and to keep off politics, but ask the church to support the status quo. In the same vein, many Christians perceive politics as a dirty game. However, it is ironic when they encourage Christians to exercise their constitutional right of voting (Okullu 1974:5). This is dualistic pietism that seems to separate God from the social issues of the people. This could be one of the reasons why politicians exercise less regarding church matters. Mostly, the church's economic vulnerability is used to bargain and twist constitutional rights of the church into manipulative loyalty.

Commercialised loyalty is an inducement and breeder of political crisis that begin in the church. This is an antithesis of the ecclesiastical role of cultivating political non-partisanship. The political title of the 'honourable member' of society has gained a lot of respect and is adorable. The privileges therein drive unprecedented fear and complacency in the church and society. The idolisation of political positions and their derivative gains is immensely rampant, which creates tension between faith, reason and practice. Titles and personalities are held preeminent at the expense of the citizenry. While the term *honourable* depicts superlative ethical contact, praxis is contradictory. The relationship between the church and politics is reasonable, but needs to be reworked. Thus, such loose relationality offers adequate reasons that secular politics mutually coexist with the church. We advocate for the church to be more involved, apart from prayer offerings, spectators and mere recipients to rigorous role actors in the reconstruction of policies and their execution. The church and the state are co-workers in stabilising the ecclesial-State balance. The public space is open to both the church and the state, and limitless in the administration of justice. The call from the political elite to the clergy to separate from politics does not arise and in case it ensues, it derogates the cohesive collaboration.

The political enterprise seems to topple the church in its role as the voice of reason. However, closely examined, it is simply suborning loyalty. Today, it is easy to predict the political side of a church leader or church leaders. Conversely, it is easy to align certain churches' inclination to particular political outfits. This is partisanship. Ecclesial partisanship is a recipe for political crisis. Unquestionably, the church enjoys social capital which is the reason politicians are vehemently attracted to it for future ambitions. Social capital is an enhanced human connectedness in both informal and formal settings. Such connectedness is essential in transmitting ideas and actions that are transformational (Nguruiya 2019:34). Only had the church known the importance of its social capital, it would base its societal transformation on it. The social capital would be a social bargaining platform to benefit the community. Rasmussen's work (2019:65) on *the role of the social capital*, observes that social capital is a resource that 'enables significant things to happen'. The electorate who

form church congregations have a huge opinion, but such a resourceful social capital commercialises their constitutional right by cheaply transacting it with handouts – a practice that politicians have incorporated as fodder for their political career. The bargain is determined by the quantitative advantage politicians derive from the church to achieve their objectives. The church has fallen prey and shown a willingness to comply where members become a trade commodity for short-term gains. Prayer and anointing act as spiritual sanitisation and cleansing for both the politician and the money donated. The church usually gets to crossroads and has double standards when it performs such spiritual activities to multiple political aspirants.

The money economy is good in its intentions. It is used as a medium of exchange to facilitate the social, intellectual, economic, religious and political well-being of the people. It is just one of the factors in the chain of production. However, in contemporary times, the money economy has gained a lot of acceptance to the point of controlling and manipulating the functioning of society. The process of commercialisation of politics seems to be capturing the church. The church is captured because of the current shift in what defines a clergy as socioeconomic worth and not the call of God. The same ideological shift is witnessed among the congregation who define the 'called clergy' by their socioeconomic standing.

Pentecostalism, especially the prosperity gospel, has captured the face of Christianity with its philosophical embrace that, unless wealthy and healthy, one is either cursed or has not been called by God. The context provides the extreme opposites which are easily attracted to each other, thereby initiating corruption and manipulation. Political amorality then gains easy access into the church and the church, on the other hand, gets into compromised politics. The two are conjoined; thus, the ecclesiastical prophetic mandate and the role of being the voice of reason and wisdom are sacrificed. Likewise, it robs the political enterprise of benevolent legislative representation. The small national revenue that would have benefited the citizenry equitably, becomes an advantage only for the few at the top of the pyramid. Thus, it can be justified to argue that Pentecostalism is a model that has been used to empower the marginalised through upward social mobility in the approach of strategic prosperity preaching (Adeboye 2018:33). It only makes sense if the other factors are held constant.

Way forward: ecclesial and political reformation

Humanity, as a social institution, needs a structure to organise and regulate its coexistence with the rest of the ecosystem. The science of politics does this through structured legislation (Ngwoke 2001:32). This, however, is sometimes thriven by politics of the majority's working theory of the winner taking it all. This policy needs to be re-examined, because it portends exclusivism – an approach that endangers any mature or maturing democracy.

The Bible a supra-book in the Christian domain; thus is the basis for deriving morality in running the church and state politics. Various pillars of justice including criminal justice, distributive justice, procedural justice and restorative justice are based on the Bible. That brings both the church and state or politics into an inevitable dialogue. The Kenyan constitution declares the nation under God's supremacy: 'we the people of Kenya acknowledge the supremacy of the Almighty God of all creation' (Kenya 2010:5). The Bill of Rights, which governs both the church functions and political activities, depicts the moral decency of God in the Decalogue (Ex 20; Dt 5 – fully explained in the Torah. Biblical figures depict good examples of God's involvement in the formation of nations and their civilisation. God rescues the Israelites from the Egyptian's oppressive regime through Moses (Ngwoke 2001:38–39) to show solidarity against oppressive and slave civilisations, because they deprive justice of its functions. The doctrine of incarnation is critical in underscoring God's engagement in human affairs. The Old Testament presents a God involved in the de-oppression of the Hebrews from an oppressive civilization. The New Testament presents the very God becoming one of us (incarnation Christology) to deliver humanity and its civilisation from the slavery of sin (Ngwoke 2001:39). In this portrait, the aforementioned types of justice can thrive and will trigger genuine church and political enterprises to coexist in harmony of purpose. Anything less than this cannot work.

On one hand, the church in Kenya has been termed as a major industry and commercial (Odiemo 2016:4) politics and, on the other hand, it has been perceived as a 'dirty game' (Okullu 1974:5), a game of darkness, a game of mudslinging, a game of use and dump theory. This leaves both institutions tainted. Thus, there is a need for a reconstructive clean-up process. Perhaps the question would be: How can the church regain its missional mandate? Likewise, how can politics become a 'clean game' or a game of justice?

Ecclesial clean-up, here, refers to a process of missional holistic transformation. Transformation into a missional community goes beyond the reconstruction of worship style or renewing church models. The model of transformation rethinks the nature of the church and re-examines ways to live out the calling of God (Armstrong 2007) in the public space. It is in the public space that politics is practiced. In the same space, the church is called to live as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. The Christological affirmation of the disciples as being the people 'in the world and not of the world' can be interpreted to justify the missional mandate of the church in the public space. Thus, while they are in the world, they will intentionally engage with secular issues to influence conversational transformation. On the other hand, being not of the world, introduces a distinctive model of engagement that the church must have with the public space in order to delineate the uniqueness of its faith and practice in the multi-sectoral public engagement. To live out the gospel as an ecclesial community of faith happens when the

community enters society to encounter politics through trustworthy relationships that impact the communities' functions entirely.

The missional mandate of the church goes beyond the convergent culture of denominationalism to a divergent ecumenical approach that embraces inter-denominationalism and cross-culturalism through ecclesial-political dialogue. The church can deconstruct the practice of politics by constructively affecting and effecting the operationalisation of politics and political careers through balanced biblical teaching. Thus, the church should be empowered to manage checks and balances within the political spectrum. Stetzer (2006:111) seems to identify the downside of the church in its effort to make sense in the wider community where politics is played. In his view, the challenge is the church's struggle with its evangelistic position which makes it 'locked up into self-affirming subculture' as the other larger culture continues to move in the opposite direction. Since being missional is reminiscent of moving beyond church structures, (Stetzer 2006:112) the church is tasked with missional resolutions that will affect both the local and international ecosystem where politics plays a huge role. Thus, the independent approach of the church in its missional calling is problematic, because the ecclesia exists in a contextual culture that is rooted in a particular way of doing politics, and its missionality should be felt practically in its transformative approach.

A Reformed political career embraces the rule of law and operationalising of justice through the practice of democracy. Andraine and Smith (2006:3) perceive democracy as an inclusive popular participation and collaboration between institutionalised conflicts. Democracy is preserved by laws of the land, traditional customs, political institutions and social organisations that aid in arbitration and coercion against monopolization of power of the affluent and the political class (Andraine & Smith 2006:3). The government of Kenya participates in the proper and legal formation of societies including the church through the provision under the Societies Act Cap 108 (2012). The legislative function that determines legislation is generally a political role. Thus, an interplay is envisaged that provides a platform for the church to engage with political players symbiotically. In this interrelationality, each becomes the other's asset.

The citizenry, who are part of the church as well as political consumers, have a political tendency to entrust the government to formulate policies and strategies which, on their part, obey the decisions. Such correlation can well be described as a political exchange model (Andraine & Smith 2006:3; Iboodulla, et al 2019:22–23). This is non-manipulative and a sincere practical interdisciplinary. Ecclesial and political negative competition, in a sense, demeans the role and the free functional space that each is given to enjoy. Usually, tension develops as a result of trust deficiency. In other words, both the state and the church build a suspicion syndrome, which flows into the administration of justice.

Conclusion

Church and state or politics are both organisations with the citizenry as key and main social capital in the operationalizing of their mission. The two have separate but interdependent approaches in strategies for bringing and preserving justice to humanity and the ecosystem. While organisations cannot be transformed, both the ecclesia and the state or politics have been relegated as organisms; thus, transformation is possible when the persons concerned will reconsider to embrace transformed approaches to their functions through intentional biblical teaching.

At the centre of the church and state commercialisation is commodification. This, however, is well regarded in light of the divine will of God who sees every human engagement with others as well as the ecosystem as God's mission to fulfil. This will necessitate restorative justice. The dichotomisation of the church and state endangers society. Equally, it casts speculations on the involvement of God in human affairs. On the contrary, letting God be involved in all human affairs makes things hold together as they are, regardless of the human factor as a fallen creature. Thus, the church and state are not parallel entities and enemies of each other, but interdependent factors. What makes them perhaps different is their indifferent approaches. While the church seems to preserve its conservatism, the state or political enterprise seems to embrace relativity and liberality. But the two have a divine mandate to keep God at the centre of their functions to help deal with emerging extremisms.

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