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Applying Josiah's Reform as Panacea to the Religio-Political Impasse in Nigeria

ABSTRACT: *The paper – using the qualitative approaches, historical methods, and literature reviews – examined Josiah's reform in the Bible as he put an end to ritual killings, the abuse of the vulnerable, prostitution, superstitious beliefs, and primitive religion during his rule. The paper is also approached from socio-historical perspectives. The paper revealed that when the reform of Josiah is examined in the light of the religious impact, it had on the religious and socio-political life of Israel. Josiah's legacy as a faithful and pious king has no equal; hence, the style of his reform need be adopted to cleanse our land from socio-political and even religious imbroglio. The Nigerian atmosphere is noted to be engulfed with political instability, characterized by corruption, insecurity of lives and property, religious intolerance, fanaticism, and the likes. It is in view of this that political and religious leaders in Nigeria were tasked to do the needful as the country crucially need reformations; and this should be carried out conscientiously and meticulously, even as speedily and most rapidly, as a national priority. So, what is needed is a leader like Josiah, who could damn all consequences and make things right. There is, therefore, needed for total cleansing of our land by removing desecrators of the land, pretentious but clueless political leaders as well as fanatic religious leaders, and replace them with God fearing people, who would serve better or be a servant leader like Josiah.*

KEY WORD: *Reform of Religion and Politics; Conflict and Instability; Nigeria Atmosphere; Leadership of Josiah.*

ABSTRAKSI: *“Menerapkan Reformasi Yosiah sebagai Obat Mujarab bagi Kebuntuan Religio-Politik di Nigeria”. Makalah ini – menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif, metode historis, dan tinjauan literatur – meneliti reformasi Yosiah dalam Alkitab ketika ia mengakhiri acara pembunuhan ritual, penyalahgunaan kaum rentan, pelacuran, kepercayaan takhayul, dan agama primitif selama pemerintahannya. Makalah ini juga didekati dari perspektif sosio-historis. Makalah mengungkapkan bahwa ketika reformasi Yosiah diuji dengan mempertimbangkan dampak religius, reformasi itu berdampak pada kehidupan keagamaan dan sosial-politik Israel. Warisan Yosiah sebagai raja yang setia dan saleh tidak ada bandingannya; oleh karena itu, gaya reformasinya perlu diadopsi untuk membersihkan negeri kita dari kerawanan sosial-politik dan bahkan agama. Atmosfer Nigeria tercatat dilanda ketidakstabilan politik, ditandai dengan korupsi, ketidakamanan hidup dan harta benda, intoleransi agama, fanatisme, dan sebagainya. Dalam pandangan inilah para pemimpin politik dan agama di Nigeria ditugaskan untuk melakukan sesuatu yang diperlukan karena negara sangat membutuhkan reformasi; dan ini harus dilakukan dengan teliti dan cermat, bahkan secepat dan setepatnya, sebagai prioritas nasional. Jadi, apa yang dibutuhkan adalah pemimpin seperti Yosiah, yang dapat mengutuk semua konsekuensi dan membuat segala sesuatu menjadi benar. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan pembersihan total atas negeri kita dengan menyingkirkan para pengembat tanah, pemimpin politik yang sok tapi tidak tahu apa-apa, serta para pemimpin agama yang fanatik, dan menggantinya dengan orang-orang yang takut akan Tuhan, yang akan melayani lebih baik atau menjadi pemimpin yang melayani seperti Yosiah.*

KATA KUNCI: *Reformasi Agama dan Politik; Konflik dan Ketidakstabilan; Situasi Nigeria; Kepemimpinan Yosiah.*

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INTRODUCTION

A cursory look at the current religio-political situation of Nigeria calls for a critical appraisal that would involve an examination and solution to the situation. It is not hidden that Nigeria is passing through lots of religious or situations with religious coloration that are not palatable. This is evident in some religious disturbances in some parts of the country (Canci & Odukoya, 2016; Sulaiman, 2016; and Yesufu, 2016).

Among the prevalent heart breaking situation in Nigeria today is religious fanaticism and un-guided utterances made by the religious leaders capable of inflaming disturbances as well as religious extremism that has led to terrorism, such as the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria (Walker, 2012; Onuoha, 2014; and Omomia, 2015).

In the same vein, Nigeria is beset by a number of socio-economic challenges, such as bad governance lots of political impasse or imbroglio which are among others, bad governance, economic woes, inequitable distribution of wealth, denial of justice, lack of respect for the constitution and rule of law, mismanagement of resources, selfish interest, nepotism, ethnicity, and the likes. All these are no strangers to Nigeria as a nation (Adamu, 2008; Egbefo, 2015; and Odo, 2015). In this context, Theophilus Okere (2004) captured the situation, when he stated that:

There is a crisis of governance in the whole of Africa [...]. The entire (of Africa) is littered with the debris of rogue states, failed governments, violent secessions, coop villains and victims, violently repressed secessions, interminable wars, interminable rows of wandering refugees, endemic diseases, endemic poverty, hopeless debt burden, ugly slums, desperate recourse to religion and

magic, massive unemployment of youths, above all, the absence of hope (Okere, 2004:4).

Indeed, it could be said that the predicament of modern Africa, particularly Nigeria, can be seen as firmly rooted in the failure of governance. As a matter of fact, one cannot refute the reality of bad governance in our country and its negative impact on the entire fabric of the nation. To salvage or redeem the country from these abnormalities, this paper submit that it becomes necessary to recess back to history, especially Biblical history, to find solution to the problems; and chart a new course into developing great and virile indivisible nation (Adamu, 2008; Afegbua & Adejuwon, 2012; and Anazodo, Igbokwe-Ibeto & Nkah, 2015).

This work – using the qualitative approaches, historical methods, and literature reviews (Hargens, 2000; Danto, 2008; Creswell, 2014; Felton & Stickley, 2018; and Mohajan, 2018) – brings to mind the Biblical Josiah in which the application of his personality and the principles of his reform could help the situation in Nigeria. Borrowing a leaf from Josiah's reform will go a long way to salvage the country. This is because his reforms contained both political and religious lessons that a nation could be applied when things go awkward. Therefore, for the purpose of clarity, is sub-divided into five main sections and be rounded off with recommendations and conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Who is Josiah? Josiah (/dʒoʊ'saɪ.ə/ or /dʒə'zai.ə/), or Yoshiyahu[a], was a seventh-century BCE (Before Common Era) King of Judah, circa 649-609, who – according to the Hebrew Bible –

instituted major religious reforms (Wells, 1990:386).¹ Josiah is credited by most Biblical scholars with having established or compiled important Hebrew Scriptures during the “Deuteronomic reform”, which probably occurred during his rule (Wells, 1990; Talshir, 1996; and Sweeney, 2001).

Josiah became King of Judah at the age of eight, after the assassination of his father, King Amon, and reigned for thirty-one years, from 641/640 to 610/609 BCE (Thiele, 1983:217; Asher, 1996; and Sweeney, 2001). Josiah is known only from Biblical texts; no reference to him exists in surviving texts of the period from Egypt or Babylon, and no clear archaeological evidence, such as inscriptions bearing his name, has ever been found (Sweeney, 2001; Alpert & Alpert, 2012:74; and Cornelius, 2015).

Nevertheless, most scholars believe he existed and that the absence of documents is due to few documents of any sort surviving from this very early period, and to Jerusalem having been occupied, conquered, and rebuilt for thousands of years (Talshir, 1996; Sweeney, 2001; and Person, 2010).

The Bible describes him as a very righteous king, a king who “walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left”, as cited in 2 Kings, 22:2 (Everett, 2018). He is also one of the kings mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew’s gospel, one of the two divergent genealogies of Jesus in the New Testament, as cited in Matthew, 1:10-11 (cf Johnson, 2002; and Beauchamp, 2010).

Affirming the epochal nature of Josiah’s reign, J.G. Greenhough (1958) declared that:

Four fifths of them (Israel’s king) were equally deficient in brains and morals, a combination of wickedness and folly, with nothing of the king about them but the name. But, here and there you come upon a man amidst all these royal puppets. It is like finding a garden in a Sahara, or a jewel in a long heap of sham trinkets and dirty in stage finery. Josiah breaks a long, monotonous series of absolutely worthless monarchs. Before and behind him are moral waste and darkness. He stands out as a figure worth looking at and loving [...]. Josiah’s good reign was like a burst of brilliant sunset, before the final darkness comes on (Greenhough, 1958:207-208).

Josiah was one of the greatest kings of the Southern Kingdom. The writers of 2 Kings, as cited in Wilfrid J. Harrington (2012), show the highest respect for Josiah as a king who feared the Lord: “Before him, there was no king like him, who turned to the LORD with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses; nor did any like him arise after him”, according to 2 Kings, 23:25 (Harrington, 2012:105-106).

Perhaps, a major reason for this commendation was the religious reforms Josiah instituted in Judah. It need be recalled that when Josiah became king, Judah was facing a time of great political and religious turmoil. However, a few years after Josiah became king, he initiated religious reforms in Israel and made an attempt at removing the pagan practices introduced by Manasseh (Greenhough, 1958; Sweeney, 2001; and Harrington, 2012).

The Reform: Factors Responsible for it. A number of factors immensely contributed to the institution of Josiah’s reform. The first factor was the rise of nationalism in Judah and other parts of the Ancient Near East around the seventh century. The second factor was the threat that led to the collapse of the Assyrian

¹See also, for example, “Josiah”. Available online at: www.dictionary.com [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: 25th July 2018].

empire, which was occasioned by the rise of Babylon and its dominance of the entire Mesopotamia region (Malamat, 1973; Sweeney, 2001; and Mariottini, 2009).

Equally, the reform, especially the religious aspect, was necessitated by the discovery of the Book of the Law in the wall of the Temple during a renovation work. The secretary, Shaphran, told the king about the discovery of the Book of the Law. The king asked the High Priest to verify and ascertain the authenticity and authority of the book. This was done. They also consulted the Prophetess, Huldah, who told the king that if the contents of the Book of the Law were violated, it was going to bring evil upon Israel (Mariottini, 2009; Olanisebe, 2017; and Venturini, 2017).

The Reform Process. Josiah's reforms began with restoration done on the Temple, which had fallen into a state of neglect, according to 2 Kings, 22:3-10 (cited in Prim, 2018). While the work was being done, Hilkiah, the high priest, found the Book of the Law, which some believed could have been the original *Pentateuch* written by Moses (Henige, 2007). Hilkiah informed Shaphan, the secretary, "I have found the Book of the Law in the House of the Lord", according to 2 Kings, 22:8 (cf Henige, 2007; Lacey, 2008; and Prim, 2018).

However, Josiah's response to the discovery was rather dramatic. The Bible, in 2 Kings, 22:11-12, RSV, indeed records that:

And when the king heard the words of the Book of the Law, he rent his clothes. And the king commanded Hilkiah, the priest; and Ahikam, the son of Shaphan; and Achbor, the son of Micaiah; and Shaphan, the secretary; and Asaiah, the king's servant, by saying: "Go, inquire of the Lord for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this Book that has been found; for great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled

against us, because our fathers have not obeyed the Words of this Book, to do according to all that is written concerning us" (cited in Smith, 1884).

After the prophetess, Huldah confirmed the authenticity of the book, Josiah began to purify the worship of Yahweh. This involved the destruction of the high places, where the people worshiped Baal and Asherah. He also removed the cult of prostitutes from the house of the Lord, by defiling the Topheth, the place which was in the valley of Ben-hinnom, where the people sacrificed their sons and daughters as offerings to Molech, and by taking other actions to bring the people back to God. The record of Josiah's cleansing of the kingdom shows how incredibly far Judah had descended into idolatry. Josiah took another giant step to purify the worship of Yahweh, according to 2 Kings, 23:4-13, as following here:

He commanded Hilkiah, the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the threshold, to bring out of the Temple of the Lord all the vessels made for Baal, for Asherah, and for all the host of heaven; he burned them outside Jerusalem in the fields of the Kidron, and carried their ashes to Bethel. He deposed the idolatrous priests whom the kings of Judah had ordained to burn incense in the high places at the cities of Judah and roundabout Jerusalem; those also who burned incense to Baal, to the sun, and the moon, and the constellations, and all the host of the heavens. He also brought out the Asherah from the house of the Lord, outside Jerusalem, to the brook Kidron (Kidron Valley), and burned it there, and beat it to dust and cast the dust of it upon the graves of the common people. He broke down the houses of the male cult prostitutes which were in the house of the Lord, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah.

Josiah brought all the priests out of the cities of Judah, and defiled the high places where the priests had burned incense, from Geba to Beersheba and he broke down the high places of the gates that were at the entrance of the gate of Joshua the governor of the city, which were on the left of the Jerusalem city gate. However, the priests of the high

places did not come up to the altar of the Lord in Jerusalem, but they ate unleavened bread among their brethren.

He defiled Topheth which is in the valley of the sons of Hinnom, that no one might there burn his son or his daughter as an offering to Molech further. He removed the horses that the kings of Judah had dedicated to the sun, at the entrance to the house of the Lord, by the chamber of Nathan-melech the chamberlain, which was in the precincts; and he burned the chariots of the sun with fire.

He pulled down and burned into ashes the altars on the roof of the upper chamber of Ahaz, which the kings of Judah had made, and the altars which Manasseh had made in the two courts of the house of the Lord, and cast the dust of them into the brook Kidron. He also destroyed the high places that were east of Jerusalem, to the south of the mount of corruption, which Solomon the king of Israel had built for Ashtoreth, the abomination of the Sidonians, and for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, and for Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites (cited in Jensen, 1978).

Meanwhile, Josiah's life came to a tragic end, at age 39, in battle with the Egyptians under Neco king of Egypt at the battle of Carchemish in the plain of Megiddo on the Euphrates (Blank, 2001). He was buried in the tombs of his fathers. "*All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah*", according to 2 Chronicles, 35:20-24 (Asher, 1996; Blank, 2001; and Sweeney, 2001).²

Josiah was buried with the greatest honors, in fulfillment of Huldah's prophecy, according to 2 Kings, 22:20; and Jeremiah, 34:5; and the prophet Jeremiah composed a lament for him, according to 2 Chronicles, 35:25; and Lamentations, 4:20 (cited in Easton, 1897; CES, 1982; and Keil & Delitzsch, 2017).

What Purpose Does the Reform Serve?

Josiah's reforms were significant for many reasons; and these are highlighted below:

²See also, for example, "Contradictions in Scripture: The Death of Josiah". Available online at: <https://precepts.wordpress.com/2007/08/09/contradictions-the-death-of-josiah/> [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: 24th August 2018].

Firstly, the reforms of Josiah had both religious and political implications. It led to the re-establishment of the religious and political independence of Judah and Israel from Assyrian domination. It equally led to the purification of the cult, a declaration of Judah's religious independence from Assyria. Josiah desired to re-establish a united monarchy with a central sanctuary at Jerusalem. When Assyria was defeated in 612 and 609 BC (Before Christ), Josiah realized that its fall would assure the success of his reforms and would keep Judah free from Assyrian subjugation (Asher, 1996; Dake, 2015:700; and Olanisebe, 2017).

Secondly, the reforms offered Yahwism a breathing space. It also improved public morality and the administration of justice (Sweeney, 2001; Dake, 2015:700; and Mastaler, 2015).

Thirdly, the reform centralized the worship of Yahweh in Jerusalem; and this resulted in the purification of the worship of Yahweh and included the rehabilitation of the rural priests. The local priests who served in the local shrines were invited to serve and minister in Jerusalem, according to 2 Kings, 23:5, 8-9. This action was reinforced by the legislation of Deuteronomy, 18:6-8 (cited in Asher, 1996; Mariottini, 2009; and Dake, 2015:701).

This exposed the downside of the reform; for example, the priests of the outlying sanctuaries became jobless, due to the centralization of worship in Jerusalem as the only legitimate sanctuary. The priests concerned were dissatisfied and disgruntled after the outlying shrines were abolished. Because Yahweh is a jealous God, he will not tolerate the worship of other gods, according to Deuteronomy,

6:10-15 (cited in Sweeney, 2001; Boloje, 2015; and Dake, 2015:701).

Israel had been separated (elected) from all other nations for special service to Yahweh. As a separate people, Israel had a mission to the nations. As God's people, Israel must express God's concern for people. Yahweh's activities on behalf of the oppressed should motivate Israel to act in the same way. Yahweh is the defender of the weak, the orphan, the widow, and the resident alien, so also should Israel be. Thus, the book of Deuteronomy calls Israel to renew the covenant with Yahweh and to decide to live by the demands of this covenant (Grisanti, 1998; Kennedy, 2013; and Dake, 2015:702).

Fourthly, the reform was a revival of Mosaic faith and teaching as it was understood in the seventh century BC. The reforms were based on the teachings of the book of Deuteronomy. The characteristic theme of Deuteronomy was love. Yahweh's gracious love had been manifested in the mighty acts of God on behalf of Israel, according to Deuteronomy, 6:20-23. For this reason, Israel should respond to this divine love by loving God and by loving the fellow members of the covenant community (cited in Mariottini, 2009; Ausloos, 2015; and Dake, 2015:703).

Fifthly, the reform led to the creation of an elitist priesthood, who monopolized worship in Jerusalem and those in the outlying areas became subordinated to those priests in Jerusalem (Sweeney, 2001; Mariottini, 2009; and Dake, 2015:704).

The reforms succeeded in organizing religious activities, such as following here:

Re-establishment of the celebration of the Passover, based on 2 Kings, 23:21-22. The celebration of the Passover in the days

of Josiah followed the norms established in the book of Deuteronomy, 16:1-8 (Mariottini, 2009; Eslinger, 2011; and Olanisebe, 2017).

Rehabilitation of the rural priests. The local priests, who served in the local shrines, were invited to serve and minister in Jerusalem, according to 2 Kings, 23:5 and 8-9. This action was reinforced by the legislation of Deuteronomy, 18:6-8. The reform made an attempt to eliminate Baal worship from the religious life of Israel (Asher, 1996; Sweeney, 2001; and Mariottini, 2009).

Elimination of the religious vessels and images dedicated to Baal and Asherah, 23:4 and 6. This effort was reinforced by the legislation of Deuteronomy, 7:15. The worship of the astral deities, the sun, moon, and stars was abolished, based on 2 Kings, 23:4-5 and 11-12. This proscription was reinforced by the legislation of Deuteronomy, 12:3; 16:21-22; and 17:3 (Mariottini, 2009; Olanisebe, 2017; and Constable, 2018).

Proscription of the practice of child sacrifice, a ritual that was common in the cult of Molech, the god of the Ammonites, was forbidden and the Topheth, the place in the Kidron Valley, where these sacrifices were offered, was defiled, based on 2 Kings, 23:10. This prohibition was reinforced by the legislation of Deuteronomy, 12:31; and 18:10 (Missler, 2003; Mariottini, 2009; and Danam, 2018).

Elimination of the consultation of mediums, wizards, and teraphim, based on 2 Kings, 23:24. This proscription was reinforced by the legislation of Deuteronomy, 18:11. Finally, Josiah defiled the high places where sacrifices to pagans gods were made. The high places, the sanctuaries of the rival deities, were

defiled according to 2 Kings, 23:13. This defilement was done in accordance with the legislation of Deuteronomy, 7:5 (Smith, 1976; Mariottini, 2009; and Yehoshua, 2017).

However, as good as the reform was, it has some shortcomings as noted by Biblical scholars. The reforms succeeded in organizing religious activity, but it failed to result in a genuine spiritual revival. The reform was superficial and the people became hypocritical (Sweeney, 2001; Mariottini, 2009; and Congar, 2011).

The Religio-Political Impasse in Nigeria that Calls for Restructuring.

Be that as it may, the question is, of what relevance is the Josiah reform to Nigerian situation? Nigeria needs urgent reform in some key arrears, specifically: politics, religious practices, and socio-economic affairs. But, then, attention will only be focused on unpleasant decadence being experienced in politics and religious practices. Meanwhile, one cannot discuss political reform without pointing attention to governance and judiciary (Odo, 2015; Omonijo *et al.*, 2016; and Nwazonobi & Apah, 2018). Therefore, the three will be taken care of in this paper.

Firstly, *Politics*. According to A.S. Hornby (1995), politics is the science or the art of government (Hornby, 1995:646). Meanwhile, N.S.S. Iwe and other scholars also describe politics as a process of adjustment and interplay of power in the interest of society (Iwe, 1974:61; Tornquist, 1999; and Cerar, 2009).

To enhance security, Nigeria's current challenges, in the areas of rules, have essentially to do with how we govern ourselves. Currently, there is a call for reform of the political system in Nigeria, which has been bedeviled by segregation,

nepotism, breeding corrupt leaders, even as the dividends of democracy have eluded majority of the people (Ogbeidi, 2012; Nweke, 2015; and Odo, 2015). This spurs the observation of J.J. Omoregbe (2004) thus:

The political setting in Nigeria is made of dishonest and fraudulent people, whose main purpose of coming to government is to enrich themselves. Embezzlements of public funds by those to whom the funds are entrusted deals with contractors handling government project with the resultant over-inflated contracts, ten percent kickback from contracts awarded, and other fraudulent practices by government officials are common features dotting our political life since independence. Naked greed, dishonesty, and corruption have become a virtues in our society. We have cases of our politicians past and present, who have in one way or the other embezzled money meant for the masses and still walk about on the street free with impunity (Omoregbe, 2004:32).

The call for reform is, therefore, a welcome development. In Nigeria today, we see some political leaders, who are supposed to render selfless services to the entire citizenry displaying recklessness, tyranny, and all sorts of negative attitudes. The severity of the bite of corruption among the political class is evident in the act of governance and judicial system (Adebanwi, 2012; Ijewereme, 2015; and Inyang, 2017).

Secondly, *Governance*. According to the European Commission, the word "governance" derives from the Greek verb, *kuberno*, which means "to steer" and was used for the first time in a metaphorical sense by Plato. It, then, passed on to Latin, *guberno*, and to many languages.³ The United Nations Development Programmes Regional Project on Local Government for

³See "The European Commission". Available online at: <http://ec.europa.eu/governance/docs/does.fr.pdf> [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: 25th July 2018].

Latin America, in 2006, posited that:

Governance is the rule of the political system that solve conflicts between actors and adopt the decision or legality. It has also been used to describe the "proper functioning of institutions and their acceptance by the public" legitimacy; and it has been used to invoke the efficacy of government and the achievement of consensus by democratic means or participation (cited in The WB, 2006).

However, one can say that good governance implies having democracy and welfare or economic satisfaction of the people, accountability, transparency, fair legal framework that are enforced impartially, protection of human rights, effectiveness, efficiency, and participatory government (Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Johnston, 2010; and KAS, 2011).

Meanwhile, it could be said that in Nigeria, the reverse is the case; hence, the call for reform. Nigeria for the past years continue to grope in the dark for fruitful governance. There are problems like insecurity of lives and property, indiscipline, injustice, bribery and corruption, greed, nepotism, and the likes (Adebanwi, 2002; Johnston, 2010; and Adebanwi, 2012). No wonder Attahiru Jega (2017) posited that governance system in Nigeria must be reformed with utmost urgency as he said:

A fragile democracy like Nigeria's does not pay attention to this global trend of governance reform, but it is better to concretely address it now before it is too late. When we allow things embarrassing as it is, Nigeria has for long been facing both acute governance and human security challenges. The extent and magnitude of the challenges defy logic and rationality.

Nigeria has such potential in human and material resources, that with good democratic governance, it should not be facing such humongous human security challenges. But, Nigeria has been characterised by acute poor governance such that the potential have been

undermined and the human security situation has deteriorated and become more complex (Jega, 2017).

It suffices at this point to state that in Nigeria, the efficiency of public utilities such as electricity and water supply is zero minus; the roads are not in good condition; workers' salary are not paid regularly; the health sectors lack modern equipment's; and the education sectors are full of problems. Good governance as an ideal has been difficult to achieve in the country, due to corruption at all levels. Also in governance, Nigerians earnestly desire a judiciary which will efficiently and quickly bring to justice those who have denigrated the commonwealth and gracious humanity through unbearable corrupt practices (Adebanwi, 2012; Ogohi, 2014; and Atolagbe, 2018).

So, while one appreciates the fact that the judiciary has administrative challenges, the one problem which members of the public are more concerned about is the ineffectiveness of the justice system. There are facts that corruption festers, even among judicial officials; also, that big-time criminals easily get away, because the system can be exploited (Gloppen, 2014; Ogohi, 2014; and Atolagbe, 2018).⁴

Thirdly, *Religion*. Religion in Nigeria for all its good intentions has been distorted, misrepresented, and perverted in the most depraving manners. While religion has contributed in some ways to the process of nation building, the positive impact of religion on Nigeria's democracy has remained negligible. The manipulation of religion by some powerful individuals,

⁴See also, for example, "Judicial Reform Nigeria Needs" posted on July 30, 2017. Available online at: <http://thenationonlineng.net/judicial-reform-nigeria-needs/> [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: 25th July 2018].

who hide under the guise of religion to pursue selfish interests remains one of the negative effects of religion on the polity (Onukwufor, 2006; Afolabi, 2015; and Yagboyaju, 2017).

In addition, greed has crept into the religious terrain to the extent that some religious leaders now patronize corrupt rulers to meet their lust for money and other material gains. In a peculiarly volatile nation as Nigeria, the mixing of religion with politics has done the country more harm than good. Meanwhile, in recent times, Nigeria has emerged one of the most religious countries in the world. As the number of churches/mosques in the country continues to increase and the population of worshipers doubling, so also is the wavelength of crime (Paul *et al.*, 2014; Afolabi, 2015; and Yesufu, 2016).

Apart from the regular worshipping in conventional locations, such as churches and mosques, a new dimension has been introduced to the mode of worship by major religious groups in the country. For instance, we now witness religious worships in places as unconventional as government establishments, company premises, and highways (*cf* Acquah, 2011; Paul *et al.*, 2014; and Afolabi, 2015).

However, while there continues to be transformation in the face of religion in Nigeria, particularly in regards to the continuing increase in the number of places of worship and the population of adherents, the same cannot be said regarding the changes religion has brought in regards to its impact on social transformational role, including helping to champion the cause of the people, especially the less privileges. But, there is a dominant view that despite the visible religiosity being exhibited by many

Nigerians, including the country's political leaders, the failure of the people to live by the core tenets of their professed religions has made it impossible for religion to serve the functions it ought to serve in the process of social transformation and the building of democracy (Acquah, 2011; Paul *et al.*, 2014; and Yesufu, 2016).

Essentially, the core principles that formed the underlining foundation on which most religions are based include truth, moral uprightness, love and the unity of all humankind, among others. Even, among religious leaders themselves concerns have been expressed that the replacement of love, truth, oneness, unity, and peace, which had been the roots on which all faith had been based, with vices such as self-centeredness, lies and falsehood, greed, and hatred bred by fanaticism, had eroded the respect that was once accorded religion and religious leaders (Acquah, 2011; Kalin, 2012; and Afolabi, 2015).⁵

Towards Adopting Josiah's Pattern of Socio-Religious and Political Reform for Nigeria. If socio-political reform is to succeed in Nigeria, there is need to follow the pattern of Biblical Josiah. He was not only open to change, but equally made use of reliable hands to handle the change agenda. Also fear and absolute obedience to the words of God and respect for the laws of the land was demonstrated by him (Akanji, 2011; Ogunkunle, 2012; and Olanisebe, 2017).

Therefore, for Nigeria to witness positive change, the following need to be taken into consideration:

⁵See also, for example, "Religion and Political Reforms in Nigeria", being the text of the public lecture delivered at the 51st birthday anniversary of Rt. Rev. Alfred Adewale Martins, Catholic Bishop of Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, on Saturday, June 5, 2010.

No Nigerian or group of Nigerians or geopolitical subdivision of Nigeria must be made to feel marginalized, or irrelevant in the Nigerian national scheme of things. All Nigerians, therefore, must be assured and reassured, of their substantive relevance to the happiness of the continued corporate existence of Nigeria nation (Kwaja, 2009; Irene, 2014; and Okpani & Abimbola, 2015).

As a rider to the above, no part or division of the country should in any way try to dominate the other nor take advantage of the minority group. Such encourage nepotism and the likes, even war (Igwara, 1993; Mathis & Jackson, 2008; and Ofili, 2016).

Nigerians, who yearn for true democracy, must learn to practice democracy. Democracy is a representative government. Nigerians should learn to make our representatives accountable always and at the same time accord them due respect (Tunji, 2017:320). There is need to have respect for the laws of the land, nobody should pay lip service to this and the constitution must be followed (*cf* Adamu, 2008; Mbondeniyi & Ojienda, 2013; and Tunji, 2017).

Religious and political leaders need to be selfless, sincere, service conscious, and committed just like Josiah, who served as a servant leader. There is need to do away with people that desecrates the land and replace them with God fearing people who would serve the country better (Ogunkunle, 2012; Makuwa, 2013; and Okeke, Ibenwa & Okeke, 2017).

Finally, youths like Josiah should be encouraged and as well encourage themselves, to come on board to exhibit their God given potentials. This is because

youths are always full of ideas, innovative, and energetic and dynamic (Ukah, 2003; Ogunkunle, 2012; and Tunji, 2017).

CONCLUSION

This paper has been able to give a brief account of Josiah's reform in the Bible. It makes some salient points that Josiah, who doubled as a political and religious reformer, swept away the idolatrous practice of his time with great determination. It recommends the fervent zeal and righteous enthusiasm of this earnest, passionate young man should characterize our leaders in Nigeria today, all the citizens would have been better, happier, and more productive.

In Nigeria, where common experience has been that of poor governance, misrule, embezzlement of public funds, poor infrastructures, increasing poverty and suffering amidst plenty and the likes, what is needed is a leader like Josiah who could damn all consequences and make things right. As the Bible says, "*when the righteous rules the people rejoice, but when the wicked rules the people groan*", based on Prov, 29:2.⁶ People can enjoy when the righteous are in authority, but people will always suffer under wicked regimes.

There is, therefore, needed for total cleansing of our land by removing desecrators of the land, pretentious but clueless political leaders as well as fanatic religious leaders, and replace them with God fearing people, who would serve better or be a servant leader like Josiah.⁷

⁶See "Proverbs 29:2, King James Version (KJV): Translation, Meaning, Context". Available online at: <https://www.quoteskosmos.com/bible/bible-verses/Proverbs-29-2.html> [accessed in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria: 19th September 2018].

⁷**Statement:** Herewith, we declare that this paper is our own original work; it is not product of plagiarism and not yet also be reviewed as well as be published by other scholarly journals.

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