

**AN EVALUATION OF BOER'S VIEW
ON REFORMED WHOLISTIC APPROACH TO
SOCIETY AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF
NIGERIA**

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APPROVAL SHEET

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ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CAN	Christian Association of Nigeria
CHAN	Christian Health Association of Nigeria
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CRCN	Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria
EKAS	Ekillisiyar Kristi a Sudan (Church of Christ in Sudan)
HIV	Human Immune Virus
ICS	Institute of Church and Society
SIM	Sudan Interior Mission
SUM	Sudan United Mission
TCNN	Theological College of Northern Nigeria
TEKAN	Tarraya Ekkilisiyoyi Kristi a Nigeria (Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Nigeria)
UBE	Universal Basic Education
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United State of America

ABSTRACT

An evaluation of Boer's view on reformed wholistic approach to society and its implication for Christian reformed church in Nigeria attempts to offer a gospel approach alternative relevant to the churches in Nigeria. The gospel approach advocated by Boer is contained in his literature which are informative and revealing in area of wholistic approach to Christian ministry in Nigeria. In the introduction the researcher expounded the nature of the gospel introduced by missionaries as lacking some ingredients. As explained, this gospel which has its origin in the dualistic view of the western church subjects Christian to docility and cynicism in Nigeria particularly some part of northern states. The second part of the thesis focuses on the biblical justification advanced by Boer on reformed approach to the society and explained the reformed premise upon which Boer developed his social theology. This is followed by historical background of the formative period of Nigeria up to the modern era to shed light to the complex situation of Nigeria on which Christianity was introduced. Chapter four focuses on Boer's literature and philosophy on reformed wholistic approach to the society. It briefly analyzes some area of discrepancies over few things highlighted by Boer and states the strengths and weaknesses of the reformed wholistic approach to the society. Finally the researcher summarizes the thesis, draws the conclusion and recommended this approach to the churches in Nigeria. Reformed approach to the society is the gospel approach alternative that will meet the taste of Africa Christianity in their milieu; hence Africa world view is wholistic.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation is an evaluation of Jan Boer's view on Reformed Wholistic approach to society and how it was appropriated by the Reformed Churches in Nigeria. It seeks to discern the current short comings of the contemporary churches' approach to the society on mission and fines ways that Boer's philosophy on wholistic approach to the church and society can be adopted by Nigerian churches to enhance a balance to its gospel approach to the society. It proposes that Boer's philosophy on wholistic approach to society will help the church to be wholistic in it gospel approach in Nigeria where Christianity has initially created unbalanced approach to life.

1.1

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The Nigerian society is a heterogeneous society with diverse ethnic Nationalities, ranging from larger groups to smaller ethnic groups. This explains why the phrase unity in diversity truly applies to Nigeria. The nation has two major religions; Christianity and Islam .There are also nominal numbers of African traditional religions and secularists. Under these settings there must be struggle for power and domination, because the settings created room for scramble and competition among various ethnic groups and the religious bodies in the society. The scramble and competition is found in the social-political, religious and economic activity of the nation, where each group wants its own interest to be represented in every sphere of the government for fear of marginalization and domination. The Christian church with its God given ministry of reconciliation should have provided

a hope for the people in such multi-ethnic society. It appears the church is not fully informed to lead her adherents to handle sociol-political issues with confidence.

A close look at the church in the Middle Belt and the Northern Nigeria in particular shows that the church is always passive over issues that pertain to her right. To some extent it makes her members docile. The docility and servility of the Christian church in this part of the country Nigeria depicts how insensitive the church is to the social political and economic matter of her lands. The lukewarm attitudes of the church over social, economic and political issues explains why her neighbour (Islam) used that as an advantage to manipulate and dominate key positions in the nations' social-political set up.

The question that keeps baffling every concerned Christian citizen is why is the church (Christians) in this part of the geographical locality of Nigeria behaved that way? According to Jan H. Boer the unconsciousness and insensitivity of the church in Nigeria is comparable to the Eastern Europe in the days of Karl Marx who says 'religion is the opium of the people.'¹ By this statement it means that religion sedates and weakens the church in a way that the church considers every things of this world as vanity. However, in the real sense, the church largely depends on the type of the gospel she received. It could be that the gospel which the church inherited scared her from the social political issues of her nation. On this Boer perceived that the gospel which the church received was not comprehensive and wholistic in its approach. In other words, the gospel that was brought to Nigeria did well to inculcate spiritual aspect of Christianity but did little or virtually nothing on socio-political aspect.

¹ Jan. H. Boer, *Christian and Mobilization*, (Jos; Christian Council of Níg, 1989), p.3.

(a) How reformed wholistic approach to society differs from sociological wholistic approach to the society.

In this background it is good to state the differences between the reformed wholistic approach to the society and the sociological wholistic approach to the society. The reformed wholistic approach is a gospel based approach which seeks to introduce or relate the gospel in all area of human endeavours to help them obtain salvation objectively. It is centered on Christ; hence it tries to portray Christ in all areas of life spiritually, politically, socially and physically. The sovereignty of God is recognized and appreciated in all spheres of life. Of course this position is held by the universal church with deferent emphasis.

On the other hand, the sociological perspective of the wholistic approach to society is centered on humanity hence it seeks to meet the need of a man physically, socially, economically, politically and other wise. The former contains the seed of salvation while the later is not. The former is built from the premise of the revealed word of God while the former depends on human wisdom.

From the sociological perspective, the international communities, the developed countries across the globe are engaged in the quest toward attaining a wholistic society. However we still find injustice and corruption everywhere like the case in Nigeria society today. Also, the Church as a social institution which claimed to be a vanguard towards building a balance and just society where peace and justice may reign seems to have failed because her approach to society is not wholistic. More than not, the church tends to compromise her role towards a wholistic society by emphasizing only the spiritual aspect of man to the detriment of physical, psychological, and mental life.

In such society, we often listen and read a lot of promises from leaders on plans to initiate policies toward a wholistic society, but it is only in theory and not in practice. Where it is fairly in operation or in practice, such as poverty alleviation and Universal Basic Education (UBE), it is being obscured or strangled by human tendencies. There are human tendencies or factors that render humanity incapable of achieving a wholistic society from Christian perspective which is drawn from the fall of man. It is indeed responsible for the hiatus, rifts and gulf between the balanced and the imbalanced society we have today. This is evident in the gap between the rich and the poor and the human tendency to exploit, dominate and extort his fellow being.

The new covenant in Christ attempts to bridge this rift to usher in a wholistic society which is in progress in the kingdom of God, established in our hearts, but shall be fully realized at the *eschaton*. This is the hallmark of the reformed view of the kingdom of God. The reformed world view as will be highlighted later does not negate the participation of Christian citizens in politics or social issues of their time on earth.

They believe that a wholistic approach to society which true followers of Christ in every society seek to address is aim at building a society where all the societal strata are fairly treated politically, socially, economically and religiously. Although, human society cannot attain perfection in all her endeavors. This suggest that the ability of human authority to bring on a wholistic society may be limited, fragile, frail and perishable over his milieu, while that of God is absolute, complete, perfect, unlimited and unquantifiable by human standard. However this does not in any way negate or emasculate the concept of a wholistic approach based on human standard, as long as it is logically deducted from the scriptures.

A wholistic approach to society which has its foundation molded and transmitted by the scriptures may set a pace to accommodate every segment in the society where healthy relationship shall reign. That is why a Reform Scholar as Jan H. Boer, a veteran Dutch missionary with Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN) has written many books on Reformed wholistic approach to society. Perhaps some learned ministers and elites from within and without Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria could testify to the fact that Jan H. Boer's literatures are informative in dealing with the church and society. The particularity and peculiarity of this literature in dealing with the church and society portray their uniqueness and distinctiveness in the contemporary Nigeria church and society in an attempt to create a balance society is relevant today.

As this thesis shall later observe, Jan H. Boer dwells not only on the current or contemporary issues of church and society, but makes a sharp reflection on the history of colonialism and missionary enterprise in the Northern Nigeria in order to strike a balance in his view on reformed approach to society. It is in light of this history that he attempts to shed light on the weaknesses of both the colonialists and the missionaries in their approach to society in Nigeria. We may recall that the major reasons that motivated the coming of Europeans into the interior parts of Africa in the 19th century are:

- a. To introduce a legitimate trade to replace the obnoxious slave trade
- b. To introduce Christianity, displace paganism and to halt the encroachment of Islam among the heathen tribes.
- c. To introduce western education in place of informal education.

It was in the light of these that Lord Lugard says, “the task of building Africa politically, socially and economically is a dual mandate which is consisted in the advancement of both Africa and Britain by developing African resources and to improve her civilization.”²

This statement sounds very plausible when taken lightly. Paradoxically, the same Lugard who makes the above statement also states that “the end justified the means.”³ Which means the end can be reached by what ever means available. Whatever it takes, whether it is good or bad, let the end be reached, provided it was in favor of the white. This gradually thwarts their effort and gradually negates the principles of reparation as earlier stipulated in their quest for occupation of Africa in order to build it politically, social and economically as Lugard proclaimed.

This later misconception led to a form of oppressive activities i.e. economic exploitation and extortion by the white colonialists giving birth to a mess society we have to day; a society which some of its members or sections are under servitude politically and socially. In such colonial context, the missionary enterprise could not really give a wholistic gospel because they were almost like path-finders to the British colonialists. This explains why the gospel inherent of most TEKAN churches in the Northern Nigeria, particularly in the Middle Belt is in-balance and so scares Christians away from their social-political roles. This is a society where Christians are pushed to the wall because of some factors ranging from the gospel they received to their background.

² Jan H. Boer, *Missions: Herald of Capitalism or Christ?* (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1984), p.13.

³ *Ibid*, p.11.

1.2

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The church in Nigeria as a social organization has a significant impact on people both in the South and Northern Nigeria. However, the church appears to be passive on her social roles in the society. This is true especially of the TEKAN churches where the church relegates her social, political and economic role to the background. Thus, the motivation for this study erupts from the desire to make the church as a social institution to present a wholistic approach to society where social issues can be adequately handled to enhance productivity. It is believed that no society can thrive or survive in the atmosphere of social-political and economic disintegration.. Boer surveyed and outlined the positive and negative impact of colonialism and missionary enterprise on the society of Nigeria. This survey needed to be evaluated to help the church re-address her social approach in the modern society of Nigeria. It helps to address the questions, how did the church attempts to resolve some social issues during the colonial era? How does the church handle some key social issues today? What measure should be taken to sensitize or motivate the church on the task of building a society with a wholistic approach? The desire to find answer to these questions is part of what motivated this research.

Many church members today are being exploited and some times extorted in the name of addressing their social problem. It is quite clear that the church is infiltrated and infatuated with the social problems from within and without. This is because; the church in Nigeria has not taken a definite position on wholistic approach to society. It is in the light of these lapses that late Karimu Damap points to the fact that the response of the church to social issues in Nigeria is not really encouraging. He lists these social issues which the church was reluctant to respond to them as follows:

Economic and in-equality, Human rights, Un-employment, Industrial relations, racism, poverty, gender issues, marriage and divorce, abortion, sexual deviations, homosexuality, lesbianism, incest and bestiality, HIV/AIDS, Occultism, Prostitution, Child Abuse and child trafficking, Debts, Politics, Leadership and Stewardship⁴

According to Damap theologians are ill-prepared to tackle these social issues in the society of Nigeria. This is partly due to lack of wholistic approach to society which was lacking during the introduction of the gospel. It is for this reason that this research is carried out, with the hope that it will serve as an impetus to Nigerian theologians to make a positive contribution to wholistic approach to society in their context.

1.3

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The church and the society appear to be at logger head with each other over some important social issues because of their beliefs and world-views. On many occasions the church seems to overlook some social matters that concerns her thereby causes pains and sorrows in the hearts of her adherents. This usually happens because of the limited information and scanty knowledge on how these social issues can be tackled or approached. It is because of this that some times the church is being ridiculed when suddenly it changes her theology abruptly when it perceives or faces dangers of social problems.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to review and re-evaluate the approach advanced so far by Boer in his reformed perspective of society and how to some extent such approach is relevant to our context when apply. In a related manner the purpose of this research is to reflect on the genesis of our contemporary social problems in the church and society and how they can be approached in the

⁴ Karimu Damap, "The role of Theological Institution in Training for wholistic Development." TCNN Bukuru: Research Bulletin, No. 38 (August, 2002), p.8.

wholistic manner to bring about fairly coherent relationship in the society where everybody will feel a sense of belonging.

1. 4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The evaluation of Boer's reformed wholistic approach to society is significant because it attempts to offer a gospel alternative that is relevant to African Christianity. It also seeks to correct the past mistakes of the founding Heroes and to provide the gospel approach that is wholistic. This is significant because it is gearing towards meeting the needs of man in toto.

5 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

Although, this work is an evaluation of Boer's Reformed wholistic approach to society, the researcher did not confine himself to Jan H. Boer's literature alone. Other avenues relevant to wholistic approach to society have been explored in order to make the research comprehensive. This means that what other writers and specialists have said about the church and society have been given special consideration as the views of others may further substantiate Boer's claims on reformed wholistic approach to society.

Apart from the Bible the bedrock in formulating any true Christian doctrine, Boer's literature serves as my primary sources along side with other secondary sources which are relevant to the topic under review. In addition, I have interviewed some personalities from among reformed church of Nigeria to ascertain their view on church approach to social issues in Nigeria.

The methodology adopted for this research is drawn from Historical and other disciplines like Sociology and Anthropology. It is inter-disciplinary in approach which borrowed from other fields of learning some relevant information that helped to put this research in its fairly rightful position it deserves.

This involved library research, engaging commentaries on Social Theologies, internet information, Journals in past and current periodicals. The method also involved interview with some personalities on issues of social concern in Nigeria.

CHAPTER TWO

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR WHOLISTIC APPROACH TO SOCIETY

Many scholars, within and outside Nigeria have the tendency to oppose the idea of Reformed wholistic approach to society; because of their dualistic view. Some argue that it is a way of secularizing the church. Some not only rejected the idea but considered it wholly as an anathema or a spurious doctrine to mess the church up with the worldly system.¹ To these people I may not denigrate their position, but beckoning them to reformed wholistic approach to society to enable them compare their biblical position to that of reformed world-view. Of course, the reformed wholistic approach to society is not advocating for hedonism (A doctrine which spelt out that pleasure is the chief good of life), but a life of commitment to the sovereignty of God. The doctrine of reformed wholistic approach is not developed from humanistic secular point of view, but a biblical base doctrine which Boer and other social crusaders seek to promote in the church of Nigeria.

To this end I shall attempt to make some survey through the scriptures both in the Old Testament and New Testament to shed light on the biblical foundation of Reformed wholistic approach to society. There is high optimism among Reformed scholars that whoever is patient enough to examine the biblical concept of wholistic approach to society may likely give this dualistic position a second thought. Dualism is an enemy of wholism. But the scripture do not leave us in darkness because we are still in the flesh. I shall now turn to the scriptures to posit the biblical position of

¹ A view base on my personal interaction with the church particularly in Taraba State. Most of them condemned politics and call it a dirty game.

Reformed wholistic approach to society as expounded by Boer and other scholars. I may not go too far but the few biblical concepts that I shall discuss will provide a better understanding of Reformed wholistic approach to society.

2.1 THE OLD TESTAMENT

In the Old Testament, there abound some portions of scriptures which reformed scholars appeal to them to defend their position. Other scholars who are not of Reformed background but espouse this position also use such scriptural passages.

As noted in the later part of this chapter below, Reformed Theology attached priority to the significant of the sovereignty of God in creation. Reformed tradition generally upholds to the belief that man is the supreme creature. That explains why God after creating all things, created man at last and ordained him to rule over all the creatures. Most scholars affirmed that the command to rule over all creatures in Genesis 1:26-28 is the first commandment in the Bible. In verse 28b, it states: "rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that move on the ground." This is the imperative scholars depend upon to draw out the concept of "cultural mandate". Cultural mandate is multi-dimensional in approach in the sense that man is placed over the garden (world) to have dominion over it in all the spheres of life.

All creatures whether living or inanimate are to be managed by man who is a superior and special creature of God. In the African primal religion, some created things both inanimate and living things are sometime being worshipped by man. This is a complete anti-thesis of God's intended plan for mankind. Instead of creatures serving man; and he rules over them (taking care of them), man turns

round to deify these creatures making them an object of worship.² In his view, Boer says Christians are queens and kings and are to rule these creatures.³ The rich natural endowment provided in nature by God are for man to rule them. He is in fact at liberty to harness the great hidden treasures of nature through the knowledge of modern science and technology for the benefit of himself and the generation yet unborn.

It is quite interesting that verses 26 and 28 of Genesis one mention the names of such creatures by their inhabitant which is narrowed to the physical world. It has not mentioned anything immaterial. Since Reformed affirm the rules of God over all of life under the dominion of man, the concept of 'rule' need to be expounded to guide us to better understanding of reformed wholistic approach to society.

2. 1. 1 The Concept of Rule and Dominion in Gen.1:26,28

To rule over something does not mean to show your superior power over it. It does not mean bully it because you have the power to do so. Rather rule is a sacred order which God in his initiative instituted from the beginning of creation.⁴ Mal-handling God's creation is totally a misunderstanding of the concepts of the term "rule" in Genesis. After creating all things, "God saw all that he had made, and it was very good" (Gen.1:31). God himself saw that everything was good. If something is said to be very good, that thing need proper care and management. He placed man over all these creatures to ensure proper management of them. The concept of 'rule' in (NIV) and dominion in (KJV) suggest a theological significant of man's cultural mandate which possesses no dichotomy. Of course, we learnt in the account of Gen.3 that man's fall obscured our understanding of 'dominion' and 'rule'. Man

² Jan H. Boer, *The Prophet Moses for Today*, (Jos: Institute of Church and Society, 1995), p.7.

³ Ibid.

⁴ This is my perception of the term to 'rule' in the Genesis one account.

became hostile to his environment and to his colleagues. However, instinctively and intuitively, man still retained in him the basic truth of God's reality. This basic truth can be seen in how man image God (*imago dei*). How man image God is a controversial issue in theology. But the wisdom display by man both now and in the past depicts greatly how man is the image of God.

In order to understand more appropriately the concept of 'rule', I wish to cite an example of the family. In the family setup, a man or an elderly person oversees the affairs of the family as it is in African context. In ruling the family, the man always makes sure that every member of the family is properly taking care of. He makes sure that they are healthy, provides food for them, clothing and all that are necessary for their being.

To rule or have dominion over the earth means therefore that man should ensure that the world is a healthy place to stay. The mandate to rule over the world is a special privilege bestow upon the church by God's special revelation. Boer says man is called God's "vice-regent" or "God's deputy" because of this special responsibility.⁵ Good Christian leadership is needed to save the world from ecological degradation. Palmer says where sin reigns; there is vast destruction of natural reserve leading to extinction of species of many animal, soil erosion, and desert encroachment.⁶ But Christian initiative in the politics can influence Government policies toward proper management of the earth. Human beings generally are steward of God but Christians should be in the forefront in the stewardship of the earth. As Boer rightly puts it, if the church fails in her duty as

⁵ Boer, *Missions: Herald of Capitalism or Christ?*, (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1984), p.149

⁶ Timothy Palmer, *Presbyterian and Reformed Faith*, (Bukuru: ACTS, 1986), p.76

steward of peace and liberation, then some of us may likely be embarrassed by the Lord one day.⁷

2.1.2 The kingdom of god

The kingdom of God is not narrowed to the spiritual world alone as it is been mistakenly held by many fundamental evangelicals among missionaries. Boer says “evangelicals suffered from a strange ambivalence on this issue and have in practice frequently reduced its scope in their own thinking to the spiritual.”⁸ He argues that human theories can do nothing to reduce God’s kingdom.⁹ Actually, God created both the spiritual and the material world, reducing the scope of the kingdom explicitly or implicitly to only spiritual is a parochial approach to biblical interpretation which may render impotent the concept of cultural mandate in (Gen.1:26, 28).

Boer further says that the concept of the kingdom is the main theme in Psalms. “For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations” (Ps.22:28 NIV). “For God is the king of all the earth ... God reigns over the nations” (47:7-8) and “the Lord has established his throne in the heavens and his kingdom rules over all” (Ps.105:9).¹⁰ It is apparent from the Old Testament conception that the kingdom of God extends to all nations and all of life. There is no limit to his kingdom as the scripture clearly posits in the Old Testament. Having this in mind, as biblical principles, reformers always seek to balance it up by wholistic approach to society. There are passages like Ps.23:1-2; 33:6-9; 50:1,10-12; 89:9-12 which speak about uniqueness of God’s kingdom in the whole earth. What else? David speaks of him as

⁷ Boer, *Mission: Herald of Capitalism or Christ?*, p.170.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p.148.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

the owner of all things (1Chro.29:12).¹¹ Isaiah speaks of him as one whose glory covers the earth (Isa.6:3b).

Boer also posits that the above passages and many more not mentioned tell of how God rules the world. His kingship and Lordship is not only found in the realm of the spirit but are manifested in the physical world. There is no dichotomy in the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not compartmentalized; he owns the spiritual kingdom, the unseen forces and the physical or material world. The Old Testament nowhere disdained the material world. It upholds the basic principles of full participation in the world affairs in order to transform it. This is overtly the reformed position in the Old Testament which Boer and other Reformed scholars seek to explicate. It points to the fact that dualism was purely a Greek pagan philosophy which has no place in the Old Testament.

Throughout the Old Testament narratives, God was dealing with a socio-political kingdom of Israel using human apparatus to meet their needs politically, socially, and economically. God was wholistic in his approach in dealing with Israel. There was no dichotomy between their spiritual life and their secular life.

In view of this, Geisler says “the world is the reflection of God’s glory which clearly negates the Greek mind.”¹² He later states that:

The Old Testament affirms the essential goodness of the material creation. The physical world is not an evil to be rejected. It is a good to be enjoyed. The material world is not a manifestation of evil but a reflection of the glory of God.¹³

Enjoying the world is not sinful so long as it is done in the pattern acceptable to biblical principles. God himself rested on the seventh day after creation. In reality, God never rested. In short as Boer puts it, he enjoys, delights or has pleasure seeing

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Norman L. Geisler, *Christian Ethics*, (Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1989), p.303.

¹³ Ibid.

all he has created.¹⁴ Therefore, what is wrong in joining God to rejoice and enjoy all that God instituted for us in this universe? Though, we still carry mortal or perishable bodies knowing fully well that we shall not reach acme in our joy in this planet. However, our greatest task is to redeem this world which we must do wholistically by involving in all the spheres of the world as enshrined in the scripture.

2.2 NEW TESTAMENT PERSPECTIVE

The New Testament too is replete of some passages which Reformed scholars developed the theology of wholistic approach to the society. In the New Testament, the concept of the 'kingdom of God' is crucial in the understanding of the Reformed wholistic approach to society. The phrase, 'the kingdom of God' is used in various ways to describe the new kingdom of Christ. The kingdom of God in the Old Testament was only found among the children of Israel under special revelation; and in the new covenant this very kingdom of God is being extended to other nations, tribes and continents of the world.

The phrase, the kingdom of heaven/God is peculiar with Matthew and gospel writers like Mark and Luke; "repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Mt 3:3; 4:17; Mk 1:15; Lk 9:11,60; Acts 1:3; 8:12; 19:18; 20:25; 28:23).¹⁵

Now the question one may ask is; what is the extent and nature of this kingdom of God? Is that kingdom narrow to the spiritual realm i.e. not involving the material world? Does the law governing that kingdom prescribe anywhere that Christians who are members of this kingdom should cease from participating in their socio-political and economic affairs?

¹⁴ Boer, *The Prophet Moses for Today*, day 8.

¹⁵ Boer, *Missions: Heralds of Capitalism or Christ?* p.148.

To answer the above questions reformed holds the view that Christ lives and rules in our heart by his spirit through the word. For now the kingdom of God is established in our heart and is manifested in our deeds. Palmer says “where Christ rules there is obedience to God, love and harmony will abound.”¹⁶ He goes on to say

Sin has affected our political life. Injustice and corruption are very common in government. But where Christ reigns, justice and honesty will prevail. In the market cheating and dishonesty are common. But where Christ reigns honesty and fair dealing will be found. In our churches, we see pride and tribalism. But where Christ reigns, there will be humility and brotherly love. In our society there are demons and evil spirits, but where Christ reigns, evil spirits are cast out.¹⁷

The idea of the kingdom of God is to transform the world. That is the extent of the kingdom of God now. It will fully be in operation at the consummation of time at the *eschaton*. But for now, we operate in the realm of material world in the kingdom of God. The material realm is good for our existence. God still loves this world and wants it to be saved through us. We cannot save the world if we run away to the bush. We cannot shine in the world if we do not participate in the socio-political life of the society. There is no such prescription hindering Christians’ participation in politics and social life of the society. Instead the kingdom of God which is like a mustard seed should be extended and expanded to all spheres of life through the church (Mt 13:31). The parable of the weeds makes it clearer. It says let the weeds and seeds grow together until the day of harvest (Mt 13:30).¹⁸ The church as an institution of grace is under obligation to live together with unbelievers in this world where it will continue to salten it till Christ comes.

Another command which Christ gave to his disciples was “... go into the world and preach the good news to all creation” (Mk 16:15). The creation refers to

¹⁶ Palmer, *Reformed and Presbyterian Faith*, p.75.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Paraphrase in my understanding of the verse. The NIV says “let both grow together” appears like a command to allow them to grow together.

in this verse is not limited to mankind alone, it refers to man and his total environment i.e. animal, plants and other inanimate creatures that are to serve man. Other theologians may disagree with me in this verse because of its textual variant. But no one can preclude this verse from the scriptures. After all, it does not emasculate the central teaching of the scriptures. When Christ says “all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me” (Mt 28:18), what is this authority? Logically one can deduce that the political power that exhibits authority on earth is under the dominion of Christ. This must include other spheres of life, economic, social and otherwise. These spheres mentioned above need to be redeemed by Christ’s authority by human apparatus. It requires that our approach needs to be wholistic.

Boer asserts that in the new covenant, God intends to unite all things in Christ¹⁹ as Apostle Paul puts it: “God has placed all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth... and he has put all things under his feet and has made him the head over all things for the church...” (Eph.1:10,21-22).

Paul says “... in him all things hold together” (Col.1:17), “He is the pre-eminent in everything.” Through him all things are to be reconciled.²⁰ Things to be reconciled are not only spiritual things but include those material things in all the spheres of this world.

In addition to the above in the New Testament, there are passages that portray the power of Christ over nature (Mt.8:26-27; 14:15); over death (Lk 7:14-15; Jn 11:43-44); over Satan and his subordinates (Mt.8:28-32; 9:32-33) and over men and their possession (Lk 19:29-35; Jn 2:14-16; 1Cor.6:19-20).²¹ All these passages

¹⁹ Boer, *Missions*., p.149.

²⁰ Ibid. Col.1:18b; 20b are paraphrased by Boer.

²¹ Ibid.

depict the power and the supremacy of Christ over all the creation. If all things are his, then we as heirs of Christ need to demonstrate his power not in the vacuum but in the society that his glory may shine and douse the power of the devil.

Boer further says that: “any statement that emphasizes the provisional nature of the kingdom in our present dispensation and some others that would appear to posit limits to the kingdom must be understood in the context of a total kingdom.”²²

I hold the opinion that since the scripture portrays Christ as the only sovereign ruler of this world then our allegiance to Christ must be *in toto*. It must not be limited to the spiritual affairs alone. After all we are not spiritual beings yet but mortal material beings placed here to manage it. This reminds us of our cultural mandate as explicated under Old Testament above.

The New Testament nowhere condemns Christian involvement in the world. Christians who are influenced by some dubious interpretation of the scripture with dualism tend to dissociate themselves from the world. They also tend to secularize government as institution under the domain of the devil. But Romans 13:1-3 explicitly states that they are God established institutions. Christian should not be scared by the pollution in the spheres around us. Some Christians frequently use the derogatory slogan “politics is a dirty gain” without weighing what they are saying in line with the scripture as ambassadors of the word. If politics is dirty, who makes it dirty? The same Christians and Muslims who lack wholistic approach to society make it dirty.

²² Ibid.

No wonder CAN points to the failure of Christians' ambassadorial responsibilities as indeed:

Politics may be a dirty game but who will make it clean" if Christians distanced themselves from politics that lead to leadership, then demons will... if demons govern and rule us and burn our churches and marginalize us and treat us like second class citizens in our country of posting, then why should the Christian community complain? The price honest people pay for keeping silent and not getting involved is to be ruled by dishonest men.²³

The legacy inherited from missionaries is the cause of this misfortune. The church is looking for alternative in her biblical position. Therefore, Reformed position provides another alternative as advanced by Boer and other scholars a biblical basis for Christians' participation in all the spheres of the world. Religious life and any other spheres must be tied together as one entity. I think it is high time the church in Nigeria particularly in the middle belt should let go this missionary legacy called 'dualism' and let integrate religion with socio-political spheres to move the nation forward. But it will be appropriate to look at the basic Reformed position which is foundational to Reformed wholistic approach to society.

2.3 THE ORIGIN OF CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH OF NIGERIA

Since the foci-point of this research is to discern from Reformed world view and philosophy its approach to society; it will be important to present a survey of the history of Reformed Church and its establishment in the middle Belt of Nigeria. Though we have other Reformed Churches in Nigeria, but I shall confine or limit myself to Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN). This will provide clear understanding of the background of this research.

²³ Boer, *Christian: Why this Muslims Violence?* Vol.3, (Belleville: Essence Pub. Co., 2004), p.23.

Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria is an outshoot of Christian Reformed Church North America. Generally all Reformed Churches date back to 16th centuries Reformation. It is coined from the Latin usage among the Swiss brethren as 'Ecclesia reformata simpliciter reformanda', meaning, to be a truly reformed church we have to be in a process of constant reformation²⁴

According to Palmer, the foundation of reformed church was laid in Europe during reformation era by Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531) in Zurich, Switzerland. However he did not live long to see his work bear fruits as his demise came into being in 1531.²⁵ but as Palmer says, Zwingli laid the foundation of reformed church and Calvin built on it.²⁶ In another sense, Zwingli planted the seed, God watered it and Calvin wedded it to its growth.

Therefore, the true father of Reformed church was John Calvin whose theology most reformed churches around the world adhere to. Calvin was a French man who lived between 1509 and 1564. When influenced by Luther's Reformation, Calvin immediately took up the initiative to preach reformation at Paris University, where he was persecuted and he escaped to Basel. He finally settled in Geneva where he worked throughout his life and become the giant of Geneva. His works in Geneva influenced other persecuted Christians who took refuge in Geneva. Through the Geneva refuges, reformed churches spread to other parts of Europe and much later across the Atlantic Ocean to North America. Calvin systematized Reformed doctrine, wrote many commentaries of the scriptures, set the Reformed ecclesiastical polity, and wrote other articles and books. His greatest work which many scholars regarded as the master piece of the Reformation is the 'institute of Christian religion.'²⁷ How does this relate to society? Calvin's works in Geneva solidified the Reformed faith and Reformed world view which continue to spread to other parts of the world and made it a unique denomination which always identify itself with Calvin's ideals and theology.

²⁴Jean-Jacques Bauswein And Lukas Visser, editors, the reformed Family world Wide, (Grand Rapids: Wm.B Eerdmans Pub. Comp., 1999), p.2.

²⁵ Timothy Palmer, *The Reformed and Presbyterian Faith*, (Bukuru: TCNN Publications, 1996), p.7.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷ Geoffrey Hanks, '70 Great Christians', (Scotland: 1992), p.116.

This explains why many scholars believe that Calvin built on the foundation that was laid by Zwingli. How about the Reformed Church of Nigeria? How did it begin? How much of Calvin's theology influence it? To this I will turn to.

In the annals of Ecclesiastical History of Nigeria, missionary activities began properly around 1840s. By 1900s some missionaries were having the burden to take the gospel to the interior part of Nigeria within the Sudanese belt. The period between 1901-1904 saw the birth of Sudan interior mission and Sudan United Mission in the Northern Nigeria.²⁸ Under Sudan united mission which was the foundation of virtually all TEKAN churches, Christian of Reformed church of Nigeria (CRCN) was born. It began with Karl W. Kumm, the founding father of SUM who had a burning desire to reach out to the people of Sudan to halt the incursion of Islam to the south. With this desire, Kumm initiated the idea of interdenominational mission organization called Sudan United Mission (SUM) which came into being 1903-1904 in England.²⁹ By July 1904 Kumm led the first team of four Missionaries to Nigeria under the platform of SUM and arrived Ibi in September of that same year.³⁰ Lugard influenced them to start the work of saving grace in Wase. In October, 1904 they commenced work in Wase which was discouraging. The following year 1906 they turned to Wukari and established a mission center there. Donga station was opened in 1907 and Ibi which was the gate way had its station officially in 1908³¹

²⁸E.P.T. Crampton, *Christianity In Northern Nigeria*, ed. Musa A.B. Gaya (Bukuru: Acts,2004), P.41

²⁹Samuel Dali, "Mission Activities," in *churches in fellowship*, ed. Mark Hopkins, J.L and Musa Gaiya, (Bukuru: Acts, 2005), p.23

³⁰Lowry Maxwell, *Half Century of Grace*, (London: graham and Heship Ltd,nd), p. 43

³¹Timothy Palmer, p. 54

All these stations were under SUM British Branch. In 1917 Donga became the first organized church in TEKAN. By 1922 there were five of such organized churches in TEKAN. These were Donga, Wukari, Numan, Langtang and Ibi. It is interesting to note that three of these first five organized churches are in Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria today. These are Donga, Wukari and Ibi.

However the parent mission to Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria began work in Nigeria through the effort of Johanna Veenstra who came to Nigeria in 1921. After spending sometime at Donga to get acquainted with Hausa language in 1920, she started work in Lukpe at Takum's suburb under SUM branch³² Having spent some years in the mission field, Johanna Veenstra died in Vom Christian hospital after being operated for Appendicitis in 1933.³³

Her death stirred up the Christian reformed church in North America to commence mission work in Nigeria. After several synods of the North America Reformed Church, it was finally resolved that CRC North America will take over the mission field of Johanna Veenstra from SUM British branch. When this arrangement was completed, a work formerly begun in the 1940s³⁴ by Christian Reformed Church, North America, later known as CRC SUM Branch. Under this development in 1947 a new station was opened in Baissa by Rev. Harry Boer and Robert Recker as its pioneer missions.³⁵ By 1947 a first pastor Rev. Istifanus Audu was ordained. The next stage was the formative period which began around 1951 under the umbrella of Ekklisiyar Kristi A Sudan (EKAS) Benue Region. Later in

³² timothy Palmer, p. 54

³³ Ibid, p. 56

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ Ibid

1977 the EKAS Benue Church changed its name to Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria (CRCN).³⁶ This is the brief history of Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria. This is the Church in which Boer served as veteran missionary in collaboration with TEKAN churches. Today the church is gradually gaining national and international recognition because it is not only found Nigeria but in some neighbouring Africa countries like Chad, Cameroon and Niger.

Boers experienced in the services to the church and humanity in Nigeria is a stimulus to wholistic approach to society base on reformed worldview. Boers' Background and Christian world view was a fire in his bones which he cannot be quiescent. He worked relentlessly to bridge the gab of his predecessors to bring about wholistic approach to society through writings, organizing seminars and paper presentations. All his effort in developing the church and society towards wholistic living are tapped from the Reformed world view. To understand this more clearly, let me turn to the Reformed world view and philosophy.

2.4 REFORMED WORLDVIEW

A world view is the way we see things and interpret them. A world view of person or people shapes their beliefs/practices. This is because the world views of any person or groups of persons influences their thought and approach to things.

In this sense, a worldview can be said to be how people of a particular community or geographical region perceive things or view things and apply them to their condition. Albert Walters says, "A world view is the comprehensive framework of one's basic belief about things."³⁷

What people believe and practice determine their commitment to their faith. Worldviews are built from different cultural, social and religious background. Thus

³⁶ Ibid

³⁷ Timothy Palmer, p. 3

we have various world views around us to day which shape or influence various sectors in the society or state. For example there is an African traditional religions' world view which believe that the supreme deity affect all of life through divinities.

So if African traditional worshippers need blessings from the Supreme Being in the political, social and economic life, various divinities are consulted to tap the blessings another example of different worldview is the Marxists' worldview which sees everything from the perspective of economic depression and freedom. Islam also sees everything in this world under their religious dominion or power. They consider themselves as God special people who suppose to be in the leadership position where ever they are found.³⁹

Similarly, the church universal has a world view, though it differs from denomination to denomination. For instance the Anabaptists believe in the separation of church and society. The catholic holds the view that the pope is the head of state, the church and the purgatory because he is the Vicar of Christ.³⁹ The significant of this assertion can be viewed from how pope wears papal tiara (Triple Crown) which indicates that he is the head over three realms: the church, state and purgatory⁴⁰. In that manner, the reformed churches have their worldview. Though, this may differs in terms of emphasis, approach and application depending on the understanding of the various reformed churches around the world. But the point here is that the reformed worldview plays a significant role in the life of its adherents where they may be found. This reformed view as Palmer puts it generally centers on the kingship of Christ over all of life⁴¹

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ H. Henro, Meeter, *The Basic ideas of Calvinism*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 1990),p.88

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

This is the basic characteristic of Reformed faith. It sees every sphere of life as being rule by God.⁴² Though our cultural heritage may influence us on one way or the other yet the reformed world view is concern with a total man. It sees salvation and the social aspect of man as indivisible entity. Reformed tradition holds the view that salvation without the social role could make Christianity irrelevant to the world. That is why Boer says, "God's kingdom is in fact, co-extensive with all of creation. He rules everywhere and we owe Him allegiance and obedience everywhere."⁴³ It means there should not be separation from the world, but participation in it to transform it. That is to say Christianity should transform not only the spiritual life but all of life, socially, politically and economically.

Abraham Kuyper one of the reformed theologian and elder state man had truly demonstrated the reformed world view in Netherlands as a politician in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Kuyper's Calvinistic background or world view made him to take all of life seriously.

⁴² John H. Leit, *Introduction to the Reformed Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1977), p.212

⁴³ Jan. H. Boer, p.13

In addition, reformed world view believes in the basic universal teachings that are found in the apostles' creeds. It upholds to the decision of the council of Nicea AD 325 which spelt out the Sameness of the essence of the father and the son. It adheres to the council of Chalcedon AD 451, which spelt out the two natures of Christ (Divine and human). It believes in the doctrine of the trinity, the vicarious atonement of Christ and other basic Christian doctrines⁴⁴ Thus, this is the premise or the background from which Boer developed his wholistic approach to social issues in the society.

2.5 THE LORDSHIP OF GOD

Concerning the Lordship of God, reformed holds the belief that all of life belongs to God. God is sovereign over all things. Reformed faith has a strong conviction or awareness that God is King over the entire world and over all of our lives. If God is King over all our lives, by implication He is King over every spectrum of life.

To this effect Reformed adherents who have overt understanding of their faith believe that Christ is their King in the market. He is their King in the classroom, in the science laboratory room, in the farm, in politics and the social life approved by the word of God. This is because reformed believe God rules this world by his word. Palmer says the word of God is his scepter which He uses to rule the world.⁴⁵

Therefore by this view all reformed adherents portray the Lordship of Christ in all spheres of life because the whole universe belongs to God. His redeemed creatures should endeavor to shine throughout the spheres of this temporal world. There should not be dichotomy in the approach to things around us. There should not be compartmentalization and dualistic approach to society. That is, if you are in

⁴⁴ Timothy Palmer, p. 71.

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.78.

the market, you are purely a market person, putting Christ aside and be under the control of worldly system. Where you can cheat or extort others. Then after market you become a Christian. This approach disturbed Boer when on one occasion he saw some women selling Irish potatoes in Jos, panel beat-in the buttocks of the containers to narrow the bottom. When they filled the potatoes in the containers one think, that the container is full. But on emptying the container a woman who bought the potatoes discovered that the container has been reduced at the bottom which is deceptive. On inquiring why they did such a thing as Christian business women. They told her that, what has business to do with Christianity. The woman was shocked with their answer.⁴⁶ In this dualistic approach by some market women, Boer perceived that most Christian had inherited imbalance gospels. They view their spiritual life as different from their social life.

It is this compartmentalized approach by some Christians that motivated Boer to seek for integration through a balance and a wholistic approach to make the gospel appealing to the world. To initiate and develop a result oriented society where no section of the society is relegated to background or under a carpet. This will also help every sphere of life to be taken seriously individually and collectively by the church or a society. This will require a better understanding of what society is. To this end there is need for a basic understand of what society is all about.

2.6 THE MEANING AND CONCEPT OF SOCIETY

Since this research deals with Boer's wholistic approach to society, gleaned from the reformed tradition or worldview; it is pertinent to have a clear understanding of what society really is in relation to the church.

⁴⁶ Kai Da Dukiyarka, ed. Jan H. Boer, Jos: *Institute of church and society*, 1982, p.5.

The world 'society' like any other term is ambiguous because it defies one definition. Its concept and meaning has both scientific and social implication. However I shall attempt to define the word from idealistic functional perspective.

The Chamber's Dictionary defines society as "a fellowship, companionship, company, association, a community, a fashionable world, co-operate body, or any organized association."⁴⁷ The word is derived from the Latin word 'societas' and 'socius,' meaning a companion. From the root meaning in Latin a state may comprise of people who are in companionship i.e. many societies existing side by side with each other bound by law in the organized settings like Nigeria.

While Webster Dictionary defines it as "a group of animals or plants living together under the same milieu and regarded as constituting a homogenous unit or entity, especially a group of persons regarded as forming a single community."⁴⁸ It goes further to state that "all people collectively, regarded as constituting a community of related, interdependent individuals."⁴⁹ This definition begins with scientific concept and ends with social science concept. It states that Animal and plants associate or live together to form a society. Similarly too in human society people of different geographical region organize themselves into different community or society. Thus, we have various social organizations existing in the state or society e.g. the church communities, Islamic communities and tribal communities. These communities may have different world views but exist together in the state by law.

⁴⁷ *The Chambers Dictionary* ed. Sandra Anderson et al, Edinburgh: Harrap Pub. Ltd, 1998), p.1569.

⁴⁸ *Websters New world Dictionary of the American Language* ed. P.1386.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

From the above definitions one may be right to infer that a society is a combination of both plants and animal interdependently living together in amity or harmonious entity. But the question is, how harmonious are the elements of society? From the Christian perspective human society is full of deviations with tendencies to dominate or manipulate because of man's fallen nature giving rise to imbalance society. Taking from the premise of Christianity, it would be fair to say that society is an imperfect harmonious association of various elements of the society that interact in a particular geopolitical zone. These elements of society are man, plants and animal.

In another sense, a social anthropology, Oke says "state society is a political institution which maintains social order. It is an organization of roles in which legal and military authority is vested and in which such authority is considered by the members of the state to be its primary purpose."⁵⁰ Within the state society, there are segments of society which the church is inclusive.

There are also various views and approaches to society by some individuals scholars. For instance Durkheim, Weber, Freud, G.H Mead, W.I. Thomas view society irrevocably as both limiting and enriching for the individual personality. Durkheim in another sense sees society as indispensable for restraining the desires of man, which otherwise would expand limitlessly, condemning him to limitless frustration.⁵¹

⁵⁰ E.A Oke, *An Introduction to social Anthropology*, Hongkong: Macmillan Publishers, Ltd, 1987), p.154.

⁵¹ Jesse R. Pitts, 'Society is in the mind of individuals,' in *Theories of Society* ed. Talott Parsons et al, Vol. 2; (New York: free press of Glance, 1961), p.686.

Contrary to Max Weber views, “society exists where there is an authority that, in a sense precedes it. And this authority is attached to idea that fulfils the individual needs for ultimate meaning.”⁵²

There are more approaches which time and space will not allow me to discuss them here. But it is evident from these two, that, a society determines or detects the role and function of every individual in the society. It has tremendous influence on individual potentials and abilities i.e. utilizing ones potentials and restraining them depends largely on the society. This is because in most cases especially in Africa, the society holds in her hand the power and authority to detect to every member of the society what it approves. This approval depends largely on the world view of that society. To some extent the world view of the people are strongly adhere to, so that certain benefit can be accrued, though they may be good or destructive.

Take for instance, respect for elders, upbringing of children by parents and moral laws are prescribed by various communities in Nigeria according to their world view. However, there are some negative practices which some societies approved but were inimical and contrary to the law of Nature. These include female Genital mutilation, female infanticide and killing of twins. The prescription by society to carry out such acts was then quite good because of ignorance and lack of knowledge. For lack of knowledge my people perish “.... (Hosea 4:6). Today such inimical prescriptions are gradually fading away as societies no longer restrain the potentials and the abilities of individual in the society. It is on this grand that truth is termed to be relative and of course subjunctive. What we adhere to as truth is a

⁵² Ibid, p.687.

product of society.⁵³ This gives birth to a lot of deconstructions and reconstructions in our society today, as the influence of globalization take hold of our societies.

Having the above view in mind, one must bear in mind the complex nature of the Nigerian society i.e. full of various ethnic groups from different cultural and religious background. To proffer a workable balance approach from the reformed tradition that is acceptable by all Sundry may be hard. For one may ask how can reformed wholistic approach as viewed by Boer be applicable to such a society? Certainly the only approach that may deem fit such society must be an approach that is relevant to their world view. It is interesting that reformed world view asserts that all of life belongs to God which to some extent is tantamount to African world view. For African interprets everything from their religious' perspective. The religion world view of an African is so strong that many scholars assert that his political, social and economic life is fused together. It is in this regard that John Mbiti asserts that "An African is incurably and notoriously religious"⁵⁴

Therefore the understanding of Nigerian society and its complex and ethnic religious background will help determine the efficiency or the efficacy of the wholistic approach to the church and society of Nigerian. It suffices here that the brief overview of what generally society is will help reader to understand why reformed wholistic approach to society requires both the effort of church and the society to build a just and balance society. The historical analysis of Nigerian society in chapter four will throw more light to it. But let me turn to the basic reason for missionaries' imbalanced approach to society as analyzed by Boer.

⁵³ Samuel Dali, Notes on Historiography, (Bukuru: TCNN, Sept 2007).

⁵⁴ John Mbiti, African Religion and Philosophy, (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p.24.

**DUALISM: AN INHERENT CHURCH LEGACY FOR
IMBALANCE GOSPEL**

According to Boer's assessment of Christianity especially among TEKAN churches in Northern Nigeria; the basic problem of imbalance gospel among Christians can be traced to dualism which Boeriana literatures seek to address.

Boer perceived the church of Northern Nigeria as a status quo church in terms of social relation from its beginning. He says "upsetting the social apple cart was far from the minds of missionary and pastor."⁵⁵ The missionary and church leaders emphasize loyalty, obedience and submission to those in authority. Boer believed that such emphasis was largely due to myopic sightedness or lack of foresight on the part of missionaries and the forces of exploitation and oppression that the colonial power lift. According to Boer, this is a common phenomenon among evangelical missions which SUM is inclusive. It is on this that we meet another cause for the continued servility on the part of Christian peasantry.

In another development, Boer noticed a little sign towards positive initiative which to him is an exceptional development on the Christians approach to political affair by TEKAN. He cited the effort made by TEKAN through their submission to political Bureau proposing a very different approach to the political affairs. The proposals sought the engagement or involvement of the peasant in the social political development of the nation in the 1980s, as this will bring positive development. In the light of this, Boer compliments the effort of TEKAN for taken such initiative; because the proposal was in support of the masses. On the other hand it states that when decisions are made at the top, development became elitists,

⁵⁵ Ibid, p.10.

expensive, ineffective and brain storm by corruption.⁵⁶ Their argument is deducted from concrete facts, says Boer. To him this approach is encouraging; if TEKAN churches will begin to apply that same approach to their own ecclesiastical affairs as well as to the political, social and economic affairs.⁵⁷

However Boer in his search for a balance approach to the society of Nigeria still finds a gulf which needed to be bridged by the word of God (scriptures). He observes that Christians are not careful to study the scriptures and tradition to develop a theology for the emancipation of the people.⁵⁸ Under this unfortunate development, Boer says that the major reason behind the inability of Nigerian church to develop a vibrant theology of emancipation is found in the colonial/missionary legacy which is dualism.

Dualism according to Boer varies in meaning and concept, depending on the context. Boer is specifically concerned with its development from pre-reformation history which has a direct link with Thomas Aquinas' synthesis of Christian thought with pagan Greek philosophy.

According to him dualism has influenced Christian thought many centuries down to the missionary era of the 19th and 20th centuries. Boer summarizes the features of such concept as follows:⁵⁹

- Reality is divided into the spheres of material and the spiritual
- God is seen to be more interested in the spiritual than the material. Thus hierarchical relationship exist with the spiritual taking priority and that One needs divine revelation i.e. the Bible to understand the spiritual world- because Human reasoning is insufficient.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

- It is only-for the affairs of the world, human reasoning is a sufficient source of information.
- Working in the spiritual area is often called “the work of God” while working in the world (secular) is not service to God.⁶⁰

According to Boer, these concise view on the concept of dualism held by the church, explains why Christians over the years uphold a dualistic approach to the society and was the foundation of missionary legacy which the church in the northern Nigeria was built upon, where the spiritual personality is viewed different from the physical. Based on this, the spiritual life is good and should be strictly followed. The physical part of man is bad, un-important and should not be given priority. The world is evil and all that is in the world is passing away. Thus, Christian should not be mindful of any political, social and economic activity.

In view of this, the Christian religion is thus reduced to personal, private and spiritual affair that has relevance for personal morality, family relations and church affairs.⁶¹ This is what may be termed a life in the ghetto.

Boer asserts that the dualistic mentality has dominated most missionaries who worked in Northern Nigeria and its impact upon the church has served as a deterrent to Christians’ participation in the political social and economic affairs of the nation. Personally I view this dualistic approach as an evil or cankerworm which constitutes to a great setback to the gospel in many areas in Northern Nigeria particularly in the middle belt where Christians are majority. For instance the number of Christians in Nassarawa State, Kogi State and of course Adamawa State is substantial enough to be vanguard in the political and economic affairs of these

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

states. But the idea of dualism which has weakened Christians in terms of political, social and economic spheres makes Christians in these states to be divided and lost control of their political right.

In short, dualism is a threat to the wholistic growth of the church in the society. One can understand now why the early church rejected Gnosticism which teaches that all matters are evil. I consider dualism as opium of the church as it makes Christians sleepy, dull and insensitive to the world around them until they become like prey in the hands of their exploiters. The church needs to deal with dualism or else it will cease to be a true voice of liberation. This is also Boer's call that "dualism must be overcome, if the peasants, especially Christians peasants are to recognize and utilize the resources the gospel has for a realignment of social economic political relations."⁶²

One other reason that the church needs to get rid of dualism is that it makes Christians impotent and inactive on the reality of opposing evil. It makes Christians to remain silent when they are denied justice. Silent without speaking out is compromising with evil. Spirituality should not be stupidity. When the body is not properly handled, the spiritual aspect of a person will be in crisis. Dualism therefore should not be admitted in the contemporary church. Dualism as a missionary legacy to the church must be replaced with integration. This is the core or central teaching of wholistic approach to society. It formed the basis on which Boer built his social theology and, wholistic approach deduced from Calvinistic theology via Kuyper who experimented the reformed world view in the political power of Netherlands in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.⁶³

⁶² Ibid, p.13.

⁶³ Timothy Palmer, p.30.

CHAPTER THREE

BOER'S HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF NIGERIA

3.1 BOER'S BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Jan H. Boer is originally a native of Netherlands but also holds a citizen of Canada in North America where he currently base. One may be right in another sense to say that Boer is a man with dual citizenship. Sometimes, base on my personal assessment looking at his life history, I am tempted to address him as a man of triple or tripartite citizenship.¹ His early childhood and upbringing has not been fully disclosed to me. What is clear is that his parent was humble Christians of reformed tradition in Netherlands where Boer himself was born and obtained his early elementary education career.

By 1959, he enrolled into Calvin College (USA) where he spent four years and completed his studies in 1962. He joined Calvin Theological Seminary (USA) "between" 1962-1965. He spent a year at Michigan State University (USA) doing African studies "between" 1965 to 1966. In 1966 he came to Nigerian for further research at Pierre Benignus study centre which basic focus is Islam, and completed the research in 1967. By 1972 Boer left Nigeria to Netherlands for further study in Missiology at the Vrije universiteit and finished in 1974. "Between" 1973-1974, he was a research fellow at vrije universiteit. He was later awarded Th.D. in 1979 by Vrije universiteit. Vrije universiteit is in Dutch language and means 'free-university'. It is in the Netherlands located in Amsterdam.²

¹ That is base on my personal perception of Boer's love, commitment and dedication to the service of church and humanity in Nigeria.

² Jan Boer, *Back Cover in Missions: Herald of Capitalism or Christ?*

He spent about a year at Cecil Rhodes library, Oxford (UK) in 1973 on research. In his career to earn living, Boer served at various capacities which may be too numerous to mention them all. For instance, Boer in his childhood served as Barber assistant in Netherlands "between" 1948-1951 and Bread delivery in Netherlands those same years his service to community must have influenced his view of society. He became a paper boy (BC, Canada) 1951-1954. He served as church Janitor (BC, Canada) 1953-1956 and at the same time a lumber mill and plywood (BC) 1954-1958.³

The above childhood story of his career portrays him as industrious, hardworking and determined person from his youth as a man of the people. This humble beginning is worthy of emulation by our youth in Nigeria reformed churches who sometime depend solely on their parents for their livelihood. It is a challenge that Boer has taken all of life seriously from his youth even to the time he has truly discovered the central teachings of reformed faith.

When Boer came to Nigeria as a missionary under Christian reformed church of Nigeria in 1966, he also served in various capacities. He became a director, institute of church and society (ICS) Jos, between 1977-1989 and subsequently its consultant from 1989 to 1993. He availed himself to lecture at the University of Jos for a period of one year (1978-1979). He also offered himself to lecture for a period of one year at Calvin Theological Seminary in graduate course on missiology 1981. He also served as Director, holistic health care Dept, Jos from 1981-1989 and its consultant between 1991-1993. Finally he served as a lecturer to theological college of northern Nigeria (TCNN) Bukuru 1993-1996.⁴ this shows Boer's life was linked to society.

³Ibid.
⁴'Boerian Social Theology' www.socialtheology.com. 10 Nov. 2008.

It requires a hardworking person to combine such services rendered by Boer to church and the society. Boer is not an armchair theologian who only theorized and cannot experiment or practicalize his view. This is evident in his determination to serve at various spheres to experiment his theological education. For example, testimonies of many CRCN students in Theological College of Northern Nigeria show that, Boer was a strong force in the establishment of Christian Reformed Church of Nigeria in Jos as early as 1990s. Today this church has grown and is under CRCN urban ministry Abuja. At its establishment Boer offered himself occasionally to transport CRCN students at TCNN to the church's worship center at TEKAN Headquarters Jos says Isaiah Hinkon.⁵

Similarly he is a strong advocate of social services and there are still a few ministers who still recall how Boer on several occasions sent assistance to those who are socially deprived and students who were in needs. Nyajo, for instance says that Boer has been his good friend and has offered him several gifts to support his ministry. His pieces of advice motivated him to start a big poultry farm in Ibi Taraba State in the early 1980s.⁶ This is part of social action which Boer attempted to develop individual wholistically.

Also, it is worth mentioning here that within a period of thirty years of Boer's service in Nigeria (1966-1996) he developed love for Nigeria society and the TEKAN churches where his service was conspicuous. This was what triggered him to take up the initiative to author many books on social issues to challenge Nigerian church and society toward a wholistic living in the Reformed perspective. This is another strong instrument in transforming a society which churches today in Nigeria are gradually responding to in this nascent democracy. Today Jan H. Boer has retired to his home at Canada but he

⁵ Interview with Isaiah Hinkon, Veenstra *Theological Seminary, Donga*, 16th Augustine, 2008.

⁶ Interview with Mohammad Ezekiel Nyajo, *Azun Poultry Farm, Ibi*, July 10, 2008.

continues his writings and research with occasional visitation to Nigeria. The point of this brief biography is that Boer's view of society which he demonstrated in various service to Nigerian society had influenced his view of church in relation to society.

3.2 BOER'S PERCEPTION OF NIGERIAN SOCIETY

From all indications, Boer's perception of Nigerian society especially the Northern Nigeria is like that of Feudal lords and the serf in the medieval Europe. The Nigerian peasants both Christians and non Christians are regarded as prey in the hands of their leaders and their nobility. They have no right to exercise their freedom to denounce what may trample upon their right.

This was the case in the medieval Europe, when the Feudal system was in practice, the serf were the poorest people in the society. They were most often used for cheap labor and they could not complain to their lords. They were often manipulated, extorted and they had no land of their own.⁷

In Nigeria, Boer observes that when the right of the masses is infringed upon, the masses may only complain among themselves but cannot go further than that. For instance, Boer observes that whenever a government official would visit a particular village. The villagers would be mobilized to wait under the Sun in anticipation for the government official, leaving their primary duties of farming. If the government official delays or do not come, the masses were not apologize for such malfeasance act and they cannot voice out their grievances.

Boer also observes that when government clinics in the village have no drugs, the villagers only could grumble and complain among themselves but cannot take further

⁷Marvin Perry, *Man's Unfinished Journey* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Comp, 1974), p.443.

action. He noticed too that when the village teachers are not carrying out their teaching task, parents cannot complain to the local education authority.⁸ These and many other anomalies are common characteristics of the Nigerian peasant which Boer says it makes them dormant, servile and docile.

Boer's assertion of Nigerian society is correct; though a careful assessment of contemporary Nigerian society shows that most of these anomalies are gradually fading away paving a way for new innovations of ideas as "result of globalization. However a lot need to be done through wholistic approach to provide conducive atmosphere through which the Nigerian peasants can attain political, social and economic liberation.

In another development Boer points out that the peasants suffered from low self image and are duty bound to pay homage or venerate the "big man." Whenever cheated or deprived of their right either individually or communally, locally or nationally, they have no objection, "but placing their right hand inside the left with the remark, "yaya za mayi?" (What shall we do?).⁹

In an attempt to visualize why Nigerians possessed such attitudes, Boer argues that three main factors may be responsible for such imbecility among Nigeria peasants. He traces the root cause to the cultural, social and religious background of Nigerian society irrespective of whether they are Christian, pagan or Muslim. However, Boer admits that there could be probably more factors, but strongly believed that the above areas feature prominently in the lives of Nigerians peasants. In this regard, Boer says that, the religious teachings in both Christianity and Islam, the traditional norms and the secular curriculum of the colonial education all contributed in one way or the other to the

⁸ Jan H. Boer, *Christian and Mobilization*, p.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.3.

excessive obedient of the peasant until they become too weak to oppose the unjust rule and to seek for fair play and justice.

However, to some extent, Muslim peasants are inclined to their religions' beliefs which they are sensitized to oppose any attempt to infringe upon their religious right. Nonetheless, they are silent on what is meant for the welfare of the society. The question then is, what is making Nigerian society to dichotomize between its religion and social political and economic life? How can people whose background in African traditional religion was not separated from political social and economic life begin to separate their religious life from their social political life? Boer's response to the above questions could be found in his critic of Christian mission in chapter two above.

3.3

PRE- COLONIAL NIGERIA

In every event there is a background. This research may not really portray the unwholesome picture of un-wholesome society of Nigeria without exploring into the pre-colonial history of Nigeria. Since the events of that era have much influence on the modern Nigeria; I will briefly explore its history for better comprehension of the nature and the complexity of the present Nigeria social-political and economic situations. The exploration into the brief historical analysis will help unfold the certainty that might have been responsible for unbalance approach to Nigerian society. The pre-colonial era laid the foundation upon which the unwholesome society of Nigeria was built. The foregoing analysis, I hope will obliterate the cloud of doubts surrounding this opinion.

In the early 19th century of Northern Nigeria, there emerged a powerful empire which threatened to submerge all other powerful kingdoms of the ancient history of Northern Nigeria. This was the Sokoto caliphate which came into being through the effort of the Jihad of Usman Dan-Fodio. It all began around 1804, and by 1834 its mission were almost accomplished.¹⁰ The Jihad which was embarked upon purely for religion reform had other reasons which includes political and socio-economic. Time and space cannot allow me to analyze each of this reason. But for whatever reasons the Jihad was fought, it has a lasting impact on Nigeria political, social and religious life.¹¹

Under this development, the emirate system of government was established with Sultan of Sokoto as the head. With exception of Borno Empire and few pagan areas, most of the northern areas were under the Sokoto caliphate. Some pagan tribes who were less sophisticated in terms of arms took refuge by force in the mountains, forest, and swamping areas mostly in the middle belt region. These tribes who were in legion hosted by mountains and forest became a prey in the hands of the predators (Hausa-Fulani slave raiders).

Other tribes who were not subjugated continued to resist the Hausa-Fulani warriors until the arrival of the European traders and subsequently the colonial masters. Available information shows that most of the Fulani campaigned against the pagans were successful through the use of Maxim gun which they purchased from European traders.¹²

¹⁰M.A. Al.hafia, "The Meaning of the Sokoto Jihad", in *Studies in the History of the Sokoto Caliphate*, ed. Y. Busman, (Third Press Inter, 1995), p.15.

¹¹E.P.T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, ed. Musa A.B. Gaiya, (Bukuru: ACTS, 2004), p.13.

¹²A.H.M. Kirk – Green, *Adamawa Past and Present* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p.158.

Deducing from this un-healthy atmosphere between the numerous pagan communities in the middle belt and the Hausa-Fulani slave raiders, it is obvious that a seed of discord has been sown. This seed of discord would be a perennial one, lasting from generation to generation. Boer makes reference to Maxwell's statement on governors' report on the pre-colonial condition in Northern Nigeria. He says the country was

Controlled and ruled under conditions giving no guarantee of liberty or even life. Slave-raiding with all its attendant horrors were being carried on by the ... Mohammedans upon ... the pagans and the latter ... were constantly engaged in inter-tribal warfare.¹³

Boer goes further to observe that "further realities were those of exorbitant taxation, extermination of population, cannibalism, trial by ordeal, highway robbery, ignorance, illiteracy, and disease."¹⁴ To this people life was perpetually under anxiety. No certainty. That explains why some traditionalists continue to tell stories to remind their children's children the evil and the barbaric deeds of Fulani to their ancestors.

Samuel Dali in his class lecture on, "Mission in Northern Nigeria" attempts to explicate how some pagan tribes keep telling some folktales to portray the bad image of Fulani. He narrated a story which his grandmother usually told them when they were younger thus: over there on the mountain closed to their village the Fulani slaughtered some of their people and their blood flowed down from the mountain.¹⁵ This story may contain truth, but may be exaggerated to make the listeners imagine how wicked the Fulani were, because blood cannot flow like water. Some similar tales may be found among Jukuns, Bachama, Kilba etc. This made the numerous

¹³ Jan H. Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, NY, 1979), p.148.

¹⁴ Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.148.

¹⁵ Samuel Dali, Lecture on Mission in Northern Nigeria (Bukuru: TCNN, September 2007).

ethnic groups to continue to nurse hatred against Hausa-Fulani even when they become Christians.

In another development, the emirate system of government was mainly established to promote Sharia legal system and Hausa-Fulani Muslim hegemony over non-Muslims. There is no liberty for non-Muslims, no freedom of association and no respect for human dignity. Under Sharia non-Muslims are regarded as second class citizens. Muslims no matter their status are held with high esteem and regarded as members of upper echelon of the society. Boer noted that Muslims, particularly the Arabs have no abolition of slave in their Agenda. They promoted slavery and encouraged it even till date.

The above background of pre-colonial history only served to prepare a fertile ground for hatred and hostilities among the northern tribes of Nigeria and the Muslim versus Christian communities as we shall see below the condition is worsened by colonialism.

3.4 THE COLONIAL HISTORY

Certainly human life is a struggle for survival. Ola Rotimi in "The gods are not to blame" says "the struggle of man begins at birth."¹⁶ In spite of the obstacles man faces in this life, he continues to struggle, sometime to freedom and liberty, and sometime to bondage and slavery.

The pagan tribes of middle belt who were under the chain of slavery and bondage in the pre-colonial era were suddenly driven into another era of struggle. At first they saw colonialism as agents of liberation and of course joined in the campaign against their old enemy, i.e. the Hausa-Fulani Hegemony.¹⁷ But when the colonialists successfully

¹⁶ Ola Rotimi, *The gods are not to blame* (Ibadan: University Press, 1975), p.5.

¹⁷ kukah, religion politic and power in Nigeria, p. 3

the whole land of the caliphate, it turned round to use their enemy against them. How did it happen?

The indirect rule system was immediately introduced as breeding ground for the colonialists, with a strong promise that Islamic religion will not be tampered with. Kukah asserts that: "The mechanism of indirect rule that Lugard used has been nationalized on the basis that it was a pragmatic way of resolving the problems that arose from a shortfall of personnel, money, communication facilities etc."¹⁸

The reason given by the British colonialists to me was a flimsy excuse to promote their economic interest. If they do not have the above personnel and facilities why should they venture into it? By the way all the Europeans knew very well how tyrannical any where Muslims rule yet they permitted it. Today the cost of indirect rule according to Kukah was devastating on the social-political and economic lives of Nigerians.¹⁹ Boer asserts that Lugard called his own theory of colonialism the "dual mandate." This dual mandate will be geared toward the advancement of both Africa and Britain by developing African resources and to improve her civilization.²⁰ This colonial approach is not wholistic, it was one sided, based on economic pursuit. The dual mandate of Lugard would have succeeded if it were directed toward complete liberation of Nigerians socially, politically and economically.

Of course colonial positive contribution cannot be relegated to the background. They helped in providing Pax Britannica through suppression of inter-tribal wars, slave raiding and paved way for peaceful coexistence among various ethnic groups in Northern Nigeria. They made effort in providing security for mission in some pagan areas, though this was a controversial issue since missions were restricted in Muslim dominated areas.

¹⁸ Kukah, *Religion Politics and Power in Nigeria*, p.3.

¹⁹ Boer, *Missions: Herald of Capitalism or Christ?* (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1984), p.13.

They also provided some limited social amenities e.g. schools, clinics, transport, systems, all ways, though basically for their benefit too.

However an in depth examination of indirect system shows that it only helped to promote Islamic interest more than any other body in Nigeria which impact remained till date. Today Muslims rulers still remember the history and so regarded themselves and their adherents as superior over non Muslims. This situation made non Muslims in northern Nigeria to cultivate a spirit of self defeat or inferiority complex. In this case I quite agree with Turaki who says that the indirect rule institutionalized the inferiority status for the non Muslim peoples of the middle belt. For it enhances the status and the unchecked powers of the emirs and also disillusioned the common people on both sides.²¹

Today the effect of indirect rule is glaring and apparently seen among the minor tribes of northern Nigeria. Today among the numerous ethnic groups their languages, cultures, values are at the verge of being swallowed up by the Hausa-Fulani Hegemony. While in some areas the domination of Hausa language over other local languages pave way for their extinction. This is an un-healthy development. God created all things (all languages) and said they are good (Gen. 1:31).

Therefore the indirect rule championed by the colonialists was in a way responsible for the un-balance society of Nigeria. To substantiate this fact, Kukah says "the north was on the boil due to socio-political in-equalities, reinforced by years of colonial rule."²²

²¹Kukah, *Religion Politics and Power in Nigeria*, p.3

²²*Ibid.*, p.8.

In the other hand also colonialism provided an avenue for Muslim rulers, merchants and scholars to embark on expansionism through the support of fund from Muslim world. The recent one was embarked upon by Sardauna of Sokoto. Kukah says:

The project proved economically and spiritually beneficial to Islam, but politically costly as it provided the basis for the suspicions which later undermined the much touted unity of northern Nigeria. As such it had disastrous consequences and also sowed the seeds for misconception and suspicion of the role of state and religion in Northern Nigeria in particular and the nation in general.²³

Now to further buttress the above point, how can we operate with two legal systems in Nigeria? Are Christians not having canon law? Why should Christians be silent while Muslims continued to manipulate the government to the point of establishing a legal system paid by government fund? I think even if Christians do not have a legal system then there is need for them to source ways that will help the church to tap the same amount from federation account as Muslims did to support the sharia law. We are all citizen of Nigeria. What is good for the goose is good for the gander. Our dualistic view has indeed deprived us of many opportunities which Muslims are enjoying in the government today. But the blame too goes to colonialism and dualism.

Colonialism also fosters the growth and spread of Islam more than any other religion in Nigeria. When all the areas which remained resistant to Islam came under the control of British authority, it opened doors for Muslim mallams and merchants. Boer cites the sad story of Bongo people, saying:

After the arrival of Europeans and the resulting peace, Muslims were sent to the area in various colonial capacities and clothed in considerable prestige. What the Muslim had not achieved through violence, the British achieved through peace²⁴

²³Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Democracy and Civil Society in Nigeria* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Lmd, 2007),

p.42.

²⁴Jan H. Boer, *Christian and Islam under Colonialism in Northern Nigeria* (Jos: ICS, 1988), p.9.

This un-wholesome development erected by the colonialists led to some of the problems we are experiencing. At this sunrise when non Muslims are seeking emancipation from their oppressors, the black colonialists or (the Muslims) it becomes a matter of continual shedding of blood. How can we be freed from the chain of this Neo-colonialism which impacts continue to imperil the cordial and harmonious existence of our dear nations? This is a hard question that only time the greatest healer could answer. But let me turn again to missionary background that carried the message of liberation to the land asserted by Kamm as the land of darkness.

3.5 MISSIONARY BACKGROUND

Some time, when one is on the mission to save or to deliver, one may not really take into cognizance the steps involve. Missionary strongly supported colonialism for reasons being mentioned above. These reasons include the role of colonialism in maintaining pax Britanica and the suppression of slave trade etc. This in turn created a free climate for missionary to go about their missionary enterprise in some pagan dominated areas. Quite certain, missionary benefited greatly from the role displayed by the colonial overlords. Although to some extent missionaries also helped the colonial overlords to meet their needs. Therefore the whole games appear to be reciprocal.

However this evaluation deserve to note down some few areas which missionaries blindly or consciously supported colonialism which gradually created rivalry and unhealthy relation among the people of northern Nigeria. It will also take a look at some shortsighted or weak areas of mission enterprise.

First of all the pioneer missionaries hold the view that the presence of colonialism in Africa was a divine mandate or divine plan and purpose to bring liberation to the

people under bondage.²⁵ To further buttress this point Boer quoted a missionary who

How strongly England was compelled to take over the Sudan! Was there no divine purpose in this occupation? And could England be so selfish as to let the River of life flow by Sudanese without pointing them to its healing waters? Oh no! A thousand times no! To restore men and women to live in peace and comfort to educate them in gentle Arts and Science – that is a noble aim worthy of an English administration.²⁶

To some extent the above quotation is not a mere fabrication or play of words. To be civilized Nigerian society is on the way to peace and comfort through Arts and Science but it is strangled by the foundation laid by colonialism. If the missionary who made the above assertion were alive today in Nigeria he would understand that colonialism has done much harm to the socio-political life of Nigeria.

There are available facts which missionaries were used as mediators between the colonial overlords and the pagan tribes who proved resistant to the colonialists. Boer notes the enormous contribution toward peace initiated by missions.²⁷ In Southern Nigeria the situation was different because there, missionaries were used as bulldozers to pull down all strongholds against colonialism. It was based on this fact that Ayandele describes the advent of missionaries as a violent intrusion into the social political world of Nigeria society.²⁸ In the northern Nigeria the situation was peaceful through missionaries' negotiation.

But unfortunately their support for colonialism had hindered them from seeing the socio-political implication this may have on the future of Nigeria. This clearly shows that

²⁵Boer, *Missions: Herald of Capitalism or Christ?*, p.44.

²⁶Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.171.

²⁷*Ibid.*, p.183.

²⁸E.A. Ayandele, *The Missionary Impact on Nigeria 1842-1914* (London: Longman Ltd., 1966), p.5.

the missionaries were not wholistic in their approach to the church and the society but depended on colonialists for one. It is in line with this that Boer says:

Missionaries supported colonialism enthusiastically and without embarrassment. In fact, this support was used as a prominent promotion pitch. They expected that colonialism would usher in full-scale liberation: economical, political, cultural, social and spiritual. They were blind to the fact that they were helping to replace an indigenous form of oppressor with capitalistic one.²⁹

The question that comes to mind is that, were missionaries ignorance of the fact that by supporting colonialism, they were indirectly supporting the black colonialists (Fulani oppressors)? And to crown it all, where is the full-scale liberation: economical, political, cultural, social and spiritual expected by missionaries from the above assertion? Therefore missionaries' failure in this sense to embark on wholistic approach was probably due to ignorance that colonialism would provide one. This expectation of missionaries is grossly myopic.

Another hindrance or rather oversight of missionaries in support of colonialists was the Laissez-faire capitalism. Boer notes the social evil associated with this political economic which can stagnate human growth wholistically.³⁰ Yet missionaries supported colonialists in this economic capitalism which distinguished between the rich and the poor. It is an Old medieval feudal system which oppressed the peasants. I am tempted to call Laissez-faire capitalism a form of Neo-feudalism. It was a selfish capitalist system of trade which allowed free enterprise to the detriment of the less privileged in the society. On this political economic the Bourgeoisies employed the service of the peasants for cheap labour. On this, workers were not paid the salary commensurate to their labour.

²⁹Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.162.

³⁰*Ibid.*, pp.11-18.

One may ask why should missionaries who claimed to bear the message of liberation supported colonialism for propagating Laissez-faire capitalism. This actually portrays a hiatus on missionary approach to society they bear the message of liberation. But one may equally conclude that missionaries back home were part of beneficiaries. That probably could explain why they supported Laissez-faire capitalism. There are more reasons that may be logically deducted form this missionary enterprise which hindered them from wholistic approach to society. Of course it may all boil down to dualism.

However some missionaries began to sound an alarm on the danger of negating the total gospel especially in the Jerusalem conference after the First World War. In fact they considered it as aberration for orthodox missionary to embark only on the conversion of individual without dealing with his socio-political and economic problem. Boer makes references to Tawney in Jerusalem conference who remarks that:

To divorce religion from the matters of social organization and economic activity which occupy nine-tenths of the life of nine-tenths of mankind, on the ground that they are common and unclean is to make them unclean and ultimately to destroy religion in the individual soul to which you have attempted to confine it.³¹

³¹Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.243..

To some extent Tawney was accurate in making this assertion against the Edinburgh conference in 1910 which forbids missions from politics. As he rightly points out: One cannot win the individual to a life of service and self-sacrifice if the social environment within which he is set is dominated by a ruthless economic egotism.³²

Yet with this awareness among missionaries they remained adamant to wholistic approach to the gospel. One other missionary's background which gave birth to mistrust leading to imbalance gospel was the "comity agreement" among SUM missions. This was not part of the original initiatives of the founding fathers but was a later development in the mission field based on the need on ground.³³ They gave reason which I consider too weak for missionaries to adopt it. The basic reason given was to enable missionaries cover large areas in a limited time. My reason for positing that this policy was too weak could be dismissed by others as baseless. But bear in mind that CMS, SIM and other missions did not adopt this policy of "comity agreement". As we can see today since it was developed from selfish ambition based on the home board missions it failed to formed united church like SIM, but a loose fellowship of churches under the umbrella of TEKAN (Taraya Ekkliisoyin Kristi A Nigeria in Hausa). No wonder Dali asserts that this comity agreement was born out of mistrust and disagreement.³⁴ It gives a portrait of spiritual immaturity among missionaries themselves. The fruit of comity agreement is what some TEKAN churches are harvesting today. These include mistrust; schism etc. therefore the background upon which the church was built was unhealthy leading to the imbalance gospel.

³²Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.243.

³³Ibid., p.162.

³⁴Samuel Dalim "Church Organization", in *Churches in Fellowship*, ed. Mark Hopkins and Musa Gaiya (Bukuru: ACTS, 2005), p.43.

Another aspect of missionary's oversight in wholistic approach to society was their inability to prepare the church for future politics. They precluded themselves from politics probably because of their fundamental evangelical background. When Christian parties were formed missionaries show no interest. Their silence according to Boer was interpreted as support for colonialism.³⁵ Since this was a general features in all colonial countries which hosted missionaries, Boer cites Verdoon who asked a fearful question concerning the church in Indonesia: "whether the church there would also become the bearer of a terrible guilt."³⁶ What guilt? The guilt of their founding fathers which may later manifest in their socio-economic and political impotency.

Above all, missionaries indeed were not herald of capitalism but messengers of liberation in the colonial context. Through mission enterprise many Christian politicians emerged from the middle belt e.g. Tanko Jolly, Sawuwa Taka. They also played an enormous role for sacrificing their lives for the church in Northern Nigeria which. Their weaknesses and mistakes did not undermine the success of their work put together. But to correct the present and brighten the future, the development of the people which Boer is advocating for must involves economic, social, spiritual and political development to ensure wholistic growth. Chapter four sheds light on this development.

3.6 HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF POST-COLONIAL NIGERIA

Having looked at the background of the pre-colonial and colonial Nigeria; it will be wise to analyze the post-colonial Nigeria for better comprehension of this research. This will centre mainly on the socio-political and economic history of the

³⁵Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.366.

³⁶Ibid.

said era. For we cannot be completely detached from the past because what makes us what we are today began yesterday.

It is quite galling to all concern citizens that Nigeria as sovereign nation suffered politically, socially and economically because it lacks wholistic approach by her leaders.

Politically Nigeria as a nation was first constituted under parliamentary system of government when she got her independence in 1960. During this period the premier of northern region sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sarduna of Sokoto embarked on diplomatic Jihad using government fund and special assistant from Arab-Muslim world.³⁷ Through this means he succeeded in gaining more proselytes among pagan communities who were initially resistant to Islam. A good example of this Islamic converts were the Jukun-wurbo who trooped into Islam between 1960-1966 in Taraba-Benue Rivers confluence.

This campaign was considered by many experts in the middle belt and other places as sowing the seed of discords. It was apparently a double standard played by the then northern government which needed to be challenged by the growing church and the individual. It was because of that Paul Unongo a non-muslim and a political activist of this period says that “Whatever may have been the gains of the conversion, they were not worth the resentment they caused or they could cause in northern Nigeria among its diverse ethnic groups.”³⁸ This is clearly an unhealthy and unwholesome development which gives a pictorial representation of a nation that may likely suffer crisis in the future. This analysis is true, considering what is happening in northern Nigeria today.

³⁷Matthew Hassan Kukah,

³⁸Ibid., p.

However, Saruana's effort was thwarted when a military coup of 1966 demolished the parliamentary structure which culminates in the Nigeria civil war 1967-1970. Since then Nigeria political scene continued to witness constant intervention by the military juntas until the third republic which came into being recently in May 1999. Of course no nation can witness a meaningful growth in such an ugly political instability. Nigerians were demoralized within this protracted period of military despotism. She lost many of her intelligent military officers. An approximate estimation shows that over 98 Nigerian military officers were killed and quite a good number were dismissed and some sentenced to imprisonment. It clearly depicts a nation with a gloomy future; a nation which future unity cannot be determined, because it lacks wholistic ideologies. I am referring to a nation which seeks the good of all of her citizens

The Gideon Orkar led coup of 1990 shows that Christians in the middle belt were discontented with Hausa Muslim Hegemony in Nigeria. That explains why Orkar while on Radio Broadcast suspended all the Hausa -Fulani led states from Nigeria. But other senior military officers led a counter-coup to keep and preserve the unity of Nigeria.

Another sad aspect of those military despots was their level of corruption. Since there is no check and balance, they siphoned the economic of the nation into their personal accounts, thereby thrown the masses into the miserable condition which the nation hardly recovers from it. Nigeria has been retarded in her growth because of malnutrition she suffered during the military dictatorships.

In the history of nations despotism or dictatorship is the worst enemy of civil society; full of uncertainty, anxiety and terrorism. In Nigeria situation the despots used their power to suppress the press; the fundamental human rights and freedom of

expressions are denied of citizenry. The judicial proceedings were turned to military tribunals which exhibits parody of justice. Of course the ad hoc nature of those tribunals depicts their inconsistencies in discharging a true and fair judgment. And in the absence of check and balance the military juntas insidiously wormed their ways to any length in protecting their selfish interest.

On the side of the masses the deplorable situation according to analysts, made them to succumb to cynicism and fatalism which I consider the worst enemy of human progress. This can only subject a man to an object to be toyed about. Kukah rightly observes this concept among Nigerians when he says, “if you ask any Nigerian, what is democracy? He will reply vehemently, “na democracy we go chop?”³⁹

Kukah’s analysis portrays how Nigerians are docile and living at the mercy of God, like the prey in the jungle. The situation is largely due to people’s inability to resist the reign of tyranny by people of all cultures in Nigeria. For Boer, this is an excruciating moment in the history of Nigeria which requires the peasants to show their grievances over perversion of justice and misrule. But because peasants have no idea of wholistic approach which leads to freedom, they cannot act or voice out. I asked a question that; who should be blamed for such wacky, silly and absurd loyalty of Nigerians? The answer to this would be traced to some historical factors as posited above. Boer having acknowledged these historical lapses of the historical foundation of Nigeria seeks to also blame this on some key religious teachings imbibed by the people.

³⁹Matthew Hassan Kukah, *Democracy and Civil Society in Nigeria*, p.1.

3.6.1 Analysis from christian religion teachings

In Boeriana literature, Boer attempts to give a vivid analysis of why Nigerians are cynic and fatalistic i.e. accepting all things happening around them as cosmic order.

This analysis may not be exhaustive, as there could be more which are not discussed here. From the religious point of view with reference to Christianity there has been no political consciousness and sensitization from the founding fathers. The gospel presented by the missionaries possessed little or no political ingredient to enable the church to take active and positive participation in the affairs of her land. Therefore politics is termed a dirty game which Christians must distance themselves from it. Boer posits that the basic reason for such oversight among missionaries was the dualistic view held by them: separating the spiritual and the material world.

In the annals of history Christians appears to be pretending because they cannot be completely detached from the political affair of their land. Yes human being generally is a political being. Failure to participate in politics by Christians can be disastrous. I agree with Eric Fife who says, "Recent history is replete with tragedies that have resulted from the political irresponsibility of Christians who gloried in their neutralism."⁴⁰ It is true that our irresponsible attitudes toward politics are an embarrassment to the church. Therefore missionaries' neutralism toward such politic and social issues was a titanic stumbling block to the wholistic development of the church and Nigeria society. It only helped in building a church that is loyal and thereby compromise with sin. Secondly Boer asserts that some Christian teachings on submission to authority need a careful hermeneutic and exegesis to

⁴⁰Eric Fife and Arthur F. Glasser, *Mission in Crisis* (USA: Intersity Press, 1961), p.34.

avoid the docility of the peasants under inimical rulers. Passages such as Romans 13:1-3 and Peter 2:5 demand careful interpretation. On submission to rulers Boer advocate for a balance position that will free our conscience from crisis. He says rulers should only be obeyed if they act as real agents of God. But where rulers begin to act as servants of demons the obligation to obey evaporates.⁴¹ Boer backs up his argument in defense of his position in the scripture as thus:

Egyptian midwives disobeyed Pharaoh's decree to commit murder (Ex.1). Naboth resisted King Ahab egotism (1 Kings21). The three Hebrew children in Babylon resisted the decree of the king of Babylon (Daniel 3).The wise men from the east were asked by angel to turn down the request of Herod the Great (Mat. 1:12).⁴²

Therefore I assume that this is a good eye opener, a beacon to the theology of emancipation towards cultural mandate. Therefore I quite agree with Boer that without taken such fundamental position in the church, Christianity would not be relevant and appealing to all social classes hosted by the church. It requires that the church must go an extra mile in explicating the true concept of the above passages considering the trends of events in the contemporary time rationally. Saint Augustine did same when he was confronted with the question about the fall of Roman Empire which Christian God was blamed for it. Augustine in relation to the scripture gave an answer which is found in the city of God.⁴³ Similarly too, Thomas Aquinas in response to the challenge posed to the church on Muslim evangelism in the 13th centuries wrote "summa contra Gentile".⁴⁴

On this point, Roman 13:1-3 and other related passages that appear to conflict with human principle of interaction like Matthew 5:38-44 should be handled with care or else Christianity would have no meaning to the down trodden.

⁴¹Jan H. Boer, *Christians Mobilization* (Jos: Institute of Church and Society, 1989), p.15.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (London: Faber and Faber, 1967), p.299ff.

⁴⁴Brian Davies, *Aquinas* (London: MPG Books Ltd, 2003), p.4.

This is because Christ has come to set us free. This freedom must be wholistic (Lk. 4:18). In this sense obedience to every authority has a limitation and therefore relative. It must be observed on the basis of vertical and horizontal authorities as spelt out in the scriptures.

Thirdly the teaching on the imminent expectation of Christ (parousia) makes many Christians to relinquish the affairs of this world to their exploiters the Muslims. This placed some Christians in the ghetto across some states in Nigeria. The church in its early stage seems to adopt the medieval styles of life like monks/nuns who deserted the society to practice Christianity in the vacuum.

It was probably Christian lukewarm attitudes towards social-political affairs that made some people to hate religion. Karl Marx description of religion as the opium of the masses fit well to Nigeria context.⁴⁵ To some extent, the teaching imbibed by Christians made Christian drowsy and weak that they hardly rise up to their political and social role. But with careful and in depth study of the scriptures there are passages that support wholistic approach to society as Boer expounded. I shall consider this in the next chapter.

3.6.2 Analysis From Islamic And Traditional Religion

On this subject matter I have a limited knowledge. However, my analysis in this section would be based on my little investigation and inquiry into these two major religions in Northern Nigeria. Generally speaking, traditional religion is inseparable from African spiritual, political, social and economic life. African man interprets every thing from the religion perspectives. His beliefs are so entangled into his fabric that he is described as incurably and notoriously religious by scholars

⁴⁵Boer, *Christians Mobilization*, p.3.

like John Mbiti.⁴⁶ With this description we hope that an African man should be influenced by his primal religion ie African traditional religion should have made African man to take his socio-political life seriously even when he changes to a new religion. But this is not what we can find today, why? The answer is simply religious teachings.

For instance, the traditional religion has its oppressive teachings. In the traditional religion obedience to those in the corridor of power is an obligation. This was a common practice among African traditional and Muslim society where despots are mostly in power. The impact or the effect of this excessive obedience resulted in producing citizens who are servile and docile. It makes citizens developed low self image which makes them hysteric and submissive to any inimical rule.

In Islam the administrative mechanism and its apparatus contains many seed of oppression. In the northern Nigeria, the Fulani rulers only encourage slavery and cultural assimilation of identity. On the other hand Muslims believe in 'Fadanci' servant to the nobles or those in authority. Also the introduction of koranic schools permits mallams to have disciples or followers (almajera) under their custody.

In addition to the above assertion, Islam teaches no objection to whatever mallam or Islamic teacher said. It teaches high respect and honour for the mallams and their Muslim rulers. These and other forms of teachings, might have subjected Muslim adherents to obey their leaders at all level. Take for instance when Sharia was introduced in northern Nigeria with exception of Middle Belt, only the peasants Muslim that were affected by Sharia law. Yet it is the same peasants who are used to support and perpetuate Sharia-law i.e. Hisba.

⁴⁶John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1969), p.24.

It was the above conditions of the people of Nigeria Christians, Muslims and pagans that made Boer to assert that Nigeria society is possessed with a stubborn demon (corruption) which can hardly be cast out even though she is engaged in the battle against it.⁴⁷ This he said is due to the fact that the people cannot oppose evil rulers. The sad aspect of it is that leaders and the general populace lack the knowledge of wholistic approach to society which gave birth to a depressed society both politically, socially and economically. Let me briefly highlight on this by-product of imbalance society of Nigeria.

3.6.3 Socio-Political And Economic Depression Of Nigeria Society

The inability of peasants anywhere in the world to oppose any corrupt leadership and other social structure that would reduce man to mere object always leads to depression. In the northern Nigeria, peasants are passing through series of in-human conditions which the government failed to come to their rescues. These leaders are either Christian or Muslim. Chrysostom one of the greatest preachers of the ancient church denounced the manners of the spiritual leaders of his time, says:

How think you that you obey Christ's commandments whom you obey when you spent your time collecting interest, piling up loans, buying slaves like livestock, and merging business with business? ... and that is not all. Upon all this you heap injustice taking possession of lands and houses and multiplying poverty and hunger⁴⁸

Our leaders who are either Christians or Muslims in Nigeria are accruing wealth to multiply poverty and hunger. A condition which most peasants cannot take two squares meal a day. They cannot educate their children. Most public schools are dilapidated structures. No good portable water for rural populace. Worst still is lack of stable power supply in most cities. Public hospitals have no drugs. Yet our leaders

⁴⁷Boer, *Christians Mobilization*, p.10

⁴⁸Justo L. Gonza'el, *The Story of Christianity* (Francisco: Harper and Row Pub., 1984.

we elected into power are riding flashy cars worth millions. Some have fleet of cars, while millions are starving and dying of diseases and some took to street for begging especially in northern Nigeria.

Take for instance in 1999, Nigeria was rated second among 180 most corrupt nations in the world. However, recently according to Daily Trust Nigeria improves on transparency international corruption index. Of 180 countries listed on the index, Nigeria recently scored 2.7 (27%) or 121 on the list only to be better than 59 other countries.⁴⁹ I do not know the yardstick or criterion employed to arrive at that score but it is explicit that what is happening around us shows that the country is still far from being declared free from corruption. The situation portrays Nigeria as nation under depression.

Perhaps to make my position explicit let me quickly expound the meaning of the word depression. From the second meaning in "The Complete Christian Dictionary for Home and School" it is defined as "a period of low general economic activity especially with high unemployment."⁵⁰ The Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary makes it clearer in the third meaning of the word depression. It says "a period when there is little economic activity and many people are poor or without jobs."⁵¹ These definitions above clearly throw more light as regarding Nigeria as a nation under socio-political and economic depression which is a by-product of imbalance society.

⁴⁹ "Nigeria Improves on Transparency International's Corruption Index", *Daily Trust*, 24th September, 2008, p.1.

⁵⁰ *The Complete Christian Dictionary for Home and School*, ed. Morris G. Watkins and Lois Watkins (Edmonds: Int. Bible Society, 1997), p.171.

⁵¹ *Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary*, 7th edition, ed. Keith Brown and others (Oxford: University Press, 2006), p.393.

When people became cynic and fatalistic they compromise with evil and even support evil rulers thinking their loyalty is godly. A careful examination of Pauline observation that rulers are terror to the crime and wrong doers (Rom. 13:3) conflicts or negates such human self inclined leadership. It was in line with that Saint Augustine of Hippo remarks that "if justice is not observed rulers are nothing else than crown robbers."⁵² Leaders are doing what they want because the societies of Nigeria in most cases are ignorant of their role to both government and the masses. Boer entitled a book in Hausa 'Talakawa ku tashi tsaye', "Wake up peasants" generally calling on the peasants whether Christians or Muslims, saints or sinners, Jew or gentile to arise and be courageous to break the chain that held us captives and to work toward a wholistic and egalitarian society.

Democracy is said to be government of the people by the people and for the people. Where in essence are the roles of the people in Nigeria politics? To be used as thugs and thrown away? No! That is not politics. The word politics is a Greek word 'politiko' or 'politike' meaning having to do with or relating to citizens.⁵³ That is why probably Aristotle in the fifth century BC argues that "among social sciences politics is the most important of them all, because it deals with man's affairs, of man's happiness or goodness".⁵⁴ But on the contrary masses especially Christian in northern Nigeria are passing through political depression. The church in northern Nigerian and middle belt in particular need to arise and embrace seriously reformed wholistic approach to minimize the level of depression in Nigeria.

⁵² D.M. Donner, "The State, Its Task and Its Limits", in *Church and Nation* (Grand Rapids: Reformed Ecumenical Synod. 1981). p.22.

⁵³ Padan Yamsat, *The Role of the Church in the Democratic Governance in Nigeria* (Jos: ACTS, 1998), p. 8.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN EVALUATION OF BOERS LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY ON SOCIO-POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC NIGREIA

4.1 AN EVALUATION OF BOERS LITERATURE

This section deals mainly with what Boer says in his literature which is outlined by researcher thematically or topically. This will be followed by the general evaluation and criticism.

In his book 'Christian and mobilization' Boer first attempts to give a highlight on reasons why the peasants and the people of low social status especially Christians cannot voice out their views in the face of political, social and economic oppression. This pamphlet portrays how Christians in the Middle-Belt and far north are quiescent, motionless and placid when their rights are trampled upon. He traces the root cause of this abnormal behaviour among Christians and other social groups to about three factors.

The first one developed from social-political aspects which ground architect is the traditional culture of the people. J.H Boer asserts that the traditional leaders used excessive power on their subjects and created in them a high level of excessive obedience. This in turn renders them imbecile and subsequently servile and passive over issues that concern them.¹

Secondly he asserts that religion lessons from both Muslims and Christians have helped in making the peasants passive over issues of economic importance. While from the side of Christians, Jan H. Boer throws blame on inadequate and ineffective interpretation of the scriptures such as (Romans 13:1, James 5:1-6). He

¹ Jan H. Boer, *Christian and mobilization* (Jos: Institute of Church and Society, 1989), pp.3-4.

said that too much emphasis on absolute loyalty to civil authority, and Christian's avoidance of riches contributed grossly in making Christians servile and docile citizens in the society.

Thirdly, Boer speaks of the education policies which were designed to promote the superiority and interest of the white exploiters and missionaries over the black. The above factors according to J.H Boer were the ground architect of the docility of the peasant particularly the Christians. However, Boer appears to argue that Christian religion as an instrument of emancipation has planted a seed of freedom and liberty in the lives of Christ followers. He among other things cites the story of a retired pastor in the defunct Gongola State (Now Adamawa and Taraba States) as a basis for his argument.⁹ In view of this statement, one may be tempted to ask: whether the seed of freedom sown or planted in Christians is dormant, that is why the Christians in the middle belt and the far North always compromise their political, social and economic roles? This is because most Christians today do not take social political and economic issues as part of their cultural mandate. It seems to me that the seed of freedom which Boer says was planted was demise vis-à-vis the above story of a retired pastor. However Boer closes this pamphlet with strong remarks on the need for Christian's mobilization as the only means to freedom. The seed of the gospel must be wholistic in its approach or else it will be irrelevant and irrational to the later generation of the church.

In 'wholistic care of, for and by the people' Boer delves into the issues of wholistic health care of a total man. In this book he tries to address the wholistic health care which should embrace both Biomedical, traditional and spiritual healings. This according to him addresses both the physical, social, emotional, mental and spiritual

²Ibid, pp.4-5.

aspects of a patient. This approach is very important in the African world view who strongly believed in the traditional medicine.

In "Christianity and Islam under colonialism in Northern Nigeria" Jan H. Boers approach is apparently a response to a challenge raised by Proff A.B. Fafunwa who blamed the backwardness of education of the North on colonialism and missionary enterprise. In an article entitled "educational backwardness of the North: A colonial phenomenon", *New Nigeria*, 4th July, 1994, Fafunwa argues that the colonialists and missionaries have had the same agenda. He asserts that "the powerful forces of church and state were combined in an alliance to convert, Emirs, Obas, chiefs and their people into Christianity."³

In the midst of long silence among Nigerian Christians who appeared to be insensitive to social issues around them, Boer counteracts all claims and assertions explicated by Fafunwa to paint missionary enterprise black in the Northern Nigeria. He cites the strengths and weaknesses of Fafunwa's position and argues that it was unfounded and based on historical inaccuracy. To make his arguments more explicit Boer states that Fafunwa was only applying the 19th century Southern Nigeria situation to Northern Nigerian 20th century and concludes that Fafunwa was grossly presenting a historical fallacy instead of facts.

He cites areas of friction between missionaries and colonial government and points to the fact that Islam was favoured to the detriment of Christianity. Among the unfortunate instances noted by Boer is the Bongo's story which is a sympathetic one. On this story Boer notes that "what Islam couldn't achieve through violence; the British Government helps Muslims to achieve it through peace."⁴ However, he

³ Jan H. Boer, *Christianity and Islam Under Colonialism in Northern Nigeria* (Jos: Institute of Church and Society 1988), p.5.

⁴ *Ibid*, p.9.

later claims that the situation appears nuance, and wishing to strike a balance when he explains that the introduction of colonial capitalism and secular western education dealt a serious blow on both Christians and Muslims.

Boer's approach to such a sensitive issue no matter his weakness deserves some commendations. A perusal reading through this book will show that without Boers response, many, particularly the Muslims would be lured into believing that the assertions made by Fafunwa in his article are absolute reality which would have been a social misinformation base on prejudices. It would have also further the course of enmity between the duo-religions in the Nigerian society.

While in "mission: Heralds of capitalism or Christ?" which is an extract of his voluminous work, "missionary messengers of liberation in the colonial context," Boer traces the path through history to unveil the strength and weakness of the gospel that was brought to our fathers with particular reference to SUM.

In this book, Boer appreciates the enormous contributions of mission to the society of Nigeria but carefully observes that the gospel introduced or offered by them was not wholistic because it renders the church imbecile to her economic and political roles. Boer argues that the gospel brought by missions tend to emphasized the spiritual to the detriment of the physical. He expresses the dismayed of Christians fear and un-willingness to participate in politics and attributed it to the gospel imbibed from missionaries.

He however opts for a balance and wholistic gospel that tend to integrate the spiritual and the physical as enshrines in reform doctrine and world-view. No doubt, chapter nine is exceptional, because it states vividly the profound overview of his teachings and philosophy on reformed wholistic approach to society. Here he states the full gospel alternative in which he attempts to bring to light the theological

justification on social political and economic matters as advanced by reformed scholars.

Also, in the book "the prophet Moses for today" Boer outlines 366 daily readings on social Biblical meditations. Boer's intention in this book is to stimulate the hearts of Christians towards wholistic Christian approach to society. Boer was mindful of the fact that certain scriptural passages that seek to address social issues in the church did not receive proper interpretation. Sometimes some passages on social issues received haphazard interpretation thereby presents a half barked messages or un-cooked ones given birth to in-balance Christian life.

Jan H. Boer believes that the meditations on passages outlined in 366 daily reading which centre on social biblical meditations may enhance positive Christian participation in his economic and political life. This will in due time create a balance between the physical and spiritual life of a Christian. However, in the passages outlined by Boer, one may not doubt the fact that some may be inferences and not directly dealing with the social issues in the society.

Similarly, a Hausa Book "Kai Da Dukiyarka," edited by Boer portrays relevancy on how a Christian should live his life wholistically. It outlines some relevant verses or passages from the Bible which may help Christians to take up their role in the society seriously. These verses or passages attempts to correct the wrong views held by many Christians that Christianity should not be merged with other affairs of the world e.g. economic or political activity. It also points to some areas of the scriptures that encourage Christians to work hard or struggle to posses the riches of this world and how Christians should use their wealth wholistically to expand the kingdom of God.

This book truly presents the theological foundation or basis for a Christian and his wealth. Since Christianity cannot be practiced in the vacuum, it entails that our possession be used according to our understanding of the scriptures and world view. The Bible itself was conceived out of a people with culture and born into a people with culture which does not negate the integration of the spiritual and the physical. It is necessary that this view must be upheld to ensure a balance Christianity. Undermining this plain fact may lead to incomplete Christian life.

In the book “you can do greater things than Christ,” Abraham Kuyper, the Author, under-takes to nullify all claims of his time to undermine the certainty of miracles and faith healings. Having appreciates the role of medical science and religion; he concludes that they are both necessary ingredients for a wholistic society. He further asserts that creation is subject to God, while religion and science help us to appreciate God and truly worship Him. If miracles and faith healing should be relegated to the annals of apostolic era, it will further emasculate our concept of cultural mandate. He strongly rejects any dichotomy and incompatibility between medical science and faith healing, but debases the idea of those who resort exclusively to faith healing.⁵

Kuyper further observes that the western church holds the view that appears contrary to reformed and Calvinistic traditions which usually advocate for integration rather than the compartmentalization of the spiritual and the material. This dualistic position held by most missions debars many Christians participation in politics and other societal issues that concern them. This unbalanced view only

⁵ Abraham Kuyper, *You can Do Greater Things than Christ*. Trans J.H Boer (Jos: Institute of church and society, 1999), p.4.

reduces the gospel, to a mere spiritual dimension thereby makes it a trivialized and marginalized object in the society.

Kuyper's view is significant to this research because an in-depth thought and critical analysis of this view portrays the reality of the church in Northern Nigeria. The contemporary church can improve its approach to society if the view can be imbibed. It will also improve the church's participation in the society in all its facets and ramifications.

In "science without faith is dead," Boer attempts to argue in support of science and faith as inseparable friends. He totally disagrees with the western view of neutrality of science. No doubt he says "my aim is to refute or repudiate the myth of neutrality as held in the west,"⁶ while in the laboratory as a Christian scientist, automatically you ceased to be Christian until you come out.

Boer wonders how a Christian scientist can put off the Christian faith while he enters his laboratory room, and puts it on when living the laboratory room. Visualizing the impossibility of this dichotomy in nature from historical and biblical backgrounds; Boer Justifies his position by stating that science invariably and inevitably has a religious substratum.⁷ I am tempted to believe that this dualistic position of the western world influenced their mission in Africa. The compartmentalized view on church and society held by most TEKAN churches which formed the basis of our in-balanced approach to society today is a western missionary influence.

In "Pentecostal challenge" a book edited by Boer, an adapted version of Neo-Pentecostalism which was written for the very purpose of bridging the gap between

⁶ Jan H. Boer, *Science without Faith is dead*, (institute of church and society, Jos: 1991), p.106.

⁷ Ibid, pp.106-107.

Neo-Pentecostalism movement and the orthodox faith in reformed churches was republished in Nigeria by Boer with the sole aim to contend with the restiveness of youths on spiritual situation in the Christian reformed churches in Nigeria. According to Boer the church is a social institution which shoulders the message of salvation to the world and if it fails in resolving her internal conflicts it cannot be relevant to the world.

This book is of tremendous importance to the church leaders, elders, youths and all members of the church in this era of social un-rest induced by Neo-Pentecostalism in our churches. It will help the church to handle her internal social conflict in the mature way or amicably. I am optimistic that a book like this will help the conservative and the so called charismatic to tolerate one another while serving God in the same church. However, the social gab between the conservative orthodox and the charismatic needs to be bridged through a wholistic approach in our gospel.

The "Nigeria decades of blood," another book written by Boer focuses on Christian-Muslim relations. In this book, Boer attempts to trace the main reasons behind the incessant riot between Christians and Muslims in Nigeria. He describes the situation surrounding the Nigeria riot. In vol. 2 he deals with Muslims approach to the riots; while in Vol. 3 he outlines the Christians versions of the riot. Boer's concern with this approach is to help both Christian and Muslims understand their point of frictions and then find possible solution to them.

According to Boer, the causes of incessant riot in Nigeria History in the late 20th and early 21st centuries must be tackled from the root through wholistic approach. Both sides must understand each other, find way to respect each other, to avert acrimony and pave way for harmonious co-existence. According to him, this is part of wholistic approach that Christian needs to embrace. This is relevant because

without peace we cannot propagate our faith or share our God given potentials in the nature. Most leaders are lacking this approach, and this is what we need to encourage.

In “missionary massagers of liberation in a colonial context,” which extract I have already reviewed above deals with a comprehensive history of Sudan United Mission (SUM), its relationship and activities vis-à-vis, the colonial masters and the Nigeria people. It focuses mainly in the areas of social, economic and political situation during the formative period of Nigeria and beyond. He asserts that lassie faire capitalism was the architect of social economic problem of Nigeria though he laments that the church was silence over it.

The book appears too voluminous for novice but essentially good to give a comprehensive picture to social, political and economic condition of Nigeria.

4.2 AN EVALUATION OF BOER'S PHILOSOPHY ON SOCIOL- POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC NIGERIA

This section is an evaluation of Boer's philosophy on the Reformed wholistic approach to society. Since I have established the basic concept from which Boer built his theology on Nigerian society, the historical analysis that laid the foundation upon which the imbalance society of Nigeria was built in the previous chapters, this section attempts to dissect the basic concepts of Reformed wholistic approach to society to ascertain its relevance to the contemporary church and society.

Let me start by giving a general overview as explicated by Boer and other scholars who directly or indirectly concord to Reformed wholistic approach to society.

As earlier established in chapter two, the Reformed world view believe that God is king over all of life. It establishes that God sovereignty is over all of creation i.e. God's rule extends to all spheres of life and every thing in creation belongs to God.⁸ (Ps. 24, 22, Gen. 1:26, 28). This is the basic premise upon which Boer built his Reformed wholistic approach to society. Boer from his Reformed Background understood that all of creation though marred or stained and deformed by sin still belongs to God. Because it is still ruled and cared for by divine sovereignty, it requires that man who is regarded as God's vice-regent to actively participate in it in order to save it. In approach advanced by Boer in most of his literature, he attempts to let his readers understand one plain fact: that this world is no abdicated or relinquished to the devil. Neither is it surrendered completely to the reprobate and ignoble people who are controlled by the devil. For Boer, so long as this planet earth exists with Christians still living in flesh and blood, they must actively participate in it to demonstrate the power of God in all spheres and to redeem it from the power of evil. Boer understood from the premise of his Reformed theology that the cultural mandate in Genesis which many Christians look up to it as an important ingredient in redeeming the world from damage and pollution i.e. ecological degradation cannot be effective without the church involvement in the world.

Boer understood that there are two kingdoms as advanced by Luther and Calvin respectively.⁹ These kingdoms according to Calvin are not anti-thetical but complementing each other. Here we have temporal kingdom and the spiritual kingdom (the kingdom of Christ). The temporal kingdom is the kingdom of men, rule by men of diverse influences and religious inclination. Of course this led us to

⁸ Timothy Palmer, *The Reformed and Presbyterian Faith* (Bukuru: ACTS, 1996), p.74.

⁹ John Calvin, *Institute*, ed. Donald Kamckim (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), p.163.

establish that here is another kingdom which is the kingdom of satan rule and control by satan.¹⁰ Now in the temporal kingdoms as written in Romans 13:1-3, those in the kingdom of Christ and those in the kingdom of Satan constitute the temporal kingdom. In essence according to Reformed theology Christ kingdom should extend and dominate the temporal kingdom which is the melting point of all people in order to win them back to Christ's kingdom. To ensure the extension of Christ's kingdom requires the participation of the members of this kingdom which are Christians. To Calvin the existence of the two governments in the Reformed worldview shows that the temporal authority and the spiritual authority of Christ are God divine initiative. That explains why Calvin says "for the spiritual government, indeed is already initiating in us upon earth certain beginnings of heavenly kingdom ... a certain forecast of an immortal and incorruptible blessedness."¹¹

In Reformed perspective the forecast of an immortal and incorruptible blessedness cannot be effectively propagated if the church intentionally for lack of proper understanding of the scriptures secluded itself from the society.

In this regard, Boer maintains that the gospel must be totally propagated to meet the need of a total man: a gospel that would not only meet his spiritual needs but also his physical needs: a gospel that contains the seed of emancipation of man spiritually, socially, economically and politically. For Boer a gospel devoid of these essential elements of human development may lead to "bondage of a man in his milieu. He therefore aspires or opts for a wholistic approach that will make the gospel relevance to man in his social environment. A gospel that would motivate or spur an individual to serve God in all segments of life be it politics or religion. It

¹⁰ Martin Luther, "Temporal Authority: To What Extent it Should Be Obeyed." *Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), p.662.

¹¹ Calvin, *Institute*, p.163.

was in the light of this that Boer indeed lamented over the nature and the type of the gospel that was presented to the church in Nigeria and probably most colonies of Africa. This gospel says Boer, was based on ancient Greek philosophy, 'dualism': Boer says dualism was the basis upon which the pioneered missionaries relate the gospel to the church in northern Nigeria especially among SUM churches.¹² Dualism as explicated somewhere above means the spiritual world is good while the realm of the material world is evil. Participation in the world affairs, social development and political affairs are considered as evil. Christians should not take part in the world.

For Boer this is a complete opposite of the real gospel. It is an antithesis of the real gospel because it dwells only on one aspect of the gospel by neglecting others. It distorts the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in Nigeria by subjecting the church to perpetual struggle for socio-political liberation today. Boer asserts that what the church and the peasant Christians in particular are going through in the middle belt and the nation at large was the fruit of imbalance gospel.

He points to dualism as a stubborn enemy of integrated gospel. In other words Boer depicts dualism as a strong nemesis of wholistic approach to society. However to proffer solution to the problem created by the dualistic evangelism Boer advocates for integration in place of dichotomy and compartmentalization. Integration involves a total gospel to enable man serve God in his milieu without friction or anxiety of being enslaved in his land. Boer cites Kuyper as a prime example of strong advocate of integration of life and religion.¹³ This depicts Kuyper from Reformed tradition that formed an exception to the western tradition of

¹² Jan H. Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, NY, 1979), p.472.

¹³ Jan Boer, "Introduction," in you can do greater things than Christ, Trans: Jan Boer (Jos: Institute of Church and Society, 1991), p.5.

dichotomy or dualism. Boer is a strong protagonist of this Dutch theologian, philosopher and politician.

No one can understand Boer's wholistic approach to society and philosophy without the comprehension of these two important words *dualism* and *integration*. These two key words formed the core in understanding Boer's wholistic approach to society. In this sense, it is needful that dualism should be thrown over board, having been experimented over the years in the African Christianity. Its effects upon the church in Africa have been destructive and so should be rejected. I agree with Boer in the sense that he is advocating for what has been part of African primal religion long before the arrival of Europeans. That is the integration of religion and all other spheres of life. This has been the African way of life that has been emasculated by the introduction of dualistic form of Christianity. The question now is how does Boer intend the integration of socio-political and religion be viable in the pluralistic society of Nigeria? In response to this question I shall discuss each element of wholistic approach to society as opted for by Boer in most of his literature. Let me begin with political approach.

4.2.1 POLITICAL APPROACH

The saying that man is a political being is a reality that cannot be disputed. Man cannot be completely detached and devoid of political ideologies. Eric in the quest toward the political necessity of Christians says "to refuse to act politically is frequently in itself a political act."¹⁴ Escapism inculcated to the church of middle belt and northern Nigeria by missionaries is considered by many as gross historical malignancy. Boer on several occasions blamed this attitude on dualistic background

¹⁴Eric Fife and Arthur F. Glasser, *Mission in Crisis* (USA: Intersity Press, 1961), p.

of western culture and pleads for the gospel that contains the seed of politics. Since Christianity has not come to take man out of his environment or culture it is therefore incumbent on the part of church to help her members to have full orientation of their political role. Such orientation should be based on biblical teaching on social theology which will enable the members to be useful to both the church and the society. For without such orientation and proper teaching with participation in the society we cannot transform the world.

Boer was indeed puzzled and astonished in 1978 when he discovered during the debate of Sharia law in Nigeria when Muslims were using their religion as a base for their argument, the Christians were building their argument from the premise of pseudo-humanistic western worldview.¹⁵ This is clearly a secular western worldview which is more advanced and sophisticated for a developing country like Nigeria based on dualism. It also portrayed how the churches in Nigeria and in indeed Africa are lacking tools to defend their position in the political scene. To correct this abnormality and anomaly the church should endeavor to bridge this gulf not only in the involvement of politics but teaching members to be politically organized and defensive according to the Christian worldview.

Situational theologies such as liberation theology, black theology which are reactionary in nature came into being as a result of imbalance gospel that the church received from the western church. The contemporary church in Nigeria is constantly engaged in the quest for a true and viable ways to political approach which is based on scriptures.

In another development Christians are part of the society who participates in things that have to do with the development of the people. The political aspect is the

¹⁵ Jan H. Boer, *Missions: Herald of Capitalism or Christ?* (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 1984), pp.142-144.

most important aspect which I feel Christians should actively participate in order to influence the policies of the state. Luther says that he wished all the temporal rulers are true Christians; that would have save us from many acrimonies.¹⁶ He goes further to state that: “for the sword and authority, as a particular service of God belong more appropriately to Christians than any other men on earth.”¹⁷ Politics is a sphere that controls the society physically. Luther refers to it as an organ of God’s kingdom which Christian should serve God through it.

Boer too from his own background considers serving in politics as a privilege in serving God in another sphere. It is because Christians in leadership authority of their land can help influence the decision of the government to guide against the evil rulers and tyranny. Fife cites the effect of Christian’s negligence of political involvement by the evangelicals. He says evangelicals were among those who withheld support from Woodrow Wilson in his efforts to find a strong league of nations. The subsequent failure of the league, in the absence of the United States, contributed to the rise of Nazism.¹⁸ This mistake of evangelical Christians later resulted in the most tragic battle ever fought in the history of the world i.e. the World War II. Of course we may not completely obliterate crisis in our world but we have our role to play while leaving the end result to God.

Accordingly Fife says, “Any form of escapism is but a tacit political note for the status quo, possibly a vote for the reactionary”.¹⁹ We cannot devoid our selves from politics. The early church tried it but failed woefully. All through the medieval church, several attempts were made by pietists who should have transformed the

¹⁶Martin Luther, “Temporal Authority: To What Extent It Should be Obeyed”, in *Martin Luther’s Basic Theological Writings*, ed. Timothy F. Lull (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989), p.6.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Eric Fife and Arthur F. Glasser, *Mission in Crisis*, p.33.

¹⁹ Ibid. p.30.

church but escaped the society and its leadership. They were acting ignorantly under dualism. I think it is high time to assess what Boer is advocating for i.e. a wholistic approach to society which politics must be actively involved from the biblical background. We are still in flesh as ordered by God; neglecting politics is negating God's work. God's sovereignty is seen all over the creation. He rules all of life which politics is part of it. Serving in politics is part of service to God.

4.2.2 SOCIAL APPROACH

Social approach is an integral aspect of missions which assessment has not yielded positive result among mission established churches. Subsequent discussion would attempt to highlight on the positive contribution and points out their weaknesses in Boer's analysis of missionary's social approach to society.

On this note Boer points out that there is no criterion to be employed to quantify the achievement of missions on social issues because their approach was ambiguous.²⁰ Of course the vision of the founding father, Kumm was to halt the advancement of Islam among pagan tribes of Sudan and to improve their living condition socially, politically and economically. This too was the claimed made by Lord Lugard.²¹ Under this development, Boer observes that the dream of the founding fathers has not come to reality positively. He says, "The kingdom project had not materialized and could not have for it was a syncretistic construction."²² That is to say it was blended with British colonial motives which gave it a deformed face. It also has no defined Christian approach to social issues.

More to that it was syncretistic in the sense that there was no clear distinction between the apostles of liberation (Christian missionaries) and the suspected social

²⁰ Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.475.

²¹ Boer, *Missions: Herald of Capitalism or Christ?*, p.13.

²² Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.475.

oppressors (the colonialists). Boer makes reference to a renowned African son, Julius Nyerere who warned the missions on their lukewarm attitudes:

The church accepts, people who help give shape to the present social-political structures and who seek to retain them, as long as they attend church and give liberally. But that is the very system that has contributed to the "hunger, the thirst, the nakedness of millions of people." If God were to ask the miserable of the earth who their friends are, will Christians be mentioned among them?²³

This statement gives a vivid picture of how Africans especially the elites were discontented with missionary's approach to social issues which was syncretistic in nature. This does not mean that missionary enterprise did not make positive contribution at all in the social approach to society and the church.

In fact in Boer's attempts to points out missionary's social contribution to the development and welfare of the people in most of his literatures, he saw the contributions of missionaries to the social well being of Nigerians as glaring. He said that Missionaries were the first to champion the course of education before the colonial overlords. He points out the fusion of social approach in mission with spiritual approach in reference to Europe.²⁴ In Nigerian context missions provided schools which the colonialists saw at first as a threat to their oppressive and exploitative agenda. But when colonialists discovered the benefits accrue from schools through manpower, they equally joined the queue but of course this was to accomplish the dual mandate of Lugard. Whatever the debate may be, missionaries were known to have spearheaded this noble task towards breaking the shackles of illiteracy which subjected Africans to perpetual sufferings and miseries. The schools provided were multi-dimensional i.e. school for the blind, adult literacy education etc.

²³ Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.475.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp.29-32.

Secondly in the health care service delivery, missionary enterprise did very well. All over this country, the impact of missionary health services are seen in spite of their limited resources. Missionaries also used their compound as refugees camp for the run away slaves or those intercepted by the European abolitionists. A good example was that of Tom who ran away from his master for fear of severe torture.²⁵ In the same vein missionary accepted to man free slaves Home from government later called Lucy memorial slave home which was moved to Wukari station from Rumasha and was closed in 1918 after 16 years of operation.²⁶

Seeing all these achievements in their social approach one would be convinced that they have done a lot in meeting the social needs of the people. But with critical analysis Boer observes that these efforts were only employed as bait. He portrays these methods as a narrow way of evangelism because back home the church were doing same thing. Boer quickly posits that:

Dualism drove the missions to spend all its energies, resources and deep devotion on evangelism in the narrow sense of the word or on social projects that would serve as bait for the former.²⁷

In one way or the other the above assertion can be justified. They used the social service as a bait to catch men. When they caught men they subject them to spiritual patience and empty them of their political agility. A situation which Nyerere says:

"... They preach patience and appear to regard the present social-economic and political structures as fixed. They attempt to improve intolerable conditions by philanthropy."²⁸

²⁵ Peter James, *Karl Kumm – Last of the Livingstones* (Bonn: Culture and Science Pub., 1994), pp.49-51.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.456.

²⁸ Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.475.

In all of these assertions Boer is unveiling to us that the gospel we inherited is encapsulated with layer that cannot protect it. It is a gospel void of other essential elements which are vital for wholistic development of individual and the society. The social issues were latent in existence because it was not really dealt with to the core. When missionaries delight in employing people for cheap labour, did they really improve the living condition of the people or they promote their suffering? Boer cites instances where church building e.g. Anglican "Church building became a popular panacea for social evils."²⁹ Others follow suit in Europe and America down to Africa and Nigeria.

Worst still was the missions' support of social evil being carried out by European overlords in their mode of employment and payment of salaries. It is established that workers were not earning salaries commensurate to their labour. James states that "for evangelical mission in general and the SUM in particular have been criticized for being primarily interested in the spiritual growth of their converts to the exclusion of their social needs – the so called social gospel."³⁰ But let me here warn that it must be a balanced social gospel: a social gospel that is aimed at treating all men as equal before God.

Therefore by this approach, it appears the church initially has not taken its social role seriously. In this contemporary time the church needs to develop and be involved in the social gospel that will improve the status of every societal echelon. It should not only be regarded as bait but as service to God and humanity. We live in the age of social unrest and economic depression in the developing country. The church needs to intensify her effort toward social approach to create a sense of

²⁹Ibid., p.30.

³⁰ James, *Karl Kumm – Last of the Livingstones*, pp.48-49.

belonging among various societal strata. Modern social problem such as human and child trafficking increase numbers of orphans and widows, HIV/AIDS victims, prostitutes, fugitives etc. call for more dynamic and special responsibility more than ever before in the history of the church.

At this, point I endorse Boer's view under the umbrella of Reformed tradition that social service should be regarded as service to God not only bait. It entails therefore that the church should oppose any social injustice that would reduce certain men in the society as slaves or medieval serf. There is no point to hide under the government and multiply the miseries of our fellow human being for our selfish benefits as did missionaries under colonialism. For the gospel to be effective and relevant to the context of the people, their social needs must be taken into cognizance. Remember the negligence of this aspect in the gospel raised a lot of suspicious among African churches which weaken their morale. A lot may still be discussed under social approach which time and space could not allow me. But one point that need to be stressed is let the church avoid dichotomy and seek for integration in her approach to mission as advocated by Boer in his Reformed wholistic approach to society.

4.2.3 Economic Approach

In attempt to replace the obnoxious slave trade with the legitimate trade in Africa in the 19th century; European philanthropists in their quest for the reparation of Africans wished to improve all the facets of African world. The first expedition (1841) to interior part of Nigeria attempted to introduce legitimate trade and model

farm within the basin of the Niger and Benue rivers.³¹ In fact at the beginning farming and evangelism were initially considered a unanimous attempt to improve the living condition of Africans. It was in that direction that Buxton is always remembers with the slogan “the Bible and plough must regenerate Africa.”³²

Crampton says that from the inception:

Religion was to work hand in hand with commerce and scientific investigation and the government sponsored the expedition. It was not until later that Christianity was to be presented as an isolated facet of civilization and its acceptance or rejection of other facets of western life.³³

At a glance on the above assertion and initiative one would be convinced that missionaries had a good motive for the people of Africa who were economically, politically and socially depressed or incapacitated. These initiative and plan by the Christians west were not later implemented along side with the gospel. With the arrival of other missionaries’ organization in the early 20th century particularly the SUM in 1904, there was no plan toward economic evangelism. As Boer clearly puts it, there was no economic theory among missionaries. In order to let his readers understand why missionaries later deviated from their initial plan to develop Africans wholistically, Boer turns to the middle of 19th century history of the western world. Boer asserts that the 19th century west was an epoch of industrial revolution, scientific and technological advancement and economic revival based on laissez faire capitalism.³⁴ There was also high optimism among the middle class because of the exciting development paving ways for better life which evangelical were caught up in the trends. Missionaries at this point in time were influenced by these modern developments thereby yielded their support for the economic trend of

³¹ E.P.T. Crampton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, ed. Musa A.B. Gaiya, (Bukuru: ACTS, 2004), p.17.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Boer, *Missions: Herald of Capitalism or Christ?*, p.25.

the time. Missionaries knew the negative consequences of this political economic system but somehow espoused it. Their espoused to this political economic was expedited by the theory of Adam Smith says Boer. Smith said “the laissez faire economic development was an acts of God divine initiative, and God in due time most appropriate, shall over rule the negative consequences associated with this political economic.”³⁵ To me Smith was not careful enough to see the evil associated with this capitalists system of economic.

Now when missionaries arrived Africa the land termed “the land of darkness,” were they in support of this capitalists system of economic? The answer to this question is simply yes. Why? It is dualism that obscured their eyes and they claimed neutrality which they thought was right but ignorantly promoting evil. Boer points to other Christians experts who raise an alarm on the evil of laissez faire capitalism. For instance he quoted Kuyper who said in Christian social congress in 1891: “Men did not literally eat other like the cannibals ... the more powerful exploited the weaker by means of a weapon against which there was no defense ...”³⁶

Boer also mentions other prominent figures which include P.T. Forsyth, Pope Leo XIII etc. The above and the host of others joined in the crusades against the dehumanizing effect of the then political economic. With these voices against laissez faire capitalism, missionaries delighted in the promotion of it in Nigeria. They did not see anything evil in that economic system because they were part of the beneficiaries back home. Any attempt to raise an eye brow against it would be devastating to all says Boer.³⁷ This position of missionaries may explain why

³⁵ Boer, *Missions: Herald of Capitalism or Christ?*, p.26.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p.31.

³⁷ Boer, *Missions: Herald of Capitalism or Christ?*, p.26.

African nationalists later considered missionaries as heralding capitalism and not Christ. Boer asserted that they:

“Supported it on the basis of superficial observation and failed to take seriously the constant barrage of criticism from nationalists and ecumenical quarters.”³⁸

To further buttress his point on mission lukewarm attitudes towards economic approach Boer says that:

Mission was so busy with spiritual matters that she lacked the inclination to bother herself with such analysis, too busy not primarily because of lack of time but because of this hierarchical dualism that relegated matters such as economic to the secondary rank of the secular”.³⁹

Now with this motive in mind can mission devise ways and means to empower the people converted economically? They regarded economic spheres as secular and evil and Christians should not seek to attain riches for fear of being worldly. Today it is quite glaring that Christians in the north particularly in the middle belt are the poorest in terms of business entrepreneurship. They were not enterprising because they were not developed by their liberators who considered seeking riches in this world as evil.

Boer to some extent is right because most of the markets in the middle belt today are being occupied by Hausa-Fulani. Thank God for Ibo Christians from eastern Nigeria for God naturally endowed them with the spirit of economic enterprise. In the transport system (commercial transport) only Hausa-Fulani dominated the sectors in northern Nigeria. Most commercial activities were regarded by Christians as not part of service to God but secular mainly for the benefit of man here on earth. It is sad to say that most ethnic tribes in the middle belt who are predominantly Christians are reduced to farming, fishing and white collar jobs. The

³⁸ Boer, *Missionary Messengers of Liberation in the Colonial Context*, p.456.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p.458.

produce and the Hausa Fulani exploited them and enriched themselves. It is unfortunate that Hausa Fulani who migrated to our land were as poor as church rat but today they were the richest of all in some of the towns in middle Belt.

Therefore the church should be awake in order to draw her members to this noble task of serving God in the economic sphere so that poverty would be reduced to nothing. We shall not all be government workers. Some may be called to serve in politics, some in commercial and economic activities, some as farmers, etc. God ordered this world and permits all to participate in nurturing it. The church should arise and deal with this cankerworm 'dualism' in the church and let the people arise and possess their possession (Obadiah 1:17). The church can achieve this through teaching, organizing seminars and even preaching it on the pulpit. I quite understand that there are little changes going on in some quarters but the chains of dualism are still holding some churches captive or apprehensive.

4.2.4 Boer's Contextualized Wholistic Approach To Health Care

Still under the social approach, I regard Boer's contextualized wholistic approach to health care as relevant to African worldview. In other hand it seeks to contextualize biomedicine into African traditional religion in order to ensure total health care for Nigerians or Africans. Boer traces the history of the beginning of wholistic health care approach to 1980. It was at the CHAN conference in Ibadan in 1980 that the concept of wholistic health care was expounded. Its basic principle is "the approach to health and healing exemplified by Jesus who cares for the whole

person, physically, emotionally and spiritually”.⁴⁰ This according to the Ibadan summit “implies for us today to use total resources for the total person.”⁴¹

On his point Boer observes that there is a monopoly of modern and western methods of attending and treating patients over traditional and spiritual/faith healing. He notes that throughout his experience in Nigeria; missionaries and government health workers only employed one sided methods in handling patients. Boer and other social crusaders consider this as haphazard approach to health care system. In one of their statement in Ibadan conference it was observed that “we have all become captive to a secular medical care system that discourages wholistic approach to society.”⁴²

In support of the above assertion Boer says that

Our deep appreciation to God for Biomedicine should not prevent us from realizing its profound shortcomings in its almost exclusive emphasis on the physical and its virtual total unconcern for the fears and questions of most patients as well as other relevant aspects of human life.⁴³

Human healing is not limited to physical alone. Other aspects of human life are important in the process of human healing.

In Africa, there is a strong belief (credence) in the realm of the spiritual and ancestral world. It is generally believed that certain diseases are caused by the spirit or ancestors.⁴⁴ Such patients may need the attention of the traditional medicine man or the pastor who would handle the patient. This requires that a patient be treated not only on chemotherapy but also on psycho-therapy. When such is done, a patient obtained wholistic care treatment in the hospital.

⁴⁰ Jan H. Boer, *Wholistic Health Care of, for and by People* (Jos: CHAN Wholistic Care Project, 1989), p.6

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., p.7.

⁴³ Ibid., p.5.

⁴⁴ Dennis A. Ityanyar, *The Wholeness of African Traditional Medicine and Health Care System*, ed. Jan H. Boer (Jos: CHAN Wholistic Care Project, 1994), pp.2-3.

Actually this is an integrated and contextualized form of treatment which seeks not to undermine the traditional treatment and faith healing. It is a wholistic approach to health care system which the church in Nigeria and Africa continent needs to implement. They need to also sale this idea to government and other relevant agencies to promote total or wholistic healing for all people in spite of their cultural background.

This approach discourages dichotomies and encourages Reformed tradition which seeks to appreciate all things in creation.

4.3 ANALYSIS FROM BOER'S REFORMED WHOLISTIC APPROACH TO SOCIETY

There is no doubt that the reformed wholistic approach to society as advanced in the context of Nigeria by Boer is informative and timely. Apparently, Nigerian church in the past around 1960s and 1970s was void of wholistic approach to society. That situation weakened their active involvement in the society. They inherited a legacy devoid of political, social and economic power. Hence, they were told to consider the world as an evil and all material things as bad. The church considers those working with government as working for the devil, though they collect their tithes and offerings. In the business spheres a Christian is separated from his faith. Considering a story of a woman in chapter three above which Boer narrated.⁴⁵ If you join politics you are considered a corrupt person. Yet the church invites politicians and other influential figures who are non Christians for fund raising. In the social spheres, Christians were to exercise patience even in the face of

⁴⁵ Boer, *The Prophet Moses for Today*. The Hausa version of the story is found in "Kai da dukiyarka" quoted in chapter two above.

evil being perpetrated against them i.e. when their social right is been trampled upon by government or individual. Just like what is happening in some Sharia states in Nigeria where Christians on several occasions were denied their fundamental human rights. While Christians are silent in the states where they are the majority claiming they are exercising patience.

These Christian attitudes according to Boer are attributed to the gospel which they inherited from their parent's missions. Boer unfolds the basic concept and origin of this gospel which tend to enslave a man in his God given domain. Acts of Apostles tells us that God created every nation (ethnic group) and has allocated each to their own portion of lands (Acts 17:26). What we see here is Contrary to this assertion. Boer posits that missionaries supported colonialism with the hope that a day shall come when indigenous church shall be a Shalom in their land but the result is that of Muslim intrusion into the socio-political life of their land. Missionaries' legacy for leaving a church without a political future cannot be exonerated from blame. But they must also be commended or complimented for their enormous sacrifices in Nigeria. For the situation is not out of hand yet. That is what ignited Boer's reformed wholistic approach to society. This approach which encompasses all spheres of life began to have impact in the Nigeria politics in the 1980s and 90s as Boer attempts to note in his comment on the numerical status of Christians compared to Muslims in Nigeria.⁴⁶ "Necessity is the mother of invention", Christians invented an approach based on secular view. However, here is an alternative approach which can help Christians and Nigerian society to gain freedom.

⁴⁶ Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood*, p.15.

Christians who occasionally argue from pseudo-secular point of view should be stimulated by this approach advanced by Boer to seek for more biblical base to build their theology in every human sphere. Every sphere belongs to God.

Considering the current situation between Muslim and Christians in Nigeria, Boer posits an alternative ways towards arbitration and amity which wholistic approach can initiate. Though in some areas, Boer appears to ask Christians in Nigeria to look at American Christians' war of words with secular-humanist position of the American society.⁴⁷ To me Americans are highly advanced in all spheres compared to Nigerians who are mostly illiterate with multiple tribes and religions. More so, American's religious background was built on the biblical principle which has a clear defined principle between the church and the state. A critical survey of American politics shows that the secularists are fighting a loose battle, because elements of religion cannot be completely obliterated from America's politics. It remains latent. When American president Barrack Obama was sworn in on 20th January 2009, Christian prayed.

Compared to Nigeria, her background was built on enmity and hostilities which gradually gave it this deformed face. But how can the two major religions live peacefully with mutual respect for one another? Boer provided some clues towards that end in his book *Nigeria's Decades of Blood*, volumes 1-3. But I am skeptical about a statement in volume 1 which states that "it is true that in the past Muslims have been more tolerant of other religions than have Christians."⁴⁸ Is Boer speaking of Nigeria situation in the past or in terms of Muslim world at large? If it is Nigeria situation, Boer should not forget that Lugard promised not to tamper with their

⁴⁷ Boer, *Christians: Why this Muslim Violence?*, p.12.

⁴⁸ Boer, *Nigeria's Decade of Blood: Studies in Christian- Muslims Relations*, (Jos: Stream Christian Publisher, 2003), p.14.

religion, so why would they not be tolerant? But if it was in terms of Muslims world at large, then Boer should remember the history of North Africa where Muslims systematically eliminated every trace of Christianity in the land which was once the cradle of Christianity in the ancient world. It depicts that Muslims are intolerant. In modern world, Muslims remains intolerant among the 10:40 window countries. Muslims are gradually moving freely into rich nations like America, and Europe and are tolerated. And in Nigeria, they are tolerated in all Christian dominated areas in the middle belt and southern Nigeria particularly in the east. So how can they tolerate other religions more that Christians who are at home with both pagans and Muslims? Probably I did not understand Boer in his quest for arbitration in that phrase.

In the same vein, the perceived spirit of domination with its attending cultural assimilation propagated by Islam is considered by Christians as threats to their existence. This is actually true when Muslim remember their nostalgia of northern Nigeria in the 19th century; they thought they can still regain it back. In this case, Boer is right to inform them that the idea of *dhimmi* (second class citizen) is obsolete. They should embrace modern trends of innovation with patience. Also both parties bear in mind the dynamic nature of religion which occurs with trend of events.

Boer's concern for Nigerian peasants for revolutionary action is in tune with the current trends of events. His wholistic approach to health care system is in line with African world view. The question is who will ensure the successful implementation of this wholistic health care in our public hospitals and church established health sectors? We need chaplains in our hospitals to give spiritual counseling, and traditionalists to render their own contribution.

Generally speaking, Boer's Reformed wholistic approach to society deserves to be applauded. The strength of Boer's approach I think attempts to lead us to appreciate God in all of life and creation.

4.4 THE STRENGTH AND WEAKNESS OF REFORMED WHOLISTIC APPROACH TO SOCIETY

Having evaluated the Reformed wholistic approach to society as gleaned mostly from Boeriana literature, I shall now proceed to briefly state the strength and the weakness of Reformed wholistic approach to society. It is an established fact that in this fallen world there is hardly any approach which is absolutely free from lapses. Therefore, this research attempts to note down the strength and weakness of Reformed wholistic approach to society. Though its weakness may be nothing to take home but it's a food for thought.

4.4.1 The Strength Of Reformed Wholistic Approach To Society

The strength of Reformed wholistic approach to society cannot be overemphasized, for it is apparently gearing and steering the society toward freedom and liberty for all segments of the society. It is an approach that wishes not to relegate any spectrum of the society to the backyard if properly understood and put into practice.

In a heterogeneous and of course pluralistic society like Nigeria, Reformed wholistic approach to society as advanced by Boer is strategic to the church in Nigeria. In the first place, it helps the church to actively participate in every sphere of life and not to be left behind in the competitive society like Nigeria. Hence it is an

approach that seeks to appreciate the sovereignty of God in every sphere of life. It seeks to undo or loose the grip of dualism; that ancient philosophical thought that the church inherited from the missionaries. It seeks to integrate all spheres of life to help man attend certain goodness of life. In this regards man would seek to appreciate both the material things and the spiritual things. Working under secular government and working under the church would all be considered as working for God.

Reformed wholistic approach to society will also help the church to take her human responsibility under cultural mandate seriously as ordered by God in Genesis 1:26, 28. It reminds us of God's sovereignty over the entire universe. He rules in every sphere i.e. the sovereignty of the social spheres, political spheres, economic spheres and spiritual spheres. Meeter puts it that

Each man has a specific task to perform or its own mandate entrusted upon him by God. Thus there is the sphere of the family, of science, of art, of technique and invention, of trade and commerce, of industry, of agriculture of the church etc. belong to society.⁴⁹

In this regards it leads man to exhibit his God-given potentials in his rightful places without restriction either by conscience. It would be relevant to African church because originally African worldview is wholistic.

Reformed wholistic approach would help modern missions and the Nigerian church to embark on wholistic mission that would be relevant and contextual to the contemporary man in his milieu. This will help build a church that would be incorporated into the society and not the church in the ghetto. It will help members to understand that the world is good and needs our service. The impact of the church cannot be felt unless the church is involved in all the spheres of life. For Christianity

⁴⁹ H. Henry Meeter, *The Basic Idea of Calvinism*, ed. Paul B. Marshall (Grand Rapids: WB. Eerdman Pub, 1989), p.117.

cannot be practiced in the vacuum wholistic approach to society would help the church to influence the society.

Finally wholistic approach to society would remind the church of her role in seeking justice for the socially oppressed people in the society. This too would help the church revisit her policies that tend to reduce man to nothing. For instance, missionaries employed evangelists and other workers and paid them salaries which did not tally with their labour. They tried to convince people that it is a work of God; therefore you do not need much money. While some missionaries believed that when they pay workers the correct salaries, it would corrupt them or spoiled them. This is not true. We have people who were rich before the coming of missionaries and still gave their lives to Christ to serve him. They were obedient to Christ and missionaries. Therefore whatever reasons missionaries have for paying meager amount of salaries to their workers can be deducted from their selfish interest in laissez faire capitalism. Only wholistic approach would help the church to stand for the oppressed and be a vanguard by example.

4.4.2 The Weakness Of Reformed Wholistic Approach To Society

Reformed wholistic approach to society appears superficially fantastic at a glance, because it is an approach that is much at home with African worldview. However an in-depth and critical insight into this approach may pose or raise some observation which cannot be easily dealt with. One Reformed scholar says:

Some Protestants did not agree among themselves, however on how the ecclesiastical and civil authorities established by God are related to each other, and this disagreement had significant consequences for the official leadership of Christia in a pluralistic society like Nigeria.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Elsie Anne Mckee, *Diakonia in the classical Reformed Tradition and Today* (Grand Rapids: Williams B. Eerdmans Pub. Comp., 1989), p.17.

First I personally observe that the application of Reformed wholistic approach to society will be more workable in the homogenous and more enlighten society than a heterogeneous society. In the homogenous society in terms of ethnic or religious affiliation it promotes unity. But in the heterogonous society like Nigeria it raises suspicious and unhealthy competition. Take for instance, initially in Nigeria; Christianity was politically weak in northern Nigeria at the time Boer arrived Nigeria with his wife in 1966.⁵¹ Islam then was politically strong as noted above in chapter three both in pre-colonial and all through to post-colonial era. By the end of 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century there was a sudden rise in Christian political consciousness, which raise suspicious among muslim community today. In this case how can the two religions cohere without friction? If both would hold tenaciously to their own position i.e. Muslim strictly to their own wholistic religious worldview and Christians strictly to their wholistic approach to society how can they co-exist? Definitely there may be some problems. Though Boer posits that if both would listen patiently to each other they may understand each other better. But Boer confesses that listening skill is a poorly developed skill among Nigerians.⁵² Today Muslims would not like to forgo their nostalgia and so are becoming intolerant: while Christians too are moving from defensive position to aggressive position. In this condition of Nigeria I am optimistic that Reformed wholistic approach to society could help expedite the socio-political role of the church in Nigeria, but to heal the wound of these two rival religions, I think only time can determine it. I may be speaking like Nigerian Christian. Do not mind me.

⁵¹ Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood* (Jos: Stream Christian Publishers, 2003), p.13.

⁵² Jan H. Boer, *Nigeria's Decades of Blood, 1980-2002*, Vol.2 (Belleville: Essence Pub., 2004), p.14.

Also, I wish to observe that in Reformed wholistic approach to society where leaders are self center there is the tendency towards monopoly and domination by the larger group in the society. Finally where wholistic approach to society is in full operation, it exposes leaders to danger and restlessness. This is because church leaders must voice out and speak up in the face of injustice and political disfranchisement. To some extent these reasons may appear too weak, but they are food for thought in considering the weakness of wholistic approach to society based on Reformed view.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary

The evaluation of Reformed wholistic approach to society as viewed by Jan Boer and other Reformers is in-exhaustive. However, in my limited capacity and ability I have been able to visualize some key issues which are important and relevant to Nigerian society to enable the churches to ponder further on them in order to embrace the gospel alternative that would promote full participation of the churches in all sphere^s of life as ordained by God.

To engage in such a titanic human struggle for another gospel alternative approach towards genuine freedom requires the scripture backing. The researcher makes frantic effort by evaluating some theological basis advanced by Boer and other scholars to establish the certainty of their position. The only way to true shalom is to embrace the biblical foundation which Boer posits in his approach to society. Embracing this approach could help the church to adhere to its mandate and obligation upon the society to transform the whole spheres of the world through its involvement. "For the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof the world and they that dwell therein," (Ps.24:1 KJV). This requires wholistic approach that would truly prove we are God's special assistants.

In seeking to make the approach advanced by Boer explicit, the researcher moves quickly to discuss the reformed worldview and the Lordship of God as they help to throw more light in understanding Reformed wholistic approach to the society. In that regard the researcher examines the main impediment to wholistic evangelism by missionaries as outlined by Boer. What is this main barricade noted

by Boer in his literatures? Certainly Boer points to one word 'Dualism'¹ as against integration. On this one word, "DUALISM", Boer says hanged all the issues surrounding wholistic approach to society according to the basic Christian tenets advanced by reformed wholistic approach to the society. The concept of dualism originated from Greek pagan philosophy and impeded missionary wholistic approach to society and subsequently produced a docile church in Northern Nigeria.

However, history has its own version of the imbalanced society of Nigeria which deserves evaluation to give in-depth thought on society upon which the gospel was introduced. On that note, the researcher begins with the biography of Boer. The experience of Boer in Nigeria propelled him to quickly engage in such venture that he hopes will bring liberation and consolation to Nigerian Christians and the entire society of Nigeria. His experiences are briefly brought into illumination to figure him out as a unique, courageous and lover of a people under social-political economic depravity,² though he dearly paid for it. When exercising this paragon of virtues in Nigeria it attracted hatred upon him which ended his missionary work in Nigeria.³

His perspective of Nigeria society which shapes his philosophical thought has been discussed as it is relevant to the African worldview. This is followed with the evaluation of pre-colonial history through to the post-colonial era. The excavation is made into the pre colonial Nigeria to assess the general situation that further compounded the Nigerians' condition in their un-balanced approach to life. It addresses major issues which formed the basis upon which Nigerian peasants

¹ Boer, *Christian and Mobilization*, p.9.

² Boer, *Nigeria Decade of Blood*, p.142

³ This information is speculative among eminent Christian citizen in CRCN. Those who knew Boer said that he left the country because of wholistic approach in social action.

from all background appear too servile and loyal to inimical regime. It further highlights on the foundation of hostilities between muslim and pagans which gradually culminated into the Nigeria endless bloody incessant violence between Christians and Muslims in the modern Nigeria. Current analysis of Nigeria society is also embarked upon to point to the fact that Reformed wholistic approach advanced by Boer could help relief the burden the masses are bearing in the Nigerian society. This is deducted from Boer's analysis of Christians, Muslims and traditional teachings.

The researcher then delved into the evaluation of Reformed wholistic approach to the society of Nigeria. Boer and other scholars assert that the missionaries approach to Nigeria society was one sided. It was only centered on the spiritual development of the people while neglecting their social-political and economic life. This is the gospel that tends to suppress the political charisma, economic ability and social drives and rendered them almost like a people in the ghetto. Nyerere says in addition that "men are shaped by the circumstances in which they live. If they are treated like animals, they will act like animals. If they are denied dignity, they will act without dignity."⁴ That was exactly the nature of the gospel that influenced the daughter churches of missionaries.

Actually, human beings are naturally inclined to shortcomings and fallacy. Having realized that human beings always learn from their mistakes, the researcher in line with Boer denounces such unbalance approach to the gospel and opts for a total gospel for the contemporary church; a wholistic approach to society that will produce Christians who will be revolutionary⁵ and not compromising with social

⁴ Julius Nyerere, "The Church's Role in Society" in *A Reader in African Christian Theology*, ed. John Parratt, (Plymouth: Latimerirend & Co, 1989), p.114.

⁵ Boer, *Christian and Mobilization*, p.9.

injustices. This is an approach that shuns every form of dichotomy and compartmentalization while adopting integration of all spheres of life as the only alternative for the wholistic approach to society. Therefore, the church in Nigeria deserves to adopt this approach which appeals to African worldview in order to be relevant to the world it belongs.

5.2 CONCLUSION

This research has evaluated Boer's reformed wholistic approach to the Nigerian society and its relevance to the contemporary Nigeria. However, the church in Nigeria is undergoing transition under necessity; transitions from dualistic world view to that of integration because it lacks initially wholistic approach. The church is at the period when various leaders are calling for alternative approach to society. Among social theologians there has been clarion call towards a balanced theology which is contextual to Africa world view. They say, "Social theology must include all aspects of life such as politics, economy and social-culture, which are directed to the deeper internalization of the gospel in such reality."⁶ This was clearly the world view of Africans which was discouraged by missionaries' secular influence.⁷ Actually, Boer's Reformed wholistic approach to society in relation to Nigeria situation is an enormous contribution in developing Nigerian Christianity and Africa at large.

We learn from mistakes. As we realize our pitfalls, it is good we take appropriate precaution towards positive growth. When missionaries embarked on the message of liberation in Nigeria, little did they know that their approach was one

⁶ "Theological Foundation for Doing Social Theology", <http://eapi.admu.edu.ph/eapi99.chpl.htm>, 14/2/2009, p.2.

⁷ Danny McCain, Theological Education for a Mature African Church," (Bukuru: A Paper Presented at TCNN 50th Anniversary, 13/2/2009), p.5.

sided. Today Nigerian church too is engaged in missions both within and beyond the shore of the country. She needs to embark on wholistic approach and not to repeat the mistakes of our missionary heroes. I wish to conclude by urging the church in Nigeria to take up the challenge put forward by Boer through thorough reflection in the scriptures to further develop a solid or constructive theology that will enhance wholistic approach to society. Dualism should be replaced with integration to ensure total freedom of man as proclaimed by Christ in Luke 4:18.

5.3 RECOMMENDATION

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13:13 that “love is the greatest of all...” (NIV). Wholistic approach to society is an indication that Christ loves the world through his servants who are earnestly engaged in it to save it. For churches to bring about positive transformation in the society that will rid the world of evil and corruption in our politics, and socio-economic life, the churches must be involved in all the sectors of society. For Boer says every sector needs God’s transforming power of grace.⁸ The church cannot claim she loves the world but exercising that love in the vacuum. That to me is cowardice being displayed under the guise or pretext for holiness. It is almost like refusing to rescue a drowning child when you have the opportunity to do so.

Wholistic approach to society as advanced by Boer provides biblical basis for church involvement in the society so that through her the society may have the light of God in every sphere of life. Through the church, God’s redemptive power may permeate the society. Kuyper gives illustration of a mustard seed in Mat.14:31 to portray the expansion of the kingdom of God as thus:

⁸ Boer, *Mission: Heralds of Capitalism of Christian?* p.149.

this tiny seed sprouts, grows up, goes through a process at the end of which we have a tree with its branches reaching out far and wide within which the birds of heaven make their home and provided shade from the heat of sun.⁹

The kingdom of Christ is suppose to move with time to provide comfort to those in sorrow and redemption to those under bondage (Luke 4:18).

Therefore, in view of the significant of Reformed wholistic approach to society and its relevance to the contemporary Christianity, I wish to recommend this approach to the church and society of Nigeria under the following reasons:

1. To help the church embark on wholistic approach that will save a total man in their evangelical work i.e. all round development of an individual.
2. To enable the church to interact and relate freely with wider society and to confront the society on issues that may be of threat to the socio-political development of their land.
3. To keep the church at breast with her role as the light of the world i.e. the role of transformation.
4. To help the church review her missionary approach in the contemporary world in order to meet up with the current challenges facing the church.
5. To enable the church to be proactive rather than reactive to her social and political responsibilities.
6. To enable the church to appreciate God in all the spheres of life because all things in creation belong to God.

⁹ Abraham Kuyper, *You can do Greater Things than Christ*, ed. Jan Boer, (Jos: Institute of Church and Society, 1991), p.33.

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