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## The Place of Religious Influence in Kenya's Political Leadership

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### **Abstract:**

*The most recent system of democratic governance in Kenya which is a product of the democratization process that culminated in a new constitution in 2010, ushered in a well decentralized system of governance. The implementation of the current political dispensation began with the general election of 2013 in Kenya. Like in many advanced democracies in today's world, the system involves a large hierarchy of political leaders from the central government to the forty-seven county governments and their governors. Numerous elective positions are involved in this huge hierarchy of political leaders in the two levels of government. Kenya like other African states has her own fair share of problems and challenges pertinent to political leadership, which sometimes, require the intervention of some pressure groups such as religious institutions in order to achieve solution or satisfactory direction for the common good. This paper attempts to show a concise examination of the place of religion in past and present political leadership in Kenya, and to highlight positive contributions and failings of religious influence in the country. Religion has been known to influence leadership in many nations since antiquity, thus in this short presentation, the various complexions which religious influence have assumed and can assume in order to positively or negatively affect political leadership have been discussed. The paper also integrates comments on the arguments as to whether or not religion, in our time, has the moral authority to interfere with political processes of the country and to what extent in this context.*

**Keywords:** Religion, democracy, democratization, Church-state

### **1. Introduction**

The most recent system of democratic governance in Kenya which is a product of the democratization process that culminated in a new constitution in 2010, ushered in a well decentralized system of governance. The implementation of the current political dispensation began with the general election of 2013 in Kenya. Like in many advanced democracies in today's world, the system involves a large hierarchy of political leaders from the central government to the forty-seven county governments and their governors. Numerous elective positions are involved in this huge hierarchy of political leaders in the two levels of government. Kenya like other African states has her own fair share of problems and challenges pertinent to political leadership, which sometimes, require the intervention of some pressure groups such as religious institutions in order to achieve solution or satisfactory direction for the common good. That is why this paper attempts to show a concise examination of the place of religion in past and present political leadership in Kenya, and to highlight positive contributions and failings of religious influence in the country. Religion has been known to influence leadership in many nations since antiquity. This is evident from the theocratic nation of the Jews; the Catholic dominated Roman Empire in the Middle Ages to the Islamic influence in Arab nations of the Middle East and Northern Africa. In recent years, Christian and Muslim religious leaders have been able to function as a pressure group that contributed constructively to the democratization process in Kenya. Simultaneously, Christian and Muslim religious values are often disregarded by adherents of both religions in periods of general elections which is a facet of the practice of democratic political system of governance.

In this short presentation, the various complexions which religious influence have assumed and can assume in order to positively or negatively affect political leadership have been discussed. Also, the discourse integrates comments on the arguments as to whether or not religion, in our time, has the moral authority to interfere with political processes of the country and to what extent in this context. In spite of the fact that religion offers ethical platform on many choices of life, it is argued that religion is not politics; therefore the former need not interfere with the latter without limits so that the role of both in nation building remains appreciable.

Unlike some African countries, in Kenya, the disparity between the Muslim versus Christian influence in the country is not pronouncedly an issue though there have been cases of some differences here and there. As of 2016, according to the UN data, Kenya is a country with a population of approximately 47,251 million Kenyans (UN). However, as of 2014, approximately 82% of the population are Christians and about 11% are Muslims; adherents of other religions: Hindus, Sikhs and Bahais constitute 1% of the population (US department of State). Kenya is a multi-ethnic country with

42 ethnic groups. Competition for scarce national resources and opportunities has been the main cause of ethnic rivalries in the country since independence in 1963. While ethnicity remains an influential factor in the nation's political culture, it is important to show how religious affiliations and beliefs have influenced trends in the political life of the nation. However, ethnic rivalries have been the major source of political upheavals in the country's history since her independence. As already mentioned, in the Kenyan political experience, sometimes Christian and Muslim religious leaders have functioned as sources of ideas and inspiration for pragmatic ways to consensus in the political arena. Religion is always associated with ideals and ethical values drawn from its teachings. High moral integrity along with other leadership skills is among the qualities or attributes which are generally expected of good leaders including political leaders.

The rapidly increasing needs of modern society require leaders with wisdom, innovative and creative abilities so that they can address emerging social issues while legitimately using their power and influence. It is generally believed that good "leaders inspire followers to willingly sacrifice their selfish interests for a higher cause". Undoubtedly, there are political leaders with commendable qualities and there are others without leadership skills and moral integrity in African nations. Thus, the performance by some of our competent political leaders working in the midst of the majority who are incompetent is bound to culminate in poor performance of political leadership in African states. It is relevant to clarify some key words here.

## 2. Nature of Leadership, Politics and Religion

Like many subjects of discussion, the concept of leadership has become complex and difficult to define perhaps because of the multiplicity of its aspects and our varying perceptions of the same. Leadership has been defined in terms of traits, behaviours, influence, interaction, patterns, role relationships and occupation of an administrative position... Most definitions of leadership reflect the assumption that it involves a process whereby intentional influence is exerted by one person over other people to guide, structure, and facilitate activities and relationships in a group or organization (Yukl, 2002).

First and foremost, leadership pertains to a legitimate process in which a leader guides, inspires, relates and mobilizes cooperation of people or groups towards sustainable achievement of a desired target or aspirations of an organization or nation. In political leadership of a state, there is hierarchy in which one leader is at the apex position and seemingly assumes the highest responsibility in directing the socio-economic and political affairs of the state. The leader's influence and how he or she relates to subordinates and the entire citizenship can improve or endanger prevailing socio-economic and political situation. A political leader or head of state can easily influence an entire nation positively if the individual exhibited high integrity, commitment to the creation of empowering environment, rule of law, transparency and accountability, while acting within the provisions of constitutional powers vested in that leadership position. Thus, such a leadership will be an expression of effective leadership.

Moreover, wisdom is essential for those who are political leaders whose actions can construct, build or destroy a people's hopes and aspirations. King Solomon who was in leadership position asserted, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Proverbs 4:7). Wisdom is one of the virtues African elites should seek before they begin to aspire for the highest leadership positions in our young democracies. The Harper-Collins Dictionary of Philosophy (Angeles, 1992) explains wisdom as prudent judgement as to how to use knowledge in the everyday affairs of life; the correct perception of the best ends in life, the best means of their attainment, and the practical intelligence in successfully applying those means. Wisdom expresses itself as some amalgam of knowledge and spiritual profundity. Whatever leadership acumen an individual or group of persons believe they possess, they can perform excellently in positions of power and authority if they seek wisdom which will lead them to personal knowledge of God and they realize also that true wisdom is given by God (Proverbs 2: 6).

Political leadership needs to be grounded in wisdom, because it is usually difficult for most persons to transcend different aspects of human frailties especially those that lead to greed, selfish interest, nepotism, conversion of public asset into personal wealth and inclination towards dictatorial attitudes. Therefore political leaders must seek wisdom on their own initiatives; they need it, but they cannot buy or possess it by means of political power and authority. Wisdom guides the application leadership skills. Any individual can train to acquire knowledge of leadership principles and skills. But the application of such theoretical knowledge of leadership in practical life for sustainable political stability and economic development requires an extra-ordinary quality that emanate from wisdom, integrity and commitment to serve fellow humans.

Politics is basically understood as the art of governance. It also deals with the allocation of resources in society. As an art of governance, politics regulate morality in society and "political institutions are the means through which a nation's wealth and resources are allocated and distributed for effective management of the welfare and developmental programmes of the people in a democratic setting (Chukwu, 2002). It is obvious that being a political leader would imply that the individual must possess certain leadership skill and the moral integrity to be able to serve the nation well.

As for the nature of religion, there are multiple views, but religion is precisely the belief in supernatural beings. According to the Longman Modern English Dictionary, religion is understood as man's expression of his acknowledgement of the divine: a system of beliefs and practices relating to the sacred and uniting its adherents in a community...something which has a powerful hold on a person's way of thinking, interests, etc.

From the above understanding of leadership, politics and religion, it is apparent that religion as a phenomenon that propagates several ethical values which are universally valid has practical relevance for good conduct of political leaders in a country. They have got something in common; they relate to the well-being of society. They co-exist by virtue

of their operation in society and influence one and other in one way or another. Kenneth D.Wald (1992) observes that religion could denote a social group, a subculture or communal beliefs for that matter. Thus he underlines how religion may relate and mingle with politics in these words: ...the communal nature of religion may induce a particular manner of political activity by members of a congregation. If a church attracts people who experience similar conditions of life; whether poverty or affluence, that shared status, may lead congregants to develop a common outlook on politics and social issues (ibid).

Contemporary states are predominantly secular and this applies to Kenya as well. It is so in the structures of public affairs and defined by secular statutes. It is the principle on which the political life of the country is built. However, it would be contentious to rule out any religious influences in the political culture of the country. This is evident in the sense that, religion is a social phenomenon that exerts tremendous impact on human behaviour. Thus our affiliation with any religious institution implies submission to conduct ourselves in accordance with the moral precepts allied with our religious conviction or belief. In this process the political culture of a nation could be affected by religious values (Chuwku, 2008).

The fact that religion makes impact on political culture of a nation is not a new phenomenon especially in most African states. According to J.S.Mbiti (1969), Africans in their traditional societies are known to be "notoriously religious". What Mbiti means by this is that the African carries religion wherever he goes. Therefore even in leadership and politics, Africans would exhibit elements of religion in them.

### **3. The Issue of Religion and Political Leadership**

In Kenya's post-colonial political era, Christianity and Islam as the two dominant religions have influenced some aspects of political leadership of the country. In spite of the differences between Christian and Islamic religious teaching, their followers appreciate and desire peace and security, transparency and accountability by political leaders.

Religious influence in politics and governance in Kenya can be traced back to the colonial era. In fact, much of negative religious influences during the colonial phase can be exposed from the first post-colonial regime to the beginning of the era of multi-party politics in Kenya when trends of positive religious influences in political events and development became apparent. According to Emily Choge (2008), during the colonial period in Kenya, the missionary church associated itself with the colonial administration because it sought protection from them. For this reason, it was hard for the missionary church to speak against evils of the colonial regime. However, she observes that even though that was the case, some individuals, could see through the colonial bias and spoke courageously for the interests of the Africans. One such person was the archdeacon Owen, who spoke against the land alienation and evils of forced labour in Western Kenya (ibid). Though historical accounts reveal that the archdeacon was alienated by his fellow white people, it is apparent that his act is a case of the Church's positive influence on leadership the colonial government in Kenya.

In early post-colonial era in Kenya, the Church and other religious leaders failed to stand up completely against social injustices caused by politics. This happened because some political leaders had influence on some clergy, thus it was hard for some church leaders to condemn social injustices. For instance, during President Kenyatta's (Dec.1964—Aug.1978), and the relationship he had with the leadership of the Presbyterian and the Anglican churches. Some of the top clergy in these churches had good relations with him. Bernt and Twaddle (1995) notes that throughout the Kenyatta era, relations between the government and the churches in Kenya remained relatively cordial. The president's brother-in-law Obadiah Kariuki had been the first African appointed an Anglican bishop in Kenya, while his wife's brother, Monsignor George Muhoho, served as Roman Catholic Chaplain to the University of Nairobi. This fact encouraged a situation where the Church could get compromised and be used as a vehicle for propagating political interests of individual politicians. This is what actually happened with the Kenyatta era. The Church became a government sympathizer and failed to speak against the faults within the regime.

### **4. Impact of Religion in Democratization Process**

In Kenya, it can be noted how religion has contributed towards democratization process. This is so especially from 1990s when the call for democratization was rampant in developing countries of Africa. It was the time when campaigns for multi-party democracy were at their height. Though the Church in some instances appeared to be sympathetic and compromising with President Moi's regime (August 1978--Dec.2002), there was a huge religious influence that played a key role in the democratization that was achieved during this era. In early years of his rule, President Moi seems to have earned favour with the Church because of his association and support of what the church preached in his leadership. Also the early years of his rule were marked with fewer scandals and cases of bad leadership compared to his predecessor's leadership which had been identified with some elements of dictatorship. However, as from 1984, Moi's leadership began to encounter some huddles which attracted much attention of church leaders. The most notable was Moi's continued curtailment of the influence of Kikuyu within the civil service and the military, which apparently was a good move, but his shifting of the state resources and patronage from Kikuyu dominance to his own Kalenjin dominance in Rift Valley Province and also the rest of Western Kenya was an indication or evidence of bad leadership inherited from Jomo Kenyatta. With the strengthening of his ruling party, the Kenyan African National Union (KANU), Moi used this influence to suppress other politicians, especially those opposed to him and KANU. On this, Bernt and Twaddle argue that, he required others to accept his rulings and to follow in his footsteps as expounded by KANU's new national executive (ibid). This was perceived as bad political leadership or governance by Moi's critics. When the church leaders noticed this, they came up in opposition. Soon the main churches and the National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCCK) clashed with the revived KANU, as the ruling party sought to silence criticism of the regime (ibid).

Consequently, some church leaders became front runners in criticizing the government of President Moi. These included Bishop Alexander Muge, Henry Okullu, and David Gitari, all of the Church of the Province of Kenya (CPK), and the Reverend Doctor Timothy Njoya of Presbyterian Church. One of the most outstanding political activities that showcased the zeal of the church leaders in promoting good political leadership and democracy was in 1986 when KANU's national governing council decided to abolish the secret ballot system of voting and adopted a new method of queuing during elections. Having been the only political party even before 1982, less opposition would be encountered from politicians since the political opposition had been effectively repressed and disorganised. The main body which could stand up against misrule from the government came from religious leaders and sometimes from the Law Society of Kenya (LSK). In this debate, the NCKK and the LSK seemed to be directly opposing the will of the ruling party (ibid). The clergy wanted the government to allow citizens to exercise their democratic rights without coercive tactics, fear or intimidation.

There were some churches, especially the non-members of NCKK, which were sometimes compromised by the government and decided to back KANU. But the NCKK and the Roman Catholic Church continued to exert more pressure against the style of governance by KANU. Though the clergy and the churches which vehemently opposed bad governance were put on spot by the political leadership of the country, they did not give up their zeal to campaign for democratization in Kenya. With the agitation for multi-party democracy in most developing countries heating up from the late 1980s onwards, religious leaders fearlessly contributed their voices towards this effort. The clergy were at the fore in bringing the awareness of how one-party states in Eastern Europe had failed to meet the basic needs and demands of their people and were inherently undemocratic. The fierce fight put forth against the government's derailment of democratization process in Kenya made the clerics to be denounced and some government officials even declared that, the NCKK was riddled with 'anti-government agitators' and had been transformed into an opposition faction (ibid).

The events that emerged during Kenyatta's regime and intensified during Moi's rule saw the Church being in the frontline promoting democratization process in Kenya. Their success was achieved when the international community and donor countries put their weight in support of multi-party system in Kenya. This compelled KANU to gradually loosen its grip on some of the things that it had earlier held firm. Eventually, Kenya began to experience change and a new phase of democratization process was initiated. The religious leaders endured a lot to see this process succeed as the country reeled out of one-party state. Some of them even lost their lives as the struggle and agitation progressed to usher in multi-party politics in the country.

In the recent past, particularly since the 1992 multi-party elections in Kenya, religious leaders commanded enormous confidence and respect for their contribution towards major political decisions in the country. The NCKK, the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM), and the Kenyan Episcopal Council of the Catholic Church (KEC) have been influential in effecting reforms in Kenya through agitation for and participation in the drafting of a new constitution. They have been seen to rise to occasions whenever they detect any form of misrule. They have been contributing a lot towards new legislation in the country with the promotion of civic education and enlightening their followers about their duties and rights in nation building. During the 2005 constitution referendum, religious leaders took a lot of time informing their followers about the meaning of the whole process. Concerning the place of religious influence towards the democratization process in Kenya, Bernt and Twaddle made this remark, the churches, commanding mass respect still remain a lone voice of criticism. Their conservative ideology has thus enabled them in recent years, not only to discuss with an authoritarian pseudo-party state, but to serve as one of the last redoubts for secular liberalism and democracy in Kenya in the new multi-party era (ibid).

It is surprising how the same Church become lukewarm in terms of condemning the shortcomings of President Kibaki era from Dec. 2002 to April 2013. In the 2005 constitution referendum, the Catholic Church was accused of failing to offer any guidance to her followers concerning the matter. The KEC folded their arms and waited for the faithful to choose whichever path they wanted without offering any kind of guidance in terms of civic education. This reveals how the Church was divided on matters of legislation of this country. Some individual bishops within the Catholic Church in Kenya appeared to support certain sides between the two opposing political camps: the pro-constitution draft and anti-constitution draft camps. During the 2007-2008 post-election violence, the religious leaders all over the country failed to speak in one voice to prevent tribal animosity from occurring. This means that each of the religious leaders could have been sympathetic to their political affiliations or ethnic group, consequently, they could not speak in one voice. By far the Catholic Church administration has been soft to the leadership of President Kibaki who is a devoted Catholic faithful, because they probably harbour the idea that one of their own is in power.

Considering the complexity of religion and politics in Kenya, some controversial images are being portrayed by the religious leaders. This is mainly found among Christian religious leaders. Kenyan politics is undergoing a lot of experiences and challenges. In the wake of mushrooming of Pentecostal and Evangelical churches in the country, it has become hard to clearly ascertain the position of religion towards the challenges affecting the well-being of the entire citizens of Kenya let alone politics. This is because the many emergent churches seem not to have any definite form of doctrines which defines, dictates or guides the role of church towards political affairs and secular leadership of the country. There are no elaborate guidelines that determine the boundary between the Church and the state. This fact has left a good number of clerics in the neo-emergent churches failing to distinguish between church matters and political ones. This explains why today many religious leaders are taking advantage of their religious popularity to seek political positions.

## 5. The Ninth, Tenth and Eleventh Parliaments

The Ninth and Tenth Parliaments which existed from 2003 to 2013 during the Kibaki regime in Kenya registered a good number of religious leaders as members of parliaments representing certain political regions. With such occurrences, it would be easier for a 'shepherd' to direct his or her 'flock' towards the political direction that he or she wants them to go. This would be a form of mixing politics with religion in the democratic setting of our secular state. It is a new trend that is not only seeing many religious leaders seeking presidential, parliamentary, gubernatorial and civic seats, but also it is creating an environment whereby Christians are falling as easy prey for politicians. It is apparent that some politicians may seek support of religious leaders with whom they share a religious creed to influence their 'flocks' to follow their political parties.

In the current regime of President Uhuru Kenyatta which commenced in April 2013, there were Christian religious leaders who contested for political seats in the August 2017 general elections. A good example of religious influence on political leadership in Kenya can be seen from the fact that in the present government of President Uhuru, a religious leader namely, Retired Anglican Archbishop Eliud Wabukala was appointed the Chairman of Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) by Uhuru after the Archbishop was unanimously endorsed by members of parliament in January 2017 (Daily Nation). The current Chair of EACC, Archbishop Wabukala is expected to restore sanity by controlling corruption by political leaders and promote confidence in the EACC among other tasks.

Since such a development of passionate courtship between religion and political leaders will unfailingly have detrimental impact capable of killing democracy in the current political atmosphere in Kenya. It is important to examine and recommend the limits that religion should tread towards the political arena of the country. Should religion not resume its rightful duty of providing moral guidance to people in order for them to be responsible and patriotic citizens instead of being partisan and meddling with political games that they seem to be doing today? The Church that we need to see should be a neutral body that doesn't take sides in controversial political matters given the fact that in the Church there are people with different political convictions.

## 6. Separating Religion from Politics

Having seen how instrumental religion has been in promoting the political well-being in Kenya, it may seem absurd to think about separating religion from politics. As mentioned earlier, it may be hard to separate these two phenomena because they are basic components of human existence in society. Sometimes it is difficult to differentiate between religion and politics. Perhaps religion is the same as politics: it is political activity undercover of God. So, religion, it is said, is inevitably political for it provides a critical perspective of public life (Sherbok & McLellan, 1992).

Debates as to whether politics and religion should be separated can be an endless exercise. In this case, it is necessary to ask whether or not, religion, in contemporary time, has the moral authority to interfere with political affairs of a country? In this matter, it compels us to look at those countries where religious influence has been vital in causing positive changes in the political arena: the non-violent movement of Mahatma Gandhi which freed India from colonization, the non-violent movement of Martin Luther King caused viable changes in political and civil rights in USA, the role of Archbishop Desmond Tutu in the bitter struggles to dismantle apartheid regime of South Africa, etc. Historically, Islamic religion, more than Christianity, has been radical in entrenching itself into the political affairs of Muslim dominated countries. Such a condition has been aptly explained by Nwabuzor and Mueller (1993) when they stated that, unlike Christianity, which nowadays usually confines itself to spiritual matters, Islam seeks to regulate all aspects of life. Central to Islamic thought is the problem of political leadership and justice. A political leader is responsible for both the spiritual and temporal conditions of his people. As a servant of Allah, he must lead them according to the Sharia (Islamic law). It is the Sharia that teaches both the rulers and the ruled the purpose of human life and the meaning of achieving that purpose. It is clear that Islam as a religion is inseparable from political leadership. In Christianity it is seemingly unclear whether or not there should be a separation of religion from political leadership. For example, the implications of the Biblical assertion in Mark 12:17, "Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and give to God what belongs to God", could be deeper than expected. Does it mean we should separate what pertains to political affairs from the affairs of the gospel? In addition, Romans 13:1-7 states, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For, there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed and those who resist will incur judgement. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct but to bad...". Our interpretations of Mark 12:17, and Romans 13: 1-7 and how these relate to the issue of religion and political leadership may be subject to debates among Biblical scholars. Nevertheless, It is known that Christianity and Judaism exercise enormous influence in the politics of the United States among others,

## 7. Challenges Emanating from the Electorate

In Kenya as in other young African democracies, most citizens have high expectations from their political leaders. However, several leaders fail to improve the quality of services or standards of living for the people to an appreciable level. This becomes a major source of distrust and lack of confidence on the credibility of leadership in our government institutions.

The Kenyan electorates are predominantly Christians. More often than not, they choose to elect leaders who do not fulfil most of the commitments they made to citizens either intentionally or unintentionally. In Deuteronomy 1:13, Moses instructed the Jewish people, "Choose wise and discerning and experienced men from your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads". In Kenya as in many African nations, it is strange that the majority of the lower income Christian voters don't care to elect wise and discerning men and women especially when there are some little hand-outs from

incompetent aspirants for leadership positions. Christian moral values are quickly abandoned when it comes to voting. This raises a question: where is the influence of Christian values on the electorate during general elections in Kenya? It is a serious challenge that confronts us as we continue to seek to have responsible political leadership in African states.

It is regrettable that the same electorates complaining of being used in elections and dumped by some elected leaders will go ahead to elect the same unreliable political leaders again and again. Therefore the blame for poor leadership in an African nation does not rest wholly on the political leaders; instead the bulk of the blame can be rightfully shifted to the electorates who are bent on electing irresponsible leaders who do not appreciate the importance of transparency, accountability, honesty, rule of law and effective leadership. We have many leaders with Christian background who totally lack the fear of God among some of Africa's statesmen. Christians know that "the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding." (Proverbs 9: 10). We need leaders who are responsible as well as God fearing. The frequent political standoff and conflicts in Africa not only lead to loss of life and property and undermine socio-political stability but these also impel ordinary citizens who are faithful servants of the Lord to imagine whether some of our leaders think that this material world is everything that is. Every true Christian will concede that the fear of God alone is bound to exert enormous influence on one's decisions and actions and how the individual relates to or respects fellow humans.

One would contend that if most of African Heads of State can have ardent faith in God they can peacefully step out of power when they are no longer wanted by the masses instead of violating the constitution by amendment to extend their tenure in office. However, when there is no fear of God in some African presidents, we see resistance to give up power to the point of deadly clashes and attempts to stifle dissent by minority groups and even to stifle the voice of the entire citizenry which includes the voice of religious leaders. The African experience in post-colonial period shows that many of our political leaders prefer to hang on to power for too long as in Zimbabwe, Uganda, Cameroon, Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Sudan, etc. In this process, oppression of political opponents becomes an option for some political leaders to ensure the status quo.

## 8. Challenges and Prospects from Religious Leaders

Today, many religious organisations and institutions are dogged with many vices to the extent that they lose credibility as models for facilitating good governance. On several occasions, there have been cases of leadership struggle between some church leaders in Kenya and in several countries of our time. Some religious institutions seem to lack a systematic and definite way of electing leaders into positions and this results into wrangles during the selection of new leaders. Save for some mainstream churches which appear to have a defined way of coming up with their leaders, there are other churches that have always found themselves entangled in struggles to an extent of making the public doubt their capability in giving any pragmatic suggestion about democracy in the Kenyan context.

For religious institutions in Kenya to act as role models in promoting national unity, they have to stand up against the negative political influence that they occasionally embrace. Before the religious organisations point finger at bad governance and lack of proper democracy in the country, they have to put their own house in order. Unity of Christians would dignify Christian religious leaders and together with their Muslim counterpart, they can enhance the prospects of the place of religion in the growth of democratic culture and institutions. This will be a laudable contribution of religion towards democratization and good governance. They should not allow differences in political affiliations divide their followers. Neither should they be partial in contributing to political matters of this country. This is possible if religious leaders discover the extent to which they are supposed to engage political leaders on national issues of the country and to ensure they observe their limit in political matters.

## 9. Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to show the place of religious influences in shaping the course of political leadership in Kenya's post-colonial era. In the discussion it was argued that religion has got a moral role in contributing towards the political wellbeing of Kenya as in many other countries in today's world. However, the constructive contributions of religion to political development is to be appreciated but not without reservations. The role of religion in causing political conflicts in our time is well known. The extent to which the political leaders of different regimes have accommodated the role of religion to political stability should not result in Church leaders allowing themselves to be compromised by political elites in Kenya. Christian and Muslim religious leaders should contribute more in advising the Kenyan electorates to elect competent aspirants for political seats. Political leaders must seek wisdom and blend it with leadership skills. The philosophic but prophetic assertion of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato (429--347 BC) continues to hunt virtually all nations to date and perhaps into the distant future: *Until wisdom coincides with leadership nations will never be free from corruption*. Those who take advantage of their popularity acquired through their religious roles, to compete and ascend to political positions should be discouraged in the country. This new trend is seemingly absurd and misleading. This does not mean that a President is not free to appoint a religious leader of high integrity to a political position that can help bring sanity in political activity in Kenya.

Therefore in this discourse, the authors recommend that there should be a clear limit set for the extent to which religion may contribute to political matters and problems. The Church should adopt a moral role in guiding the political course towards democratization of the country without allowing any bias that is politically detrimental to the nation. Being aware of the pluralistic character of their followers and the electorate in general, in terms of political affiliations, religious leaders should be neutral and allow the faithful to be free as they exercise their democratic rights in choosing

political leaders with high integrity from any political party so as to ensure economic prosperity, harmony, peace, patriotism and orderly progress in nation building.

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