

Towards Ethnic Liberation Theology in Nigeria

Towards Ethnic Liberation Theology in Nigeria:

*A Polemic in a New Testament
Perspective*

By

John Arierhi Ottuh

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



Towards Ethnic Liberation Theology in Nigeria:
A Polemic in a New Testament Perspective

By John Arierhi Ottuh

This book first published 2018

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Copyright © 2018 by John Arierhi Ottuh

All rights for this book reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright owner.

ISBN (10): 1-5275-1097-2

ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-1097-5

To the memory of my supervisor and mentor, Revd. Fr. Prof. Justin S. Ukpong (1940-2011), former Vice Chancellor of Veritas University (Catholic University of Nigeria), Abuja, who was an erudite scholar of no mean repute. To all those who dare to fight against ethnic disparity in Nigeria and Africa at large and to those whose encouragement and sponsorship have helped in no small measure to accomplish this work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Tables	ix
Foreword	xi
Rev. Fr. Prof. John A. Onimhawo	
Acknowledgements	xv
Preface	xvii
Chapter One.....	1
Introduction	
1.1 The Bible Passage	1
1.2 Background to the Study.....	1
1.3 Statement of the Problem.....	3
1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study	4
1.5 Scope of the Study	5
1.6 Conceptual Clarifications.....	5
Chapter Two	11
Theoretical Framework and Justification of the Study	
2.1 Theoretical Framework.....	11
2.2 Justification of the Study	14
Chapter Three	17
Methodology, Procedure and Ethical Consideration of Ethnic Liberation Theology in Nigeria	
3.1 Methodology	17
3.2 Procedure	18
3.3 Ethical Consideration for Ethnic Liberation Theology in Nigeria....	18
Chapter Four	25
Theories of Ethnicity and its Resonance with the Nigerian Situation	
4.1 Theories of Ethnicity.....	25
4.2 Resonance of Ethnicity Theory with the Nigerian Situation.....	39

Chapter Five	41
An Overview of Liberation Theology and its Resonance with the Study	
5.1 An Overview of Liberation Theology	41
5.2 Resonance	45
Chapter Six	59
Contemporary Context of Interpretation: The Situation of Ethnic Disparity in the Nigerian Milieu	
6.1 The Church	59
6.2 The Political Sphere	61
6.3 Socio-economic Sphere	62
6.4 Educational Situation	68
6.5 Some Possible Causes of Ethnic Disparity in Nigeria	69
Chapter Seven.....	71
Ethnic Disparity in Nigeria: Its Negative Effects on the Church and State	
7.1 Ethnic Disparity in Nigeria	71
7.2 Negative Effects on the Church and State.....	72
Chapter Eight.....	81
Exegesis of Galatians 3:26-29	
8.1 The Compositional Background of Galatians	81
8.2 Contexts of Galatians 3:26-29.....	84
8.3 Analysis of Galatians 3:26-29.....	91
Chapter Nine.....	99
Galatians 3:26-29: Theological Implications and Ethical Lessons for the Nigerian Milieu	
9.1 Theological Implications of Galatians 3:26-29.....	99
9.2 Ethical Lessons from Galatians 3:28-29 for Nigerian Christians.	101
Chapter Ten	103
Liberation in View, Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations	
10.1 Liberation in View	103
10.2 Findings	105
10.3 Conclusion	106
10.4 Recommendations.....	106
References	109

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: INEC Distribution of Senatorial Districts, Federal and State Constituencies, Electoral Wards, and Polling Stations

Table 2: Characteristics of Nigerian States

Table 3: Estimated Nigeria 2006 Census Figures

Table 4: Greek Word Studies of Galatians 3:26-29

FOREWORD

I consider it a rare privilege for me to write a *Foreword* to this book, “Towards Ethnic Liberation Theology in Nigeria: A Polemic in a New Testament Perspective” at a time when our country, Nigeria is faced with political, socio-economic, moral, religious and security challenges. It is a truism that without respect, love, equity, unity, justice and peace, no country can make the desired progress. It has often been canvassed that one of the major problems or challenges confronting Nigeria is ethnicity. The consciousness of ethnicity in the spheres of leadership and administrative operation in Nigeria has led to oppression and injustice in so many ways. The consciousness of ethnicity has also engineered disunity, disharmony, rancour and insecurity. Ethnicity in Nigeria has caused employment to be done on the basis of ethnicity instead of federal character as federation. Without a sound moral leadership and equilibriumization of all tribes in Nigeria, the nation cannot make progress.

The above ugly situation in Nigeria and the Nigerian Church must have been a muse for the author to carry out this research work. This book, by way of attempting to proffer a solution, has used the biblical text: Galatians 3:26-29 as a basis for the fight against ethnic oppression and injustice in Nigeria. Using liberation hermeneutics as a model, the author argues that if the biblical text under study is rightly understood and properly applied in the lives of Nigerians, Nigeria including the Church would make the desired progress. If the moral lessons of religious and spiritual values, respect, love, unity, equity, brotherhood, etc., are practiced by all in Nigeria, they will engender peaceful co-existence which will in turn become the foundation of sustainable development. These ideas are crystallized by the author in ten chapters.

Chapter one identifies the biblical text, sets the background of the study, and provides a statement of the problem, the objectives and a conceptual clarification of the study. Chapter two delves into the theoretical framework and justification of the study. Chinua Achebe and other scholars were adopted as theoretical models in this study. Chapter three presents the methodology, procedure and ethical consideration for ethnic liberation theology in Nigeria. The author adapted the liberation theology model as a methodology for this work. Chapter four considers

theories of ethnicity and their resonance with the Nigerian situation. Chapter five also presents an overview on liberation theology and its resonance with the study. Chapter six focuses on the prevailing situation in the Nigerian Church, x-rays the political and socio-economic developments in Nigeria, and identifies the causes of negative ethnicity, such as historical prejudices, superiority complex and particularism.

Chapter seven is a detailed discussion on ethnic sentiments, showing their devastating impact on both the Nigerian Church and society. Ethnic disparity is seen to have caused bitterness, violence, disunity, a superiority complex, the marginalization of minority ethnic groups and economic sabotage. Chapter eight is a testimony to the fact that the author is a well groomed biblical scholar. In this chapter, the author accomplishes the exegesis of the text in view. To engage in any exegesis, the exegete must follow certain canons of interpretation. This is why he has to give a background to understanding the text, examine the compositional background of Galatians as a whole, and go further to expose the biography of the man, Paul, the authorship, date and destination of writing, the occasion and purpose, and the literary, socio-historical and theological contexts of Galatians. Having sufficiently exhausted the discussion of the background to the text, the author engages in the exegetical analysis of the text phrasally and thematically so as to drive home the meaning of Paul's message in the text.

In chapter nine, the author weaves some theological implications and lessons from the text and shows how these are applicable to the individual and national lives of the nation, Nigeria irrespective of religious affinity. Here Christians are being directly addressed from the passage. However, the message therein must be learnt and imbibed by all and sundry because it points out that Paul's teaching in Galatians 3:26-29 is against negative ethnic sentiments and challenges the reader to rise above ethnic bias. And chapter ten dwells on the area of liberation in view, the findings, conclusion and recommendations. The author gives his recommendations in this book because he is convinced that if they are implemented, they will help Nigeria to move forward in socio-cultural, economic, political and religious development and as such make Nigeria a better society to live in.

I recommend this book not only to scholars in the humanities and social and management sciences, but also to all Africans especially Nigerians in Diaspora and those who have a stake in the socio-economic, political and ethico-religious survival of the Nigerian nation.

Rev. Fr. Prof. John A. Onimhawo
Professor of Religious Management and Cultural Studies
Dean of the Faculty of Arts
Ambrose Alli University,
Ekpoma, Edo State,
Nigeria.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Soli Deo Gloria (to God be the glory) for the success of this work. There would not have been a book of this nature if not for the inspiration and grace of God. My gratitude also goes to those whose ideals I used to support my idea. I want to register my appreciation to my dear wife Mrs. Evelyn Ottuh and my dear son Samuel Okeoghene Arierhi-Ottuh for their support and encouragement. To all those who have supported me in one way or another, I say thank you. I am deeply indebted to those whose works I have used to support my ideas. I also thank Winners Baptist Church, Effurun, my students, friends and well-wishers who have supported me in one way or another. May God bless you all.

PREFACE

This work is entitled: “Towards Ethnic Liberation Theology in Nigeria: A Polemic in a New Testament Perspective.” This study was carried out against the status quo of ethnic disparity in Nigeria. The work is aimed at: fostering equilibrium recognition of all tribes and religions in Nigeria; encouraging a common national identity and development; initiating a process of detribalization of the Nigerian Church and State; and constructing theological lessons from Galatians 3:26-29 for Nigeria’s unity. In order to contextually carry out this work, the liberation theology paradigm was adopted as the methodology for this study and the bible passage (Galatians 3: 26-29) was used to anchor a reconstruction of liberation theology for Nigeria’s ethnic minority like the liberation theology against apartheid in South Africa. The work shows that there is ethnic disparity in Nigeria and that the fostering of the equilibrium recognition of all ethnicities and religions in Nigeria will bring about national unity. It also shows that ethnic equality will encourage a common national identity and development in Nigeria. It also shows that ethnic equality will initiate a process of detribalization of the Nigerian Church and State thereby making all citizens of Nigeria see themselves as Nigerians before considering their ethnicity. Paul’s teaching in Galatians 3:26-29 is a biblico-theological recipe for ethnic liberation. The work concludes that when all regions in Nigeria are treated with fairness and justice, they will foster unity, brotherhood and nationhood.

Dr. John A. Ottuh

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Bible Passage in Perspective

1.1.1 Greek Version of Galatians 3:26-29

- 26 πάντες γὰρ υἱοὶ Θεοῦ ἐστε διὰ τῆς πίστεως ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ·
27 ὅσοι γὰρ εἰς Χριστὸν ἐβαπτίσθητε, Χριστὸν ἐνεδύσασθε
28 οὐκ ἐν Ἰουδαίῳ οὐδὲ Ἑλλήνι, οὐκ ἐν δοῦλῳ οὐδὲ ἐλεύθερῳ, οὐκ
ἐν ἄρσεν καὶ θήλῃ· πάντες γὰρ ὑμεῖς εἷς ἐστε ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ
29 εἰ δὲ ὑμεῖς Χριστοῦ, ἅρα τοῦ Ἀβραάμ σπέρμα ἐστὲ καὶ κατ'
ἐπαγγελίαν κληρονόμοι; (GOC).

1.1.2 English Version of Galatians 3:26-29

- 26 For in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.
27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.
28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there
is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs
according to promise (RSV).

1.2 Background to the Study

Research on ethnicity and its inherent problems has been a very hot burning issue in recent times. Many theories have been propounded by scholars. Although widely studied by anthropologists and political scientists since the late 1960s, ethnicity and by extension ethnic groups and ethnic diversity remain highly contested concepts (Brown and Langer, 2010: 2). Irrespective of the arguments being generated on this subject matter Brown and Langer (2010: 2) submit that:

an increasing number of political scientists and economists have started to incorporate ethnic groups into their (empirical) analyses or use ethnic

diversity as an independent variable for explaining a range of social and economic outcomes, most notably relating to violent group mobilization, secessionist movements and economic growth differences (see, for example: Collier and Hoeffler 1998; Easterly 1997; Rodrik 1999; Sambanis 1999). However, other scholars have remained skeptical of using ethnicity as an explanatory variable. Martin Doornbos has strikingly captured this position as follows: 'Ethnicity does not explain anything, it needs to be explained' (Doornbos 1991: 19). While we take the view that ethnic groups and ethnic diversity can be important explanatory variables with regard to a range of social and economic phenomena, the concept of ethnicity faces a number of conceptual, measurement and practical problems and limitations which can potentially have a major impact on the validity of the research results.

While this research does not intend to go into survey research, this work is an improvement on Ottuh's (2012) work entitled "Reading Galatians 3:26-29 in the Context of Ethnic Disparity in Nigeria: A Theological Approach." Ethnic chauvinism and disparity are present in the Nigerian church and society. Ethnic disparity, irrespective of whatever cogent rationale is behind it, is one strong aspect that is destroying the unity of the Nigerian church and even the state. Paul's teaching towards ethnicity in Galatians 3:26-29 challenges Nigerian Christians and sundry people to rise above ethnic bias in their dealings with others. This is a call for Christians and sundry people in Nigeria to preach and discourage ethnic disparity in the church and state.

This was the propelling factor that aroused the writing of this book especially at this point where Nigeria's national unity is being threatened by the insurgence of the blood-thirsty Islamic terrorist sects called *Boko Haram* and other ethno-religious feuds arousing tensions in the church and state. On the other hand, the church is not growing in the way that it should because of disunity which may have emanated from ethnic disparity in the church in one form or the other.

Paul's teaching in Galatians 3:26-29 which discourages negative ethnic disparity in the church of Christ was anchored in his theological understanding of salvation by faith through Jesus Christ. It is on this basis that the church must understand that salvation does not come to a person by ethnic affinities or one's personal effort of observance of illegal human Laws but by faith in Jesus Christ who established the church (otherwise called the body of Christ). This study unveils that Jesus Christ wants the church to live as one family or one body that is devoid of ethnic chauvinism and disparity. This challenges Christians and all Nigerians alike to see themselves as Nigerians not on the basis of ethnicity but on the basis of a common national identity.

This work is divided into ten chapters. Chapter one introduces the work and gives clarification to relevant terms. Chapter two deals with the theoretical framework and the justification of the study. Chapter three presents the methodology, procedure and ethical consideration of the study. Chapter four dwells on the theories of ethnicity and their resonance with the Nigerian situation. Chapter five gives an overview of liberation theology and its resonance with the study. Chapter six explores the contemporary context of interpretation: the situation of ethnic disparity in the Nigerian milieu. Chapter seven sheds light on ethnic disparity in Nigeria: its negative effects on the church and state. Chapter eight dwells on the exegesis of Galatians 3:26-29. While chapter nine confirms the implications of Galatians 3:26-29 for the Nigerian milieu, chapter ten concludes the study and gives some recommendations. This study argues that an equilibrium recognition of all ethnic groups in Nigeria can indeed foster a national identity and unity. This unity will manifest in inter-religious and political spheres of our relationships as Nigerians and as a nation.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Submerging an ethnic group under another ethnic group in a heterogeneous society such as Nigeria is an avenue of easy subjugation and oppression. The ethnicity of Nigeria is so varied that there is no definition of a Nigerian beyond that of someone who lives within the borders of the country (Ukpo, 1977: 19). The boundaries of the formerly English colony were drawn to serve commercial interests, largely without regard for the territorial claims of the indigenous peoples (Ukpo: 38). As a result, over two hundred and fifty ethnic groups comprise the population of Nigeria, and the country's unity has been consistently under siege: eight attempts at secession threatened national unity between 1914 and 1977. The Biafran War was the last of the secessionist movements within this period (Ukpo: 3).

Those groups who are being referred to as minority ethnic groups in Nigeria usually do not have a political voice, nor do they have access to resources like others who are more powerful by the Nigerian definition of majority. The minorities therefore often consider themselves discriminated against, neglected, or oppressed. There are only three ethnic groups which have attained "ethnic majority" status in their respective regions in Nigeria: the Hausa-Fulani in the north, the Ibo in the southeast, and the Yoruba in the southwest (Ukpo: 11, 21). These three groups comprise about fifty-seven per cent of the population of Nigeria. The remainder of

the people are members of the ethnic minority groups, which include such peoples as the Kanuri, the Nupe, and the Tiv in the north, the Efik/Ibibio, the Ejaw, and the Ekoi in the east, and the Edo and Urhobo/Isoko to the west, along with hundreds of other groups that differ widely in language, culture and even physique. The specific groups mentioned above are distinct in that they were found, in the 1953 census, to have over one hundred thousand members (*ibid*).

This ethno-religious divide was orchestrated by the colonial masters who fused Nigeria into an ethnic and political dichotomy by recognizing only three tribes (Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo) as major tribes in Nigeria thereby giving room for ethnic subjugations. Colonialism in Nigeria could be seen as being responsible for our disunity. In 1914 Sir Frederick Lugard amalgamated the then four regions in Nigeria and this brought about disunity in disguise. The Hausa, Yoruba and Ibo languages are the tribal languages recognized in Nigeria and as such render the rest of the tribal languages unpopular thereby creating the impression of superiority over the others. By this design some tribes that are considered to be in the minority were subjugated in disguise under the recognized regional language. This has brought about a lot of inter- and intra-ethnic crises in Nigeria. For example, the fight between the Ijaw and the Itsekiri in the Niger Delta and that of the Tiv and the Jukun in the north could be traced to feelings of ethnic disparity. The various inter-religious violent clashes and political violence are the manifestations of ethno-religious disparity in Nigeria. Another example of this phenomenon is the insurgence of Boko Haram who vowed to implement sharia law in all of the 36 States of the federation including the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja. If this is true, it shows that they want to be in control of others who are not Muslims in Nigeria. In the midst of ethnic discrimination and subjugation, insurgency and rivalry, can Nigerians live in unity?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to use Galatians 3:26-29 to develop the concept of national unity in Nigeria. Moreover, the broad objectives of the study are as follows:

- i. to foster equilibrium recognition of all tribes and religions in Nigeria;
- ii. to encourage a common national identity and development;
- iii. to initiate a process of detribalization of the Nigerian Church and State; and

- iv. to construct a theological lesson from Galatians 3:26-29 for Nigeria's unity.

1.5. Scope of the Study

The scope of this research is being limited to ethnic disparity in Nigeria. Here, ethnic discrimination in Nigeria is the thrust of this work. There has been so much agitation from different parts of Nigeria complaining of being marginalized and oppressed by those powerful ethnic groups in Nigeria. The wealth of the so-called minority ethnic groups in the oil rich Niger Delta region is being used to care for the so-called majority ethnic groups in Nigeria whereas, the owners of the wealth are living in abject poverty in the midst of wealth. The scope of this research is a pointer to the fact that minority groups in Nigeria have been suffering under subjugation and oppression and as such, the situation needs to be addressed proactively.

This study focuses on ethnic liberation in Nigeria using Galatians 3:26-29 as a basis. The bible passage (Galatians 3:26-29) under study is used to anchor a reconstruction of a liberation theology for Nigeria like the liberation theology against apartheid in South Africa. Liberation must be focused and specific because every cultural milieu has its own social, political, economic and religious challenges. This is why this study is specifically focusing on the liberation of ethnic minorities in Nigeria from subjugation, oppression and injustice melted by those of the so-called majority ethnic group especially among those political and religious leaders emanating from such major ethnic groups.

1.6 Conceptual Clarifications

1.6.1 Ethnic Group

The Encarta Dictionary defines the word ethnic:

- a. as a group of people who share distinctive cultural traits as a group in society;
- b. as something relating to a group or groups in society with distinctive cultural traits;
- c. as a particular origin or culture; relating to a person or to a large group of people who share a national, racial, linguistic, or religious heritage, whether or not they reside in their countries of origin; and

- d. as culturally traditional people belonging to or associated with the traditional culture of a social group.

Ukpo (1977: 10) calls an "ethnic group" a "group of people having a common language and cultural values." According to him, these common factors are emphasized by frequent interaction between the people in the group. In Nigeria, the ethnic groups are occasionally fusions created by intermarriage, intermingling and/or assimilation. In such fusions, the groups of which they are composed maintain a limited individual identity. Moreover, Okpu (1977: 11) says that the groups are thus composed of smaller groups, but there is as much difference between even the small groups; as Chief Obafemi Awolowo puts it, "as there is between Germans, English, Russians and Turks."

On the other hand, an ethnic group according to the Encyclopædia Britannica (2010) is a social group or category of the population that, in a larger society, is set apart and bound together by common ties of race, language, nationality, or culture. In a country where multi-ethnic groups exist, there is bound to be the consciousness of ethnic diversity. This is one form of social complexity found in most contemporary societies. Historically it is the legacy of conquests that brought diverse peoples under the rule of a dominant group; of rulers who in their own interests imported peoples for their labour or their technical and business skills; of industrialization, which intensified the age-old pattern of migration for economic reasons; or of political and religious persecutions that drove people from their native lands. Ethnic diversity poses a lot of challenges to a heterogeneous ethnic nation because uneven consideration can lead to conflict and crisis. In this crisis, those ethnic groups whose members suffer casualties are being referred to as victims of ethnic discrimination and as such, it amounts to crimes against humanity (Szpak, 2012: 156). The term "ethnic group" is generally understood in anthropological literature to designate a population which (Naroll, 1964):

1. is largely biologically self-perpetuating;
2. shares fundamental cultural values, realized in overt unity in cultural forms;
3. makes up a field of communication and interaction; and
4. has a membership which identifies itself, and is identified by others, as constituting a category distinguishable from other categories of the same order.

Raoul Naroll's articulations demonstrate that one source of confusion is our lack of agreement about the criteria which define the entities—variously called “tribes,” “cultures,” “societies,” and “peoples”—which we describe. Such a lack of agreement is obviously a challenge to global comparisons (Moerman, 1965: 1215). On this same note, Moerman (1965) citing Naroll (1964: 283) and other scholars lists six criteria commonly used to demarcate ethnic entities, viz: trait distributions, territorial contiguity, political organization, language, ecological adjustment, and local community structure. In addition to Naroll's specific criticisms of them, Moerman (1965) adds that these and similar criteria have three main shortcomings as delimiters of “culture-bearing units:” 1) since language, culture, political organization, etc., do not correlate completely, the units delimited by one criterion do not coincide with the units delimited by another; 2) if by “culture” we wish to mean “a pattern, a set of plans, a blueprint for living” (Naroll 1964: 288), then units delimited by combinations of these criteria, including the combination which Naroll suggests, are only occasionally and accidentally “culture-bearing units;” 3) it is often difficult to discern discontinuities of language, culture, polity, society, or economy with sufficient clarity to draw boundaries. It is this which makes me suggest that the delimitation of ethnic entities is especially problematic in all parts of the world which are continuously inhabited but not divided into either sharp ecological zones or strong and durable states. Under such conditions, it becomes quite difficult to use “objective characteristics [of] language and cultural practice” (Garvin 1958: 125) for determining where one entity stops and another, its neighbor, begins. Delimiting the entity by its political organization ignores the common phenomenon of “intermediate zones” (Nadel 1947: 158) about which one cannot say that there is law without and law within. Since territoriality is enforced by political acts, its limits are similarly vague. Mere proximity is useful for delimiting some primitive peoples but, “for modern social groups, this may not be essential”. Barth (1969: 13-14) sees ethnicity from the following viewpoints:

Ethnicity is the way in which groups of persons organize themselves, that is, ascribe and identify themselves with respect to their origins and backgrounds. Clearly, there is an element of choice. Indeed, people often change their ethnic identities. How others—outsiders—ascribe and identify them according to the ‘cultural stuff’ (traits) usually associated with ethnic identity is only part of the picture and self-generated. Most significant are the social boundaries themselves—the boundaries between ‘we’ and ‘they’—not what is used to fill them, the concrete content, such as traits or ‘cultural stuff.’ Cultural similarities and differences are important only

insofar as the members of ethnic groups make them so; some are played down or denied; others are highlighted and exaggerated. These tend to be of two types: first, overt signals or signs—dress, language, house-form, style of life and the like—which can be marked and exaggerated by geography or ecology; second, basic values, that is, the norms of morality and virtue by which behavior is judged. Finally, it is important to see how and why ethnic groups generate and maintain these self-defined group boundaries (Barth, 1969: 13-14).

This definition is self-asserting. However, it deals with ethnicity and ethnic groups. Duling (2008) sees Barth's assertion on ethnicity as both self-ascribed and other-ascribed, but the accent lies on the former. It is an identity based not only on origins and backgrounds, but also on the generation and maintenance of the boundaries to preserve it.

1.6.2 Discrimination

Discrimination in relation to ethnicity refers to the different treatment of others based solely on their membership of a socially distinct group or category, such as race, ethnicity, sex, religion, age, or disability. Discrimination can be viewed as favorable or unfavorable, depending on whether a person receives favors or opportunities, or is denied them (Norman and Lieberman, 2008).

1.6.3 Disparity

According to the *Complete Christian Dictionary for Home, School and Office*, disparity means great difference; or inequality. According to West and Endicott (1976: 93), disparity is a state of not being equal. Disparity according to *New Webster's Dictionary* and *Roget's Thesaurus* is difference in form, character, or degree; incongruity. In this same light, the *American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* defines the word disparity as: the condition or fact of being unequal in age, rank, or degree; difference or unlikeness; incongruity; dissimilarity.

Also, *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* refers to the word disparity to mean a state of inequality or difference, as in rank, amount, etc. From the above definitions, the word disparity portrays a very high level of discrimination among things. Therefore, in the context of this work, disparity shall mean a state of discrimination and inequality caused by the human system to enhance oppression.

1.6.4 Theology

Theology according to the *Complete Christian Dictionary for Home, School and Office* (2003), is the study of the nature of God and religious truth. It is also an organized body of beliefs concerning God and man's relationship to God. According to Bromile (2004), theology is that which is thought and said concerning God. Theology, according to Paul (2008) is a discipline that attempts to express the content of a religious faith as a coherent body of propositions. In his view, theology is narrower in scope than faith, for whereas faith is a total attitude of the individual, including will and feeling, theology attempts to express in words the elements of belief that are explicitly or implicitly contained in faith. In the same vein Evans (2002) defined theology as the orderly, systematic study of God and of God's relations to His creatures. Evans (2002) also points out that there are many different types of theology and their presuppositions as follows: philosophical theology which attempts to discern what can be known about God without presupposing any particular revelation or church teaching as authoritative; biblical theology which attempts to develop theology out of the study of biblical texts, and comes in more specific forms, such as Old Testament theology, New Testament theology, Pauline theology, Markan theology, etc.; systematic theology which dwells on both biblical and philosophical theologies to develop a comprehensive account of God and His relations to the world; and dogmatic theology which attempts to do theology from the perspective of the teachings (or dogmas) of the church or some specific church.

From a religion's point of view, theological reflections are not limited to a special religious sphere, separated from common life. Theology speaks simultaneously about God or the gods and man and the meaning of existence. Theology, especially Christian theology, speaks about the world, its conditions of being created, its estrangement from the purpose of creation (e.g., sin), and its determined goal (eschatology or view of the last times) (Thielicke, 2010). Out of these statements come normative directives for life in the world, not only for the purpose of gaining access to salvation but also for concrete ethical behavior in the context of the I–Thou (or person to person) relationship, of the clan, of the nation, and of society.

1.6.5 Nigeria

Located in West Africa, the Federal Republic of Nigeria is Africa's most populous nation and the largest single black population in the world.

The estimated total of over 100 million inhabitants in 1995 represents roughly 14% of the entire population of sub-Saharan Africa living on less than 4% of the region's land area. Nigeria is administered as a federation of 36 states and the federal capital territory of Abuja (Moran, 1998: 4). The land area of Nigeria is 923,768 sq. km./356,669 sq. mi. (356,669 mi.²). It became an independent member of the British Commonwealth in 1960. The Nigerian currency is the naira and its 2006 census gives an approximate population of 140,003,542 (NPC, 2006).

Nigeria lies between latitudes 4⁰ N and 14⁰ N and also between longitude 3⁰ E and 15⁰ E meridian. It is bounded on the north and northwest by the Republic of Niger, on the northeast by the Republic of Chad, on the east by the Republic of Cameroon, to the south by the Atlantic Ocean and on the west by the Republic of Benin (Etemike, Mordi, Ojieh and Akinwumi, 2000: 5). Nigeria is a heterogeneous entity with over 250 indigenous ethnic groups, the major ones being the Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo. Among the minor ethnic groups are the Edo, Fulani, Tiv, Efik, Ibibio, Igala, Jukun, Itsekiri, Urhobo, Nupe, Bata, Angas, Ijaw, etc. Nigeria is a federation of 36 states, a federal capital territory (FCT) and has 774 local government areas.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

2.1 Theoretical Framework

Brooten (2017) has also considered using New Testament studies to respond to structural racism and other contemporary forms of inequality. He argues that the defense of the marginalized persons should also be channeled through specific uses of the New Testament and further the values of human dignity and equality as these interact with the Bible. This is a theoretical model in using the New Testament not only for spiritual *soteria* but also for human liberation from oppression and injustice. Closely followed here, are those using literary works to advocate a better human society in Africa. Nigerian Chinua Achebe and other scholars have been a great inspiration for the theoretical framework for this book.

The issue of ethnicity in Nigeria has been raised by many Nigerian scholars especially Chinua Achebe. This book is an addition to the numerous ones already published by these renowned scholars. Here the work of Achebe and some other scholars will form the theoretical framework of this book. The theoretical framework for this study is Achebe's (2012) work titled: "There was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra." On this basis Swarnalatha (2013) described Achebe as an intellectual grandmaster of Nigeria and that his intellectual prowess, or intrepid spirit was able to weave together all the socio-cultural and political strands of the past, present and future in masterpieces such as "Things Fall Apart", "Arrow of God", and "Man of the People", to mention a few of his major works but not to mention his collection of poems through which he weaved a tapestry of life in various forms and genres. He was also able to bridge generational gaps: he wrote copiously for the audience of mature adults, youths and children in a panoramic display of prodigious intellect, in a mosaic manner that is prosaic in nature. Chinua Achebe, the founding father of African fiction whose writings chronicled Nigeria's troubled history, died on 21st March 2013.

Moreover, Swarnalatha (2013) discusses Chinua Achebe's attempt to confront the historical and spiritual roots of Africa's crisis and points out that Achebe was consistent in courageously criticizing the misrule on the continent for decades, stances which put his life at risk and forced him to flee his native country, and that his great disappointment manifests itself in his last and latest book—"There was a Country: A Personal History of Biafra". One lesson pointed out by Swarnalatha in Achebe's Biafra experience is the inability of the civil war to unite and resolve the problem of ethnicity but at least Achebe has also offered a solution to resolve these problems, by invoking the Negritude embedded in the *mbari* of his own Igbo culture, which emphasizes mutual respect and coexistence and declares that the solutions to Africa's problems can be found in Africa—her bosom and her humanity—and that Africans must rebuild their own indigenous institutions. Achebe's Biafra experience raises the question: can war bring peace to Nigeria? Can Boko Haram's war against Nigeria resolve the problem of ethnic inequality, the religious superiority complex, and injustice against the minority? The answer is no. The way forward is what the President of Nigeria, Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan (GCFR) has done by convening a national conference to enable all ethnic and interest groups to come to the round table to agree on how Nigerians can live together as a nation. It is expected that the President and the National House of Assembly of Nigeria will implement what has been agreed upon by the conference. The administration of Gen. Mohamedu Buarri should not brush aside the recommendations of the conference.

In the same vein, Shaib and Shittima (2013) observe that Chinua Achebe's works in the past decades can be generated from the Web and that Achebe's materials are rich sources with great potential to provide information about the wider impact of academic research. The study concludes that Achebe's literary book has seen much Web presence and impact with a high and significant relationship between Achebe's quest and the literary world.

Bernard and Kinggeorge (2014), viewing the problem of ethnicity from Adichie's "Half of a Yellow Sun" and Achebe's "There was a Country", opined that one of the greatest challenges to national unity in Nigeria is the multi-ethnic composition of the country which was not given due consideration by the British colonial administration during the amalgamation in 1914 and as such, the result of this insensitivity by the British administration has been ethnic rivalry and mutual distrust among the different ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. They observed further, that these traits became evident in the first decade following Nigeria's flag of independence in 1960 and crystallized during the Nigeria-Biafra war for