



Journal of Liberal Arts and Humanities (JLAH)
Issue: Vol. 1; No. 4; April 2020 pp. 59-79
ISSN 2690-070X (Print) 2690-0718 (Online)
Website: www.jlahnet.com
E-mail: editor@jlahnet.com

Exegetical Appraisal of the Divisions in the Corinthian Church and its Application to Nigerian Christianity

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Abstract

The contemporary Nigerian Christianity is not immune from cross-cultural conflicts of different kinds in spite of its multicultural nature. Ironically, cultural diversity in the church is God's sovereign plan. He authored and brought it to bear on the life of the Church as a gift and a means to achieve his plans and purposes for the church on earth. The extent of division in Nigerian churches is quite common and has really given a serious concern to scholars. Two germane research questions, which borders the problem of this research, are considered in this study. What is the major reason the level of church divisions is extremely high in Nigerian churches? Is the division in Corinthians church applicable to recurrent and successive division in the Nigerian churches? These are the research problems which this research has been able to tackle critically. This research anchored on interactive ritual theory of religion. Meanwhile, the research adopts a critical exegetical method to enhance discussion of the problem of division in Corinthians church as such is applicable to Nigerian Christianity. Findings in this research state that the same problem that led to the division in Corinthians church is also applicable to the problem Nigerian Churches is facing today. All church leaders to do a greater work by desisting from using their personal quest for materialism and power to rupture the good mind of the members in the church.

Keywords: Exegetical, Appraisal, Church, Divisions, Exegesis, Corinthian Church, Nigerian Church.

Introduction

Division of Churches connotes the fragmentation of Christian denominations and hatred that exists among Christians. This characterizes the feature of most Nigerian churches/Christianity. Therefore, the cumulative effects of the division of Churches in the last few decades outweighed the positive effects. On a positive view, some respectable spiritual leaders have added effort in bringing together Christians of different denominations to dialogue and discuss the salient issues about the truth in the bible and those Christian virtues that enhance national peace and development.

Historically, in Nigeria towards the end of the 19th century, only six foreign missionary establishments were fully functional."¹ Following the position of Ikeazota, the six churches established are as below with their year of establishment via the founders.

¹G.R Ikeazota, (2013). "Proliferation of Churches and National Development" *Bassey Andah Journal* 6(2013): 2

For about sixty years, only six foreign missionary extractions were on record in Nigeria. From the 1960s African initiative in the missionary work became very obvious and aggressive with the Aladura Movement and the Scripture Union as key protagonists. The activities of the Faith Tabernacle (1928), Apostolic Church (1931) and Assemblies of God Church (1932) were very skeletal, compared to the great zeal and missionary aggression of the 1970s. Though Bill Roberts had started the activities of the Scripture Union in Nigeria in the 1960s it was after the Civil War that the Evangelical aggression gave rise to different fragmentation of Churches. Ignorance, poverty, and illiteracy had forced many people to seek divine intervention beyond the formal and nominal approach of the mainline Churches. The Civil War had left many people

S/N	Churches	Founders	Year Founded
1	Methodist Church	Thomas Birch Freeman	September 1842
2	Church Missionary Society	Henry Townsend	December 1842
3	The Presbyterian Church	Hope Waddell	April 1846
4	Baptist Church	Thomas J. Bowen	August 1850
5	Holy Ghost Fathers	Father Lutz	December 1885
6	Qua Iboe Church	Samuel Alexander Bill	December 1887

Purposely, Paul's intention of writing the book of 1 Corinthians when he was at Ephesus was mainly to handle the problem of different views on who is the exponent of Christianity, and the problem about baptism that arose in the Corinthian church. This problem of division among the members of the church came to his notice later on. And as a man with leadership understanding deemed it fit to respond positively to the problems. This is because he had a quest for the unity of the church entrusted in his hand. He never wishes any problem that could lead to division in the church to come from his teachings. Paul rather wish that the purpose of God in instituting the church be realize by faith. People like Fortunatus, Achaicus, and Stephanas played a vital role in helping Paul to know about the division problem in the Corinthian church. These three delegates were the people sent to go and deliver the letter composed by the congregation in Corinth to Paul. Invariably, from the above, we can deduce that there are three major means by which Paul was able to get the information of what is happening in the congregation. They can be summarized as bellow: one is through servant of Chloe. In Nigeria, members in the church out of fear, find it difficult to approach the church head who did something wrong. But those who has been influenced by western culture outspokenly challenge the church head on any wrong did. Secondly, through a letter written directly to Paul from the congregation expressing their feeling about what they are not clarified about personal life and congregational life. Thirdly, through the three-delegate sent by the congregation to Paul in Ephesus. These three delegates are included among the source of information to Paul because they are other things, they told Paul which differ from the information given from the first and second source. Among all other churches founded by Paul, the Corinthian church is known globally because it has a strong leading position in Achaia, but now is experiencing a serious disrepute based on the division problem that arose in their midst. The first book of Paul to the Corinthians is loaded with moral lessons that addresses the attitude of Christians, the church leaders in contemporary Nigerian churches. Paul identifies the problem of Corinthian church and addresses it in line with the demand of the kingdom of God.

“Paul develop this idea in several different ways to deal on their root problem of pride. They had their eyes on external things like eloquence, social status, ascetic practices, etc. And Paul explains that those things mean nothing in God's kingdom.”¹¹

Paul's attempt to reply the congregation complaints in Corinth is purposely to address the issue of church division which some groups claim they are no longer for Paul, but Apollos. Some claim they are of Peter while some groups insist on remaining followers of Paul. And the remaining group believed they are of Christ with whom all the divided groups professes.

Division in Nigerian churches are caused by so many factors like a wrong application of biblical doctrine, intolerance, pride, tribalism, god-fathers, leadership position, loss of spiritual insight, inferiority complex, superiority complex and lots more. If the churches could just deal with ego and pride of her leaders, most them would never divide. It is obvious that churches are most often pride induced, sometimes it is the truth that divides and that is excusable, but the solution is in understanding each other in all humility.

homeless and poor. Majority of the people resorted to prolonged prayer and fasting as well as speaking in tongues beyond the conventionally written prayers of the missionaries. Baptism of the Holy Spirit, healing and other forms of miracles became pronounced. Gradually, every prayer warrior became Church founder, as thousands of people needed a solution to myriads of life puzzles brought about by the hardship of the Civil war.

¹¹P. G Apple, *The Key to Solving Church Problems: Exalt God rather than Man* (Baltimore: Beech-wood, 2009), 5.

“In many ways arrogance, pride, dogmatism, and personal preference describe the modern church’s denominational confusion.”^{III} The church is to be more of an organism than an organization. Church to be more organism than organization means that elements of positive living should be seen in the lives of Christians in churches than an ordinary assembly. Apostle Paul uses the body to explain what the church means. The church is the body which does the will of the head. Problem of Church division set-in the moment a person or group tries to use other people to meet a particular selfish goal. Church division may occur as a result of pride in keeping stipulated rules and regulation of the church in which those that disobey the rules are maltreated. Another way it can occur is when a church chose to camouflage interpolation of doctrine without using the Bible truth to bring it to the understanding of the people. It can as well result when group team-up to take away leadership position from existing leadership. Since the Nigerian church does not exist in a vacuum, the diversity of the country along ethnic, tribal, and cultural lines, also show up in Churches, thus, the attendants' conflicts and divisions at different levels of its operations and ministries. Ike emphasizes the forms of “marginalization and Injustices that are very high at all strata, both in the society and the Church.”^{IV} The result of marginalization and injustices is the main cause of rivalry, hatred, divisions, misunderstanding, and apathy in Nigerian churches.

The problem that initiated this research remains, what is the major reason for the extremely high level of divisions in Nigerian churches? Another problem in this research states, is the division in Corinthians church applicable to recurrent and successive division in the Nigerian churches? These are the research problems that will be given a critical and tactical attention in this research.

The purpose of this research is to examine Paul’s leadership principles in solving church’s division menace. The research will exegetically investigate the similarity of the divisions in Corinthian church to divisions in Nigerian churches. This research will highlight reasons for the profuse proliferation of churches in Nigeria.

Data collection was obtained from two main sources, the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources like unpublished materials were consulted and participant observations carried out. In the secondary aspect, written published materials such as textbooks, academic journals, conference/seminar papers and internet materials among others were accessed. The mentioned sources were used because they geared towards providing great information for the work of this type. Method of data analysis adopted in this research is a critical exegetical method.

The research underpins the ways the similar problem of Corinthians church could be eradicated in various congregations in Nigerian churches. Paul specifically took a bold step to address the problem without giving room for further problems.

Conceptual Framework

In view of the fact that Paul approached the issue in the congregation the way he does, yet God was at work to bring to manifestation his will for the church. With respect to the persecutions and trials the New Testament church faced, yet God was never silent to deliver his people. Even when the gravity of persecution was so high in the church, God made a divine way to keep the church growing. The role of God is to reconcile people to Him. Also, the Lord has the purpose of new believers in Christ as the creation of peace and unity between believers and nonbelievers. In other words, “there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” This is God’s plan for the church. Ever since the early church, it has unfortunately been a hotbed of conflicts. The conflict in the Corinthian church is simply described as thus:

^{III}B. Utley, *Paul’s Letters to a Troubled Church: I and ii Corinthians* (Texas: Marshall, 2011), 25.

^{IV}O.F Ike, “The Church in Nigeria: The Family of God in Communion Dialogue and Mission,” Paper presented at *the Second National Pastoral Congress in Nigeria at Pope John Paul ii Centre Wuse*, Federal Capital Territory Abuja, November 14, 2012.

“The image of the church these chapters [1 Cor. 1-4] present is extremely ambiguous. For there is a paradox at the heart of the church, It is the painful tension between what the church claims to be and what it seems to be; between the divine ideal and the human reality; between romantic talk about ‘the bride of Christ’ and the very unromantic, ugly, unholy and quarrelsome Christian community we know ourselves to be.”^v

Despite the fact that Reinhold observes that “human nature is not wanting in certain endowments for the solution of the problem of human society,”^{vi} yet, men can never resolve their problems in their society when they allow their sinful nature to overrule. The contemporary church is not out of place since they are still part of the society. Christians have quest to live in love and peace with one another, but they do not live up to such a target regularly. They by omission and commission hurt others by words and actions. Church fragment into different unit come to bear when decisions are to be reached on the issues like the election of leaders, the use of church money, the position of the church building, and the system of the church administration. Jesus in his prayer for the church specifically prayed for their unity. The unity of the church would link our oneness with one another to the unity of the Godhead. The same prayer for the unity of the church in which Jesus was praying for is the same position of Paul for the unity of the church. On a critical look, of-all the early churches, the Corinthian church can be regarded as the most problematic church in the New Testament.

Principal Issues in the Corinthians Church as Applicable to Nigerian Christianity

The purpose for which Jesus made available different personalities with spiritual gifts in the church is simply to ensure that the church grows effectively. The functionality of the church will be a hard task when the different personalities with the different gifts from God are not performing (Ephesians 4:7-16). Yet some churches such as the one in Corinth struggled with many problems. In fact, Corinth may be likened to the Mexico, Nigeria, South Africa, or Las Vegas of the ancient world. No other epistle gives a better look at the problems and conditions in an apostolic church. Even though planted and nurtured by Paul himself, the church at Corinth is faced with social, ethical, spiritual, and doctrinal problems. The problem of division in the Corinthian church is applicable to the problem of church division in Nigeria. Some of the problems which had led to proliferation of Nigerian churches include doctrinal challenges, interdenominational marriage, mode of baptism, belief system, and leadership position. For further insight on this,

“Churches are noted to be springing up at an alarming and unprecedented rate in all available spaces, shops and uncompleted buildings. Worship come up in warehouses, hotels, abandoned cinema buildings, studios and other public places. It is a common sight to see a minimum of fifty different churches on a street of four kilometers long. This may paint a terrible picture, but such is the present rate of church proliferation in the country.”^{vii}

For Paul to be able to write the Corinthians letter, it was a difficult task, but through his profound knowledge and ideals, dominate the pages of the letter and made known to the church his patient, love, and self-control. The Corinthian situation and Paul’s instruction to them provide important lessons for today’s churches that are going through process of division. Corinthian letters reveal causes and solutions to church problems. This will be discussed extensively in the textual critical exegesis of 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. Paul understood the church as the called-out people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple where the Holy Spirit lives. Church rivalry; however, grow when people behave as individuals, not as members of a body. During church division, the oneness of the body of Christ is ruined. Jim points out the significance of unity as thus:

“The church is a living organism, not a machine; a body, not a collection of individuals. In the church, all interpersonal disputes are symptoms of deeper problems impacting or involving the whole body. This is what makes church conflict different from all others because the church is founded upon oneness in Christ. There is one body and one Spirit just as you were called to one hope when you were called one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”^{viii}

^v S. W John, *Calling Christian Leaders: Biblical Models of Church Gospel and Ministry* (Leicester: Intervarsity, 2002), 17.

^{vi}N, Reinhold, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, (New York: Charles Scribner, 1960), 2.

^{vii}O.DIbiyinka, “Environmental Effects of Church Proliferation: The Redeemed Christian Church of God as a Case Study” *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1, no.15 (2011):178.

^{viii}V. Y. Jim, *Making Peace: A Guide to Overcoming Church Conflict*, (Chicago: Moody, 2002), 33.

Paul proposed the real and practical model of ministry for thirty years. This means he did not contract with the world but made himself fit-in for the purpose of God. Throughout the ministry of Paul, he devoted himself into soul winning that is why he was able to carry out the ministerial task effectively. Paul adopted a particular strategy that even as he kept his biblical rules, yet, he from time to time changes his biblical method of interpretation. Here, the researcher tries to explore the fact that Paul is dynamic in his approach to interpreting the message of the bible. Paul most time will prefer to behave like an unbeliever in view to win souls for Christ, and later on, he will be seen behaving the normal way. Holding to the spiritual contribution of Paul, some scholars attribute the exponent of Christianity to Paul, while some are against this idea. "Paul is much better described as 'follower of Jesus' than as 'founder of Christianity.'"^{IX} In fact, leadership strategy of Paul and his quest to expand the kingdom message made some to think he is the exponent of Christianity. But in other words, like David who affirmed that Paul is rather to be described as a follower of Jesus Christ and not the founder of Christianity. Who then is the exponent of Christianity between Jesus Christ and Apostle Paul? If you affirm Jesus Christ to be an exponent of Christianity, can Jesus be a founder of Christianity when he is not a Christian? One can agree with me that the leadership skill and quest of Paul automatically has created an image in the subconscious mind of the people about Paul's unending zeal to establish and make for the continuity of Christ body here on earth. "Everything rises and falls on leadership."^X This statement actually received a proof in the Corinthian church in which Paul's position of leadership is explained. In this respect, Christians in Nigeria and beyond need to emulate Paul's strategic plane to deal with the division problem in his time. Holding to the biblical principles for a solution to the church division problems, God shows way out to the subsequent church division problems through Paul's admonition. To further ponder on this, the exegetical analogy of these facts about the division in Corinthians church will help us to understand other mysteries about the church in Corinth as it has a cross-reference to the contemporary Nigerian churches division.

Textual Critical Exegesis of 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

The below is the Greek and English translation of the 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. Under each Greek word is the English meaning and the same meaning is used for critical exegesis of the passages. However, accent, soft breathing, the iota subscript, elision and punctuation marks are well acknowledged in the text.

The Text of 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

The text of 1 Corinthian 1:10-17 is going to take two ways, the first is the Greek translation and the second is the English translation which are as interpreted bellow:

The Greek Direct Translation

The Greek translation bellow contain some of the critical signs that indicate that a given text is omitted, inserted and some that have alternative readings. For instance, "(Γ, ○, †, < >, and †)."^{XI}

V10=> Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες καὶ μὴ ἦ ἐν ὑμῖν †σχίσματα, ἧτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῖ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γυώμῃ.

V11=> ἐδηλώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί °μου, ὑπὸ τῶν χλόης ὅτι ἐριδῆς ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν

V12=> λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει • ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Χριστοῦ.

V13=> †μεμέρισται ὁ χριστός; †μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώτε †ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε;

V14=> εὐχαριστῶ ' [τῷ θεῷ]' ὅτι οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα εἰ μὴ Κρίσπον καὶ Γάϊον,

V15=> ἵνα μὴ τις εἴπῃ ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα †ἐβαπτίσθητε.

V16=> ἐβάπτισα δὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον, λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἴ τινα °ἄλλον ἐβάπτισα.

^{IX}W. David, *Paul: Follower of Jesus or Founder of Christianity*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 10.

^XR, Lee, *The Eight Laws of Leadership: Making Extraordinary Leaders out of Ordinary Believers*. (Lynchburg: Church Growth Institute, 1992), 10.

^{XI}†=>this is a critical sign denoting alternative readings, ○ => this is a critical sign conveying words omitted in the text, †=> this is a critical sign showing inserted words in a given text, < > => this is a critical sign denoting replacement, and † => is a critical sign symbolizing alternative readings also. It is good to note that 'Γ' and '†' are the same where they are seen to appear in any given text.

V17=>οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλὲν με ὁ Χριστὸς βαπτίζειν ἀλλὰ ἵνα εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἢ λόγῳ, ἵνα μὴ κενωτῆ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ χριστοῦ.

The English Direct Translation

The below is the translation of the above Greek to English.

V10=> I am reassuring but you, brothers, through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ of us so that the very thing you may be saying all ones, and not may be in you divides, you may be but having been adapted down in the very mind and in the very assumption.

V11=>It was made apparent for to me concerning you, brothers of me, by the ones of Chloe that acts of strife in you are.

V12=>I am saying but this that each one of you is saying i actually i am of Paul, I but of Apollos, I but of Cephas, I but of Christ.

V13=>has been break the Christ. Not Paul was put on stake over you, or within the name of Paul were you baptized?

V14 => I am conveying appreciation that none of you I baptized if Crispus and Gaius

V15 =>in order that not person of influence should say that into my name you were baptized

V16=> baptized but the of Stephanas house also; remaining thing not I have known if any person other I baptized.

V17=> Not for delegated off me Christ to be baptizing but to be make known clearly good news, not in common sense of word, in order that be made nothing the stake of the Christ not might.

The Critical Textual Exegesis

In V 10=> Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες καὶ μὴ ἦ ἐν ὑμῖν ἴσχισματα, ἥτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῖ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ. (I am reassuring but you, brothers, through the name of the lord Jesus Christ of us so that the very thing you may be saying all ones, and not may be in you divides, you may be but having been adapted down in the very mind and in the very assumption).

The Greek phrase used Παρακαλῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς (I am reassuring but you) was both imperative and durable. It implies a call to convenient development likewise an authoritative challenge. This means that the speaker is emphatically concern about the well-being and progress of the recipients of his instruction. The passages where this term was used in the letter of Paul to Corinthians are (I Corinthians 1:10; 4:16; 16:15; and II Corinthians 2:8; 5:20; 6:1; 10:1; 12:1, 8; 15:30). In the same verse 10 of our text, the Greek word ἀδελφοί (Brothers) used by Paul is the same with “brethren.” Paul’s frequent use of the word ἀδελφοί is mainly to express his fatherly love for the church. Though a times, he admonishes them with harsh words yet, they are still his brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus. In another look at the usage of the Greek ἀδελφοί by Paul, in most of his statement he prefers to use it to signal a new subject, but in this context, he uses it to express the unity of the congregation in Corinth. The phrase also used in verse 10 διὰ τοῦ ὀνόματος τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, (through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ of us) in Jewish culture represents a person’s attribute and authority. Utley translates this as thus “by all that our Lord Jesus Christ means to you.”^{xii} Also in the same verse 10, the phrase ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ λέγητε πάντες καὶ {so that the very thing you may be saying all ones} entails that there is more than one present active subjunctive in the purpose of Paul, that is ἵνα which is clause meaning (so that). As used in the context “so that the very thing you may be saying” denotes present active subjunctive “all ones” which is a perfect passive participle, which makes this a tangential. This tangential implies that Paul is relating this word to every group in the congregation. This means that the same purpose of the calling he received should be what they also ought to profess, whether you are of Paul, Apollos, Peter or Jesus Christ, we are called for a similar purpose and that purpose ought to be achieved. In the congregation in Corinth, so many factions coexist, and these factions were not having the same thing in common as to understand each other.

^{xii}B. Utley, *Paul’s Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians* (Texas: Marshall, 2011), 25.

As said earlier, the intention of Paul for this church entirely reflects the prayer of Jesus as pointed out by John in John 17:11, 21-23, “that they may be one, as we are.”^{xiii} Unity of the body of Christ is essential for a healthy, growing of great commission church (Philippians 1:27). The existence of unity in the church leads to transformation, harmony and transparency among the people (2 Corinthians 3:14; 4:4; and 11:3). The phrase **μη ἢ ἐν ὑμῖν ὀχίσματα** (and not may be in you divides). This term **σχίσματα** (divide or separation or discord or split) was used in Koine Greek of factious political parties (Acts 14:4; 23:7). It is from the Greek word **σχίσματα** that the English word, “**schism**,” was derived. This forms the major discord in the Corinthians congregation, these divisions were based on several issues like as below:

1. “Believers’ personal preference for certain leadership skills (i.e. rhetoric)
2. Believers’ pride and jealousy over spiritual gifts
3. Believers’ recognition of economic categories (i.e. rich and poor)
4. Believers’ prejudice over social rank (i.e. Slave and free)
5. Believers’ racial pride (i.e. Jew and Gentile)
6. Believers’ jealousy or pride over marital status (i.e. married and unmarried)
7. Believers’ pride over intellectual prowess (i.e. first-century educational elitism, sophists).^{xiv}

The above-mentioned problems of the early church are not different from the modern-day church problems where arrogance, dogmatism, pride, and personal ambition dominate the spiritual consciences of the church. In Nigeria, each denomination claims to be the best and only called out church by God. Each denomination thinks they reflect the mind of God exclusively. Paul’s intent in admonishing the Corinthians church is mainly as seen in the same verse 10, the last statement which read **ἦτε δὲ κατηρτισμένοι ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ νοῖ καὶ ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ γνώμῃ** (you may be but having been adapted down in the very mind and in the very assumption). “Completely united with only one thought and one purpose.”^{xv} The very purpose Paul is referring to here is for the sake of the Kingdom of God, the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Great Commission, personal sanctification, not personal confusion, preferences, or interest.

V11=> ἐδηλώθη γάρ μοι περὶ ὑμῶν, ἀδελφοί μου, ὑπὸ τῶν χλόης ὅτι ἐριδῆς ἐν ὑμῖν εἰσιν (it was made evident for to me about you, brothers of me, by the ones of Chloe that acts of strife in you are). The main subject in the statement above is people of Chloe.

“We know nothing about this lady except that perhaps she was a member of the church at Corinth or at least her workers were members. Her name was a nickname for the agriculture goddess, Demeter. Her servants are one source of Paul’s knowledge about the problems which had developed within the house churches at Corinth.”^{xvi}

The word **ἐριδῆς** meaning (quarrels) is one among the fruits of the flesh mentioned in the Galatians, you can see that in Galatians 5:20, this denotes the state of disorder, unsatisfactory, lack of self-control, anger, and selfishness. This implies that these are the characteristics of people who engage into quarrels. This also can be seen in Paul’s other list of sins found in Galatians 3:3, 2 Corinthians 12:20, and I Timothy 6:4. It should never characterize the church of Jesus Christ! It implies that for the church of God to engage in quarreling is one of the grievous sins against God. This will be a food for thought for churches that are planning to divide.

In V 12 **λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος ὑμῶν λέγει • ἐγὼ μὲν εἰμι παύλου, ἐγὼ δὲ Ἀπολλῶ, ἐγὼ δὲ κηφᾶ, ἐγὼ δὲ Χηριστοῦ.** (I am saying but this that each one of you is saying indeed I am of Paul, I but of Apollos, I but of Cephas, I but of Christ.). Paul here tries to let the congregation know about what he has heard about the different factions existing in the congregation. These factions are: Paul’s group who are considered freedom group, Apollos group who are highly lettered otherwise known as philosophical party, Cephas group considered as legal party (2 Corinthians 11:18-33), and the last group being Christ group who are seen to possess special calling, highly gifted and highly spiritual (2 Corinthians 12:1). Paul having envisaged the different factions encouraged the church that they are all in Christ and none should claim to belong to any of these groups or that, rather all are in Christ.

^{xiii} John 17:11 (KJV)

^{xiv} B. Utley, *Paul’s Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians* (Texas: Marshall, 2011), 27

^{xv} 1 Corinthians 1:10 (The Today’s English Version (TEV) translation)

^{xvi} Ibid: 27-28.

Paul in his open remarks while addressing the congregation to explain to them his awareness about the different groups existing in the congregation exhibited a pastoral quality of fairness and plainness in executing his task of drawing men and women close to God.

It is good to note that one of the qualities of Apollos as an eloquent preacher is his high intellectual acquisition. This particular quality is good enough to make one think himself superior to others. The same thought of superiority can make one to think in line of establishing his own church. When such is found in the church, they will be pushing very hard to open a separate congregation since they are lettered and vibrant to preach with good polished language. Apollos is endowed with an excellent spirit and several other gifts that made him distinct from others around him. He is a Jew from Alexandria in Egypt, but never intends to go back to Egypt (Acts 18:24-28, 19:1 and 16:12). It is quite understandable that through Apollos, good number of followers were drawn to the congregation in Corinth. The word in Greek **κηφᾶ** 'Cephas' is Aramaic which is similar to the Greek name Peter, but the controversy now is if Peter was ever in Corinth or not, because if he was in Corinth then, his own group would have been Judaist party.

In another look at the text, the statement **λέγω δὲ τοῦτο ὅτι ἕκαστος** (I am saying but this that each...) the word 'each' **ἕκαστος** indicates that the different political parties were named after individuals who have drawn a conclusion to stand by what they are saying. The word **λέγω** is alternative present indicating repeated and continue action, which is "saying". It is also vital to note that the development of different classes of people with different opinion in the congregation are based on overemphasis on wisdom, highly influenced by cultural, social and material differences, and such is applicable in the contemporary church.

"I of Christ" It is uncertain if this is Paul's reaction to the leader-oriented factions or another factious group who claimed only Christ as their leader. Clement of Rome, who wrote to Corinth in A.D. 95 (i.e., I Clem. 48) does not mention a Christ's party, although he does mention the other factious groups. This supports the view that this may be an exclamation by Paul. They may choose to acknowledge and follow human leaders, but he lifts up and belongs to Christ alone! Other scholars have supposed that this may have been a group that claimed a special knowledge of Jesus or a special revelation from Jesus or a special relationship to Jesus (i.e., an elite, Gnostic-type faction). But again, this is uncertain and mere speculation. There is so much we do not know about the first and second century church."^{XVII}

Believing every reasonable doubt, some group stood their ground to affirm that they are of Paul for a reason well-articulated on their own side of view. A group stood by the fact that they knew Christ through Paul, that he is the one to own their listening ear and not any other. Most division among Christians stem from the speculations and teaching that is coming in contrary to already going on teachings in the church. Without any doubt, it is obvious to note that there was a big group that followed Paul during his time of ministry in Corinth. For those who were attracted by charismatic kinds of preaching are of special interest to be in the Apollos party. It can be deduced that Apollos possesses a unique quality that attracted so many people to himself. He is well known for his rhetoric quality, a man with a dynamic method of preaching and teaching the concept of the Old Testament scriptures. In Corinthian church, they exist different groups with their different belief on different personalities. Then there was the group who never show their interest to be part of Apollos or Paul. This group may in their belief conclude to say they do not believe about Paul or Apollos rather, may be of the opinion to get back to the beginning of what they were, where they were and how they were before the advent of Paul and his colleague conviction to join their own belief. Another group came with the intention to go back to join Peter in Jerusalem. It is also good to know that Peter has preached in Corinth and has lived there. This group that had their interest in Peter made a confession that shows they really felt they were more grounded and stronger in faith with the influence of Peter. It is good also to know that Peter was one among the first disciples called by Jesus himself, he is also among the inner circle of Jesus during Jesus' ministry on earth. This is how the church in Corinth was splitting, agreeing, disagreeing and fighting about the relative benefit and jurisdiction of these various spiritual fathers. In other words, the other group steps out of the Paul, Apollos and Peter and sticks to Christ whom they believe is the ultimate whom the above-mentioned leaders, preacher professes. The evangelists upon their zeal for evangelism, yet they were disjointing from others, isolating from the Church and fighting each other concerning things happening presently in the congregation.

^{XVII} B. Utley, *Paul's Letters to a Troubled Church: I and II Corinthians* (Texas: Marshall, 2011), 28

With all these things happening, Paul was amazed because he cannot ascertain the root cause of the divisions, whether it is the method of his teaching or not. The truth is that Paul was overwhelmed with confusion to have seen what is happening to be the case among the Corinthian church. Believe it or not, the moment you make a choice of following the teaching of one man about Christ, you are liable to be prone to so many challenges in the society. It is apparent that there is no one that has a complete knowledge about Christ, not even Paul of all people, Peter the rock, and Apollos the man full of intellect. Can a complete knowledge of Christ be seen among the disciple? On a negative expression, the disciples were not with full knowledge about Christ that is why none of them were present during Christ's crucifixion but women. The record of the earthly ministry and life of Christ in the Gospel of Mathew, Mark, Luke, and John, which reflects their varied perspective, also attest to the assertion, that none of the disciples had a comprehensive knowledge of Christ when on earth. Originally, God on his will created human beings with different spiritual endowments that many will be good to teach, others good in preaching, respectively. In the contemporary church, there are good number of others who can make a convincing contribution to help others to understand the teachings about Christ. Limiting oneself to only a speaker or teacher and feeding spiritually from only one particular source, is liable to give a young immature believer a distorted view of Jesus Christ. Listening to different views about Christ will however better adequately the knowledge and understanding of Christ and will not lead anyone to destruction. It is quite unfortunate that among Christians in Nigeria, a good number of them forbid their members from listening to teachings and preaching of other preachers of the Gospel. The reason has been that they are not from the same denomination even when they are all Christians. If all these prejudices exist among Christians in Nigeria, how then can the unity of the church be achieved?

In V 13 => **μεμέρισται ὁ χριστός; ἢ μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώτε ἢ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίστητε;** (has been parted the Christ. Not Paul was put on stake over you, or into the name of Paul were you baptized?) This verse records Paul's horrified reaction. Paul simply asked this question to express his amazing feeling over this recent issue that just came up in the church, he asked, **μεμέρισται ὁ χριστός;** (has been parted the Christ?). Since **μεμέρισται ὁ χριστός;** may be read either as a statement or as a question, several witnesses, like P⁴⁶ 326 1962I⁵²⁹ syr^p.pal cop^{sa} arm, prefix the interrogative **μή**, thus relieving the ambiguity and conforming the clause to the following question. This is a perfect passive indicative, implying that Christ has been and remains divided by the attitudes and actions of these factions at Corinth. If this is a question, then a "yes" response is expected. The Papyri manuscript which was written in the A.D. 200's has a textual variant which read, "Christ cannot be divided" (but this papyrus has been damaged and the text is unsure). The most ancient and reliable Greek uncial manuscripts, A, B, C, D, F, and G, deleted the negative, thereby, making this statement to take three forms which are as (1) a question; (2) an exclamation; or (3) a statement. **μή Παῦλος ἐσταυρώτε ἢ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίστητε;** (not Paul was put on a stake over you, or into the name of Paul were you baptized?) These are Paul's emphatic statements of Christ's supremacy. Paul here for the sake of the name of Christ reduced himself and addressed these factious groups. Paul emphatically used a rhetorical question to really express the supremacy of Christ.

V14=> **εὐχαριστῶ [τῷ θεῷ] ὅτι οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα εἰ μὴ Κρίσπον καὶ Γάϊον,** (I am giving thanks that none of you I baptized if Crispus and Gaius). In the Greek word **εὐχαριστῶ [τῷ θεῷ]**, it is clear that the insertion of **μου** before **θεῷ** as replaced with **τῷ** is scribal assimilation to verse 4 which read **εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου πάντοτε περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ τῆ δοθείση ὑμῖν ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,** which is translated to be (I give thanks always to the God concerning you upon the excessive generosity of the God to the having been given to you in Christ Jesus,). It is more difficult, therefore, to make a determination if the phrase **τῷ θεῷ** fell out unintentionally in transcription which can be seen as generated by Metzger "**εὐχαριστῶτωθω,**"^{XVIII} or that those who copied added a letter to make up the abbreviation of Paul's writing to read **τῷ θεῷ** which is obvious in most of Paul's writing which 1 Corinthians 1:4 is good example. But on a lighter mood it is more preferred to conjoin the pattern of Paul's writing by taking the phrase **τῷ θεῷ** instead of **μου θεῷ**. One may be wondering why the phrase **[τῷ θεῷ]**, in verse 14 is enclosed in a bracket. The reason is simply because it was omitted in the ancient and trusted papyrus **κ* B 6 1739sa^{ms}** that is why it is enclosed in our text above. It also shows the peculiarity of the phrase in the text.

^{XVIII}B.M. Metzger, (1971). *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament* (Princeton: United Bible Society, 1971), 544.

V15=> ἵνα μὴ τις εἴπῃ ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα Ἦβαπτίσθητε. (In order that not someone should say that into the my name you were baptized). The word Ἦβαπτίσθητε has several replacements from different manuscripts which in our text, the sign “Γ” was placed behind the word that received the replacement. For instance, the following manuscripts C³ D F G ψ 1881 replaced the affix from the original text to–**τισα** while other manuscripts β⁴⁶κ A B C* replaced with–**τισθε**. And since they are all supported by recognized papyrus, our own translation is still appropriate. Meanwhile, Paul’s main emphasis is to strictly emphasize that Christ is the one he is representing and not himself. This is indeed an expression of gratitude of which in his ministerial assignment, he is well convinced that he never takes God’s glory to himself. The life of Paul is worthy of emulation especially to those that attribute all works of God to their own ability. God cannot be limited or humiliated by the attitude of men. That one is privileged to have God’s spiritual endowment should not be a reason to think himself more highly than God. In other words, Paul was admonishing the contemporary Christian on the need to focus on the call they received, and not fighting over issues that does not really matter in the Church. Like in Nigerian churches, they fight over doctrinal issue, leadership positions, and money. It is Christ first before any other thing. All the things that the Church does like showing hospitality, praying for the sick ones and other things are not from them rather through God's grace. God says ‘my power will I give unto you’ ‘my peace will I give unto you’ ‘but my glory will I not share to any man’. God can only mimic our ignorance but his glory is with him and cannot be shared.

V16=> ἐβάπτισα δὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον, λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἴ τινα ὄλλον ἐβάπτισα. (baptized but also the of Stephanas house; leftover thing not I have known if anybody other I baptized). The above word ὄλλον is omitted in the following manuscripts F G a b d which made the verse have alterations to read that **ἐβάπτισαδὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον, λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἴ τινα ὄλλον ἐβάπτισα** (baptized but also the of Stephanas house; leftover thing not I have known if anybody I baptized). This manuscript fell out of place since the meaning of what the speaker has in mind is altered, so the translation in our text is more appropriate compare to the meaning from the above manuscripts. It also means that our text as seen above is more original since the ancient papyrus did not recognize the omission. The statement of Paul is a statement of accountability to have recall and lay emphasis to the particular family he baptized. It means that if anyone is doubting him, about the name he baptized with, then the person can go to the family of Stephanas to ask. And holding to the fact that there is already confusion in the midst of the church that made the whole church to have divided mindset and attention, Paul used the medium to correct the wrong impression that is already causing confusion among the members of Corinthians church. Paul with every enthusiasm projected the life of Christ as his ultimate goal for the church to emulate. Taylor says that:

“The life and ministry of Jesus is the pattern for individual Christians, for the life of the church as a whole, and especially for the life and work of leaders in the church. Jesus was not only the carrier and bringer of the message; He was himself the message. By his way of living, by the qualities of His character, by His compassion and readiness to come close to people in their need, Jesus set a pattern for His followers. All Christians in the fellowship of the church are called to be a living expression of these same attitudes, to be living letters for everyone to know and read.”^{XIX}

By the way of understanding the attribute of Christ Jesus, this will give the Christians more highlight about the urgency of making Christ known to mankind and not placing much emphasis on the issue that cannot help the fulfillment of God’s mandate to the church on earth.

V17=> οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλὲν με ἮΧριστὸς βαπτίζειν ἀλλὰ Ἦεὐαγγελίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ Ἦ Λόγου, ἵνα μὴ κενωτῇ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ χριστοῦ. (Not for sent off me Christ to be baptizing but to be declaring good news, not in wisdom of word, in order that be made empty the stake of the Christ not might). The above text also has several insertions and replacement on some word like ἮΧριστὸς which is inserted, word like Ἦεὐαγγελίζεσθαι has a replacement likewise Ἦλόγου as said earlier for the sake of academics, the use of the following signs Ἦ and Ἦ is the same in scholarship. The dot in the subsequent sign is an indication that such sign was used previously in the same verse.

^{XIX} H. Taylor, *Applied Theology 2 Tend my Sheep*. (Delhi: ISPCK, 2006), 11.

However, β⁴⁶ B F G 323 pc inserts ‘ο’ while in the manuscript B 365 pc received replacement of our above original text to read **ισασθαι** likewise the papyrus β¹¹ sy^p received a replacement different from our original text to be **λόγων**. The word **λόγων** as inserted by β¹¹ sy^p takes genitive case, and at the same time in plural form. If the above manuscript is used, it will mean that our text will take a form of possession which is quite different from the intention of the speaker. It will mean that the word Paul mentioned is not making reference to God’s divine wisdom to Paul his own. This manuscript is not appropriate to the original manuscript since there is no support from the ancient manuscript to prove its originality. Therefore, for Paul to place much emphasis about baptism could imply that the issue of baptism is one of the issues that really caused the problem of division in the church at Corinth. Such is not far from most division that have occurred in Nigerian churches where some group because of the issue of infant baptism and mode of baptism are leaving their churches to form their own church while others are leaving to join another church. The same people who frown at infant baptism preach Christ for all, the same people preach that if anyone is not baptized with water and Holy Ghost, he will not see the kingdom of heaven.

Theoretical Framework

A theory “is a general proposition, or logically-connected system of general propositions, which establishes a relationship between two or more variables. It is an explanation of a particular social phenomenon.”^{xx} In a qualitative research, a theory gives over-all account of the range of particular concepts that are affiliated in a systematic manner. This complex concept must be made clear in detail so as to really bring out the meaning of the concept in whole. Also, theory is well organized, analytical means that constitutes our experiences from day to day. The theories that scholars have used in earlier researches are used in this research in relation to contemporary church and its management. For instance, the interactive ritual theory of religion is used in this research.

Interactive Ritual Theory of Religion

This religious theory was propounded by Randall Collins who drew his insights from work of Durkheim and Erving Goffman. This is a theory that explains the interaction and feedback of individuals who are within a specific religious group. It deals with the historic understanding of a particular religious group and how that group has strived over the years to the point it is. In its historic trace, different kinds of interactions and religious rituals are carried out and these are the things that are expected from the individuals who belong to such group to give its feedback. Religion is a phenomenon that deals with a historical presentation. “It is so because religion cannot be fully understood if it is properly guided with its trace of history.”^{xxi}

On the other hand, to handle the problem of division in churches in this contemporary time and the quest to resolve the subsequent division, it should be followed with an interaction of the past, present and perhaps future events. Putting into consideration these three aspects will help the church to focus more on their major objective instead of seeing their present situation as a problem. “There are key factors that sustain the existence and application of interactive ritual theory.”^{xxii} These key factors are physical co-presence of the interactive group, exclusivity of the group, a mutual focus and mood, and bodily synchronization. Collins further outlines some advantages that could be drawn from the interactive ritual theory in the discourse of religious affairs, especially as regards its historic understanding.

^{xx}G. Abend, *The Meaning of Theory*. (Washington: Northwestern University, 2008), 177.

^{xxi}O. Z. Ifeanyi, “*Seventh-day Adventist Church’s Perception of the Ecumenical Movement in Abia state, Nigeria.*” A thesis Submitted to the Department of Religion and Human Relations, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, in partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the award of Master of Arts (M.A) degree in Religion and Human Relations, September 2016, 45.

^{xxii}Randall, Collins, *the Micro-Sociology of Religion: Religious Practices, Collective and Individual*. (ARDA Guiding Paper Series. State College, PA: The Association of religion Data Archives at The Pennsylvania State University, 2010), <http://www.thearda.com/rrh/papers/guidingpapers.asp>.

Some of these notable advantages include the fact that it “enables us to see when religious practices succeed or fail socially when belief, enthusiasm, morality, and community are stronger or weaker, growing or fading.”^{XXIII} As proposed by Durkheim in his theory as regards issues of shared norms and value for the continuity of a society, Collins also makes strong assertions on interactive ritual theory as something that expresses strong emotions and never loses sight of different values system of the individual that assemble together in such religious affairs. Collins affirms that in religious ritual, there are different religious beliefs and each proposes its method of interaction in expressing its belief better. He made an instance with the Catholic and Protestants who though in one Christian circle, have different religious rituals. These rituals he opines come inform of belief or doctrine which unites and makes its interaction better. These rituals always have a historic undertone which cannot be overlooked and it is such historic undertone that makes it a continuous interaction.

In assessing this theory, Collins opines that any religion or religious concept under review must first take into cognizance its historic beginning. Therefore, for the concept of church and its division, the interactive ritual theory looks into the historic beginning of church, doctrine, belief, and activities. Tracing the historical events of societal structures, institutions, and ideas enhances the understanding of the role they play in churches and its continual existence. Christian historiography simply shows the unique Christian perception of reality, which as well does not refer just to history documented through people of God, and not even study of church history and discourses about God. Historiography is rather concern with everything about a given people, their way of life, their perception, nature of their institution and their traditional management method. Also, what keeps the unity of Christians to keep moving is their ability to critically trace their history and discover how well they started, where they are now and where they are heading to. To better explain church division problems under the confines of Christianity, it is apt to employ interactive ritual theory. Therefore, this research adopts this theory to better explain the concept of church, Christianity, and church division in our contemporary time.

Issues Surrounding the Divisions in Nigerian Contemporary Churches

The extent of church division in Nigeria is paramount to the extent that its occurrences happened at a very ease manner. Some of the glaring factors that enhances the successive proliferation of churches in Nigeria ranges from: issue of covering of hair, position of women in the church, persecution, high political ambition in the church system, disagreement between leaders and members, jealousy, insecurity syndrome, inadequate enlightenment, avidity.

Concerning the issue of head covering in 1 Corinthians 11:2ff, the thrust of instruction Paul gives is that a woman dishonors her head when she prays or prophecies with her head not covered. Here the woman’s head implies any male folk that is around woman, which could be the uncle, cousin, the better-half of the woman or one who takes care of her for the moment. Looking at this in actual sense, what then is Paul trying to insinuate here? It simply means that Paul is trying to bring to focus the issue of respect a man deserves from a woman in times of worship. For the sake of men who cannot take care of their wife's hair, covering it will help to cover their inabilities in taking care of their wives' hair. Paul though without a woman as a wife understands issues surrounding family affairs by placing this as a prerequisite that ought to be safe-guarded for security reasons. Paul in another dimension, made reference to “the woman as man’s glory, and man’s glory should be covered during worship”. In worship, two things are expedient; prayer and prophecy. Any worship that these two things are not contained is not a worship. A worship should be able to encourage the discernment of God’s will for the people (prophecy) and as well be a medium for intercession (prayer).

Another cause of church division is about position of women in the church. Paul says to the church in Corinth and not to African churches “let your women keep silence in the churches: For it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also said the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church” (1 Cor. 14:34, 35 KJV). Likewise, in 1 Timothy 2:11, 12, Paul repeated the same thing, and all are his opinion and not God’s. He says “let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. ‘But I suffer not a woman’ (ἐπιτρέπω δέοῦκυνῆ) to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”

^{XXIII} Randall, Collins, *the Micro-Sociology of Religion: Religious Practices, Collective and Individual*. (ARDA Guiding Paper Series. State College, PA: The Association of religion Data Archives at The Pennsylvania State University, 2010), <http://www.thearda.com/rrh/papers/guidingpapers.asp>. 6.

If Paul is giving instruction to the church in Corinth based on his own side of view, why should that become a problem to the present contemporary church? It is out of context to use another man's tradition to punish one who is not even in any way related to background in which such a tradition was executed. In other words, Paul was even contradicting himself by making reference to prophecy during the time of worship. If women are to keep silent in the church, how will they speak in tongue and at the same time prophesy since silence has to do with lack of sound? These are things Christians in Nigeria should put into consideration before taken a step of alienating women from spiritual and vital role they need to be part of in the church. Nigerian churches should know that God never and will never forbid women from professing his name in the place of worship and in the society at large.

Considering our present globalized world where some women are more spiritually endowed than men, how is it right to stop them from exercising the divine gift given to them by God? That is an act of wickedness on the side of those who preach and stand against women from expressing their feeling. Can a woman because she is a woman keep quiet over an issue bordering her in the floor of the church? In Nigeria churches, this is a bondage that women are facing and that has made so many to vacate their main church to form another church of their own. The only thing a woman owns in exercising her gift is to execute that with submission. Preventing a woman from receiving ordination and freedom of coming up to the pulpit to exercise her divine gift from God is absolutely an act of ungodliness. If Paul is generalizing his opinion in the Corinthian church why contradicting his opinion in the church in Ephesus. Some Christians came to my house with a doctrinal message and were emphatically affirming their own church as the only God's approved church on earth. This statement never upset me but along the line of the discussion the leader of the Christian group told me why other churches in Nigeria are not a church but just a social meeting place whereby women are permitted to stand and preach in the church. This is exactly where I was provoked but the Holy Spirit was on a serious assignment at the moment by helping me to take them to scriptural instances where Jesus exhibited a character of letting these women exercise their freedom. From the origin, God made them male and female, he never intends that the woman he made for Adam be a slave in his hand rather that they both be united to pursue a specific goal. However, other causative issues about church division that need to be considered are as below:

Persecution: By definition, "persecution is one of the influences of church division. When the overzealous members of a Church are not accepted and controlled they end up breaking out into another Church."^{XXIV} "Quest for salvation, miracles, utilization of spiritual gifts and desire to improve on practices through prophetism also can bring about the division of churches."^{XXV} So many went into forming their own church as a result of persecution from the former denomination.

High Political Ambition in Church System: Some members of the Church who desire leadership at all cost end up forming their own Churches. This has led the Pentecostal Churches ending up in Episcopal formation. "Titles and affluence, as well as political aspiration, are now the chief motivator for Church formation."^{XXVI} Some churches in Nigerian has gone to the extent of attaching what will be the benefit of a church leader occupying one position or the other and this has triggered the excessiveness of quest for political power. The ambition to occupy the position is not mainly to aid the masses but because of the benefit attached to it, together with the pride, fame attached to the position. One in this position boast of so many things and is respected more than God. Perkins posits that:

"Paul constantly had to remind the Corinthians Christians that they should not seek to exalt themselves over others. Boasting about one's achievements and even expecting the apostles to demonstrate their authority in "sign" such as persuasive speech, revelations and speaking in tongue turn out to be pervasive "sin" among the Corinthians."^{XXVII}

^{XXIV}T. Emereonye, *The Igbo Religious* (London: Orbis Books, 2011).

^{XXV}D. Okeke, *Searching for God*. (Aba: Joseph's Press, 2007).

^{XXVI}E. A. Ituma, "Johannine implication of the church as a living organism," *International Journal of Theology and Reformed Tradition* 1 (2009): 10.

^{XXVII}P. Perkins, *New Testament Introduction*. (India: St Paul press. Pope, 2010), 225.

Considering the event of the Corinthian church, it is very similar to what is happening presently in Nigerian Christianity. Even in the cost of one going into any political position, the person should think as a leader by thinking about the followers.

Disagreement between Leaders/Members: “disagreements between church leaders and members now end up into the formation of new churches.”^{xxviii} To further buttress this point, Chukwubuikem argues that:

“This was what happened between Amos Onyike and Reuben Oti all from Olokoru in Umuahia, Abia State in Nigeria. This constraint resulted in a split in their ministry. Amos moved out with some group and Reuben teamed up with some group and they founded their own churches respectively.”^{xxix}

Indeed, the substance that aid the sustainability of church is yet to be comprehended and implemented among Christians. It is for this lack of implementing the real tenet of church growth that with little issue, division set-in in the church. Meanwhile, Chukwubuikem to have mention name supposed not just for security reasons, but in other words, Chukwubuikem may have the notion of making a vivid clarification about division in the church as it affects Nigerian churches.

Jealousy: jealousy is simply displeasure feeling towards the possession of a person or group. Negative feeling over the possession of other is so precarious that it induces total separation and division among people and organizations. “This has also caused proliferation of churches.”^{xxx}“Jalousies over the ownership of land or over the way resources are distributed by a national government are frequently cited as causes of what in the late twentieth century became known as ethnic cleansing.”^{xxxi}To buttress this fact, jealousy operates in two ways; first, a subordinate may become jealous of the success of the leader. This drives the subordinate to establish his own church. Secondly, sometimes a leader might be jealous of his subordinate. A subordinate who is succeeding well more than the boss might attract the leader’s jealousy due to the former’s growing popularity, owing to his personal charisma or the manifestation of the anointing and gift of God in his life. Nwosu further reiterates that “in such jealousy, the leader drives away the subordinate, who in turn is left with the only option to form his own Church.”^{xxxii} This syndrome is very intense among Christians as that has caused several divisions in Nigerian churches in the contemporary time.

Insecurity Syndrome: the quest for physical and spiritual power has led to the separation of an individual or groups to form another church. In view of numerous fetish experiences in Nigeria, many people search for protection in Churches. As such, the individuals and churches attract more members. Other individuals who are able to learn this act of spiritual security go about establishing their own prayer centers which with time migrate to church. In some Nigerian churches, security consciousness is at its peak and members are migrating from one denomination to another in search of spiritual power to deal with their family enemies. These protection searchers go as far as collecting modern charms like handkerchief, candle, liquid elements and others to fight back. The moment this issue turns to a business in Nigeria, so many people are now leaving their businesses to form spiritual prayer houses which today have rendered Christianity in Nigeria into what it is today.

Inadequate Enlightenment: Inadequate enlightenment so far has brought about proliferation of churches in Nigeria. Some members of the church due to lack of enlightenment follow any teaching without minding if it is right or not. Some of these people went as far as establishing their own church due to unverified wrong teaching from false teachers. So far in Nigeria, some persons have separated from their main church to another looking for where they feel the truth is preached. “Proliferation of churches has been known to thrive more in Nigeria among the uneducated and illiterates.”^{xxxiii}

^{xxviii} A. Chukwubuikem, “Christianity in Africa” *Achimota Journal of Religion* 8, (2008): 18.

^{xxix} Ibid: 5

^{xxx} J. Hayword, *the Training of Missionaries*. (Ibadan: Daystar Press, 2009), 9.

^{xxxi} N. Shields, *Christian Ethics*. Bukuru, (Jos: African Christian Textbooks, 2004), 165.

^{xxxii} C. Nwosu, *Be an Ideal Religious*. (Owerri: Global Press, 2009), 4.

^{xxxiii} A. Walter, *Africa Independent Churches*. (New York: Oxford University, 2004), 210.

Avidity: Avidity is uncontrollable quest for what is not on someone's reach. Based on the contribution of Walter, some Church leaders, out of avidity and selfishness exhibits “survival of the fittest and elimination of unfit”^{XXXIV} way of life. “The mindset to force out every assumed rival within a Church leads to frustration on the part of the loser in a competing pastoral interest”^{XXXV} When people whom others are looking forward to determining their own good-way of life are sinking into nullifies attitude, it will demoralize the interest and spirit of the followers.

Effects of Church Division to National Development

Church division though has caused numerous disasters like killing of church leaders and members, destruction of church properties, court cases, family disunity and others, but in other ways have helped positively in national development. Development has been conceived by people in different dimensions, “development in human society is a many-sided process. At the level of the individual, it implies increased skill and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material well-being.”^{XXXVI} “This must be conceived of as a multi-dimensional process involving changes in structures, attitudes, and institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth; the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty.”^{XXXVII} So far, church division has brought drastic effect to national development which are going to be discussed as below.

Negative Effects of Church Division on National Development

Considering the negative effects of church division in Nigeria. Suffice it to say that noise during church services, people arriving and departing from the church after service, the activities of coming and going, and placing a vehicle in a position, contamination from moving vehicles at regular basis and movement of people up and down the streets are among the bad exteriorities caused by recurrent division of churches in Nigeria. In other words, numerous structural incompatibilities of church buildings with residential structures also minimal the price of residential properties. What the researcher tries to postulate here is that the price of residential properties reduces in its value due to system of Christian worship in Nigeria. Buyers will find it difficult to buy such landed property where noise are constituted. “In Nigeria, Pentecostal churches are particularly noted for unmatched zeal; exuberance; loud singing, clapping, bell ringing and drumming; and with loudspeakers mounted on rooftops or the facial boards.”^{XXXVIII} The activities of Pentecostal churches in Nigeria are too many and are even worst to the extent that they cannot be over-emphasized.

“Environmental noises that exceed ambient levels can disturb valuable activities such as conversation, TV viewing, leisure, work or sleep and that in several cases can have adverse effects on long-term health and thereby reduce productivity and quality of life. The irritating noise level in the neighborhood also contributes to more violent and aggressive behavior.”^{XXXIX}

It is quite noisome and over lamming that the rate of division in Nigeria churches is now turning Christianity to what it is not and what it should not be. The quest that some ministers of God are succeeding in ministry, measured by their amount of investment, cars, structures and the amount of money in their bank account has now made good number of worshipers to claim they are called by God.

^{XXXIV}This simply implies that is only those with superior strength will continue succeeding while those without will be failing.

^{XXXV} Ibid: 210.

^{XXXVI}A.F. Fan, Jummai J and Onuoha G. N. (2014). *Global advanced research Journal of Educational Research and Review* 3, no.2, (2014): 24. <http://garj.org/garjerr/index.htm>.

^{XXXVII}F.A, Fan, Edu, M.I, and Ibiang, E.I, eds. “Mass computer literacy and Nigeria’s development,” *the International Researcher: A multi-Disciplinary J. Graduate School, University of Calabar* 1, no. 4, (2010): 104.

^{XXXVIII}K. B. Gabriel and Yewande, A. “The Impact of Neighborhood Churches on House Prices” *Journal of Sustainable Development* 4, no.1 (2011): 247.

^{XXXIX} Ibid: 247.

Now! So many businesses in Nigeria are no longer functioning because the business owners are claiming to be called by God. In actual sense, this is greediness in its escape velocity.

In other words, negative effects of church division may be seen in the following areas:

Conflict: According to Habila and Achunike conflict is “the clash, contention, confrontation, battle, rivalry, controversy or quarrel among ethno-religious groups.”^{XL} The socio-religious conflict stems from an irreconcilable posture with regards to symbolic values to the groups concerned. These symbolic values, which cannot be compromised is believed. Church division in Nigeria so far has breeds so many conflicts that have caused loss of lives, properties and render so many families useless. People of other religion like Islam and African Traditional Religion are finding it so difficult to believe most Christian teachings due to the fact that what Christian teach against is what they are practicing in the society. No regard again to the church because of the high level of physical, emotional, social and spiritual pollution in the church. Nigerian churches is physically polluted in the sense that the churches has lost its saltiness, and light and now are pursuing shadow, the church is emotionally polluted because most atrocity committed in the society are members in one church or the other. The church is socially polluted in the sense that the activities of most churches are far from the outlined Christ’s doctrine to the church. The church is spiritually polluted whereby the operations of some churches are through cultic powers just to move crowd, fame and for money making purpose. The purpose of kingdom quest is very minimal among Nigerian churches. “Since 1980s religious conflict has bedeviled Nigerian society, most especially the Northern part. Among the 19 states that constitute Northern Nigeria, there is virtually no state that has not witnessed one form of conflict or another.”^{XLI}

Inadequate Employment among Nigerian Citizens: the level of unemployment in Nigeria is very high which most causative factors lie in church division. The very question that is begging for an answer is how church division can bring about unemployment to the citizens? It is very obvious that the church as a non-governmental organization has thrived very well to employ and keep unemployed youth busy with one thing or the other in the church. When division arises from the church, it cripples the working ability and functions of the million people employed by the church. And losing their employment can drastically cause too many distractions in the society whereby some will decide to engage in robbery and other corrupt activities in the society.

Poverty: it is very obvious that the poverty of civil war was a contributive factor to a different division of Churches. Around the 1980s and 90s, many religious exponents in Nigeria converted their trading warehouses to prayer and worship centers. Also, the level of survival of the fittest and elimination of the unfit life in most Nigerian churches led to its division. Some group and persons decided to opt out and look for their daily bread by establishing their own church due to feeling that they are under suffering. The level of poverty among churches in Nigeria is very intense to the extent that it has resulted in the proliferation of churches in the region. **Disunity among Members of the Family:** Church division has caused a lot of problems in families. Family disunity as a result of church division is prominent in Nigeria. It occurs where members of the family have different choices to make as regard to belonging to one denomination or the other.

This was the situation in Assemblies of God Church Nigeria where power tussle divided the church into two groups. Now the church is free from or to deliberate on the issue that resulted in their misunderstanding due to court judgment passed in February 2017, yet many families are now in a serious disunity. Most parents persuade their children to be part of the faction they belong. And the children due to their own understanding of the whole cause of division, refuse their parent’s request. This situation has led to perpetual discomfort in the family system. Same situation is applicable to other divided churches in Nigeria which Apostolic church, Christ ascension church, Roman Catholic church and the Presbyterian church of Nigeria is not an exception.

^{XL}K.R. Habila, and H.C. Achunike, “Religion in Nigeria from 1900-2013,” *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences University of Nigeria Nsuka* 3, no.18 (2013): 46

^{XLI}B. Alhaji-shehu, *Ethno-religious conflicts/violence in Northern Nigeria*, (Master Thesis Submitted to the Universitat Wein, 2012).

Turning the Place of Worship to Comedian Center: The mentality of most church leaders are no longer connecting to the extent that their state of mind is now stereotyped in a way that what is evil is now a means of relief. In Nigeria, there is no different between the church (place of worship) and cinema hall where comedians entertain people. It is in Nigeria that some general overseers of churches will use the church tithe, offerings and contributions collected for the development of God's kingdom and hire a comedian to entertain the members.

If the church in Nigeria at this era of mechanical disruption in Christendom will focus in pursuing shadows, what will common man do to add value in his society? Most Christian's behaviors are full of squabble, and many have come to the last resort to term it globalization. Modernity among Christians should have a Christian focus and dimensions and not really conforming to the worldly standard. To be realistic, if that is the case, what then is the difference between the world and the call out ones (the church)? Considering the extent of this mess-up, it is not and will never be the lifestyle of the church of Jesus Christ in Nigeria. What everyone should know is that the most hungry and grieving group and individuals for survival are now conventionally interrupting the reality of churches in Nigeria. It is also good to know that this started the moment there is increase in church division in Nigeria. Suffice it to say that Nigerians love joke more than the Gospel and comedian make money more than top politicians in Nigeria. For the fact that some who claimed to be called by God and are using such medium to extort money from people. Why wouldn't there be confusions, controversies, divisions, hatred and evil escalation in the church when a comedian crack jokes with the name of God and the church and the whole Christians laugh over it? Invariably, if church are using their hall for this kind of evil speeches, about the church leaders why will common man see those things as evil again? Proliferation of churches have created a lot of loop hole which can only be covered with the grace of God at work among his elected ones.

Expansion of Immorality: The same way the church divides is the same way immorality is increasing in its number every day in the church. And due to quick money syndrome, some church founders are now using ritual process to make their money. Holding to the increase in the level of immoral behaviors in Nigerian churches. It is quite alarming that such that is mention among the heathens are mention in the church of Jesus Christ. So many issues have been recorded about the churches in Nigeria. When a pastor is not sleeping with another man's wife, he is into drug pushing. In Nigeria, the use of fake power to perform miracles is very obvious. To better the situation now, the church should focus more on the way forward before things gets out of hand beyond the way they are presently.

However, most gospel preachers in Nigeria founded their own church instead of serving a correction given to them by the mother church leaders due to their immoral behaviors.

"Paul reminded the Corinthians of his previous letter and clarified that in it he had urged them not to associate with those who claimed to be Christians but led immoral lifestyles (vv. 9–11). That was the case with this incestuous individual. He was to be put out of the congregation to preserve the sanctity of the church."^{XLII} These people cannot only accept to leave the congregation for other thing rather, they will go ahead to open another congregation in their name. The standard of Christian leadership should be a type that a moment a leader betrayed the trust of the people, that person should discontinue from his/her leadership position.

Positive Effects of Church Division in National Development

Church division is not out of ungodliness or sin against the church, rather a divine will and mandate of God for the purpose of bringing his will into accomplishment on earth. The various fragmentation of churches has actually affected the societal need in so many dimensions too numerous to mention. Churches today build schools, shops, hotels, and other viable investment that are beneficial for the development of the nation. Church fragmentation today have helped some general overseers to look into areas that the church could be of good help in the national development. In another way, what about issues of morality? Churches through its disintegrations has deemed it feet to enter so many unreached areas with the Gospel message aiming to help in changing and shaping the moral lives of people.

^{XLII} John, B. Polhill. *1 Corinthians: A Church Divided*. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 1999), 13.

Though the mainline churches are making a drastic effort in doing so. The rate at which the societal morality is handled with the rate of church fragmentations is so high to an extent. Therefore, the most important thing to be put in consideration even when so many are still coining up to open more churches is to stick to the main purpose of the calling. The essence of division in the contemporary Church is majorly in the constant search for the method of integrating the current and natural areas of human life with the transcendental and supernatural qualities. It is essential that there should be further analysis of the way in which individuals migrate to another denomination they feel is better.

The intensity of this kind of migration not only affects the life and functionality of the already existing denomination rather, it demoralizes the spirit of other members of the church. The reliability and authenticity of the emerging content of the faith and its moral convictions are confirmed by procedures developed over the ages. The divisible nature of the church aid in the area of forming a complex network of multipartite connections within which the individual members of the Church community make their unique contributions in the shaping of the particular elements of the religious message in such a way that it becomes adequate to contemporary challenges.

The source and point of reference for all members of this network are the testimonies of a broadly defined tradition, the central place being occupied by the Holy Scriptures while the Holy Scripture forms the source of tradition. At the same time, the more descriptive aspects of the intellectual strivings of the theologians serve constantly to deepen and broaden the understanding of the basic theological truths in the context of the ever-changing reality. Though this varies with the perception of the individual or group whose objective is to shoot out and establish another denomination. Some after separation go into a serious study in order to preach and live by the truth. This is how one can ascertain the contribution to the enrichment of church division. In church division, the core is determined by what is most important from the point of view of the development of the denomination which must be a range of acts aimed at transforming the unchangeable elements of the transcendental strata. The result of these transformations takes the form of a persuasive religious message communicated within the particular socio-cultural environment. In turn, the latter sets the frames for the strategies of realizing the mission of the congregations.

Eventually, together with the initiation and putting into practice of subsequent elements of the mission of the Church, relationships between members of the church and the society as a whole falters. Within the network of exchanges created by the growing number of these relationships, there occurs the process of transmission of what has been developed within the Church communities into surrounding segments of society. Thus, there comes about a range of rationalizations and evaluations, together with the activities, practices and social virtues underpinned by them. All of them can be perceived as being an outcome of the broadly understood processes of the newly formed denominations.

Conclusions

From what is expected from the church presently and futuristically, it has not been easy for the contemporary churches. The research so far has examined various factors responsible for the discrepancies that exist among churches in Nigeria. The rate at which church divides in Nigeria is highly paramount which in one way has helped so much in expansion of Christian religion. In other words, church proliferation in Nigeria has affected the growth of Christianity spiritually, socially and otherwise. It is quite unfortunate that the attitude of those who called themselves has made people to generalize that Christians are abettors of corruption. The same church proliferation has as well affected the respect of the church and emotional security of the society. The increase in church division has heightened the rate of abortion, death, early pregnancy, family crisis, communal crisis, hatred and lots more. There has been no time in the history both past and present that the Church has been completely united. Incidents in the New Testament and as derived from the history of the church help to argue this saying out. No external factor is to be blamed for the problem of division in the Churches in Nigeria; the Church of Jesus Christ has consistently failed to attain to ecumenical spirit because of its failure to adopt and abide by the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

The rate of division in Nigerian churches is daunting. The churches in the country is essentially a heterogeneous one with an individual of different ethnic background who has migrated from one ethnic to another. The research so far has discussed the recurring challenges of extremism and contumacy that has become a catalyst fomenting the bruise in Nigerian Christianity. Despite the extent of the problem, yet the problem can still be abated if only Christians can show practically their differences in character, and learning. Yes! By learning, one can be able to understand the society and how to satisfy its need. All denomination adherents should know that in the mind of God, he is not after the veracious splitting unit of the denomination. God has in mind to unit those he called out and equip them for good and excellent work here on earth.

All denominations; be it Presbyterian church, Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Baptist and other non-denominational organizations has a dominant role to play through their effort to teach, encourage, and be ready to support ecumenical movement of uniting various denomination in the country. The unity of a nation, state, community and family is directly nested on the church.

Findings

- ❖ Churches in Nigerian divide at will to form a new church at any little incidence that is supposed to be handled effectively by the church leaders, but serious attention is not given to most church problems by her leaders.
- ❖ The mindset of the so-called spiritual leaders is no longer on the major call they received from God, but now on the things that will benefit them and families respectively.
- ❖ No adequate follow-up on biblical procedures on how to handle issues among Christians.
- ❖ The level of crime in Nigerian churches is in such a way that the good percentage of the atrocities committed in the society are Christians.
- ❖ Church proliferations in Nigeria are no longer for the purpose of enriching the kingdom of God but for business purposes.
- ❖ The so-called church leaders are also the perpetrators of the successive proliferation of churches in Nigeria. Reason is that they lack the enlightenment to go into deep studies of what they teach their members in the church.

Recommendations

In view of findings made so far and other issues articulated in the research, this research, therefore, recommends the following to be put into consideration for the optimum, advantageous and perfect life of the church in Nigeria:

- Nigerian churches to consider her diverse backgrounds of revelation about God and live in peace with each other holding to the saying “one man’s food is another man’s poison” (what is good for someone may not be good for another person). That your doctrine condones a particular aspect of lifestyle should not be a reason for condemnation of the other whose doctrine is not agreeing with your doctrine.
- Nigerian Christians can as well adopt accommodation spirit to aid in fostering trust among them, and let no denomination see the other as evil since Christ unites all the church as their body.
- All church leaders to do a greater work by changing their motive and not using their personal quest for materialism and power to rupture the good mind of the members.
- All denominations to cultivate the spirit of tolerance as that will aid in accommodation of belief and tradition of other denominations.
- If all denominations in Nigeria believe their core call is to encourage love, peace and progress, then her leaders have a big role to play by constant discussing and preaching the love.
- Strict adherence to the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ, the exponent of Christianity which focused on the necessity for total accommodation together with harmony among Christians in Nigeria.
- The system of leadership appointment in Nigerian churches need to be harnessed to differ from the secular method and most importantly, the method among Christians should be holistic.

List of Abbreviations/Signs

- Ɀ Codex Sinaiticus
- **A.D** Anno Domino
- **A** Codex Alexandrinus
- **B** Codex Vaticanus Graecus
- **C** Codex Ephraemi Rescriptus
- **D** Codex Claromontanus
- **G** Codex Harleianus
- **KVJ** King James Version
- **P** Page
- **PP** Pages
- **RSV** Revised Standard Version
- **P** Papyrus
- **ᐆ⁴⁶** Chester Beatty Biblical Papyrus 1
- **Θ** Codex Koridethi
- **W** Codex Washingtonianus
- **Ⲱ** Alexandrian Witnesses
- n.p No Page
- < Beginning of text Replacement
- > End of Text Replacement
- **Γ** Replacement
- **Ɀ** Subsequent replacement
- **○** Omitted
- **Ɀ** Insertions

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