

The Role of Economic Church in Peace and Conflict Resolution: An Empirical Review

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Abstract:

Economic Church can be viewed as the role played by the religious Organizations, in the process of wealth creation and transfer in the market as a whole. Market in this context is not limited to the geographical space occupied but also the extent of reach such as local or international market and the description of the goods or services for instance livestock market. During conflict, this being the period when there is a struggle or clash between two opposing forces, the economic system is disrupted and the economic environment is less than conducive. The Church plays an economic role before the conflict, during the time of conflict and during the post-conflict period; hence the economic role of the Church in peace and conflict resolution cannot be underestimated. This study uses empirical review of relevant literature to explore the role of the economic Church in peace and conflict in Kenya, but also draws examples from other parts of the World. The economic Church should be well defined and steer clear of politics in times of peace, that is before conflict so that its role during and after conflict can be recognized, supported and appreciated by those involved in the conflict and those with vested interests. This role is essential in economic sustainability and therefore should not be compromised.

Key Word: Conflict period, Conflict resolution, Economic Church, Pre-conflict period, Post- conflict period.

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I. Introduction

Economics can be incorporated into the role of the Church in peace and conflict resolution. Each of the possible definitions of Economics brings in a different aspect of the economic Church. In isolation, Economics is the branch of knowledge that deals with production, consumption and transfer of wealth. It can also be explained as the condition of a region or group as regards to material prosperity. Economics in addition, can be seen as the process of wealth creation in a market. According to Sengers (2012) 'Church' is a common word that denotes ordinary, traditional or mass Christian churches. He goes further to explain according to Sociology, the characteristics of a Church as a religious Organization; that a Church is a bureaucratic organizational structure, a passive relationship with their members, a positive relationship and attitude to society and the state, and a leading vision for the whole of society including a positive attitude to other religious bodies. The Kenyan religious landscape indicates Christianity as the most practiced religion as indicated in Fig.1.1.

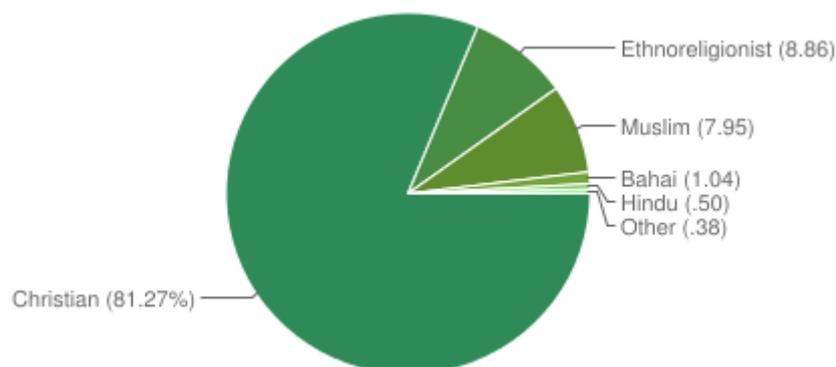


Figure 1.1 Religion in Kenya

Source: The Association of Religion data Archives

Kamaara (2000) explains the role of the Christian Church in Kenya as that of Socio-Economic and Political development. At the core of the formation of a Church is the 'entrepreneurial model' which explains sect formation and the behaviour of their founders. Most of the Churches may not have elaborate systems put in place but mostly act as facilitators of the process of wealth creation and transfer. Some Churches however have put in place stringent measures to ensure the process of wealth creation and transfer both within and outside the congregation is efficient. Another concept of the Church linked to Economic development is the Church-centered economic development which is described as an initiative of the local church wherever it is, supported by the local church, in line with the mission of the local church, but owned and operated by members of the Community at large (Moore, 2011). The argument here is that handling of funds for Economic development should not be a fundamental function of a Church. The concept of Economic Church is not the same as Church owned economic development, for instance whereas Church-centered economic development is limited to the participation of the local Church and is more permanent, Economic Church has got a much wider scope and not specific hence the permanence cannot be evaluated when it comes to any one specific group. The benefits of Church-centered Economic development are however similar to the benefits of an Economic Church in the sense that in both, networks are developed and resources mobilized more effectively for the good of the Community as a whole.

II. Empirical Review

The Economic Church during peace

The role of the Church in peaceful times can be described as proactive since it involves putting in place systems and processes that lead to economic empowerment of its Congregation and generally sustainability of peace as a whole. In Kenya proper coordination and collaboration between faith and the State on socio-economic issues started in the 1900s (Ochanda, 2012). Apart from providing spiritual nourishment, moral and political leadership, which was mostly dominant in the traditional Church, the contemporary Church has taken up additional responsibilities as regards to material prosperity. It is not uncommon to have some Churches tie spiritual prosperity to economic prosperity, where the congregation is encouraged to have material possession, to prosper as a sign of spiritual progress. This is coupled sometimes with the more extreme doctrine that equates material possession with spirituality; that one cannot be in favour with the maker and still be poor. This doctrine is used by some of the Religious leaders to drive guilt in to their Congregation in order to receive donations and property, therefore amass a lot of wealth to the detriment of the welfare of the Congregation. On a similar basis, some religious leaders preach the doctrine of "planting the seed" with the argument that wealth can be acquired in form of blessings by giving to the Church. Taking advantage of the emotional needs of the Congregation therefore, some of the Religious leaders are able to acquire a lot of wealth. The other extreme is the doctrine against ownership of property which implies that "where your treasures are, is where your hearts will be". The Congregation is therefore discouraged from having any possessions or property as this is deemed to be in contrary to the belief of eternity, hence interference with faith. Okullu (2003a), explains the socio-economic role of religion in Kenya and Sub Sahara Africa in peace and conflict, dwelling mainly on that which improves the welfare of the Community. Similarly, in this context we are compelled to dwell more on the legitimate role played by the Economic Church during peace and conflict as opposed to the non-mainstream practices that appear to be part of the Church routine in some Congregations. During peace, the Economic church plays a pivot role as explained below.

1. A conduit for Philanthropy during peace

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary (2003) defines Philanthropy as "goodwill to fellow men; especially active effort to promote human welfare". Duran (2001:4) goes beyond provision of money and includes provision of shelter, time and other material resources. The donor does not receive any goods or services in return to the donation, making the transaction incomplete in the economic sense since it does not involve a quid pro quo. The exception would be if tax deductible contributions are made to the Churches, resulting in joint consumption and joint investment. The role of the Church in redistribution of resources however is evident. This role is important for any economic unit and is one of the functions of any State. Despite the fact that in the spirit of being "your brother's keeper" the Congregation is accustomed to finding financial assistance for those who are less endowed, through fundraising for school fees, clearing medical bills and other needs, this may not be conclusive given the prevailing Economic situation. More resources are required to meet the needs of big numbers in the congregation who do not have any source of income. This is specifically common in the rural areas and in the Slums, where in some instances the Church is the only source of support to Citizens through donations and provision of basic needs.

Evangelical Protestants have an insistence on tithing, which is considered Philanthropic as the Congregation is encouraged to 'give back to God', hence to Society through Charitable work. The Catholics have a slogan "Time, Talent, Treasure" to guide them on giving, although they are considered to have less

'say' on how their money is spent contrary to the Evangelical Protestants. Common however is the fact that part of the money contributed in many cases is spent on the comfort and safety of some of the Church members who least deserve it, especially on mission trips and residential upgrades for the Church leaders. It is therefore common to have Church Ministers among the different Congregations who possess massive wealth, own palatial residences and drive luxurious cars whereas some of their members cannot afford more than one meal in a day. In the economic sense 'irrational' is not acceptable, yet these Congregations made of individuals who like everybody else have self-interests yet they are made to be so unselfish that they give selflessly contrary to the assumptions of the laws in Economics. An individual is willing to give up the last coin with the belief that their needs and those of the family will be met by faith, contrary to the preach water and drink wine Minister on the receiving end, whose faith allows them to get from the Congregation and not rely on their faith as they profess.

Economic efficiency constitutes efficiency in production, in distribution and in output mix. The Church therefore has the responsibility of rendering the services it has volunteered to offer efficiently. Central to the Church's mandate in offering leadership is a sense of service and accountability to the community and to God (Stuckleberger & Mugambi, 2005). The subject of 'Finances in Church' is rarely mentioned despite indications of tardiness to comply with the expected demands for social welfare and progress. Seldom to say, the training of religious leaders does not involve classes on financial management and worse still is the fact that many of the Church leaders, such as for the Evangelical protestant do not undergo any type of formal training. On the backdrop of this, the leadership is seldom held responsible or accountable, they instead feign ignorance when put to task to account for their financial misappropriations. Lack of equitable resource distribution and mistrust therefore eventually leads to conflict within the Congregation, with the Church in this case becoming the source of conflict even when the rest of the Society is at peace. To avert such situations, the Economic Church is therefore entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring efficient resource allocation and distribution in order to avoid internal conflict.

Irrespective of the financial circumstances, the Economic Church has found itself in a situation that requires them to reach out beyond the boundaries for resources. The Church therefore may involve the government, Non-Governmental Organizations and the International community in trying to reduce the plight of the poor and the less fortunate as it takes advantage of economies of numbers. It is not uncommon to find that most Churches have ties with grant making foundations or have their own endowments and foundations. The Economic Church embraces the fact that there is no social welfare if there is no individual welfare.

Cooperation between the Church and modern Philanthropy has seen a number of challenges, sometimes emanating from conflicting interest and views on resource utilization. The traditional notion that the chief purpose of alms giving is benediction and spiritual peace is waning as philanthropists become more interested in how the grants they provide are used. They call for accountability and no longer shy off in demanding for audit trail. This cooperation between the Church and philanthropists therefore requires that both the Church representative and the Philanthropy In-charge be individuals of integrity and of moral standards beyond reproach so as to enable the economic Church discharge its mandate favourably. Just as the theory of comparative advantage in economics dictates, a parallel application would require that the Church places the mandate on the most suitable individual to ensure that a lot is accomplished at the least cost. The Economic Church in most cases is able to discharge its services to the community through the Church Related organizations (CROs). A Church Related Organization is a religious organization affiliated or identified with one or more religious organizations (Fritz, 2014). The CROs channel acts of philanthropy through provision of medical services, education, sanitation and food among others.

Acts of Philanthropy are seen in Healthcare provision by Economic Churches. It is a common practice to have Hospitals which are owned and others sponsored by Churches. Some of the best hospitals which offer specialized services are actually owned by Churches. Roman Catholic is actually the largest non-governmental provider of health care as they adhere to the mandate of Jesus to preach peace and heal the sick. Widmer et al.,(2011) point out the position of the WHO on maternal conditions as a leading causes of death and disability in low-income countries. They show the importance of Faith Based Organizations (FBOs) in ensuring maternal safety and go further to recommend that there should be stronger partnerships between FBOs and Governments in order to effectively deal with the issue. Church Health services (CHS) is considered to be the key in reduction of maternal mortality in many rural areas. In Papua New Guinea for instance, CHS were recorded as providing 58% of health facility childbirth care and 38% of first antenatal visits (Mapira & Morgan, 2011). Other models of FBOs' provision of Maternal New born Health (MNH) include World Relief Care Group- Mozambique which in collaboration with religious leaders and pastoral care groups to provide care to new mothers with their babies. Congregation-based Malaria prevention Program of the Synod of Livingstone of Malawi, established in the year 2000 deals with treatment and prevention of Malaria to the expectant mother and the children by providing information, treatment and mosquito nets to avoid infection. Whereas some of the Churches such as the Methodist Church support both maternal healthcare and family planning, some do not support family planning such as the Catholic Church. On a similar note, and in the spirit of protecting the Citizen, the Catholic

Church has on several occasions raised concerns about the safety of the vaccines given to women, that is the anti-tetanus vaccine and the polio vaccine given to children.

A less dramatic illustration of the Church getting involved in provision of health care is the case of Interfaith Health services (IHS) in Omaha, Nebraska Djupe et al., (2007). Here the religious leaders in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America (ELCA) especially the ministers mobilized different entities to cater for a community concern, in this case provision of health care. In Southern Sudan, the Catholic Relief Service (CRS) partnering with the local churches has continuously assisted thousands of South Sudanese driven from their homes by the violent conflict that existed between the nation's president, Salva Kiir, and former vice president, Riek Machar and sheltered them in the fields and fed them as a result of almost two years of violent conflict (CRS Report, 2015). The CRS did this by providing healthcare and education. The Zimbabwe crisis caused by the Zimbabwe- South African border conflict saw the involvement of The Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Uniting Church of Christ in providing food and shelter for Zimbabwean immigrants. In Kenya, according to Oladipo (2001), Churches in collaboration with related Organizations and Partners have provided civic education, western style education, modern medical services, new techniques in agriculture, safe drinking water and other services to the Citizens. The cost of provision of these services is much lower than provision by the Government due to the fact that some of the providers are volunteers in the spirit of Christianity and more specifically to honour Mary the Mother of Jesus as the giver of life. Irrespective of the reason behind it, the Economic Church plays an important role during peace by providing medical services and requirements which could otherwise have cost a lot of money, making them inaccessible to some, leading to huge losses of lives.

The Economic Church is a conduit for Philanthropy seen in provision of Education. Jesus Christ is considered to be the best teacher by most of the Christian congregations, reflected through the work of evangelism. The early Missionaries integrated Education with Christianity as they settled in Kenya. The Government of Kenya puts much emphasis on Education in its Socio-Economic development programs. Barasa and Misati, (2012) explain the role of the Church in the development of Education in Kenya, pointing out the important role played by the Church in Provision and expansion of Education in collaboration with other Stakeholders such as the Government. It is therefore common for congregations have or sponsor Schools, Colleges and Universities. Some of the Private Faith-based Universities include: The Catholic University of Eastern Africa, The University of Eastern Africa Baraton, Daystar University, United States International University, St. Paul's University, Africa Nazarene University, Pan Africa Christian University, and Kenya Methodist University among others.

The Catholic Church mentors several Colleges such as the Hekima College, Tangaza College, Uzima University College and others. The participation of the Anglican Church is seen in the Education Policy of Anglican Church, 2011, p. 4-7. The Economic Church is seen in providing Social welfare through Education which is considered to be a Socio-economic benefit. The benefits of Education accrue not only to the individual but also to the whole Society. The Economic Church helps reduce the direct and indirect costs of education and allows the Citizens to enjoy the benefits.

2. Ownership of property during peace

"The intrinsic nature of the Church serves the unintentional but essential function of reducing transactions costs by enforcing a system of property rights" (Hull & Bold, 1989). The belief in gods, heaven and hell serves as an unquestioned way of enforcing ownership of property, making it a common practice among different Churches and Congregations over the World to own property. The low marginal cost of property rights due to religion, as opposed to the increased marginal cost of secular property rights enforcement makes ownership far much affordable and secure to not only the Church congregation, but the entire Nation. As opposed to individual ownership of property, the Church gains ownership of property through the theory of implied trust which asserts that the local Church accepts and holds property on behalf of the Church membership. This theory has seen Churches over time accrue a lot of wealth. The Churches invest in Guest houses, transportation and recreational facilities among other properties which are run based on religious faith hence enjoy wide support and loyalty from members. On individual wealth however, as put by Keister (2003), Religion directly affects wealth ownership since it plays part in shaping values and priorities. Religion contributes to the set of competencies from which action like investment is constructed, and on many occasions provides important social contacts. Ochanda, et al., (2003) point out that religion, and therefore the Church promotes positive attitude towards honesty, increases level of honesty and reduces corruption tendencies, at the same time encouraging thrift, which in turn instils savings, investment and therefore economic growth. Among the religious groups still, different denominations are rated differently by some Researchers. A study in USA for instance, indicated that the Jewish are more likely to accrue wealth as opposed to the Protestants who are least likely to accrue wealth.

The theory of the firm dictates that firms maximize their wealth for sustainability. Although ideally speaking the Church does not face competition from other churches, but practically, the competition for resources exists not only from other churches, but also from non-religious entities which exist in the same market. This therefore call to a more efficient way of managing their resources which include time, money, and manpower/ man-hour. Networks are also created and sustained in order to increase revenue. The revenue is earned though providing a product mix which includes social goods, goods of temporal bliss or religious entertainment, deferred perpetuity or eternal life and altered fate (Hull & Bold, 1989).

The net asset worth of Churches in Kenya and the world as a whole however keeps increasing at a high rate as its members acquire additional wealth. This increasing wealth however becomes a source of conflict amongst the church members themselves even when the rest of the society is at peace. Discontentment by some members leads to factionalism and divisions and progress to serious conflicts. The Protestant Episcopal Church v. Baker (1991) involving possession wrangles of Church property is one such example. In Kenya there numerous occasions where the conflicting factions physically try to evict each other from the church premise as they fight over ownership. The Church in this case becomes the source and perpetrator of conflict.

The Catholic Church particularly has a considerable amount of wealth, most of it surrounded with a lot of mystery. The American Catholic Church, which has the fourth largest follower base by country, after Brazil, Mexico and the Philippines, spent \$170bn in 2010 on things like healthcare, schools and parishes. The sources of the cash in-flows include individual donations, own investments, Corporate donors and Government grants. Despite that data is scarce, and the exact GDP figure is unknown, the CIA world fact book estimates Vatican City's 2011 revenue to be \$308m, therefore considered the biggest financial power on earth as explained by Avro Manhattan in his book, 'The Vatican Billions'. The Catholic Church's net worth is placed at \$ 8 billion. The Church's priceless art, land, gold and investments across the globe prove that it is one of the wealthiest institutions on Earth. The Vatican has very high shares in some of the most profitable Corporations in the World such as General Motors, General Electric, Gulf Oil, Shell and Bethlehem Steel among others.

The Jewish Church is another illustration of enormous wealth owned by a religious group. In the Jewish Church, taking a vow of poverty was and is still considered wrong and against the law (Lynch, 2007). This therefore indicates the seriousness with which hard and diligent work is encouraged in order to acquire wealth: to be a lender, not a borrower. Using the Philanthropic principles of Jewish wealth, anyone who is of sound mind is capable of acquiring wealth. One of the richest Churches in the world was the Solomon's church, endowed with magnitudes of gold and silver. Jewish Federations of North America representing 157 Jewish Federations raise and distribute nearly \$3 billion annually for social services through a network of faith-related organization (Wawudor, 2006).

The African Inland Church (AIC)'s wealth starts from the remote seedling Nursery at AIC Cheptebe Center in Kerio Valley where hundreds of Mango and Orange seedlings are sold to the Semi-Arid areas to the Schools and hospital, among other properties owned by the Church. Other Congregations such as Presbyterian Church of East Africa and the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) similarly own a lot of property, movable and immovable such as guest houses.

3. Micro financing to provide starts ups for investments during peace.

This can be associated with Church Centered Economic development; although in some of the Congregations it may not be a formal process as such. The basis of this is to guide the Members in forming simple savings groups aimed at economically empowering them; these are welfare groups created by the Church. "Jumuia" is a word given to Small Christian Communities (SCC) that comprise of Congregation from common Geographical boundary created by the Church among the Roman Catholic, intended for spiritual nourishment through Bible study. Due to the immense networking in these groups however, eventually financial sustainability becomes an area of interest and through them businesses are created and sustained (Murphy, 2002). Through pooling of finances created through contributions and lending among themselves at very low or at no interest rate, the businesses become self-sustainable. Self-sustainability is also ensured by high level of trust, reciprocity and cooperation among the members of respective SCCs. In different Congregations, similar religious groups are developed and acquire frameworks similar to that of 'CHAMAs' and eventually businesses start to thrive. The Economic church takes advantage of economies of numbers as *ceteris paribus*, the amount of resources circulating increases with the numbers in the Congregation.

The Economic Church during conflict

The role of the Church before conflict does not end with the onset of conflict; however the attention is shifted to the consequences of the on-going conflicts and ways to minimize their effects to mankind and the economy. The Economic church therefore plays a role in providing shelter for victims, provision of basic requirements and spearheading the conflict resolution process. The Economic Church is also involved in sourcing for additional resources from the Philanthropists, among others.

1. Shelter for victims during conflict

The contrary cases notwithstanding, victims of conflict always run to Churches and other religious buildings as the first choice for shelter. Women, Children and the elderly in areas of conflict more often than not seek refuge in religious buildings such as churches because they are in most cases, least actively involved in the conflict itself. The July 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict is one such conflict where more than 2000 people mostly women and children sought refuge at the Greek Orthodox church in Zaytun, more so considering the fact that sheltering in any mosque would have been dangerous since such areas would provide the high Palestinian casualties and deaths that the other side hoped for, especially during the Muslim prayer hours. The contrary case is illustrated by Rwanda case of conflict between the Hutus and the Tutsis in 1994 where those who had gone to seek refuge from the Ntarama church were brutally murdered. This was replicated in many other Churches in Rwanda such as the Cyahinda parish Church, Nyamata Church, Sainte Famille Catholic Church and others. African Rights (1995) points out that more Rwandese Citizens were killed in Parishes and churches than anywhere else during the conflict. This however, ideally is not considered to be the role of the Economic Church but an exception to the norm, a situation in which the Church becomes a victim of the existing conflict and people suffer while seeking protection from the place they have gone to seek solace, the Church.

2. Provision of basic requirements during conflict.

Conflict may not be as a result of a specific process in production or consumption but the externalities that result are enormous. These may be relate to the social costs, of which the Church tries to minimize during conflict. It goes without saying that with the increased number of individuals seeking shelter in the churches, the challenge of providing basic requirements such as food, water and clothing also increase. The Church is a religious place therefore the expectations are that the basic needs will be taken care of, hence putting a lot of pressure on the Economic Church during the time of conflict. This is particularly challenging when the conflict builds up drastically and huge numbers of people are displaced within a short period of time. This in most cases leads to a situation where the Economic Church is unable to cope with the needs of the victims.

3. Spearhead conflict resolution process during conflict.

During conflict, the victim and the perpetrator are both 'dehumanized'. The social fabric is totally disintegrated, and trust completely destroyed. All systems, including the economic system operates at a much less than optimal level. The Economic Church therefore has a role of re-establishing the trust and giving them a sense of belonging through mediation. The Church in this case plays many roles during this period. The Economic Church is the intercessor, convener, trust builder and resource expander. It takes up the role of the counsellor, witness and generates possible alternatives for the conflicting sides. The Economic Church takes the initiative to reduce the Human cost of violence whose effects are normally felt long after the conflict. The environment and the conditions under which this is done however may not be conducive since the conflict is on-going; there is a lot of suspicion, mistrust and even hatred between the warring parties. Due to possible casualties and victims and losses of property on both sides, and in the case where the conflict has lasted for a long period, the warring sides start running short of weaponry, food and water, fatigue and exhaustion sets in, they start re-evaluating their positions. They may be desperate to end the conflict and have their lives back but at the same time cautious to ensure they have achieved and not lost it all as far as the cause of the conflict is concerned. Since neither side wants to accept defeat, this process is as complicated as it is delicate. The Church can only remain relevant in this process if it was considered non-partisan even before the commencement of the existing conflict.

4. Acquisition of additional resources from Philanthropists during conflict.

During conflict, there is selective access allowed to the victims, in some cases specific Non-Governmental Organizations such as the Red Cross and the Church are allowed in the areas of conflict. The actual situation on the ground, the plight of the victims can therefore only be well represented by these Institutions. Economics has it that 'there is no Social welfare without individual welfare'. This therefore requires that the welfare if the individual victims has to be taken in to account. More often than not, the conflicts run for long periods to the extent that any existing reserves get depleted hence forcing the Church to start seeking for additional resources from well-wishers. Due to the high level of mistrust between the warring sides during the conflict, it is only the Church that can be entrusted with this function.

The Economic Church after conflict

The decisive determinants of reconciliation are the (re-) building of relationships based on trust – the weaving of a social fabric – and to learn to recognize and respect the uniqueness of every human being – his or her inviolable human dignity. It is also only through this process that the economic infrastructure can be restored back to where it was before the conflict. The church therefore at this stage finds itself reverting to the original function before the conflict but at the same time still playing the role it had during conflict as the victims

struggle to rebuild their lives after the conflict. HEKS (2007) point to a period before the reconciliation called the transition period which encompasses establishment of facts followed by justice, reparations and finally institutional reforms.

Conciliation starts before the end of the conflict and continues long after the conflict. During the conciliation processes The Economic church can represent a shelter for victims, a place for dialogue with perpetrators or can act as intermediaries between conflicting parties. The post conflict period is considered to be very rigorous as the Economic Church plays the role that merges the two periods: during conflict and post conflict period. In other words, the Church has to deal with the transitional period first before it can eventually go back to the period before another conflict. The urgent deadlines characteristic of the post conflict period makes the role played by the Economic Church even more urgent as it tries to revive trust between the sides involved. As the two sides try to cede the ground, this is the time when offers and counter offers, accusations and counter accusations are made and deadlines given which in the spirit of good faith have to be adhered to avoid a relapse into conflict. It is important to relate to the course of the conflict in the first place which in most cases is associated with non-equitable allocation of resources, where one party feels aggrieved. The post conflict role of the Economic Church therefore has to ensure that both sides agree on the systems and mechanisms to be put in place to ensure all citizens have access to material and immaterial resources. This may additionally require financial resources as the basic infrastructure is put in place to kick start the process of reconstruction and sustain the process of conciliation.

This period is also characterized by rebuilding of the physical infrastructure demolished during the conflict hence the Church is drawn in due to the frequently post-war experiences in the context of emergency and reconstruction aid. As the post conflict period tries to 'humanize' the victim and the perpetrator, their key words are reparation that restores their dignity, re-establishes their rights, their productive capabilities and their social, political and economic rights as citizens. The Economic Church takes a lead to provide alternative or rebuilt the demolished houses, Schools, Hospitals and other infrastructure in collaboration with the Government, which in most cases of political conflict either ceases to exist or does not have proper systems in place after the conflict.

The role of the Church in this process will depend on how the conflicting sides perceived the role the Church and position the Church took during the conflict. Lack of trust from either side could make the role of the Church in the post conflict period greatly challenging. The interconnection between Religion and Power is so strong that it is common to have religious leaders take political sides during political conflicts. Furthermore, Religious leaders are human therefore their emotions may hinder a balanced assessment of the situation leading to making skewed decisions. It is evident that in many parts of the World that religious groups have been able to provide to the Citizens that which the State has been unable in some parts; Education and health. It is in doing so, compounded by the logistics that surround provision that politics and religion come to mingle and some religious leaders get 'lost' in the struggle for equality and justice.

On that note therefore, the Economic Church is unable to separate itself from the rest of the church and roles of the Church. Whereas there are numerous examples of leaders who turned to religion to legitimize themselves, such as Abacha and Obasanjo of Nigeria (Mustapha, 1999) this thin line between religion and politics requires serious attention to ensure not too much ground is ceded. It could be unreasonable for the Church to claim to be concerned solely for the economic welfare of the citizens without paying attention to their Political and social well being but there should be a clear cut point beyond which the religious leaders should not go if they want to retain their relevance. The economic Church is charged with the responsibility of weaving the social fabric, to ensuring social welfare.

In some cases the Economic Church is forced to arbitrate when an agreement is not forthcoming through conciliation. This however is not envisaged as it is an indication of lack of 'Trust' from either side of the conflict. In the case of arbitration unlike in conciliation, the decision put forth by arbitrators are final and legally binding therefore there is very little limited room for appeal. This may therefore imply that if either side feels dissatisfied this may precipitate another conflict in the unforeseeable future. Both conciliation and arbitration may be methods of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) but in the spirit of good faith, conciliation would be more appropriate as it gives more room for negotiation despite the fact that more often than not, it takes longer than arbitration.

At what cost therefore does the Economic Church get so much involved in trying to correct the existing economic systems that it doesn't change sides and become a Political Church? There are numerous example where Religious leaders get involved so much in state politics that they cannot draw the line between the two. Longman (2001) gives a picture of the circumstances surrounding the genocide in Rwanda. He points out the fact that Churches were closely allied to the state, were deeply involved in the battles over the State and also were themselves important arenas of political struggle. The depth of the involvement of Religious leaders in political power in Rwanda was so deep that some Church personnel involved in the violence justified their action as legitimate concern of the Hutu's safety and refused to acknowledge the nature of the offense, until

recently that the Pope apologized on behalf of the Catholic Church to the people of Rwanda. As much as religion and politics go hand in hand, it is imperative that the Economic Church maintains a 'political neutrality' outlook in order to be relevant during the conflict and in the post conflict period. The Economic Church should provide guidance and endeavor to have their recommendations implemented without necessarily taking on Political leadership or actively taking up political positions.

III. CONCLUSION

The role of the Economic Church cannot be overemphasized since a complete human being is not only the soul, but also the body and mind. Whereas economics cannot be incorporated directly to the Soul, the body and the mind require nourishment, which is as a result of an economic system. Whereas there are many domains that could be used in dealing with the economic church in peace and conflict resolution, this study had divided it into before conflict, during conflict and after conflict. It is however not practical to elaborate when one period starts and ends, as the activities overlap. The role played by the Economic Church is a process; a cycle therefore cannot be demarcated. The Economic Church plays an important role in restoring and maintaining the equilibrium, a conducive environment which allow other systems political and social to operate optimally. Internal conflicts in the Church should be managed and resolved before they get out of control because a Church in conflict cannot be able to play the required Economic role in peace and conflict resolution in the Society as a whole. This therefore means that as long as the Church exists, so will the economic role in peace and conflict resolution.

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