

The Role of the Church in the Realization of Vision 2030 in Kenya

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Abstract

The Kenya Vision 2030 was inaugurated in 2008 as the country's development plan with an aim of transforming Kenya into an industrialized middle-income country providing high quality life to all its citizens by 2030. Do religious organizations have a role to play in the realization of this Vision? Although the Church is one of the most trusted institutions in Kenya commanding a large following (82.5%), ordinarily no one thinks that she has a role to play in the accomplishment of this Vision. This paper argues that the Church as the conscience of the society cannot stand at the periphery. Since the Church basically preaches and stands for the ideals suggested in this Vision, she should fully get involved in its implementation. The paper proposes a number of ways in which the Church in Kenya can get involved including quest for peace, justice and reconciliation; economic empowerment programs; development activities; environmental conservation and fighting corruption.

Keywords: Church and Society, Kenya Vision 2030, Church's Participation in Vision 2030

Introduction

Kenya Vision 2030 is the country's development blueprint initiated in 2008 to cover the period 2008 to 2030. It aims to transform Kenya into an industrializing middle-income country providing a high quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030 (Kenya Vision 2030, 2007). Although it is claimed that this Vision was developed through an all-inclusive and participatory stakeholder consultative process (Kenya Vision 2030, 2007), there is no evidence that the Church or any other religious body was given much attention as a cardinal party in this process. Ideally no one would think that the Church or any religious body would have a role to play in the realization of Vision 2030 in Kenya or even the millennium development goals. Surprisingly, even the Church in Kenya does not think that she has a vital role to play in the realization of this crucial development plan.¹ This is detrimental considering the role the Church plays in the society. Mugambi (1996) regards religion as an important pillar of any culture, signifying its significant place in the modification of cultures

¹ Between the years 2003 and 2011, the Author participated in all the major decision making organs of the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) (i.e. The Provincial Synod and the Provincial Standing Committee of the Synod), and I never heard the ACK leadership plan on how the Church would participate in the realization of Vision 2030. The Author have also looked at the Strategic plans of the main denominations in Kenya, mainly the Roman Catholic Church, the ACK, the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and the Methodist Church in Kenya (MCK) and none of them has featured Kenya Vision 2030.

whether socially, politically or economically. Besides, Nkonge (2012) informs that over the years the Church has been the most trusted institution in Kenya, a clear indication that she is an indispensable force when it comes to making and implementing national policies. The Church in Kenya enjoys a large following of about 82.5 % of the national population (Kenya's Population Census Results, 2009). One wonders how such a huge body can be ignored in the realization of such an important national development plan, yet majority of those affected are Christians. Although my intention is not to evaluate the extent to which this Vision has been accomplished in the last six years, I want in this paper to explore the role the Church can play in the realization of this Vision in the remaining fifteen years.

The Meaning of the Church and her Role in the Society: An African Perspective

To understand the role of the Church in Kenya in the accomplishment of Vision 2030, we need to commence by reflecting on the questions: What is the Church? What is the role of the Church in the Society? The questions look simple but one has to ask 'What did Jesus of Nazareth have in mind when he incepted the Church?' It is only then that we shall start to see the connection between the Church and the Kingdom of God in an African context. Jesus came to establish the Kingdom of God on earth (see Mk. 1:14- 15; Lk. 17: 20-21; Mt. 6:33). Although I do not want to adopt the premillennialism view that when Jesus came to the earth he and his father expected and planned that he would establish a physical earthly kingdom, which he was not able due to the hostility of the Jews thus establishing the Church instead (Pentecost, 1965), my argument is that there is a close correlation between the Kingdom of God which Jesus spoke about and the Church which he incepted. The Church is thus the 'realized Kingdom of God on earth'. Jesus puts it clearly that, "I have come that they may have life and have it in full" (Jn. 10:10). In other words, the Kingdom that he had come to establish was that of the provision of abundant life to the 'lifeless' inhabitants of the earth.² It is in view of this that we start to see the sacred duty of the Church (as God's realized Kingdom) in the provision of life to the African continent where Archbishop Desmond Tutu laments that,

The picture is so bleak and the prospect of one seemingly unmitigated gloom. It is as if the entire continent was groaning under the curse of Ham and was in all respects the Dark Continent of Antiquity. . . Are we God's stepchildren? Why has disaster picked on us so conspicuously? We seem to be tragically unique in this respect (Ngara, 2004).

Defined from its etymology, the Church derives from the Greek *ekklesia* and Hebrew *qahal* which means a meeting or gathering. It is a meeting of people who are summoned for a common purpose. When the word is used in connection with the Christian Church, it means a meeting or gathering constituted of people who have confessed Jesus Christ as their Lord and Saviour (Nthamburi, 1991). Of course this is important because how can one become a member of a movement if he/she does not acknowledge the authority of its founder and leader? Christians must comprehend the vision and mission of Jesus when he inaugurated the Church if at all they claim to be his followers (church members). This explains why O'Donovan (1995) regards the Church as the company of believers who have accepted to give their lives as disciples of Christ in response to his call. They are his disciples because they have hearkened to his call to execute his mission and vision on earth. They are true members of his realized Kingdom. This is elucidated by Mugambi (1989) who says that the Church, understood as the community whose identity is anchored in the commitment of its

² For further clarification of this point see Jesus' manifesto in Lk. 4: 16-19)

members to Jesus Christ, has the corporate obligation to continually implement the demands of Christian discipleship.

What then is the role of the Church in the society? Mugambi (1989, p. 101) observes that the primary business of the Church in the society and in the world is to be in mission. Bowen (1996) describes mission as the way in which the Church is sent out into the world). Bosch (1998) explains this by asserting that the term mission presupposes a sender, a person or persons sent by the sender, those to whom one is sent, and an assignment. Nkonge (2004) shares this view and contends that mission involves a group of people who are sent for a special purpose, mainly to teach and spread religion. The terminology presumes that the one who sends has the authority to do so. Quite often the sender is God who has an indisputable authority to decree that people should be sent to execute his will (Bosch, 1998). Thus mission refers primarily to *Missio Dei* (God's Mission). God has revealed himself to the world as the one who loves it and who is involved in the activities of nature and humanity. The Church is privileged in that God has called and allowed it to participate in these activities (Bosch, 1998). In this way, mission becomes the way in which the Church is sent to the world to be its light and salt (see Mtt.5:13-16). This implies that mission has to do with changing or transforming the world. Nkonge (2011) adds his voice to this debate by arguing that mission in the twenty-first century cannot have many definitions apart from that it is an activity whereby God calls his disciples and sends them as salt and light to add flavor and shine to the world.

Mission is thus transformative in nature in that it aims at transforming the world (Nkonge, 2008). Therefore, the Church exists because of mission and without transforming the world, there is no mission. It is in view of this that we commence to see the relationship between the Church and Kenya's Vision 2030 (The contents of Vision 2030 are discussed in the next section). The biblical analogy of the 'Salt and light' (Mtt.5:13-16) challenges the Church in Kenya and Africa in general to play her role as an agent of social transformation. Adeyemo (1990) helps us understand the role the Church in Kenya can play in the realization of Vision 2030 by his allusion that "The Church in Africa has never existed and cannot afford to exist in isolation". Even some African political leaders are aware of this fact as exemplified by the former President Milton Obote of Uganda who at the eve of independence remarked that had it not been for the revolutionary teaching of the Church, Uganda would not have achieved its independence when it did and went on to call the Church to participate in the national affairs (Adeyemo, 1990). Also while addressing Christians in Nairobi on 4 July 2010, the then President of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki regarded the Church as the conscience of the society and urged Christians to continue being involved in national affairs (Capital News, 2010). The same words were echoed by the current Deputy President of Kenya, William Ruto who challenged the Church to play a leading role in transforming the society (The Standard, 2014).

It is therefore clear that as the late Archbishop Gitari puts it, the Church cannot afford to cut itself from the rest of the society, living a separate and enclosed life of its own. If it were to do that, the Church would not be effective and might become paralyzed or perish altogether (Gitari, 1986). Peachey (1988) gives a more theological interpretation of the Church's involvement in the society by elucidating that while the existence of the Church centers in Christ, her witness and vocation is expressed in the society. The Church is united with Christ the head, but the body-the Church- is given for the life of the world. So, when Jesus called upon his disciples to be the salt of the earth, he was challenging them to be involved in the society. Just as salt can only make food have taste when it is put in the food, Christians can

only make their saltiness felt if they are actively present in the society (Gitari, 1986). It is possibly for this reason that Hiebert (1985) calls the churches around the world to see it as their responsibility to bring to the people the Good News of salvation and to minister to their needs. Any salvation which the Church may think of is incomplete if the aspect of transforming the society is overlooked (see Lk. 4: 16 ff).

Having justified the need for the Church's involvement in the society we now move ahead to look at the contents of Kenya's Vision 2030 so as to suggest how the Church in Kenya can participate in its realization. To what extent has the Church in Africa been involved in social affairs? Njenga (1989) argues that since the Industrial Revolution the Church has been more and more involved in the social matters affecting the daily lives of the people. But is this argument a true reflection of the Church in Kenya or even Africa? Okullu (1974) feels that the Church in East Africa and Africa as a whole has not done much when it comes to getting involved social affairs. He sees this as a problem inherited from the colonial Church where, 'Christianity was planted in East Africa . . . emphasizing that the Church's duty was solely that of curing the soul. It had nothing to do with the social life of the people. . . '. This is of course a debatable point since there so many schools, hospitals, e.t.c initiated by the Church. I however consider the comments of Njonjo Mue relevant in this debate. He says,

The missionary church made a huge contribution to Kenyan society, especially in the areas of education and health. But if the Church did well in helping to lift the living standards of the colonial populations, it is also an inescapable fact that that it did little to openly challenge the social injustices of the colonial era, preferring instead to engage in quiet diplomacy with the colonial powers rather than seeming to rock the boat. It thus acquired the image of a collaborator in the evils of colonialism (Mue, 2008).

In many cases, this collaboration of the Church and the State continued even after independence sometimes making the Church to remain silent even when the society was disintegrating as a result of the social injustices propelled by the State. For instance, Githiga (2001) informs that although the close cooperation between the Church and State in independent Kenya was beneficial in that the freedom of worship was enshrined in the constitution and the Church was able to initiate some development projects, especially in the areas of education and health, the relationship was detrimental in that it prevented the Church from condemning the social evils that persisted such as corruption, nepotism, tribalism, land grabbing e.t.c. It is also the feeling of many people that since Mwai Kibaki took over from Daniel Moi as the President of Kenya in 2002, the Church in Kenya has been less active in the matters affecting the Kenyan people (Gifford, 2009; Mue, 2008). This is possibly why the Church does not think that she has a role to play in the realization of Vision 2030 which immensely affects the lives of the Kenyans.

The Contents of Kenya Vision 2030 in Brief ³

For us to be able to suggest ways in which the Church in Kenya can participate in the realization of Vision 2030, it is imperative that we look at what this Vision entails. The Kenya Vision 2030 was initiated in 2007 as the country's development plan covering the period 2008 and 2030. It aimed at transforming Kenya into an industrializing middle-middle income country providing a high quality life to all its citizens by 2030.

³ The information used in this section is gotten from the Kenya Vision 2030

This Vision is based on three main pillars namely the economic, the social and political. The economic pillar aims at the economic empowerment of all Kenyans, the social pillar seeks to build a just and cohesive Kenyan society with an equitable social development and the political pillar is geared towards developing an accountable and transparent democratic nation of Kenya. It is envisaged in this Vision that by 2030, Kenya shall have made a remarkable progress in the elimination of poverty and hunger, provision of primary education, ensuring gender equality, reduction in child mortality, improvement in maternal health, lowering HIV/AIDS and other major diseases, environmental sustainability and maintaining good partnerships with other development partners.⁴ Key areas to focus on to ensure the successful realization of this Vision will be macroeconomic stability; continuity in government reforms; enhanced equity and wealth creation; infrastructure; energy; science, technology and innovation; land reform; human resources development; security as well as public sector reforms.

Under Vision 2030, Kenya aims to increase the annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rates from the current average of 6% to 10%. This will be enhanced by putting more effort in tourism, agriculture, trade, manufacturing and financial services. The Vision also underscores the importance of investing in the people of Kenya for the prosperity of the nation. Effort will thus be made to build a just and cohesive society that enjoys equitable social development in a clean and secure environment. There will therefore be transformation in all social sectors including Education and Training; Health; Water and Sanitation; Environment; Housing and Urbanization; Gender, Youth, Sports and Culture; Equity and Poverty Eradication. The Vision also envisages a country with a democratic political system where equality is entrenched regardless of one's race, ethnicity, religion, gender or socio-economic status. Kenya will be a country that harnesses the diversity of its peoples' values, traditions and aspirations for the benefit of all.

The Church's Involvement

Having seen what is entailed in Kenya Vision 2030, it is preferable to look at the possible ways in which the Church can participate in the realization of this Vision. In section 2, we found that the Church as the 'salt and light' of the world has a significant role to play in the transformation of the society. A Church fixed at the periphery of the society or nation is no longer needed. From section 3, it is clear that the Kenya Vision 2030 has the transformation of the Kenyan society as its main precept; the same ideal emphasized the Christian Church. That is why I feel that considering the noteworthy position of the Church in any society, including Kenya where she is followed by the majority of the population, she has a vital role to play for the successful realization of Kenya's development plan, the Vision 2030. The following are possible ways in which the Church can get involved.

Quest for Peace, Justice and Reconciliation

The Church is an agent of peace, justice and reconciliation in any society (Shenk, 1983). These are important development components in the African continent which Camara (1971) informs that is filled with ethnic and religious conflicts, wars over resources, and failed states. Thompson (2003) comments on this and says that "From south to north, west to east, fighting burns or simmers in Africa". For example, in Kenya the 2007/2008 post-election violence was a serious setback to the realization of Vision 2030 which had just been initiated. This carnage was aggravated by the fact that the Church in Kenya took sides with the church

⁴ These are also the Millennium Development Goals whose deadline is this year (2015).

leaders and followers supporting their tribal political kinsmen. Kipkemboi (2013) is doubtful whether Kenya's post-election violence would have escalated to the level it did had the Church not taken sides on the political divide. Just like many Kenyans, he believes that the violence that rocked Kenya was in part exacerbated by the silence of the Church. As Kenyans slaughtered each other, some churches were actually also showing partisan by identifying with tribes and political parties fronted by their tribesmen. One wonders how the Church which is supposed to be the conscience of the society should have done this. According to Mue (2008), the church leaders later apologized to the Kenyans for the Church's failure. But is it right to abdicate one's responsibility then come to apologize when things are in mess?

Nevertheless, I concur with Mue (2008)'s assertion that the churches' formal apology to the nation for having taken sides during the 2007 General Election was an important step in the long road to the Church recovering its credibility and playing its role of being the conscience of society. A multi-ethnic society like Kenya with diversified socio-political ideologies requires a Church that is awake at all times in her quest for peace, justice and reconciliation. Unless these three elements are incorporated into the country's economic, social and political pillars that are envisaged in Vision 2030, it will be difficult to realize the dreams set forth by this Vision. The quest for peace, justice and reconciliation is essentially God's work. Ephesians 2 and 3 speak of a non-violent revolution, a dramatic change in relationship between two human communities: Gentiles and Jews. Jesus is central in this universal community 'for he is our peace' (Eph. 2:14) (Peachey, 1988). The way of justice is also rooted in the nature of God. Prophet Jeremiah elucidates this by asserting that "I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight" (Jer.9:23). On reconciliation, Okure (2011) clarifies that incarnation was God's plan to reconcile the entire creation to the divine self, thus restoring the relationship disrupted by the prehistoric or original sin (Gen: 3:16). God in Jesus effected this reconciliation first in person, 'the word became flesh' (Jn 1:14; Gal.4:4) and subsequently through Jesus' passion, death and resurrection, as pure act of grace. In reconciliation God justifies us, declares us righteous, and gives us divine peace. Reconciled to God in and through Christ, the Christians are to mirror the reality of this reconciliation as a way of life. They therefore become God's ambassadors, persuading others to be reconciled to God and to others.

Since the primary mission of the Church is to be a living witness as salt and light of the world (Okure, 2011), the locus where God's reconciliation, peace and justice thrives, it is evident that the Church embraces all aspects of humanity, including social, economic and political which are visualized in Kenya Vision 2030. Thus if Kenya aims to be transformed into an industrialized country by 2030 (see Kenya Vision 2030, 2007, p.1), peace, justice and reconciliation will have to be prioritized as it will be difficult to realize this dream in their absence. The Church which is an active agent of these facets (Okure, 2011 & Shenk, 1983) must not be ignored or think that she has no role to play in this initiative. Social, political or economic prosperity cannot flourish where there is no peace, justice and reconciliation.

Economic Empowerment of the People

Kenya Vision 2030 (2007) stipulates economic empowerment of all Kenyans as one its crucial aim, where economic development programme will be rolled in all regions of Kenya to ensure that the GDP growth rate of 10% is achieved by 2012. Today, in 2015, this has not been achieved as the GDP growth rate stands at around 5.5% per annum, less than 6.2% in 2013 and 6.1% in 2006 (Kenya GDP Annual Growth Rate, 2004-2015, 2004). Does the

Church have any role to play in the economic development of Kenya? It is interesting that the Church in Kenya is busy asking her members to contribute money in form of offering, tithing, thanksgiving e.t.c, but the same Church is not showing the adherents how to be economically self-sustaining. It is like asking someone who does not know how to catch fish to give you fish. According to Mugambi (1989), the Church has as her primary duty 'evangelizing the world'. Nkonge (2004) is of the view that although evangelization describes everything the Church does and is called to do, considered in relation to her impact on society, evangelization is tantamount to raising the economic standards of the people in which it is meant for. Evangelization without an aspect of raising the living standards of the people concerned is thus dubious. If we are to achieve the economic goals set in Vision 2030, the Church must help Kenyans change the attitude that Kenya is poor and therefore should be sustained by foreign aid. Njino (2008) sees it unhealthy for Kenyans to be content with handouts. They should outgrow vices and cultures that bedevil them such as laziness, mismanagement of available resources, wrong priorities, excessive spending and dependence on 'big brother/sister'. The Church as salt and light of the world cannot fail to address the issues raised by Njino because when her members are economically stable, the Church will also be stable, and this will in turn stabilize the entire country. This way the Church will be making a remarkable contribution to the realization of Vision 2030 which aims at providing a high quality life to all Kenyan citizens by 2030. The Church in Kenya needs to take seriously the words of Reed (1994) that "By means of economic empowerment, churches have become a force for revitalization in their communities".

Participating in the Development of the Nation

In summary, the Kenya Vision 2030 is about the socio-economic and political development of the nation of Kenya. Although economic empowerment which I have discussed above is part of development it is important to note that development is broader as it concerns itself with human dignity, security, justice and equality. M'Ikunywa (1986) clarifies this by arguing that "Development is more than the passage from poor to rich, a traditional rural economy to a sophisticated urban one". According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, to develop is to gradually grow or become bigger, more advanced, stronger e.t.c. Okullu (1984) defines development as transformation of one thing into another. Development deals with positive change of individuals or communities. This change is in all spheres including social, political, economic, psychological, spiritual e.t.c.

The Church in its transformative role is the agent of change in the world. M'Ikunywa (1986) observes that for far too long the Church in general has regarded issues of development as somehow outside its area of immediate concern, concentrating instead on what it considers as its proper duty of preaching the Gospel. It will however be insincere for us to fail to acknowledge that some churches in Kenya have done considerably well in physical development of the nation especially in areas of health, education, agriculture, constitutional reforms, e.t.c. This notwithstanding the fact that some of the hospitals, clinics, universities, colleges and schools started by the Church are too expensive to be afforded by the common Kenyan is a positive contribution to the development of the nation. I think the motivation factor in the Church's involvement in development should not be profit but service to God's people, transforming the world.

Okullu (1984) gives us a theological justification of the Church's participation in development by arguing that development was began by God himself when He said " Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it . . . The Lord took the man and put him in

the garden to till and keep it” (Gen. 1:28; 2:15). So, development has an aspect of multiplying or creating many out of few and also keeping or taking care. A human being as God’s vice-regent must not forget that he/she has a responsibility of multiplying what God has created and also taking care of it. This is what true development entails. Kobia (1986) clarifies this even more by asserting that development responds to the divine will. He says that,

God’s commission that man should have dominion over the rest of creation provides for man the divine mandate to mobilize natural resources in order to better his life. Considered from this perspective, development has life (and people) as its central purpose. The fullness of life therefore becomes the primary goal for development. In so far as life is most sacred in God’s creation, the Church must have a role in whatever affects life- negatively or positively.

If development has to do with the fullness of life or with total development of the person, then it is clear that the Church is called to be involved in development as this is her primary vocation. The Church has been called to enable people attain fullness in life (Jn. 10:10). Since the Vision 2030 was initiated on the same basis, there is no way in which the Church in Kenya can overlook it. The Government should also see the Church as an indispensable partner in the realization of this Vision.

Environmental Conservation

Environmental preservation is key to the successful implementation of Kenya Vision 2030. The Vision envisages a clean, secure and sustainable environment by 2030. This will be achieved by increasing the forest cover to 4%, lessening by half all environment-related diseases, improving pollution and waste management, ensuring availability and accessibility of improved water and sanitation to all Kenyans, enhancing disaster preparedness in all disaster-prone areas and improving the capacity for adaptation to global climate change. On top of this, environment-related laws will be harmonized for better environmental planning and governance (Kenya Vision 2030, 2007). Does the Church have any fundamental role in this initiative geared towards saving the environment?

The 1998 Anglican Bishops Lambeth Conference reported that,

The whole creation is an act of divine love. Every part from the smallest to the largest is intended to be beautiful, both for itself and in its relationship with the whole. However creation as we experience it is disordered. It is only in recent years that we have begun to understand the enormous scale of the damage humanity has caused and is causing to the created order; and the consequences of this for the earth itself (land, water and air), for all living things and not least for the human species itself (The Official Report of the Lambeth Conference, 1998).

Professor J.N.K. Mugambi, the resource person on climate change with World Council of Churches (WCC) in Kenya notes with a lot of concern that the twentieth and twenty-first centuries have cast great doubt about the capacity of human beings to think and act responsibly with regard to their environment. The recklessness with which the environment has been pillaged makes one wonder if there will be any habitat by the end of the twenty-first century (Gitau, 2000). Is humanity aware of what it is doing to itself? For example, in Kenya there is a rapid depletion of the living natural resources. Kenya is replete with deforestation, land degradation, desertification, poaching and pollution which adversely affect the ecosystem (How to Solve Environmental Challenges in Kenya, 2012). As this environmental degradation takes place and as human beings destroy their own habitat or home the Church

which is the light of the world is silent. Gitau (2000) contends that although there is clear biblical evidence indicating how mankind should relate with nature, the Church in Kenya is yet to highlight those biblical insights touching on environmental rehabilitation. While Jesus Christ the founder of Christianity was a great environmentalist, the Church in Kenya has failed to develop a relevant theology on the environment. One wonders how Vision 2030 will be realized in such a situation.

As God's vice-regents, Christians have the responsibility of taking care of God's creation (Gen. 1: 26-28). The Church needs to hearken to the Anglican Bishops' call that "As Christians we need to be aware of our responsibility and accountability for the destruction of the natural environment and should seek to question . . . the use of resources which uphold our iniquitous systems" (Official Report of the Lambeth Conference, 1998). The believers' song as Kenya moves towards the year 2030 should be,

O Lord my God! When in awesome wonder
Consider all the worlds thy hands have made,
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,
Thy power throughout the universe displayed.

Then sing my soul my soul, my saviour God, to thee;
How great Thou art, how great Thou art!
Then sings my soul, my saviour God, to thee
How great Thou art, how great Thou art. (Praises to the Most High, 1986, no.3).

The Christians' comprehension of their profound sacred task of environmental conservation will be a significant contribution towards the realization of Kenya Vision 2030. The environmental issues are so important that the Church that is concerned with the welfare of her members cannot give a deaf ear to them. The Church in Kenya must wake up to the reality that the rate at which mankind is plundering the environment threatens his/her own survival. Vision 2030 aims at providing quality life to all Kenyans. How will quality life be achieved in a shattered habitat? It has to be said again and again that the Church has an essential responsibility of providing life to the society. The preservation of the environment is tantamount to what Gitau (2000) calls 'Restoring the image of the Garden of Eden'. Practically speaking, I think the Kenya Vision 2030 concerns itself with restoring the 'Garden of Eden' in Kenya. In this case the 'Garden of Eden' is a country devoid of poverty, illiteracy, hunger, environmental destruction, violence, injustices, tribalism, corruption, unemployment e.t.c.

Combating Corruption

Corruption in its manifestation as bribery, extortion, fraud, nepotism, outright theft, kickbacks, and et cetera (Kunhiyop, 2008), is a serious hindrance to development in any nation. A country may have a good development plan, like Kenya's Vision 2030, but unless it is able to fight this vice, all its effort to offer quality life to its citizens ends to nothing. Although corruption is illegal in Kenya, it is woven deep into the fabric of everyday life of the Kenyan society (Githiga, 2001). Bishop Okullu had to say in 1974 that 'Corruption in Kenya is nearing dangerous proportions' (Okullu, 1974). What is very saddening is that this situation seems not to have changed in spite of the successive governments' promise that they will stop this adversary of development. Bishop Mwendwa argues that corruption in the post-colonial Kenya has had a history which cuts across the era of the Jomo Kenyatta and

Daniel Moi's Kenya African National Unity (KANU) governments to Mwai Kibaki's Party of National Unity (PNU) government (Mwendwa, 2015). President Uhuru Kenyatta's Jubilee government is today grappling with this same vice as it has entered into every sector, including important national institutions such as the Parliament and Judiciary (Daily Nation, 15 March, 2015). In the 2012 Corruption Perceptions Index, Kenya was ranked 139th out of 176 countries (Transparency International, 2012). Kunhiyop (2008) elucidates that despite its high Christian population, Kenya is one of the most corrupt countries in Africa. It is thus clear that corruption is a disease devouring every sector in Kenya and it will be absolutely difficult to realize the ideals of Vision 2030 in such an environment.

So what should the Church in Kenya do curb corruption? An important thing to note is that as Kunhiyop (2008) denotes, many Christians are also corrupt. They accept or even benefit from corruption. This may explain why although some 82.5 % of the Kenyan population claims to be Christian (according to 2009 Population Census), corruption is still rampant in Kenya. This means that any Church's meaningful war against corruption must start from within herself. The Church in Kenya should not be like the Vatican Church which Kung (1974) informs that it is busy defending social justice, democracy and human rights for the world outside but internally continues to maintain an authoritative style of government. If the Church hopes to transform the world, this transformation should first be experienced within herself. The Church is the salt and light of the world, but as Jesus asks 'Can a blind man lead a blind man?' (Lk. 6:39-40). When Christians in Kenya will start to realize that they have a moral duty to contribute to the social, economic, political and cultural well-being of the Kenyan society, and that they cannot achieve this if they are corrupt, this will be a huge stride towards combating corruption.

On top of this the Church must hearken to her prophetic call of being 'the voice of the voiceless'. Githiga (2001) faults the Church in Kenya for failing to criticize corruption. He is concerned that church leaders and even Christians in general are silent as a few people plunder this country's resources. One wonders how it will be possible to realize Vision 2030 when the available resources are fraudulently being pocketed by a few corrupt individuals. Nthamburi (1989) argues that the Church is a source of moral virtue. It plays an important role in preserving the society's moral norms. It thus shuns such illegal acts as corruption, nepotism, dishonesty and misuse of public office and categorizes them as immoral acts. This is basically what the Church in Kenya should be doing. Failure to stand firm and speak against corruption is a sign of lack of courage like that of Elijah who did not fear to prophesy against Ahab who neither respected the land laws nor felt guilty for grabbing the land of the poor man (1 Kings 21 & Githiga, 2001). The Church should thus prophesy against civil servants, public officers and political leaders in Kenya who have no respect for the law and who delight in stealing from the poor to benefit themselves, their families and cronies. This way, the Church will be making a notable contribution to the realization of Vision 2030 which can never be accomplished in a corrupt milieu.

Conclusion

The Kenya Vision 2030 that was developed in 2008 was a significant contribution to Kenya's social, political and economic development. It was a good development plan for enhancing high quality life to all Kenyans in all essential areas of life such as education, health, economic life, secure environment, democracy, infrastructure, security and a just society. If all the suggestions made in this vision are strictly implemented, then no doubt Kenya will be

a prosperous country by 2030. Therefore effort must be made by all sectors to ensure the successful execution of this vision which is very promising to all Kenyans regardless of their status, gender, religion, race and age. As this happens, the Church which is the conscience of the society cannot stand at the periphery. She must realize that God has appointed her as the 'gatekeeper' for the country (1 Tim. 3:15), and blame usually falls on her if things go wrong. There is no way in which the Church can claim to exist if the citizens of the country where she is operating are suffering. She must therefore solemnly support this Vision which promises high quality life to all the people of Kenya. The abundant life by promised by Jesus (Jn.10:10) is witnessed through the Church, His bride. Failure by the Church to take cognizance of the issues affecting the society makes her an insipid and irrelevant organization.

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