



A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN CAMEROON IN ADDRESSING THE POLITICAL CRISIS IN CAMEROON, 1990 –
1992

BY

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, Mokoko Thomas Mbue, hereby declare that this thesis which I submit for the award of the degree of Philosophiae Doctor at the University of Pretoria is my original work and has not been submitted for a degree in another institution.

Signature:



Dedication

To my late wife Mrs Mokoko Mbue Agnes Mingwe nee Tataw who loved me with unequalled passion and walked with me through this research journey, but who could not see its end, and to Nso Besong Agboranyor whose zeal for the completion of this work has been a propelling force, this work is dedicated. Love; true love never dies.

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to critically analyse the role played by the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) in addressing the political crisis in Cameroon from 1990 – 1992. This research sourced data from primary and secondary sources. The qualitative method was employed in the collection and treatment of data.

This research examined the Dietrich Bonhoeffer paradigm as a tool for the analysis of the role the PCC played in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, and compared it to the South African and El Salvadoran models, established the remote and immediate causes of the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon, identified and examined the various roles the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, critically analysed the role the PCC played in addressing the crisis in the light of Bonhoeffer's paradigm and proposed a contextual model for the public role of the Church in Cameroon.

In applying the Bonhoeffer three-step model to the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon this research realised that the PCC aptly applied the first step, timidly applied the second step, and did not engage the third step. This research found out that PCC's inability to engage the third step was caused by the inapplicability of this step given the Cameroonian context of church-state relations, the lack of precedence in Cameroon of church involvement in politics beyond the first step and the constraints of the Constitution of the PCC. This was the foundation of the proposed contextual model. The research work rounded off with some recommendations and a conclusion.

Key Words

Role played. Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, addressing, political crisis, Cameroon, the Dietrich Bonhoeffer three-step paradigm, church, intervention, politics.

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List of Abbreviations

CASES

ANC: African National Congress -----	18
CEPCA: Conseil des Eglises Protestantes du Cameroun-----	9
CMF: Christian Men Fellowship-----	145
CNU: Cameroon National Union -----	109
CPDM: Cameroon People's Democratic Union -----	5
CRTV: Cameroon Radio and Television -----	160
CYF: Christian Youth Fellowship -----	145
DRC: Dutch Reformed Church-----	270
DRMC: Dutch Reformed Mission Church -----	70
FGC: Full Gospel Church -----	8
KNC: Kamerun National Congress-----	150
MDR: Mouvement pour la Defense de la Republique-----	130
NCNC: National Council of Nigeria and the Cameroons-----	150
NDI: National Democratic Institute-----	135
NPMB: National Produce Marketing Board -----	117
PCC: Presbyterian Church in Cameroon -----	250
POWERCAM: Power Cameroon -----	117
SACBC: Southern Arican Catholic Bishop's Conference -----	18
SACC: South African Council of Churches-----	18
SAP: Structural Adjustment Program -----	114
SCNC: Southern Cameroons National Council: -----	117
SDF: Social Democratic Front-----	118
TCCM: Technical Committee on Constitutional Matters-----	213



UNDP: Union National pour la Democratie et le Progres-----	120
UPC: Union des Popultions du Cameroon -----	130
USAID: United Nations Agency for International Development -----	136
WCC: World Council of Churches -----	249

CHAPTER 1

A critical analysis of the role played by the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon in addressing the political crisis in Cameroon, 1990 – 1992

1.1 Introduction

The years 1990-1992 marked a turning point in the history of Cameroon. These years were characterized by unprecedented political upheavals. Before delving into the topic, it would be necessary to briefly paint the background picture of the upheavals.

Cameroon was colonized by Germany in 1884 (Nghoh, 2019:45; Keller, Brutsch & Schnellbach 1997:9) by the signing of treaties with the Duala Chiefs¹. In the Berlin Conference of 1884/1885, the boundaries of present-day Cameroon were drawn up. Germany stayed as the colonial master of Cameroon till late 1915, when as a result of the First World War, Britain and France attacked and defeated her in Cameroon. After the war, the League of Nations partitioned Cameroon between Britain and France to be administered as Trust Territories. One fifth of the land mass was given to Britain while France received four-fifths (Nghoh, 2019:91). Since Britain was already in control of Nigeria, a neighbouring country to Cameroon, which happened to be adjacent to the part of Cameroon she had to administer, for administrative reasons, British Cameroon was administered as part of Nigeria.

This continued until the re-unification of Cameroon in 1961 (George 2012:15). At the time of the re-unification of the Republic of Cameroon (former French Cameroon) and British Southern Cameroons in 1961, there was multipartyism in both sections of the Cameroons. Through the political manoeuvres of late President Ahmadou Ahidjo², by 1966, the Federal Republic of Cameroon became a de facto one-party state with the

¹A chief is a traditional ruler who is in charge of an ethnic group speaking the same language and having a common culture.

²Ahmadou Ahidjo was the first President of *La République du Cameroun* (French Cameroon) – 1960 to 1961 – and the first President of the reunified Cameroon – 1961 to 1982

Cameroon National Union (CNU) as the only party, headed by the President of the Republic (Takougang & Krieger 1998:3). Cameroon had moved from a multiparty democracy to a single party dictatorship. All attempts at democratizing the political landscape of Cameroon failed as the government resorted to imprisonment, torture, and even murder. This situation continued until May 26, 1990 when, amidst the tense presence of about 2.000 troops, the Social Democratic Front (SDF) party was launched in Bamenda (Akoko 2007:195). Attempts to stop the creation and launching of this party were met with determined resistance, and thus failed. From then till 1992 when the first multiparty presidential elections were held since 1966, there was a very tense political atmosphere. After the elections in which the SDF felt robbed of its victory, violence reigned as riots, arsons, murders and sit-down strikes went on uncontrollably throughout the nation.

This situation was compounded by the Anglophone problem.³ Over the years, the English speakers had had the feeling of being marginalized in the country. They felt that the predominant French-speaking government had intentionally betrayed the reunification agreement, and had embarked on the policy of undermining the Anglophone culture and language. According to the reunification agreement, Cameroon became a federated state in which the two regions had some amount of autonomy. This was actually the situation from 1961 to 1972 when President Ahmadou Ahidjo, through a referendum, decided to nullify the federal system and institute the unitary system of government with power concentrated in the hands of the President of the Republic (George, 2012:83). The move was viewed by the Anglophones, who felt safer in the federal system, as an abrogation of that agreement. The unequal opportunities the Anglophones had in higher institutions of learning and in employment opportunities were also causes for concern. At reunification, English and French were adopted as official national languages, which according to the agreement, were to have equal status.

³ The Anglophones are those who hail from that part of Cameroon, which was administered by Britain as part of Nigeria. Those who hail from the part formerly under French colonization are referred to as the Franchophones. The Anglophones are a minority as they form just one-fifth of the total population, while the Franchophones form the other four-fifth.

Moreover, instruction in all the higher institutions of learning was predominantly in French. The Anglophone students thus had problems coping in the system. From independence and reunification, it was only in 1993 that the first Anglo-Saxon University was opened in Buea in the South West Region of Cameroon. Also, only few Anglophones could be found in prominent positions in the government as most public examinations and other official documents were in French. The Anglophone community was also displeased at the way the Ministry of Education handled the General Certificate of Education (GCE) examinations⁴. These bitter feelings also persisted at this period in the history of Cameroon because there were calls for the creation of an independent Southern Cameroons state.

Since this research is based on the role the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (hereafter referred to as PCC) played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, it suffices to briefly present this religious entity.

The PCC, the spiritual and constitutional successor of the Basel Mission (BM), is one of the Protestant Churches in Cameroon. The London Baptist Missionaries brought the gospel to Cameroon in 1843 (Dah 1983:113). After German colonization of Cameroon in 1884, it became increasingly difficult for the German government to work with the English Baptist Missionaries. The Basel Missionary Society, a Swiss-German missionary venture, therefore took over missionary work in Cameroon.

The BM was in Cameroon till 1957 when autonomy was granted to the indigenes. The product of this autonomy is the PCC. The issue of church and state agreements and disagreements in Cameroon could not be completely disassociated from the legacy of the BM. For a very long time, in fact, up to date, some missionary ideologies are still implemented. The relationship between the Basel missionaries and the German colonial government in Cameroon was influenced to a large extent by their relationship back in Germany since some of the member organisations of the Basel Mission were based in

⁴ GCE is the Anglophone post primary certificate examination. It is at two levels – the Ordinary Level (O/L) and the Advanced Level (A/L)

Germany. Their relationship back in Germany, largely due to Bismarck's *kulturkampf*⁵, was marked by tension and conflict. Dah puts it thus in reference to the Cameroonian context, "Although it was generally agreed in mission circles that the duty of government was to restrain evil and promote good, this did not hinder the BM from disagreeing with the government where it was felt that the latter was overstepping its limits" (Dah 1983:146). This legacy still seems to be alive in the PCC, a product of the euthanasia of BM work in Cameroon.

1.2 Statement of the problem, research question and research objectives

1.2.1 Statement of the problem

The aim of this study is to critically analyse the role played by the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon in addressing the political crisis in Cameroon from 1990 – 1992. This is cast in the broader framework of church-state relationship. The role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon and the role the church should play in the public arena solicit the attention of this study.

Until the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon (which started in 2016), the period between 1990 to 1992 stood out in the history of Cameroon as the most politically turbulent and the most challenging years since independence. The Social Democratic Front (SDF) party, the first opposition party to be created from 1966 when Cameroon became a one-party state, was launched in Bamenda on 26th May 1990 amidst tension. This launching was followed by reprisals and civil unrest. In 1992, government machinery was almost brought to a halt and lots of property lost as a result of civil unrest that ensued after SDF alleged election rigging by the ruling CPDM party. The period between 1990 and 1992 was characterised by a very tense political atmosphere with recurrent clashes between the forces of law and order and the civilians. Amidst all of this the church is

⁵ The "Kulturkampf" was Bismarck's policy to draw the line between the Church and the state as he curbed the allegiance of the German Roman Catholic Church to the Vatican. This was made clear in his speech in the Reichstag on March 10, 1873. (Dah 1983:43).

perceived to have remained neutral or failed to assume its role when it was expected to, which may have mitigated or alleviated the crisis. Until now, no in-depth analysis has been done on the role the PCC played in the crisis. Church-state relation in Cameroon is ambiguous. While the church (PCC) purports to maintain a critical distance from the government, it still depends on the government for approval to operate and for subventions.

1.2.2 Research question

The question this research seeks to address is: What role did the PCC play in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon?

1.2.3 Research objectives

The objectives of this research are:

1. To examine the Dietrich Bonhoeffer paradigm as a tool for the analysis of the role the PCC played in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon and to compare it to the South African and El Salvadoran models.
2. To establish the remote and immediate causes of the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon.
3. To identify and examine the various roles the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon
4. To critically analyse the role the PCC played in addressing the crisis in the light of Bonhoeffer's paradigm
5. To propose a contextual model for the public role of the Church in Cameroon.

1.3 Significance of the Study

This work is of significance to the researcher, and it will be helpful to the PCC, various faith communities and the government.

Since faith is expressed in a community, the gospel, and by extension, the Church, which is the prophetic voice in conscientising various stakeholders, should be able to address

itself to the issues of that community: clamouring for justice, warning against impending doom, denouncing evil practices that keep humanity under slavery, while announcing hope to those who abide in the will of God for his people. The appropriate understanding of the role of the church out of the walls of the church building will resituate its relevance in the lives of its members in particular and the public at large.

The findings of this work will be of importance to the PCC. It is important that the PCC should know where it originates and what it has been through, and it is especially important to re-examine the crisis periods in the nation, particularly the 1990-1992 political crisis, to see the role it played. A study of this period is important as it marks the rebirth of democracy in Cameroon, and the crisis during this period, apart from the ongoing Anglophone crisis, which is the most challenging that the nation has faced since independence and reunification. What role did the PCC play in resolving this conflict? Did the PCC succeed to be “the salt of the earth”? (Mt.5:13; The Bible NIV version). A better way of avoiding such mistakes in future is to examine and attempt corrections to those of the past. This serves as a sign post for the Church in the role it should play in future crisis. A church can be of help in the community only when it gets involved in the affairs that affect the lives of its inhabitants.

The recommendations and conclusions of this work will equally serve as a guide to other churches on the role they may play in addressing future crises. The proposed model for church intervention in politics in Cameroon will serve as a template to these churches. This is more poignant now especially as Cameroon, which hitherto was a peaceful country in the Central African region, is currently plagued with socio-political unrest in the two English-speaking regions. The Boko Haram incursions from Nigeria into the Far North Region of Cameroon and the threat from the Seleka rebels from the Central Africa Republic in the East of Cameroon also constitute this unrest. The recommendations and conclusions of this research will serve as a guide to other churches in Cameroon, especially in the current context, on the role they should play to resolve the crisis. They will also serve as pointers to churches in other nations, particularly Sub Sahara African nations plagued with internal squabbles, on the role they should play.

The divide between the church and the state, the sacred and the secular is deepening, especially to the advantage of some politicians who insist that the Church should leave politics to politicians and focus on preaching the gospel. A proper analysis of the role that the PCC played in the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon, along with contextually adapted recommendations based on the role the Church played in addressing Apartheid in South Africa and combating oppression in El Salvador, will serve as exemplars to the Cameroonian society. This will valorise the place of the Church in the governance of a nation.

In addition, this work will clarify and resituate the PCC in its rightful role in this historical framework. Gifford (1998) accuses the PCC for being preoccupied with minor sectional and not national issues. He quotes the example of the Presbyterian Church's stance on the Anglophone problem (Gifford 1998:282). Gifford paints the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon in the picture of a Church interested only in minority squabbles, and upholds the Roman Catholic Church as the only Church interested in national issues. This work will examine the truth of Gifford's claim and resituate the PCC in its rightful place.

This work is of significance to the researcher as it will satisfy the researcher's thirst to comprehend and establish what should be the public role of the church in general and the PCC in particular.

1.4 Literature review

Although no specific study has been conducted to evaluate the role the PCC played in addressing this crisis, it is worth mentioning that some authors, in their own ways, have mentioned the Church in relation to this upheaval, even though none of them treats the issue at stake. The task of this research is to fill in this gap in literature.

Gifford (1998) has devoted a whole chapter to Cameroon. In it, he briefly presents the history of Cameroon and scantily discusses the 1990-1992 political crisis. He further discusses the public role of the various faith communities: Roman Catholic Church, *Eglise Presbytérienne du Cameroun* (EPC), PCC, *Eglise Evangélique du Cameroun* (EEC), *Union des Eglises Baptistes du Cameroun* (UEBC), *Eglises Baptiste du Cameroun* (EBC),

Native Baptist Church (NBC), Lutheran Church in Cameroon (LCC), United Pentecostal Church (UPC), and the Full Gospel Church (FGC). Out of the sixty-two pages devoted to the presentation of the public roles of these various faith communities in Cameroon (246-305), twenty-four are based on the Roman Catholic Church (251-275). The others are given very scant treatment. The public role of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon is presented in barely three pages (281-284). Gifford neither identifies the various interventions of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon nor does he propose what the PCC should have done; all he does is cite a few open messages, and concludes that the PCC is more interested in Anglophone issues. This assertion seems misleading. This research work will fill this gap

Nwel (1995:176) paints a different picture of the political climate of Cameroon in 1990-1992. Under the sub-heading “The Churches: What form of presence and what kind of action” he gives the impression that he aims to discuss the contribution of the various Churches. However, it seems “Churches” to him mean the Roman Catholic Church, as he ends up presenting mostly their role in the upheavals. Out of the seven pages devoted to this sub-heading, ten Protestant churches in FEMEC⁶ are given scant treatment only in three pages (177-179). By this, he completely writes-off the part played by the Protestant Churches, and thus provides an unbalanced analysis of “the Churches.” This work will present the role the PCC, a Protestant Church in Cameroon, played during this crisis.

Nku (ed. 1993) is a collection of the various official statements presented to the Head of State, the Prime Minister, and the Tripartite Conference, by the Synod of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, the Moderator, and the Synod Clerk, at various stages of the upheaval. It also contains a letter addressed to the Christians in all congregations of the PCC on their Christian conscience and elections, and two sermons preached during this period. It neither throws light on whether the Church did any other thing apart from

⁶FEMEC now known by the acronym CEPCA (Conseil des Eglise Protestante du Cameroon) presently has 11 member churches

presenting these letters nor does it evaluate how effective the Church's intervention was. This research work intends to address these issues by critically analysing the extent to which the PCC went and how far it should have gone in its intervention.

A number of authors have written about the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon but have either erroneously or intentionally made little or no mention of the contribution of the churches, talk less of the PCC. Worthy of note are Atem (2012), Ngwana (2001), Monono (2005), Mbile (1999) and Mokake (1997).

Atem (2012) is concerned with examining the evolution of the unification of the Anglophone and francophone institutions in Cameroon since independence. Thus, when he gets to the 1990 – 1992 period, he is interested in highlighting how at the rebirth of multipartyism in Cameroon both Anglophones and Francophones were indiscriminately represented at the hierarchy of political parties (95-96), and how the 1992 Presidential Elections exhibited the national nature of the parties (96), and not the 1990 – 1992 political crisis. His mention of the churches is only to portray how national they are, operating in both the Anglophone and Francophone regions of Cameroon (133 – 138).

Ngwana (2001) in 48 pages traces the political evolution of Cameroon during the period under review (42 – 90). However, these pages are replete with 9 press releases and letters from the Cameroon Democratic Party (CDP) to which the author was the National President/Chairman. Some of the press releases and letters are as short as 1 page while others are as long as 7 pages. At the end of it all, these 48 pages are a litany of what the author's political party had to say in the various political issues. No mention is made of the churches in Cameroon and the role they played; giving the readers the impression that churches are either dormant/ absent in the political life of Cameroon or they have compromised their role as voice of the voiceless. This work, in elaborating the history of the crisis in Cameroon in the years 1990–1992, will critically analyse the role the PCC played in its resolution.

Monono (2005) focuses on the participation of independent candidates in elections in Cameroon from 1945 to 2004. He looks at the 1990 – 1992 period from the perspective of changes in the electoral law that ushered in democracy (123 – 124). In spite of the

contestations that surrounded the 1990 constitutional changes and the crisis that mounted in the build up to the 1992 Presidential Elections, Monono neither makes mention of the 1990 – 1992 political crisis nor the role of the church in its resolution. This research will present the crisis that culminated in the 1990 constitutional changes and its aftermath and examine the role that the PCC played in its resolution.

Mbile (1999) on his part proffers a brief but lopsided evolution of the 1990 – 1992 political crisis (335-338). Four pages cannot be enough to treat the history of the most tumultuous years in the history of independent Cameroon. His judgments and conclusions seem to have been coloured by his position. For example, writing about the 1992 Presidential Elections he asserts:

Paul Biya had enough votes across the country to clinch victory.... The honest nation breathed relief and God was praised for sparing Cameroon the convulsions that had shattered Africa and Biya, cool and brave made little noise compared to the haughty claims and boasts of his challengers, and collected buried millions. Few had any doubt that had Biya the man of peace not retained power, the fire eating new comers who had used violence so far to frighten people to their banners may have only been encouraged into the use of violence and blood to keep it. (Mbile338)

Mbile's position and perception are understandable given the fact that he had served as Minister and Secretary of State of three different Ministries, and at the time of writing was serving as Chairman of the Cameroon Development Corporation Board of Directors (the largest state-owned corporation in Cameroon), appointed by Mr. Paul Biya. He makes no mention of the involvement of the churches, talk less of the role played by the PCC in the resolution of the crisis.

Mokake (1997) delves into the economic crisis that plagued Cameroon in the 1980s and 1990s stating the features of the crisis, the causes of the crisis and the attempts made to resolve the crisis (193 – 195), but does not elaborate on the political crisis to which the economic crisis was a precursor. He mentions the churches and particularly the Roman Catholic Church, in its role it played to mount pressure through Pastoral Letters for the reintroduction of Democracy (196), but neither mentions the role of the PCC in this same

light nor looks at the role of the other churches in addressing the crisis in general. This research work will examine the political crisis which was partly a consequence of the economic crisis and analyse the role the PCC played.

A plethora of authors have written on the role played by the church in South Africa in resolving the apartheid imbroglio. Although the authors are not concerned with the Cameroonian context, their findings can help inform this research work with tools of analysing the expected public role of the PCC. Some of them are:

Dube and Molise (2018) in *The Church and its contributions to the struggle to liberate the Free State Province* argue that the role the Church played in the liberation of South Africa from Apartheid had been given very scant attention by scholars. To fill in this lacuna, they therefore present the role the Church played particularly to oppose Apartheid in the Free State Province in South Africa. According to Dube and Molise (2018) the Church played the following roles: the Church articulated the theology of resistance over and against state theology; alongside this, the church propagated the theology that promoted peace and tolerance of differences; the church provided food and shelter to the families affected by detentions; the churches prayed for a peaceful end of Apartheid and pacified resistance groups; the churches used education in the mission schools to whip up nationalist sentiments and implant tenets of liberation theology in the students. Dube and Molise (2018) round off by stating that the battle against institutionalized Apartheid might have been won with the gaining of independence from white minority domination in 1994, but the struggle against structural Apartheid is still on thus the churches in the Free State Province persist in their activism. This article is insightful as it enumerates the roles the Church played to deal with a political issue (Apartheid). However, it is limited in context as it addresses the role the church played in a particular province (the Free State Province). This research work is based on a national level (Cameroon), a political crisis different from Apartheid, and a context different from that of South Africa.

Moodie (2018) focuses on the transition in the Dutch Reformed Church, a church that had propagated, abated, and theologized in support of Apartheid to a church that publicly confessed the sin of Apartheid in 1990. Moodie argues that this shift in position was

orchestrated by internal dissent within the DRC championed by theologians like David Bosch, Lex van Wyk and Jaap Durand which met initial resistance but later gained fervour. These persistent jolting eventually led to the ground-breaking 1986 General Synod of the DRC which laid the foundation for the public confession. This article, though from a different context and based on a different church, is informative as it traces the internal theological metamorphosis of a church that had a major bearing on its public witness. This article is suggestive of the fact that internal jolting within the PCC might have influenced the role it played in 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

Meiring (2007) in his article, *Bonhoeffer in South Africa: Role model and prophet*, traces the various ways in which Bonhoeffer's life and theology impacted the struggle against Apartheid in South Africa. While admitting that Bonhoeffer personally had no contacts with South Africa, he goes ahead to elucidate how Bonhoeffer posthumously influenced the struggle in South Africa. He indicates how Bonhoeffer influenced the Cottlesloe Consultation and the final declaration which was warranted by the Sharpeville Massacre. He points out the role played by Beyers Naude, an archetype of Bonhoeffer, and the likeness of the Christian Institute of South Africa which he chaired to the Confessing Church of Bonhoeffer; he typifies the *status confessionis* of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to that of Bonhoeffer; draws parallels between liberation theology and black theology and the influence of Bonhoeffer on the latter; and argues Bonhoeffer's relevance in the new south Africa. Meiring (2007) provides fundamental information for this research on the impact Bonhoeffer could have on a context he was not directly in touch with. More importantly, his work lends this research the questioning tool of the relevance of Bonhoeffer to a new Cameroon. Can Bonhoeffer's paradigm still speak to the situation in Cameroon in relation to the role the PCC has to play in resolving future crisis?

De Gruchy, and de Gruchy (2005) in the Third Edition of *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, have traced the origin and historical evolution of Apartheid in South Africa. They presented the divided role the church played in abating and combatting Apartheid, the eventual volte-face of the Dutch Reformed Church, the ground-breaking leadership role

of Beyers Naude and the role the churches have played in post-Apartheid South Africa. This book, which is considered a classic, though it aptly captures the role the churches played in the fight against Apartheid in South Africa, is based on a context foreign to Cameroon. It may provide this research with tools to evaluate the role that the PCC played in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, but its conclusions cannot be transposed to the Cameroonian context. This research is based on a different context and a different nature of crisis which needs its own contextual solutions.

Pityana and Vicencio (eds. 1995) is a compilation of papers that were presented in the Vanderbijlpark Conference that was held in March 1995 under the theme *South Africa and its regional context – Being the Church Today*. The papers were all geared towards the purpose of the conference – that of evaluating the new role of the church in post-apartheid South Africa. The papers, therefore, do not delve into the role that the church in South Africa actually played in the fight against Apartheid, thus making it difficult for this research work to glean paradigms for application in the Cameroonian context. The papers, however, critically examine the role the Church in South Africa should play in post-apartheid South Africa. Although this work could serve the purpose of analysing the role the PCC played in the political crisis in Cameroon, it is not based on the Cameroonian context.

Gifford (ed. 1995) compiles papers that were presented in a conference at the University of Leeds from the 20th to the 23rd September 1993 on the theme *The Christian Churches and Africa's Democratisation*. To these, he added essays by Ross and Ranger. The various papers focus on the role the church played in the democratic struggle in some African nation-states. Particular focus is on Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Congo, Cameroon, Rwanda, Uganda, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia and Madagascar. Titi's paper (pgs 168 – 187) has been reviewed above. It suffices here to turn to the South African perspective. Walshe, in examining the role the South African church played in the democratisation process, specifically towards the crumble of apartheid, concentrates on the period between Mandela's release from prison and his ascension to power. The study examines the various interventions of the Church councils and unions and the activities

of some ministers but harps on the lacklustre involvement of congregations and most ministers. In as much as the role the Church played in this transitional period was important, it cannot be complete without mention of the interventions of the church in the era before the release of Mandela when South Africa was caught up in an imbroglio between the apartheid regime and the black South Africans which sometimes culminated in violent confrontations. However, the research presents a bird's eye view of the role that the church could play in the public arena amidst dissenting voices. Although it can inform this research for purposes of comparative analysis, it does not directly deal with the situation of the Church in Cameroon – a situation that this research seeks to address.

Ranger (ed. 2008) examines the role the Evangelical Christians played in the democratisation of Africa with particular emphasis on Northern Nigeria, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mozambique and South Africa. Balcomb (191 – 223), in the above book, takes interest in the South African context and carves out the following five (5) major typologies of evangelical reaction towards apartheid: the “conservatives” (194) who supported apartheid and resisted changes in the post-apartheid era, the “pragmatists” (195) who were originally indifferent to apartheid, adopting an apolitical stance but later became more engaged as the fight against apartheid gained steam. There were the “protagonists of the ‘Third Way’” (195) who were against apartheid but stood for a gradual process of change while working for reconciliation. Next is the “protagonists of the ‘alternative’ community” (195) whose thoughts were otherworldly thus steered clear of political involvements, and the “liberationists” (195) who were against apartheid and made it a point of duty to actively get involved in the political process to fight for its demise. For each of these evangelical reactions, a spiritual leader is identified to typify the stance. Balcomb thus paints a general picture of evangelical reaction to apartheid which, though may assist this research to typify the reaction of the churches in Cameroon to the political crisis in Cameroon 1990-1992, is based on a different context – the South African context. According to Kinghorn, (1990) the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), which is the most popular denomination amongst the Afrikaner whites was the flag bearer and defenders of Apartheid theology. Kinghorn holds that until 1857, decisions taken at the DRC Synods

indicated their tendency to tilt towards a one and unified church for both the whites and the blacks. However, by the middle of the 19th century some whites started lobbying for separate services and even separate congregations warranted by their differences in the understanding of church traditions, language, culture and hygiene. Kinghorn puts the responsibility for the conception and propagation of the ideology of apartheid on the DRC when he states that the idea of separate congregations for whites and blacks might have been the kick-starter for the institutionalization of apartheid. He points out how the DRC maintained the discourse of separateness till the 1980s when it gradually drifted to differentiation which culminated in the annulment of the laws against mixed marriages and mixed worship services. Kinghorn's work brings out the journey a particular church, the DRC, travelled in apartheid in South Africa as it moved from championing separateness to embracing inclusiveness. This resonates with this work which focuses on the role a particular church (the PCCC) played in the political crisis in Cameroon in 1990-1992. However, the context of this research is different, the journey travelled by the PCC is different and the recommendations of the role the Church should play will be adapted to this context.

Borer (1998), specifying the factors that led to the unbanning of the African national Congress (ANC) in 1990 and the first democratic elections in 1994, states that the religious factor stands at par with the role that the international community played. As concerns the religious factor, she mentions the roles played by the two main church organizations that challenged the apartheid government: the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC) indicating how they differed in their views over the legitimacy of the South African government. SACC, she points out, became more politicized than the SACBC. Borer provides a three-step categorization (model) of the role the South African churches played in the fight against apartheid: the first, the "Sympathetic" step, limited itself to words condemning apartheid and its brutal consequences; the second, "Human Rights Involvement" moves to action, not against the perpetrators of apartheid but support to others actively engaged in the fight against it and to some victims of it; the third, "Overt political activity" saw the churches involved in direct political action in defiance of state

policy through civil disobedience and other acts of direct political action. This categorization is akin to Bonhoeffer's three-step paradigm and therefore of interest to this research. This research, while using these steps as tools of analysis, will propose a contextual model for Cameroon.

Boulay (1988) in her incisive biography of Archbishop Desmond Tutu makes the role he played in the fight against apartheid part and parcel of his life journey. She elucidates with details the role Tutu played and the consequences on him as an individual (government reprisals and the rejection of fellow ministers), and the impact on his family at large. She goes beyond this to make Tutu part of a national and global struggle in South Africa as a member of national church unions and abroad as a member of international Christian organisations. This work provides parameters of measurement of the extent of the involvement of the leadership of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon in the political crisis in Cameroon. However, it is limited in its scope given it is based on a context different from that of this research work.

The Kairos Document (1986), drafted at the worsening stage of apartheid in South Africa, critically examines the role of the church vis-à-vis the challenge of a dehumanising apartheid regime. It differentiates between "State Theology", "Church Theology" and "Prophetic Theology" (1986:8) and does an analysis of the church's responsibility towards the state based on an interpretation of Romans 13:1-7. The crux of the document is the "Challenge to Action" in which the Christians are called to "a ministry of involvement and participation" (1986:29). The Kairos Document will serve this research with some tools of evaluation of the commitment of the PCC to engage its worshippers in practical action to resolve the crisis in Cameroon. The Kairos Document is limited in application as it deals with a specific context – the South African context, which is different from the geo-political context of focus of this research. It is also based on the reflections of theologians from different denominations while this research is focused on a particular denomination.

1.5 The Research Paradigm

According to Kamal and Lin (2019:1388-1389) a research paradigm is a set of assumptions that direct actions taken and decisions made. These assumptions support and inform the research project.

This study is within the constructivist and interpretivist paradigm. The epistemological position of the researcher is tilted towards constructivism, which is based on the understanding that reality (knowledge) is subjective, thus is constructed from each individual's experience (Flick, 2009:70; Costantino in Given 2008:116) requiring the persons involved in the construction to be actively involved. To be able to fully glean the role the PCC played in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon and to fully explore the role it was expected to or would have played, this study will rely on the experiences and opinions of individuals who witnessed and or actively participated in the political crisis both on the side of the government and that of the PCC. The researcher's views on social factors through the ontological eye can be objective or subjective. The researcher will employ the ontological view of the interpretivist which holds that the researcher should focus attention on comprehending the phenomenon or situation under study from the stand point of the respondents (Given 2008:41). Thus, this research will interpret the opinions, experiences and knowledge of the respondents to decipher the role the PCC played and the role it could have played.

Research methodology

This section describes how the research will be guided. It specifies the research approach, research design, data collection and analysis, credibility and trustworthiness, ethical issues, limitations and delimitations of the research.

Research approach: Qualitative research approach

Creswell (2014:31) defines research approaches as plans and procedures for research that stretch from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis and

interpretation. This approach is seen as one that focuses on the “subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour” (Kothari, 2004:5)

Qualitative approach lays emphasis on focusing and exploring the experiences of the respondents and how they make meaning out of their real-life experiences (Cropley, 2021:5), given that reality is subjective (Cropley 2021:9).

Given the penury of substantial secondary sources on the subject under study and the subsequent dependence on primary sources, but also mindful of the need of open-ended questions for the interviews with the key players in the crisis, the qualitative method will be used for collection, analysis and evaluation of data.

Qualitative research is one of the scientific methods of research which engages in seeking answers to a question, using a predefined set of procedures to answer the question, collecting evidence, producing findings that were not determined in advance and are applicable beyond the immediate boundaries of the study (Mack *et al.* 2005:1). In addition to these general parameters, qualitative research particularly gives the researcher the possibility of understanding a given research problem or topic from the perspectives of the local population it involves. Qualitative research is especially effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviours, and social contexts of particular populations. As Mason (2002:1) puts it “while not all qualitative researchers are on a mission to produce ‘the general picture’ of how things work, the qualitative habit of intimately connecting context with explanation means that qualitative research is capable of producing very well-founded cross-contextual generalities, rather than aspiring to more flimsy de-contextual versions”.

Qualitative research approach is suited to this research as it will enable the culling of data from the respondents for the interpretation of the role the PCC played in the crisis and the role it should have played.

Research design

According to Yin (2011:75), “every research study has a design, whether implicit or explicit”. To Flick (2009:128), “Research design is a plan for collecting and analysing evidence that will make it possible for the investigator to answer whatever questions he or she has posed”. For data gathering the multiple case study design will be used for this research since it allows the use of multiple sources and sites (Mohajan 2018:12). The choice of this design is predicated on the fact that it will serve for a better description and understanding of both the researcher and the readers of the role the PCC played in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

Data collection

According to Creswell (2013:146), data collection is “a series of interrelated activities aimed at gathering good information to answer emerging research questions”. Such activities include sampling strategies, research population, sample size and data collection strategies.

Sampling

Sampling is a process of selecting individuals for interview from a population in such a way that they represent the population (Noori, 2021:47; Lune & Berg, 2017:38; Flick, 2009:115). The convenience sampling method was employed for this research (Cresswell, 2007:126). This method permits the researcher to choose the respondents (research population) based on their availability. This method is appropriate for this research especially as this research is being conducted within the context of an ongoing armed conflict in Anglophone Cameroon (North West and South West) and Boko Haram incursions in the northern part of Cameroon. Many persons are internally displaced as they have relocated to safer havens and others are blocked in conflict zones. The convenience sampling method permitted the researcher to select respondents who were easily available.

According to Leavy (2014:668), the sample size “depends on the depth and breadth of the study” In order to get a sample representation for this research work, a total of 6 pastors were interviewed: 2 who served in Bamenda (the headquarters of the SDF party) at the time of the crisis, 2 who served in Buea (the headquarters of the PCC) and 2 who served in Yaounde (the seat of the government); 6 politicians were interviewed (from Bamenda, Buea and Yaounde both from the ruling party and the opposition party) and 6 Christians of the PCC both active participants and observers of the crisis within the age range of 50 to 90 making up a total of 18 participants. As concerns the number of participants to be interviewed, Taylor et al, (2016:32) hold that “although qualitative researchers typically start with a general idea of how many settings or people they intend to study, they define their samples on an ongoing basis as the studies progress”.

To identify the participants, snowball sampling method was used. Snowball sampling is a method based on referrals (Lune & Berg, 2017:39; Taylor et al, 2016:108; Creswell, 2007:127; Mack et al, 2005:5,6). Respondents with whom contact has already been established refer the researcher to other potential respondents within their social networks (Tracy, 2013:136). This method is suitable for the situation as many potential respondents have moved to unknown locations. The few the researcher can locate can refer to others.

Research population

To Noori (2021:39) research population is the target group of the researcher. The sample for this research will be drawn from a population composed of pastors, politicians and Christians.

Research site

A research site indicates where or on whom the researcher intends to carry out the research (Creswell, 2013:147; Berg & Lune, 2017:36). This choice should be guided by suitability and feasibility. This research was conducted in three different towns in Cameroon (Bamenda, Buea and Yaounde) which are regional headquarters. These three

regional headquarters represent the centres of action of the political crisis: Bamenda, the regional capital of the North West region, and the base of the main opposition party (SDF); Buea, the regional capital of the South West Region, the seat of the PCC from which declarations and directives emanated; and Yaounde, the stronghold of the ruling CPDM party and the political capital of Cameroon. Yaounde and Buea are accessible. Bamenda is periodically accessible as a result of the fact that it is a hotbed of the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon. These research sites are suitable to the study because the research is based on the role that the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis.

Data collection instruments

Ritchie in Ritchie and Lewis (2003:34-37) groups the data collection methods into two categories: naturally occurring data (which includes participant observation, observation guide, documentary analysis, discourse analysis and conversation analysis) and generated data (which includes biographical methods, individual interviews paired or triad interviews and focus group discussions).

Given the primacy of the gathering of material to a research project, material for this work was gleaned from interviews and documented sources.

Interviews

One of the instruments for data collection used in this research is interview guide. To Noori (2021:27) an interview is a data collection method in which questions are asked orally to the respondents. Taylor et al (2016:102) refer to interviews as “favoured digging tool”. Interviews in qualitative research grant the researcher access to how the interviewees “experience and perceive the world” (Usman & Bulut 2021:3). Interviews, if properly employed, can be useful in getting helpful information as they create conducive environments for respondents to share their views, experiences and thoughts. Since very little has been written on the role that the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, interviews of participants helped to fill in this gap. Also, their

opinions helped establish the role the Church was expected to play. The interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis. A total of 18 persons constituted the sample (6 pastors, 6 politicians and 6 Christians). The interviews were used mostly in Chapter Five.

- **Semi structured in-depth interviews**

For the purpose of this research, the semi-structured form of interview was used because it is suited to qualitative research.

According to Lune & Berg (2017:69), Flick (2009:150), Hancock *et al* (2009:16) Semi-structured interviews are more widely used by Qualitative researchers. They identify the following advantages of the semi-structured interview: the questions are open ended covering the various topics the researcher wants to treat, the open-ended questions provide the researcher and interviewee the opportunity to discuss some topics in greater detail, the interviewer to prompt the interviewee for more consideration on the response especially where the former is hesitant, and allows the interviewer to pursue a line of inquiry introduced by the interviewee.

To Mason (2002:62), the semi-structured interview, in spite of differences in style, has the following features in common: interactional exchange of dialogue, relatively informal in style, thematic, topic-centred, biographical or narrative in approach, hinged on the premise that knowledge is situated and contextual and the purpose of the interview is to ensure relevant contexts are brought forth to enable the production of situated knowledge.

The interview sessions ranged from 30 to 50 minutes. A tape recorder was used with the consent of the interviewees.

- **Procedure for data collection using semi-structured in-depth interviews**

Using the convenience and snowball methods, identified interviewees were contacted by phone and a date fixed for the interview session. The researcher and the interviewee selected a convenient location for the interview. The interviewee was informed of the purpose of the interview, the study objectives, anticipated risks (if any) and benefits (Taylor *et al*, 2016:111 & 112; Tracy, 2013:89; Mack *et al*, 2005:32). The interviewer started discussions with the interviewee on other lighter topics to create an atmosphere

of free conversation. This was followed by the semi-structured questions with probes for in-depth discussions that revealed the views, feelings, experiences etc. vis-à-vis the role that the PCC played or should have played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, and the interviews were recorded for later transcription. Notes were also taken.

Documented sources:

These included but were not limited to policy documents, mission statements, annual reports, minutes of meetings, contracts drafts, diaries, codes of conduct, web sites, series of letters or emails (Coffey, 2014:367; Flick, 2009:255; Hancock et al, 2007:19; Ritchie in Ritchie and Lewis, 2003:35).

The various interventions of the Church during this period were examined through a study of official letters, minutes of Synod meetings, departmental reports to Synod meetings and sermons. The letters, minutes and reports can be found at the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon Archive at the Synod Office in Buea, Cameroon, some of which have been published by Nku (1993). These were critically analysed in the light of Bonhoeffer's three step intervention paradigm (Brown 1997:61-62).

The content of 2 sermons preached during these years were critically analysed. 1 sermon preached in Yaounde and 1 sermon preached in Buea were identified and critically analysed. Yaounde is the capital city of the nation hosting the government machinery and the source of political decisions. Yaounde incarnates policies and decrees affecting the functioning of the nation and regulating daily living for ordinary citizens. Yaounde is the seat of the CPDM party (the ruling party) which militants were a bulwark to change. Most of the government ministers profess Christ as their saviour and some of them worship in PCC congregations (especially Bastos congregation) in Yaounde. 2 sermons preached in Buea were also identified and critically analysed. Buea is the seat of the PCC hosting the executive officers of the Church. The Synod Executive Committee of the PCC, the highest executive arm of the Church which meets in-between Synod meetings and takes decisions that regulate Church life and its relationship to other external bodies (the

government inclusive), meets in Buea. Buea therefore stands as the powerhouse of the PCC from which policies emanate and from which stances are taken pertaining to political decisions and actions. One of the ways in which these stances can be expressed is through sermons.

The sermons were analysed to establish the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. The analysis of the sermons aimed at establishing the position of the PCC and deciphering and evaluating proposals made for the resolution of the crisis.

Newspapers published during this period – public and private, pro-government and pro-opposition – were also reviewed to get their perspective, cross-check historical facts about the crisis from other sources and to ascertain if they reported about any role the church played or failed to play. Copies of the newspapers are in the National Archives in Buea.

Although other authors have not dealt with the main focus of this research work, some have published materials on the history of Cameroon and the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon which provides enough background information for this research work. Others have also published books on Dietrich Bonhoeffer's conceptual framework on the public role of the church and the role the church played in Germany to oppose Hitler, the role the church played in the fight against Apartheid in South Africa and in combating oppression in El Salvador which can serve this research tools for analysis and comparison. The libraries of the Presbyterian Theological Seminary in Kumba, the Protestant University of Central Africa in Yaounde, the University of Pretoria and the private libraries of Rev Dr. Nyansako – ni – Nku in Kumba and Rev Dr. Jonas Dah in Bamenda were adequately utilised.

Data analysis

According to Hoonard and Hoonard (2008:186) "Data analysis is an integral part of qualitative research and constitutes an essential stepping-stone toward both gathering

data and linking one's findings with higher order concepts" Simply stated, data analysis is the "process of simplifying data in order to make it comprehensible" (Noori 2021:13).

Data collected from primary sources, transcribed interviews and from documentary sources were analysed manually into themes. Classifying data into themes will give a picture of the lived experiences and opinions of the respondents in relation to the role the PCC played in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. A careful examination of the data in relation to inductive evidence from literature on the research site will guide the researcher on the suitable themes. Peer review was done to avert the danger of the researcher's lopsided interpretation or analysis. The open review method was employed in which the manuscript was submitted to someone whose objective opinion of the analysis was required.

- **Trustworthiness of the study**

The trustworthiness of this study was guaranteed through credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Chowdhury 2015:146; Flick, 2009:392; Cresswell, 2007:203)

- **Credibility**

The credibility criteria seeks to establish that the results of the research are credible or dependable from the perspective of the interviewee especially as qualitative research entails understanding the phenomenon under study from the perspective of the interviewee (Trochim, 2020: online article). According to Kalu & Bwalya (2017:50), "Credibility addresses the issue of whether consistency exists between the views of the participants and the researcher's representation of them". The researcher shelved his own beliefs (bracketing) and used data from different sources to clarify meaning and interpretation. Interviews were transcribed shortly after they had been conducted to ensure the real image is captured.

- **Dependability**

Dependability ensures that the interpretations, findings and recommendations of the research work are based on the data from participants of the research (Korstjens and

Moser, 2017, online article). Dependability alludes to the stability of the researcher's findings and the researcher's report of changing conditions in the phenomenon of the study (Kalu & Bwalya, 2017:51). Each stage of data collection and analysis was explained.

Dependability is also a correlation between the changes that occur in the setting of the research and how these affect the approach to the study (Trochim, 2020 online article). The researcher equally explained how the changes in the context of the research influenced the approach to the research

- **Transferability**

Korstjens and Moser (2017 online article) define transferability as “the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be transferred to other contexts or settings with other respondents.” Transferability ensures that the findings of a research can be of relevance to other situations, individuals and contexts Kalu & Bwalya (2017:50).

The researcher facilitated this process in the use of “thick description” (Cresswell, 2007:204). To ensure transferability, the researcher did a thick description of the research site, participants and design to enable the readers arrive at their own decisions (Tracy, 2013:3,4). Detailed information was provided by the researcher on the proposed study to enable readers to reflect and transfer the findings to their different contexts.

- **Confirmability**

Confirmability seeks to establish that the findings of the study are a reflection of data collected and not a concoction of the researcher's imagination (Korstjens & Moser, 2017 online article). The availability of a detailed account of the research process ensures confirmability (Kalu & Bwalya 2017:51). The researcher ensured that the findings of this study are based on data collected from the participants by providing the research process.

Ethical issues

The researcher has the responsibility to protect the participants (interviewees), build confidence with them, create a conducive environment for the interview and guard against

any malpractice. One of the steps in this direction is to gain the informed consent of each participant before the commencement of the interview (Flick, 2009:37; Cresswell, 2007:141; Mack et al, 2005:11; Mason 2002:80). The informed consent letter stating the objective of the research and ensuring confidentiality of the identity of the participant was read to the participant and the participant given time to digest the content. Where possible, the participant signed the informed consent form to serve as a binding agreement between the researcher and the participant. The participants were offered a copy of the informed consent letter.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer's three-step Paradigm

This research project briefly presents the histories of Cameroon and the PCC. The causes and the history of the upheavals are identified and traced, and the role that the PCC played is critically analysed. It also presents the extent to which the PCC got involved.

To do this, the three-step paradigm of Dietrich Bonhoeffer for church intervention in politics, was used. Since Bonhoeffer's three-step paradigm is elaborated in Chapter 2, it suffices to mention only its basic tenets here.

Bonhoeffer, born on the 4th of February 1906 to Karl Bonhoeffer and Paula nee von Hase (Bethge 1970:3), was a German theologian who experienced the extremes of Hitler's Nazi Germany. He was accused of involvement in a plot to assassinate Hitler, imprisoned and executed a few days before the Allied forces defeated Germany.

Bonhoeffer believed that:

... so long as the state acts to maintain justice and order, the church as such may not engage in direct political action against it. This does not mean, of course, that the church takes no interest in political affairs, for it is the responsibility of the Church to ask the state again and again whether it is fulfilling its duties as a state, that is, whether it is acting to produce law and order. The Church must protest both when there is too little order ... and when there is too much order.... (Godsey 1960: 110)

He held that as Jesus Christ who lived in the midst of His enemies, was deserted by His disciples, and was alone on the cross "... so the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes. There is his commission, his work" (Bonhoeffer 1954:17)

This research is in line with Bonhoeffer when he holds that the Church has a number of roles to play in the society in which it finds itself. He proposes three steps of intervention in the public arena: firstly, the Church has to question the actions of the government (Brown 1997:61), secondly, it has to "bind the wounds" (Brown 1997:61) of those who have been wounded by the vicious wheel of the government,⁷ thirdly, it has to "put a spoke in the wheel"⁸ of the government (Brown 1997:62).

Bonhoeffer's three-step paradigm is used for five main reasons: firstly, it is a model based on the public role of the Church; secondly, it is birthed in a crisis situation; thirdly, it is proposed by a clergy who was actively engaged in the political arena of a nation, fourthly it has been applied in other contexts (South Africa and El Salvador) fifthly, its third step of political intervention (putting a "spoke in the wheel") would give this research the challenge of investigating how far a church should go in its public role

Bonhoeffer's three-step paradigm, for the aforementioned reasons, were used as the thermometer for the evaluation of the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

Using theological and historical analysis, with reference to what occurred in other Churches faced with similar circumstances (South Africa and El Salvador), the role played by the PCC was evaluated, and what the PCC should have done that it left

⁷ This means a situation in which the Church takes care of those who have been adversely affected by the vicious policies of the government. This, I believe, could be done through welfare services and the availability of the Church's counselling to those who have been spiritually or psychologically bruised.

⁸ To "put a spoke" in the wheel of the government means active involvement in opposing the government and practical ways of preventing the implementation of the government's dictatorial and unrepresentative policies

undone was established. A conclusion and recommendations summed up the results of this research work.

1.6 Delimitation and limitation of the research scope

It is impossible to address all the issues concerning a particular topic in one research work. This research work raises some issues, which it will not address in detail. . These issues could serve as pointers to further research.

The role that the PCC played in resolving this political unrest should be viewed as one amongst many other interventions by various Churches. In fact, *Fédération des Eglises et Mission Evangélique du Cameroun* (FEMEC)⁹, an association of eleven Protestant Churches in Cameroon of which the PCC is a member, equally addressed a series of letters to the President and Prime Minister of the Republic during the period under study. The Roman Catholic Church, the largest Christian denomination in Cameroon, also played an important role. Also, to be considered are the Pentecostals. This work portrays only a partial picture of ecclesiastical intervention during this unrest, the role that the other churches played needs to be established for a better appraisal of the public role of the gospel in Cameroon. It would be germane for a study to be done which paints this broader picture, putting the Catholics, Protestants and Pentecostals in their rightful places. The absence of a national Christian Council led the various faith groupings to act in dispersed ranks. The absence of concerted efforts might have been one of the fatal blows to the success of the roles the various churches played. Published material documenting the roles played by the Roman Catholics through the Episcopal Council, the Protestants through FEMEC (now CEPCA), and the Pentecostals through the Pentecostal Union is scarce. Where published material exists, it gives this topic scant treatment. Most of what one can find are copies of letters that were written to political authorities, public declarations and sermons addressing the crisis. The document most referred to by the Roman Catholic Church is the 1990 Pastoral Letter by Bishop Paul Verdzevov, the then

⁹FEMEC has now been renamed CEPCA (Federation of Protestant Churches in Cameroon)

Archbishop of Bamenda, against torture. The Pastoral Letter, according to Rev Fr. Humphrey Tatah Mbuy (interviewed on July 15th 2015 in Bamenda) was so important – especially as it addressed the deplorable treatment that was meted out by the forces of law and order to all those arrested during the political unrest – that it gained international recognition and was translated into 6 different languages. All attempts to get communiqués and letters that were sent out by CEPCA during this period relating to this crisis have been futile. CEPCA authorities affirm that the organisation spoke on behalf of the Protestant churches, but their filing system has made it difficult for the letters to be found. Two trips to Yaounde (the seat of CEPCA) have not yielded any results. All that is available to go by so far are the letters written to political leaders and sermons preached by hierarchy of the PCC (Nku 1993), a member church of CEPCA. This remains a very fertile ground for further research.

These delimitations do not impact the importance of this work; it rather guides its area of interest. The PCC is a church in its own right, and a critical study of the role that it played in this crisis and the recommendations that will ensue serve as sign posts for other denominations.

Since infallibility is not of human beings, this work cannot exonerate itself of some limitations.

The main shortcoming of this work is historical periodization. Very few scholars seem to have developed interest in the subject matter. Most of the work is based on primary sources. These sources have to be consulted before definite conclusions can be arrived at. Also, the fact that some of the participants still occupy their previous positions or are still in active service (especially the government officers) hindered the availability of confidential documents especially if the documents contain information that discredits them. Another limitation of this work is the death of some key actors (both church and government) who would have proffered great insight. Furthermore, most of this research is carried out in the heart of the Anglophone armed crisis in Cameroon which made movements and accessibility to some research sites very difficult. As a result of the crisis,

most actors and opinion leaders who had been identified for interviews were either internally displaced or had sought asylum in the United States of America or in Europe.

In spite of these shortcomings, there is enough material to facilitate an informed conclusion. The available published material are adequately exploited, the plethora of unpublished material (letters, minutes, reports, sermons and mimeographs) are analysed and some of the main actors interviewed. Information collected from the interviews is cross-checked to separate facts from fiction.

The process of historical reconstruction cannot exonerate itself from bias, as it exists from the choice of the topic through the hypothesis, methods, and venues of research, to the analysis. The important point is that the researcher should be aware of his or her biases and be honest about them. This research work is carried out by a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon who is passionate about his faith and has an unalloyed love for his denomination. This faith and love are, therefore, brought into the reconstruction of this history. Although the researcher aimed at a procedural methodology in the presentation of the “fragments of evidence,” he may be unable, at one point or another, to help being either too critical or too defensive in the analysis of the material collected. To avert this, peer review procedures were employed

1.7 Outline of chapters

This research comprises 6 chapters.

Chapter One is the general introduction. This chapter introduces the research topic, states the problem, research question and research objectives. It equally states the importance of the study, reviews the available literature and briefly presents the research methodology to be employed. This chapter also presents the delimitations and limitations of the scope of the research.

Chapter Two delves into Bonhoeffer’s biography, the details of Bonhoeffer’s three-step paradigm and the influence his biography might have had on his paradigm. It equally examines other contexts (South Africa and El Salvador) in which the paradigm has been employed to justify its usability in the analysis of the Cameroon context.

Chapter Three presents a survey of the history of Cameroon. It presents a brief historical background as a precursor to the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon and elaborates the remote and immediate causes, the evolution and consequences of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

Chapter Four presents a brief background history of the PCC, traces antecedence of political involvement in its missionary history then focuses on the role the PCC played in the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

Chapter Five details a critical analysis of the role the PCC played in the political crisis in the light of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's three-step model of church intervention in politics. This chapter evaluates the role the PCC played in the crisis, elaborates the pit falls and establishes how far the PCC should have gone in playing its role.

Chapter Six proposes a model for Cameroon and offers recommendations and conclusions.

Conclusion

This Chapter introduced the research topic, stated the problem, research question and research objectives. The Chapter equally stated the importance of the study, reviewed the available literature and briefly presented the research methodology to be employed. The Chapter also presented the delimitations and limitations of the scope of the research and a summary of the chapters.

CHAPTER 2

The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Paradigm: As a basis for analysing the Cameroonian Context

2.1 Introduction

This research seeks to establish the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. The preferred paradigm to use for this analysis is the Bonhoeffer three-step paradigm for Church intervention in politics. Since PCC's actions will be interpreted in the light of the Bonhoeffer paradigm an understanding of the circumstances that birthed the paradigm, and an elaboration of the paradigm is necessary.

This chapter presents the Dietrich Bonhoeffer three-step paradigm of Church intervention in politics, the preferred model for the analysis of the role the PCC played in the resolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, and justifies its choice over the Latin American and South African models. The Chapter briefly presents the biography of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, his political activism, his proposed three-step paradigm for church involvement in politics, (which entails calling the attention of the state to the consequences of its actions, attending to those who have been adversely affected by the vicious wheel of the state and stopping the vicious wheel from turning), and his understanding of the public role of the Church. This Chapter also examines the South African and Latin American models of Church intervention in politics in the light of Bonhoeffer's paradigm. The analysis of the South African and El Salvadoran contexts will give this research work grounds to draw parallel and divergent lines with the Cameroonian context. This chapter ends with a justification of the preference of the Bonhoeffer model for application in Cameroon over the other models.

The Bonhoeffer three-step paradigm is used in the analysis of the role played by the PCC in the resolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. An understanding of the

paradigm, and its influence on other models paves way for the right questions of how far the PCC went, why it could not go as far as Bonhoeffer prescribed and whether Bonhoeffer's last step is feasible in the Cameroonian context.

2.2. The Bonhoeffer Paradigm for church intervention in politics

Human ideas and convictions are not always accidents of history: they can often times be traced to their environment, company, circumstances or upbringing. Therefore, to better understand Bonhoeffer's model, it is necessary to briefly delve into his biography (cf De Gruchy 1999:26). The biography of Bonhoeffer will lend credence to the circumstances that influenced the three-step paradigm and the extent to which Bonhoeffer himself implemented it.

a. Brief Biography of Bonhoeffer and his political activism.

Dietrich and the twin, Sabine, were born on the 4th of February 1906. They were the sixth and seventh children of Karl Bonhoeffer, a professor of psychiatry and neurology, and Paulanee von Hase who lived at Breslau, Germany (Bethge 1970:3).

His paternal grandfather, Friedrich E.P.T Bonhoeffer (1828 – 1907) was the president of the High Court in Tübingen where he died. His wife, Julie Bonhoeffer nee Tafel (1842 – 1936) came from a family that played a leading role in Swebian democracy in the nineteenth century. (Bethge, 1970:3)

Writing about Bonhoeffer in the Foreword of *The Cost of Discipleship* G.K.A. Bell opines "He was crystal clear in his convictions; and young as he was, and humble-minded as he was, he saw the truth, and spoke it with complete absence of fear" (Bonhoeffer 1995:11).

G. Leibholz, in *Memoir in The Cost of Discipleship*, traces Bonhoeffer's personality as an embodiment of an inheritance from his parents, grandparents and great grandparents. He explains that "From his father, Dietrich Bonhoeffer inherited goodness, fairness, self-control and ability; from his mother, his great human understanding and sympathy, his devotion to the cause of the oppressed, and his unshakable steadfastness" (Bonhoeffer 1995:13). He presents Bonhoeffer as a fearless lad who would take risky tasks which

others shunned. Bonhoeffer's maternal great grandfather, a renowned Church historian, just like Bonhoeffer's paternal grandfather, was imprisoned in the fortress of the High Asperg in 1830 because of his subversive views (Bonhoeffer 1995:14). Thus, Bonhoeffer was born in the lineage of persons who stood up for their beliefs, and from a tender age could take risks. These were, certainly, predisposing factors to the stance he will later on take against Hitler's government and the courage exhibited in his proposition of the paradigm.

Paula, Dietrich's mother, herself a qualified teacher, was the first instructor of her children and that of some of her husband's colleagues. She successfully registered them for state examinations in which they performed very well. As a result of the early start, she gave them, Dietrich, like the others, was able to skip classes and eventually take the school leaving examination at a very early age (Bethge 1970:7).

In 1912, the Bonhoeffer family moved to Berlin where his father, Karl Bonhoeffer had been appointed Professor of Psychiatry and Neurology (Raum 2002:17; Bethge, Bethe & Gremmels 1986:34; Bethge, 1970:12). This is where Bonhoeffer eventually spent most of his life.

In 1913 Dietrich was enrolled in the Friedrich Werder Grammar School. He was put in the eighth form and found the work unchallenging. In his New Year notes in his diary, his father wrote: "Dietrich does his work naturally and tidily. He likes fighting, and does a great deal of it" (Bethge 1970:13).

Dietrich's two brothers were enlisted in the military (1917) in the course of the First World War. The death of his brother, Walter, in battle on the 28th of April 1917 (Bethge 1970:15; De Gruchy 1999:25) and the grief of his mother, left an indelible print on his young mind (Bethge 1970:16). These could be contributory factors to his abhorrence of injustice and totalitarianism and his burning desire to be actively engaged against it. Hans-Christoph, Bonhoeffer's cousin, believed that the death of Walter was a contributory factor to his decision to study theology (Raum 2002:24). At the age of 13, he joined the Boy Scouts in 1919 but in 1920, he left (Bethge 1970:18).

Bethge recounts, “During his last years at school there is increasing evidence of his opposition to the right-wing radicalism that was becoming more and more obstreperous” (Bethge 1970:19).

Dietrich’s choice to study theology from the onset was startling, as no one had seen it coming. The family, though they believed in God, were not church goers. They prayed at home every evening and had Bible study, but abstained from Sunday services and any direct contact with a parish minister (Bethge 1970:21)

At the age of fourteen, his brothers and sisters tried to dissuade him from the path of theology by saying “he was taking the path of least resistance and that the church to which he proposed to devote himself was a poor, feeble, boring, petty bourgeois institution but he confidently replied: ‘in that case I will reform it’” (Bethge 1970:22; De Gruchy 1999:25). He certainly kept to his word! His later frustration with the church at its luke-warmness towards Hitler’s totalitarian policies, his involvement in the activities of the Confessing Church and his proposal of the three-step paradigm for church intervention in politics were his attempts at reforming the Church.

At the age of seventeen Bonhoeffer enrolled to read theology in the University of Tubingen and at 18 was attending courses at Berlin University. He was greatly influenced by the theology of Karl Barth though he was never taught by the latter. By 1928 he was a curate in Barcelona (Bonhoeffer 1995:14).

In 1929, Bonhoeffer was at the Union Theological Seminary for his post-doctoral studies where he came under the mentorship of Reinhold Niebuhr who “challenged him to think deeply about the church’s involvement in the aches and pains of society” (De Gruchy 1999:28). His visit to America exposed him to the ills of slavery and the need for their liberation. In 1930, upon his return to Germany, when Bonhoeffer was just 24, he became a lecturer in Systematic Theology in the Berlin University.

While lamenting the death of Bonhoeffer, G. Leibholz holds that “...worldly standards cannot measure the loss adequately. For God had chosen him to perform the highest task a Christian can undertake. He has become a martyr” (Bonhoeffer 1995:15). Bonhoeffer was one of the earliest theologians to realise as early as 1933, the vainness

of National Socialism and to condemn a system which was, in every respect, making its leader, the “Führer”, its god. In a radio broadcast in early 1933, which was abruptly switched off midway, Bonhoeffer said, “leaders or offices which set themselves up as gods mock God” (Raum 2002:59).

The ascendance of Hitler to power on 30th January 1933 heralded the division of the German Evangelical Church. A movement within the church, which styled itself the German Christians, threw their weight behind Hitler’s policies. In a speech rendered by one of the leaders of this movement in June 1933, he said:

If anyone can lay claim to God’s help, then it is Hitler, for without God’s benevolent fatherly hand, without his blessing, the nation would not be where it stands today. It is an unbelievable miracle that God has bestowed on our people. (Raum 2002:63)

Cajus Fabricius, a professor of theology, in support of Hitler’s Aryan Clause asserted, “We oppose the mixture of our race with that of the Jews” (Raum 2002:63). Raum paints a picture of the German church at this historical period when he states:

Of the eighteen thousand Protestant pastors in Germany in the mid-1930s, about a third became strong supporters of the German Christian movement. Another third stood by, watching, waiting, and hoping that they could avoid political entanglements. These pastors felt that their job was to preach and teach the Bible, not to become involved in the affairs of the world. Another third sought to return the church to its traditional biblical values and realized that to do so, they must speak out against the teachings of the German Christians. (Raum 2002:64)

This is how divided the German church was. Bonhoeffer’s critique of Hitler’s government and the church’s support of it was open. He belonged to the group of Christians who toiled to return the Church to its traditional Bible-based values. They formed a group called the Young Reformers.

The battle for the soul of the German Church came to a head in the elections of the Reich Bishop in 1933. While the Young Reformers, supported by Dietrich Bonhoeffer, backed Bishop Frederich von Bodelschwingh, the German Christians supported Bishop Ludwig

Muller who had close ties with Hitler. The winner of the elections, it was believed, would determine the direction the Church would take in its relationship to the Hitler government. Bodelschwing's victory brought a sigh of relief to Bonhoeffer as it gave him assurance of the backing that they received in opposing Hitler's policies. However, this relief was short lived as the Hitler government manipulated some students and other supporters to launch an avalanche of attacks on Bodelschwing. Bodelschwing resigned on the 24th of June 1933 (Raum 2002:70) and fresh elections were called for July 1933. Bonhoeffer, supported by his students, spent sleepless nights to produce brochures and posters for the election. The Gestapo, in an attempt to frustrate Bonhoeffer and the Young Reformers, and to foster the chances of Ludwig Muller, seized all their brochures and posters. To the consternation of many, Bonhoeffer stormed the Gestapo headquarters and engaged the director in a verbal exchange at the end of which a few of the materials were released to him (Raum 2002:71). This was one of the first open confrontations between Bonhoeffer and the Hitler government and a further step on his path to resistance.

The division in the Church gave Hitler the much-needed opportunity to step in and ensure a church that would be an extension of the policy of the government. At the request of Muller, Hitler suspended elected bishops and on the 23 of July, gave a fifteen-minute speech calling for all Protestant Churches to unite into one "Reich Church" that would be "in support for our new national and state policy" (Raum 2002:72). The German Christians won the day and occupied all the key positions in the Church.

Those pastors who had been in support of the Young Reformers, and others who sympathized with the suspended bishops under Martin Niemoller, decided to write a new confession for the German Evangelical Church. Bonhoeffer and Hermann Sasse were commissioned to work on it. They retreated to Bethel where they spent three weeks working on the document that would later be called the "Bethel Confession" (Raum 2002:75).

Bonhoeffer, alongside other pastors, then formed the Pastors' Emergency League in which they vowed to: "a commitment to preach the Bible, to obey the Confessions of the

Reformation and to resist any attacks against them, to take responsibility for those who are persecuted and to repudiate the Aryan Clause, which prohibited non-Aryans from taking government jobs” (Raum 2002:75).

This vow might have formed the groundwork for Bonhoeffer’s three-step paradigm for church involvement in politics. If put side-by-side with the three-step paradigm, this vow, in the aspect of responsibility for the persecuted and the determination to resist a repugnant government clause, capture two of the three aspects of the paradigm.

By 1934, the membership of pastors in the Pastors’ Emergency League numbered 7,000. However, because of constant pressure from the Hitler’s government, this number dropped to 5,226 by 1936 (Raum 2002:83).

As a further attempt to save the German Church, the Pastors’ Emergency League endorsed the Barmen Confession that had been drawn up by Karl Barth, Bonhoeffer’s mentor. This ushered in the creation of the Confessing Church. Bonhoeffer was invited from London, where he had taken up pastoral duties, to head one of the seminaries of the Confessing Church (Nichols 2013:33; Bonhoeffer 1995:17; Godsey 1979:4).

Bonhoeffer gave this seminary vision and purpose. The seminary took off with neither financial resources nor a structure to house it. Dietrich and his students had to solicit for and depended on the benevolence of individuals. Steadily Hitler’s government enacted laws that isolated the Confessing Church and her pastors and put them at a position of illegality. In spite of the threats, arrests and torture of some of their pastors, Bonhoeffer persisted with his students. He was stopped from teaching at the University of Berlin and this gave him time to concentrate on his students at the seminary in Finkenwalde.

While attending the Ecumenical Conference at Fano, Denmark, in 1934, a Swede asked him what he would do if war would come, his response was: ‘I shall pray to Christ to give me the power not to take up arms’” (Bonhoeffer 1995:17). This statement gives the impression that as early as 1934 Bonhoeffer was already considering the option of armed resistance to Hitler.

The government stepped up its persecution of the Confessing Church. In 1937, over 800 clergy men were arrested (Raum 2002:102). Niemoller, one of the leaders of the Confessing Church, was arrested on the 1st of July 1937 on the direct instructions of Hitler and he spent 8 years in prison. After the war, on a tour in America, he said the following in one of the speeches he made:

When they arrested the Communists and socialists, I said: I am not Communist, so I did nothing. When they imprisoned the Jews, I said: I am not a Jew, so I did nothing. When they attacked the Catholics, I said: I am not a Catholic, so I did nothing. When they came for me, there was no one left. (Raum, 2002:103)

The Gestapo sealed the doors of the Finkenwalde seminary in the summer of 1938. Thus, tolling the death bells of the seminary. Dietrich, however, was not daunted by this closure. He started an underground seminary, which met in two different locations which finally folded up in 1940.

The Hitler government continued its attack on the confessing Church and the Jews, which further radicalised Bonhoeffer. This is similar to what happened in Cameroon when the Biya government cracked down on the Church for her persistent calls for a reintroduction of multiparty politics and a change of government policy, which establishes contextual parallels and grounds for application of the model.

On the night of 9th November 1938, the Hitler government released an onslaught on the Jews during which over 1,000 Jews were killed, 1,119 synagogues and 1,000 Jewish shops and homes were either burnt down or destroyed (Raum 2002:108). When the news got to Bonhoeffer the following day, he was distraught. He is reported to have told his students that “such violence against God and humanity would not stop on its own” (Raum 2002:109). This might have been the turning point; the incident that convinced him that everything humanly possible should be done to stop Hitler; this might have been his launching pad for the flight of active involvement in a plot to kill Hitler.

Bonhoeffer moved closer to his brother-in-law, Hans von Dohnanyi, who alongside other top military personnel in Hitler’s government were dissatisfied with the system and were

plotting the overthrow of Hitler. Dohnanyi introduced him to this group of plotters (Raum 2002:112).

In November 1938, the government required all men of Bonhoeffer's age to declare their residence for eventual conscription into the army. Bonhoeffer travelled to England to visit his sister, and later, his American friends made arrangements for him to travel to the USA where he was expected to teach a summer course and pastor immigrant Jews – a decision which he later regretted (Raum 2002:115). To him, abandoning his people at such a time of need to seek comfort in America was a betrayal.

Upon arrival in Germany, he wrote back to his friends in America: "I must live through this difficult period of our national history with the Christian people of Germany. I will have no right to participate in the reconstruction of Christian life in Germany after the war if I do not share the trials of this time with my people" (Raum 2002:116; Bonhoeffer 1995:17-18).

Upon his return, Bonhoeffer continued working with Dohnanyi and his group of plotters in the Abwehr (the Counterintelligence Office of the High Command of the Armed Forces). He served as their counsellor and link to the ecumenical world. Thus, he travelled frequently to meet church leaders in other countries to seek their support for a post-Hitler Germany (Godsey 1979:6).

In September 1940, Hitler overran France and his military prowess was yet to be challenged. Faced with this military onslaught and the silence of the Church, Bonhoeffer wrote:

The church confesses that she has witnessed the lawless application of brutal force, the physical and spiritual suffering of countless innocent people, oppression, hatred and murder, and that she has not raised her voice on behalf of the victims and has not found ways to hasten to their aid. She is guilty of the deaths of the weakest and most defenceless [sic] brothers of Jesus Christ. (Bethge *et al.* 1986:184)

The Gestapo had banned Bonhoeffer in 1936 from preaching, in 1940 from teaching and in 1941 from publishing (Raum 2002:134). He was constantly under the Gestapo radar

for persistent defiance to Hitler. He knew every detail of two failed attempts to assassinate Hitler, one in his plane and the other at an exhibition.

During the Second World War, he continued working with the Confessing Church in Germany and the political underground movement. He was arrested at his parent's home on April 5th 1943 by the Gestapo and imprisoned in Tegel. He was transferred from Tegel to the main Gestapo prison in the Prinz Albrecht Strasse on the 5th of October 1945 (Bonhoeffer 1995:18 & 20; Godsey, 1979:6). He was transferred to one concentration camp after another when the Gestapo prison was destroyed by air raids in February 1945. Bonhoeffer was executed at the concentration camp in Flossenbug on 9th April, 1945 at the command of Himmler (Bonhoeffer, 1995:22) on charges of conspiracy to assassinate Hitler.

Bonhoeffer's life and experiences are directly connected to his convictions, especially his three-step paradigm for the public role of the church. Springing from a background of resistance to obnoxious government policies, shocked by the death of his brother in World War I, convicted by theology and the need to stand up for others (the Jews), exposed to the realities of slavery in America, and convinced of the urgent need to sanitise Germany by taking Hitler out, Bonhoeffer will travel the journey from pacifism to radical activism, and this is reflected in his paradigm. Most of all, he did not propose a paradigm for others to implement – he lived the paradigm.

Bonhoeffer's biography demonstrates that his paradigm was birthed out of his personal experiences and struggles. It did not come from the blues. It was a culmination of his experiences and reaction to the status quo. Turning to the case of Cameroon, were the actions of the PCC inspired by experience and the status quo or based on an old missionary blue-print? It will be argued later that the influence of the missionary approach to political issues and the ideas of Jeremiah Kangsen greatly influenced the role the PCC played in the resolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. Bonhoeffer's biography is a pointer to the fact that the role the Church plays in politics should be contextual.

The use of this paradigm to analyse the role played by the PCC in Cameroon is based on the fact that it had been tested by the author. Its level of success in Germany is an issue for further research. We shall now outline Bonhoeffer's three step model to indicate how it may speak to the Cameroon context.

b. Bonhoeffer's three-step paradigm and his understanding of the public role of the Church

Bonhoeffer's three-step paradigm must be understood in its right context. Hitler had just ascended to power. He had succeeded to divide the Church between the German Christians and the Young Reformers who would eventually become the Confessing Church, and he had just published the Aryan Clause, which forbade any Jew, or spouse to a Jew, from working for the German government. Since German pastors were considered employees of the government, it implied that Jewish converts could not serve as pastors. Bonhoeffer's three-step paradigm for the public role and responsibility of the Church was part of a paper he presented to a small discussion group which he titled "The Church and the Jewish Question". It was Bonhoeffer's reaction to Hitler's recent actions. Bonhoeffer's paradigm was neither intended for universal application nor a recommendation for individual implementation. It was rather a proposed reaction of the German Church to Hitler's policies, within their context.

Bonhoeffer proposed the following three steps for the church's reaction to the Jewish Question (the Aryan Clause) as ways in which the church can get involved in matters of state.

... there are three possible ways in which the church can act towards the state: in the first place ... it can ask the state whether its actions are legitimate and in accordance with its character as state, i.e. it can throw the state back on its responsibilities. Secondly, it can aid the victims of state action. The church has an unconditional obligation to the victims of any ordering of society, even if they do not belong to the Christian community. 'Do good to all men.' In both these courses of action, the church serves the free state in its free way, and at times when laws are changed the church may in no way withdraw itself from these two tasks. The third possibility is not just to bandage the victims under the wheel, but to put a spoke in the wheel itself. (Bonhoeffer1958:221)

The three-step paradigm seems to be a logical progression from words to action, from detached commentator to active participation. These steps have been classified differently by other authors (see Barnes 1999)

Each of these steps stand out and, for the purpose of this research, deserve some comments:

Step 1: The Church “can ask the state whether its actions are legitimate and in accordance with its character as state i.e. it can throw the state back on its responsibilities”. Here, Bonhoeffer does not specify how the church should go about this but the formulation intimates that this step is limited to words, spoken or written. The radio program he presented which was interrupted, his critical sermons against the Hitler regime and his writings could be classified under this step.

Step 2: The Church “can aid the victims of state action. The church has an unconditional obligation to the victims of any ordering of society, even if they do not belong to the Christian community: ‘Do good to all men.’”. From words, Bonhoeffer’s next step involves indirect action – not to prevent the occurrence of the abuse of power, but to take care of the victims of such abuse of power. He was obviously calling the church to its responsibility to protect the Jews, not only the Christian Jews but all the Jews in Germany who had been targeted by the Aryan Clause. Bonhoeffer believed that “The church is the church only when it exists for others.... The church must share in the secular problems of ordinary human life” (Bonhoeffer, 1971:382). Here again, Bonhoeffer set the example in his involvement in the smuggling of some Jews out of Germany through a plan called “Operation 7” (Raum 2002:127). The assistance he gave to some of his former students to evade military conscription come in handy.

Step 3: The Church should “put a spoke in the wheel itself.” This is the final and extreme step. Here, Bonhoeffer launches a call for direct action against the oppressor. He calls the church to rise up against a government which crushes its own people; he calls for direct action that would stop the machinery of the vicious wheel of the government from spinning. While lecturing students at the German High School for Politics Bonhoeffer said:

“a leader who allows his followers to make him into an idol will become a ‘mis-leader....” (Raum 2002:59). Bonhoeffer, again sets the pace in this direction by getting involved in attempts to assassinate Hitler. Bonhoeffer is quoted to have said:

If I see that a madman is driving a car into a group of innocent by-standers, I as a Christian cannot simply wait for the catastrophe and cover the wounded and bury the dead. I must wrest the steering wheel out of the hands of the driver (Videocassette by Trinity Films Inc. 1982)

Schoenherr, **A.**, in his online article titled “Dietrich Bonhoeffer: The Message of a Life” (<https://www.religion-online.org/article/dietrich-bonhoeffer-the-message-of-a-life>) renders it thus “if a drunken driver drives into a crowd, what is the task of the Christian and the church? To run along behind to bury the dead and bind up the wounded? Or isn’t it, if possible, to get the driver out of the driver’s seat?”

Bonhoeffer saw the third step necessary only when the state failed in its responsibility by either instituting too little or too much law. To Bonhoeffer, too little law would be when the citizens are deprived of their rights, and “too much where the state intervened in the character of the church and its proclamation, e.g. in the forced exclusion of baptised Jews from our Christian congregations or, in the prohibition of our mission to the Jews” (Bonhoeffer, 1958:221). He, however, cautions that, “The necessity of direct political action by the church is, on the other hand, to be decided at any time by an ‘Evangelical Council’ and cannot therefore ever be casuistically decided beforehand” (Bonhoeffer 1958:222)

How far should the church go in this direction? Should the Church go as far as Bonhoeffer himself went in planning murder or drinking from the cup of coup plotters? These are issues that will be discussed in Chapter Five.

Bonhoeffer’s move towards radicalism and his departure from pacifism seems to have been progressive, at each stage fuelled by the totalitarian and dictatorial policies of Hitler’s government. He did not set out from the beginning deciding on the path of violent resistance, especially having in hind sight that he had toyed with the idea of going to India to learn non-violence from Ghandi (Elshtain 1997:224) and had actually been in touch

with him. The path he took was forced on him by circumstances and the desire to liberate his people from tyranny.

Mengus (1992), quotes Gaetano Latmiral, an Italian Engineer and reserve officer and a fellow prisoner with Bonhoeffer to have written to Bonhoeffer's brother-in-law, Gerhard Leibholz, in a letter dated 6th of March 1946, the following memory he had of his discussion with Bonhoeffer:

He spoke to me about the tragic fate of the German people, whose defects and values he knew; he said to me that it had cost him a great effort to desire his [country's] defeat but that it was necessary. . . . He said that as a pastor he considered his duty not only to console or to take care of the victims of exalted men who drove madly a motor-car in a crowded street, but also to try to stop them. He said that he was sure not to see the end of these events, because he feared that, in the event he were [sic] transferred to a concentration camp, he would be killed with the other political prisoners before the end. He said that in this case he hoped to face death without fear, being convinced it was for the sake of the right and the Christian faith (137)

It was never Bonhoeffer's idea to die as a martyr. His was not a show of heroism for public attention; it was rather a compulsion beyond himself, an obedience to a divine mission, an answer to a higher call. If not, how else could his sudden return from America be explained, that he would renege the comfort of a peaceful nation to prefer the uncertainties and dangers of a nation at war? How else can it be explained that he got "engaged to Maria von Wedemeyer in January 1943, and three months later he was imprisoned at Tegel" (Nichols 2013:22). On April 9th, 1945, shortly before he was killed, he wrote: "I am dying as a silent testimony of Christ among the brothers" (Mengus 1992:137).

Contrary to the radical stance in the three-step paradigm championed in "The Church and the German Question", he adopts a more pacifist stance on the role of the Church in politics in "The Cost of Discipleship". Here, in his interpretation of Matt. 5:38-42, Bonhoeffer holds that:

This saying of Christ removes the Church from the sphere of politics and law. The Church is not to be a national community like the old Israel, but a

community of believers without political or national ties. The old Israel had been both-the chosen people of God and a national community, and it was therefore his will that they should meet force with force. But with the Church it is different: it has abandoned political and national status, and therefore it must patiently endure aggression. Otherwise evil will be heaped upon evil. Only thus can fellowship be established and maintained. (Bonhoeffer 1995:141)

He further states that: “The only way to overcome evil is to let it run itself to a standstill because it does not find the resistance it is looking for. Resistance merely creates further evil and adds fuel to the flames.” He further enjoins the Christian to obedience to the government since it has been ordained by God. The state has the mandate to govern, he continues, and the Christian has the duty to obey. In his exposition of Mk. 8:31-38, he sees the call of Christ as a call to self-denial. “When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die” he states (Bonhoeffer, 1995:89).

Bonhoeffer seems to be making here a case for obedience to the state and a call to pacifism since the Christian is called to serve and not to assert dominion, and building a thesis against revolting against state authority.

This same pacifist Bonhoeffer would later on take a revolutionary stance to fight against the Hitler regime to the extent of getting involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler. This radical shift is justified by Bonhoeffer’s encounter with the Bible while at Finkenwalde. This was expressed in this letter Bonhoeffer wrote to a girlfriend in January 1936 while he was at Finkenwalde, which is here quoted extensively:

. . . I threw myself into work in a very un-Christian and arrogant way. A crazy ambition which some people have noticed in me made life difficult for me and robbed me of the love and confidence of my fellows. At that time I was terribly alone and left to myself. That was very bad.

Then something else happened, something which has changed and transformed my life to the present day. I discovered the Bible for the first time. It is also very bad to have to say that. I had preached often and seen a good deal of the church, spoken and written about it and yet I had not yet become a Christian; in a wild and uncontrolled way I was still my own master. I know that at that time I used the cause of Jesus Christ for my own advantage, for my crazy vanity. I pray to God that, that never happens

again. Moreover I had never, or hardly ever, prayed. But despite all this loneliness I was quite pleased with myself. The Bible and especially the Sermon on the Mount freed me from this. Since then everything has changed. I have felt that plainly, and so have other people around me. It was a great liberation. It became clear to me that the life of a servant of Jesus Christ must belong to the church, and it became even more clear, step by step, how that must come about.

Then came the 1933 crisis. That strengthened me in this. Now I found others who shared this purpose with me. Now I was concerned above all for a renewal of the church and the pastorate. . .

All at once Christian pacifism dawned on me as being a matter of course, though shortly beforehand I had passionately fought against it «at the disputation, to which Gerhard (Jacobi) also came. And so things developed, bit by bit. It took over all my perception and all my thought . . .

Before me lies my calling. I do not know what God means to make of it. There is still a good deal of disobedience and impurity in me here. I catch myself out in it every day. But this is the way I must go. Perhaps it will not be for much longer. Sometimes we wish that that were the case (Phil. 1.23). Nevertheless, it's good to have this calling . . . I think that the glory of this calling will only dawn on us in coming times and events. If only we can win through . . . “(Bethge *et al.* 1986:84)

Bonhoeffer's shift from pacifism to radical activism leads this research to argue that the Church's position in its public role should not be static but should always be adapted to the circumstances. Based on this, as it would be argued later, the PCC's role in the resolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon was handicapped by its replication of missionary experiences and the blueprint left by Rev Jeremiah Kangsen, a pastor who dabbled into politics before coming back to the pastoral ministry.

The role played by the PCC in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon is analysed according to the three steps Bonhoeffer prescribes in this paradigm. Firstly, the role that the church played in calling the attention of the state to the consequence of its actions are analysed (this is done through an analysis of letters, communiqués and addresses written and sermons preached during this period). Secondly, the role the PCC played in binding the wounds of those crushed by the vicious wheels of the state is examined through the social actions of the church. Finally, the role played by the church in putting a spoke in the wheel of the government (if at all it did) is also considered.

Before this paradigm is applied to the Cameroonian context, it is necessary to see how it was used in two other contexts in two different continents: South Africa (Africa) and El Salvador (Latin America). This will be proof that it has been used before and has inspired other models, thus can be used in the Cameroonian context and can inspire a different model adapted to this context. The South African and El Salvadoran contexts, though termed by this study as “models” were inspired or influenced by the Bonhoeffer model. However, as it will be demonstrated, they had their contextual specificities.

2.3. The Context of the South African Model

The South African model, just like the Bonhoeffer paradigm, was born out of the need for the Church(es) to provide religious answers to political problems – Nazi totalitarianism (for Germany) and apartheid (for South Africa). De Gruchy refers to Beyers Naude, who had attended the Bonhoeffer Congress in Dusseldorf in 1971, to have played the “Bonhoeffer-like role” in the fight against apartheid in South Africa (De Gruchy 1997:355). In as much as Bonhoeffer’s paradigm should have influenced the struggle against apartheid, especially at its later stage, the South African context had its own peculiarities. Thus, a bird’s-eye view of the role the churches in South Africa played as far as apartheid is concerned is necessary.

The unbanning of the African national Congress (ANC) in 1990 and the first democratic elections in 1994 were the final signals of the collapse of apartheid. Many factors ranging from internal dissent expressed through pressure groups, trade unions and armed groups to international pressure played various contributory roles to its collapse. The role the Churches played in the apartheid brouhaha, either in aiding and abating it even prior to independence and giving it vision (like the Dutch Reformed Church) or in combating it (Like the South African Council of Churches and the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference) cannot be overemphasised.

The Churches and Apartheid in South Africa

From their landing on the shores of the cape coast, Christianity was the preserve of the white settlers who, with the African indigenous populations, viewed each other’s religion

with mutual suspicion until the early 1820's when the first attempts were made by the former to reach out to the latter with the Christianizing mission (Kiernan in Prozesky 1990:9). Gradually, but steadily, Christianity penetrated the African communities, in some areas faster, and in others slower, in some through mutual understanding and willing conversion, and in others by the use of the barrel of the gun. By and large, Christianity gained grounds amidst resistance from the African traditionalists, with the former presenting a superior worldview to the later and denigrating the latter's religion to have no place for the superior being – God (Kiernan in Prozesky 1990:11).

The Christianizing venture was organized along racial lines. For example, the Moravian mission targeted only the blacks, while the Dutch Reformed Church targeted the whites and the blacks in separate missions. The South African community was thus plunged into racial segregation and development on different lines. The sad part of the tale is that the Church, given its fragmented approach to mission, conformed to this policy. This, to Saayman, is not the norm as he states “although very often the Church which grew out of the mission looked distressingly like the society around it, Christian mission did, in its best moments, plant the seeds which would eventually grow to challenge unchristian and dehumanising forces such as racism” (Saayman, W., in Prozesky, 1990:30). In as much as there were some conformist missionaries or ministers, there were also others at the revolutionary end who defended the rights of the natives over and against those of the white colonialists (Saayman in Prozesky 1990:33)

The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), the most popular denomination amongst the whites, was the flag bearer and defender of Apartheid theology. The DRC which was established in the Cape of Good Hope by the mother denomination in Holland in 1652 eventually gained autonomy in 1824 (Kinghorn in Prozesky 1990:57)

Kinghorn holds that until 1857, decisions taken at the DRC Synods indicated their tendency to tilt towards a one and unified church for both the whites and the blacks. However, by the middle of the 19th century some whites started lobbying for separate services and even separate congregations warranted by their differences in the

understanding of church traditions, language, culture and hygiene. Kinghorn states that the 1857 Synod eventually decided that:

“... although it was desirable that our members from the heathen be assimilated into existing congregations ... some who are weak ... had opposed this and, therefore ... impeded the propagation of Christianity among the heathen. Thus, for the sake of reclaiming white support for mission work, Synod decided that those Christians from the heathendom would henceforth ... enjoy their Christian privileges in a separate building” (Kinghorn in Prozesky 1990:58)

In 1881, the Dutch Reformed Mission Church (DRMC) was created separate from but subservient to the DRC. And this, it has been argued, is the beginning of the institutionalization of apartheid (Kinghorn in Prozesky 1990:59) as it was the nursery and experiment of the idea of separate development.

Up till the 1930's, the poor Afrikaner and the blacks who had migrated to the cities, lived together in the slums. This ushered in a new wave of the ideology of superior and inferior cultures led the politicians, backed by the Church, to insist on maintaining the purity of the superior white race over and against the black and instituting separate settlements for both communities.

It is very possible that the insistence of South African politicians on maintaining the purity of the white race, happening at a time when Hitler was propagating his Aryan policy in Germany advocating the supremacy of the German race and instituting policies to preserve its status, could have borrowed from this German experiment.

The DRC formalized its theological thoughts on apartheid as seen in the documents of the 1948 Transvaal Synod, which held that although scripture talks of the unity of humanity, God also created races and nations. The 1950 Peoples' Conference at Bloemfontein went further to postulate the doctrine of separate development, which was eventually adopted by the government as an official and institutionalized policy. (Kinghorn in Prozesky 1990:64 & 65; Wallis 1989:47).

Shortly after this, the word race gradually disappeared from the vocabulary of the DRC and replaced by the word nation. To DRC, racism was a sin, but apartheid, or nationalism,

or separate development was not (Kinghorn in Prozesky 1990:68). They argued that separate development acknowledged the humanness of everybody, both the blacks and the whites, and in fact, gave room for the conditions of living of the blacks to be ameliorated, even if at a different pace from that of the whites. It should be mentioned that this was not the position of black South African scholars.

By the 1980's, as a result of some internal dissent and international pressure, the narrative shifted from discrimination to differentiation. This led to the annulment of the policy that prohibited mixed marriages in 1985 (Kinghorn in Prozesky 1990:71). The DRC followed suit in 1986 by abolishing the single law that forbade mixed membership and allowed confessional matters as the only pre-requisite for membership in any congregation. (Kinghorn in Prozesky 1990:71; Moodie, T., online article). However, the DRC did not merge with the DRMC.

The DRC's apartheid theology, hinged on Gen. 1 – 2, 10 – 11, Deut. 32:8 and Acts 17:26, asserted two facts: firstly, that all humanity proceeds from the blood of Adam and secondly, that the existence of nations and races is a creation of God, thus divinely ordained (Kinghorn in Prozesky 1990:74 & 75)

Signs of African resistance to the separatist tendencies that would eventually lead to the institutionalization of Apartheid were visible from the early part of the 20th century. It was expressed in the creation of African indigenous churches, which can be grouped into the Ethiopian Movement, the Zionist movement and the churches of the spirit (Cochrane in Prozesky 1990:85; see Pillay in Mofmeyr, Lombaard & Maritz (eds.) 2001:57-58)

The 1936 incident, which saw the expunging of African voters from the voters list in Cape Province, attracted the reaction of the Christian Council for South Africa and the Anglican Church, which demanded formal representation in government.

The election of an all-white government in 1948 and the consequent flow of anti-black legislations occasioned a response of protests from the English-speaking churches. Synod resolution after Synod resolution was passed by the black churches, condemning apartheid and by the 60's, Black Theology appeared as a counter narrative to Apartheid Theology (Cochrane in Prozesky 1990:90).

Bolstered by the World Council of Churches' Program to Combat Racism, the Christian Institute and other churches took a bolder step to challenge the legitimacy of the government and in the 70's steadily got engaged in active resistance movements (Cochrane in Prozesky 1990:91).

When Eberhard Bethge (the close friend and biographer of Bonhoeffer) visited South Africa in 1973, during a seminar in Johannesburg, one layman asked him "When did Bonhoeffer visit South Africa? He knows our situation from the inside" (De Gruchy 1984:4). This can lead to the convenient conclusion that, if Bonhoeffer had influenced the church's struggle against apartheid before 1973 through individual church leaders and theologians who were familiar with Bonhoeffer's theology and life journey, this influence was more entrenched after Bethge exposed Bonhoeffer to the larger South African public in these 1973 public lectures. The lectures spoke to the people in their context. De Gruchy (1984) holds that Bonhoeffer "... has been an inspiration to many Christians who have drawn courage from his example as well as found insight in his writings as they have striven to be disciples of Jesus Christ in the midst of the world" (De Gruchy 1984:6). He further states that, "... the Confessing Church struggle during the era of the Third Reich, of which the Barmen Declaration was such a crucial part, has been an important paradigm for many Christians involved in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa" (De Gruchy 1984:9).

Like in the case of Nazi Germany, the Churches that stood against Apartheid faced reprisals for their positions. On the 31st of August 1988, the Khotso House, the building that housed the South African Council of Churches was bombed. The same fate befell the Khana House which lodged the South African Council of Catholic Bishops (Wallis, J., Hollyday, J., (eds), 1989:xv). Other churches and organizations had similar experiences. The government's banning of 17 anti-apartheid organizations (Wallis & Hollyday (eds.) 1989:xv) and the rights to peaceful protest on the 24th of February 1988 caused Allan Boesak, Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Frank Chicane and other church leaders to lead hundreds of worshippers in a prayer session. This culminated with a march to the parliament to demand for the reinstatement of the right to peaceful protest. Their refusal to

disperse when ordered to, led to the arrest of the main church leaders (Wallis & Hollyday (eds.) 1989:xvi; see Pillay in Hofmeyr, Lombaard & Maritz 2001:60). Though they were later released, church leaders vowed to continue with their protest. This was the dawn of a new era in the churches' struggle against apartheid.

Preaching on March 13th 1988 to a crowd of youths who had been banned from marching, Allan Boesak said "The government of South Africa has signed its own death warrant. No government can take on God and survive". Desmond Tutu, addressing the apartheid government during the same occasion said, "You are not God, you are mortals. It is God whom we worship, and God cannot be mocked" (Wallis in Wallis & Hollyday (eds.) 1989:2).

The South African Council of Churches mobilized international support, to the distaste of the government, for the families of detained anti-apartheid activists (Wallis in Wallis & Hollyday (eds.) 1989:7) also in addition, funded projects in the black communities. The frontline role played by the Church leaders in the anti-apartheid struggle rekindled the faith of many youths who had gotten distraught about the church and abandoned it. There was a new wave on youth inflow into the church (Wallis in Wallis & Hollyday (eds.) 1989:8)

The two main church organizations that challenged the apartheid government were the South African Council of Churches (SACC) and the Southern African Catholic Bishops' Conference (SACBC). However, they differed in their view of the legitimacy of the South African government. The "SACC became more politicized than the SACBC" (Borer 1998:2)

The foregoing will serve the purpose of drawing lines of agreement and dissonance between the Bonhoeffer paradigm and the South African model in the role the churches played in the public arena and to establish how the actions and reactions of the churches corresponded to the three-step paradigm, though standing out with its South African specificities.

The South African Model

Borer provides a succinct categorization of the role the South African churches played in the fight against apartheid when she states:

In the South African case, one can divide church commitment to the anti-apartheid struggle in the 1980's into three levels, representing increasing political involvement. The first level can be labelled 'Sympathetic' which involved condemnation of apartheid in principle and was accompanied by statements issued in support of the victims of apartheid's injustices. The second level can be designed 'Human Rights Involvement,' in which church organizations became active in the struggle on the level of human rights by engaging in such activities as supporting trade union organizations, objecting to detention without trial and serving as refuges and sanctuaries. The third level of involvement can be termed 'Overt Political Activity,' in which church organizations committed themselves in the political arena in cooperation with other organizations to protests and civil disobedience. With the exception of the white Dutch Reformed Churches, almost all religious denominations became involved at the first, sympathetic, level. The Catholic bishops, through the SACBC's national and regional Justice and Peace Commissions; the SABC went so far as to engage in selected models of civil disobedience, such as supporting draft resisters. The SACC, however, embraced the highest level of commitment through its declaration of the illegitimacy of the state and its call for massive civil disobedience. It is clear, though, that certain individuals in the SACBC moved precipitously close to the brink of this level of political commitment. (Borer 1998:4-5)

Thus, according to Borer, the three different ways in which the churches expressed their resentment of and opposition to apartheid are:

"Sympathetic" – this level limited itself to words condemning apartheid and its brutal consequences: This was expressed in sermons preached by vocal anti-apartheid proponents like Beyers Naude, Allan Boesak, Desmond Tutu and Frank Chikane and the positions of organisations like the Christian Institute, the SACC and SACBC in declaring apartheid as evil and unscriptural.

"Human Rights Involvement" – this level moves to action, not against the perpetrators of apartheid but support to others actively engaged in the fight against it and to some victims of it. Examples are the support SACC and Christian Institute gave to resistance movements, SACC's support to the families of detained activists and the projects SACC in collaboration with partners started in black communities. SACC, in line with WCC's program at combating racism, became active in this direction.

“Overt political activity” – this level saw the churches involved in direct political action in defiance of state policy through civil disobedience and other acts of direct political action. Examples here are the march on the parliament led by Allan Boesak, Desmond Tutu, Frank Chikane and other church leaders; their refusal to disperse upon the instructions of the police and their eventual arrest and release; Tutu’s call for economic sanctions on South Africa in 1986 (Cowel, 1986:3) to bring international pressure to bear on the government to abandon its apartheid policy; and the Tutu led protest march in 1989 to a whites-only beach located at Western Cape (Kurtz 2010:6).

The Kairos Document, first published in 1985 and revised in 1986 (Leonard 2010:41) clarified the Church’s duty when faced with an illegitimate and dictatorial government. After a critique of “State Theology” and “Church Theology”, the Kairos Document propounds the tenets of “Prophetic Theology” which calls the Church out of its cocoon of complacency to a confrontation of the forces of evil espoused by the Apartheid government. The Document asserts the right of an oppressed people to fight for their liberation and compels the Church to support such strides in every way possible. This Document sanctioned overt political involvement of the Churches, Church organisations and individual Christians.

The Belhar Confession (1986), a major departure from the traditional position of the DRC, called the Church to its responsibility to stand with the oppressed and work for their liberation.

This categorization is a replica of Bonhoeffer’s three step paradigm. It contains all the elements of the paradigm and in the order in which Bonhoeffer stated them – from rhetoric, through passive action, to direct action. The main difference between the two is that while Bonhoeffer’s paradigm was well laid down before implementation, the South African case was an analysis after the event. The South African case, unlike Bonhoeffer, did not have a blueprint for implementation – most South African churches merely evolved from one level of resistance to another given the circumstance and the particular church or church organization involved.

The Bonhoeffer of South Africa: Beyers Naude

Beyers Naude, pictured as the Bonhoeffer of South Africa, is the perfect image of the transition from pacifism to activism. As De Gruchy puts it “when Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s friend and biographer Eberhard Bethge visited South Africa in 1973, he confided in the author [De Gruchy] that Naude was South Africa’s Bonhoeffer”.

Although many black South Africans played leading roles in the struggle against Apartheid such as Desmond Tutu, Frank Chicane, Allan Boesak and others, this research identifies Beyers Naude as the one who walked the Bonhoeffer journey from pacifism to radical activism.

Naude, like Bonhoeffer, travelled the road from a flag bearer of Afrikaner supremacy to a combatant against racism; from pacifism to activism.

Born on May 10, 1915 to a minister and an Afrikaner freedom fighter, he studied theology in the University of Stellenbosch and the seminary of the DRC and graduated a minister of the DRC. He joined the Broederbond in the fight for Afrikaner nationalism. His move to Loxton in 1943 in response to a pastoral call brought him face to face with the realities of the poor black communities, which were in contrast to the affluence of the white communities he was used to. As his heart went out to the sufferings of these people, the first inkling of doubt about the racist policies of the DRC set in (Pauw in Beyers Naude Centre Series on Public Theology Volume 12005:10).

His growing dissent for apartheid and conviction of the ineptitude of the biblical justifications by the DRC was accentuated by his exposure to the writings of other theologians, a study tour he undertook to Europe and North America and his participation at the Reformed Ecumenical Synod in 1958.

As vice chairperson of the Transvaal Synod, he received a plethora of complaints from black pastors on the realities of apartheid and its implications on their people. In reaction to this:

Naudé went on four or five visits to segregated Indian townships, to black mining compounds and to coloured slum neighbourhoods, experiencing the

awful division, strife and hardship that apartheid had brought to people's lives. He told himself that if this is what apartheid is all about, it is evil, it is inhuman, it is something that can never be supported. He visited the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) and for the first time studied the apartheid race laws. "It brought me to the conclusion, not only on theological grounds, but also on practical grounds, on the grounds of justice, these laws were even less acceptable" (in Ryan 1990: 48). He knew that the church's race policy had to change.... (Pauw, in Beyers Naudé Centre Series on Public Theology Volume 12005; Balia 1989:13)

This was the turning point for Naude. This experience jolted him from pacifism to the reality of the need for activism. He started Bible study groups to bring together like-minded people to stand against apartheid, gradually he became more vocal against the DRC's position on it and, together with friends, started a theological journal, with himself as editor intended to spread the falsehood of DRC's biblical foundations for apartheid. More and more he saw the need to start a non-denominational ecumenical movement, which would give members free space to search for other alternatives to apartheid. In August 1963, he created the Christian Institute for Southern Africa.

When asked to choose between his position as Moderator of the Southern Transvaal Synod to which he had just been newly elected and Pastor of the DRC and leader of the Christian Institute he had helped form, he made the radical move of preferring the latter (Pauw, in Beyers Naude Centre Series on Public Theology Volume 12005; Balia 1989:21).

Under the umbrella of the Christian Institute, he pushed for a replica of the Confessing Church in South Africa to stand against the policies of the apartheid government. This falls in line with the decision by Bonhoeffer and other German pastors to break away from the German Christians who supported Hitler, to form the Confessing Church, which stood against Hitler's policies. Beyers contributed to the writing of "The Message to the People" a South African version of the Barmen Declaration with insistence, not on theology, but on practical resistance to apartheid ((ed.) De Gruchy 1997:356). This culminated in the publication of the Kairos Document in 1985.

He gave the Christian Institute leadership as Director for 14 years and threw his full weight behind resistance to apartheid. The Christian Institute identified with the blacks in their struggle, and for this reason, attracted government reprisals. Their offices were raided severally by the police and passport of some staff confiscated. This increased the confidence the black community had in it, as they saw whites suffer police harassment for their sake.

Naude's refusal to testify to a Commission of Inquiry that was set up in 1972 to investigate the Christian Institute among other organisations led to his court sentence of 50 Rands or a month in jail. He preferred the latter "in solidarity with the thousands of political prisoners who had gone before him. He spent one night in jail "...and was released only after "Dr JHP Van Rooyen and Rev. Gert Swart paid the fine" (Pau, in Beyers Naude Centre Series on Public Theology Volume 12005:19)

Just like the case of Bonhoeffer's Finkenwalde seminary that was banned by the German government, the South African government eventually banned the Christian Institute in 1977, and just as Bonhoeffer was banned by the nazi government from public speaking, teaching or writing, from 19th October 1977 to 26th September 1984 Naude was under a South African government ban. (Pauw, in Beyers Naude Centre Series on Public Theology Volume 12005:19,20). This implied he could not move beyond certain limits, was prohibited from meeting with more than one person at a time and from publishing.

Just like Bonhoeffer who had to take singular action to join the group at the Abwer when the Confessing Church was reluctant to actively stand against Hitler in Germany, so too Naude, when he realised that the DRC remained adamant on its support of apartheid in spite of all attempts to cause it to change. Naude, had to leave the Church and engage in the process of getting together like-minded pastors and laity to fight against it.

Naude, during and after the ban, became the face of resistance to apartheid at home and abroad. After the ban was lifted, he continued his attacks against apartheid, quit the DRC and joined the DRMC.

Unlike Bonhoeffer, he would live to see the fruits of his labour: the crumbling of apartheid and an apology to him from the DRC for having refused to see the truth of what he stood for. He died in 2004.

Although Naude is a South African epitome of Bonhoeffer in his move into activism and the defence of oppressed people of a different race, yet, unlike Bonhoeffer, he did not pay the ultimate sacrifice – He lived on and died out of natural causes.

Meiring (2007:151) in a personal testimony of Bonhoeffer's impact on him gives a bird's-eye view of how much Bonhoeffer's theology and personal life influenced the struggle against apartheid and consequently the South African model when he writes:

I was a second year theology student at the University of Pretoria in 1960, when a visiting chaplain addressing a Students' Christian Association conference introduced us to Bonhoeffer, relating the story of his life and death at Flossenbürg, urging us to read Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*. I did that, with growing admiration and awe – and consternation, because the implications for South African Christians, in our context, was inescapable. To a young Afrikaner hoping to be ordained into the ministry of the white Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), Bonhoeffer's challenge was quite frightening. Reading Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison* in the months that followed did not help either. The heroism of the prisoner, the messages to his family and friends, the brief – often disturbing – insights into Dietrich Bonhoeffer's thinking, above all his poems, continued to inspire and haunt me. Little did I realise at the time how many fellow South Africans were struggling with the same questions, how profound the effect of Bonhoeffer's theology – as well as his identification with the Barmen Declaration and his role in the struggle of the Confessing Church in Germany – would be on theologians and lay Christians alike, in years to come.

Thus, Bonhoeffer's influence on the fight against apartheid in South Africa dates back to the 60's as Meiring and other theologians and students of theology encountered him through his writings and were challenged by his witness. Bonhoeffer could be heard and seen in the actions of churches, organisations and individuals. Bonhoeffer could be heard in the debates at the Cottoesloe Consultation and the dissenting voices rising up within the DRC; he could be read in SACC's *Message to the People of South Africa*, the *status confessionis* of the World Alliance of Reformed Churches of 1982 in Ottawa and the kairós

Document; he could be seen in the actions of individuals like Beyers Naude, Allan Boesak, Desmond Tutu, Frank Chikane etc. and in organisations like SACC, and the Christian Institute.

From the South African experience, the next section that follows examines the El Salvadoran model of the church involvement in combating authoritarian government policies.

2.4. The Context of the El Salvadoran Model

The El Salvadorian civil war, which had commenced with political instability in the 1970's, ended in a peace accord that was signed between the government and the rebel Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) in 1992. This peace accord gave way to the formation of a transitional government and eventual democratic election (Lauria-Santiago & Binford n.d.). This section examines the role the Church played in El Salvador during this period, especially in combating dictatorship and the oppression of the poor masses in the light of the Bonhoeffer paradigm. The church in Latin America generally has been referred to as “a ghetto Church” (Gutierrez 1988:58). Thus, it could not have remained neutral in the midst of the agonies and groans of the people of the ghetto. A brief history of the church's involvement in the political arena in El Salvador before this period will precede the El Salvadoran version of the Bonhoeffer three-pronged model. This will be followed by an analysis of a Bonhoeffer archetype – Archbishop Oscar Romero.

Altmann (2016:15) holds that:

The first written account in Latin America on Bonhoeffer's life and theology, still in German, seems to be registered [as early as] ... 1948 in the first issue of the theological review *Estudios Teológicos*.... Thus, the 'discovery' of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Latin America occurred ... after the Second World War and Bonhoeffer's death.

The Influence of Paul Lehman, Bonhoeffer's American friend, and the lectures of Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer's biographer, in 1970 in Brazil and Argentina were of no less importance.

It is clear that the apparition of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in Latin America by far predates the church's struggle in El Salvador. Thus, the inclinations of part of the church towards public witness cannot be completely dissociated from the Bonhoeffer story.

Altmann (2016:13,14) demonstrates the influence of Bonhoeffer on Liberation Theology when he writes:

The influence of Dietrich Bonhoeffer on Latin American theology has been examined by various authors, both Latin Americans and others. In Germany, for example, Paul Gerhard Schoenborn gathered testimonies and evidences of Bonhoeffer's influence upon Latin Americans. Already in the year 1976 Julio de Santa Ana, from Uruguay, gave a lecture in Geneva about 'The influence of Bonhoeffer on the Theology of Liberation', published in the *Ecumenical Review*. In 1995, in a seminar on occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of Bonhoeffer's death, at the Lutheran Seminary in Sao Leopoldo, state of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, Nélio Schneider spoke about the 'signs of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology and witness in Latin America'.

It can, therefore, be concluded that Bonhoeffer's life and theology had an impact on the foundation and elaboration of Liberation Theology, the theological reflection and praxis that gave impetus to the radical wing of the Church in El Salvador, like in other Latin American countries, in their fight against oppression.

Martin Maier SJ (2018:4, 5), the Secretary for European Affairs at the Jesuit European Social Centre in Brussels, in a sermon preached shortly before the canonisation of Archbishop Oscar Romero on the 14th of October 2018, in trying to justify why it took a long time for the church to canonise Romero, makes a case for the influence of Liberation Theology (which was inspired by Bonhoeffer), on Romero. He states:

One of the major reasons that the beatification and canonisation of Romero has taken so long is that he was identified with Liberation Theology Before his conversion, Romero opposed Liberation Theology. It seemed to him dangerous for Church and theology to get involved in social and political questions. During his own theological studies at the Pontifical Gregorian University he had studied neo-scholastic theology, which [drew], sharp boundaries ... between 'grace' and 'nature' and as a consequence of that, between God and humanity, Church and world, faith and history... the Church had to concern itself with the salvation of souls. Her primary goal

had to be to ensure that as many people get to heaven as possible, and the most important means to this were the sacraments.

Within this ecclesial, theological and spiritual framework, it was only logical that Romero would for a long time put the sacraments at the centre of his priestly activities, and not concern himself unduly with secular affairs. Accordingly, until 1977, Romero had a negative view of Liberation Theology. He described it as a 'theological fashion', and dangerous for Christian faith. In a confidential memorandum that he drafted in 1975 while a consultant on the papal commission for Latin America, he took critical issue with the theology of Ignacio Ellacuría SJ and Jon Sobrino SJ. The Vatican authorities reacted swiftly and for the first time Ellacuría and Sobrino were forced to defend their theological position. But after his transformation, his attitude to Liberation Theology altered as well and he made Ellacuría and Sobrino his closest advisers. A diary entry gives an indication of the change in Romero and of his later thinking, where he describes with satisfaction how, while in Louvain at the beginning of 1980, he managed to lay to rest the reservations of a Belgian theologian concerning Liberation Theology.

Historical background and complacency of the Church in El Salvador

From the time of independence from Spain in the 1820's the Roman Catholic Church, the dominant church in El Salvador, was pro government. Its clerics were close to, served the ruling class, and mostly served in urban areas. However, this started changing from the 1950's as the archbishop, Luis Chávez y González, encouraged the church to be more critical in its stance towards the government and he launched a number of educational programs in the diocese. The Vatican II Council, which held from 1962-65, further enhanced this critical stance of the Church (Williams & Petersen 1996:875). Nevertheless, these moves were opposed by most of the bishops. The young enthusiastic priests who wished to depart from the norm found strong resistance from their ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Protestant missions came to El Salvador much later than the Roman Catholics. This was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Williams & Petersen 1996:876), but gained steam steadily. The Protestants could be divided between the main line Protestants (Baptists, Presbyterians, Lutherans to mention but a few) and the Evangelicals which were mostly Pentecostal. The latter experienced faster growth than

the former. At the time when the Roman Catholic Church was engaging the government on the plight of the peasants, the Evangelicals steered clear of political debates. The assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero and the persecution of the Roman Catholic Church was used by these churches to win more converts as they argued that these were the signs of the end times so El Salvadorans should believe in Christ and prepare to meet him. Their views were turned from the temporal to the eternal (Williams & Petersen, 1996:880) with emphasis on evangelisation. Therefore, the plight of the peasants and the bane of their lot was not the focus of these churches – they were more concerned with saving their souls.

Given the complacency of the Protestant block in El Salvador, unlike Protestants in other Latin American countries who championed the course of liberation, the El Salvadoran model will be analysed based on the reactions of the Roman Catholic Church, especially in the second half of the twentieth century.

The El Salvadoran model

As concerns how to deal with the dictatorial government in El Salvador, Montgomery (1982:210) quotes three categories into which Carlos Scannone has classified the Church:

The first category, in Scannone's words, is "a conservative, preconciliar theology" that emphasizes "the values of tradition, the institutional and sacral aspect of the church, and hierarchical authority."

The second emphasizes "a liberation theology pre dominantly influenced by Marxist categories and methodology in its concern to analyze and transform reality." This orientation "stresses social criticism of injustice, ethico-prophetic denunciation, and identification with the poor and oppressed."

The third category reflects a "liberation theology predominantly concerned with being a theology of popular pastoral activity," which "underlines the values of popular culture, the already' existing unity of the church as the People of God, the Christian sense of our people and their religiosity and historical roots of the current liberation process, and openness of this process to a qualitatively new society that would be neither capitalist nor Marxist."

Bakhtiari (1986:29), in his categorisation equally brings out three distinct factions or tendencies in the Roman Catholic Church in El Salvador, which can be equated to Bonhoeffer's three step paradigm.

In El Salvador, there are also roughly three divisions in the Church. The first group emphasizes a traditionalistic, pre-conciliar theology that considers the values of tradition, the institutional and sacral aspect of the Church and hierarchical authority, important. The second group emphasizes a more democratic, popular theology concerned with a liberation process that is closer to the Christian Democrats' vision of a system that is neither capitalism nor Marxism. The third group emphasizes the liberation theology perception of incorporating Marxist categories and methodology. This orientation is very similar to the pro-FSLN faction in the Nicaraguan Catholic Church.

Scannone's and Bakhtiari's categorizations are very much the same but for the juxtaposition of points two and three. Bakhtiari certainly had knowledge of Scannone's categorization since the latter's work predates the former's. The juxtaposition by Bakhtiari therefore, might be intentional. For the purpose of this work, the Bakhtiari categorization will be used mostly because it fits into Bonhoeffer's model which is a logical progression from rhetoric to praxis; from benign conservatism to radical liberalism.

Thus, according to Bakhtiari the three factions or groups in the Church were:

Group 1.

This group "...emphasizes a traditionalistic, pre-conciliar theology that considers the values of tradition, the institutional and sacral aspect of the Church and hierarchical authority, important". Until the 1960's the Roman Catholic Church had mostly a white European dominated priesthood that dwelt mostly in the towns, had a smooth relationship with the government and fraternized with the ruling class (Shortell 2001:87).

Of the four bishops in the period under review, three (Bishops Jose Eduardo Alvarez, Pedro Arnaldo Aparicio & Marco RenRevello), and a few priests, supported this position. They held fast to the social doctrine of the Church as specified by Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical, which limited the church to creating favourable conditions for the working class.

Group 2.

This group "...emphasizes a more democratic, popular theology concerned with a liberation process that is closer to the Christian Democrats' vision of a system that is neither capitalism nor Marxism". One bishop (Arturo Rivera Damas) out of the four subscribed to this group and supported the position of Vatican II. To them, liberation could be attained only "through non-violent, gradual change in the socio-political structure." (Bakhtiari, 1986:30). They were in support of land reforms; they advocated for demilitarisation and looked forward to negotiations with the leftists.

This shift from the 1960's was facilitated by the emergence of priests who focused on rural ministry. The government became uncomfortable with the growing strength of the rural folks with growing awareness of their situation. Upon the retirement of the Archbishop, the El Salvadorian government pressured the Vatican to appoint an Archbishop who would reign-in the local congregations and tow government lines. In response Vatican appointed Oscar Romero "... a conservative and bookish prelate" (Shortell, 2001:87) as Archbishop in 1977.

The Church suffered from government reprisals as a result of its position. Father Jose Alan was kidnapped in April 1970, Father Nicolas Rodriguez was kidnapped and murdered in 1972, Father Rafael Barahona was kidnapped and tortured in 1973. "All told, in the decade beginning in 1972 eleven priests and a seminarian were assassinated. At least sixty priests were expelled or forced into exile. Some of these, along with many others who did not leave, were picked up and beaten or tortured" (Montgomery 1982:218).

Father Jose Inocencio Alas, priest of Suchitoto, a few miles from San Salvador, formed and developed Christian based communities and supported land reforms, a taboo subject at that time. In January 1970, the government convened a special congress to examine land reforms and Father Alas was invited as one of the speakers. He presented a very passionate address in favour of land reforms, to the consternation of the government. Upon leaving the assembly, he was abducted by some armed men in plain clothes, and carted to an unknown destination.

Upon getting news of the abduction, archbishop Rivera Damas drove to the office of the President of the National Assembly to lay the complaint. From there he drove to the Minister of Defence, Fidel Torres, where he was later joined by Bishop Ricardo Urioste. Both prelates refused to leave until Alas is produced. The Minister made several calls and told them finally that they did not have Alas in their keeping. But the prelates refused leaving until they have proof that Alas was alive. The Minister made some more calls at the end of which he assured them that Alas was alive and would be released soon. That is when the archbishop and bishop retired to their residences. Alas was beaten, drugged and abandoned at a cliff. Meanwhile, the catholic radio station kept announcing the abduction of Father Alas and calling for prayers from priest and faithful (Montgomery 1983:64).

The government's decision in 1972 to build a damn that would flood the farms of the peasants and the massive fraud of the 1974 elections convinced the peasants of the need of a united front to fight for their rights. This led to the creation of the United Popular Action Front in April 1974 under the auspices of Father Alas during a meeting in the Basilica of San Salvador. Alas and his brother were eventually forced into exile in 1977.

The El Salvadoran Roman Catholic Church, especially its progressive wing, like Bonhoeffer's Confessing Church, like the black churches in South Africa, and as will be demonstrated later, like the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, were up against governments believed the use of force to be the norm. Thus, their actions in favour of the dispossessed, even as minimal as stepping in to bind the wounds of the victims, is perceived as church meddling into politics and attracts government reprisals.

Group 3.

This group "...emphasizes the liberation theology perception of incorporating Marxist categories and methodology". This group was in collaboration with the Democratic Revolutionary Front (FDR) and the Farabundi Marti Front for National Liberation (FMLN). They supported liberation theology and worked with the revolutionary armed groups. Father Rutilio Grande was of this group. Father Grande taught the peasants that they

should not accept "their lot on earth because their reward will come in the hereafter," rather, they must begin to relate the gospel message to their own "situation of misery and injustice" (Bakhtiari 1986:30).

By the late 1970's, out of El Salvador's 5 million population, 65% were peasants who either worked on the plantations or on their farms of not more than 2.5 acres while 3/5 of the usable land was owned by 2% of the population (Lernoux 1977:101). Father Grande and father Caranza worked tirelessly amongst these people to better their lot.

Father Grande, like Bonhoeffer, turned towards armed resistance and was one of the priests who worked closely with the armed resistance groups. He took the Bonhoeffer step of "putting a spoke in the wheel" of the government machinery to stop it from crushing the people. Pro-government forces assassinated him. His funeral witnessed the gathering of 100,000 people, the largest in the country's history until then (Lernoux 1977:101). The death of Father Grande marked the turning point for Archbishop Oscar Romero.

How far will the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon be willing to go in its quest for a peaceful resolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon? Will the circumstances and contexts be similar to warrant this radical drive?

A Bonhoeffer archetype – Archbishop Oscar Romero

Archbishop Oscar Romero stands out as an archetypical figure of Bonhoeffer in his journey from pacifism to radicalism and self-sacrifice for a course he was convinced of, with full knowledge of the consequences of his decision – possible death.

Romero was born in eastern El Salvador in 1917. He joined the priesthood at 13, and at 20 he was in Rome to study theology. He got ordained as a priest in 1942. He returned to El Salvador in 1943 and till 1967, served as pastor in the San Miguel diocese, a period during which he gained "great renown among the people as a preacher, newspaper writer and organizer of diverse activities in the diocese. However, at the same time, he irritated some of the clergy and other persons with his demanding and, at times, harsh personality." (Brockman in Romero 1993:7)

In 1967, Romero was appointed Secretary of the Bishops' Conference of El Salvador with residence in San Salvador, the capital city. He was ordained bishop in 1970 and served as the auxiliary bishop of the San Salvador diocese. 1974 saw Romero being named the bishop of Santiago de Maria, a rural diocese that hosted his village of birth. He immediately invested himself in his pastoral ministry and ensured he visited even remote parishes that could be reached only by horse. When government forces killed five peasants in his diocese in 1975, he spent time with the families in their grief and personally celebrating mass for the dead. He protested the killings to the President in writing. His ministry in this diocese brought to him the reality of the sufferings of the peasants (Brockman in Romero 1993:8).

When the position of archbishop for El Salvador became vacant, the ruling class preferred Romero to be appointed. The appointment of Oscar Romero was upon the request of the apostolic nuncio, who after consultations with his friends in the government, preferred Romero who would not rock the boat; one who would not be a bulwark to the government, over and against Bishop Rivera who was seen as more radical and preferred by the people. Thus, until his appointment, Romero was seen and known by both the government and the people as a pacifist, reason why the government preferred him while the people preferred Chavez.

However, Romero proved them wrong. A day to his installation as archbishop, Father Rafael Barahona, one of his priests was arrested. The day after his installation, he went to the presidential palace to request for the release of the priest. The President queried him for the unruly attitude of his priests and asked him to reign them in, to which Romero responded "With all due respect Mr. President, we take our orders from someone higher" (Montgomery 1983:76)

The murder of Father Rutilio Grande three weeks later, a respected priest who was known for his critique of the government, an organiser of Christian Base Communities for the empowerment of the peasants and a friend of Romero who had organised his ordination ceremony as bishop in 1970, was the motivation for Romero to cross the Rubicon (Brockman 1993:10)

O'Sullivan (2015:2,3) gives the following account of what transpired during the night of Father Rutilio Grande's assassination:

Eva Menjívar, a missionary sister who knew Romero and worked with Grande, was tending Rutilio's corpse the night he was killed. She was "using a towel to absorb the blood that was trickling out, when Romero arrived. She said Romero approached the corpse and, after standing in silence for several moments, said, 'If we don't change now, we never will.'" It now fell to the new Archbishop to lead the prayers for his friend and for his friend's travelling companions who, being poor in economic terms, were among the vast majority of the people in the country. As well as praying for long periods that night beside the body of his friend and in the company of the poor peasants Romero stayed on for long hours listening to and talking with them and seeing the pain in their eyes. The whole experience led to what he called "a divine inspiration": he had to stand up for these people, speak out on their behalf, and face down the violent repression against them. He felt his timidity fall away and in its place came great confidence, courage, and conviction. He had always felt a special closeness to the poor, but now after Grande's death he felt it even more.

This was the turning point for Romero. The sight of his murdered friend, the grieves and aches of the peasants, and the coldness of the government, was just enough to shove him out of pacifism, or perhaps passive activism, to radical activism. Before now, he loved and worked for the poor, but from hence he decided to fight for the poor.

His first moves after this were to close all Roman Catholic schools for three days of mourning, cancel all mass for the following Sunday and ordered for a single mass. He faced opposition from the apostolic nuncio and some bishops. However, 100,000 people attended mass that day celebrated by over 150 priests. He declared he will not attend any public functions till the assassins of Father Grande are arrested and brought to book.

He will maintain this steam for the next three years as archbishop. During this period he enjoyed the massive support of the people, but his greatest source of opposition were the rich and ruling class and his colleague bishops. Out of the five Bishops of El Salvador, only one supported him. Even his own auxiliary bishop was against him (Brockman in Romero 1993:11).

Romero once said, “A Church which does not suffer persecution, but in fact enjoys the privileges and the support of the world, is a Church which should be afraid, because it is not the true Church of Jesus Christ.” On the 24th of July 1979 he is quoted to have said: “It would be sad that in a country in which there are so many horrible assassinations there were no priests counted among the victims”(O’Sullivan 2015:4)

Three weeks before his assassination, he said: “If they kill me, I will rise again in the Salvadoran people. My voice will disappear but my word, which is Christ’s, will remain. I say this without pride, with great humility.... I hope they will realize they are wasting their time. One bishop may die, but God’s Church, which is the people, will never die.... May my death be for the liberation of my people” (O’Sullivan 2015:4)

He also said: “They can kill me, but not the voice of justice”. “If they kill me,” he added on another occasion, “I will be resurrected in the struggle of the Salvadoran people” (Montgomery 1983:77)

On Sunday March 23rd 1980, a day before he was assassinated, Archbishop Oscar Romero preached his most radical sermon in the Roman Catholic Church in San Salvador in which he talked about the liberation of the El Salvadoran people. Addressing the military, he said:

My brothers, they are part of your very own people. You are killing your own fellow peasants. God’s law, Thou shalt not kill!” takes precedence over a human being’s order to kill. No soldier is obliged to obey an order that is against God’s law. No one has to obey an immoral law (Berryman, 1987:2)

The next day, Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated by a hired killer while serving mass at a hospital chapel. The Roman Catholic Church’s position, after the death of Romero, with the ascendance of Rivera as Apostolic Administrator, was not the same. Firstly, their passion for the flock and commitment to the poor was different. Secondly, while Romero enjoyed the full privileges of an archbishop, Rivera was an Apostolic Administrator with limited powers, thirdly, the Vatican was looking forward to improved church-state relationship in El Salvador, and lastly, persecution, though intermittent under Rivera, had abated as compared to Romero’s era. Thus, the Church lapsed into a new

phase. However, from time to time, when necessary, Rivera condemned government action

2.5. The Bonhoeffer paradigm as preferred model for Cameroon

The Bonhoeffer paradigm, as has been demonstrated, inspired the South African and El Salvadoran models. This gives credence to its applicability in the Cameroonian context for the analysis of the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

The Bonhoeffer paradigm and the South African and El Salvadoran models were all developed in situations of national crisis where the church was forced to take a stance. This is akin to the situation in Cameroon where the PCC had to take a stance in a national crisis. This research work, in analysing the role the PCC played in Cameroon, draws parallels with the German, South African and El Salvadoran experiences.

In all three situations (German, South African and El Salvadoran) it was the government against a defenceless part of the population; in all three scenarios the church(es) were divided; in the three cases Bonhoeffer and his archetypes (Naude and Romero) made a mental journey from pacifism to radical activism, from nonchalance to engagement. This research work draws experience from the role the Bonhoeffer archetypes in South Africa and El Salvador played in the crisis in their countries to identify and analyse a Bonhoeffer archetype in the PCC and the role that he/she played in the resolution of the crisis.

However, there were contextual specificities for each situation, peculiar to it even if in some ways similar to another. In Germany, Hitler had taken control, pushing the agenda of the Nazis, shutting down all opposition and cracking down on the Jews through the Aryan Clause. In South Africa, the apartheid government was busy implementing policies of separate development, while in El Salvador the dictatorial regime was bent on maintaining the hegemony of the rich over the poor. Though similar, these contexts had their peculiarities. While in South Africa and El Salvador it was a nation divided amongst itself with part of it arrogating to itself privileges to which the others could not access (In South Africa it was the minority whites against the majority blacks and in El Salvador it

was the minority rich against the majority poor). In Germany, it was the government mostly against foreigners (the Jews) and a minority of the population (the handicapped) in an attempt to “purify” the German race. In Cameroon, just as in South Africa and El Salvador, it was a dictatorial government against the population represented by the opposition political parties.

In responding to this political crises deep cracks emerged on the walls of the churches in all three scenarios: in Germany the church was split between the German Christians and the Confessing Church with the former supporting Hitler and the latter opposing him. In South Africa, it started with a split within the DRC which birthed the DRMC with the former backing apartheid and the latter, by the mid 20th Century, against it. African Independent Churches emerged with an outright stance against apartheid; in El Salvador, the Roman Catholic Church saw a split amongst its clergy with a majority pro government and maintaining the pre-conciliar stance of the Church, and a minority who had caught the fever of Liberation Theology and galvanised by the pronouncements of Vatican II standing on the side of the poor masses against the government. In the German, as in the El Salvadoran situation, the majority of priests or pastors were pro-government while in the South African situation the majority were against the government. While in Germany and El Salvador the role churches played as a body is minimal (in Germany the Confessing Church was not willing to go the full length in opposing Hitler and in El Salvador four out of the five bishops were pro-government), in South Africa church organisations were more engaged in public witness in opposing government policies (SACC and SABC). Though the South African and El Salvadoran struggles were inspired by Bonhoeffer, the role played by the church(es) and the allegiance of the clergy was context specific. Therefore, the role the PCC played in the resolution of the crisis in Cameroon and the allegiance of the clergy had to be specific to the Cameroonian context. In the case of the PCC, there were no cracks on the walls of the church as an organisation nor were there dissenting voices from the clergy. It would be expected that this unison would give impetus to the role the PCC played in resolving the crisis.

Bonhoeffer and his archetypes in South Africa (Naude) and in El Salvador (Romero) all made mental journeys from pacifism to radical activism. Bonhoeffer and Romero had to pay the ultimate price with their lives for daring to stand against the government while, although Naude suffered persecution, he died of natural circumstances many years later. The killing of Bonhoeffer and the assassination of Romero were possible surely because they almost single-handedly championed a cause, thus it was about them and not the churches as organisations. This might have led the political leaders to believe that taking them out would serve as a word of caution to the others. While in the case of Naude, he's was just one voice amongst many. However, he stood out for breaking the traditional belief of the DRC and daring to challenge it. It was clear in his case that killing him would not stop the movement especially as churches and church organisations were also involved.

Overall, the Bonhoeffer paradigm stands out as the preferred model for application in the Cameroonian context because, it predates the South African and El Salvadoran models and actually served as an inspiration to them. It remains relevant even for Cameroon

The German scenario where the drive was championed by the Confessing Church, just like the El Salvadoran situation where the Roman Catholic Church spearheaded it, resonates with the context of this research where the role of a single church is critically analysed. This is in dissonance with the South African Situation where Church councils championed the drive.

Bonhoeffer's appeal to the Cameroonian context lies in the extremism of his third step and his personal engagement to see it through. It gives this research work the opportunity to question the extent to which a church should go in its public role vis-à-vis its biblical mandate.

The Bonhoeffer paradigm, when critically analysed and applied to the Cameroonian context, with its merits and demerits will culminate in the proposal of a contextualised model for Cameroon.

Conclusion

This chapter focused on Bonhoeffer's life and how it impacted his paradigm, it elaborated the Bonhoeffer paradigm for the public role of the church and his thoughts about the public role of the Church. It has also demonstrated how the models for South Africa and El Salvador fit in the Bonhoeffer paradigm and how they were influenced by it and in each of the two cases, it showed the divisions within the church and the church's response to the political issues, it presented the model applied in each case and identified a Bonhoeffer figure. This Chapter equally justified the preferred use of the Bonhoeffer model to analyse the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon

The next chapter delves into the political context of Cameroon and presents the causes and evolution of the political crisis to which the PCC had to react.

CHAPTER 3

The causes and evolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon

Introduction

Since events cannot be dissociated from their historical contexts, for a better understanding of the remote and immediate causes and the evolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, it is necessary to begin this chapter with a general survey of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history of Cameroon before delving into the causes and evolution of the crisis.

The International Crisis Group's Report no 160 (2010:1), referring to Cameroon states: "The roots of current problems lie in history.... The Form of modern Cameroon, and many of its current problems, originate in the colonial period". Cameroon's problem, and particularly the 1990-1992 political crisis, is partly a product of its fragmented history that saw it experience three different colonial masters, an arbitrary partition of its territory for colonial administrative convenience, an entrenchment of two different cultures (Anglophone and Francophone) and an eventual reunification after close to 45 years of separation. It is this historical patchwork that forms what is now called the Republic of Cameroon. This chapter provides a summary of this history and from it traces the possible causes of the 1990-1992 political crisis. This Chapter also elaborates the evolution of the crisis.

3.1. Brief historical background of Cameroon

A. Geographical location

Geographically, Cameroon is located in Central Africa between Equatorial Africa and the Guinea lands of West Africa, between the East African Plateau and the Atlantic Coast at the Bight of Biafra. It is bordered by Nigeria to the West, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Republic of Congo to the south, Central Africa to the east and Chad to the northeast. It stretches from the Atlantic coast northwards to the Lake Chad Basin and southwards

to the tributaries of the River Congo and lies between the Congo River basin and the Niger River basin (Fanso 1989:7).

Its location accords it a unique climate and vegetation that is representative of the whole of Africa thus warranting its appellation “Africa in miniature” (Fanso 1989:7). It exhibits all major climates and vegetation of the continent: coast, desert, mountains, rainforest, and savannah. Perhaps this uniqueness in climate and vegetation is a contributory factor to the zeal to possess the land which snowballed into the country being bequeathed with three colonial heritages that sowed seeds for the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. It covers a surface area of 475,442 square kilometres (183,569 sq. mi) and has an estimated population of about 26,000,000 (twenty-six million) people

<https://www.worldometers.info/demographics/cameroon-demographics/#sources>).

Politically, Cameroon is divided into 10 (ten) administrative Regions headed by Governors and 58 (fifty-eight) Divisions headed by Senior Divisional Officers

B. Pre-colonial history of Cameroon

The notion of an entity called Kamerun (later called Cameroon or Cameroun) came into existence only in 1884 after Germany signed treaties of annexation with the Douala chiefs on 12th of July (Ngoh 1996:61).

Before then, the region was inhabited by independent nations (Kingdoms) intermittently engaged in boundary feuds and fraternal relations as each sought to protect its territorial boundaries.

The first mention of Cameroon in European records appeared in the 5th Century after Hanno, the Carthaginian, voyaged to the West Coast of Africa. During this voyage, from a distance, he saw a mountain on fire (surely the mountain was erupting), and he named it the “Chariot of the Gods” (Fanso Vol.1, 1989: 90). This is what later became known as the Cameroon Mountain.

It was, however, only in 1472 that the first Europeans landed on the coast of Cameroon to establish a sustained contact between Cameroon and Europe. These were the Portuguese.

The person who led the first Portuguese voyage to the Dualas at the coast of Cameroon was Fernando Po, after whom the island off the coast of Cameroon was named. It was from there that they made their first visit to Cameroon through the estuary of the River Wouri. The discovery of lots of prawns at the estuary led them to name the river “Rio dos Cameroes” meaning “River of Prawns” (Ngoh 1996:45). The Spanish who later occupied Fernando Po from 1494 and continued regular trade visits to the coast of Cameroon rendered the Portuguese “Cameroes” as “Camerones”. The Germans would later call it Kamerun, the English, Cameroon, and the French, Cameroun.

It should be noted that the Portuguese appellation “Cameroes” applied only to the coastal Duala people. The other kingdoms in the hinterland still remained independent and “undiscovered”. However, the territory referred to as Cameroes (with its attending variations) gradually increased in size as more nations were brought-in either forcefully through warfare or peacefully through treaties triggered by the quest for raw materials through successive European powers (the Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish, British, German and French) and the zeal to spread the Word of God. The advent of the missionaries, their role in planting the gospel and its consequent impact it would have on the role the PCC played in resolving the crisis will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The coastal Duala chiefs, to avert the situation of an unfriendly nation annexing Cameroon, wrote letters to Her Majesty’s government in Britain requesting annexation by the British. These letters were precipitated by the realization that the various traders were putting pressure on their governments to annex the area and tilt the monopoly of trade in their favour. In August 1879 King Akwa, one of the Duala kings, wrote to Queen Victoria of England formerly requesting annexation of his territory. In March 1881 King Bell, another Duala King, wrote through the British Consul Edward Hyde Hewett to Queen Victoria. In November 1881 both Kings Bell and Akwa wrote a joint letter to the British Prime Minister William Gladstone (Abraham & Paul 2014:64-65).

Meanwhile, Otto Von Bismarck, the German Chancellor, who hitherto had scant interest in colonising African territories, was coming under serious pressure from German merchants in the coastal regions of Cameroon. Adolf Woermann of the Woermann firm

was used by the German traders to channel their plea for German annexation stating the threat they faced from the British traders and especially the French who were signing exclusive trade agreements with natives along the Niger and the Benue rivers (Ngoh 1996:59). Also, the increasing German population dependent on the few available natural resources convinced Bismarck of the need to colonise other lands for natural resources to fuel the German industries.

In February 1884, Bismarck dispatched Dr. Gustav Nachtigal on a secret mission to Cameroon with firm instructions to annex the territory for Germany and acquire enough lands for eventual plantations. While Nachtigal was on his way, Edward Schmidt, a representative of the Woermann firm in Duala received a confidential letter from Adolf Woermann in Hamburg in which he was instructed to work secretly with Johannes Voss, the agent of Jantzen and Thormaehlen firm in Duala, to negotiate treaty terms with the Douala chiefs convincing them of what they stood to gain from German annexation, pending the arrival of Nachtigal.

When Nachtigal arrived in Duala he met a very receptive crowd thanks to the nightly meetings Schmidt and the other German traders had been having with the Kings and Chiefs and gifts they had been promised. Thus, on 12th of July 1884, Nachtigal annexed Cameroon for Germany (DeLancy 1989:8). The German flag was officially hoisted on the Cameroon soil on July 14th 1884.

Britain did not forgive Germany for these early political gimmicks. This explains why, accompanied by France, an ally in the war, she attacked Germany in Cameroon at the outbreak of the First World War. This will lead to the bicultural and bilingual nature of the nation that would be a fertile ground for the 1990-1992 political crisis.

The eventual crafting of the nation-state, a product of the German colonising venture, would entail a continuous effort to bring together different ethnic groups (nations) and peoples, and sometimes, or perhaps often times, tribal/regional sentiments would override allegiance to the nation-state. This fragmentation will be the bane to attempts to craft a nation out of this patchwork.

These nations, before colonisation, had existed as independent entities with well-structured systems of government, laws and traditions and customs. From time to time, they migrated to other places in search of security, water source, fertile lands etc. until they arrived at their permanent settlements, which they most often acquired through war. Therefore, what would later on be crafted together as a nation-state would be an agglomeration of several independent nations. This would come to play in the evolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon as tribal allegiance would override national sentiments. As will be argued in Chapter Three, the reactions in Ebolowa after the 1992 Presidential elections were an outpour of tribal sentiments which have their roots from this pre-colonial period.

C. Kamerun under German colonial administration

When information of the German annexation of Cameroon was made public, there was confrontation between the pro-German and pro-British natives in Duala. King Bell was violently attacked by some of his subjects and he had to flee from his palace for a while seeking German protection. Led by Prince Lock Priso, the people of Hickory Town (Bonaberi) rejected the German authority by signing a treaty of annexation with Hewett and hoisting a British flag. This led to the December 1884 war in Duala. The inhabitants of Joss Town carried out anti-German demonstrations (Abraham & Paul 2014:76).

The French were surprised by the German annexation, but not hostile to it. In fact, they preferred a German to a British annexation because of the previous squabbles between the French and British traders. The French willingly surrendered Malimba, Campo and Big Batanga to the Germans (Fanso 1989:18)

As early as 1885 the German colonial government started violating the provision inserted in the annexation treaty by the Dualas barring the Germans from expanding into the hinterlands. This was to safeguard the middle man trade of the coastal traders.

The later emergence of the political entity called Kamerun (Cameroon or Cameroun) would be thanks to this German expansion which, to a large extent, has defined the boundaries till date.

Worthy of note is the fact that the annexed territory was not delivered to the Germans on a platter of gold. While some were annexed through peaceful treaties (like parts of Duala, Batanga,

Bali, Yaounde etc.), others were subdued through the power of the gun (like the Bamileke chiefdoms, the Fulbe, Nso, Bakweri etc.).

The colonized territory (Kamerun) was under the administrative auspices of a Governor whose power was delegated by the Kaiser and the Chancellor with the mandate to rule by decrees. This obtained till the outbreak of the First World War. During the 32 years of German colonial rule in Kamerun (1884 – 1916) the territory was governed by six Governors.

As will be demonstrated in the next chapter, the draconian administrative measures of some German governors during this period and the attending reaction of the missionaries laid a foundation for church-state relation in Cameroon.

D. The First World War, the change of Colonial Masters and Independence

What started as a purely European conflict would later on be transported to the African scene. Britain and France, amongst others, for strategic reasons of weakening the German fighting power by engaging it in a war on several fronts, with an eye to occupying the colonial territory to be eventually used for bargain in case Germany makes some European victories, coupled with the British memory of being edged-out in the colonization drive, decided to attack Germany in Cameroon.

On 5th August 1914, the British colonial government in Nigeria received instructions from London to expel all German and Austrian citizens from Nigeria. On 29th August 1914, the British Army in Nigeria attacked the German colonial government in Cameroon in Garoua. This was the start of WWI in Cameroon.

The British were eventually joined by the French with assistance from the Belgians to launch a “three-pronged attack” from the coast of Douala, the north and the south east. The Germans eventually capitulated on 17th February 1916 and the German soldiers at their stronghold in Mora surrendered on 20th February 1916 (Fanso 1989:53).

Thereafter, England and France reached an accord on 4th March which was effected on 6th March on how to arbitrarily partition Cameroon. According to this agreement, Britain received two disconnected territories on the eastern borders of Cameroon which constituted one fifth of the total territory. France received four fifth of the territory. This local bilateral arrangement was confirmed by the Council of the League of Nations on July 20th 1922 and the partitioned territories given the status of Mandates. Mukete (2013:29) states that as a result of this partition the “inconvenience suffered by the people was beyond description. Some villages were simply split into two; family members had to be subject to the nuisance of performing border formalities whenever they wanted to meet their relatives across the border”.

The consequence of this arbitrary partition of Cameroon is the separate evolution of one fifth of the nation as Anglophones and four fifth as Francophones under two different political, linguistic and legal cultures. Had there been no First World War and the consequent attack of Germany in Cameroon by France and Britain which led to the partition of the territory, Cameroon would have evolved under a single colonial master.

The partition of Cameroon set the stage for what would later on be known as the “Anglophone problem” which was one of the causes of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

3.1.5. French Administration of Cameroon: 1916 - 1961

The administrative capital of French Cameroon was Yaounde. French Cameroon was governed by a High Commissioner. In administrative hierarchy, the Secretary General of the Administrative Council was the direct assistant of the High Commissioner. Under him were the heads of various administrative services. For administrative purposes, French Cameroon was divided into districts which rose from 13 in 1923 to 17 in 1935 (Fanso

1989:63). Each district was constituted of sub – districts. To curb the authority of some very powerful traditional rulers, the French administration set up the Council of Indigenous Notables in the various administrative districts.

French Cameroon, which had been classified under category “B” mandate,¹⁰ saw the experimentation of various administrative policies by the French colonial government before the end of WWII. The policies were assimilation, paternalism, association and differentiation. Of these four policies, assimilation and paternalism have had a greater bearing on the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

The most practiced policy was that of assimilation. This policy considered Cameroonians as French citizens and they were made to see France as “their mother-country” (Ngho, 2019:94). By this, Cameroonians worked for French interest and “the economic production of French Cameroon was designed to satisfy the needs of France” (Ngho, 2019:94). This same policy will continue after independence where Cameroon will serve as the producer of raw materials for the French and other foreign industries. The prices of the main cash crops of Cameroon (cocoa, coffee, rubber and timber) will be determined by foreign markets through their mostly French merchants. As will be argued in Chapter Three, one of the main causes of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon was the economic crisis in the late 1980’s partly orchestrated by the drastic fall in the price of raw materials.

Paternalism is another policy which was practiced by the French colonial government which has lingered-on after independence. The policy of paternalism viewed the relationship between the colonial master and the colonised as a father-son relationship where the father knows what needs to be done and decides for the son without consulting him. This policy will inform the French colonial government’s decision to depose chiefs who stood for the rights of the indigenes and replace them with those loyal to the colonial government (Ngho, 2019:97). This high-handedness will be passed on to the political

¹⁰ Category “B” mandate was a mandated territory that was considered not developed enough to be placed on the road of selfhood and eventual autonomy and independence.

machinery of the independent Cameroon where the government knows and should decide on what is good for the people. This high-handedness will escalate the 1990-1992 political crisis as government will repeatedly shun dialogue and resort to the use of force.

The end of WWII in 1945 ushered-in the period that has been referred to as the period of decolonization. The French stance on reluctantly preparing the colonial territory for eventual independence was influenced by the provisions of the 1946 French constitution and the requirements of the United Nations trusteeship system. This was the era that saw the emergence of political parties and trade unions that articulated the need of independence of the Cameroon territory.

At the forefront of political activism was the *Union des Populations du Cameroun* (UPC) party which stood for immediate independence in opposition to the French colonial government's stance on a gradual drive to independence. The UPC's failure to win any seats in the 1952 elections was attributed to the political machinations of the colonial administrators. They felt cheated of their victory. This led to a series of revolts and confrontations with the colonial administration that led to deaths on both sides and many people wounded (Fanso 1989:116).

On July 13th 1955, the French colonial government banned the activities of the UPC party. Its leadership went underground, moved over to British Cameroon and formed an armed resistance movement. From there, they masterminded revolts and guerrilla attacks in various towns and villages.

The political evolution of the territory eventually saw Andre Marie Mbida appointed Prime Minister. He then appointed Ahmadou Ahidjo as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior. Ahidjo's political agenda of immediate independence and reunification with British Cameroon won popular support of more Cameroonians and other political parties as opposed to Mbida's position on gradual move to independence. Consequently, on February 19th 1958, Ahidjo was named Prime Minister (Ngoh, 2019:138; Ngoh 1996:163; Nwankwo 1988:109 gives 18th February as the date of appointment). The independence of French Cameroon was proclaimed on the 1st of January 1961 with the name "The

Republic of Cameroun” with a green, red, yellow flag and with Ahidjo as its first President (Nghoh 1996:167).

The name French Cameroon took at independence – The Republic of Cameroon – as will be argued in Chapter Three, will become a bone of contention in 1984. In a Presidential Decree, President Biya will change the name from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon, thereby undermining the reunification accord of 1961 and the referendum of 1972. According to Nghoh (2019:298):

By adopting the name ‘Republic of Cameroon’ it gave the impression, rightly or wrongly, that the 19960 Republic of Cameroon absorbed or better still assimilated ... the former British Southern Cameroons. The new name, ‘the Republic of Cameroon’ disturbed many English-speaking Cameroonians because British Southern Cameroon reunited with the Republic of Cameroon as equal partners

These sentiments of assimilation of the Anglophones by the Francophones will leave the former with the feeling that it is only through a re-introduction of Democracy their voices can be heard. Thus, as evidenced in Chapter Three, the Anglophones will champion the cause for the reintroduction of multipartyism in Cameroon in 1990.

3.1.6. British Administration of Cameroon: 1916 – 1961

After the Anglo-French partition of Cameroon in 1916, the British received two separate portions that became known as British Southern Cameroons and British Northern Cameroons. For purposes of administrative convenience, these portions were administered as part of Nigeria.

Suffice it here to delve only into the history of British Southern Cameroon, especially as this would be the section that, in 1961, would opt to join their brothers in French Cameroon while British Northern Cameroon would vote to join Nigeria.

Between 1916 and 1922, the administrative strategy of the British Colonial government was not very clear. Most often, they used the laws and administrative structures that were prevalent. It was only in April 1922 that the British Colonial government in Nigeria informed the Resident in Buea “that the Secretary of State for the Colonies had approved

Indirect rule”¹¹ (Fanso 1989:82) as the administrative system for the colonies. The Governor General residing in Lagos was administratively in charge of the Protectorate of Nigeria and the mandated territory of Cameroon.

Two Lieutenant – Governors served under the Governor – General: one in charge of Southern Nigeria and the other in charge of Northern Nigeria. Southern Cameroon was administered as part of Southern Nigeria. The Residents controlled the provinces and were answerable to the Lieutenant – Governor. Southern Cameroon, haven been granted the status of a Province, had a Resident. The Resident in Southern Cameroon answered directly to the Lieutenant Governor in charge of Southern Nigeria

The provinces were further subdivided into administrative districts headed by Divisional Officers (DOs). The Cameroon Province was carved out into 4 districts viz: Victoria, Kumba, Mamfe and Bamenda.

During and after WWII, Southern Cameroon continued to be administered as part of Nigeria. Thanks to the Lancaster conference of 1953, Southern Cameroon was granted quasi - federal status in January 1954 with Dr. E.M.L Endeley as Leader of Government Business.

With the independence dates already fixed for Nigeria for 1st October 1960 and French Cameroon for 1st January 1960, the 1959 elections in Southern Cameroons had to be very decisive of the future of the territory. Dr. E.M.L. Endeley’s Kamerun National Congress (KNC) was becoming less warm about the idea of reunification with French Cameroon, while J.N. Foncha’s Kamerun National Democratic Party (KNDP) had fully embraced the idea. Foncha’s victory over Endeley was already indicative of the direction Southern Cameroon would take. Foncha immediately replaced Endeley as Prime Minister of Southern Cameroon.

¹¹ Indirect rule is the system of administration in which the colonial government administered a colonized territory through local authorities making use of the traditional institutions. In the case of Southern Cameroon, the British colonial government used the Divisional Officers, the traditional authorities and the native courts for administration.

On 11th February 1961, the United Nations organized a plebiscite in Southern Cameroon for the people to decide their future. The questions posed were:

- a. Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Federation of Nigeria?
- b. Do you wish to achieve independence by joining the independent Republic of Cameroon? (Ngho, 2019; 205; Fanso 1989:153).

To the chagrin of some who had espoused ideas of an independent Southern Cameroon, the United Nations did not allow for a third option for two main reasons: firstly as a result of division amongst the politicians of Southern Cameroon who could not agree on the single most popular option, and secondly, "... the United Nations refused, with the complicity of the British, to put the option of an independent Southern Cameroons state to the voters ... on the grounds that the creation of another tiny state was politically undesirable and economically unviable" (Konings 2005:3,4). The refusal of the third option, with the connivance of Foncha, sealed the fate of British Southern Cameroons (Mbile, 1999:149). Had the third option been allowed, there is high probability that the people would have overwhelmingly voted to stand on their own and the Anglophone crisis which drags on till date and which was one of the causes of the 1990-1992 political crisis, would have been avoided. Mbile (1999:149) laments: "It shows how close we were to a third alternative, and yet it was lost. It seems to me that the hand of destiny was resolved to guide us to where we are today"

Given the two choices that were allowed, Foncha's party used the high-handedness of the Igbo's, (a tribe in Nigeria which was very influential in Cameroon) to sway sympathy towards reunification.

The results showed that the people voted overwhelmingly to gain independence by joining the Republic of Cameroon. J.N. Foncha thus carried the day and soon afterwards engaged in the process of negotiating the terms of the reunification.

After a series of meetings between Ahmadou Ahidjo, President of the Republic of Cameroon (what was formerly French Cameroon), and John Ngu Foncha, Prime Minister

of Southern Cameroons, delegates of the two entities met in Foumban from 17th – 21st July 1961 to work out final agreements on the nature of the reunification. It was agreed that the two entities would come together in a federated union with a federal government and two regional governments. Former French Cameroon would become East Cameroon and former Southern Cameroon would become West Cameroon. Ahidjo was the Federal President and Foncha was cumulatively the Prime Minister of West Cameroon and the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon (Fanso 1989:157; Rubin 1971:110).

The reunification brought together peoples who had evolved under two different colonial cultures from 1916 to 1961 with entrenched administrative systems that would influence governance and social cohesion for decades to come.

The foregoing history serves to explicate the complexities of the colonial patchwork now grafted into a nation – a history which in itself would birth contestations and dissensions.

3.1.7. Cameroon under Ahmadou Ahidjo (1961 – 1982)

Cameroon has experienced two waves of multipartyism: the first was from independence to 1966 under Ahmadou Ahidjo, and the second (the focus of this study) from 1990 under Paul Biya. The drive towards multipartyism in 1990 which was the onset of the political crisis was a direct reaction to its previous suppression in 1966.

The political discussions in the Federal Republic of Cameroon from 1961 to 1966 were dominated by Ahidjo's request for the creation of a unified national political party. After years of politicking, the political parties in East and West Cameroon held extraordinary conventions and dissolved their parties, and on 1st September 1966 the Cameroon National Union (CNU) was formed as a single national party. The CNU party (rebaptised in 1985 as the Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement [CPDM]) existed from 1966 as the lone political party till 1990 when multipartyism was forcefully rebirthed.

From 1961 to 1972 Cameroon operated under a Federal system with a Federal constitution. In the course of these years, the Federal president, Ahmadou Ahidjo, raised arguments on the expensive nature of the Federal system and opted for a unitary system. He argued that the expenses for three governments (the Federal Government, the West

Cameroon State Government, and the East Cameroon State Government), four assemblies (the Federal Assembly, the East Cameroon State Assembly, the West Cameroon State Assembly and the West Cameroon House of Chiefs), added to the inability of West Cameroon to balance its budget had greatly inhibited the economic growth of the nation.

In a referendum organized on 20th May 1972, 99.9 percent of the voters overwhelmingly voted in favour of a unitary state (Nghoh 2019:266). President Ahmadou Ahidjo then scrapped the Federal Constitution and replaced it with a Unitary Constitution and decreed May 20th to be celebrated nationwide as the National Day.

The 1972 Unitary constitution changed the name from the Federal Republic of Cameroon to the United Republic of Cameroon. It created seven provinces to be headed by Governors appointed by the President of the Republic. The number of provinces was increased to 10 on 22nd August 1983.

The 1972 constitution also abolished the office of Vice President and designated the Speaker of the House of Assembly as the constitutional successor of the President. Solomon Tandeng Muna (an Anglophone) who was the Vice President became Speaker of the House of Assembly.

A further constitutional amendment in 1975 re-created the office of Vice President and Paul Biya who hitherto served as Secretary General at the Presidency was appointed Vice President. Another amendment in 1979 designated the Vice President, not the speaker of the House of Assembly as the constitutional successor of the President of the Republic.

The change of name of the country from the Federal Republic of Cameroon to the United Republic of Cameroon with the attending implication of centralization of powers on the President, added to the unexplained change from an Anglophone being the second personality of the state to a Francophone, would later on fuel the Anglophone feeling of marginalisation, thus another impetus to the Anglophone problem.

From reunification in 1961, the understanding was that the two sections will come into the union as equal partners on the basis of federalism and power sharing. It was thus expected that if the head of state is a Francophone, the vice should be an Anglophone. These changes were viewed as calculated attempts to side-line the Anglophones and orchestrated continues expression of discontent by them. The opportunity for the rebirth of multipartyism in 1990 may thus have been seen by Anglophones as an opportunity to take by election that which they could not have through appointments.

3.1.8. Cameroon under Paul Biya (1982 – 1990)

On 4th November 1982, President Ahidjo took the nation by surprise by announcing his resignation from the office of President of the United Republic of Cameroon. He designated his constitutional successor, Paul Biya, to replace him. On 6th November, at 10 am, Paul Biya was sworn-in, by the Speaker of the Assembly, as President of the United Republic of Cameroon.

In his swearing-in address he promised to continue with the policies of the Ahidjo regime but injecting in principles of rigour and moralization which he later espoused in his book *Communal Liberalism* which was published in 1987. He titled his government “New Deal” (DeLancy 1989:73).

Retired president Ahidjo initially gave his full support to the Biya regime evidenced by his tour of six provinces after his resignation to weep-up support for his successor and his willingness to dismiss some of his close aids like Moussa Yaya who opposed Biya’s ascendance to the presidency (Ngoh 2019:293). But this was short lived as friction soon developed between Ahidjo and Biya.

Ahidjo, upon retirement from the presidency maintained the Chairmanship of the CNU party while Biya was named the Vice Chairman. In 1983 Ahidjo announced that it was the duty of the party to determine the policy of the nation and the government had to implement that policy. This made the party Chairman superior to the President of the Republic. Paul Biya countered this in an interview in which he stated that the policy of the nation had to be decided by the President of the nation.

On 18th June 1983, Biya reshuffled the cabinet without consulting Ahidjo, replacing most ministers who were loyal to Ahidjo. From thence, President Biya boycotted all CNU party meetings convened by Ahidjo. The latter decided to go on self-exile to France.

On August 22 1983, Biya announced a foiled plan to destabilize the government and arrested some persons who were tried and sentenced to death but Biya later commuted their sentences to jail terms.

In 1984 Biya, through a Presidential Decree, without consulting the people of Cameroon, changed the name of the country from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon thereby bringing the nation back to the name Francophone Cameroon had before the reunification in 1961 ((Konings 2005:4; Fanzo 1999:293). This act was a negation of the Fouban accord of 1961 and tolled the bells for the burial of the Anglophone identity.

On 6th April 1984 at about 3 am, rebel forces attacked and took control of the Presidency, the army headquarters, the Yaounde airport and residences of some top military officers and government ministers. Thanks to the timely intervention of loyal forces from Yaounde, Douala, Ebolowa and Koutaba, the regime was salvaged and Biya addressed the nation on 7 April at 7pm reassuring that everything was under control (Fanzo 1989:181; Ngoh 1996:293 – 294 [though Ngoh gives 3:30 am as the time the coup was launched]).

The CNU Congress that was convened in Bamenda from 21 to 24 March 1985 saw the birth of a new political party – Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement (CPDM) with President Paul Biya as its Chairman. This signalled the death of the CNU party.

Biya's disregard and spite of Ahidjo (a northerner), the two attempted coups which were blamed on the northerners and Ahidjo accused as master minder, the consequent purging of the northerners from the military and top government positions and the supplanting of the CNU party (Ahidjo's party) with the CPDM party, will leave a bitter taste in the mouths of the northerners which will be expressed at the rebirth of multipartyism in 1990 and the elections in 1992. The North, which, hitherto, had been a stronghold of the ruling CNU party, will experience a dramatic swing as they will rally behind the UNDP party that will

be created in 1990. And throughout the political crisis of 1990-1992, the northerners will mostly play a passive role.

The foregoing history serves as bedrock for a proper understanding of the 1990-1992 political crisis. The pre-colonial history of independent nations that would later be forged into a single entity by the Germans has bred a state with sectional, regional and tribal sentiments; the German penetration into the hinterland helped define Cameroon's current boundaries; the First World War and the consequent partition of Cameroon led to the entrenchment of two foreign cultures – Anglophone and Francophone – which has given birth to the Anglophone problem; the Ahidjo and Biya administrative blunders birthed the economic crisis; and the halt on multiparty democracy by the establishment of a single party state led to the 1990 quest for democracy.

3.2 Causes of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon

The 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon is part of the history of Cameroon under Paul Biya's regime. However, the primacy of this period to this research work warrants separate and more detailed treatment. The year 1990 was the rebirth of multipartyism in Cameroon and 1992 was the hallmark of the rebirth of democracy, or in the words of Ngolle (1996:5) "the second wave of democracy" – presidential elections. These two years, and the years in between, were marked by political upheavals.

A. Remote Causes of the 1990-1992 political crisis

Since the 1990 political crisis was triggered by the rebirth of multipartyism, its remote causes would be the conditions that led to discontent with the one-party system thereby laying fertile grounds for the clamour for democracy.

i. Economic Crisis

The signs of economic crisis became visible in Cameroon in 1987 through the drastic fall in the prices of agricultural products in the world market and the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) enforced by the Bretton Woods Institutions.

The flooding of the world market with agricultural products precipitated by the newly created plantations in South America caused prices to plummet. Cameroon, with its national income heavily dependent on exports of agricultural products, was heavily affected. Plantation owners received less money for their exports which led to a slash in the pay package of some workers and the dismissal of others.

By 1988 the government had about 150 parastatals which, rather than generate income to fund government expenditure, instead expected annual subsidy from the government to function. The government was spending about 150 billion francs CFA annually as subsidy to the parastatals (Konings 1996:249). The Biya regime increased the number of civil servants on the payroll of the state from 80,000 in 1982 to about 180,000 in 1988, with most of the new employees coming from his Beti tribe (Konings 1996:251). This was a huge drain on government's resources which would have been invested otherwise. The state's oil revenue drastically dropped from US\$350 million in 1985 to US\$207 million in 1988. The free flow of cash between Cameroon and France enabled annual capital flight of about 150 billion francs CFA which was almost a quarter of the annual budget of the nation. The external debt rose from US\$2.7 billion in 1984 to US\$4.7 billion in 1989 (Konings 1996:252).

Cameroon's indebtedness with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) led to their imposition of the SAP in 1988 (Gabriel 1997:23). The SAP required the laying-off of employees of the government, the drastic reduction of salaries to reduce the burden of the monthly payroll on the government, cutting down of government expenditures and removal of public subsidies.

Biya resisted the laying off of about 40,000 Cameroonians (who were mostly from his Beti tribe), but in 1991 announced further measures to stabilize the economy: out-of-station allowances and other allowances to civil servants were cut by 50%, salaries for most government workers were reduced by 7% and free housing for civil servants (excepting top government officials like Ministers and directors) was withdrawn. Salaries of civil servants were further reduced by 30% in January 1993 and 50% by October 1993 (Konings 1996:254)

This led to misery in the affected families and a general feeling of discontent especially as President Paul Biya had earlier promised the Cameroonians that Cameroon would never be indebted to the IMF (Ngoh 1996:300).

Embezzlement of public funds was no less a cause of the economic crisis. The absence of proper state financial control mechanisms and the then growing culture of impunity gave room for state officials to divert money meant for the common good to serve individual interests (Ngoh 1996:300). Most of such money was hoarded in foreign banks for fear of their traceability and possible confiscation in local banks. Thus, liquidity flow in the country was not enough for substantial investment to provoke economic growth.

The economic malaise led to general discontent and the blame was laid on Biya's one-party system. This triggered the feelings that an open democratic system would give room for competition and the possibility of better economic policies that would avert such a calamity. So when the struggle for democracy would start, it would find fertile grounds among these discontented people.

ii. The Anglophone problem

A sore on the political skin of Cameroon is what has been referred to as the Anglophone problem (Abraham and Paul 2014:309), which more than ever before was articulated in the late 80's and early 90's. The minority Anglophone population that had been administered by Britain and that voluntarily opted in the 1961 plebiscite to join their brothers in the Republic of Cameroon as equal partners in a Federal system of government, felt marginalized.

According to the Fouban Accord in 1961 it was agreed that English and French will be the two official languages in Cameroon and of equal status. But to the chagrin of the Anglophones English had become an appendix to French as all official government decrees, texts and appointments were in French. The English version, if ever done, was full of errors. Other initial abrogation of the Fouban Accord included, among others, the persistent appointment of very few Anglophone Ministers, the appointment of Federal Inspectors who came head on with the Prime Ministers of the federated states, the

abolition of the use of the pound sterling in West Cameroon and its replacement by the franc CFA (Abraham & Paul 2014:310).

Anglophones also complained of the over-centralisation of power by the Francophone leadership, government's intentional efforts to bar them from handling key positions in the nation from reunification (like Minister of Finance, Defense, External Relations, Territorial Administration, etc.) and the pillage of natural resources such as petroleum and timber from the Anglophone regions without attending benefits. This came to a head in 1990 when one of the architects of the reunification, first Prime Minister of West Cameroon and first Vice President of the Federal Republic of Cameroon, John Ngu Foncha, resigned as First Vice President of the ruling CPDM party, amongst other reasons, on the grounds of Anglophone marginalization (Abraham & Paul 2014:314).

Business enterprises that existed in Anglophone Cameroon before reunification that served to boom the economy, provide social amenities and employments were scrapped-off by the Francophone regime. The National Produce Marketing Board (NPMB) that served as a corporative society for farmers to ensure a fair price for their produce, was shut down; the natural deep sea port in Limbe through which goods were imported and exported thereby making Limbe an economic hub was closed in favour of an artificial sea port in Douala (French Cameroon) which has to be drained annually; POWERCAM, the electricity plant that was based in Yoke (English Cameroon) was closed in favour of the electricity plant in Edea (French Cameroon); Cameroon Bank was closed; road and railway infrastructure was intentionally carried out to link French Cameroon to English Cameroon and no effort was made to link the towns of English Cameroon (e.g. the road from Limbe to Douala, the railway line from Kumba to Mbanga, the road from Bamenda to Yaounde and Bamenda through Bafoussam to Douala). (Fonchingong, 2004:44; Cameroon Post No.121, August 14-21, 1992:2; Le Messenger vol. II No. 021, June 9, 1992:15)

The nation thus became polarized. The Southern Cameroon National Congress (SCNC) sprang up calling for secession of English Cameroon from the Federation and advocating

for independence. The majority Francophone government clamped down heavily on SCNC, banned it and labelled it a terrorist group.

All avenues of dialogue were shut down. The ordinary Anglophone had nowhere to express him/herself given the intolerance of the then one-party system. The only option remained the genuine fight for a reintroduction of democracy which would give voice to the voiceless. Little wonder why the struggle for democracy and its attending consequences were from the Anglophones and the Bamilekes.¹²

Fuelled by the feeling of marginalisation, which was seen as a product of the one-party system and bad faith by the mostly Francophone government, the Anglophones saw the possibility of the re-introduction of multipartyism as a panacea. As Konings points out, “given the deep resentment in the Anglophone region of Francophone dominance in the post-colonial state, it is not surprising that the country’s first opposition party emerged in Anglophone Cameroon” (Konings 2005:5). Thus, the clamour started in Bamenda (in Anglophone Cameroon) where the first opposition party (SDF) was launched by John Fru Ndi (an Anglophone) amidst government reprisals. Throughout the political crisis, although the SDF party had branches all over Cameroon, it was principally viewed by the government as an Anglophone party. The results of the 1992 Presidential Elections said it all as “Fru Ndi received 86.3% and 51.6% of the votes cast in the North West and South West Provinces respectively” (Konings 2005:5). As will be seen later, this perception will lead to anti-Anglophone sentiments in some parts of Cameroon. Even in the aftermath of

¹² The Bamilekes (from the West Region which is incidentally sandwiched between the two Anglophone regions) had also nursed feelings of marginalization from the pre-independence period. The UPC party in French Cameroon had a huge following from the Bamilekes. When it was banned in 1955 in French Cameroon, it moved its base to English Cameroon and engaged in guerrilla warfare. The leadership of the UPC party was mostly Bamileke. Ahidjo, backed by French troops, unleashed reprisals against the Bamilekes. Some Bamileke villages were burned down, some villagers killed and many others incarcerated. The Bamilekes were viewed as enemies to the government. Thus they gave their full backing to the quest for democracy.

the 1992 Presidential elections and the consequent ghost towns, its implementation, and government reaction were most draconian in Anglophone Cameroon.

iii. Regional and ethnic/tribal politics

While the nation-state, Cameroon, was still struggling to craft its own identity and foster allegiance to the nation given its bi-cultural colonial inheritance and its natural multiplicity of ethnic groups, its leadership, in an attempt to implement the “divide and rule” principle, allowed, or in some cases encouraged the creation of regional and ethnic groupings and pressure groups working for the political interest of their kith and kin. The nation was viewed as a national cake from which each region or ethnic group struggled for its own chunk.

The government of Cameroon under Ahidjo (1961-1982) saw a heavy presence of the northerners (the region from which Ahidjo hailed) in the government machinery. They were seen as the favoured region. Under Biya (a southerner) the Betis from the Southern region supplanted the northerners in the government. According to Fonchingong (2004:38) quoting statistics of 2003, he held that “about 55% of the Senior Divisional Officers ... Divisional Officers ... and District heads hail from the Beti heterogonous ethnic group”. Given that Cameroon has about 240 ethnic groups (Fanso 1999:283), it is too much for 55% of the top administrative staff to come from one. Konings (1996:251) quotes Takoungang who reports that by August 1991, 37 out of the 47 Senior Divisional Officers (heading administrative units), three quarter of the directors and general managers of parastatals and 22 of the 38 high ranking officials appointed in the office of the Prime Minister were from Biya’s Beti ethnic group. The nation had been taken hostage by one ethnic group.

This tendency fuelled the need for more regional and tribal groupings to ensure a fair share of the national cake. Thus, the following groupings sprang up in the late 1980’s: The South West Elite Association (SWELA) to fight for the interest of the South Westerners, the North West Elite Association (NOWELA) for the interest of the North Westerners, the Elites of the Grand North came together to represent the interest of the three northern regions (Adamawa, North and Far North), “Essingan” to defend the interest

of the heterogeneous Beti and Bulu ethnic groups, “SAWA” for the interest of the people of the Litoral region, “Lakam” for the interest of the Bamilekes of the West region etc. (Fonchingong 2004:39).

This did not augur well for a nation state that was still grappling with identity issues. Allegiance to the region or tribe superseded allegiance to the nation. This will be more evident at the onset of the second wave of multipartyism in 1990. The political parties that were formed had more of tribal and regional following (Ngolle 1996:7): the CPDM party (the ruling party) had the Southern region (the region of origin of the President) as its bastion, the SDF party (the main opposition party) had Bamenda, the homeland of Ni John Fru Ndi (Chainman of the party), as its stronghold, Bouba Bello Maigari’s UNDP party had its following from the Grand North from which he hailed, and same applied for the other plethora of parties. Thus, the nation was fragmented and true to scripture, “If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand” (Mk. 3:24).

The foregoing indicates how fragmented and weak Cameroon had become. Pre-colonial tribal allegiances re-surfaced and compromised the unity of the state. In the course of the political crisis, ethnocentric feelings will be exhibited, which will add salt to injury. The Betis will rise up against the Anglophones, the Dualas will protect their interests from the Bamileke incursions, the Northerners will rally against the Betis and Ewondos. The government will use these regional sentiments to prevent the SDF party from gaining a stronghold in other regions.

iv. The Wind of Change from Eastern Europe

The year 1990 saw a new wave of clamouring for the reintroduction of democracy in many sub-Saharan African nations. These have been linked to Mikhail Gorbachev’s policy of Glasnost and Perestroika, the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall (Ngoh 1996:306; International Crisis Group, 2010:12). Contrary to Ngolle’s (1996:5) insinuation that Biya gave democracy to the Cameroonians, Gabriel (1997:13) holds that circumstances forced democracy down Biya’s throat. One of such circumstances was the Wind of Change. This wind from Eastern Europe which had been preceded by the end of the Cold War in the 1980’s blew through Africa. African leaders who over the years had

successfully contained the demand for the reintroduction of democracy in their countries suddenly realized they had to toe the line of the West and acquiesce to these demands. The successful reintroduction of democracy in other African countries gave impetus to the demands in Cameroon

Nations do not exist in vacuums. Thus, activities in one nation can influence, either positively or negatively, the activities in another especially if it is a trend. The new wave of the quest for democracy (multipartyism) in other African countries from the late eighties, just like the quest for independence from the late fifties, had an impact both on the clamours of the people and, even after initial resistance, the final acquiescence, albeit reluctantly and cautiously, of the government. The success of the quest for democracy in other nations emboldened its seekers in Cameroon to keep pressing till the walls cracked.

B. Immediate Cause of the 1990 political crisis

The immediate cause of the 1990 political crisis was the reintroduction of multipartyism. As earlier mentioned, from the independence of French Cameroon and its subsequent re-unification with English Cameroon, multipartyism was practiced till its suppression in 1966 and the consequent creation of the lone CNU party with Ahidjo as Chairman. In 1985 the name of the lone political party was changed to CPDM with Paul Biya as Chairman.

Arguing in favour of the one-party system Ngolle (1996:3) posits:

For some, the single mass party form of politics was not only in line with African traditions, it was the most desirable to enable the achievement of rapid economic development and national unity. The rationale being that it would harness all the national energies instead of engaging in dispersed and often conflict-prone pluralistic forms of political expression.

For others, this model of politics was democratic within the context of Africa whose traditions were consensual rather than competitive and conflictual. In the case of Cameroon, the rationalization that nation-building and national unity would be enhanced seemed quite an attractive case given the fragmented nature of her pre-independence history.

Ngolle's assertions should be taken with a pinch of salt. Many nations in the world are composed of heterogeneous communities. Going by Ngolle's assertions, therefore,

Democracy should be proscribed for these, and one-party system should be the norm. Ngolle does not espouse the ideals of democracy and its relevance for a community as heterogeneous as Cameroon to ensure the participation of all and sundry in the management of state affairs.

Whatever the arguments proffered for one-party system, there came a point in the history of Cameroon when the tide of the clamour for democracy could not be stemmed by the government.

To Ngolle (5), the second “wave” of democracy was different from the first in three different ways:

While the first was fragmentary in terms of the federation, the second was cohesive and national in character. In the first wave, the political parties were regional parties whereas in the second wave, the political parties are to a large extent national parties. In the first wave, there were three constitutions at play; in the second wave there is only one single constitution. In the first wave, the form of the State was a Federation whereas in the second wave, the form of State is a Unitary Republic. What is, however, common to both waves is the existence of competing freely formed political parties engaging in pluralistic debate and electoral competition with a multiplicity of candidates.

While the one-party system was being practiced, the constitution of the nation still carried the multiparty option. With growing nation-wide discontent, many blamed the problems of the nation on the one-party system which, to them, had been hijacked by a few who grew very rich at the expense of national development. Thus, many felt the solution to the problems would be a genuine return to multipartyism.

Within the ranks of the CPDM itself there were the conservatives (who formed the majority) and the progressives. Ngoh (2019:339) mentions Jean-Jacques and Processor. Fabien Kangué as progressives within CPDM who stood for multipartyism, against all odds.

On 19th February 1990 Barrister Yondo Black in Douala convened a secret meeting with the intention of launching a political party (Mokake 1997:195; International Crisis Group, 2010:12; Konings 1996:256). The government immediately arrested him and the other

attendees of the meeting. Foreign pressure and that from the Bar Council in Cameroon caused the government to state that Yondo Black and cohorts were not arrested as a result of their moves to form a political party but rather as a result of their subversive ideas. This indirectly meant that anybody wishing to form a political party was free to do so.

Thus, on 26 May 1990, amidst tension, the SDF party, the first opposition party since 1966, was launched. This event unleashed a wave of political crisis with their attending economic implications.

3.3. The Evolution of the 1990 – 1992 political crisis

According to International Crisis Group (2010:18), the SDF party

... originated in networks of students, businessmen and dissidents in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. It was founded in early 1990 by a dozen people then referred to as 'Study Group 89' and now as the 'Founding Fathers', the most important of whom was Siga Asanga. It was through his influence that Fru Ndi, a relative, took the party's helm

Ni John Fru Ndi, a bookseller from the North West Region (Anglophone) based in Bamenda, and a former candidate for the 1988 legislative elections under the ticket of the CPDM (International Crisis Group 2010:12), took advantage of the lame excuse the government gave for the arrest of Yondo Black and the constitutional provision that if a declaration of intent to form a political party is deposited and not responded to after two weeks, the silence can be taken for approval. He compiled the necessary documents and personally took them to the office of the SDO. He caused the recipient of the documents to formally acknowledge receipt. He also personally handed a copy of the documents to the police (interview with Ni John Fru Ndi, 6/10/2017, Bamenda). When the SDO did not respond after two weeks, he made public his wish to launch the party on the 26th of May 1990. Whether his motive was out of a genuine zeal to give a voice to the voiceless in Cameroon through democracy or to vent his frustrations on the CPDM for his failed attempt to get to parliament in 1988 is an issue for debate.

The government responded by banning all political manifestations. On the prearranged day, state security operatives frustrated any attempt of people to assemble at the stadium in Bamenda. Fru Ndi decided to move the launch of the party to the Presbyterian Church Centre, and there too the security forces blocked all the entrances. Fru Ndi immediately changed the venue of the meeting to Ntarinkon which was his neighbourhood where he expected massive support from the population. The SDF party was launched amidst the tense presence of security forces overwhelmed by the crowd that turned out for the event. At Ntarinkon, using a fig tree as shade, Fru Ndi delivered his inaugural message. Amongst other things Fru Ndi said:

Today is the most significant day in the struggle for democracy in Cameroon ... that democracy is about the laws that they enact to govern themselves.... We say that democracy is about people because we believe that non-observance of the fundamental freedoms, namely, the freedom of conscience and religion, freedom of thought, belief, opinion and expression, freedom of the press ... of peaceful assembly and ... association, the people cannot ... enjoy their basic rights which are life, liberty and pursuit [sic] of happiness as human beings.... Today we call on you all to yell for democracy. (Mbu 1993:347-348 in Dah 2015: 45)

Fru Ndi ended his inaugural message by declaring the party launched, “then all hell broke loose (Interview with Ni John Fru Ndi, 6/10/2017, Bamenda). Confrontation that ensued between the forces of Law and Order and the population led to the death of six youths (Ngoh 1996:308; International Crisis Group, 2010:12; Cameroon Post No.85, October 4 – October 11, 1991:8).

The government condemned the launching of the SDF and described it as illegal. Other CPDM top militants swung into action as they released invectives against the Chairman of the SDF party, Fru Ndi. Various CPDM sections wrote official communiqués condemning multipartyism and declaring their unalloyed loyalty to President Paul Biya and the one-party system and organized public manifestations to that effect. A case in point was the march that was effected after a CPDM meeting at the Pan African Institute in Buea championed by Governor John Ngole and Minister Benjamin Itoe (Mbile

1999:334). Thus, while some marched for the institution of multipartyism, others marched in favour of the one-party system.

It should be mentioned that those who marched in favour of the one-party system were not against democracy, they opted for a one-party democracy. By this time, as a result of mounting clamour for democracy, the CPDM party had instituted an in-house practice where elections were conducted within the party through the “list” system (DeLancy 1989:168). The “list” system permitted party members to group themselves into various lists to compose an executive and the various lists at each level would stand for election. The list that wins carries the day. But, this “democratic” practice within the party was always truncated by party discipline and the will of the party hierarchy always took precedence. In principle this policy was supposed to apply at all levels of the party, but it was seldom applied at the highest level, the Congress. The Chairman of the party, Paul Biya, always went unchallenged either at the level of party chairman or president of the nation. To the CPDM members, this was democracy, and all that needed to be done was to fine-tune its application at the levels of party chairman and president of the nation.

So, the issue was about the type of democracy to practice. While some held that the one-party democracy promoted national unity and minimized cost, others were convinced that the one-party system was the cause of all the woes of the nation and opted for a multiparty system.

Paul Biya surprised the nation when in June 1990 he told the CPDM “we must be ready for competition” (Mbile 1999:334). In December 1990, the National Assembly revised the constitution legalizing multipartyism.

The new constitution opened the flood gates for the registration of political parties.

New political parties came up in such succession that most people have lost count as to whether they are now one hundred and fifty (150) or more. Surely we are reaching the point of absurdity in our number of political parties and men could not be wrong to say that democracy had run amok in Cameroon (Mbile 1999:337)

What Mabile fails to mention is the fact that the multiplicity of parties played to the advantage of the CPDM. Fearing the strength of the SDF party, given the huge following it had from inception, the government encouraged the creation of many other “opposition” parties which were actually satellite CPDM parties (Nyamnjoh 1999:105). This, they believed, would divide SDFs following and neutralize its strength.

The political climate seemed to have gone out of control as regional and tribal sentiments were whipped-up by political parties to have a following. Even villages and families were divided by political affiliations. The case is mentioned of two biological brothers who attempted to form two different parties. The registering authorities found this strange and advised the younger brother to join the older brother to form a single party. The younger brother insisted but the authorities stood their grounds. Another case is reported of a lawyer who formed a party to which he was the president and his pupil lawyer the secretary (Mabile 1999:339).

It soon became evident to the mainline opposition parties that they could make greater impact on the political landscape by teaming up in a coalition especially as they had a common enemy – CPDM – and common problems about the laws of the land. They came together and formed the Coordination of Opposition Parties. The Coordination of Opposition Parties petitioned the government requesting for the revision of electoral laws, the creation of an independent body to supervise elections, the convocation of a Sovereign National Conference and the putting in place of a transitional government (Ngoh 1996:309).

The unwillingness of the government to acquiesce to these demands and the arrest of a prominent journalist, Pius Njawe and activist Celestin Monga in early 1991 caused the opposition parties to call for “Ghost Towns”. Originally intended for a couple of weeks, the strike lasted from March to August 1991 (International Crisis Group, 2010:12; *Le Messenger* No. 028, June 20, 1991:2)¹³. The strike action was intensified after Biya, in his

¹³ Nyamnjoh (1999:102) dates the “Ghost Town” strike action from April 1991 to January 1992.

speech of 27th June 1991 referred to calls for a national conference as pointless (Nyamnjoh 1999:102). From Mondays to Fridays public and private transportation was grounded as movement of persons and goods was forbidden. All business centres were shut down and people were asked to stay at home. Life came back to normalcy only on Saturdays and Sundays – these days were set aside for funerals, replenishment of food stuff and drugs by families and the running of sundry errands. The “Ghost Towns” were punctuated with arson, murder and looting. As Mbile (1999:335-336) puts it:

A completely new and alarming complexion had come into our politics, burning, destruction and killing. Tyres were burnt in the streets, houses owned by C.P.D.M. members were set on fire with the inmates at times burnt alive. In Bamenda amongst the many houses burnt were those of Prime Minister Achidi Achu, Fon Angwafor and Hon. Peter Fomum. In particular Tita Fomukong of Bali was roasted alive in his burnt out house in Mankon. The general boycott ordered by the SDF opposition created such an impact on the economy of the country coupled with the then prevailing world economic situation that the nation faced a near collapse especially in the most affected provinces of the North West, West, Litoral and South West.

The government reacted by countering violence with violence. Government troops were deployed to all the troubled spots in the nation and confrontations between the people and the military sometimes turned violent. By the end of the “Ghost Towns” which lasted about six months about 400 deaths were registered (Ngoh 1996:310).

In an attempt to meet the requests of the people and ensure peace in the nation, the government convened the Tripartite Conference in Yaounde. In attendance were government officials, representatives of opposition parties, religious leaders and some senior statesmen. At the end of the conference after serious negotiations and deliberations the Yaounde Tripartite Declaration was produced on 13th November 1991¹⁴, (Ngoh 2019:341) but Fru Ndi refused to sign it.

¹⁴ Konings (1996:259) gives 17th November for the end of the Tripartite Conference

The Tripartite Conference which was intended to serve as a forum for genuine dialogue and national reconciliation and which resolutions were expected to give a roadmap for the nation ended up being a forum for presentations. There was very little room for dialogue. Fru Ndi refused to sign the Declaration because it was mostly drawn up by the CPDM party members and did not capture the issues raised during the Conference. There was general dissatisfaction especially amongst the opposition parties as the conference was viewed as a sham and its final declaration an expression of the CPDM position. The contributions and proposals from the churches during the Conference who had prayed for consensual resolutions that will guarantee long-standing peace had not been taken into consideration.

By the end of 1991 it could be said that Cameroon had multipartyism but its Legislative and Executive were still of a one-party composition. Although the constitution gave room for democracy, the institutions that were to ensure free and fair elections – like an independent electoral commission – were not put in place. The president was still, in every sense of the word, in control of the executive, the judiciary and the legislative. The same body, the Ministry of Territorial Administration, that organised elections under the one-party system, was still charged with the responsibility of organising multiparty elections. By every intent and action, the country was democratic in principle, but still one-party in practice. The Constitution provided for the creation of a Constitutional Council to adjudicate electoral petitions, but this Council will be put in place only in 2017 (27 years after the law was promulgated) with members hand-picked by the President.

These lacunas will affect the organisation of the legislative and presidential elections of 1992 and influence the aftermath.

a. The March 1992 Legislative Elections

While the country was still suffering from the vestiges of the “Ghost Towns”, the first multiparty elections were announced for March 1991. The political tempo rose again as parties rushed to register their candidates. The SDF called for a general boycott of the

elections on the grounds that the government had not yet set up an independent electoral commission that would ensure transparency and that the resolutions of the Yaounde Tripartite Declaration were not being implemented. The other opposition candidates rejected the call and filled-in their candidates. At the end of the elections, the following results were recorded:

CPDM won 88 seats

Union Nationale Pour la Democratie et le Progress (UNDP) won 60 seats

Union des Populations du Cameroun (UPC) won 17 seats

Mouvement Pour la Defence de la Republique (MDR) won 4 seats (Ngoh 1996:312)

Gabriel (1997:14) puts the number of seats won by the UNDP at 68, contrary to Ngoh's 60. Konings (1996:260) corroborates Gabriel's 68 seats for UNDP, but gives UPC 18 seats and MDR 6 seats. The fact remains that the CPDM emerged the victor followed by the UNDP, UPC and MDR.

From the above results, the UNDP was just 28 seats shy of CPDM. Given that the SDF at this time was considered the main opposition party with a larger following than the UNDP, it is evident that had they contested in this election, they would have won almost equal seats to, if not more than the CPDM. This would have been the easiest way to fix the bad electoral laws they were complaining about. Had SDF secured the majority of seats in the legislative elections, it would have better prepared the grounds for a freer and fairer presidential election

But their decision to boycott fitted well in the plans of the ruling CPDM as it permitted them to walk through unchallenged and maintain their grip on the legislative arm of government.

Speaking in defence of why SDF boycotted the Legislative elections, Fru Ndi said "we were looking for a change and not for avenues to compromise. The electoral law was also not good". Asked about SDF's decision to contest in the forthcoming Presidential election he said "...going into either municipal or presidential elections means that you are having

the real change that you've been looking for and we want to change Biya, the regime and the party in power" (The Herald No. 003, August 12 1992:2).

Fru Ndi's excuse for going in for the Presidential elections after renegeing participation in the legislative is lame. His target, it seems was to change the President (Biya), but he failed to realize that a change of the executive without a corresponding change in the legislative is lopsided. For there to be real democracy, it must start with a genuine revision of the constitution for implementation by the executive and supervised by the judiciary.

The SDF boycott of the legislative elections and the consequent criticism it attracted from their members and sympathisers surely influenced its resolve to participate in the Presidential elections and to defend its purported victory, which will lead to another political stand-off. The legislative election in itself was not a crisis, but it should be seen as a step towards another political crisis – the aftermath of the Presidential elections

b. The 11th October Presidential Elections

When the Presidential Elections were slated for 11th October 1992, the SDF, although the reasons which caused them to call for a boycott of the Legislative Elections had not been addressed, decided to participate. Abortive attempts were made for the opposition to present one candidate believing that they could form a stronger force to counter the CPDM hegemony. But the political aspirations of individual party leaders foiled such attempts. A few parties like Samuel Ebuja's Movement for Democracy and Progress (MDP) finally accepted to stand behind SDF's Fru Ndi under the platform of the Union for Change. Some other parties like Antar Gassagay's Peoples National Party (PNP), fell behind CPDM's Paul Biya.

At the end of the elections the following results were released by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and proclaimed by the Supreme Court on 23rd October 1992:

CPDM = 39.9%

SDF = 35.9%

UNDP = 20%

CDU = 3.6% (Ngho 1996:313)

Again, Gabriel gives different percentages won by the parties, contrary to Ngho. According to Gabriel (1997:15) CPDM had 40%, SDF had 36% and UNDP had 19%. Nyamnjoh (1999:103) puts the CPDM percentage at 39.976 while Konings (1996:260) agrees with Ngho's 39.9%. Nyamnjoh's 39.976% should be the most reliable. While Ngho might have decided to maintain just one decimal point (39.9%), Gabriel might have decided to round-up the figures to 40%. Whatever the percentage discrepancies, according to the official proclamation, CPDM emerged the victor, followed by SDF, UNDP and the CDU. The results indicate that SDF was the most popular opposition party, given the wide gap between it and the UNDP. Also the narrow margin of the CPDM which had hitherto been used to having 99,9% vote in every election under the one-party system, was indicative of the general discontent amongst the masses. It is clear that had the opposition parties put in a single candidate, CPDM would have been no match.

c. The reactions

The reactions to the election results were immediate. Fru Ndi declared that according to results he got from his election monitors from all the pooling stations, he had won and the government had rigged the elections in favour of Biya. The Cameroon Post Newspaper (No. 135, November 19, 1992:1) confirms Fru Ndi's claim when it states "President Biya himself knew way ahead of the Supreme Court proclamation that the verdict of the October 11 elections had given Ni John Fru Ndi a landslide victory of over 41%". The newspaper goes ahead to state that "... a telephone message registered in diplomatic quarters from Minister Andze Tsoungui¹⁵ to Mr. Paul Biya in his Mvo'meka residence said: '...Mr. le President c'est grave' (Mr. President it is bad [translation mine]) is reported to have said Tsoungui. 'Je ne veux rien entendre. Je veux gagner les elections' (I don't want to hear anything. I want to win the elections [translation mine]) Mr. Biya is said to have retorted". The President's response, according to the report, is what gave the minister the

¹⁵ Andze Tsoungui was the Minister of Territorial Administration charged with the organisation of the elections.

kitus to do everything within his power to rig the elections. This research lends credibility to this report given the fact that the government which had already activated its repressive machinery by the time of publication of this news story made no efforts to shut down the paper nor formerly counter the story with a rejoinder. Fru Ndi (Interviewed on 6/10/2017, Bamenda) further concords "...SDF won, we won".

Government's pre-arranged plan to rig the elections in favour of Biya, the incumbent, which was finally implemented, was laid bare by the resignation of George Mofor Achu, who was governor of the East Province, on the 19th of October 1992. In his resignation letter to the President he wrote:

Let me draw your attention to the fact that I did not find it in accordance with my conscience to implement the instruction of the Minister of Territorial Administration given during the last extraordinary governors' conference of September 28, 1992. By these, we were instructed to do everything fair and foul to ensure at least, a 60 percent victory of the CPDM party candidate in our provinces.... Furthermore, we were to be appraised thereafter on this basis. To assist us in this task, a six-page document issued by the UDC party on techniques of electoral fraud was distributed to us (Gwellem, 1996:67, in Dah, 2015:46-47).

Thus, Fru Ndi's claims of electoral fraud were not baseless.

Youths took to the streets in all opposition strongholds. Another wave of burning was unleashed. The Government dispatched troops immediately. Many people were arrested, a State of Emergency was declared in the North West Region (Bamenda inclusive) by a Presidential decree on 27th October 1992 and Fru Ndi, the main opposition leader who claimed to have won the elections, was put under house arrest (Konings 1996:261; Le Messenger vol. II No. 040, November 12, 1992:4) alongside 150 others. Ngoh (2019:344), however, sites 2th October 1992 as the date of signature of the presidential decree. His home was searched for 7 hours for incriminating evidence to link him to the arson and other acts of vandalism. He and the 150 others were taken to the Brigade Mixte Mobile (Mixed Mobile Brigade – BMM) for questioning. After several hours of grilling they were taken back to Fru Ndi's residence and kept under house arrest (Cameroon Post No. 137, December 2, 1992:8).

A number of other influential SDF supporters and bureau chiefs were arrested. In the Litoral and West regions, the following were arrested (some tortured) and locked-up: Prince Moukouri Manga Bell (October 26, 1992), Professor Kum'a Ndumbe III, Martin Tomdio who was SDF District Vice President for Douala IV and Mbah Gilbert (October 24, 1992), Talla Corantin (October 28, 1992). All opposition party leaders who backed Fru Ndi's candidacy under the Union for Change banner went into hiding. More than 30 people were arrested in Douala and about 100 believed to have been kidnapped, about 40 were arrested in Bafoussam (October 23, 1992), 4 persons were arrested in Mbouda (November 2, 1992), and 16 in Bandja village (November 5, 1992) (Cameroon Post No.136, November 25, 1992:8) and about 1,000 people were arrested in Bamenda (Cameroon Post No. 135, November 19, 1992:5) which is the seat of the SDF party. The SDF party head quarter in Bamenda was ransacked and documents carted away.

About 600 traders of the Bamenda main market decided to go on a sit-down strike and refused to open their stalls on the 29th of October 1992. They were rounded-up by the gendarmes, brutalized and young men were arrested (Cameroon Post No. 135, November 19, 1992:8).

Then entered the tribal factor! In the South, the region of origin of the President, there arose a strong feeling to defend their kith and kin. This erupted in xenophobia, especially against those who were suspected to have supported the opposition parties (the Anglophones, Bamilekes, Bamums and the Northerners)¹⁶. In Mbalmayo town (in the South Region), between October 12 and 14, 1992, thousands of such people were chased from the town, their homes burned and property looted (Cameroon Post No.136, November 25, 1992:8). The ethnic cleansing started in Ebolowa, headquarters of the Presidents region of origin, as early as on October 11, 1992 as soon as early election results showed that Fru Ndi was leading in that town. The Mayor, Mr. Enam Mba'a, rallied

¹⁶ The Northerners, after the ascension of Biya to the Presidency, and especially after the 1984 foiled coup, were viewed as Ahidjo loyalists and the prominence they had enjoyed was replaced by the Betis. They therefore largely supported the UNDP party.

some indigenous youths and instigated them against the strangers. Armed with spears and machetes, they beat up some of the strangers and looted and burned down their homes and shops. By the end of the day, about 40 persons were reported to have been hospitalized with different degrees of wounds (Cameroon Post No.136, November 25, 1992:9).

Anglophones and Bamilekes (the supporters of SDF) were systematically flushed out of the Presidential Guard. Of the 33 who were flushed out, 25 were either Anglophones or Bamilekes and the rest just a camouflage. The Minister of Armed Forces was instructed to transfer these officers far off from Yaounde, the capital city (Cameroon Post No. 132, October 30 – November 4, 1992:3)

The “Ghost Towns” had far-reaching negative effects on the economy of the nation, business enterprises, families and individuals. *Brassseries du Cameroun* alone sacked 200 truck drivers, 400 low level workers and 32 office workers, making a total of 632 (Cameroon Post No. 138, December 16-23, 1992:3)

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) criticized the irregularities in the elections and international community criticized government’s use of force to counter the protests. The United States of America’s decision to suspend the delivery of “military spare parts, maintenance gear and communication equipment” which the government of Cameroon had purchased and their decision to reduce the annual donation to United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Cameroon by 4 billion francs CFA was not unconnected to government’s crack-down on the opposition (Cameroon Post No. 137, December 2, 1992:3). The State of Emergency was finally uplifted a few days after Christmas of 1992 (Ngoh 1996:313).

It should be noted that till 1992 there had been no precedence of the transfer of power through the ballot box. Ahidjo was elected Prime Minister in 1958 of what would become *La Republique du Cameroun* but there were no further elections in 1960 when independence was granted by France. The colonial master (France) just named him President. A similar scenario applied in the ascendance to power of his successor, Paul Biya. When Ahidjo decided to resign from his functions as President of the United

Republic of Cameroon, no elections were conducted; he merely handed over office to Biya. The absence of a precedence, albeit all the pressure from within Cameroon and from the international community, made it practically impossible for true democracy to win the day.

Writing about Cameroon in 1997 when the nation was believed to have gone through the birth pangs of democratization, Gabriel (1997:1) holds that “Cameroon is not in transition to democracy; there has been some liberalization but democracy is not in sight.” Gabriel (1997:17) continues, “It is hardly democratic to boycott elections or manipulate results, to dominate television, to hinder the administration of justice or keep a secret fund of oil revenues. Cameroon is manifestly not a country in transition – for the time being it is *stagnating* in the first stage of transition”

The battle all along the struggle for democracy and its attending consequences has been between the progressives and the conservatives, the pro-democracy and the pro dictatorship, the inclusionists and the exclusionists. While the masses clamour for the former, the government holds tight to the latter.

Thus, the struggle for real democracy in Cameroon still continues. The 1990 -1992 political crisis was the launching pad for future political debacles.

Conclusion

This chapter has given a bird’s eye view of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial history of Cameroon. It has elaborated the causes of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, identifying the immediate cause, and has expatiated on the evolution of the political crisis.

Amidst this political debacle, the churches in Cameroon did not stand aloof. In a bid to seek creative solutions to the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, various denominations played various roles as individual churches or as faith blocks. The next Chapter will address the role the PCC played in the addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

CHAPTER 4

The role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon

Introduction

The involvement of church in politics is a long-time controversial issue not peculiar to Cameroon alone. Whether the Church should be involved in politics or not is a long-time debate with pros and cons (Raiser, 2013:1; McDaniel, 2011:3 Phiri, 2001:4) The Church in every society has a primordial role to play in the up building of the nation. She is committed to the absolute values of truth, morality and love.

This chapter deals with the PCC and the role it played in addressing the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon. Since the PCC is a product of its history and the role it played in the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon is not unconnected to this history, for the purpose of better comprehension, this chapter starts by presenting a brief background history of the PCC highlighting historical antecedence of political intervention in its missionary and post missionary history, then moves on to focus on the role the PCC played in the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, which is the main aim of this research.

4.1. Brief Historical Background of the PCC

4.1.1. The advent of Christianity in Cameroon

Fired by the zeal to evangelise the "heathens", Rev John Clarke and Dr. G.K. Prince of the English Baptist Missionary Society set out from England and Jamaica and moved out to Fernando Po in 1841 (Keller *et al.* 1997:2). Shortly thereafter the missionaries started paying intermittent visits to the coast of Cameroon.

The success of their work, and the report back to England ignited the missionary flame in others to join them in mission work. 42 people, among who were Alfred Saker and Rev. Joseph Merrick, arrived Clarence in 1844.

As early as 1845 problems arose between the protestant English Baptist Missionaries and the Roman Catholic Spanish government which had colonized Fernando Po. The latter became increasingly uncomfortable with the presence and evangelization of a protestant mission in their territory. Therefore, the only condition given for the continued presence of the English Baptist Missionaries was the cessation of the proclamation of the gospel. On the 22nd of May 1858, Don Carlos Chacun, Commander of the Spanish Squadron and Governor General of the Islands of Fernando Po, Annobon and Corisco, issued an edict evicting the English Baptist Missionaries from Fernando Po (Keller *et al.* 1997:3).

Meanwhile, sustained missionary presence at the coast of Cameroon had begun in 1844 when Rev Joseph Merrick took up residence in Bimbia. He opened a congregation and a printing press and started printing the Bible in the Isubu language which he had studied. But the work he started was chocked after his death in 1849 by constant inter-tribal wars and adherence to native traditions.

As a result of the eviction from Fernando Po in 1858, Alfred Saker moved over to the coast of Cameroon where he bought a piece of land at the mouth of river Limbe from King Manga Williams of Bimbia. He named this land Victoria, after the reigning queen of England. What seemingly was a misfortune to the missionary society was a blessing to the planting of Christianity in Cameroon.

With the permanent settlement of the missionaries in Victoria, congregations were established in Victoria and Douala, schools were opened, and the Printing press that had been opened in Bimbia by Joseph Merrick was transferred to Duala. The missionary stations were opened mostly in the coastal areas of Cameroon.

As the religious climate in Cameroon was changing, the political climate was not aloof. The English home government was slow in heeding to the pleas from the English traders in Douala who, in league with some Douala chiefs, saw English annexation of the territory as profitable and prestigious. The German government acted faster and dispatched Dr.

Nachtigal who annexed Cameroon for Germany on 12 July 1884. The English envoy, Hewett, arrived two days later. Cameroon had become a German colonial territory.

Politics and religion have, often times, influenced each other. The Cameroonian case was not an exception. The English Baptist Missionaries found it increasingly difficult to work under a German colonial government (Ngoh 2019:66). Some of the policies of the latter were obnoxious to the former. A case in point was the decision by the German colonial government to enforce the teaching of German in all schools. The English missionaries found it overbearing for them to be compelled to teach German in their schools. It was finally realised that only a German-based missionary society could better work with the German colonial Government in Cameroon.

Consequently, the Baptist Missionary Society officially requested a German based missionary society to take over missionary work in Cameroon. In Germany, the lot fell on the Basel Missionary Society (Keller *et al.* 1997:10).

The insistence of the German colonial government for the Baptist missionaries to teach German in their schools and the consequent resistance of the missionary society rather opting to shut down than implement such obnoxious policy, was the first step in the church – state imbroglio in Cameroon. This trend will be continued by the Basel Mission and eventually inherited by the PCC and it will find expression in the role the PCC played in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis.

4.1.2 The Basel Mission takes over missionary work in Cameroon

The Basel Mission was reluctant and suspicious of the colonial government's intention to poke its nose in the affairs of the missionary society. In spite of the plea that came out of the conference of the German missionary Society which met in Bremen from 27th – 29 October 1885, for German colonial governments to facilitate the work of non-German protestant missionary societies, the situation in Cameroon did not improve. The experience of the Baptist Missionaries left them with misgivings. Consequently, the Basel Mission, before accepting to come to Cameroon, stated its missionary goals to the German government in very clear terms. One of these was; “the Society takes it as its

duty to protect the national peculiarities of the people among whom it works, as long as such are not steeped in paganism or in contradiction to Christianity. The indigenous language has priority in her schools, although other languages are taught as necessary". This was granted by the German government in a letter from the German Foreign Office dated 12th of June 1886 (Keller *et al.* 1997:12). With this, the Basel Mission decided to take up missionary work in Cameroon.

The missionaries in the mission field would be under the direct control of the Home Board. The early theology of the first Basel Missionaries to Cameroon would be influenced by Theodor Oehler who taught almost all of them. Oehler put forth as cardinal role of the missionaries to Cameroon, the spread of the gospel of Jesus Christ, and God's Kingdom. Developmental issues were secondary.

Negotiations between the Basel Mission and the English Baptist Mission were underway. The Basel Mission finally paid 3000 Pounds to the English Baptists, for land and property they were to inherit (Keller *et al.* 1997:12). They equally agreed that the Basel missionaries would emphasize, in their teachings, the evangelical truths and desist from denominational doctrines. The Basel Mission could, however, neither give up its stance on baptism nor teach otherwise.

On December 23rd 1886 the first Basel missionaries arrived Cameroon. They were Rev Gottlieb Munz, Rev Christian Dilger, Rev Johannes Bizer, and Rev Friederich Becher.

The Basel Missionaries arrived the coast of Cameroon in 1886 with faith and zeal to plant God's word in the Cameroonian soil. This faith and determination speak in a letter that was written back home when one of them, Rev Christian Dilger, died just a few days after arrival. They wrote; "It is the Lord whom it has pleased to introduce our band in such a way. We therefore can and will not withdraw" (Keller *et al.* 1997:13). And they did not withdraw.

From then on, through rough terrain, under difficult weather, threatened by the deadly malaria fever, they strode over long distances, taking the gospel of the resurrected Jesus Christ to Cameroonians. Their zeal was daunted only by the First World War when

Germany finally succumbed to the military pressure of Britain and France. The territory was partitioned. Britain was in control of 1/5 of the colonial territory and France had 4/5. This had serious consequences on the missionary enterprise. The missionaries, especially Germans, were forced to leave Cameroon since it was feared that the Germans could use their nationals to achieve their wish of reclaiming Cameroon (the last white missionaries to leave were the Australian R. Rhode, and the American Bender). Again, the political climate impinged on the missionary enterprise. Missionary work of the Basel Mission was left in the hands of the indigenes, championed by Johannes Litumbe Ekese who directed the affairs of the Basel mission with some native teachers/catechists. Basel Missionary stations in the French Cameroon were left for some time unattended, until 1917 when the French-Paris Mission came in on the invitation of the Basel Mission.

From 1917 when the last Basel Missionaries left Cameroon till 1923 when the first few returned, missionary work in British Cameroon rested on the shoulders of Rev. J.L. Ekese who had been ordained on 9th April 1917 and hurriedly prepared to take over missionary work in the area (Keller *et al.* 1997:58). The enormity of the task of covering the whole of British Cameroon by a single ordained Pastor was inconceivable. Thus Rev. Ekese, later in 1917, ordained Josef Mukutu Mukongo but his assistance was short-lived as he died in 1920. Ministers had to come from French Cameroon, led by Rev. Modi Din and assisted by Evangelist Peter Essoka to administer the sacraments to some areas of British Cameroon

The missionaries had left Cameroon with lots of misgivings fearing the extinction of the Christian faith in the territory in their absence. Upon their return they were surprised to meet a thriving church which membership had moved from 1,768 (one thousand seven hundred and sixty eight) in 1914 to 8,913 (eight thousand nine hundred and thirteen) in 1925 under indigenous leadership (Keller *et al.* 1997:66).

In 1939, the work of the various missionary bodies in Cameroon was once more nearly grounded as a result of the commencement of World War Two (WWII). White missionaries had to leave the country. The work in the mission stations were carried out mostly by the native Pastors, Catechists and Teachers. After the war, many white Basel missionaries

did not come back to Cameroon. This created the problem of personnel for the work in the field. In order to combat the problem, the Home Board of the mission recommended the ordination and training of indigenous teachers/catechists to take up the mission work in the country.

The foregoing history demonstrates how the Basel Mission which originally had mandate over the entire colonized territory of what would later on become the Republic of Cameroon, as a result of political re-carvings orchestrated by World War I and entrenched by World War II, would find itself confined to 1/5 of the original territory which will later on become Anglophone Cameroon. This will eventually have an impact on the role the PCC will play in resolving the political crisis as the government will severally view the actions of the Church, either rightly or wrongly as will be later demonstrated, to be in defence of the Anglophone cause.

The history of the PCC, from missionary times, has been variously influenced by the political evolution of Cameroon from the colonial period.

First, as earlier presented, the advent of the Basel Mission in Cameroon was a product of disagreement between the German colonial government and the English Baptist Mission in Cameroon. The English Baptist missionaries started work in Cameroon shortly after they arrived Fernando Po in 1841. Germany colonised Cameroon in 1884, after the missionaries had established congregations and schools. The German colonial government, as earlier indicated made things difficult for the English Baptist missionaries by imposing the teaching of German in their schools. As a result the English Baptists had to request a German missionary society to take over work in Cameroon. The lot fell on the Basel Mission. Thus, had the German colonial government not politicized missionary work in Cameroon the Basel Mission would never have come into the picture and the PCC would not have come into existence.

Second, WW1 changed the missionary nomenclature of Cameroon. From 1886 to 1914, the outbreak of WW1, the Basel Mission covered the entire territory of German colonial Kamerun. As elaborated in Chapter Three, Britain and France attacked Germany in

Cameroon and by 1916 had taken over the territory and partitioned the territory with Britain having 1/5 (one fifth) and France 4/5 (four fifth). The Basel Missionaries were sent out of Cameroon for fear they could act as spies for the German colonial government. They would be formerly asked to come back in 1925 but only to the territory that was under the British colonial government. This limited the scope of operation of the Basel Mission to the British colonial territory and caused the main language of operation of the Basel mission to be English. This has impacted the membership of the PCC. Till date, the functional language of the PCC is English and, although it is presently found in all the 10 (ten) regions of Cameroon, all her services are in English and membership is mostly of Anglophones. Congregations in Francophone Cameroon mainly attend to Anglophones living in these areas. Thus, the political impact of WW1 resonates in the language and membership of Cameroon till date.

Third, the PCC gained independence in 1957 when Cameroon was still partitioned. The Southern Cameroons, the British territory in which the Basel Mission operated was administered as part of Nigeria. When the indigenous Church gained independence in 1957, she assumed the name Presbyterian Church in Southern Cameroon. After reunification in 1961 the name of the Church was changed to Presbyterian Church in West Cameroon in tandem with the change of name of the state. After the cancellation of the federal system in 1972 that saw the name of the state changed to the Republic of Cameroon, the name of the church was changed to its current appellation – The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon.

Thus, the political evolution of the state of Cameroon has had a direct bearing on the PCC.

As time went on, the Basel Mission thought the Church they had founded in Cameroon needed to be independent. By 1957, both the Basel mission and the indigenes agreed the time was ripe for independence. Consequently, on the 13th of November 1957, at 11am, the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon was born when the final draft of the constitution was unanimously adopted at Ntanfoang-Bali. This was followed by prayer, hymns of praise and the ringing of the Ntanfoang Church bell. In April 1958 Rev Abraham

Ngole was elected Chairman, J.F. Mancho as Vice Chairman and Rev Aaron Su as Secretary of the General Synod (Keller *et al.* 1997:94). By the time of independence, the PCC had on record 59,307 (fifty-nine thousand three hundred and seven) members (Keller *et al.* 1997:108).

From then on, the Presbyterian Church has grown in leaps and bounds and now exists in all the ten regions in Cameroon. The Church has 78 nursery schools, 152 primary schools, 21 secondary schools, 1 technical school, 1 teachers' training school and runs a master's degree awarding seminary in Kumba. The evangelistic arms of the church are the Christian Women Fellowship (CWF), Christian Men Fellowship (CMF) and Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF)

The church now has an estimated population of about 1.500.000 with 1.553 congregations spread out in 31 presbyteries. There are 465 ordained pastors, 88 unordained pastors and 14 evangelists making a total of 567 shepherds. From independence the PCC has had 6 Moderators, 10 Synod Clerks and 11 Financial Secretaries (PCC Diary 2020:65 & 76).

The independence of the PCC did not signal the birth of a new theology for the Church. The new Church was still tied to the theological apron strings of the BM. Thus, the political theology of the PCC was still based on that of its founding fathers.

As will be argued in Chapter Five, the PCC's Constitution makes it clear that she "... maintains the spiritual, theological, and the material continuity ..." of the Basel Mission. (PCC Constitution 2014:5). This statement stagnates any theological development in the PCC and, consequently, ties her political theology to the position of the founding missionary society – the Basel Mission. Dah (1983:71) posits that: "One of the main figures who shaped the work of the Basel Mission in Cameroon from 1886-1914 was precisely Theodore Oehler.... Oehler taught practically all missionaries who worked in Cameroon before the First World War". This constitutional stance of the PCC, put side by side with the comments of Dah (1983) reveal that the PCC was hanging her theology on the thoughts of one person. Dah (1983:72) further states that "when Oehler was invited

to take up office as Inspector of the Basel Mission, he felt himself less adequately gifted for such a position, especially in view of his one-sided education mainly in theology and his lack of ‘involvement in missionary activities’”. Thus, PCC was basing her theology on one who was convinced of his lopsided education and inexperience in “missionary activities”

4.2. Historical Antecedence of Political Involvement

The issue here is whether the PCC had any historical antecedence of political involvement or if its involvement in the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon was a pacesetter. Did the PCC engage the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon as a newcomer or was it playing on familiar turf?

A glance at the pre-independence and post-independence history of the PCC points to an elevated level of political awareness first of the missionaries, and later the PCC. From the missionary times, the lines between Church and state, secular and sacred were clear. The BMS, before acquiescing to the request to take over missionary work in Cameroon from the Baptists, as earlier mentioned, in the conditions they posed to the German Colonial Government, needed an assurance of no political intervention in missionary affairs. This was granted by the colonial government. But there was no reciprocal commitment on the part of the BMS not to meddle in political affairs. For the purpose of ascertaining antecedence of political involvement one case will be cited in the missionary era and another after independence of the PCC.

4.2.1. The Bakweri land problem

One of the areas in which the BM political activism was made manifest was in the Bakweri land problem. The Chancellor of the Reich, in June 1896, gave specifications on what should be considered “Crown Land” (Keller *et al.* 1997:39; Dah, 1983 147-148). According to him, any land in the colonized territory that was neither owned by an individual nor a community was automatically “crown Land”. However, the German Governor of Cameroon, Jesko Von Puttkamer, decided to interpret this law differently. To him, any

land to which there were no valid ownership documents and any land acquired but not exploited within a period of 4 years was declared “Crown Land”

By 1899, more than 10,000 hectares of land around the Fako Mountain had been appropriated by the Governor and declared “Crown Land”. It should be mentioned that the appropriated land was very fertile, haven been enriched by volcanic ash from the active Fako Mountain. This land was given out for plantations. More and more the natives lost their farming lands to the plantations and in some cases whole villages were relocated. Dah (1983:148) posits that the continuous expropriation of native farm lands was a calculated strategy by the colonial government to render the natives landless, thus push them to become labourers in the plantations.

A case in point concerns Muea (Mwea) village at the foot of Mount Fako. In a letter written by a plantation Manager addressed to the BM at Buea dated 30th June 1901, the Manager wrote, “We have to remind you that the village of Mwea, which is on our land, must be removed by August 3rd of the year 1901 and we ask you also to remove your school by this time” (Keller *et al.* 1997:39). This was a blatant violation of the stipulations of the Chancellor: the land was not only owned by a community and individuals; it was actually a settlement. But Puttkamer, for the sake of German economic interests, was about to resettle the village from its fertile habitation.

The BM took up this struggle. They wrote several futile petitions to the Governor Von Puttkamer reminding him of the specifications of the Chancellor of what could be declared “Crown Land”. After Puttkamer’s intransigence, they petitioned the Colonial Office in Berlin directly. Consequent to this, the first Land Commission was appointed in January 1902 composed of “a trader, a Government Official and two missionaries” (Keller *et al.* 1997:40). The missionaries, one from the Basel Mission and the other a Roman Catholic, were expected to be the advocates of the natives. The work of this commission resulted to the creation of reserved areas for the natives. When the plantation owners insisted that they would be the ones to determine how much land could be considered reserved land, the BM appealed to the Chancellor.

In 1903 the Chancellor commissioned a special Deputy to look into the issue. The investigative mission which went to six villages around the Fako Mountain reported that the land issue was far from solved. Thus 270 to 290 more hectares were ordered to be added to the 213 hectares already allotted and each native house was entitled to six hectares of land (Keller *et al.* 1997:40).

Keller *et al.* (1997:39) indicates that at the commencement of the expropriation of Bakweri land the Bakweri people had lots of suspicion of the Basel Missionaries. The former believed that the latter was in league with the colonialists and perhaps wanted to camouflage under the gospel while serving the interest of their home government. Keller *et al.* (1997:40) further states that this hampered the initial moves by the missionaries to plant the gospel around the Fako Mountain. He however indicates a change of stance of the natives by 1906 when they realized the pivotal role the missionaries had played in the conservation of their land. More villages opened their doors to the gospel of Christ and many more requested for and offered land for schools to be opened.

The missionaries, though German nationals, made a clear distinction between the secular and the sacred, patriotism and social justice. Ordinarily they would have been expected to serve the German colonial interest in acquiring more lands for plantations to fuel the burgeoning German industries. But on this issue, they took a different position – they stood on the side of the oppressed, though total strangers to them. Although the BM collaborated with the colonial government in other areas of administration (e.g. to fight alcoholism, slavery and the advance of Islam to the south), on the issue of the rights of the natives, they could not compromise. This action was setting a solid precedence for leaders of the yet-to-be-born indigenous church.

The willingness of the natives to receive the gospel of Christ after 1906 is indicative of what the people expect from the Church. The people expect and respect a Church that would speak for them and live their struggles; they expect a Church that understands their daily realities and can bring a message of hope. The Church defines itself in any community by where it stands in moments of crisis.

These would surely serve as foundational lessons for the leaders of the indigenous Church. The impact of this act on the PCC cannot be overemphasized especially as its Constitution (1988:1) specifies:

The Church is the historical and constitutional successor of the Basel Mission Church in Kamerun established in 1886 as an external arm of the Evangelical Missionary Society of Basel (Basel Mission) in Switzerland. It maintains the spiritual, theological, and material continuity of that Church, and upholds the Reformed Tradition.

It could therefore be concluded that the role the PCC played in the resolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon is a continuum of the role the BM played in the resolution of the Bakweri land problem.

The Church must be dynamic. For the church to remain relevant, it must adapt to changing times. For theology to be of essence to a people, it must speak to their daily realities and address their daily challenges. For the PCC to pledge its adherence to the theological apron strings of the founding missionary body (BM), is fettering its relevance and dynamism. The challenges Cameroonians face today are different from those faced in the missionary days, thus, missionary theology cannot aptly address today's context. For the PCC to fully fulfil its mission to the people, it should add a clause to the Constitution on the need to interpret God's Word through the lenses of daily challenges.

4.2.2. Jeremiah Chi Kangsen: Pastor and politician

A second precursor to the 1990-1992 ecclesiastical dabble in politics is the case of Rev. Jeremiah Chi Kangsen. Though he started his pastoral ministry under the BM, his contribution towards the public role of the independent PCC is worth mentioning.

Born in 1917 in the Kesu village in Wum of the Aghem tribe in the North West Region of Cameroon as one of the many children of the polygamous Fon¹⁷, Kangsen got baptized in 1932. He attended Basel Mission School in Wum, Weh and Bali and the senior primary

¹⁷ Fon is the title given to a traditional ruler in the North West Region of Cameroon.

school in Bombe then proceeded to the Catechist Training Institute (CTI) in Nyasoso in 1935 to commence his pastoral formation. From 1936, when he graduated from the CTI, to 1944, he served the Basel Mission church as pastor in various places. Kangsen then proceeded to Ghana for a two-year theological formation in Trinity College. Upon his return to Cameroon in December 1947, as the most educated indigenous pastor of the Basel Mission Church in Southern Cameroon he was posted to teach at the CTI. He was ordained in 1948 into the Ministry of Word and Sacrament of the PCC (Dah 2014:44)

Meanwhile, the Aghem people needed a flag bearer to represent them in the political evolution of Southern Cameroon in the Eastern House of Assembly in Nigeria. On December 27th 1950, the Aghem people, writing to the BM through their paramount Fon Wallang, requested for Kangsen to be liberated by the Church to represent them in politics. On the 8th of January 1951, the BM formerly acquiesced by granting him leave without pay but left the door open for Kangsen to return whenever he felt so (Mbue 2000:9).

This was a ground-breaking move for the BM church; this could be taken for the Church's official endorsement of the public role of the Church. This permission will give Kangsen, who would later on serve as Synod Clerk and Moderator of the PCC, a first-hand experience in politics which would help him later on shape the political path of the Church in his views on the role the church should play in politics and recommendations he would make to the Synod.

Kangsen went in for the elections under the umbrella of the National Congress for Nigeria and the Cameroons (NCNC) and came out victorious. He was later on elected into the House of Representatives in Nigeria. With the Southern Cameroons split from the Eastern House of Assembly, he joined the Kamerun National Congress (KNC). His party won the 1953 elections in Southern Cameroon and he was appointed member of the Executive Council of Southern Cameroon where he was put in charge of Education and Social Services and later in charge of Natural Resources. When his party lost the 1961 elections, he picked up his cassock and went back to the now independent church, the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon.

Mbue (2000:11) confirms that Kangsen's dabble in the political arena sanitized the political game as he carried his pastoral calling into politics. He states: "While in politics, Kangsen never lost sight of his calling – it remained as close to him as ever. From his first day in the Eastern House of Assembly, he always appeared in his clerical attire and was known as, and called 'Pastor' by all." Neba (1996:17) holds that "Kangsen hardly drank to excess and was never found with a girlfriend, a practice then common among politicians." Dah (n.d.:6) quotes Kangsen to have said "... when I did my politics I knew all along that I was a pastor. I knew I shouldn't say anything that I would be ashamed of when I stand on the pulpit to preach. I was very conscious of that".

When Kangsen resumed his pastoral ministry in 1961, he was granted scholarship to further his theological education in Edinburgh. When he returned to Cameroon in 1963, he was assigned to teach in Nyasoso at the CTI where he served until 1967 when he was elected Synod Clerk of the PCC. After two years, unopposed, he was elected Moderator of the PCC to replace Rev Abraham Ngole, the first Moderator of the independent church.

Towards the end of his political career, in 1960, Synod of the PCC asked him to write "his reflections on the relation he saw between 'Church and Politics.'". The document which he submitted to Synod starts by regretting the erroneous impression politicians have given to the common folk that politics "... is a clever way of telling lies to the public and thereby deceiving them" (Dah n.d.:7). If this really was what politics was all about, he argued, then the Church should distance itself from it. He held that the Church has a justifiable role in the political life of the nation warranted by the Bible and the history of the Church. He went further to state that the Bible has never been indifferent to politics quoting Moses as both a religious and political leader and citing the prophetic voice of Samuel, Eli, Amos and Hosea who courageously condemned the foreign and social policies of the kings and were directly involved in directing the affairs of Israel.

Concerning a Christian, he held that though he is not of the world yet he is influenced by the political and social climate of the nation and owes his people a duty to fight for the protection of the citizen and existence of justice. For the Christian to do this he cannot stay aloof from politics; he must get involved without compromising his Christian

principles. He however cautions that before the Christian gets involved in party politics, he should make sure the party's policies enhance the ideals of freedom and community welfare. He equally cautioned against negative nationalism like "... Africa for the Africans' 'Cameroon for the Cameroonians' which could develop into racial and tribal hatred" and enjoined the Christian politician to steer clear of "movements and societies in which violence is practiced as a means of achieving political objectives" (Dah n.d.:10)

Turning to the pastor he believed that every pastor had a right to sympathise with or support any political party but he discouraged active political involvement by a pastor in active service holding that Christians of different contending political parties should be able to view the pastor as a neutral father who can arbitrate. He lauded the church's foresight in this matter in granting leave of service to pastors who wanted to get involved in partisan politics.

By this stance, Kangsen made a difference between involvement in politics (either by the individual pastor or the Church) and involvement in party politics. By all means, he encouraged the pastor and the Church to articulate its position on matters affecting the welfare of the citizens, but cautioned against involvement in party politics. He saw the Church as a neutral arbiter with a moral voice that puts it above party politics but remaining true to its prophetic responsibility.

This reflection which Kangsen addressed to the Synod has influenced the PCC's position on involvement in politics and especially the role the PCC played in the resolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

To elucidate the influence Kangsen's letter had on the PCC's stance on politics, it would be necessary to extensively quote the Book of Orders (1995:61-62) of the PCC which stipulates the beliefs and practices of the Church.

.... The relationship of the Church towards the government must be that of critical detachment. This will set the Church free from any political apron strings and enable it to be free to act as a watch dog for society.... On the whole the Church is called upon to be a watch-man for the society.... Consequently the PCC shall
Continue to encourage its lay-Christians to take active part in politics, because the Church can only bring about the much needed sanity in public

life if those in responsible positions allowed Christian ethics to influence the discharge of their duties and utterances.

The pastor has a divine responsibility to be a reconciling factor where politics, especially in its partisan form, tends to breed hatred and confusion.

a) So in order to be able to minister to all people, irrespective of their political leaning, a pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, still in active service, shall not indulge in partisan politics.

b) A pastor of the Church shall not let his political inclination interfere with his sacred ministry. Pastors are therefore bared from participating [sic] in partisan politics at all levels.

4) However, where a pastor considers his participation in active partisan politics as an expression of obedience and faithfulness to God's call for justice, such a pastor shall be required to resign or ask for leave without pay, from his/her pastoral duties. And his/her political views shall not be understood as the official view of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. But such a pastor shall remain a Christian of the Church and shall receive pastoral care from it.

5) Pastors shall, in any case, exercise their civic rights by voting. In fact, the pastor should encourage his parishioners to exercise their civic rights by participating in free and fair elections. Pastors shall do so without influencing members of their parishes to follow their political persuasion.

From the foregoing, the influence of Kangsen's write-up on the position of the Church on politics is enormous, especially considering that this document is produced about 35 years afterwards. Thus it could be said that till date, the Church's position on its role in politics is hinged on Kangsen's stance.

Haven proven that the PCC was not delving into the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon as a green horn, and the influence of this antecedence on its stance on politics in general and party politics in particular with its attending influence on the role the PCC would play in the 1990-1992 political crisis, it is necessary to move on to look at the role the PCC played in addressing the crisis.

4.3. The role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon

The nation was falling apart, torn from its core by political impasse, fragilised by corruption, regionalism and tribalism and hard hit by a debilitating economic crisis as

presented in Chapter Three. The Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, an apolitical legal entity founded on the ambits of evangelism and convicted in bringing the “fullness of life” to Cameroonians, true to her Constitution which asserts “She feels responsible for the education of the youths, men and women; the liberation of the oppressed, the care of those who suffer” (1988:3) had to rise up to its prophetic calling and take stances on the issues at stake. Just like the case of the churches in Germany, South Africa and El Salvador, the PCC was faced with practical political crisis which required religious answers.

This section examines the role the PCC played in addressing the crisis. This will be articulated under three axes: A) Letters and speeches, B) Sermons preached, C) Indirect or direct actions. Fitting this into Bonhoeffer’s categorisation, letters, speeches and sermons will fall under calling the attention of the state to the consequences of its actions, while indirect and direct action is classified under binding the wounds of the victims of government action and putting a spoke in the wheel of the government.

A) Letters and Speeches

Article 6 (ii) of the 1988 Constitution of the PCC sanctions the role of the Church as a “witness to right, Justice, truth and peace in social, economic and political life of the country in which she lives” (1988:3). It is with this backing that the PCC attempted to act as the voice of the voiceless and watch dog of society in the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. The PCC acted through telex messages to some government officials, memoranda to the president and by taking her own stance on issues of public interest through circulars to congregations and presentations in political forums of national and international interest.

i. Letter from the Synod Committee of the PCC

The first of these reactions was a circular letter from the Synod Committee of the PCC issued on the 20th March 1991. This was titled, “The position of the PCC on multi-party politics”. At the dawn of the second wave of multipartyism, this letter was aimed at making known the official position of the Church and to provide counsel to the pastors. It also

addressed Christians found in decision making bodies of the country and their own task in nation building. It was to be read in all congregations of the PCC.

On the prophetic ministry of the Church, the Synod Committee saw the duty of the PCC as being,

... to encourage the rich to use their wealth to the glory of God and the service of their fellowmen and proclaim liberty to the oppressed and to champion the cause of the poor and weak. For if the Church stayed quiet on established evils and known wrongs, then it would be identifying itself and the Christian faith with evil and wrong-doing. The Church should be able “to defend right when it is miscalled wrong”. The Church should not strive to be popular with secular regimes, rather its over-riding concern must be to remain faithful to its calling by its Lord and Master Jesus Christ (Nku 1993:13)

The Synod Committee further held that it was the divine duty of the Church to,

... jealously guard the sovereignty of our nation. We are called upon to promote national development and human progress. Our ministry of love and reconciliation must enhance the national effort of general integration. But we must constantly remember that these ideals can only be realized in the context of peace. And from our point of view, peace is not merely the absence of tension and strife but the presence of justice. That is why the Church cannot allow anything to compromise its pursuit of justice (Nku1993:17)

According to the Synod Committee, the government had the duty to “... guarantee the fundamental human liberties of free expression and association” (Nku, 1993:14), ensure a fair distribution of the national wealth, participation of citizens in nation building and determining the utilization of natural resources. Synod Committee defined a good government as one which must:

...not ignore minority rights... jealously guard and protect the rights of all members of the community ... not alienate the masses from the ruling authorities Aim at organizing society in such a way that people are not forced to resort to revolutions and physical uprisings to seek redress for their grievances” (Nku1993:14-15)

From the foregoing, the PCC carved out spheres for herself and for the government. While arrogating to herself the role of the watchdog of the society, defender of truth and justice, she apportioned to the government the role of ensuring the welfare of the citizens.

On Christians and politics, the Synod Committee encouraged “especially the lay members, to take active part in politics” believing by so doing “the Church can bring about the much-needed sanity in public life” (Nku1993:15).

Concerning the pastor and partisan politics, Synod Committee held that “the pastor has a divine responsibility to be a reconciling factor where politics tends to breed hatred and confusion” (Nku1993:15). Synod Committee upheld the Church’s position which banned the active participation of pastors in partisan politics and gave a lee way for pastors who wish to so engage in politics to resign from their pastoral duties but emphasized that it was the civic right of pastors to vote. Synod Committee concluded that “the minister of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon should conduct himself in such a way that his integrity should rise above partisan politics. This will win him the respect of his parishioners” (Nku 1993:17). This very much resonates with the position of Jeremiah Chi Kangsen in 1960 which was captured in the Book of Orders (1995:61-62). As will be argued later, the leaders of the PCC will betray their political neutrality in a pre-election letter they will address to all congregations of the PCC.

ii. A letter to the government, political parties and people of Cameroon.

On the 18th of June 1991 FEMEC, in a letter titled “Come let us reason together: An appeal to the government, the political parties and the people of Cameroon for Peace, Restraint and Objectivity” made her analysis of the political situation and proposed some solutions. The positions in this letter could be attributed largely to the PCC for a number of reasons: Firstly, she was a member of FEMEC; secondly, the then President of FEMEC whose signature was appended to the letter, the RT. Rev. Awasom, was also the then Moderator of the PCC; and thirdly, according to Dah (2011:96) the letter was drafted and signed in Buea, the seat of the PCC.

In the letter FEMEC member churches welcomed the re-birth of multipartyism but regretted the lives that were lost in the process – a loss which would have been averted

had both the government and opposition parties exercised some “restraint, the spirit of patience and tolerance” (Dah 2011:88).

The letter indicted both the government and opposition parties for the “rising emotions, quick decisions for action ... and the determined efforts to consolidate power and authority by all means” all at the expense of the “peace and security of the common citizen” (Dah, 2011:89).

The FEMEC member churches held the opinion that both the government and opposition leaders had the duty to ensure a peaceful environment for the citizens. While admitting the inadvertence of conflicts, they called for compromise on both sides.

As regards the status quo, they observed that:

Hate, repression, consolidation of power, letting lose the trigger of the gun, throwing of stones, setting of buildings on fire, attempt to starve other citizens and road blocks with strikes calls, would be nobody’s victory; not even the one who has all the power and weapons at his disposal.... Road blocks, wild-cat strike calls and action – coupled with violence and lose [sic] of lives give the credit to no party (Dah, 2011:91).

After pledging their commitment to pray for the nation they asked “But what is the purpose of these prayers of peace, if the politicians and the forces of peace and order or shall we say ‘Law and Order”, those who are in authority and those who make the policy only seem to go on perpetuating actions which call for violent reaction?” (Dah 2011:90). They went ahead to caution that “Force, ultimatums and the barrel of the gun have never brought about true peace to a people of any nation – we don’t think it would bring to Cameroon today” (Dah 2011:90).

After citing antecedence of peaceful resolution of political issues through dialogue and consensual agreement, the FEMEC member churches wrote: “It would seem to us, therefore that asking the people of various shades of opinion to come together and decide which way the country should go is not a new or strange idea” (Dah 2011:993). To them, the way forward was a meeting of the various political parties for a consensual agreement. This meeting was important because:

It is no secret to any Cameroonian that the present national Assembly, the present government and our present president are the results of the vote of a one-party system. We are equally aware that the rules applied in that one party system were worked out by the people who were going to benefit from them. Common sense certainly questions how the game would be played by 28 or more parties today. Who has sole right to work out the rules if it is not these parties sitting together? That is why we think that to be consistent with our peaceful change as cited above, plans for constitutional changes, electoral changes or procedures, political orientations for the future should be initiated, prepared and proposed by the people who have embraced the birth of political pluralism with such euphoria. What such 'a come together' should be called is irrelevant at this point (Dah 2011:93-94).

The letter ends up by indicating that the prayers of the Protestant Churches would be in vain if "the government, the opposition parties and His Excellency the President of the Republic and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces" do not help us by restraining their reactions and listening to each other's point of view and finally coming to a compromise" (Dah 2011:96).

iii. Memo presented to President Paul Biya

The third reaction by the Church was when President Paul Biya came to Buea, the headquarters of the PCC, in one of his nationwide tours on the 27th of September 1991. The Synod Clerk of the PCC, Rev Nyansako-ni-Nku, (acting in the stead of the Moderator who was out of station) led a delegation including executive members of the PCC and members of other Churches to meet the President. He presented a memo reviewing the political atmosphere and stated what the PCC thought was expected of the government.

While appreciating government's action for the re-introduction of "plural politics" in Cameroon and the amnesty granted to "political offenders" the Memo called on government to create "a general forum in which all the alternative views from a cross-section of the country can be freely expressed in order to formulate a common national program of action" (Nku1993:20).

In the memo the Synod Clerk decried the ugly effects of tribalism in the universities and in public life and corruption in "very high places" while regretting that promises "to stamp out these vices have not been matched with action" (Nku1993:22). The memo saw

government's efforts at bilingualism as lame and directly indicted the state media, Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) for having over 80% of its programs in the French language. It condemned institutionalized tribalism, sectionalism and nepotism, which destroyed national unity.

The creation of the university of Buea was welcomed and a wish was made that the same humiliating discrimination that had been the lot of Anglophones for the last 30 years be stopped, while reforms be implemented in Yaounde University to enable it serve as a cradle of bilingualism and national unity.

The Memo also expressed dissatisfaction on the marginalization of Anglophones considered only as second best in administrative and political appointments. It advocated the return to a federal system, which should have a defined system of revenue allocation. This should be followed by an equitable distribution of the nation's resources as a guarantee for peace and stability in the country.

iv. Contribution at the Tripartite Conference

The fourth reaction by the PCC was in November 1991. In the heart of the ghost towns that had almost crippled the economy of the major towns and disrupted movements, President Paul Biya called for a tripartite conference in Yaounde in October/November 1991. The Moderator of the PCC, Rt. Rev. H.A. Awasom, on behalf of all the Protestant Churches in Cameroon made very important interventions on the issue of the electoral code in his address to the conference on November 1st 1991. Although Awasom addressed the Conference as the President of the then FEMEC, his analysis and proposals cannot be dissociated from the stance of the PCC. This is evident in his opening remarks in which he was thankful for "... the space you have offered me to express my opinion and that of the Christians and colleagues of our Church as well as the Protestant (if not all) Churches in Cameroon...." (Nku 1993:27)

In his address, Awasom regretted the death toll and pain the political impasse had caused the population – an impasse that could have been solved otherwise. To him, it was "a shame and disgrace to all of us whether Government or the so-called Opposition parties and non-Politicians alike" (Nku 1993:27)

Referring to the events leading to the Tripartite Conference Awasom said:

Let me dare to speak for the Cameroon public; we are tired of accusations and counteraccusations as to who is the cause of violence in our streets and who is not. Yet the violence continues unabated with lives going along with it. Let us all be honest and accept our collective responsibility for the horror we have created in our country for selfish interests.... Yet neither government nor opposition can accept guilt or partial guilt for these wanton killings; because each side again claims to be fighting for the rights, the protection the security of the people of this country, and the so called state institutions. And what about those dying with green leaves signifying peace in their hands on our streets! Are they dogs? ... But people have been murdered in their tens and hundreds in our towns and cities but nobody seems to have been worried about them Everybody goes out on “Peace Marches” condemns violence yet – violence persists – who then is responsible? (Nku, 1993:29)

As per his expectations of the conduct of business during the conference to the end of having meaningful and long-lasting resolutions Awasom suggested that:

... the main role players in this game must be very flexible if they have the interest and love for this country at heart. These role players are none other than ... government, or the ruling party, and the leaders of other political parties, which have termed themselves opposition. These groups have to be very flexible and flexibility requires a change of stand-point, a change of opinion and a shift in emphasis in the light of understanding the other person’s view point, and also in the interest and willingness to strike a compromise.... God and history will judge us. (Nku, 1993:28)

He further stated that:

This conference, in order to be seen and accepted as having done its assignment well, and for the good of the people of this country, must of necessity address itself to these two inter-related painful issues. The “Ghost Town Operation” (Villes Mortes) and the Omnipresence [sic] and Confronting Armforces [sic] in the major towns of our provinces, sometimes shooting at marching crowds at close range. (Nku, 1993:29)

On the issue at hand – the drawing up of an electoral code – Awasom opined that:

“An Electoral Code, however well drawn up in an atmosphere of near disorder, an atmosphere of a near state of emergency and an atmosphere of complete distrust and lack of faith in one another, as we even feel and

observe in this conference room, would just be window dressing. The task has to be done, but not before the polluted air is cleared” (Nku 1993:29)

He further suggested that a smaller group of specialists should be set up and tasked to propose a new electoral code and an independent electoral commission be put in place to oversee elections in Cameroon.

Basing his judgment on the experience of the conduct of previous elections which, even under the one-party system, were not transparent he stated that:

... closely following the question of the Electoral Code, however, perfect it would be, is the question of the organisation and conduct of the election. I am of the opinion, Sir, ... that any sincere peace loving Cameroonian who wants fair-play at this critical period of our country’s political life, that an Independent Electoral Commission would be set up to oversee the elections itself. (Nku, 1993:30)

On a whole, this is the most succinct presentation the PCC did directly to the government which addressed the status quo and gave suggestions for a way forward.

In effect, the PCC, through this presentation proposed the following for the resolution of the political impasse:

- i. Flexibility from both the ruling and opposition parties and their willingness to concede to some demands of the other for the sake of peace.
- ii. The “ghost towns” and overbearing presence of the armed forces should be addressed.
- iii. A small committee be set up to draft an electoral code
- iv. An independent electoral committee be put in place to oversee the conduct of elections.

- v. **Telex message to President Paul Biya on Legislative Elections**

Shortly after the tripartite conference, the President, Paul Biya, decided to call for legislative elections slated on 1st March 1992. Many political parties felt this was inappropriate especially as it was too soon coupled with the absence of a consensus on an electoral code, and threatened to boycott the elections. The Moderator, Rt. Rev. H.A.

Awasom, whose previous pleas at the Tripartite Conference for the enactment of a consensus Electoral Code had not been heeded to, and the Synod Clerk, Nyansako-Ni-Nku, in a fourth reaction on behalf of the PCC, addressed a telex message to the President of the Republic of Cameroon. In it they stated the following:

There is yet no general agreement as regards the electoral code.
The Tripartite Conference itself closed without receiving reports of the drafting committee it appointed
Consequently, there is so much controversy surrounding the Electoral Code as approved by the last National Assembly
Normally, people should be called upon to elect a parliament after they know what the Constitution of the Nation Attributes to parliament
Secondly, the ruling CPDM party itself, has not been able to fulfill the requirements of its own Electoral Code e.g. the Publication of the list of candidates 40 days prior to the election date and the payment of deposits to the Treasury; because of time constraints.
In our opinion, it is not a good omen for the Nation when government itself, cannot observe its own laws!
The fact that the number of political parties participating in the Elections is less than those abstaining, is also in our view not healthy for the desired peaceful evolution of our Nation.
In the light of all these and other issues, which threaten the peace of our Nation, we strongly feel compelled by our devine [sic] calling to appeal to Your Excellency to act promptly to save our dear fatherland before the situation becomes irredeemable [sic].
That is why we further appeal to Your Excellency to reconsider the National Legislative Elections Scheduled for 1st March 1992, to a more opportune time.
In the meantime, we shall continue to pray to our God and Father for the peace and unity of this country. May he bless you in your demanding task of leading the Nation.

It should be mentioned that this appeal fell on deaf ears as elections went ahead as scheduled on the 1st of March 1992 and it was boycotted by the main opposition party, SDF, alongside others.

vi. A Pastoral Letter to all Congregations of the PCC

Shortly after the legislative elections in which the ruling CPDM party had a landslide victory, the President decided to call for precipitated presidential elections for 11th October 1992. In spite of the continuous complaint of the

opposition parties of the uneven political terrain warranted by the lopsided electoral code and the absence of an independent commission to supervise the elections, the main opposition parties decided to contest. The Church found its Christians torn amongst themselves as a result of contending political inclinations.

The Moderator and Synod Clerk, in a fifth reaction, sent out an official communiqué addressed to all congregations titled “Your Christian Conscience and the Presidential Elections”. In it, the Church’s hierarchy, while distancing their duty from that of instructing the Christians who to vote for, insisted on their responsibility to counsel them to use their ballots in a “responsible Christian manner” (Nku 1993:36).

They regretted the failure by the government to settle the “controversial issue of the Constitution” and the absence of a consensus electoral code and they expressed concerns over the short time (six weeks) given by government for political parties to prepare for the elections.

They reminded the Christians of their responsibility to work for genuine peace which is predicated on the presence of justice. They instructed the Christians, in casting their votes, to:

... look for a person whom you believe has the divine qualities of leadership as outlined in the Bible, at a time when the Children of Israel were about to choose their leader. He must be one whom you believe:

“Has been chosen by God to lead this country”

“Who will not multiply horses for himself”

“Will not multiply wives for himself and

“Will not multiply for himself silver and gold” (Dt. 17:15-17) (Nku1993:36)

They went further to pose the following questions to guide the presidential choice of the Christians:

In whom can you stake your confidence? Who do we trust has the capacity and ability to revive the depressed spirits of Cameroonians and galvanized [sic] them to work hard for the rebuilding of this nation? Who do we trust has the integrity to stop the massive corruption, and institutionalized looting

of public funds, which is now common practice in our country? Who do we trust can turn this rapidly declining economy around? Who do we trust can succeed in making Cameroonians to gain their lost confidence in public institutions and state authority? Who do we trust can give this country a sense of purpose and make every Cameroonian really feel at home here? Who do you trust will rule in such a way that social justice i.e. the equitable distribution of our natural resources, will cease to be an empty slogan? (Nku 1993:37)

They ended by calling on all congregations and Christians to set aside 13th September, 20th September and 27th September to 4th October as days of special intercessory prayers for the country.

The letters and speeches by PCC hierarchy fall under calling the attention of the state to the implication of its actions in Bonhoeffer's paradigm, and under the "sympathetic" level of church commitment in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa according to Borer's categorisation (Borer, 1998:4).

Chapter Five will critically examine the letters and speeches. Suffice it here to state that the PCC was not short of words in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, as evidenced by the number of letters written and speeches made.

B) Sermons

This section will take a look at sermons that were preached during the period of the political crisis in Cameroon. If sermons are anything to go by, they are expected to engender transformation both in the spiritual and secular domains. Sermons are the canal for the interpretation of God's Word; sermons are the vehicle for the transportation of God's will to the people; sermons can be avenues for the gleaning of the political or social theology of the Church.

Sermons at crisis moments have the double effect of consoling the oppressed and troubling the oppressor. This is evidenced by the radio sermon of Bonhoeffer in Germany that was interrupted, and the troubling sermon that was preached by Arch Bishop Romero in El Salvador on the eve of his assassination. His assassination cannot be disconnected from the effect of this sermon on the government.

Also, though sermons generally would fall under Bonhoeffer's first category of the public role of the church (calling the attention of the government to the consequences of its actions) it can also be considered under the second category (binding the wounds of those crushed by the vicious wheel of the government) given its palliative role in healing wounded souls.

This section will examine sermons preached at two locations: Yaounde and Buea. The justification for the selection of these two locations is hinged on the fact that Yaounde is the political capital of Cameroon, thus sermons preached there target the ruling party and policy makers and Buea is the seat of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon, and sermons preached here might seek to clarify the position of the Church on national issues.

A sermon preached in each of these locations will be gleaned to decipher the political stance of the PCC vis-à-vis the crisis.

i. Sermon preached in Buea

Preaching in Buea Station congregation in Buea on the 29th of December 1991 on Romans 13:11-12, Rev Nyansako-ni-Nku, then Synod Clerk of the PCC, titled his sermon "Between memory and hope". Looking back at the year that was ending, Nku lamented the state of affairs in Cameroon. He decried the economic recession that was a product of the political crisis, the social and political fabric that was disintegrating, the destruction of property and the mayhem which led some Cameroonians to hunt down their compatriots "as if they were animals in the wild forest" (Nku 1999:8).

As concerns the Tripartite Conference and its outcome, Nku (1999:8) said:

The psyche of our nation was so badly shaken that when the so-called tripartite conference was called, many Cameroonians breathed a sigh of relief and looked up to the conference with pregnant anxiety.

And with the signing of the so-called Yaounde accord, we thought common sense had finally prevailed, and our country could march on forward with hope.

But unfortunately, no sooner than the conference rose in Yaounde did we begin to receive conflicting signals from our political leaders. It would seem there is still so much suspicion and mistrust by all the parties concerned. And like all political treaties that have been signed in the course of human history, the interpretation of the text varied from one signatory to the other.

Consequently, the desired goal cannot be fully realized. And while this wrangling goes on, the ordinary Cameroonian continues to groan in pain and to suffer.

Nku painted the level of exasperation of the ordinary Cameroonian at the state of the nation in the hilarious story of an old lady. He said:

... an old lady ... was recently requested by the pastor to pray, for the current situation in the country. The frail old lady, walked up in front of the congregation, closed her eyes, and with her feeble arms stretched upwards, she pleaded with God, that the situation in Cameroon now was so serious that God should not just send his son, but he should come himself and redeem us. The old lady pleaded that what we were in, needed more than just the immature intervention of a child, so the Father himself must step in. Nku (1999:9)

Nku, in this sermon, aptly diagnosed the state of affairs of the nation at that time, but unfortunately failed to point a way out of it. It is one thing to lament about the status quo, it is something else to proffer a convincing way out.

ii. Sermon preached in Yaounde

The Rev Dr. Bame Bame Michael, the then Parish Pastor of Bastos congregation in Yaounde (the political capital of Cameroon, thus the centre of all government action) and the Dean of the then Faculty of Protestant Theology in Yaounde, preached a very fiery sermon on the 29th of September 1991 directly indicting the government. Before then the Rev Dr. Bame Bame Michael had been considered a sympathizer of the opposition SDF party and an enemy to the CPDM government (Buma Kor, interviewed on 17/10/2017 in Yaounde). It should be noted that the Bastos congregation was the hub for most Anglophone top politicians in Yaounde. Thus, sermons preached in this congregation had a direct bearing on government action and, often times, solicited an immediate reaction. Rev Dr. Bame's words were taken seriously by the government especially given his status in the Anglophone community in Yaounde. This is corroborated by Buma Kor (1997:24) when he states that "With Rev. Bame's political stance, the pulpit at Bastos was regularly listened to and his fame became established with the attendant recognition of a peoples' spokesman who was consulted by several and diverse dignitaries in Yaounde"

Although this sermon does not directly address the political crisis albeit its being preached during the heat of the crisis, it is replete with insinuations which are worth our attention.

In this sermon Rev Dr. Bame Bame Michael talked about threats to his life from official quarters, attempts to bring his administration to disrepute and possible plans to frame him up. He said:

Last year, towards the end of the academic year, the Chairman of the Board of the Faculty of Theology received an anonymous phone call from the Ministry of Territorial Administration, asking him to warn me to keep quiet or if I didn't keep quiet they will use all means to shut me up. Then he wrote a letter to the Chairman of the Board and I am keeping a copy of that letter, I have it here in my bible. Then I was informed by some friends that some security officers were sent into the Faculty of Theology to stir up the students so they should go on strike last year, so that the Board of Governors will come to the conclusion that I was not able to run that institution and they will not vote me again. That happened again this year but they did not succeed. About five weeks ago a friend of mine who occupies a very important position in the country called me and said, "Michael when you go about now make sure that your car is well locked because I have reliable information that they might throw some documents into your car in order to incriminate you" (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020)

Rev Bame here exposes the methods the government had been using to deal with political opponents – threats, frame-ups and blackmails. This is akin to what Bonhoeffer experienced in Germany, Desmond Tutu and others experienced in South Africa and Arch Bishop Oscar Romero experienced in El Salvador. A common denominator for dictatorial regimes is their ability to clamp down on dissenting voices – even the church.

These threats had been experienced by other political opponents like Ni John Fru Ndi of the SDF party, but the accusation coming from the pulpit and from Rev Dr. Bame, had greater credibility

He was not taking these threats lightly because he was conscious of the fact that:

... not too long ago ... the retired Bishop of Ngaoundere was brutally murdered in his sleep. It was not only a senseless but also a gruesome and diabolic act. It revealed the true character of the forces which are at war in

our land. It shows to what extent the evil forces ruling in this land are ready to go in order to maintain their hold on the enslaved people of this land. When that happened it dawned on me that one could not take lightly the threats that have been made against certain religious figures on this land, myself included. We cannot forget that within a brief interval in the history of this nation, three prominent religious figures have died in mysterious circumstances. (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020)

The murder of the retired Bishop of Ngaoundere and the “mysterious circumstances” surrounding the death of three religious leaders was general knowledge at the time, but Bame here directly lays the blame of these acts on the doorsteps of the government when he states “It shows to what extent the evil forces ruling in this land are ready to go in order to maintain their hold on the enslaved people of this land.” He speaks directly to power and utters publicly what might have been muttered fearfully in some quarters, thereby sending a signal to government that the masses are not unaware of their devices.

Bame then went ahead to make some very strong assertions concerning the nation of Cameroon and the government of Cameroon. For a better compression of the enormity of his assertions, I here quote him extensively:

The battle for the soul of this nation which has now reached its final phase actually started in 1985. In that year, during the Bamenda congress, the ruling party of this country changed not only its name but also its motto and the word “Truth” was dropped and replaced by the word “Progress”. From a purely linguistic and ideological stand point, it was a relatively unimportant change but from a spiritual stand point it was far reaching because a force opposed to truth had taken control of the ruling party. And one woman in Bamenda, when that happened, asked the question, “Does this mean that we shall never hear the truth again in this land?”

That power was satan, whom, as Jesus says in John 8:44, from the beginning he was a murderer and has never been on the side of truth because there is no truth in him. When he tells a lie he is only doing what is natural to him because he is a liar and the father of lies. Were our leaders’ conscious of what they were doing? Only God knows, but the consequences are there for everyone to see. Since 1985 this country has been plunged into spiritual darkness. The devil has spread his influence over every aspect of our national life, and his twofold character of murderer and father of lies has been reflected in everything happening in this country.

After the Bamenda Congress, there was a government reshuffle, that same night the lord showed me a vision of the Unity Palace. In that vision I saw a dark cloud descending on the Unity Palace and in the midst of that dark cloud there was a demon crouching as dark as charcoal. What stood out in sharp contrast were its white eyeballs and sharp teeth that horrible looking creature was grinning and seemed to be saying to itself, "I have finally Gained control of the Unity Palace".... It has been transformed into its headquarters its home base where he gives out commands to all the units, the mobile units he has deployed all over our national territory. Our land has become the nest of demons. After that vision I was urged to make a statement to this congregation - a statement which irritated all of you and which made u look on me as though I were a lunatic, and of course I think I have always been that. I said, and I quote my very words "We are entering the darkest period in the history of our country".

Today nobody doubts the truth of that statement. A year after the congress in Bamenda the Rosicrucians held their first regional conference in our capital city that was the first of its kind. Then satan began consolidating his victory over the people of this land and since 1985 the spirit ruling over the people of Cameroon has not been the spirit of God but spirit of Lucifer, the spirit of the dragon the great deceiver. And nearly all Cameroonians including some believing Christians have obediently and slavishly offered their service to him unknowingly through serving those whom satan has placed in positions of power and authority over this nation. If you serve somebody who has given his life to serve satan you are indirectly serving satan through the service you render to him.

Let me say this loud and clear, I have said it many times before but let me say it again, for this might be the last time you hear it from my mouth: the battle in this country is not between Anglophones and Francophones, between the Betis the and the rest of the country, between the North West and the South West, between Muslims and Christians, the battle in this country is a battle between God and satan. I have said that before and I repeat it, the battle in this country is between the servants of satan and the servants of God, between darkness and light, between evil and good. It is a spiritual battle in which human beings are being used as willing instruments. And unless we realise this truth we will be doomed forever. The time has come when the truth must ring throughout this land in the churches and out of the churches, for the day of Gods Judgment is near. (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020)

Here, Bame states a historical fact – the Bamenda congress and the change of name of the ruling party from CNU to CPDM which engendered the change of motto – but gives it a spiritual interpretation. He harps on the replacement of the word "Truth" with the word

“Progress” in the motto of the new party interpreting this to signify the enthronement of Satan over the affairs of the party and the nation and the suppression of truth in the public domain. He sees the Cameroon government as a surrogate of Rosicrucianism – a theme which had become common in his sermons (cf. Kor 1997:25) and vilifies all those who serve the government. Did Bame expect all government servants who are Christians to resign? What would become of their families? Would the Church have provided jobs for them?

The vision he purports to have had further specifies the Unity Palace (the Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon) as the seat of demons. He falls short of calling the President the demon incarnate.

Rev. Dr. Bame Michael further stated that:

The real enemy is satan it is not those who have a job and fight to earn a living and feed their families and send their children to school. The enemy is satan and those who are serving his course in this land. The enemies of our republican institutions are those who are shedding blood and locking up people in prisons because they dare ask for their freedom and their rights, those are the enemies of our republican institutions. (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020)

Based on the fact that the 1990-1992 political crisis was wrapped in the quest for freedoms (of association and expression) with the government tightening the noose and the opposition asking for more with the attendant arrest and torture of political leaders and civilians, Bame’s assertion can be argued to mean the CPDM government is the real enemy of the state.

He then calls on the worshippers to take a stance either for God or for the devil. Drawing inspiration from Joshua 24:15 he said:

The time has come for us to decide either to stand on the side of wrong or on the side of right; either to stand on the side of God or to stand on the side of satan; the time has come for us to choose this day whom we are going to serve, either the God the Father of our lord Jesus Christ, or the god of the rosicrucians, the sorcerers, who are giving the instructions to our leaders and pushing them to destroy the peoples of this land. Time has

come for us to decide on which side we stand. “Chose whom you will serve”. The time has come for us to stand either on the side of evil or right, darkness or light and to do so publicly and in a most determined and uncompromising manner. The whole world must know on which side each of us stands. God must know on which side each of us stands. Are you going to stand on His side or on the side of Lucifer and the devil? (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020)

Bame’s call for the worshippers to either stand on the side of God or Satan, having in hindsight the fact that he had already demonized the CPDM government, was akin to out rightly asking them to stand for the opposition party. However, his call to action seems not to be as concrete as his exposition of the government system. He does not say what he expected the people to do to prove they have taken a stance. Were they to resign from government? Were they to vote for the opposition party in the event of an election? Were they to take to the streets to continue mounting pressure on the government and orchestrate an eventual collapse of the “evil” system? In the face of injustice and oppression, the Church must prescribe practical actions and methods to ensure the liberation of the people (Rev. Professor Anyambod Emmanuel, interviewed on 17/5/2017 in Yaounde).

Just like the Confessing Church in Germany, the black churches in South Africa and the Roman Catholic Church in El Salvador, the forgoing shows that the PCC was not silent from the pulpit in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. The sermons demonstrate that the Church was conscious of the stakes and understood the political, economic, social and spiritual implications of government action. However, unlike the call for protest launched in South Africa, the call to action from PCC’s pulpit was lame.

C. Indirect actions.

i. Engagement of some pastors of the PCC

The role played by some pastors in the political process should not be omitted. Some of those to be mentioned in this category include the late Rev Henry Anye Awasom, the then Moderator of the PCC, the Rev. Dr. Nyansako-ni-Nku, then then Synod Clerk, the late

Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame, the then Pastor of Bastos congregation in Yaounde and the Rev. Joe Set Aji-Mvo, the then Director of Church Centre in Mankon, Bamenda. These pastors stood out as symbols of hope amidst hopelessness and their fearlessness, in one way or another, brought pressure to bear on the government for a resolution of the crisis. Awasom, as earlier elucidated, in spite of pressure and threats, stood his grounds on the call of the Church to dialogue. As a church leader he had the option to remain silent or speak out. He preferred the latter with all that it entailed. He was blunt in his presentation to the Tripartite Conference in Yaounde in speaking truth to power and was courageous in the pastoral letter he co-signed with the then Synod Clerk addressed to the congregations on the church and multipartyism.

Nku, then Synod Clerk, just like his boss the Moderator, consciously chose the path to be the voice of the voiceless. His speech to the President during his visit to Buea (as presented above) was forthright. He presented the raw facts to the President on the various vexing issues affecting the nation and especially the Anglophones. As Synod Clerk of the PCC, who was also the Chief of Staff, his forthrightness and fluid articulation served as a source of inspiration to other pastors who in their own corners articulated similar concerns (Rev. Professor Anyambod Emmanuel, interviewed on 17/5/2017 in Yaounde).

Bame, vocal and fearless, became a point of reference in Yaounde. His theological analysis of political events in the nation sent a chill down the spine of his family and friends who feared for his life and aroused a stir in the ranks of the government. He was considered an opinion leader in Yaounde.

Amongst all the PCC pastors in Bamenda, the stronghold of the SDF party (the opposition party), Aji-Mvo's role was outstanding. As Director of Church Centre, Mankon, Bamenda, he played host to meetings that laid the groundwork for the creation of the SDF party and served as chaplain to some. He also attended and openly prayed during some SDF rallies. He saw his role as being "to instil in folks that God was the centre of both personal and political life; and that new opposition parties were to see their coming up like liberation movement and not another personality cult." (Interview with Aji-Mvo, 8/11/2020). He was

one of the few pastors who visited Fru Ndi regularly during those tumultuous years and ministered to him.

While Awasom and Nku were the voice in Buea, the seat of the PCC, and Bame was in Yaounde, the seat of the government, Aji-Mvo was in Bamenda, the seat of the SDF party. These personalities became the face of hope for the people and the dread of the government.

These pastors played various individual roles to address the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. In the next chapter, we will argue that none of these persons however, could rise up to the level of Bonhoeffer in Germany, Beyers Naude in South Africa or Arch Bishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador to champion the course and be the voice of the voiceless in Cameroon.

ii. The social services of the PCC.

To be able to attain its goal the PCC had to create various arms to attend to the needs of specific groups. The Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF) movement was created to attend to the needs of the youths, the Christian Men's Fellowship (CMF) movement to address the needs of the men and the Christian Women's Fellowship (CWF) movement to cater for the women.

These movements are organized at congregational, presbytery and national levels. They have the task of growing the faith of their members, equipping them with life skills by teaching them various methods of economic sustainability, imbuing them with Christian family values and educating them in responsible citizenship. These movements also serve as a social support system. They rally to the assistance of any of theirs in trouble or in urgent need. They visit their sick members, assist in the payment of medical bills of members in need and condole with bereaved members. Some groups provide capital for members who wish to engage in petit business. These movements were engaged in these before the crisis, during the crisis and after the crisis. It is their normal modus operandi.

These arms of the PCC, in practical terms, serve to “bind the wounds” of persons who have been crushed by the “vicious wheel” of the system. The Movements serve as a social support system for members. Although there is no statistics available as to how many persons these movements reached out to, from the activities of the group, it can be surmised that they cushioned the effect of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon on their members.

iii. Prison Ministry

d. Direct actions

As discussed in Chapter Two, Bonhoeffer in Germany engaged in direct action by getting involved in plots to assassinate Hitler. In South Africa, Desmond Tutu, Alan Boesak, Frank Chicane and other church leaders defied the Apartheid government’s ban on protest by leading their members in a public manifestation. In El Salvador, Arch Bishop Oscar Romero boycotted all public ceremonies in protest against the murder of a Priest.

In the case of Cameroon, this research found no evidence of any direct action the PCC engaged in pertaining to the 1990-1992 political crisis. It can therefore, be concluded that the PCC did not take the third step of the Bonhoeffer’s paradigm.

4.4. State reactions to the role the PCC played in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon

Speaking against state action in Cameroon, as was the case in Germany, in El Salvador and in South Africa, had consequences. In Germany Bonhoeffer was banned from preaching in the radio and teaching in the university. South Africa Pastors were arrested, the Khotso House and the Khena House that lodged the SACC and SACCB respectively were bombed. In El Salvador priests were arrested, tortured and killed. Arch Bishop Oscar Romero was assassinated.

Arch Bishop Oscar Romero had said, “A Church which does not suffer persecution, but in fact enjoys the privileges and the support of the world, is a Church which should be

afraid, because it is not the true Church of Jesus Christ.” He later on added: “It would be sad that in a country in which there are so many horrible assassinations there were no priests counted among the victims” (O’Sullivan 2015:4)

The PCC leaders of the time were aware of this and it was a path they walked conscious of its consequences. The PCC’s pronouncements on political issues in Cameroon did not augur well with the government and various attempts were made to muffle the voice of the Church and scaring off its leaders. The reaction of the state, though in some cases came after the period under review, but its cause could be traced to the 1990-1992 pronouncements of the PCC.

i. Rt. Rev. Henry Anye Awasom

The then Moderator of the PCC the Rt. Rev. Henry Anye Awasom, the leader of the PCC, through his various public pronouncements did not mince his words as concerns the position of the PCC vis-à-vis the political crisis. He was labelled an SDF sympathizer especially given the fact that he hailed from Mankon, Bamenda, just like the SDF leader, Ni John Fru Ndi (Interview with Nku 6/8/2017), and treated as such. Apart from anonymous threats through telephone calls and letters, the government stepped up its game when by 7 am on Tuesday 1st of February 1994 armed gendarmes put the Moderator’s residence under siege. According to The Herald newspaper (No. 083 of Thursday February 10-13 1994) quoted in Dah, 2011:74, Moderator Awasom had been “...included in a sweeping dragnet of opposition figures across the nation that the regime planned to incriminate” (Dah, 2011:74) The plan was “... to hide a quantity of arms and ammunitions in the prelate’s yard and then accuse him of being in possession of firearms for political motives.” (Dah, 2011:76). The idea was to rope-in Awasom “... in a make-up coup d’état to divert the nation’s attention from the acute socio-economic problems that ... overwhelm[ed] the government. The list ... [includd] Cardinal Tumi, Yondo Marcel, Yondo Black, Fru Ndi, Jean Jacques Ekindi, and others” (Dah, 2011:76).

Narrating the events of the fateful morning of February 1, 1994, which The Herald newspaper referred to as “Morning Drama” the newspaper indicates that the gendarmes positioned themselves around the home of the Moderator. Unperturbed, Awasom

followed his usual morning routine of cleaning up and getting ready for office. “But Awasom would not be allowed to leave his compound for his office until there was a sharp exchange in which he insisted that he must be in office from where he could be got as soon as he was wanted.” (Dah 2011:75).

He was finally allowed to go to his office (which is located about 200 meters away from his residence in the same premises). Upon arrival in his office he tried unsuccessfully to reach the Prime Minister in Yaounde. He finally got the Governor of the South West Region, Oben Peter Ashu, on phone to find out the reason of the morning harassment. The governor claimed ignorance of the presence of the gendarmes at the Moderator’s residence. The Herald newspaper states that: “Just then, the Gendarme Commandant arrived and told the Church prelate that the operation had been intended to arrest a culprit hiding behind the Moderator’s house. The culprit, he claimed, ... [had] been picked up and whisked away.” (Dah 2011:75).

About half an hour after the Moderator’s encounter with the Gendarme Commandant, Governor Oben Peter Ashu, who had earlier claimed ignorance of the presence of gendarmes at his premises, called to corroborate the version of the Commandant. The Herald newspaper explains that: “upon leaving the Moderator’s office the Commandant had checked with the Governor to make sure that both of them had the same story to tell to cover up what the Moderator came to know that same day” (Dah 2011:75).

Dah (2011:77) concludes that: “reading through ‘Cry Justice’ ... it becomes clear why Awasom got implicated in a ‘Coup d’etat that wasn’t”.

ii. Nyansako-ni-Nku

Nku, the then Synod Clerk, was not spared the ordeal of facing the consequences of the stance of the PCC on political issues. He was conscious that the path he had embarked on would eventually have some consequences and he grappled with walking the tight rope of protecting his family and staying true to the gospel. He confirms:

... there were times when I really cried because the choice was there to be a failure in defending the integrity of the word of God and at the same time I was also afraid not to fail the kind of protection I was supposed to give my

wife and my children because we were exposed to a lot of police harassment, and most times I slept not knowing what was going to become of me. (Interview with Nku 6/8/2017)

But he persisted on this dangerous path of speaking for the voiceless because:

... from the day I was graduating from the seminary I was convinced that when situations arise where pulpits become bashful; when situations arise when men of public repute prefer to compromise and acquiesce with evil in order to suppress truth and justice then, the church must raise up its voice and pastors, like prophets, must be able to stand up to authority and say “thus says the Lord”. (Interview with Nku 6/8/2017)

The Biya regime did not take the intervention of the PCC in the political issues of the day kindly and reacted through covert and overt threats. Apart from anonymous threats through phone calls and letters, the then Synod Clerk, the Rev. Nyansako-ni-Nku was invited for questioning twice during the period under review. The first incident was at the police station in Buea and the second was at the *Brigade Mixte Mobile* (BMM)¹⁸ office in Limbe.

In the first incident, the Rev. Nku was invited, early one morning, to the police station in Buea to “clarify one or two things”. Being a diabetic, he had his morning routines of cleaning up, eating breakfast and taking a shot of insulin before going to the office. But since this convocation to the police station was very early in the morning, and thinking he would spend just a few minutes there, he did not take his usual insulin shot. To his surprise, he found himself spending close to six hours at the police station.

That morning, Nku walked on foot from the Synod Office (the headquarters of the PCC) to the police station (which is about 200 meters away) accompanied by Mr. James Ako Egbe, the then Development Secretary of the PCC. At the police station three major charges were levied against him.

¹⁸ The Brigade Mixte Mobile (BMM) is the paramilitary secret police of Cameroon. It was known and dreaded for the torture of political prisoners.

Firstly, he was accused of intentions to wage war against the state of Cameroon. In response to this, Nku says: “I produced my Swiss knife and told them it was the only weapon I moved around with because I could peel my oranges and do anything with it. How could a Swiss knife overthrow the military and security forces of this country? I said by that they were demeaning the capacity of the military.” (Interview with Nku 6/8/2017)

Secondly, he was accused of planning to burn down the Palace of Chief Endeley¹⁹. To this he responded: “in the palace is someone whom I refer to as one of my father’s here [Buea], and indeed we had that kind of relationship with chief Endeley that is why he and his wife became the god parents to all my children. So I said if they even knew that relationship they would not in their wildest imagination create that kind of impression.” (Interview with Nku 6/8/2017). Finally, he was accused of conniving to burn down the University of Buea. To this Nku says:

I am on record as haven raised the issue of an Anglophone university to the Prime Minister at the time, I am on record as haven petitioned the Head of State on that issue, when finally the university was granted I travelled to Switzerland, worked with all my friends who knew directors of this Swiss manufacturing companies which produced drugs ... [and they donated] stocks of science books. I brought about 4-6 bags of science books. This was the basis for the beginning of a good library for Buea University.... So I told the police why then would I turn around and burn down the university? I said I didn’t know about them but I have had education to value what education is all about. So you could see when people in authority want to destroy somebody they can even resort to telling lies.... (Interview with Nku 6/8/2017)

After spending close to six hours above the time for his usual morning insulin shot, Nku started having some early warnings of a diabetic crisis. He had a choice to make: either he stays at the police station and slumps into a diabetic coma, or he leaves and risks being shot from behind. When the police officer kept asking questions to prolong his stay, Nku says:

¹⁹ Chief Endeley was the Paramount Chief [traditional ruler] of Buea, the seat of the PCC

I rose up and told them I was going and they could shoot me from behind but I was not going to stay because I knew what I was running into and it would be announced that I died of natural causes. So I started to walk away and James was so afraid of what was going to happen. So he too stood up and followed. We realized that a few people were beginning to come to the station. Apparently news had gone to town.... I just managed to reach the Synod Office compound and one driver took me to the house. I took my treatment and it took me about an hour to come round. (Interview with Nku 6/8/2017)

The second incident was convocation he received to report to the BMM office in Limbe. The convocation, bearing a signature but no name, was dropped at his residence. Attempts to know from the Governor and the government Prosecutor in Buea the reason for the convocation, proved futile as they claimed ignorance of it.

Nku drove down to Limbe with his driver with the intention that if he is arrested the driver could alert the others. But before leaving home he took certain dispositions:

I had left my wife with contacts of some institutions and people within and without the country like Amnesty International, Bread for the World in Germany, WACC in London and told her if by two o'clock I was not back home she should try to inform them immediately that she had reason to believe that I am being held by the state. (Interview with Nku 6/8/2017)

Nku narrates what transpired at BMM in Limbe as follows:

...everybody saw me and everybody wondered aloud what I was doing there, so I showed them the paper I received and they said it was not there. It went from table to table and the Commissioner himself came and asked who invited me there and I told him I didn't know and showed him the paper with a police stamp and there was a signature on it. So he said he would interview. So he started and at one point he told me I seemed smart and if I didn't tell him the truth he could use unorthodox means to get what he wanted out of me. I asked if unorthodox meant he could torture me; not doubting his capacity to torture people. So he saw that I was quit [sic] resolute. He asked who is talking about torture, I said I did. So after sometime he said I should go. So we left the place and were speeding to Buea. We got there at about 2 minutes to 2pm. My wife was still pacing up and down, the food was still on the table that I had not eaten in the morning. (Interview with Nku 6/8/2017)

The persistent critique of the PCC of state actions was obnoxious to the state who thought that the Church should have either maintained sealed lips or backed government actions. The government used its machinery of coercion to compel the PCC to shut up. Its covert threats and overt actions were all geared towards this direction. But the PCC was undaunted in her pronouncements.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a brief historical background of the PCC and traced the antecedence of political involvement of the Basel Missionaries and the PCC to prove the PCC was not engaging in the 1990-1992 political crisis as a green horn. The chapter then delved into the various roles the PCC played in addressing the crisis by presenting the letters and speeches addressed to the government during this period, sermons preached in Buea and Yaounde and other actions of the PCC. The Chapter rounds off with the reaction of the government to these actions of the PCC.

In response to the overall question of the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, this chapter has identified the various roles the PCC played in addressing the crisis. The chapter presented the facts of the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. Chapter 5 will critically analyse this role vis-à-vis the Dietrich Bonhoeffer paradigm.

CHAPTER 5

A critical analysis of the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon in the light of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s three-step paradigm of church intervention in politics.

Introduction

Chapter Two of this research work presented the Dietrich Bonhoeffer paradigm for church intervention in politics as the measuring rod for the evaluation of the role the PCC played in Cameroon. Chapter Three gave a bird’s eye view of the historical background of Cameroon, with emphasis on the causes and evolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. Chapter Four presented the PCC and delved into the various roles the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis. Thus far, it has been shown that the PCC was actively involved in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. Chapter Five now seeks to critically evaluate how effective the involvement of the PCC was vis-à-vis the Bonhoeffer paradigm.

This chapter restates the Bonhoeffer paradigm, casts the role the PCC played in resolving the crisis in the framework of the paradigm, situates each role in its political context and critically examines the impact of each role. The chapter draws parallel and divergent lines between the role the PCC played in the crisis in Cameroon to that which other churches played in South Africa and El Salvador highlighting the contextual differences. This sets the stage for the establishment of the inherent challenges in applying the Bonhoeffer model to the Cameroonian context without adapting it to the local realities. The pitfalls of the role the PCC played are highlighted.

5.1. A brief restatement of the Bonhoeffer paradigm

In Chapter Two this research work elaborated the Dietrich Bonhoeffer paradigm. Since it is the model used to analyse the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, for purposes of coherence, it needs to be restated here.

Adolph Hitler had just ascended to power in Germany and in a bid to push his agenda to assert German supremacy he had published the Aryan Clause, which forbade Jews and their spouses from working for the German Government. To Bonhoeffer this was inadmissible. In a paper presented to a discussion group which he titled “The Church and the Jewish Question” (as cited in Chapter Two), Bonhoeffer espoused his thoughts (Bonhoeffer 1958:221) which we now term Bonhoeffer’s three step paradigm for Church intervention in politics. His proposal was in line with what he thought the German church should do in reaction to Hitler’s Aryan Clause. Bonhoeffer stated that:

... there are three possible ways in which the church can act towards the state: in the first place ... it can ask the state whether its actions are legitimate and in accordance with its character as state, i.e. it can throw the state back on its responsibilities. Secondly, it can aid the victims of state action. The church has an unconditional obligation to the victims of any ordering of society, even if they do not belong to the Christian community. ‘Do good to all men.’ In both these courses of action, the church serves the free state in its free way, and at times when laws are changed the church may in no way withdraw itself from these two tasks. The third possibility is not just to bandage the victims under the wheel, but to put a spoke in the wheel itself. (Bonhoeffer, 1958:221)

Bonhoeffer’s three steps can be classified as follows:

Step 1: The Church “can ask the state whether its actions are legitimate and in accordance with its character as state i.e. it can throw the state back on its responsibilities”. For the purpose of this research, this first step can be referred to as “Rhetoric”. Here, the role of the church is limited to words (spoken or written) addressing the crisis and calling the state to live up to its responsibilities. Bonhoeffer’s incisive radio program, which was halted, his critical sermons against the Hitler regime and his writings can be classified under this first step.

Step 2: The Church “can aid the victims of state action. The church has an unconditional obligation to the victims of any ordering of society, even if they do not belong to the Christian community: ‘Do good to all men.’”. This research refers to Bonhoeffer’s second step as “Indirect Action”. Here the church does not confront the state or perpetrators of injustice. Rather, the church attends to the victims of injustice, those crushed by the

wheels of the vicious state machinery. Bonhoeffer was rousing the German church to its responsibilities to attend to the Jews who had been targeted by Hitler. He personally exemplified this by assisting his former students to evade military conscription and actively taking part in the smuggling of some Jews out of Germany through a plan called “Operation 7” (Raum 2002:127). In the context of Cameroon, all social actions of the PCC that targeted the victims of the crisis are classified under this step.

Step 3: The Church should “put a spoke in the wheel itself.” This research terms this third step “Direct Action”. Here Bonhoeffer calls the German church to a heads-on confrontation with the Hitler regime. Putting a spoke in the wheel of the state entails every action taken by the church to prevent, frustrate or mitigate the implementation of state policy that works against its citizens. In the context of Cameroon, this can also mean all actions taken by the PCC to bring the state to the dialogue table for an end to the crisis. Putting a spoke in the wheel calls the church out of the comforts of the church building to the muddy streets to work for, and fight for the rights of the people. Bonhoeffer demonstrated this by his involvement in a plot to kill Adolph Hitler.

The three steps proposed by Bonhoeffer for the German Church to react to the Hitler regime show a natural progression from rhetoric to action; from passive commitment to active intervention; from calling the regime to order, to taking action to stop the regime on its tracks. Moreover, Bonhoeffer personally talked the talk and walked the walk!

It should be noted that although Bonhoeffer’s three step proposal presented in the aforementioned paper was directed to rouse the German church to action against Hitler’s Aryan Clause, it later served as a blue print and driving force for Bonhoeffer himself from then until his execution in 1945. Its localized context, notwithstanding, the three-step proposal became a paradigm for church involvement in politics which, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, was applied in the cases of South Africa and El Salvador.

How does the role the PCC played in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon fit in Bonhoeffer’s paradigm? In critically reflecting on this question this research will draw information from the previous chapters.

5.2. Classification of the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon in the framework of the Bonhoeffer paradigm and a critical analysis of this role.

The role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon will be classified under the three steps proposed by Bonhoeffer for the German Church under the Hitler regime. They are: i) Rhetoric, ii) Indirect Action, and iii) Direct Action. Each of the roles will be critically analysed.

1. Rhetoric:

What constitute rhetoric here are verbal or written communication or interventions by the PCC, which did not entail any direct or indirect action during the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. Thus, sermons preached, speeches, letters and communiqués written by the PCC are classified under the first step of Bonhoeffer's paradigm.

a. Sermons

This work has taken into consideration three sermons that were preached at two main locations: two sermons preached in Buea and one sermon preached in Yaounde (see Chapter Four). The choice of Buea is motivated by the fact that it hosts the headquarters of the PCC. Sermons preached here by church hierarchy should carry the stance of the PCC on issues, given that the voice of the Moderator or Synod Clerk is considered the voice of the Church. Yaounde is the political capital of Cameroon and by virtue of this fact, the seat of the government. Sermons preached in Yaounde at crisis moments that have political undertones target ministers and other government officials who are political actors.

i. Sermons preached by Rev. Nyansako-ni-Nku

Our attention is first on a sermon preached by the then Synod Clerk of the PCC, Nyansako-Ni-Nku, on the 29th of December 1991 in the Buea Station congregation. He titled the sermon “Between memory and hope”.

The sermon was preached at a time when the first wave of “Ghost Towns” had ended leaving behind the bitter taste of its consequences. The Tripartite Conference had just ended with the signing of the Yaounde Tripartite Declaration on the 13th of November 1991 (Ngoh 2019:341). Worthy of note is the fact that Ni John Fru Ndi, the leading opposition candidate, had refused to sign on the grounds that it did not reflect the discussions and suggestions made during the conference. There were agitations and calls from political parties and religious leaders for a revision of electoral laws and the creation of an independent electoral body especially as it was clear Biya would call for elections early 1992.

Nku was preaching at a time when Cameroonians had gone through lots of uncertainties in 1991 and were standing at the threshold of a new year. The title of the sermon “Between memory and hope” seemed very fitting – memories of the year ending, and hope for the year about to begin. In his introductory remarks, Nku said, “We are standing at a crucial point of life in history. One year in the long span of time is just about to wind up and be swept off by the swift currents of time into the distant past. And another is just about to break in inaugurating an entirely new era in the process of existence”. Listening to this or reading this one would be left with the impression that this would be an opportune time for retrospection and forecast – retrospection into the year just ending and forecasting a plan of action for the year about to begin.

This research here focuses on Nku’s analysis of the historical events of the moment and his proposals for a way out.

Nku, in a few sentences, aptly captures the highlights of the socio-political state of the nation in 1991. He talks of the economic situation, which had been a contributory factor to the political crisis and exacerbated by the “Ghost Towns” of 1991. He mentions “wanton destruction of property Cameroonians hunting down their fellow citizens” alluding to the looting, arson and killings that accompanied the “Ghost Towns”. He ends up with the

tripartite conference, which had ended just about a month before the sermon was preached expressing the hopes, they had nursed for the signing of the Yaounde accord. Nku's expression of their expectations of a return to normalcy after the signing of the Yaounde accord was naïve. The refusal of Fru Ndi to sign the final declaration was already a signal of dissenting voices to the content of the document and an indication that its statutes would not be binding to such. Nku expressed disappointment, and rightly so, that there was "... still so much suspicion and mistrust by all the parties concerned ... [and] the interpretation of the text varied from one signatory to the other".

After highlighting the major incidents of 1991, Nku does not address the "What do I do?" question. As enunciated in his introduction, he went down memory lane of the socio-political happenings of 1991 but failed to give hope and direction on the socio-political challenges facing the people in 1992. This was an opportunity for Nku to present a proposal on what should be done to resolve the crisis. His analysis of the events of the crisis would have served as the basis for these proposals.

The SACC in South Africa, as presented in Chapter Two, did not mince their words in answering the "what do I do" question. They called the people to a protest. To have properly addressed the political crisis in Cameroon, the PCC and its leadership needed to have a clear vision and give clear directives.

Lessons from El Salvador, as enunciated in Chapter Two, inform us that everybody does not need to be on board for the drive for change to be effective. Arch Bishop Oscar Romero was opposed even by his colleagues Bishops, but he was willing to engage on the journey for liberation even without them. Bonhoeffer in Germany, amidst opposition from a large group of Pastors, was willing to walk the talk. All it takes is an individual with conviction and a vision to address situations of oppression and engender change. PCC needed such a figure to adequately address the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. Nku, in his sermons, though apt in analysis, was careful not to trouble the waters.

"Rhetoric" in Bonhoeffer's three step paradigm, as presented in Chapter Two, entails to "ask the state whether its actions are legitimate and in accordance with its character as state" (Bonhoeffer, 1958:221). This means speaking truth to power. It entails to "throw the

state back on its own responsibilities” (Bonhoeffer, 1958:221). If Nku’s sermons are seen in this light, they lack the element of throwing “the state back on its responsibilities”.

The sermon, “Between memory and hope” aptly captured the events of the year that was ending. The memory of the journey covered was very clear. But unfortunately the vision for hope was very blurred. The sermon leaves the impression that he knew where the nation was coming from, but lacked the idea of where it was or should be going to.

As cited in Chapter Four, Nku had confessed: “I was ... afraid not to fail the kind of protection I was supposed to give my wife and my children because we were exposed to a lot of police harassment, and most times I slept not knowing what was going to become of me. (Interview with Nku 6/8/2017). This fear of the unknown, the need to protect his family from police harassments and other unknown actions surely caused him to hold back his punches thereby stifling the more positive role the PCC would have played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

Thus, the desire for personal and family safety stifled the prophetic voice. This is unlike the cases of Bonhoeffer in Germany, the leaders of the Black churches in South Africa and Oscar Romero in El Salvador (as stated in Chapter Two), who took the risk of speaking out in spite of the risks involved which they were aware of. O’Sullivan (2015:4), as presented in Chapter Two, records that three weeks before the assassination of Oscar Romero in El Salvador, he said: “If they kill me, I will rise again in the Salvadoran people. My voice will disappear but my word, which is Christ’s, will remain. I say this without pride, with great humility.... I hope they will realize they are wasting their time. One bishop may die, but God’s Church, which is the people, will never die.... May my death be for the liberation of my people”. Nku shied from walking down this road of sacrifice.

ii. **Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame**

Next is the analysis of the fiery sermon preached in Yaounde by the late Rev. Dr. Bame Bame on the 29th of September 1991. Since the content of Bame’s sermon has been discussed in Chapter Four, attention is here turned to the context in which he was preaching, his spiritual interpretation of historical events and his call to action.

The tone of Bame's sermon is better understood when cast on its political background. Cameroon had operated under a one-party system from 1966 till 1990 when internal and external forces compelled a re-launch of democracy in Cameroon with the inauguration of the SDF party in Bamenda on the 26th of May 1990 (NN, SDF at 25, 2015:14). This opened the floodgates for the creation of other political parties. Government responded with repression. Calls from the opposition parties for a revision of the electoral code to reflect the new democratic nomenclature of the Republic fell on death ears. Some opposition parties, championed by the SDF party, had called for "Ghost Towns" from March to August 1991. The opposition parties had hoped that the crippling of the economy through the "Ghost Towns" would compel the government to the negotiating table for an end to repression of political opponents and the revision of electoral laws. By the time it was called off, the government had not bulged. The "Ghost Towns" had brought untold sufferings to the people of Cameroon. Many had lost their jobs, petit traders had been sent out of business, shops had been looted, and many had died. About 400 persons had died as a result of the violence perpetrated during this period (Ngoh 1996:310) and others, unrecorded, had died as a result of the economic hardship the period imposed.

Bame had witnessed all these: he had witnessed the political evolution and upheavals; he had seen the callousness in the government repression machinery. As a pastor of a large congregation, he had surely administered to persons who had been adversely affected by government action, buried some who were killed in the process and consoled families who had lost loved ones. When understood in this light, Bame's sermon can be seen as an outburst fuelled by these events.

To Bame, the political tussle in the nation was an actualization of a spiritual battle. To him the real battle was a spiritual battle over the soul of the nation. He polarized the nation as a battle ground between God, and Satan; the agents of light and those of darkness.

As stated in Chapter Three, Paul Biya had ascended to the office of President in 1982, (Ngoh, 2019:290) taking over from Ahmadou Ahidjo. Nevertheless, Ahidjo had maintained the Chairmanship of the then ruling CNU party. The rift between the two culminated in the 1984 coup d'état (Ngoh 2019:301) and led Biya to take over the Chairmanship of the party

as well. To consolidate his leadership over the nation in general and the party in particular, he convened the congress of the CNU party in Bamenda. At this convention, the name of the party was changed from CNU (Cameroon National Union) to CPDM (Cameroon Peoples Democratic Movement). The word “Truth” was replaced by the word “Progress” in the motto of the party (Nghoh 2019:301).

In this sermon, Bame gave a spiritual reading to the political issues at stake. To him: “The battle for the soul of this nation which has now reached its final phase actually started in 1985” with the replacement of “Truth” with “Progress” in the motto of the CPDM party” (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020).

Bame spiritualised the battle in Cameroon. He said that the battle is not “between Anglophones and Francophones, between the Betis and the rest of the country, between the North West and the South West, between Muslims and Christians”. To him, “the battle in this country is a battle between God and Satan ... between the servants of Satan and the servants of God, between darkness and light, between evil and good”. (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020).

Given the prevailing tense political atmosphere at the time between the CPDM government and satellite parties on the one hand and the SDF and other coalition opposition parties on the other hand, by spiritualizing the battle for Cameroon to a bipolar duel between good and evil, the servants of God and the servants of Satan, especially after identifying the regime in place as agents of Satan and demons, Bame was indirectly indicating that the SDF and other coalition opposition parties were the servants of God.

If viewed from the perspective that Bame was preaching this sermon at a time when he himself had experienced a new spiritual journey and had started the revival services in Bastos (Buma Kor, interviewed on 17/10/2017 in Yaounde), it could be concluded that he was merely giving a spiritual colouration to historical events. But if viewed from the perspective of events that unfolded in the nation from 1985 to 1991 (the economic crisis in the late 80’s that wreaked havoc on the nation, the political crisis in the early 90’s with

its attending death toll and hardship, the proclamation of the Liberty Laws in 1990 which opened the doors to the Rosicrucians etc.) Bame's spiritual reading of the political events might be given greater consideration.

The Bible actually polarizes the world as a battle ground between God and the devil and spiritualises the battle. Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians puts it thus: "For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms". Eph. 6:12 (NIV Bible) (MacArthur, 2013:1817).

To Bame the devil had taken abode in the Unity Palace and "it has been transformed into his headquarters, his home base where he gives out commands to all the units, the mobile units he has deployed all over our national territory. Our land has become the nest of demons." (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020). Since the Unity Palace is the official residence and office of the President of Cameroon, by this, Bame was directly referring to Paul Biya as Satan.

Given that Bame was preaching at a time when the Liberty Laws had just been passed and the idea of freedom of speech was still at its nascent stage, given that repression was still rife and opposition to the government was viewed as treason, it took a lot of guts for him to have said it the way he did. Bame seemed to have thrown caution to the winds.

Evidently, this is not the only sermon in which Bame lambasted the government. In this sermon, he alludes to another earlier sermon he had preached which had caused a stir in the congregation. He said: "After the Bamenda Congress, there was a government reshuffle. That same night the lord showed me a vision of the Unity Palace. After that vision I was urged to make a statement to this congregation - a statement which irritated all of you and which made you look on me as though I were a lunatic" (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020)

After reading spiritual meaning into historical events of the time and demonizing the state machinery, he turned his attention to the people, directing them on the path he wanted them to follow.

Forrester opines that: “The challenge of the poor and the exploited is not first of all a challenge to theology. It is rather a challenge to Christians and to the Church to show – not just to say - whose side they are on” (Forrester 1988:64). Bame challenged the worshippers to choose whose side they were on: either on the side of God or on the side of Satan.

Then, like Bonhoeffer in the struggle of the Jews in Germany who held that the “...life of the Church must be linked with the life of the people” (Leibholz 1995:31) and Romero in the plight of the poor in El Salvador believed “A Church which does not suffer persecution, but in fact enjoys the privileges and the support of the world, is a Church which should be afraid, because it is not the true Church of Jesus Christ.” (O’Sullivan 2015:4), Bame locates Christ in the midst of the suffering people when he said: “Yes, dear brothers and sisters in Christ, Jesus our lord and master is suffering in the sufferings of the peoples of this country” (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020). If Jesus Christ is the head of the church, and if Christ is located in the sufferings of the people, then, Bame is in other words challenging the church to identify with the sufferings of the people.

Sermons are mediums of communication of God’s divine will, they are canals of transmission of divine precepts. A sermon meets its end when it successfully addresses the question: What do I do? After revealing the sinfulness of man and the magnificent love of God, what should I do? After exposing me to the satanism of the state machinery and the call of Joshua to choose, what should I do? After opening my eyes to the sin of idolatry, debauchery etc, and the grave consequences, what should I do? Bame then makes a definite response to the “What should I do” question. “The time has come for all of us to act and act we must because we have no choice....Honour the lord and serve him faithfully. Get rid of the Rosicrucian gods, of the sorcerers or the demons, get rid of Satan and the shrines he has built in the high places of this land and serve only the lord

your God” (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020).

Bame would have been expected to launch a more concrete call to political action. He might have added his voice to the calls for a revision of the Electoral Code. He might have proposed some concrete actions to be taken by believers as a way forward to mount pressure on the government to yield to the demands of the opposition parties. Alternatively, he would have proposed some steps to be taken by the PCC to halt the government machinery, which according to him was demonic, on its path of engulfing the entire nation. Rather, Bame proposed spiritual action. He called on the worshippers to do away with Rosicrucian gods, sorcerers, demons and Satan.

One may not fault Bame on his proposed action especially as he had spiritualized the problem. He surely believed that only a spiritual solution could resolve a spiritual problem. If, according to Bame, Satan were the cause of the political and economic problems of the nation, then the eradication of Satan would be the solution to the problem.

Did Bame go too far in his critique against Biya and his government? To this, as evidenced in Chapter Two, Bonhoeffer would certainly say no! Bonhoeffer held that “it is not only a Christian right but a Christian duty towards God to oppose tyranny, that is, a government which is no longer based on natural law and the law of God.” (Leibholz, 1995:29-30).

However, unlike Bonhoeffer in Germany who was more pragmatic in his approach by calling the churches to rise against the “Aryan Clause”, or Arch Bishop Romero in El Salvador, who, after the assassination of Father Rutilio Grande suspended all worship services and called for a single service and made public his decision not to attend any state function until the assassins were apprehended, or Arch Bishop Desmond Tutu, Franc Chicane and Allan Boesak in South Africa who took practical action by joining protesters, Bame spiritualised a physical problem. There is no doubt that physical problems may have spiritual solutions. But, over-spiritualisation of issues of oppression gives the oppressor time to perfect his act.

A general look at the sermons preached in Yaounde and Buea show a marked difference in their reading of political events and their sense of urgency.

Bame, in Yaounde, gave a spiritual interpretation to the political events. To him, the misfortunes that had befallen the nation stemmed from the cultic inclination of the Biya government and their quest to hold a manipulative sway over Cameroonians. Meanwhile Nku, in Buea, blamed the political crisis on the scramble for political power and the greed for economic viability of the leaders. While Bame's reading of the events of his day was more spiritual, Nku's was more pragmatic.

Addressing the "what do I do?" question, Bame is specific in his prescription of spiritual action. He asks the worshippers to get rid of Satan and his cohorts. To Nku, the solution to the problem is the uniting of forces of the Christian churches and their commitment to work for peace, love, justice and reconciliation.

The tones of their sermons are quite different. While Nku is civil and cautious in his analysis and proclamations, Bame is confrontational and urgent.

These discrepancies could be understood from the stand point of location and position of the two pastors.

Bame, on the one hand, was serving as Pastor in Yaounde, the centre of political activities in the nation and was ministering to some Anglophone ministers and members of government. By his location, he was at the centre of political action and would feel the brunt of the consequences of political decisions more. In addition, by mingling with top brass of the government, he was privy to some information that others might not have had access to. In Chapter Four he is quoted to have said: "About five weeks ago a friend of mine who occupies a very important position in the country called me and said, "Michael when you go about now make sure that your car is well locked because I have reliable information that they might throw some documents into your car in order to incriminate you". (Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991. Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020) Added to this is the fact that although he was highly criticized and hunted down by some members of government, he had the protection of others who considered him their spokesperson. By position, though respected and revered, he was neither an appointed or elected officer of the PCC – he

was just a parish pastor – thus his personal opinion ran no risk of being mistaken for the position of the PCC.

Nku, on the other hand, was located in Buea, the seat of the PCC, and headquarters of the then South West Province. Buea, by location, is far off from Yaounde, and one living in Buea may not experience the day-to-day pressures of the one in Yaounde. As Synod Clerk, Nku had some connections in Yaounde but would not have had access to the level of classified information Bame had. Also, by virtue of his office, Nku had to be cautious with his pronouncements as whatever he said would have been taken as the official stance of the PCC on the crisis.

It is difficult for this research work to evaluate the impact of these sermons or their contributions in addressing the crisis. It is however an established fact that sermons, or the act of preaching, is the hallmark of worship, thus soliciting a corresponding reaction from the congregants. McDaniel (2009:1228) posits “there can be no question that there is a constellation of power around the pulpit”. Stoorvel (2019:12), references a study carried out by Hawkins and Parkinson “... among 80,000 congregants in 376 churches, [in which] they found that the satisfaction of a congregation with their senior pastor is determined primarily by preaching and vision casting (51%)”. Thus, it can be implied that the aspect of worship, which has the greatest impact and may solicit the greatest reaction, is the sermon. The same study reveals that a sermon “not being challenging or thought-provoking enough” (Stoorvel 2019:13) is one of the three main reasons why congregants may be dissatisfied with a worship service. This indicates the desire for congregants to be challenged. Thus, the more challenging the sermon, the more compelling the reaction. Although this study cannot directly point to particular impacts these sermons had in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, their role cannot be underestimated.

b. Letters, speeches and communiqués

In tandem with the Bonhoeffer paradigm, this research classifies letters and communiqués the PCC wrote and speeches the Moderator and Synod Clerk of the PCC made under “Rhetoric”. Bonhoeffer, in the area of “Rhetoric”, as argued in Chapter Two,

was the first German theologian, though still very young, to openly identify Hitler and his policies as a threat to Christianity and German nationalism. He was the first to articulate his thoughts in writing in reaction to Hitler's "Aryan Clause" which forbade Jews from holding any government office. In his paper, "The Church and the Jewish question" (as espoused in Chapter Two) Bonhoeffer laid down the blueprint for the church's role in politics. It is in this document that he propounds the three-step paradigm of church intervention in politics. His thoughts and position on the Christian/church vis-à-vis the state was also stated in his writings. Amongst others, mention should be made of *The cost of discipleship* (1937) in which he clarified what it means to be a Christian highlighting the ultimate sacrifice entailed in the call to discipleship, *the Ethics* (1949), and *Letters and Papers from Prison* (1959) which were published posthumously in which he grappled with the role of a Christian in a totalitarian regime. *The Bethel Confession* (1933) which he took part in drafting, also portray his thoughts. Bonhoeffer's writings were in response to issues of his day and reflected his evolution from passive resistance to active conspirator. The letters, communiqués and speeches the PCC hierarchy wrote between 1990 and 1992 addressing the crisis under review have been presented in Chapter Four. Here, attention is focused on analysing the content of the letter in the light of the political climate of its time and evaluating its impact.

i. Letter from the Synod Committee of the PCC

On the 20th of March 1991 the Synod Committee of the PCC, which meets on behalf of Synod, the highest decision-making body of the PCC, addressed a letter to all congregations of the PCC titled: "The position of the PCC on multi-party politics".

The PCC had propagated the gospel in a political climate of democracy and the respect of human rights from its independence in 1957 to 1966 when multipartyism was supplanted by a one-party system. As established in Chapter Three, from 1966 to 1990, the PCC operated in a political context of dictatorship and repression. The Ahidjo and Biya regimes, as presented in Chapter Three, maintained the one-party system until external pressure and internal factors compelled the launching of the SDF party in 1990. The re-birth of multipartyism was fraught with challenges: resistance from government

structures, repression of identified opposition leaders, demands for constitutional reforms, the non-respect of human rights, just to mention a few. The entire nation was hard hit by economic crisis. Salaries of civil servants had been slashed, there had been the Structural Readjustment Program that had led to the laying off of many civil servants and the Franc CFA had been devalued ((Nghoh, 2018:202)). The times also warranted a mentality shift that would accommodate the new political realities. The Liberty laws were enacted in 1990 permitting for a greater level of freedom of speech, religion and association though its implementation was truncated.

It was in this context that the Synod Committee was addressing this letter to be read in all congregations of the PCC.

The letter identified the following as problems plaguing the Cameroonian socio-political and economic climate: “Systematic social injustice, institutionalized corruption, tribalism, nepotism, greed, selfishness and blatant discrimination ... rancor, mistrust, political jingoism, and disunity” (Nku, 1993:12). This diagnosis summarized the socio-political and economic malaise of the nation at the time. A more detailed diagnosis, however, might have called for more pragmatic resolutions in the call to action. Blanket citation of some vices without concrete identifiable situations trivializes the context and reduces the enormity of the vice.

The above weaknesses of the content of the letter notwithstanding, it still had some degree of impact/influence on the pastors and Christians of the PCC because it met the intended purpose. Concerning the impact of this letter, it can be said that to a large extent, it met its intended purpose. The letter was addressed to the Christians and Pastors of the PCC, streamlining their actions in the era of multipartyism.

The pastors of the PCC still in active service were required not to “... indulge in partisan politics. A pastor of the church should not let his/her political inclination to interfere with his/her sacred ministry. Pastors are therefore barred from participating in party politics” (Nku 1993:16). This research has not found any evidence that any pastor in active service got involved in partisan politics during the period under review after the circulation of this letter. Worthy of note is the fact that before this letter was written some pastors were

openly identified with activities of the SDF party at the time of its launch. Rev. Joe Set Aji-Mvo (interviewed in Bamenda on 8th October 2020), the then Director of Church Centre Mankon in Bamenda was one of such. He attests to this when he says: “I functioned also as City Chaplain.... [and] often led prayers at the Coordination of Oppositions party’s Rally”. He facilitated the holding of the initial meetings to plan for the launch of the party and at its early days, was identified with Fru Ndi the leader of the SDF party. Muyo (Interviewed in Bamenda on 3rd April 2021), at the creation of the SDF party served as a spiritual adviser to Fru Ndi and SDF leadership. However, there is no evidence that this trend continued after this letter was written.

The letter encouraged the lay members of the church “to take active part in politics” (Nku, 1993:15) hoping by so doing they would bring sanity into the political arena. The involvement of the lay members of the church in partisan politics before this letter is established by the fact that the top brass of the SDF party at the time of its launch in 1990 were all PCC Christians. Ngale Kinge (interview with Mola Ngale Kinge on 17th March 2021 in Buea) holds that “the church was indicted as being part and parcel of SDF and it was simply because the frontline leaders of the SDF were Presbyterian Christians”.

One would have expected, given this encouragement for members to get into politics and sanitize it, for some concrete steps to have followed. Some words of encouragement may not be enough to change the mentality of a people who had demonized politics and lost faith in politicians. Political empowerment workshops and training seminars would have followed to empower the Christians to actively take part in politics. Rev. Fr. Rutilio Grande and colleagues in El Salvador, as elucidated in Chapter Two, succeeded to change the narrative by empowering the local population through their base communities. This was an eye-opener for the peasants who became aware of their rights and were more conscious of the exploitation of the poor peasants by the rich in power. They thus became more politically active.

This would have also been an opportunity for the PCC to pass over her virtues of truth, justice and the quest for true peace to the would-be politicians and the masses. But this opportunity seems to have been lost. It would take about 15 years for PCC to see the

need to empower particularly women to get into politics. This will be done through the Women's Economic and Empowerment Program (WEEP) funded by Bread for the World, Germany which had as objective the economic, social and political empowerment of women in the PCC.

The involvement of PCC lay members in the ruling party is corroborated by the cream of persons Bame was preaching to in Bastos congregation. However, the fact of their bringing sanity into the political arena is not established. If that were the case, there would have been no "Ghost Towns", arsons, deaths, and the debilitating economic crisis that persisted to hit the nation. Or at least, the PCC members in politics would have stood out in their endeavours to stand for justice and peace. Thus, as earlier mentioned, the letter, to an extent met its intended end.

ii. A letter to the government, political parties and people of Cameroon.

The then Moderator of the PCC, the Rt. Rev. Henry Anye Awasom, on the 18th of June 1991, in his capacity as President of CEPCA signed a letter titled: "Come let us reason together: An appeal to the government, the political parties and the people of Cameroon for Peace, Restraint and Objectivity". Although this letter was not directly from the PCC, it is discussed here as a contribution from the PCC on two grounds. Firstly, the PCC was a frontline member of CEPCA whose contribution to the writing of the letter can be deduced from the fact that the letter was written in English (out of the 11 member churches of CEPCA only the PCC and the CBC are English speaking). Secondly, the Moderator of the PCC was also the President of CEPCA and the letter was signed in Buea.

This letter was written at the heart of the first wave of "Ghost Towns" which lasted from March to August 1991. Movement of goods and persons was grounded from Mondays to Fridays and allowed only on Saturdays and Sundays for funerals and replenishment of provisions for the families. The economic life of the nation was paralysed. Dah (2015:31) paints a picture of the situation in the following words:

The months of April and May 1991 were the most revolutionary in Cameroon history in recent times. On April 3rd cars and buses went up in flames in the capital city Yaounde, burnt by hawkers who were constantly harassed by the security forces. Soon the burnings spread into the Provinces and Divisions. Large groups of youths between the ages of 15-30 set public buildings on fire in Douala, Bafang, Kumba, Bafoussam, Bamenda, Kumbo-Nso, Ngoundere and Garoua. Brasseries depots and vehicles came under fire.... Road blocks were raised everywhere in the country....

Such was the context in which CEPCA was addressing its appeal. CEPCA, in this letter, decried the chaos, violence, destruction of public property, hate, repression, road blocks, calls for strike and killings stating that these acts benefited nobody.

Put side by side with Dah's reading of the political climate, CEPCA's letter can be given the credit of a proper comprehension of the context. The call was for the various factions to come and reason together. This call was an appeal to the consciences of the protagonists for them to consider the consequences of their actions. The Churches, in this letter, tried to walk the middle line to avoid apportioning blame to any particular faction thus in the concluding statements the letter stated: "We have made this appeal for peace and understanding in all earnest and good will with no partisan spirit".

If non-partisanship is meant to mean neutrality, is it possible to be neutral amidst strife and rancour? Can the church be neutral faced with suppression, repression, arson, murder etc. perpetrated either by government or by unarmed civilians?

To this Bonhoeffer would have responded in the negative. In a letter to his grandmother on the 20th of August 1933, shortly after Hitler took over power in Germany and after an observation of Hitler's political aspirations and early manoeuvres, McKim (2018:10) quotes Bonhoeffer to have written: "The question really is: Germanism or Christianity?". To Bonhoeffer there was no option of neutrality. The German Christians had to choose between Hitler's exclusivist Aryan German nationalism or the accommodating gospel of Christ. To Bonhoeffer, it was the duty of the state to ensure law and order. Thus, in a case where there is total breakdown of these, and the state fails in its responsibility, but rather sets in motion its vicious machinery (in his case, Hitler's plans against the Jews) it

behoves of the church “to destroy the wheel of that machine” (Frick, 2017:8). Thus, to Bonhoeffer, neutrality is not an option for the church.

Montgomery (1983:77) quotes Archbishop Oscar Romero, in an interview granted on the 14th of December 1979, shortly before he was killed, to have said: “We have managed to combine well the pastoral mission of the Church, preference for the poor, to be clearly on the side of the repressed, and from there to clamour for the liberation of the people”. To Romero, therefore, neutrality was not an option. The church should stand on the side of the poor, the repressed.

Forrester (1988:64) states:

The challenge of the poor and the exploited is not first of all a challenge to theology. It is rather a challenge to Christians and to the Church to show – not just to say - whose side they are on. The response must be practical, it means acts of solidarity, which involve opposition to the economic, social, political and cultural forces of dehumanization as well as the religious legitimations of these forces. Charity, almsgiving, development are inadequate because they do not engage with the causes of human degradation; the praxis of liberation, solidarity with the oppressed, involves confronting the structures of oppression.

In addition, Hoffmeyer (2013:169) nails the point when he posits; “According to the principle of inertia, trying to be politically neutral equates to support for the existing order. If you are not doing something to change the way things are, you are letting things continue the way they are”.

Thus, CEPCA’s neutral or nonpartisan stance was actually aiding and abating the status quo. Given the political circumstances in which this letter was written, an open stance should have been taken, words of condemnation or dissatisfaction expressed and blames apportioned. At the nation’s darkest hour, the churches, PCC inclusive, failed to be at their finest. PCC and the other Protestant Churches failed to live up to the moment.

This research cannot ascertain how much role this letter played in the convening of the Tripartite Conference from October 30th to November 13th 1991. However, the convening

of the Conference 4 months after this letter may be indicative of government's bowing to pressure from within and without, the Churches inclusive.

The impact of other Protestant churches appending their acquiescence to the content of the letter, even if it smacked mostly of PCC content, might have jolted government to consider the enormity of the interventions. In addition, given the mild tone of the letter, government might have been prone to lend more credence to its appeals.

iii. Memo presented to President Paul Biya

Next is the Memo that the Rev. Nyansako-ni-Nku presented to President Paul Biya during his visit to Buea on the 27th of September 1991.

The nation had just gone through its most challenging epoch in recent history as the "Ghost Towns" had ravaged the economy, claimed lives and property. The "Ghost Towns" had been called off in August, and in September the President of the Republic decided to make a nation-wide meet-the-people tour to get grass-roots reactions on the state of the nation. There were still incessant calls for a Sovereign National Conference to discuss the revision of the electoral code, the putting in place of an independent body to supervise elections, and for Cameroonians to decide the fate of their nation. Elections were already forecasted for 1992 and there was an uneasy calm hovering over the nation. It was in this context that Paul Biya was visiting Buea.

Amongst those the President was scheduled to receive was the delegation of the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon. The then Moderator, the Rt. Rev. H.A. Awasom was out of station and the Synod Clerk, Nyansako-ni-Nku had to sit in for him. The content of the letter has been presented in Chapter Four and the lameness of the reading of the political climate stated.

Allusion is made only to some of the consequences of the "Ghost Towns". No mention is made of the demands for the revision of the electoral code, an independent body to organize elections or the calls for dialogue – the burning issues that characterized the political debate at the time.

President Paul Biya's visit to Buea in the heart of the political crisis, obviously, to seek proposals for the resolution of the crisis, was a lost opportunity for the PCC to champion change in the status quo. Out of the eight themes presented in the Memo, as presented in Chapter Four, (unity and diversity, the creation of Buea University, ugly side of tribalism and corruption, on bilingualism, the special problem of teachers of the private sector, the benign neglect of Anglophones) only one (our concern for the current political situation) was directly addressed to the issue of the day.

Although in the Memo reference is made of the position paper on "multi-parties" (Nku, 1993:20) which the Memo indicates was handed to the President, it would have been more poignant had some time been spent in analysing the status quo and proffering solutions to the problem. The paper referred to was not addressed to the President thus could not have articulated issues as they needed to have been done. On the issue of the political crisis, apart from the Church's appreciation of what government had done, the only request that was made was for the convening of a "general forum". The convening of the Tripartite Conference in October/November 1991 might have been a response to this plea.

Although the other themes evoked in this Memo were of importance but they clouded the focus on the crisis and minimized the role the Church could have played in addressing it.

Of the eight themes presented in the Memo only three, as stated in Chapter Four, (our concern for the current political situation, unity and diversity, and, ugly side of tribalism and corruption) were of national character. The other five were on purely regional and personal issues that pertained to the Anglophones or the PCC. This lopsided and regional based presentation might have given Paul Gifford the grounds to label the PCC as a church focused on regional issues (Gifford 1998:282). Nku's Memo betrayed concern for the plight of the Anglophones and the welfare of the PCC. However, it is erroneous for Gifford to base his judgement on this single letter for such sweeping conclusions.

Had the PCC exploited this singular opportunity to its fullest, she would have profiled herself as a possible peace broker in the crisis that was rocking the nation.

iv. Contribution at the Tripartite Conference

After persistent calls for a forum for dialogue from political parties, church leaders and foreign bodies, the government finally acquiesced and called for a Tripartite Conference from the 30th of October to the 13th of November 1991. The Moderator of the PCC, the Rt. Rev. Henry Awasom was invited to speak. He addressed the Conference on the 1st of November 1991. The content of his address has been presented in Chapter Four. According to the analysis of the address done in Chapter Four, his presentation was the most succinct of all the written interventions of the PCC in the crisis. Its understanding of the political context was profound and its proposals for solutions were far reaching. Attention here is focused on the possible impact of Awasom's proposals during the conference and afterwards.

Awasom, in his presentation, proffered the following as a way out to address the political impasse:

- Flexibility from both the ruling and opposition parties and their willingness to concede to some demands of the other for the sake of peace.
- The “ghost towns” and overbearing presence of the armed forces should be addressed.
- A small committee be set up to draft an electoral code
- Put an independent electoral committee in place to oversee the conduct of elections.

Firstly, Awasom requested for flexibility from both the ruling and opposition parties and their willingness to concede to some demands of the other for the sake of peace, an attitude which he observed was “... still very lacking” (Nku 1993:28) in the early days of the Conference. The fact that the Conference came to a peaceful end, although the final document, the Yaounde Declaration, was signed by 40 of the 47 political parties in attendance (Ngoh 2019:341), can be testimony to the fact that the appeal did not fall on deaf ears. Ngoh (2019:341) chides the SDF, the leading opposition party, for not signing when he states: “The SDF did not give any convincing argument why it made such a dramatic volte-face after it had actively participated in the discussions and drafting of the Declaration”. SDF's participation throughout the Conference, their presence and

participation at the drafting of the Declaration, given their original intransigent stance, gives more credit to Awasom's appeal.

Secondly, Awasom appealed for an end to the "Ghost Towns" and a withdrawal of the armed forces from the streets. Enonchong (2021:25) reports that the Yaounde Tripartite Conference '... resulted in the Yaoundé Declaration which was essentially a concession to which the opposition agreed to end the civil disobedience campaigns while the government acceded to making democratic and constitutional reforms". It can thus be concluded that by the end of the Conference Awasom's request for the end of "Ghost Towns" was granted as the opposition leaders accepted to call it off (Ngoh 2019:342). However, there is no corresponding direct evidence on any commitment from the government to withdraw the troops from the streets. The closest government got towards this direction was to concede to the annulment of all "Special security measures" (Ngoh 2019:342) that had been put in place as a result of the "Ghost Towns". Indirectly this could be taken to imply that since the armed forces were present on the streets to ensure security and enforce peace (although they went to repressive extents), the decision to annul the "Special measures" that had been put in place included the withdrawal of the armed forces from the streets. Awasom's second appeal, also, was not ignored. This agreement brokered at the Tripartite Conference ensured momentary calm although it was short lived as fresh calls for "Ghost Towns" would be launched after the October 1992 elections and government will declare a State of Emergency and activate its repressive machinery through the overbearing presence of the military.

Awasom's third appeal was for a small committee to be set up to draft an electoral code. "Would it be a job of these 200 delegates assembling in this hall or shall we not give this work to a committee of specialists who know-how?" Awasom had asked (Nku 1993:28). Awasom, in the opening remarks of his presentation had stated that the purpose of the Tripartite Conference, as stated in the invitation letter he had received, was to draw up "a preliminary Electoral Code" (Nku, 1993:27). Since by the end of the Conference no preliminary electoral code had been drawn, it can be taken that the conveners saw reason with Awasom's request. However, the expectations for the proposed small committee to

be put in place and for a new Electoral Code to be ready before the forthcoming elections were not met. By election time in 1992 there was no new Electoral Code. Biya would appoint the Technical Committee on Constitutional Matters (TCCM) only in 1993 (Enonchong 2021:26) after he had consolidated power. It can therefore be said that Awasom's third appeal was successful only in the short run – as it prevented a hasty drafting of an electoral code by 200 delegates – but not in the long run, as work started on the new electoral code only in 1993 after the Presidential Elections had taken place in 1992.

Awasom's fourth appeal was for an independent electoral committee to be put in place to oversee the conduct of elections. Before the re-introduction of multi-party politics in Cameroon in 1990, the Ministry of Territorial Administration conducted elections under the one-party system. Awasom argued that the game had changed thus the framework must also change to accommodate the new dispensation. Awasom went further to indicate that even in the one-party system when there was nothing at stake, the results could not be trusted. To drive his point home, he cited the following example:

... in an area well known to me - a number of people a little over 11,000 had registered; before the election date, four permanent voters had died, nine other persons had moved out. On that same day there was a Funeral Service and a number of people did not vote. When the results of the election were published, just out of curiosity and because of the many 100% votes scored - I had to refer to this area as the number registered was the same as those who voted and so the result was 100% (Nku, 1993:30)

This appeal seems to have fallen on deaf ears as by the time of elections in 1992 no independent electoral commission had been created. This, and other factors, including the fluid electoral laws, caused the SDF to boycott the March 1992 elections.

On the whole, when assessed generally, Awasom's presentation at the Tripartite Conference had great impact, mostly on the short term in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

v. Telex message to President Paul Biya on Legislative Elections

One of the shortcomings of the Yaounde Tripartite Conference was the failure to put in place a committee to work on a new electoral code in spite of the plea from Awasom and others. The Conference rose with the aspiration this would be done in the near future and a code to govern the conduct of the elections would be adopted before the convening of the pools.

This was not done. The president announced legislative elections for March 1st 1992. The code that governed elections under the one-party system had to be used for a multi-party election. Also, the time given for political parties to mobilise their electorates for the election was seen as too short. This did not go down well with the opposition party leaders and the civil society. The Moderator and Synod Clerk of the PCC, the Rt. Rev. Henry Awasom and the Rev. Nyansako-ni-Nku respectively, co-signed a message which was telexed to the President requesting him to postpone the legislative elections “... to a more opportuned time” (Nku 1993:33). The Prime Minister and the Secretary General of the CPDM were copied. The content of this letter has been presented in Chapter Four.

The fact that the legislative elections were held on 1st March as scheduled is testimony to the fact that the telex message from the PCC had no impact. In the area of letters and communiqués, this is the most un-impactful intervention of the PCC in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. Its single plea – to postpone the elections to a later date – was not heeded to.

It seems the mind of government was made up. The government realized that the only way for them to maintain their hold on power was to stall the implementation of a more democratic electoral code and to precipitate the date of the legislative elections so as to take the opposition parties by surprise. The opposition had spent time and energy in political activism in the “Ghost Towns” and in crippling the government machinery and had put in little effort in establishing the basic grass-roots structures of the party.

Moreover, the government plan yielded fruits, to the detriment of democracy in Cameroon. The SDF party, the largest opposition party at the time and the most dreaded by the CPDM, alongside other political parties, decided to boycott the elections. As argued in Chapter Three, this boycott played to the advantage of the CPDM which won a

landslide majority in parliament thereby securing a strong political base to influence future constitutional reforms.

Can the refusal by government to listen to the plea from the PCC for the postponement of the elections be interpreted to mean that government's ability to listen to the church is conditioned by the impact their acquiescence may have on their grip on power? Can this be taken to mean that government has a greater commitment to maintaining power than to any change that may ruffle its boat of power even if it is for the common good? Can this mean that the Church is only as important to the government as it helps government to maintain power?

vi. A Pastoral Letter to all Congregations of the PCC

The legislative elections had been conducted on March 1st 1992 without the revised electoral code and an independent body to supervise the elections. Some opposition parties had protested and boycotted the elections. This did not perturb the government as it gave the ruling CPDM a clean slate for victory. Then on Tuesday the 25th of August 1992, Biya called for Presidential elections for 11th October 1992 giving just a six weeks notification (Nku 1993:35). The pastoral letter titled: "Your Christian conscience and the Presidential Elections" co-signed by the then Moderator and Synod Clerk, was a response to this sudden call. As analysed in Chapter Four, this letter, in tone and content, expressed frustration and desperation: frustration at an obstinate regime and desperation for a change.

Attention is here focused on the possible impact of this letter in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. The pastoral letter, as presented in Chapter Four, was addressed to all Christians of the PCC. Its target was to awaken the consciences of the Christians and to possibly steer their choice for a candidate away from the obstinate regime in place. The Letter also appealed "...to all political parties to abide by a civilized code of conduct. This should ensure that nobody exploits the situation to cause violence...." (Nku, 1993:37).

The letter expressed the wish that "As Cameroonians, and even more so, as Christians, we have a high sacred duty to ensure that this country is not plunged into a terrifying

nightmare plagued by a vicious cycle of hate, discrimination, violence, waste of human lives and wanton destruction of property” (Nku 1993:38).

To analyse the possible impact of the letter on the resolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, a critical look has to be taken at the three main appeals or wishes expressed in the letter.

Firstly, the letter expressed the wish for the Christians to be conscious of the choice they will make for a President and the attending consequences. As presented in Chapter Four, the questions the letter posed to the Christians were leading and betrayed the benign desire to see a change at the helm of the nation.

In all the aforementioned interventions the PCC had navigated a neutral path which betrayed no inclination to either the government (ruling party) or the opposition parties. Reading the previous interventions and the present one, one sees a marked change in tone. It leaves the impression that after the failed attempts at the Tripartite Conference to get the government bend to the will of the majority on the issues of the electoral code and the revision of the constitution, it became clear to the PCC that no meaningful reform could be effected by the regime in place. It seems the PCC had made up her mind on whom they thought could bring about the required reforms.

The questions posed to the Christians as guide to the candidate they should vote for were very leading. A close examination of a few will buttress this point.

When the Moderator and Synod Clerk ask the Christians (electorate): “Who do we trust has the capacity and ability to revive the depressed spirits of Cameroonians and galvanized [sic] them to work hard for the rebuilding of this nation?” it is evidently not the government in place. If the spirits of Cameroonians were “depressed” and the nation needed “rebuilding”, it was evidently the fault of the government in place. Thus, same could not be trusted to fix it. This letter was indicating to the Christians that they better cast their vote for a different candidate if they expect their lot to improve.

The question “Who do we trust has the integrity to stop the massive corruption, and institutionalized looting of public funds, which is now common practice in our country?”

already connotes that the status quo is the product of the regime in place. Nku, in his Memo to President Paul Biya during his visit to Buea, had laid the blame of corruption on the steps of the government when he said: “One other very disturbing factor is that of corruption, especially in very high places. This coupled with massive capital flight has contributed in making life for the ordinary Cameroonian very miserable. Unfortunately, promises to stamp out these vices have not been matched with actions” (Nku 1993:22). It can be concluded that the PCC was here again directing the Christians to vote for any other candidate but for the incumbent.

Again, Nku, in his Memo, had indicted the regime for the sorry state of the economy. He had said: “... the level of discontentment in the country now due to a depressed economy is so bad that it is moving our country to a dark precipice. We hope, Mr. President, that common sense can prevail”. Therefore, when in this Pastoral Letter they ask: “Who do we trust can turn this rapidly declining economy around?” they could not have been asking the Christians to vest their trust in the regime that had orchestrated the problem.

All the questions that follow in the aforementioned paragraph: of instilling “lost confidence in public institutions and state authority”, giving the “country a sense of purpose”, making “every Cameroonian really feel at home”, and ensuring “social justice i.e. the equitable distribution of our natural resources....”, point the Christians to a direction other than that of the ruling party. The ones who caused the problems, the Pastoral Letter seems to be indicating, cannot be trusted to fix them.

Although the Pastoral Letter nowhere specifies where the Christians should cast their vote, the direction of thought could be deduced. At the time of writing the most popular opposition party was the SDF. Could the PCC have been tilting the attention of the Christians towards this direction? A number of factors can lead to an affirmative response.

The then Moderator, a signatory to this Letter hailed from Mankon, Bamenda which is a neighbouring quarter to Ntarinkon, Bamenda, the birth place of Ni John Fru Ndi, the leader of the SDF party. (Dah 2011:16)

Also Fru Ndi was an Anglophone, and given the persistent cries of the PCC on the marginalization of the Anglophones, he was surely seen as one who would put an end to this cry to which the government had paid deaf ears.

Furthermore, Fru Ndi was a Christian of the PCC worshipping in Musang congregation in Bamenda town. Referring to resistance that was raised by civilians against attempts to arrest him, Fru Ndi says: “Rev. Aji-Mvo and other local pastors around then, even including my present pastor, Rev. Dr. Muyo, were some of those that cut trees in the night to block the way so that I should not be taken” (Ndi, interviewed 6/10/2017). These were pastors of the PCC. Fru Ndi affirms he was in contact with PCC hierarchy when he says: “Rev. Nyansako, as the Synod Clerk then, was coming; they blocked him here and he turned to go back. I shouted at them, they let him come in” (Ndi, interviewed 6/10/2017). It can, therefore, be concluded that, according to PCC hierarchy, the alternative to the status quo was Ni John Fru Ndi.

How successful was this wish? Did the Christians vote for Fru Ndi or for the incumbent, Biya?

It is not possible to directly indicate the direction to which the PCC Christians cast their votes. However, deductions can be made from the general result trends since the PCC Christians, the principal addressees of the letter, were part of the electoral college. The final results as proclaimed by the Supreme Court on 23rd October 1992 as presented in Chapter Three, were as follows:

CPDM = 39.9%

SDF = 35.9%

UNDP = 20%

CDU = 3.6% (Ngoh 2019:343, Ngoh 1996:313).

According to these results, the CPDM won. Going by these results, the plea of the aforementioned letter fell on deaf ears. However, according to historical evidence, as presented and argued in Chapter Three, the elections were rigged. Fru Ndi was gypped of victory. Going by this fact, the benign wish of the PCC to see change at the helm of the

nation was granted. To the PCC, a change at the helm of the nation would restore calm and a quick resolution to the political crisis. Had Fru Ndi been declared President, the Anglophones who had wailed of discrimination from the Biya regime would have been pacified, the rising discontent from other opposition parties would have been calmed, at least till the next Presidential elections. Although the wish of the PCC was realized, the reversal of the results at proclamation negated every impact this would have had in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis.

As presented in Chapter Three, after the proclamation of the results, Fru Ndi reacted. He declared his victory and was put under house arrest. The PCC which had prayed for change did nothing to protest against the results. Fru Ndi was left alone and received attention only from a few pastors in Bamenda. The PCC went silent. As evidenced in Chapter Two, when Dietrich Bonhoeffer was arrested in Germany for conspiracy to assassinate Hitler, the Confessing Church went silent. When Arch Bishop Oscar Romero was assassinated in El Salvador, the Roman Catholic Church in El Salvador registered no public protest.

In Chapter Three we argued that there was enough evidence to back the claim of rigged election. The silence of the PCC in the face of such mitigated the role the Church could have played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. A government ban on protests could not stop the church leaders in South Africa to go on the streets even with the threat of imprisonment looming over them.

Secondly, the letter expressed concern for all political parties to operate by a code of conduct that negates violence, manipulations, machinations, hate, discrimination, and the loss of human lives and property. Was this appeal adhered to?

Ngoh (2019: 343-344) reports the aftermath of the proclamation of the results of the Presidential elections in the following words:

The CPDM victory led to ugly and destructive demonstrations in the country, especially in the North West, Litoral, and West and, to a limited degree, in the South West Regions (then Provinces). Given the intensity of the violent demonstrations and the reaction from the government troops, a state of emergency was declared in the North West Province by decree number

92/003 of 23rd October 1992 and Fru Ndi was subsequently put under house arrest. The two-month-long crisis in Cameroon and especially in the North West had devastating socio-political and economic consequences in Cameroon with hundreds of deaths reported as a direct result of the October 1992 presidential election. Angry Cameroonians, unfortunately, took the laws into their hands and wrought havoc especially against those who supported the CPDM even if it was their democratic right to support the CPDM.

Evidently, the call to negate violence and the loss of human lives and property was not heeded to. Shortly after the proclamation of the results, the supporters of the SDF and other disgruntled opposition parties took to the streets in protests, which resulted to burnings, lootings and deaths. The government reacted with extreme force, arresting and shooting at unarmed protesters, declaring a state of emergency in Bamenda and putting Fru Ndi under house arrest.

Fru Ndi, being a member of the PCC worshipping at the Musang congregation in Bamenda should have listened to the content of the letter and would have been expected to uphold its content. Although there is no evidence that he encouraged the violence, the fact remains that his supporters, vying to defend his victory, perpetrated the violence. By this time, (1992) Bastos congregation in Yaounde was the main Anglophone congregation in the capital city where most Anglophone members of government worshipped. On their part, they should have also listened to the letter read in Bastos congregation and would have been expected to cause the government to moderate its reaction to the protests. This research has not found any evidence of any such role they played. Rather, government unleashed its full force on unarmed protesters.

Adejimola (2009:4) holds that “During the conflict process or conflict progression, communication is very essential. The relevant information must be communicated timely and at appropriate stages and place....” Among the communication strategies to be used to transmit information during a conflict he cites circular letters, press releases, speeches and communiqués. Going by this, the PCC was on the right track. The PCC communicated at the right times (1990-1992), at the right places (Buea and Yaounde), and to the right persons (the PCC Christians, the President of the Republic, and to political

party and opinion leaders). The content of the messages differed, their tones varied according to the situation at hand and PCC's perception of it, and the impact of the various communication strategies was not the same. It should be noted that the interventions of the PCC was one amongst many from other denominations, political parties and opinion leaders. Thus, the efforts by the government and the opposition parties to abate the political tension from time to time cannot be attributed to the PCC alone.

When cast in the framework of the first step in Bonhoeffer's paradigm, which this research has termed "Rhetoric", it can be concluded that PCC lived up to its bidding. The PCC hierarchy (Moderator and Synod Clerk) and pastor (Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame) were vocal at each point of the political crisis, sometimes walking the neutral path and other times calling wrong by its name. When compared in tone to the messages of Bonhoeffer in Germany, Arch Bishop Romero in El Salvador and Tutu in South Africa, PCC's proclamations were sometimes lame and too cautious.

PCC's contribution to address the 1990-992 political crisis in Cameroon was timely, its reading of the political climate was generally apt, but often truncated by caution, rendered inept by the absence of practical proposals on the way forward (apart from the presentation at the Tripartite Conference in Yaounde) and lacking in matching words with action.

2. Indirect Action

According to Bonhoeffer, the second role the church has to play when faced with a state that perpetrates too much or too little order is to take care of the victims of state action. Bonhoeffer's involvement in helping his former students to evade military conscription and to assist Jews to escape from Germany, as argued in Chapter Two, can be cited in this direction. Here, this research will consider all social actions of the PCC that targeted the victims of the crisis.

a. The departments of the PCC

The Departments of the PCC that are engaged in Christian education and social actions, as mentioned in Chapter Four, are the three Movements: Christian Youth Fellowship

(CYF), Christian Women Fellowship (CWF), and Christian Men Fellowship (CMF). These Movements were established to take care of the needs of the youths, women and men respectively. The CWF handbook states: “The mission of the Department is to enable women to serve the Lord Jesus Christ wholeheartedly and to bring about positive changes in all areas of their lives, at home, in the congregation, in the community and society at large. This is achieved through continuous evangelisation, education, leadership development, capacity building workshops and conferences, with the aim of empowering the women spiritually, socially and economically. (Salle, 2021:ix).

Also, the Development Department through its rural training centres offers training to youths in agriculture and animal husbandry to lead them to self-employment. The congregations, presbyteries and Central Church also engage in social and humanitarian actions as needs arise.

These departments, by virtue of their programs provide spiritual, social and economic empowerment to their members. As presented in Chapter Four, no clear evidence has been found of the role these departments played in attending to the needs of their members during the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

The National Secretaries (executive secretaries) and presidents of the movements at the time are all of late. The current officers, as a result of poor filing systems, cannot trace the minutes of their national committee meetings during these years from which evidence would have been culled. They cannot also remember of any specific action that was taken by the PCC in this direction. Thus, this research cannot say with certainty if these movements did anything to attend to the needs of the victims. This research bases its conclusion on the 1990 and 1992 minutes of Synod, the highest decision-making body of the PCC to which the various departments report and on which the departments depend for validation of their policies and activities. In these minutes, no mention is made of any special activity designed by these movements to attend to the needs of the victims of the political crisis.

However, the role they played in attending to the social, spiritual and economic needs of their members cannot be completely written off. The CWF Hand book (2021:44) reminds

members of the standing order of the movement which states that: “Any member who falls sick or is hospitalised or bed ridden at home shall inform the group to which she belongs, upon which the group shall organise prayer sessions and visits to such a member while she recovers. When a CWF member dies, the group to which she belongs contributes an agreed amount to assist the family”. The groups or departments had a cushioning effect on the members. It bearing one another’s burden in times of illness and death, they actively participated in binding the wheels of those crushed by the wheel of the state. Unfortunately, the impact of their social actions was limited only to members.

b. Prison ministry

Rev. Dr. Muyo Joshua Ngwalem (interviewed on 13th April 2021 in Bamenda), asserts that this period saw the birth of the prison ministry of the PCC. He holds that the high number of arrests and incarcerations led the PCC to see the need to appoint Prison Chaplains to attend to the spiritual needs of the prisoners. Congregations in Bamenda took turns to donate food items to the prisoners periodically. George Likiye, an SDF party official, corroborates PCC’s focus on prison Ministry at this time (interviewed on 10th April 2021 in Buea). George Likiye adds that the PCC also visited those who were locked up at police stations in Buea as a result of the crisis, with food stuff.

Ngwalem justifies, particularly concerning those who were placed under house arrest with Fru Ndi at his residence (as presented in Chapter Three), why the PCC might not have provided material assistance. He says:

... his [Fru Ndi’s] party at that moment was really up to date. They supplied everything needed for those who were locked in there ... and it was also difficult for Christians just to move in. It was only myself, other pastors like Rev. Aji-Mvo ... [who] attended to him. Not any person was allowed to go in....

Apart from work with prisoners and those locked up at police stations, this research has not found any evidence of other special programs or activities designed by the PCC to meet the needs of the victims of the crisis.

Those interviewed in Bamenda, the town most affected by the crisis, cannot remember any concerted action towards the victims of the crisis. Fru Ndi (interviewed on 6th October 2017 in Bamenda), based in Bamenda throughout the crisis, does not make mention of any assistance received from the PCC either to himself or to members of his party who were the main victims, apart from spiritual accompaniment. It can therefore be concluded that the silence from the various interviewees may mean that either nothing was done, or what was done was too little or isolated or insignificant to have attracted any attention.

Ngale Kinge (interviewed on 17th March 2021 in Buea) suggests a reason why the PCC might have been silent in this area. Kinge posits that the perceived inability of the PCC to bind the wounds of those who had been crushed by the wheels of the repressive machinery of the state might have been orchestrated by the fact that the PCC itself was a victim of the crisis and also in need of assistance. The schools and hospitals owned by the PCC were recording huge deficits and had become a liability to the Church. The Financial Secretary's report to the PCC Synod of 1st to 4th April 1990, holding at Church Centre Kumba, revealed that the Church ended the 1989/1990 financial year with a deficit of 133.8 million (one hundred and thirty-three million, eight hundred thousand) francs CFA. This was apart from the 101 million (one hundred million, one hundred thousand) francs CFA deficit of the primary school system (PCC Synod Minutes, 1990:11). Kinge actualizes this when he states, in the context of the North West region:

The church, the Presbyterian church of [sic] Cameroon, at that time owed her teachers more than sixty months of salaries. So the church by itself had a problem with its workers and I was handling that file at that level because all complains from the teachers were addressed to the governor of the North West region and they landed only on my table.

The same report also indicated “the projected income [for 1990/1991 financial year] was below the projected expenditure by more than 175 millions” (PCC Synod Minutes, 1990:11).

By 1992, the situation had worsened. The Financial Secretary, in his report to the 34th Synod meeting at Church Centre Mankon from the 5th to the 8th of April 1992 presented the following financial facts:

The overall deficits of the Presbyteries, Departments and Institutions amounts to 222.000.000 francs (two hundred and twenty-two million francs CFA).

The Medical Institutions ended the 1990/1991 year with an accumulated deficit of 46.000.000 francs (forty-six million francs CFA)

By June this year, our Primary School Sector would have a deficit of at least 1.921 million francs (one thousand nine hundred and twenty-one million francs CFA). (PCC Synod Minutes, 1992:16)

To be able to survive these financially challenging times the 1990 Synod Meeting had to take the following decisions:

That according to the current financial situation, the Synod is asked to give some proposals in setting up priorities and re-organising of Departments and Institutions (e.g. changing and reducing of activities, change of assignments and duties or reducing of staff, etc.)

.... That salaries and benefits of personnel working within the church system should be reviewed and terminate some of them because of lack of funds.

.... That the payment of 2% annual seniority bonus should be freezed [sic] with effect from this financial year (01/07/90) till further notice.

.... That annual incremental position granted to Pastors and Social Workers should be freezed [sic] with effect from this year (01/07/90).

.... That should any worker go on retirement, or leave the Church service for any reason, this worker should not be replaced. His/her function should be distributed to other workers and if this is not possible, arrangement should be made in such a way that another worker from any other Department/Institution is transferred where he/she could be made redundant.

.... That where there is a decrease in activities in some establishments because of the financial situation workers should be terminated and employed on contract basis (PCC Synod Minutes, 1990:17)

This was the financial state of the Church that was expected to stand in the gap for the victims of the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon. The PCC was financially very sick and in urgent need of attention. The Church had to downsize its services and cut down on activities to be able to weather this financial storm. Thus the possibilities for the PCC to take care of the victims of the crisis, was limited.

Kinge (interviewed on 17th March 2021 in Buea) bases the financial difficulty of the PCC at this time on the fact that since the Church is its Christians and the debilitating socio-

political conditions had taken their toll on the economy thereby affecting the salaries of wage earners and the income of petty traders and business men, the Church was also directly affected as its collections dropped. Ndiva Mosuka (interviewed on 11th April 2021 in Buea) and Ngwalem (interviewed on 13th April 2021 in Bamenda), corroborate the Central Church's ineptitude to attend to the needs of the victims of the crisis.

However, the financial difficulty of the PCC is not enough reason for the lack or absence of concerted efforts to bind the wounds of the victims of the crisis. In the case of Germany, as stated in Chapter Two, Bonhoeffer did not need finances to stand in the gap for Jews to help them escape from Germany or prevent them from being conscripted into the army. PCC could have used simple methods like free treatment to some category of victims or tuition-free education for some orphans who lost parents in the crisis in church-owned hospitals and schools. Chapter Two presented how the SACC mobilised international support for the families of detained anti-Apartheid activists and funded projects in the black communities. The PCC could have used its network of partners to raise funds for the victims of the crisis to help in binding their wounds. Chapter Two presented the case of the abduction of Father Jose Inocencio Alas. Upon getting news of it, the Arch Bishop Rivera Damas visited the President of the national Assembly to lay a complaint and then he and Bishop Ricardo Urioste staged a sit down strike at the office of the Minister of Defence refusing to leave until the whereabouts of Father Jose is known. They did not need finances to stand up for an abducted priest to ensure his release. While acknowledging that the financial handicap of the PCC affected its public witness, it is worthy of note that other options were available which the PCC did not utilise.

Therefore, the PCC was found wanting in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon in the area of binding the wounds of the victims of the crisis.

Although there was no centralized or concerted action taken to bind the wounds of the victims, some individual action was engaged.

c. Individual action

Ngwalem (interviewed on 3rd April 2021 in Bamenda) corroborates Aji-Mvo's (interviewed on 8th October 2020) stance on pastoral attention given to Fru Ndi and those under house

arrest at Fru Ndi's residence. Ngwalem, however, adds that they took advantage of the house arrest to preach the gospel to the people and through that, a number of them got baptized in Fru Ndi's house. Pastoral attention may not have provided for the physical needs of the people, but it surely granted them spiritual and psychological stamina. They were assured of God's presence even in their pain of isolation. The fact that some of them accepted to be baptized under these conditions attests to the impact this would have had on them. Those who have been crushed by the vicious wheel of the state are in need of physical, but also spiritual and psychological attention for their wounds to be fully bound. Even when the church lacks the physical means to meet the needs of victims of oppression or suppression, it should not also lack the spiritual wherewithal to assuage the cravings of their soul.

Ngwalem acknowledges the role he played in attempting, albeit unsuccessfully, to stop the burning of the home of Fon Angwafor, a CPDM frontline militant, by a group of boys from Nkwen. His pleas of "this destruction is not good for us, please spare that house please spare that house" (interviewed on 3rd April 2021 in Bamenda) fell on deaf ears as the boys set the house on fire.

Ngwalem also mentions his words of caution to Fru Ndi concerning the plight of the people vis-à-vis the "Ghost Towns" hoping to alleviate the situation of the man on the streets. He states that Fru Ndi and Albert Mukong had planned for one of the "Ghost Towns" and when his opinion was sought for, he quotes himself to have said: "no, the people are tired of the ghost towns. Please this one would not be effective don't call for it" (interviewed on 3rd April 2021 in Bamenda). They went ahead with the "Ghost Town" as planned and it failed.

Ngwalem and late Rev. Fondo, successfully stopped the planned burning of Ayaba Hotel (a government owned hotel in Bamenda). Ngwalem narrates that news had circulated around town of the presence of Mr. Forchive, the Delegate of National Security, at the Ayaba Hotel and boys had mobilized to converge at the spot to burn down the hotel and its occupants. Ngwalem was hinted on this plan by late Rev. Fondo who was on retirement in Bamenda. He and Fondo went to the entrance to Ayaba Hotel where the boys were

already assembling. Fondo asked Ngwalem who was younger and more audible to address the boys. Ngwalem says he addressed them in the following words: “look boys that’s an investment for us in the North West.... Must we burn that place? Let us try to preserve our structures no matter what. A single individual cannot be above this majority.... Are you even sure he is inside there?” (interviewed on 3rd April 2021 in Bamenda) After the pleas, the tension subsided and the boys went home without burning the hotel.

The boys believed that the government and its institutions had failed, and the leaders of the ruling CPDM party had failed to represent the people. The killing of the six on the 26th of May 1991 after the launching of the SDF party (Chapter Three) had infuriated them. Thus, the boys were victims who, in seeking to disentangle themselves from an oppressive regime, became oppressors themselves.

In as much as the Church has the responsibility to take action to prevent the government from crushing its citizens and to attend to those who have been crushed, the church also has the duty to halt the vicious wheel of victims becoming oppressors and attending to the victims of this process. Ngwalem, in the first case, and Ngwalem together with Fondo, in the second case, played this role, even if the first attempt was fruitless.

The actions of Aji-Mvo, Ngwalem and Fondo are in tandem with the solo drive of Bonhoeffer in Germany. Bonhoeffer’s engagement to the cause of the Jews and his opposition to Hitler’s “Aryan Clause” was personal. His involvement in a plot to assassinate Hitler was not sanctioned by any denomination or church organisation; it was personal. Thus, personal actions of Pastors of the PCC could make a difference in the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

1. 3. Direct Action

The third step in Bonhoeffer’s paradigm calls on the church to “put a spoke in the wheel” of the government machinery to stop it from crushing the citizens. In conformity with this third step (as presented in Chapter Two) Bonhoeffer got involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler – a plot which finally led to his arrest, trial and death shortly before the capitulation of Germany in the Second World War.

This research considers any action taken to directly confront the state or plans put in place to frustrate the vicious policies of the state with the goal of bringing an end to the crisis to fall within this third step of the Bonhoeffer paradigm. Bonhoeffer himself had set the pace. In South Africa, the action taken by Desmond Tutu, Alan Boesak and Frank Chikane to lead a march on the streets in defiance to the ban imposed by the Apartheid government falls within this category. In El Salvador, the decision by Romero to boycott all government ceremonies can also be cited.

In the case of the PCC in Cameroon, no such action can be cited. No evidence can be found in published and unpublished documents and interviews to attest to any direct action taken by the PCC to frustrate state policy with the goal of ending the crisis.

Bonhoeffer, after observing the trend of the events in Germany fuelled by Hitler's authoritarian regime, had come to the conclusion that the only means by which Germany was to be liberated, was through the death of Hitler. To him, the death of Hitler and the capitulation of Germany in the Second World War would signal liberation for Germany from authoritarianism and freedom for the Jews.

Going by the tone of the letter the Moderator and Synod Clerk addressed to the Christians in 1992 titled "Your Christian conscience and the Presidential Elections", the PCC had reached breaking point and the conclusion seemed to be that the only source of liberation for Cameroon was through the eviction of Paul Biya and his regime from power. Nevertheless, the PCC relied on the ballot box. It would have been evident by then that the Biya regime could not be trusted to uphold democratic principles (which they had objected to from inception), and respect the results of the ballot box. Even when it was proven that the results of the Presidential elections had been swindled (as argued in Chapter Three), the PCC took no action to defend democracy and the rule of law. Had the leadership of the PCC called for a march on the streets as was the case in South Africa, or a boycott, as was the case in El Salvador, the government might have bulged.

Achowah Umenei, (Interviewed on 28th September 2020 in Bamenda) argues that had the PCC clergy and laity gone to the streets in protest against the government, some

positive results would have been reaped. To make his point, he quotes the case of the Philippines when he says:

When Ferdinand Marcos was ousted from office in the Philippines through the 1986 People's Power, the Roman Catholic Church played a very important role: it called on the clergy and laity to join in nonviolent street demonstrations. The presence of Christians, nuns, monks, priests, bishops, archbishops and even cardinals played a big role in chasing the president out of the country. That paved the way for the widow, Corazon Aquino to become President.

Peter Tazeh (Interviewed 12th April 2021) holds the same opinion. He states: "I expected that at one stage the church will organize a peaceful march... I didn't see that. I thought that the church was not militant enough; didn't come outright enough"

However, as earlier mentioned, the PCC was walking a very tight financial rope and wanted to avoid any further reprisals from the government.

George Likiye (Interviewed on 10th April 2021 in Buea) gives another reason for PCC's ineptitude to directly get involved in the 1990 – 1992 political crisis. According to him:

... the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon from 1990 to 1992 had some very serious difficulties trying to manage the political situation at the time because this came at a time when the church had just comfortably sorted out what would have broken the church between the two English speaking regions ... of Cameroon.

Likiye was here referring to the 1985 election crisis in the PCC. Rev Thomas Ediage, the then Synod Clerk from the South West Region had hoped to replace Rt. Rev. Jeremiah Kangsen, as Moderator in the 1985 elections in the PCC. The election of Rev. Awasom, another North Westerner, as Moderator, left the South Westerners with the feeling of marginalization in the PCC. Immediately after the elective Synod of 1985 some Presbyteries of the South West Region requested for the PCC to be split and refused to send any financial contributions to the Central Church. An emergency Synod meeting was convened to begin the healing process in the PCC to avert a split. It was finally agreed that it should be enshrined in the constitution of the PCC that the offices were rotatory.

Thus, by the outbreak of the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon, PCC was just coming out of a crisis. This, coupled with the financial crisis the PCC was facing mitigated her ability to get actively involved in the crisis.

Biya's victory in the 11th October 1992 presidential elections provided him space and time to consolidate power and steel dissenting voices. Biya and his CPDM party were at their most vulnerable state in the 1992 elections. Never before then and never after then have they been declared victorious with such a low margin. Thus, 1992 was a missed opportunity for the PCC and for the nation. The PCC missed an opportunity to champion change and usher in genuine democracy.

Therefore, as concerns Bonhoeffer's third step in his paradigm for church intervention in the public arena, PCC was found totally wanting. PCC took no practical action to address the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. PCC's role was rhetoric without praxis.

This research now addresses the other factors that might have impeded the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

5.3. Other impediments to the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

1. Antecedence of political involvement and the Book of Orders of the PCC

The first antecedence of political involvement, which might have influenced the role the PCC played in the 1990-1992 political crisis, was the Bakweri Land Problem, which has been presented in details in Chapter Three. Suffice it here to recapitulate just the main issues.

The German Chancellor had defined "Crown Land" in the colonies to mean any land that was neither owned nor cultivated by individuals or a community. The governor in Cameroon, Jesko Von Putkamer, laid claims to all lands for which ownership could not be proven and which remained unused for more than 4 years. Bakweri lands were expropriated and given out for German business men to open plantations to feed raw materials to the German industries. The move to relocate the Muea village at the foot of the Fako Mountain, and the request for the Basel Mission to relocate its school, sparked

the reaction of the Basel Mission. Fruitless petitions were written to the governor. The Basel Mission then took the matter up with the Chancellor in Germany. The Chancellor's intervention twice laid the matter to rest in favour of the Muea village. The missionaries had won the day.

The question here is: how might this have influenced the role the PCC played in the resolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon?

A look at the method the Basel Missionaries employed to resolve the crisis classifies the intervention in the first step of Bonhoeffer's three step paradigm – Rhetoric (advocacy). The role the Basel Mission played was to call the attention, first of Governor Putkamer, then of the German Chancellor, of the effect of the vicious policies of the colonial government. The Basel Mission limited herself to letter writing. Looking at the role the PCC played in the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, as argued above, the PCC was very active at the level of Rhetoric (advocacy) revealed by the number of letters, communiqués and addresses that were written.

In the case of the Basel Mission in the Bakweri Land problem, the first step of intervention sufficed for the problem to be resolved. But in the case of the PCC in the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, the first step was not enough. All efforts put in by the PCC to call the attention of the government to the impact of its intransigence yielded little fruit, but not enough to cause any major change. Here, the PCC seemed to have run short of antecedence of indirect or direct action to be taken in such a case. The PCC seemed to have remained strung to the apron strings of its history and found it difficult to break new grounds, face new challenges and set new standards.

The Basel Mission could have also been accused of acting out of sentiments. The historical facts leave the impression that the Basel Mission reacted only when it was asked to relocate its school in Muea. Thus, it can be argued that the Basel Mission was actually fighting for her interest and not that of the natives. Had the Basel Mission had no school in Muea, would she have reacted? Many other villages around the Fako Mountain were relocated by Putkamer, why did the Basel Mission react only in the case of Muea? Surely to defend her interest! The PCC can also be accused of championing the

Anglophone cause (as argued in Chapter Four), as the concerns they raised in the letters, communiqués, and speeches addressed mostly Anglophone issues. Nevertheless, unlike the Basel Mission, the PCC did not openly take sides to defend her interest. Although PCC was also a victim of the crisis as exhibited by the huge financial deficits with its attending consequences on the activities of the Church, the PCC failed to take sides. But for the desperate letter addressed to the Christians before the 1992 Presidential election which betrayed the sentiments of the Church, the PCC struggled to walk the tight rope of neutrality.

The second antecedence of political involvement is the pace set by Rev. Jeremiah Chi Kangsen, which has become the blue print for the role the PCC has to play in the political arena (as argued in Chapter Four). For the purpose of coherence in analysis, suffice it here to state briefly that Kangsen was an ordained pastor of the PCC who was given leave of absence by the Basel Mission to actively represent his constituency in the pre-independence politics of Cameroon. He was one of those who represented Southern Cameroons in the Eastern House of Assembly in Nigeria. He eventually became a minister in Southern Cameroons when it was granted quasi-independent status. When his party lost the 1961 elections, he picked up his cassock and re-joined the pastoral core. He would later on become Synod Clerk and Moderator of the PCC.

Chapter Four argues that the paper he presented to Synod in 1960 on his views on Church and politics, which were later formalised by the Synod Committee of 20th March 1991 and captured in the *Book of Orders: Procedure and practice of the Church* (1995:61-62), published 35 years afterwards, is evident of the influence his views had on the PCC. The *Book of Orders*, although published after the period under consideration (1995), was a word verbatim quotation of the position of the Synod Committee of 20th March 1991 (Nku, 1993:11-17).

Having established the influence the Kangsen antecedence had on the *Book of Orders*, attention is here focused on the content of the *Book of Orders* especially pertaining to the role of the Church in politics and its influence on the role the PCC played in the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

The *Book of Orders* (1995:61), in its preamble of the chapter on “Church and politics”, states: “The relationship of the Church to the government must be that of critical detachment. This will set the Church free from any political apron strings and enable it to be free to act as a watch-dog for society”. This implies two things: firstly, the Church should be independent from state influence and secondly the Church has the responsibility to be the watch-dog for the society.

Firstly, for the Church to be able to maintain a critical distance from the state and assert its independence of action from state influence, it must be able to defend this independence at all levels. Although Cameroon has styled itself a Lay State, thereby absolving itself from subscribing to any religious practice, it maintains the right to authorize the existence of religious groupings and regulate their functioning to ensure they do not threaten national interest. PCC hangs her legality of existence on the Certificate of Incorporation that was signed in 1962 by the then Prime Minister of Southern Cameroon, John Ngu Foncha. Without this document, PCC would be declared illegal. The Ministry of Territorial Administration has severally shut down churches that existed in illegality and whose existence was deemed a threat to national security. Can the PCC, thus, claim total independence from government influence?

Also, the PCC considers herself a partner in development with the government especially in the area of education and health. From independence, the PCC ran schools and hospitals inherited from the Basel Mission. Government law regulates these. The Church depends on subventions from the government to be able to meet up with the payment of salaries of teachers. One of the reasons given for the huge debts in the education sector of the PCC is the drastic cuts in subventions, and government’s inability to pay even the stated amounts (interview with Njie Kale²⁰, 17th March 2021, Buea). Can the PCC fully assert her independence from government action when some of its units depend on government gratuity? The Church’s dependence on government action for the survival of some of her units has stifled possible ecclesiastical action against state policies. The

²⁰ Njie Kale is the Education Secretary of the PCC

critical detachment of the PCC is thus limited to rhetoric. The transition to action has been paralysed by her dependence on government for legality and subventions. Thus, the PCC was very active in letter writing, drafting of communiqués and writing speeches.

Secondly, the Church has to be the watch-dog of the society. Merriam Webster online dictionary defines a watchdog as: (i) “a dog kept to guard property” and (ii) “one that guards against loss, waste, theft, or undesirable practices”. Wikipedia defines watchdog as “An individual or group that monitors the activities of another entity (such as an individual, corporation, non-profit group, or governmental organization) on behalf of the public to ensure that entity does not behave illegally or unethically”. The definition of Wikipedia seems to better suit the context in which the word has been used in the *Book of Orders*. Going by this definition, the PCC was appropriating to herself the responsibility to monitor the activities of the government of Cameroon on behalf of the society to ensure legality and ethics are upheld. The definition does not specify how this should be done, and does not connote any action. The PCC, true to the spirit of the coinage in the *Book of Orders*, played its role as watchdog of the society by persistently calling the attention of the government to the consequences of its actions and policies. The role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon was limited by the specifications of the *Book of Orders*.

The *Book of Orders*, it should be noted, was published in 1995, three years after the nation of Cameroon had reached boiling point; three years after the PCC had the most urgent need, from independence, to take decisive action to steer the direction of affairs in the nation. It would have been expected that there would have been a major departure from the Kangsen stance on the role of the Church in politics, given the experiences the PCC had had through the crisis. Nevertheless, the PCC’s continued insistence on that stance is proof of how much it influenced the role the PCC played in the crisis. It fettered any action the PCC would have taken as it confined thoughts within a defined framework.

Looking back at the history of Church involvement in politics in Cameroon, from the missionary times through the proposals of Rev Kangsen, the PCC had no point of reference to have served as an example for indirect or direct action.

For every church or organisation, to remain relevant, it must adjust to the changing times. Precedence is not necessarily needed for new methods to be injected to address new challenges. In fact, the growth of any church or organisation is dependent on its adaptability to new challenges. In the case of Germany, the German church was facing a new challenge in Hitler and the Confessing church and Bonhoeffer had to rise to the occasion. In South Africa, Apartheid had been in the system for a number of years, but there came a time when the black leaders took up the challenge to face it squarely. In El Salvador, added to the misery of the masses was the dictatorship of the government. The Roman Catholic Church and Arch Bishop Oscar Romero had to devise new methods to deal with it. The PCC needs to learn to depart from missionary theology and the blueprint of Kangsen to adapt new methods of addressing new challenges. The PCC needs to dare out of its comfort zone.

2. The Constitution of the PCC

The Constitution of the PCC also served as another fetter on the leg of the Church to inhibit political action.

According to the constitution,

The Mission of the PCC, like that of the Universal Church, is to proclaim the Good News of God through Jesus Christ, in word and action. The proclamation of this Good News includes preaching the word, teaching, healing, and liberating the people of God from sin. (Luke 4:18-19) (PCC Constitution, 1985:7)

This mission statement defines the four-fold ministry of the Church – to preach, teach, heal and liberate – as espoused in Luke 4:18-19. As far as this research work is concerned, the focus is on the fourth ministry of the Church. In the New International Version of the Bible (NIV), Luke 4:18-19 reads thus: “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor”. While the text in scripture reads “...to set

the oppressed free”, in the PCC constitution it reads “... and liberating the people of God from sin”.

Without delving into the exegesis of the text, a literal interpretation leads to the conclusion that Christ’s ministry of liberation, as specified in Luke 4:18, is more encompassing than liberation from sin. It entails liberation from all circumstances that have held God’s creation captive from living life in all its fullness. Liberation from sin and the influence of the devil is a subset of the liberating ministry. The PCC Constitution’s parochial position on the Church’s liberation mission limits the ambits of operation of the Church and inhibits the engagement of any action for liberation from political bondage and social enslavement.

In “Defining the Ministry” of the PCC, the Constitution states “... She [the PCC] feels responsible for the education of the youth, men and women, the liberation of the oppressed, the care of those who suffer” (PCC Constitution, 1985:8). Although here the ministry of liberation is not attached to sin, its specification in the Mission of the PCC still stands.

Why should the PCC specify “liberation from sin” when scripture talks of setting “the oppressed free”? This gives the impression that it was an intentional addition to define the role of the PCC in the area of the liberation mission.

The Constitution makes it clear that the PCC does not intend to depart from the theological stance of the Basel Mission. The Preamble of the Constitution, amongst other things, states: “It [the PCC] maintains the spiritual, theological, and material continuity of that missionary society [the Basel Mission]”. Little wonder why the PCC did not break new grounds in the role it played in the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. This Constitution was adopted 28 years after independence from the Basel Mission. Does this imply that the PCC cannot develop an indigenous theology, which speaks to its context? If the Church has the task of bringing the gospel to the people in their own context and enabling them to see and feel God around them, can this be effectively done hanging on to missionary theology? In the case of South Africa, Black theology emerged. In El Salvador and Latin America in general, Liberation Theology was birthed. These were theological responses to the challenges of the people.

If the Church has to be of essence to its community, it must make the Bible come to life in their midst. For the Church to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world, it must be able to reach the people at their points of need; the Church must speak to them in accents and tones clear and understandable to them.

In Chapter Four we mentioned that the success the Basel Missionaries recorded in fighting for the lands of the Bakweri people in the Muea village increased the confidence of the villagers in the missionary venture and there was a sudden drastic increase in church membership in the area. For the Church to be of relevance to the people, it must be seen working for them and with them through their trials and tribulations. For this to be done, the PCC should depart from missionary theology and methods and face the challenges of the Cameroonian context.

Bonhoeffer's biography, as argued in Chapter Two, showed a gradual progression from a detached political observer, to an active political participant, from sympathy to empathy. Even his theology evolved from pacifism to political activism, according to the political developments in Germany. In Chapter Two, it is concluded that Bonhoeffer never set out from the beginning either intending to be involved in a plot to assassinate Hitler or hoping to become a martyr. But historical developments compelled him to take this route. Even his proposed three step paradigm is a natural progression from a commentator, through an indirect actor to a direct actor.

The Bonhoeffer transition is indicative that a Church and its members should not be static in their theology and political engagement. The theology of the church, in speaking to its context, must be a theology in transition. At each stage, the church must ask the Bonhoeffer question: "What is God calling us to do?"

Thus, PCC's attachment to the theological apron strings of the Basel Mission, her insistence on the political position of Kangsen as captured in the Book of Orders of the PCC, and the PCC's interpretation of the four-fold mission of Christ, have dissociated the Church from its environmental realities and placed its actions in a distant epoch. The results of such actions can only be limited since they are not adapted to the level of the problem. These factors were impediments to the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

5.4. The Challenges of adapting Bonhoeffer's model in Cameroon

Bonhoeffer's journey is an embodiment of his history; his journey of faith and political activism was provoked and conditioned by the prevailing political circumstances of his day. The rise of Hitler to power in Germany and his consequent authoritarian policies, most vexing to Bonhoeffer being the "Aryan Clause", jolted Bonhoeffer out of complacency. Bonhoeffer's reactions were context-specific. In his struggle to address the political issues arising from his specific German context, the Bonhoeffer paradigm was birthed.

Putting the German context side-by-side that of Cameroon during the period under study, convergent and divergent lines can be drawn.

Both the German and the Cameroonian governments were led by dictators. While in Germany, Hitler had hijacked the system and quashed all opposition, in Cameroon Biya had clung to the reign of power and was in the process of quelling dissenting voices. Also, in both cases, the political leaders were also the heads of their ruling political parties and they incarnated the policies of the parties. In both cases, the only clear option for possible change was the departure of the leaders.

Despite these convergent lines, there were a number of divergent lines which might have challenged the adaptation of Bonhoeffer's model to the Cameroonian context.

Firstly, the contexts of the crises were different. On the one hand, the German crisis was evoked by a leader (Hitler) who was weeping-up nationalist sentiments against foreigners, especially the Jews whom he blamed for German problems. To him, the German race was superior to other races and its purity should be upheld. It is this same policy that fuelled his desire to dominate other nations in the international scene thereby triggering the Second World War. The Cameroonian context, on the other hand, was different. In Cameroon, it was the case of a leader (Biya) who wanted to stay in power by reneging and abrogating democratic principles. In Cameroon it was the case of a Cameroonian against a fellow Cameroonian, the ruling party against the opposition parties. While in Germany Bonhoeffer and the Confessing Church were fighting against dictatorship and negative German nationalism (anti-Semitism), in Cameroon the PCC was fighting against dictatorship and for nationalism.

Awasom (Dah 2011:78) made a case for the difference in contexts when he wrote:

The question is often raised: what has the Church said? In Europe the Church may be able to call the state to order in some matters. But in Africa the state permit the Church to exist or not to exist. Have you ever understood that? Can the Church therefore exercise the same rights of confrontation with the state as may be the case in some parts of Europe?

Secondly, the situation of the German pastor was different from that of the Cameroonian pastor. While the German church operated in a situation where pastors are considered government employees, in Cameroon, the church operates in a state, which has declared itself lay with separation between church and state. The situation of the German pastor might have evoked sentiments, which led to the division within the Church in Germany between the German Christians and the Confessing Church. Some pastors might have seen themselves as part of the government and felt morally bound to support government policy. Meanwhile, in the case of Cameroon, pastors are employees of the Church and the payment of their stipend is fully the responsibility of the Church in which they serve. The leadership of PCC was in unison as concerns the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. There might have been some discrepancies in the tone and approach to address the crisis from one pastor to another, but there were no cracks on the walls of the pastoral core as to who was to blame.

Awasom's aforementioned comments on the difference in context between the church in Europe and that in Africa in how they address political issues calls into play the issue of church-state relations. The context influences the reaction. The position of the government vis-à-vis the churches or religions determines the range of actions possible for the church to employ in addressing political issues. It is germane for this research to delve into the models of church-state relations, its historical evolution and its possible effect on the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

5.5 Church-state relations

Since this research topic focuses on the public role of the PCC within the broader framework of church-state relationship, it is important at this point to present some models

of church-state relationship and an overview of the evolution of this relationship over time. This exercise is more exploratory than analytic. This is to enhance understanding of the various models, situate the Cameroonian context in this framework and lay the foundation for the operational model in the Cameroonian context.

i. Models of church-state relations

a. Haselbarth's Models of church-state relations

Haselbarth proposes two models for church state relations which he called “the teaching on the Two Kingdoms” (Haselbarth 1976:198) and “the kingship of Christ in politics” (Haselbarth 1976:199). The growth and spread of Christianity warranted a definition of its relationship to the state.

The first model propounded was that of “the Two Kingdoms” after the teachings of Luther. This model believed that though God is at work in both the church and the state in accomplishing His purposes, both are separate and independent from the other. While the church had the task of preaching the gospel, the state had that of administering law. According to this model “the state must not impose its will on the church; nor should the church try to meddle with politics for her domination or gain” (Haselbarth 1976:198).

The second model (the Kingship of Christ in politics), puts Christ at the centre of everything. This model sees the world as unsaved and places the burden of reaching out to this world through the church and its members. Members have the duty to show the light to others since they have been privileged to know that “... freedom, justice, development, civil rights, etc. need to be implemented... because God's love to men became manifest in Christ.... Since also the political realm belongs into Christ's influence, the political action of Christians can become a signal which points to God's Kingdom to come” (Haselbarth 1976:200).

This research resonates with Haselbarth's second model for church state relations – the Kingship of Christ in Politics model – over and against the Two Kingdom model. This research holds that the Church, the bearer of the liberating gospel of Christ, and its

members, should be front liners in championing the course of freedom, justice, peace, human rights etc. The Two Kingdoms model inhibits the church from engaging in political discourse thereby limiting its role in public affairs. The PCC, by the definition of her mission in the public arena as contained in The Book of Orders (1995:61), states: “The relationship of the Church to the government must be that of critical detachment. This will set the Church free from any political apron strings and enable it to be free to act as a watch-dog for society”. By this definition, the PCC places herself in the Kingship of Christ in Politics model. It would have been expected that this position would have given the PCC a greater operational latitude in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. This, however, was not the case as her actions, as argued above, were truncated by constitutional and antecedent apron strings

b. Forester’s three models for church-state relations

Forster (2012) differentiates three types of states in their relation to religion: the religious state, the anti-religious state and the secular state:

To Forster the first type is the “religious state”. By this, he means a state in which “there is a clear relationship between a formal religion and the nation State. In some instances, there is an overt relationship between the nation State and a particular religion.” (Forster in Bentley & Forster 2012:75). As an example of such a state, Forester cites Iran where Islam is the official religion of the state.

The second type is what Forster has referred to as “an Anti-religious State”. In such a state, “the government has a policy of actively working against religious conviction among its citizens. In such a State, religion is seen as harmful to the intentions of the State and so religious conviction and religious institutions are forbidden by law”. (Forster in Bentley & Forster 2012:76). The Cambodian Khmer Rouge and the former USSR (1921 to 1928) are cited as examples of states in which the government actively worked against religious beliefs.

According to Forster the third category is the secular state. Forster quotes Prozesky who explains that the secular State ensures, "...freedom of belief and associated practice for all belief systems, such as all the country's religions and that none of them has preferential status in law". Prozesky is further quoted to have stated that it would be a fallacy to equate the secular state to atheistic or anti-religious tendencies. Rather, "since the State seeks to secure freedom of belief and religious practice, it will neither support nor suppress religious belief and the associated religious practice." (Forster in Bentley & Forster 2012:76). Forster, just like Prozesky, holds that the secular state is the best form of governance to be supported by Christians.

One would have expected the Religious state to be the most preferred option. However, according to Prozesky, as cited by Forster, the Religious state compels all to belong to a particular religion which goes at variance with the belief that the decision of where to worship and who to worship should be from deep conviction. Thus, a religious state does not provide the kind of room for freedom of worship that the secular state does (Forster in Bentley & Forster 2012:77). Furthermore, in the religious state the lines between church and state are very murky as the state Church (or religion) feels compelled by the special privileges it enjoys to support state actions, thereby muffling the prophetic voice of the Church or religious body (Forster in Bentley & Forster 2012:78).

Forster's three models are almost akin to, though not exactly the same as, Fox's (2018) four levels of categorization of church state relations. According to data collected from 183 countries, Fox proposed four categories for the analysis of church state relations viz: a) where the government has an "official religion" (2018:19), b) where the government grants "religious support" (2018:20), c) where there is "regulation, restriction, and control of religion" (2018:20), and d) where there is "religious discrimination" (2018:20).

Following Forster's three models for church state relations, this research locates Cameroon in the third model – a secular state. This is stipulated in the following three articles in the Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon:

... no person shall be harassed on grounds of his origin, religious, philosophical or political opinions or beliefs, subject to respect for public policy;

the State shall be secular. The neutrality and independence of the State in respect of all religions shall be guaranteed; freedom of religion and worship shall be guaranteed (Constitution, 1996:2)

The secular state model operational in Cameroon was a major set-back to the role the PCC played in the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. The secular state model gives the government the latitude to approve or disapprove the existence of churches and regulate church activities. These provisions stifled the prophetic voice of the PCC in speaking out against the human rights abuses and calling her members to action against the government. As argued in Chapter Four, apart from the last letter addressed to all Christians of the PCC, the other letters, speeches and memos were cautious and struggled to be neutral. The sermon preached by the then Synod Clerk at the end of 1991 when the nation was in crisis was lacking in its vision and hope for the coming year. The fact that the churches and other religions are under the supervision of the Minister of territorial Administration who has the right to approve or ban them is enough to muffle the prophetic voice.

The secular state model plays to the advantage of the government in Cameroon. Based on this model, the state has no obligation to listen to the Church. Throughout the evolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon as elaborated in Chapter Three, the PCC wrote letters, communiques and memos and preached sermons addressing various aspects of the crisis. Given the secular state model, the government did not feel obliged to acquiesce to the demands.

c. Young's five models of church-state relations

Bentley (Bentley in Bentley and Forster, 2012:94) presents five of Young's models of how the church should relate to the state:

The first is the Retrogressive Model: This model confines the responsibility of the church in the state to that of saving souls. In situations where the irresponsibility of the state leads to social injustice, it behoves of the church to work for the salvation of the souls of the members of government and of the community. This model views injustice as sin and

believes that if the perpetrators of these acts are convicted through the engagement of the church, they will ensure the rule of justice.

The second is the Revolutionary Model: This model, which is common among Liberation Theologians holds that both the church and state have the task of first liberating themselves from unjust systems in which they operate. This model insists that “Church and State are therefore both imperfect structures and are unable to satisfactorily speak on behalf of either society or God. The struggle is not between Church and State per se, but against the Church and State subscribing to systems which exploit and oppress society as a whole” (Bentley in Bentley & Forster 2012:95).

The third is the Reactive Model: This model advocates for a total separation between church and state. This separation can ensure the critical distance from which the church can observe and react to the actions of the state. This approach is based on the assumption that “...the State recognises the position and critique of the Church as a legitimate representation, not only of the Will of God, but of its own constituency” (Bentley in Bentley & Forster 2012:95).

The fourth is the Realism Model: This model is based on Niebuhr's “Christian realism” which sees human beings as created in the image of God, yet “vulnerable” to the trappings of sin. This nature leads humanity to stand in opposition to God's will (Bentley in Bentley & Forster 2012:95). This approach sees church state relations as a play of power. Both domains possess power and it is the duty of the church to use its power to ensure the state does not abuse its power to the detriment of the society. “The wellbeing of society” it concludes “therefore hinges on this power play between Church and State” (Bentley in Bentley & Forster 2012:96).

The fifth is the Mutual responsibility Model: This model, growing out of the realism model and espoused in the works of Karl Barth, suggests a triangular inter-relationship between church, state and society. “None of the entities can exist independently. Society needs the State for its structural coherence and the Church for reinforcing its notion of spiritual belonging. Similarly, Church and State do not exist as islands, but need each other and

society in order to find their own identity and mission” (Bentley in Bentley & Forster 2012:96).

Church state relations in Cameroon as was experienced before and during the 1990-1992 political crisis cannot be exclusively classified under a particular model of Young as espoused by Bentley (Bentley in Bentley & Forster 2012:94). It can rather be understood as an amalgamation of the Retrogressive and Reactive models. The Retrogressive model speaks to the context of Bonhoeffer’s three step paradigm (as presented in Chapter Two) which focuses both on the oppressed and the oppressor – a path PCC walked in struggling to address the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. On the other hand, PCC finds its feet in the Reactive model, which according to the PCC, calls for a critical distance between Church and state. However, unlike Young’s Reactive model, the PCC is not completely separated from the government as they collaborate in areas of education, health and development. The reactive model’s predication on government’s acknowledgement of the church as the agent of the proclamation of the will of God was not tenable in Cameroon. Rather, as argued in Chapter Four, the government of Cameroon was suspicious of the stance of the PCC and made overt and covert attempts to threaten PCC hierarchy into silence. The threats to the then Moderator and convocation of the then Synod Clerk to the police station, as exemplified in Chapter Four, were attempts to scare them from speaking out.. This influenced the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon especially as the Laicite model of governance in Cameroon gave the government the mandate to approve or disapprove the existence of the PCC.

d. Kretzschmar’s typology of church-state relations in Africa

Kretzschmar (2012) in her sketch of church-state relationship in Africa distinguishes four different periods: the pre-colonial period, the colonial period, the independence period and the post-colonial period (Kretzschmar, in Bentley & Forster 2012:132). Historical periodization places the period of focus of this study in the fourth period – the post-colonial period.

Kretzschmar goes further to typify the church state relations in Africa into three categories: 'collaboration', 'neutrality' and 'critical engagement' (Kretzschmar, in Bentley & Forster 2012:133).

According to Kretzschmar

“Collaboration means that the necessary critical distance between the Church and the State is not maintained, resulting either in the Church dominating the State or, more often, a Church that is subservient to the State. A Church that seeks to remain ‘neutral’ often lapses into disengagement or escapism, leaving the State free to pursue its own policies, the practical effect of which is often similar to that of collaboration. Finally, the approach of ‘critical engagement’ seeks to interact actively with the State (and society), but not in a subservient manner.” (Kretzschmar, in Bentley and Forster, 2012:133-134).

This research aligns with Kretzschmar (2012) on the position of “critical engagement” as the best model for the African Church. The PCC also espouses this model as the foundation of its relationship with the government. As cited above, Kretzschmar (in Bentley and Forster, 2012:133) holds that the position of “critical engagement” should not leave the church “subservient” to the government. However, the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis, in spite of her espousal of the “critical engagement” policy, was truncated by her continuous dependence on the government for subvention for her schools.

Kretzschmar (in Bentley and Forster, 2012:134) warns that the church that toes the line of neutrality gives the state the leeway to pursue its own policies. As argued in the earlier part of this Chapter, the PCC in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, more often than not, avoided taking a stance. By not doing so, the PCC was indirectly giving the government the impetus to continue on its path.

e). Ahmed’s four archetypes of relations between religions and state

Ahmed (2017), examining the relations between religions in general terms and states from a constitutional perspective proposes five archetypes:

The first is the *Laicite* (strong secularism): This archetype, practised by France, defines the state as a lay or secular state. By this, the state recognizes the existence of various religions and guarantees their rights to exist but is against the public show of any particular religion and rather propounds its own ethos in its schools that cuts across religions. Its public ceremonies have no religious coloration (Ahmed 2017:9).

The second is the religion-state neutrality (weak secularism): This model, as practised in the United States of America, describes a state that “neither endorses nor criticizes religion” (Ahmed 2017:9). In this model, the state does not support any particular religion and does not discriminate amongst religions. This model does not prohibit public expression of religious beliefs even by public figures.

The third model is the pluralist accommodation: This model, as practised by Germany, South Africa and India, promotes “...the equal and non-discriminatory treatment of religions. This means that the state tries to accommodate religions and may cooperate with religious institutions in their social functions” (Ahmed 2017:10). This model provides public space for religious bodies and views religious institutions as partners in development.

The fourth is the recognition without establishment model: In this model, the state may accord formal or informal recognition to a particular religion, as was the case in Ireland till the 1970’s (Ahmed 2017:11). This recognition is not accompanied by any special privileges from the state.

The fifth model is that of religious establishment: This model describes a state where, in spite of guarantee of religious freedom, it identifies itself publicly with a particular religion “...which is ‘established’ in the sense of being supported, funded, endorsed or patronized by the state” (Ahmed, 2017:12). This model is practised in Norway.

The contextual framework of church state relations in Cameroon, within which the PCC operates, is in Ahmed’s *Laicite* model patterned after the French system. A larger part of Cameroon being a former French colony and still experiencing a strong neo-colonial presence of France, practises this model patterned after its colonial master. Thus, the role that the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon is

analysed through the contextual lenses of the secular state. The operational latitude of the PCC within this context is limited by the constitutional provisions and cannot be compared to that of a Church operating in a different model. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's model of Church-state relationship was birthed in the context of the "pluralist accommodation" model which views religious bodies as partners in development. This difference in context, as argued above, impacted on the role the PCC played in the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

ii. The Kairos Document

In the heart of Apartheid in South Africa a group of theologians came together to reflect on the role of the church in the face of such blatant violations of the rights of the blacks. The result of this reflection was the Kairos document which was produced in 1985 and revised in 1986.

The Kairos Document, in proposing where the church should stand in the face of Apartheid (and in fact, other political crisis), differentiated between three theologies: State Theology, Church theology and Prophetic Theology.

The Kairos Document defines State Theology as the theology used by the state to defend Apartheid. The State succeeds to do so by "misusing theological concepts and biblical texts for its own political purposes" (Leonard, 2010:49). Romans 13:1-7 is the biblical text State Theology used in defence of Apartheid.

Church Theology was the opinions of mostly white church leaders on the status quo. This theology was superficially critical of Apartheid but lacked the verve to engage in in-depth analysis of the status quo. Church theology focused on ideas of reconciliation, justice and non-violence. The Kairos Document critiques these three ideas. To the Kairos Document, the reconciliation espoused by Church Theology is void of insistence on true justice. Reconciliation, the Kairos Document argues, must come only after true justice has been meted. The Kairos Document also points out that the idea of Justice in Church Theology is justice to be doled out by the state and not the oppressed. The Kairos Document argues that the process of justice that does not involve the oppressed is injustice. Furthermore, Church Theology's stance on non-violence is lopsided as it focuses on the unarmed

efforts of the oppressed to liberate themselves meanwhile the structural and physical violence carried out by the state is overlooked.

Prophetic Theology, to the Kairos Document, is a Christian response to Apartheid “that is biblical, spiritual, pastoral and, above all, prophetic” (Leonard, 2010:63). The Kairos Document differentiates between academic and prophetic theology. Academic theology is seen as the comprehensive and systematic study of theology. Meanwhile prophetic theology is a search of theological answers to the issues at hand – in the case of Kairos, seeking for what the Bible says in their context of Apartheid. Prophetic theology is confrontational, spiritual, hopeful and pastoral. It denounces sin and announces salvation. Prophetic theology is a call to action. It jolts the church to action. It calls the church to stand with the oppressed because God is always on their side. Prophetic theology calls for the transformation of church services: the evil spoken of in the baptismal liturgy must be named; the fellowship spoken of in communion service must be named. These church services must serve the need of the oppressed and speak to their context. The Kairos Document legitimises civil disobedience by the church against any illegitimate regime and the mobilisation of church members to work against such regimes.

In the context of the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, the church operated within the confines of Church Theology. The church’s critique of state actions was lopsided, void of any concrete call to action. The PCC limited herself to letters, communiques and sermons. No evidence has been found of action taken to stand with the oppressed. Like the case of South Africa, the pews of the congregations of the PCC were filled every Sunday by the persons who were being crushed by the vicious wheel of the state. But unlike the Church in South Africa, the PCC failed to stand with the majority of her members; the PCC failed to practically stand with the oppressed; the PCC failed to mobilise the members to civil disobedience against an illegitimate regime.

Models, it can be concluded, are contextual. Church-state relations, even as it may follow some observed and studied patterns, vary from context to context, depending on the realities on the ground. Thus, this research, while drawing inspiration from the

aforementioned models and the Kairos Document focuses on the local context that animated the relationship between the PCC and the government in Cameroon and its effect on the role the PCC had to play in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

iii. Evolution of church-state relations

This study which critically examines the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon harbours around church state relations in particular, and the relationship between state and religion in general. Therefore, it would be necessary to briefly trace the historical evolution of the state and religion before narrowing it down to Church-state relations. This will help situate the role the PCC played in this historical trajectory.

The existence of states and religions pre-date the founding and establishment of the Church. Mueller (2012) holds that the Sumerians invented writing, thus their state is the first to have documented records. According to these records, state and religion were interwoven. “The state was an absolute monarchy with religion for an ideology. The king was god’s representative on earth, and immediately beneath him were the priests” (Mueller, 2012:2). The impact religion had to bear on state affairs influenced both the public and private life of the people of Mesopotamia. The same thing applied for the other early kingdoms of Greece, Egypt, Babylon, Persia, and Rome (Fox 2018:14).

The rupture between state and religion would appear centuries later under the democratic principles of the Greek City States. Mueller says Athens:

... can be said to be the first, secular state, in which state and religion ... became separated. This separation arose not because the Athenians had made a conscious decision to separate the two sets of institutions, but rather because of their reverence for reason. The Greeks were simply too rational to let superstition influence their choices in the public domain. (Mueller 2012:3)

The Greek civilization was supplanted by the Roman Empire with a strong inkling for superstitious beliefs in rituals and incantations. This gave the priests a privileged position in the society especially as they, like the ruling class, came from the aristocrats. The King, it was believed, had supreme powers from God, and the priests and ruling class followed in hierarchical order.

To Fox (2018:14) the relationship between religion and the state permeates human history, through the ancient empires to biblical times. He argues that even in the Old Testament, the state (represented by the kings) could not be extricated from religion (represented by the priests) as they were interdependent. However, the kings and priests came from different and well distinct classes.

According to Knowles (1967:3) for almost three centuries after the public life of Christ, the Christian folk were not yet organised in structured bodies meanwhile the operational mechanism of the Roman Empire (the state) was already properly structured and functioning. However, from family fellowships the church would evolve to the guidance of elders and the eventual shepherding by Bishops. Knowles asserts that “For almost three hundred years ... the church as an organized body with a corporate policy had no political existence” (Knowles 1967:4).

The shift will come with the conversion of Emperor Constantine who became a Christian Emperor thereby seeing his mandate as divinely ordained and declaring himself the protector of the church. The stability and status Constantine’s conversion granted Christendom notwithstanding, his claims of a divine mandate to rule over the Church of God led to objections from the Bishops of Rome. These Bishops asserted “the primacy of the spiritual power and the supremacy of the successor of the prince of the apostles and his inheritance of the promises made by Christ to Peter. Thus, now for the first time the problem of church and state was being posed” (Knowles 1967:5).

The issue of Church-state relation resurface in the writings of St. Augustine of Hippo and particularly in his City of God which modelled theological reflections of church state relationship through the middle ages (Knowles, 1967:6).

Pope Gelasius I, writing to Emperor Anastasius in 494 saw Church-state relations in his day as “two forces that ruled the world, the sacred sovereignty of the priesthood and the executive power of the prince. Both were God-given, and while the priestly authority was greater, inasmuch as it guided even the emperor's soul as that of a son of the church, yet the priesthood obeyed the emperor in matters of public, secular interest.” (Knowles 1967:6).

Church-state relations evolved overtime to the point that the Pope was vested with the authority to appoint Emperors. Thus, Charlemagne was appointed and crowned by the Pope in 800. However, Charlemagne will break from this tradition as he saw himself as the “divinely ordained governor of Christendom” (Knowles 1967:8). This view was held by successive Popes who went as far as declaring that “the pope had been entrusted with the two swords, temporal and spiritual, that he bestowed the use of the former upon the secular ruler, but only so that he might serve the ends of the pope to whom he owed his position as emperor.” (Knowles 1967:9).

This was made practical by Innocent III and Boniface VIII under whose mandate this theory came under attack and was openly challenged by Pierre de Flotte, an agent of King Philip the Fair of France. They held that the state could effectively punish defaulters in this life, but the Church could only threaten what would happen in life after now. This dominated Church-state discourse in the 14th century.

Nurnberger states that according to Luther, God prevails over evil and sin in the world “outwardly” and “inwardly”: “outwardly” through the governance of the government and “inwardly” through the preaching of the gospel by the Church. To Luther, the Church should not govern and the state should not preach (Nurnberger, in Bentley & Forester 2012:42).

To Luther, the form of the state should not be static but should vary in response to circumstances and Christians are called upon to respond to the state using their senses of “observation and reason” (Nurnberger, in Bentley & Forester 2012:43).

Lutheran theologians, based on the teachings of Luther, will later on take different trajectories. While some maintained the separation between church and state, holding

that the church has nothing to say in the form of government, implicitly, the Church has to support government action. Others saw democracy as the form of government best suited to biblical principles and vied for the need of the church to advocate for it.

The Reformed Tradition, influenced by Calvin argued that the gospel is meant to reveal God's glory, and God's glory is established when there is law and order. So, Calvin believed in a set of rigid principles in contrast to Luther who based on observation and reason. Calvinists thus insisted on very strict Christian ethics and a clear framework for Christian involvement in politics ((Nurnberger, in Bentley & Forester 2012:46). This led to two different tenets: while some Calvinists applied this to theocratic systems of governance, others applied it in a democratic context.

The eventual dogmatism and orthodoxy of Protestantism by the 17th century led to the emergence of pietism and its consequent off-shoot – Pentecostalism. Pentecostalism was other-worldly and relegated political issues to the realm of the temporal state.

The 1960's, with the decolonisation of African nations, the prior accent given to it by the United Nations and the continuous probing of the World Council of Churches, saw the birth of Political Theology. Alongside this was birthed Black Theology in South Africa, Liberation Theology in Latin America, and Feminist Theology in Europe but to name a few.

Political theology or the reaction of Churches (or the gospel) to political realities is case specific. Nurnberger cites David Nicholls who:

...has shown convincingly that a powerful correlation exists between the social circumstances, the fashionable ideology and the theology pertaining to a particular historical-cultural context. One has to be careful, therefore, not to mistake a given theological approach for a pure idea unrelated to its social context – least of all for a timeless revelation of God. ((Nurnberger, in Bentley & Forester 2012:54).

Knowles holds that:

Indeed, from the French Revolution to the present day an entirely new situation has developed. The 'state', whether liberal, democratic, socialist, fascist, or communist, has become increasingly non-religious, if not

positively anti-religious. For the first time since the age of the conversion of Europe to Christianity, many of the countries of the old and new worlds have ceased in large part to provide a Christian climate or background in public life (Knowles, 1967:12).

Okolo, Abalogu and Oziezi (2020:183), however, present a contrary opinion of those who insist on the resurgence of the prime influence of religion in general on national life. Proponents of this view argue that:

... the age of secularity has ended while religion is resurging; even the societies of Western Europe which once served as a prime example for secularization theory are experiencing a resurgence of religion. Here, the continuing and rising presence of religion becomes particularly manifest in the public sphere.... Religion is assuming a new public role and thereby refutes the long-standing assumption of a privatization of religion (Okolo et al. 2020:183)

The disparity in the positions held by Knowles (1967:12) and that propounded by Okolo *et al.* (2020:183) can be understandable on two grounds: firstly, given the time gap in publication between Knowles (1967) and Okolo *et al.* (2020) a lot should have changed in the global religious landscape. Secondly, Knowles focuses his analysis particularly on the Christian religion while Okolo *et al.* (2020) deal with religions in general. The hype in religious participation in the public sphere can be attributed to an increase in Islamic fundamentalism since the Iranian Revolution of 1979 (Raiser 2013:1). An increase in Islamic activism and fundamentalism does not necessarily indicate a similar move in Christendom.

Pillay, referring to the Protestant Reformation posits "...the 16th-century Protestant Reformation was an attempt to reform and transform both church and society". It entailed "the reform of the morals and structures of church and society, new approaches to political issues, shifts in economics thinking, the renewal of Christian spirituality, and the reform of Christian doctrine." (Pillay 2016:21). Thus, the church's public role became accentuated after the Reformation. To Pillay, the continuous prevalence of these issues "call for a strengthened public witness as we [the church] seek to bring about the transformation of church, society, and the world" (Pillay 2016:21).

Fox (2018:15) harping on the potential influence religious beliefs can have on political behaviour states "... religious worldviews, beliefs, doctrines, and theologies provide a lens through which people can understand the world around them as well as including explicit instructions on how to behave. All of these qualities of religion can potentially have profound influence on political behaviour"

Historically, church – state relations have evolved in Cameroon from the colonial to the post-colonial periods. As stated in Chapter 4, the first missionaries to set foot on the shores of Cameroon were the English Baptist Missionaries in 1843. They collaborated with the European traders who had settled in Douala. Cameroon was formerly colonised by Germany in 1884. A bitter relationship ensued between the English missionaries who had already established schools and congregations, and the German colonial government. This stemmed from the sour Anglo-German relationship which bred mutual suspicion. As stated in Chapter 3, the English had declared their intention to annex Cameroon. Bismarck, the German Chancellor, aware of this sent his envoy ahead to beat England to the deal. Conscious of the English feelings about Cameroon, the German colonial government was suspicious of an English missionary society operating within its territory. The colonial government frustrated the English Baptist Missionaries by instituting a policy that only German should be taught in all schools.

When it became clear to the English Baptist missionaries that they could no longer continue in Cameroon, they requested for a missionary society from Germany to take over missionary work in Cameroon.

Chapter 4 specifies the conditions the Basel Mission, a Swiss-German missionary society, gave the German colonial government before they accepted to take over missionary work in Cameroon. One of the conditions was the non-interference of the colonial government in missionary work in Cameroon. The Basel missionary society took over work in Cameroon in 1886.

Meanwhile the relationship between the German colonial government and the English Baptist missionaries had been one of tension, that with the Basel Mission was one of mutual respect. The German colonial government and the Basel Mission had areas of

collaboration and disagreement. Their greatest area of discordance, as mentioned in Chapter 3, was the Bakweri land problem. This ensued when the German colonial governor wanted to expropriate the native land in Muea. The Basel missionaries rose in defence of the local population. After a series of petitions to the German Chancellor, the matter was resolved in favour of the natives.

Church-state relations metamorphosed into a different phase after independence, especially after the reunification of 1961. As argued in Chapter 3, after the reunification, the President, Ahmadou Ahidjo systematically consolidated powers and would not tolerate any opposition. The state adopted the French *laicite* model of church-state relations. By this the state declared itself a lay state, granting freedom of worship but retaining the right to regulate religious affairs by granting permission to exist or not to exist.

This research is located in this historical epoch. The gentle romance between church and state is over; the state strives to regulate the activities of the church within its geographical boundaries and the church pitches its prophetic voice to conscientise the state. This was the dilemma in Bonhoeffer's Germany, in Naude's South Africa and in Nku's Cameroon.

The historical evolution of church-state relations informs this research of the dynamic nature of this relationship. While the current state of the relationship affected the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, this research is cognizant of the fact that, since church-state relationship keeps mutating, in prospecting the role the PCC will have to play in the public arena in the future, the PCC will need to adjust to the new dynamics.

The evolving nature of church-state relationship informs this research of the need for the church to always have an understanding of this relationship at the time of its intervention in the public arena in order for her response to be relevant. The 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon occurred at a time when there was separation of spheres between the state and the church under the Laicite model with the state having the powers to authorise the existence of churches. The role the PCC played in addressing the crisis had to be adapted

to this historic epoch. This accounts for the PCC's high engagement in rhetoric and low involvement in indirect action and absence in the area of direct action.

However, this is not enough justification for the ineptitude of the PCC in the areas of indirect and direct action in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. From studies of the German, South African and El-Salvadoran contexts, the church has succeeded to make impact in the public arena only where it had the courage to challenge the status quo. In Germany Bonhoeffer took on Hitler's dictatorial regime. In South Africa, the leaders of the black churches stood up against Apartheid in the face of threats of imprisonment. In El Salvador, the Roman Catholic Church under the leadership of Arch Bishop Romero resisted a dictatorial government. For the PCC to have made positive difference in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon she needed to swim against the tides, push the boundaries set by the government and operate beyond the space the government had provided for the church.

Thus, the PCC failed to operate within the spirit of the Protestant Reformation which was "to reform and transform both church and society" and to engender "the transformation of church, society, and the world" (Pillay 2016:21).

Fox (2018:15), as earlier presented, addressing the influence of religion on political behaviour concluded that "religion can potentially have profound influence on political behavior" Going by this assertion, the PCC failed in making use of the tool of religion to impact the political behaviour of the leaders of the government, at least, of PCC members in the government. This research found no evidence of any PCC member of government who either aided the PCC in her strive to address the crisis or stood up against government action as a result of the impact of the gospel message.

The Bonhoeffer archetype

The steam of the resistance of the Confessing Church in Germany to Hitler's totalitarian policies was kept by Bonhoeffer who became the face of the resistance. His commitment to the resistance was bold and selfless even at the point of death. In South Africa, the Bonhoeffer archetype was Beyers Naude as argued in Chapter Two. His selfless

commitment to the fight against apartheid, even in the face of imprisonment and the threat of death, was a major boost to the role the Churches played in bringing an end to apartheid. In El Salvador Bishop Oscar Romero championed the church's resistance to the dictatorial regime. Although he was murdered at the early stages of the resistance, the fervour of his courage lingered on and inspired many other ministers leading to the birth of liberation theology.

The question here is: was there a Bonhoeffer archetype in the PCC as the Church struggled to resolve the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon and what role did he play?

In the PCC, in so far as the 1990-1992 political crisis is concerned, three pastors stood out. They are the Rt. Rev. Henry Awasom, the then Moderator of the PCC, the Rev. Nyansako-ni-Nku, the then Synod Clerk and the Rev. Dr. Bame Bame Michael, the then Parish Pastor of Bastos congregation in Yaounde. The three of them were vocal on the crises, critical of government's approach, and proposed ways out of the crisis. Rev. Dr. Bame Michael was a parish pastor, and by his position, had a right to his opinion with no bearing on the direction the PCC should take. Rev. Nyansako was Synod Clerk serving under the Moderator and mostly echoed the thoughts and decisions of the Synod Executive. Thus, Rt. Rev. Henry Awasom, as head of the PCC had to play the Bonhoeffer role. This is buttressed by the fact that the PCC operates a centralized system of Church governance where all major decisions are taken by the Synod under the auspices of the Moderator, and throughout the crisis there were no dissenting voices among the clergy on the direction the Church should take. There was no attempt by any pastor or laity to champion another cause. Thus, the brunt of the responsibility of the direction the PCC took, and the role she played in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis rested on the shoulders of Rt. Rev. Awasom. In Germany, Bonhoeffer, though not the leader of his church, took up the responsibility to champion the cause because, as argued in Chapter Two, the church was divided and its leadership had failed to take up the mantle. In the cases of South Africa and El Salvador the church leaders led the struggle and were the faces of the revolution in their various nations. In the case of the PCC, there were no

cracks on the walls of the pastoral core, but the then Moderator, Awasom, failed to champion the cause.

As argued earlier, the PCC was very strong in her reaction to the crisis at the first level of Bonhoeffer's three-step paradigm. The PCC wrote letters, communiques, addresses, made speeches and preached sermons on the crisis. These all ended at the stage of rhetoric. Very little was done at the level of taking care of the victims of the crisis and getting directly involved in confronting government.

Awasom seemed comfortable with this level of reaction. He had had a taste of the regime's viciousness. As evidenced in Chapter Four, he was accused of supporting the SDF party, he had received several anonymous threatening phone calls and, once, his residence was surrounded by the military. This might have been warning enough for him to know any further steps could incur greater repercussions.

His stance on how far he was willing to go and how much sacrifice he was willing to make was expressed in the above quoted letter he wrote to his friends in Germany on the 23rd of August 1994.

By this, Awasom was indicating his inability or unwillingness to have engaged any further step beyond the confines of rhetoric. He makes it clear that the Church in Africa cannot get into "confrontation" with the state like the Church in Europe. This was an overstatement because the example of the churches in South Africa, in their fight against apartheid, was still fresh in mind of the world. The selfless roles played by Church leaders in the likes of Bayes Naude, Desmond Tutu Frank Chikane etc. were glaring examples of how leaders can put their lives on the line for a just cause.

Awasom's unwillingness to stick out his neck for the sake of the people is a factor to be considered in the failure of the PCC to "put a spoke in the wheel" of the government machinery. The failure of an appropriate Bonhoeffer archetype in Cameroon played to the disfavour of the PCC in the role she played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

Conclusion

In conclusion, after a critical analysis of the role the PCC played in the resolution of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon in line with the Dietrich Bonhoeffer paradigm, this research holds that the PCC did a lot at the level of the first step in Rhetoric, did very little at the level of Indirect Action (second step) and did nothing at the level of Direct Action (third step). The role the PCC played was conditioned by its dependence on its Basel Mission antecedence, the pace set by Jeremiah Chi Kangsen, the fettering effects of the Book of Orders and the Constitution of the PCC, the inherent complications in adapting the Bonhoeffer paradigm to the Cameroonian context and the absence of an appropriate Bonhoeffer archetype.

CHAPTER 6

General Conclusion to the study

Introduction

This Chapter concludes the research by proposing an adapted model for the public role of the church in Cameroon, tracing the research journey covered thus far by summarizing the various chapters, identifying research findings and, making some recommendations.

6.1. Contextual model for the public role of the Church in Cameroon

In proposing a contextual model for the public role of the Church in Cameroon, note is taken of the challenges in adapting the Bonhoeffer model in Cameroon as evoked in Chapter Five. Bonhoeffer's paradigm was birthed as a response to the political challenges posed by the Hitler regime in Germany. Thus, it was context specific. Its application in South Africa and El Salvador did not go without challenges, as described in chapter two. Also, the church in Germany operates in a context where pastors are considered employees of the state but the church in Cameroon operates under the laicite model (as argued in Chapter Five) in which there is a clear separation between church and state, with the state reserving the right to authorize and supervise the activities of the church. Furthermore, the church in Cameroon, especially the mainline churches that operate schools, are dependent on the government for subventions to run the schools. Therefore, for the church in Cameroon to be of essence to the citizens by championing their course, the church needs a model adapted to this context. The question here is: what can the church do to cause a positive change in government policy and action given her context? In other words, how can the church bring pressure to bear on the government to change a course that is detrimental to the citizens within her contextual realities?

The proposed contextual model for the public role of the church in Cameroon, just like the Bonhoeffer model, will have three steps, but unlike the Bonhoeffer model, the third step

will be different. The proposed contextualized model will propose a modus operandi for each step.

Step 1: Rhetoric

In examining the role, the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon in the light of the Bonhoeffer model, this research established in Chapter Five that the PCC was very active in the area of rhetoric. This was the area of strength of the PCC. Very little was done to take care of the victims, and nothing was done to put a stop to government action. Further research on the role other churches in Cameroon played in the resolution of this crisis may also reveal same findings. Thus, in the Cameroonian model for the public role of the church, this first step is maintained.

The church should at no time cease from being the conscience of the government and the voice of the society. By her nature, the church is a grassroots organization, which experiences the daily realities of her members. The church must therefore be able to articulate the concerns of these members and strive for an improvement of their standard of living. Even as the church prepares believers for the kingdom of God, she should not lose sight of striving to make them have a better life while here on earth. Members identify more with the church that understands and articulates their concerns. A case in point is the Bakweri land problem presented in Chapter Three. When the indigenes realized that the Basel Mission was fighting against the illegal appropriation of Bakweri lands by the German colonial government, their initial suspicions of the missionaries were replaced by trust and membership of the Basel Mission church increased in Muea and environs.

To better articulate the plight of the masses, the Synod of PCC, through the Moderator and Synod Clerk, must be in constant dialogue with the grassroots to better comprehend the stakes. The grassroots should be involved in diagnosing and analysing the issues at stake and thereby appropriate the final resolutions. That which is not done with them cannot be properly done for them. Chapter Two cites the case of Father Jose Inocencio Alas in El Salvador who formed the Christian based communities for the empowerment of the masses. This was an eye-opener for the need of land reforms.

The PCC is well structured from the congregation to the presbytery and to the Synod. This order should be followed in the analysis of the problem. However, when it concerns issues of countering government's actions, Synod Executive Committee should act on behalf of Synod. The letter, address or communique should not be the product of either the Moderator or Synod Clerk; it should be the product of the entire Synod Committee, and the content of the letter should convey that impression. Historical evidence from the findings of this research, as presented in Chapter Two, indicate that government's response to solo ecclesiastical actions are fatal, while that of combined actions are repressive. In the case of Germany, Bonhoeffer almost single-handedly championed the cause against the Aryan Clause in writing and action. It was easy for the Hitler regime to single him out, arrest and kill him. As presented in Chapter Two, Bonhoeffer was a founding member of the Pastors' Emergency League which had vowed to: "a commitment to preach the Bible, to obey the Confessions of the Reformation and to resist any attacks against them, to take responsibility for those who are persecuted and to repudiate the Aryan Clause, which prohibited non-Aryans from taking government jobs" (Raum 2002:75). As long as Bonhoeffer functioned within the ambits of this organisation, he was safe. But when he joined the small group to plot for the assassination of Hitler, he met his fatal end. In the case of El Salvador, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, Arch Bishop Oscar Romero championed the plight of the suffering masses even in the face of opposition from other Bishops. The result was that he was assassinated. But the case of South Africa is different. Since the Black Churches acted in synergy and their leaders were in unison, they were persecuted, arrested and imprisoned, but cases of assassination of the main leaders was not recorded. This does not preclude the killing of other leaders at various levels of the struggle against Apartheid. This research here focuses mostly on the main church leaders engaged in the struggle (Desmond Tutu, Allan Boesak and Frank Chikane). Thus, letters, addresses and communiques written should carry the seal and reflect the composition of the Synod Committee on behalf of the PCC. This would exonerate the leadership from direct government reaction.

In addition, the letters, speeches or communiques should reflect the bilingual nature of the country. Cameroon is a bilingual country with English and French as official

languages. Out of the ten regions, only two are English speaking, the other eight are French speaking. The English-speaking population is about one-fifth of the total population of Cameroon. The PCC is an English-speaking church. Even her congregations in the French speaking regions use English as their language of communication. This research did not find any letter, speech or communique addressed to the politicians or President of the Republic written in French or even summarized in French. If the PCC intends her messages to be properly comprehended, they should be translated in to French. Therefore, for each letter, address or communique, there should be an English and a French version. The letters, speeches and communiques to be read in PCC congregations can be only in English since the members are mostly English speaking. For this to be effective there needs to be a translation unit at the Synod Office in Buea. Alternatively, the church could hire/seek for the services of a qualified translator on such occasions if the church cannot sustain a translation desk due to financial constraints.

As earlier mentioned, the PCC was strong in the area of “Rhetoric” in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. While consolidating this position, the above inputs would further enhance the PCC’s role in the public arena.

Step 2. Indirect action.

In the Bonhoeffer paradigm, this step is for all actions carried out by the church to take care of the victims of government action. These actions have no direct bearing on government policies. This proposed contextual model agrees to the practicability of this step in the Cameroonian context. This research revealed in Chapter Four the lame efforts made by the PCC to take care of some of the victims (prisoners) of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. Effort that is more conscious needs to be put in this direction. Chapter Five argued that for the church to be of essence it should be seen struggling with its members. Bonhoeffer stood with the Jewish members of his day, the black church leaders, as evidenced in Chapter Five, sought for foreign assistance for victims of the Apartheid struggle and funded local projects. The Roman Catholic Church in El Salvador created the Christian base communities to empower the poor.

For the PCC to be able to engage in Indirect Action which ensures the wounds of the victims of crisis are bound, a strategic plan needs to be put in place to canalize the efforts of the PCC.

a. Poor and sick fund

The PCC has depended on the Development Department for the social services of the Church. Up till recently, as seen in the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon where this department has garnered funds to reach out to Internally Displaced Persons, it concerned itself with managing the social services of the PCC (Prespot, the Agricultural project at Nfonta, the Youth Centres for vocational training for young people etc.). This truncated PCC's outreach to the poor and needy.

Every 1st of January (New Year's Day), there is a special collection in all congregations of the PCC titled "Poor and Sick Fund". This collection is channelled through the Presbytery to the Central Treasury of the PCC. The idea to reach out to the poor and the sick, the group of persons who suffer most in any crisis, is lofty. The problem is that this collection does not fund any particular project. Given the numerous financial needs of the Church, when the money gets into the Central Treasury it is easily used for other pressing needs. A few needy persons who get to the Synod office receive tokens. The impact of this collection is not felt. The Poor and Sick Fund should serve the purpose for which it is meant – taking care of the poor and sick, especially victims of crisis.

In Germany, as presented in Chapter Two, Bonhoeffer strove to bind the wounds of the victims of government action by smuggling some Jews out of Germany through a plan called "Operation 7" (Raum, 2002:127). In South Africa, the SACC solicited for foreign assistance to take care of the families of victims of the Apartheid struggle. The PCC, through the Poor and Sick Fund collection, and mobilisation from her partners, can better reach out to the poor and needy.

b. Grassroots Organisations

This research work is focused on the role a single denomination, the PCC, played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. This is unlike the case in Germany

and South Africa where several churches and church organisations were involved. It is akin to the situation in El Salvador where a single denomination, the Roman Catholic Church, had to address dictatorship and oppression.

The awareness of the masses to the political and economic realities of their nation was largely thanks to the Christian based communities that were created by Father Jose Inocencio Alas. As a result of the decision of the El Salvadoran government in 1972 to construct a damn that would have flooded the farms of the peasants, coupled with the massive fraud of the 1974 elections, the peasants saw the need of a united front to fight for their rights. This led to the creation of the United Popular Action Front in April 1974 under the leadership of Father Alas.

Thus, it can be deduced that the creation of grassroots organisations for education and mobilisation of the masses is a key factor in addressing dictatorial systems. In the case of the PCC, grassroots organisations already exist

As stated in Chapter Four, the PCC has three main movements: Christian Men Fellowship (CMF), Christian Women Fellowship (CWF) and Christian Youth Fellowship (CYF). These movements are the evangelistic arms of the PCC. The movements are grassroots organisations that are expected to educate the masses not only on Bible knowledge, but also on socio-political and economic issues as in the case of the Christian based communities of Father Alas. Unfortunately, the programs of these movements are mostly on Bible knowledge and social concerns, and have nothing to do with political awareness. This is a missed opportunity to raise the awareness of the grassroots to the political and economic realities of the nation. During the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon, this research found no evidence of such programs for grassroots education.

The Movements of the PCC are equally expected to reach out to the needy in their communities and share the load of binding the wounds of the victims of crisis. Unfortunately, fellowship in these groups is limited only to members. The outreach of these groups is limited to mostly once a year when they visit a prison, an orphanage or a

health facility to reach out to patients. The Movements should design a conscious outreach program to the needy.

The lameness of the role the PCC played in addressing the needs of the victims of the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon should be a wake-up call for conscious emphasis in the area of the church's public witness. The funds raised through the Poor and Sick Fund collection should serve as the PCC's contribution for the plight of the victims of crisis. Meanwhile, the Movements should carry out independent local actions in their communities to cater for the vulnerable, they should also serve as channels for collection of data from, and outreach to the vulnerable. The Central Church should free its hands from attending to tables and take charge of spiritual matters.

When the Disciples received complaints about the neglect of the widows of Hellenistic Jews, the Twelve Disciples said: "It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word." (Acts 6:2-4 NIV). The Movements would take care of "this responsibility" while the Central Church attends to the healing of the soul.

This step thus entails the proper education of the grassroots on socio-political issues, the adequate use of the Poor and Sick Fund, and the conscious mobilisation of the CMF, CWF and CYF movements of the PCC as veritable arms of outreach.

As already established, the PCC's role in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon according to the second step of Bonhoeffer's paradigm, was lame. PCC needs to develop structures to bind the wounds of the victims of crisis.

Step 3: Direct Action

At this step, the proposed contextual model departs from the third step of Bonhoeffer. According to Bonhoeffer, as presented in Chapter Two, this third step entails "putting a spoke" in the wheel of the government machinery. This encapsulates all actions the

church takes to stop government machinery from operating or cause government to change its policy. For Bonhoeffer, this step meant plotting for the assassination of Adolf Hitler, the then German Chancellor.

As argued in Chapter Five, the PCC found it difficult to engage this step because of her contextual reality. Open confrontation with the government in Cameroon would have grave consequences for the Church, as the government would utilize every weapon at its disposal to cripple the church and frustrate her mission. Chapter Four presents cases of government harassment of the then Moderator, Rt. Rev. Henry Awasom, and the then Synod Clerk, Rev. Nyansako-ni-Nku. The reality of the Cameroonian context warrants a deviation from Bonhoeffer's approach at this third step.

It is difficult to judge Bonhoeffer's motive to join a group to plot for the assassination of Hitler other than his wish to liberate Germany from the clutches of a dictator. The question here is: How far should the church go in "putting a spoke in the wheel" of the government? Is the church of God allowed to commit murder?

In Genesis 20:13 the NIV version of the Bible says, "You shall not murder". God expressly forbade murder. The exception given was for the avenger of blood recorded in Deuteronomy chapter 35 who had the right to kill only one who was judged to have committed murder. The government has taken over this prerogative to judge and, where necessary, sentence to death. Whether the government uses this prerogative rightly or wrongly is another issue for consideration.

However, mention should be made of the facts presented in Chapter Two of the church's involvement with armed revolutionary groups especially in El Salvador. In El Salvador, Priests were accused of taking up arms in resistance movements against the government. Thus, it can be said that the price the Roman Catholic churches in El Salvador had to pay for the liberation of the people was blood stained hands. The involvement of Bonhoeffer in plots to assassinate Hitler is also telling of how far a church leader was willing to go. This research is not ignorant of the wanton killings that accompanied the Christian

crusades and the wars waged by successive Israelite kings under the direct command of God.

This brings the issue of the Just War Theory into play. The question is: can war be justified? In relation to the issue at stake concerning the role Bonhoeffer played in the attempted assassination of Hitler and the role played by some Priests in El Salvador in joining revolutionary groups, the question would be: can the church have a justifiable reason to engage in or support war or the use force? The purpose of Just War Theory “is to articulate moral principles whereby the resort to war and the means of fighting wars are limited” (Kaplan, 2012:12). There are three groups of critics of the Just War Theory. The first are the realist who hold that given the need for nations to defend their territorial integrity and national security, wars cannot be avoided. The second are the pacifists who see a contradiction in the terms “Just” and “War”. To them, there is nothing as a just war. War itself is unjust. The third are the legalists who are concerned with the rules that govern warfare.

Had the world been in the state of utopia where national and international strife and rancour would have been wiped away, warfare in particular and the use of force in general would be of no essence. But given the current context, this research believes that:

Unfortunately, war is a central feature of human civilization and will occur in spite of our continuous efforts to prevent it. The critical reality makes it necessary to adopt moral guidelines limiting the use of force for those who would undertake it. (Yaakop, Ali, Ali, Nurdin, Mustamirah, Seman, Mohamad, and Razif, 2020:964).

The questions that arise are: what should be the place of the church or a Christian vis-à-vis the Just War Theory? What should be the position of the church or a Christian when faced with war or violence?

Smith, B., (2012:22) gives the following three conditions under which a Christian can resort to violence: “If a Christian’s life is in danger”, if “the lives of others are in danger” and “if the life and well-being of someone on whom others are dependent upon is in danger (for example the breadwinner of a family, or a mother with young children)”. In the

case of the 1990-1992 crisis in Cameroon, Smith's three conditions were met. But as argued in Chapter Five, the PCC was aloof as concerns direct action.

Smith (2012:22), however cautions that "violence must only be used as a last resort. Where possible all other means of defence must be explored". This caution might have dictated the actions PCC could take in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

The Church, by its nature, should preserve life. It should be at the most extreme of cases and where there is firm conviction it is the will of God that the church should take up arms.

In the case of the PCC in Cameroon, two things are involved: firstly, PCC's ineptitude in stepping out to bind the wounds of the victims of the crisis, as demonstrated in Chapter Five, kept it far off from getting actively involved to put a spoke in the wheel of the government. That notwithstanding, had the PCC had the urge to go violent, there were no resistance movements at the time for the church to lend support to. Secondly, the context of Cameroon where the church is dependent on the government incapacitates the church's involvement in radical actions. Chapter Five presents PCC's dependence on subventions from the government for its educational sector to survive.

If the Church should not commit murder, given the contextual challenges which make it difficult for a church in Cameroon to launch an all-out onslaught against the government, what tool can the church use to cause government to change its policy or stop an action?

As an alternative to Bonhoeffer's third step, this contextual model proposes advocacy. Church advocacy, if properly handled, can stifle government action and lead to change of policy.

To the Life & Peace Institute, advocacy is defined as:

Strategic and deliberate action directed at changing or influencing a given policy, position, system etc. Defending an idea, promoting a position, raising awareness. Policy advocacy is the process of negotiating and mediating a dialogue through which influential networks, opinion leaders, and, ultimately, decision makers take ownership of your ideas, evidence, and proposals, and subsequently act upon them. (Life & Peace Institute 2017:5)

Going by this definition of advocacy, two aspects are of interest to this research work. Firstly, advocacy as “Strategic and deliberate action directed at changing or influencing a given policy, position, system etc.” if properly utilized by the PCC can effectively change policies in Cameroon. Secondly, advocacy as “the process of negotiating and mediating a dialogue through which influential networks, opinion leaders, and, ultimately, decision makers take ownership of your ideas, evidence, and proposals, and subsequently act upon them” can be properly utilized to cause government actors themselves to champion the process of change.

Haselbarth’s second model of church-state relations which he termed the kingship of Christ in politics, as presented in chapter Five, situates Christ at the centre of everything. To this model, the world as unsaved and the burden of reaching out to this world is placed on the church and its members. Church members given the responsibility to show the light to others since they have been privileged to know that “... freedom, justice, development, civil rights, etc. need to be implemented... because God's love to men became manifest in Christ.... Since also the political realm belongs into Christ's influence, the political action of Christians can become a signal which points to God's Kingdom to come” (Haselbarth 1976:200).

Since both the spiritual and the secular realms belong to Christ, and church members are expected to champion change and show the light to others, the church needs to take up the responsibility to empower these members.

The PCC has a wealth of human resources which if properly harnessed can serve as a great tool for advocacy. In the pews of the congregations of the PCC are found politicians of the ruling party and the opposition party. Mention should be made here that the word “politician” is used in the Cameroonian context in a loose sense. It involves both those who militate in any of the political parties and those who hold elective and appointive

positions especially as the appointed officials are expected to belong and actively militate in the ruling party.

This research proposes that the PCC should form a group called “Ambassadors for Christ”. This group should bring together all the politicians in any given congregation. The Department for Lay Training and Evangelism should design special programs for this group to be implemented at congregational, presbytery and national levels. Special prayer sessions should be organized for this group with a weekly study material produced. The aim of the PCC should be, firstly, to strengthen their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, secondly, to ensure their commitment to the polity of the PCC, and thirdly, to cause them to be advocates of the church. The Pastors should have an intentional ministry to these persons to constantly remind them of their need to stand for that which is right and defend the interest of the people. Before every Parliamentary or Senate session, prayers should be organized in all congregations of the PCC. The Moderator, Synod Clerk and Secretary Lay Training and Evangelism Department should organise special service of prayer and anointing in Bastos congregation in Yaounde for the members; both of the ruling and opposition parties before each Parliamentary or Senate session. The politicians should be led to see beyond party lines, and stand for the interest of the citizens. This research is convinced that if the “Ambassadors for Christ” are properly harnessed, this could be the beginning of the birth of a new Cameroon.

According to Ahmed’s categorisation of church-state relations as discussed in Chapter Five, Cameroon subscribes to the French *Laicite* model (lay state) which recognises the existence of different religions but the state does not subscribe to any (Ahmed 2017:9). *Laicite* does not mean a-religious; it simply means the state develops its own ethos not patterned according to any particular religion. The persons to model political decisions from Monday to Saturday sit in the pews in the congregations on Sundays. The church has the responsibility to imbibe them with values for national transformation. As cited in Chapter Four, the letter addressed by Synod Committee to all Christians of the PCC at the onset of the crisis, requested Christians to engage in and sanitise politics. The “Ambassadors for Christ” group will be a right step in this direction.

The PCC has ecumenical and partnership relationships with various ecumenical and partner organisations out of Cameroon. Some of these bodies are The World Council of Churches (WCC) with headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland; Presbyterian Church of the United States of America; The Methodist Church of England; Mission 21 in Switzerland; Bread for the World in Germany etc. These bodies can be veritable tools of advocacy for the PCC. They can cause their governments to bring pressure to bear on the government of Cameroon for change of policy and government action and even provide resources for political education and empowerment of the politicians. A case in point is the support WCC gave to the churches in South Africa in the Programme to Combat Racism as presented in Chapter Two

Summarily, the proposed model for the public role of the church in Cameroon has three stages, akin to the three stages of Bonhoeffer's model.

Stage one is Rhetoric (calling the attention of government to the consequences of its actions), stage two is diaconal work (binding the wounds of the victims of government action) and stage three is advocacy. The major departure from the Bonhoeffer model is at stage three given the contextual realities of Cameroon.

6.2. Summary of Chapters

This research sought to critically examine the role played the PCC in resolving the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon. To do this, the Dietrich Bonhoeffer three-step paradigm of the public role of the church was used. Although the study is delimited to a period of two years (1990-1992), the research had to span through a broader period especially as the political crisis was a product of the history of the nation, Cameroon, and the role the PCC played was shaped by her history and polity.

In Chapter One, the research topic was introduced, the problem, the research questions and the research objectives were stated. This research work was deemed to be of importance to the researcher by satisfying the quest of the researcher to better comprehend the public role of the church in general and the PCC in particular. The research critically examined PCC's public role in this crisis period identified the pitfalls

and reinvigorated her public role in future political crisis and also served as a pointer to other churches in Cameroon to better equip them for the role they should play in the ongoing Anglophone crisis in Cameroon and future crisis and to other churches in sub-Saharan Africa. The literature reviewed showed that very little had been written on the public role of the churches in Cameroon in general and on the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in particular, making this research work a ground-breaker. Under the research paradigm, the research methodology, research approach, research design, data collection method, data analysis methods have been specified. The Dietrich Bonhoeffer paradigm was briefly presented (to be elaborated in Chapter Two). Since it is impossible to address all issues concerning a particular topic in one research work, the scope of this work was delimited to the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. This research work acknowledges that other churches played various roles in addressing this crisis. This is indicated as other venues for further research. The limitations of the research work included the unavailability of published material on this topic, the hoarding of information by government officers, the death of some key participants and the inaccessibility of some research sites as a result of the ongoing Anglophone crisis. This notwithstanding, the researcher had enough unpublished sources and respondents to draw informed conclusions. Chapter one rounds off with an outline of the various chapters.

In Chapter Two, the Dietrich Bonhoeffer paradigm was presented. The presentation of the paradigm was preceded by a brief biography of Bonhoeffer, which traced his personal journey from pacifism to radical activism in plotting for the fall of Hitler's Nazi regime through the assassination of Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer's three-step paradigm, Chapter two argued, was birthed out of his experiences and a practical response to the practical problem the German nation and church faced. According to Bonhoeffer, as presented in Chapter two, the first step the Church has to take when there is "too little order ... and when there is too much order..." (Godsey 1960: 110) is for the Church to hold the state to task on the legitimacy of its actions, the second step is to bind the wounds of the victims of state action, and the third step is to "put a spoke in the wheel" of government's machinery (Bonhoeffer, 1958:221). To legitimize the use of the Bonhoeffer model to

analyse the role the PCC played in Cameroon, its antecedent influence and applicability in the South African and El Salvadoran contexts were examined. It was demonstrated that the Bonhoeffer model inspired both the struggle against apartheid in South Africa and the liberation struggle in El Salvador. However, these various contexts had their own adaptations according to contextual realities. This Chapter ended up identifying Beyers Naude for South Africa and Archbishop Oscar Romero for El Salvador as archetypes of Bonhoeffer in their various contexts, who bore the flame of the struggle.

Since the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon was a product of the historical evolution of the nation, Chapter Three started with a purview of the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial historical evolution of Cameroon. Thereafter, the Chapter traced the remote causes of the 1990-1992 political crisis. First is the economic crisis which started from the late 1980's; Second there was the Anglophone problem which was birthed with the independence and reunification of East and West Cameroon. Third, was the regional and ethnic tribal conflicts entrenched by the Ahidjo and Biya regimes. Fourth, was the wind of change that was blowing through Africa calling for the re-introduction of multipartyism. The immediate cause of the political crisis – the rebirth of multipartyism – which was kick-started with the launching of the SDF party and snowballed into a plethora of parties, was elucidated. The evolution of the crisis was examined with particular attention on the March 1992 legislative elections and the October 1992 presidential elections with the attending aftermaths of arrests, ghost towns, arson and deaths. 1990-1992 political crisis costed the nation a lot in material and human losses. By the end of 1992, the crisis was abating. This research agreed with Gabriel, who, writing about Cameroon in 1997 when the nation was believed to have gone through the birth pangs of democratization, held that “Cameroon is not in transition to democracy; there has been some liberalization but democracy is not in sight” (Gabriel 1997:1). The researcher argued that the battle all along the struggle for democracy and its attending consequences had been between the progressives and the conservatives, the pro-democracy and the pro dictatorship, the inclusionists and the exclusionists. While the masses clamoured for the former, the government held tight to the latter.

Chapter Four was dedicated to the presentation of the facts of the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. The critical examination of this role in the light of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer paradigm was reserved for Chapter five. Chapter Four opened with a brief presentation of the history of the PCC from its Basel Mission roots. To establish the fact of the influence this history had on the role the PCC played in the 1990-1992 crisis, two cases were examined as antecedence of political involvement of the church: the Bakweri land problem under the Basel Mission administration and the influence of Jeremiah Chi Kangsen, a prominent pastor of the PCC who was granted permission to actively militate in party politics. However, he re-joined the ministry when his party failed elections and eventually became Moderator of the PCC. The paper Kangsen presented to Synod in 1960 on his views on church and politics, which was later, almost word verbatim, captured in the Book of Orders of the PCC published in 1995 (35 years later) was proof of its influence on the political ethos of the PCC. The researcher argued that this antecedence fettered the role the PCC played in the 1990-1992 political crisis. Chapter Four then delved into the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis. The letters and speeches made by the then Moderator, Rt. Rev. Henry Anye Awasom, the then Synod Clerk, Rev. Nyansako-ni-Nku, and official letters from the Executive Committee of the PCC and FEMEC were presented. Two sermons preached in Buea by Rev. Nku and one preached in Yaounde by Rev. Dr. Bame Bame were analysed. The individual engagement of the Rt. Rev. Awasom, Rev. Nku and Rev. Dr. Bame, were highlighted. The social actions of the PCC during the crisis period were also examined. Chapter four rounded off with government's reaction to the role the PCC played, exhibited in threats and repressive acts on Rt. Rev. Awasom and Rev. Nku.

Chapter Five critically analysed the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon in the light of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's three-step paradigm of church intervention in politics. Here, the role the PCC played, as presented in Chapter four, was classified according to the three steps proposed by Bonhoeffer. The first step, which this research classified as "rhetoric" encapsulated all that the PCC did or said to raise the awareness of the government as concerns the crisis. Under this first step, this

research classified the sermons that were preached in Buea and Yaounde by Rev. Nyansako-ni-Nku and Rev Bame Bame Michael respectively, and all letters, communiques and speeches that were written or made by the then Moderator, Synod Clerk, Synod Executive Committee or FEMEC. The second step, which this research termed “indirect action”, considered all actions taken by the PCC, which targeted the victims of the crisis with no direct bearing on the government machinery. This research found out that apart from the outreach to prisoners during this period, there was no evidence of any other indirect actions to assuage the impact of the crisis on the victims. As concerns the third step, which this research termed “direct action”, no case was found either any direct confrontation between the church and the State or any plan to frustrate government action for the welfare of the citizens. This Chapter thus argued that, the PCC was very active in the area of rhetoric, lame in the area of indirect action and completely absent in the area of direct action. This Chapter identified the antecedent history of the PCC, the stipulations in the Book of Orders on the PCC’s public role, and the provisions of the PCC Constitution as impediments to the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. The Chapter ended by identifying the contextual political and religious differences between Germany and Cameroon, and the absence of an apt Bonhoeffer archetype as challenges to appropriating Bonhoeffer’s model in Cameroon and presents the different models of church-state relations and the historical evolution of this relation to identify the model in application in Cameroon.

6.3. Research Findings

The main objective of this study was to critically analyse the role played by the PCC in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. This analysis was done using the three-step paradigm of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The usefulness of the Bonhoeffer paradigm was tested by examining its impact in the South African and El Salvadoran contexts.

In this section, the findings of the research work are presented.

1. The Church should adapt to the changing political climate

Bonhoeffer's move from pacifism to radical activism is a challenge to the church. In Chapter two this research portrayed that Bonhoeffer did not set out from the beginning on the path of violent resistance. He had toyed with the idea of going to India to study non-violence from Ghandi (Elshtain, 1997:224). Contrary to the radical stance in the three-step paradigm espoused in "The Church and the German Question", Bonhoeffer had adopted a more pacifist stance on the role of the Church in politics in "The Cost of Discipleship" (which was published posthumously). Here, in his interpretation of Matt. 5:38-42, Bonhoeffer held that:

This saying of Christ removes the Church from the sphere of politics and law. The Church is not to be a national community like the old Israel, but a community of believers without political or national ties. The old Israel had been both-the chosen people of God and a national community, and it was therefore his will that they should meet force with force. But with the Church it is different: it has abandoned political and national status, and therefore it must patiently endure aggression. Otherwise, evil will be heaped upon evil. Only thus can fellowship be established and maintained (Bonhoeffer 1995:141).

This research argued in Chapter Two that the changing political climate in Germany caused Bonhoeffer to move from pacifism to radical activism. The move of Bonhoeffer from an advocate of pacifism to active radicalism indicates that the position of the church vis-à-vis state action should not be static. It should adapt to the changing political climate.

However, this was not the case with the PCC in the role she played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. In Chapter Five this research demonstrated that the PCC was still playing according to the guidelines that had been stipulated by Kangsen in his position paper presented to Synod in 1960 on his views on the church and politics. The fact that this position paper was enshrined in the Book of Orders that was published in 1995, thirty-five years after it was written, and three years after the 1990-1992 political crisis, demonstrates how much influence it still had on the actions of the PCC.

Chapter Five argues that for any church or organisation to be of worth, it must adapt to the changing times. Theology, Chapter Five states, is of essence only when it can provide practical solutions to practical problems. The adaptability of Bonhoeffer birthed his paradigm. Chapter Two presents Arch Bishop Oscar Romero who's reading of political events changed as a result of the changing political climate and he evolved from a pacifist to an activist. This led to the founding of Liberation Theology. The struggles of the black churches in South Africa against Apartheid led to the development of Black Theology. The PCC's insistence on clinging unto missionary Theology, as has been argued in Chapter Five, has inhibited the role it played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

The PCC needs to revise her stance on church and politics to face the present realities and accommodate new challenges.

2. The influence of Bonhoeffer on South Africa and El Salvador.

This research established, in Chapter Two, the influence Bonhoeffers paradigm had in South Africa and in El Salvador although he never personally set foot on the soils of these nations. In the case of South Africa, although individual theologians were familiar with the writings and thoughts of Bonhoeffer, the 1973 visit of Eberhard Bethge, Bonhoeffer's friend and biographer, to South Africa exposed Bonhoeffer's writings to a wider public. De Gruchy (1984:6) confirms that Bonhoeffer was an inspiration to many Christians who drew courage from his example. As presented in Chapter Two, Borer (1998:4 & 5) divides the response of the church to apartheid into three levels: "Sympathetic", "Human Rights involvement" and "Overt Political Activity" which is a replica of Bonhoeffer's three-step paradigm. Beyers Naude, who became the face of the anti-apartheid struggle, was identified by Eberhard Bethge as the Bonhoeffer of South Africa. Just like Bonhoeffer, Naude had made his journey from pacifism to radical activism.

In El Salvador also, as in South Africa, this research established in Chapter Two Bonhoeffer's influence on the public role of the Roman Catholic Church. Altmann (2016:15) asserts the presence of writings on Bonhoeffer in Latin America as early as

1948. He further demonstrates Bonhoeffer's influence on Liberation Theology, which propelled the Roman Catholic Church in El Salvador into action against the government in defence of the people. Unlike the three-step paradigm of Bonhoeffer as experienced in Germany and South Africa, in El Salvador, Chapter Two presents three different factions in the Roman Catholic Church. The first group emphasized "... a traditionalistic pre-conciliar theology that considers the values of tradition, the institutional and sacred aspect of the church and hierarchical authority, important" (Shortell 2001:87). This group held fast to the social doctrine of the church, which focused on favourable conditions for the working class. The second group stood for a liberation process that is non-violent and calls for a gradual change in the socio-political structure. The third group stood for liberation theology and worked with the revolutionary armed groups to overthrow the government. These three groups though independent from one another, were a progression from pacifism to activism. Archbishop Romero, champion of the El Salvadoran liberation cause, was identified as the Bonhoeffer archetype.

In the case of Cameroon, the Bonhoeffer model could not be fully applied given the contextual differences. Chapter Five argued that the first step of Bonhoeffer's paradigm was fully applied, the second step was lamely applied and the third step was not applied at all. This research has established the fact that knowledge of Bonhoeffer's life and writings was common in South Africa and El Salvador before and during their crisis. Therefore, they had something to learn from. Meanwhile, this was not the case in Cameroon. This research did not find any evidence of knowledge of Bonhoeffer's life and writings before or during the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. All the PCC had to go by was her antecedence and the blue print of Kangsen.

3. The Constitution of the PCC.

This research work unearthed two major loopholes in the constitution of the PCC, which impinge on the public role of the PCC. In Chapter five this research took issues with the Mission Statement of the PCC as stipulated in her Constitution.

According to PCC'S constitution, "The Mission of the PCC, like that of the Universal Church, is to proclaim the Good News of God through Jesus Christ, in word and action. The proclamation of this Good News includes preaching the word, teaching, healing, and liberating the people of God from sin. (Luke 4:18-19) (PCC Constitution 1985:7).

This mission statement defines the four-fold ministry of the Church – to preach, teach, heal and liberate – as espoused in Luke 4:18-19. This research focused on the fourth mission of the Church, which, as stipulated in the Constitution, is to liberate the people of God from sin. In Chapter Five, this research took this seriously especially as it is a distortion of the text as found in the Bible. In the New International Version of the Bible (NIV), Luke 4:18-19 reads thus: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour". While the text in scripture reads "...to set the oppressed free", in the PCC constitution it reads "... and liberating the people of God from sin". Other Bible versions carry the connotation of setting the oppressed free. Why did the PCC translate this as "liberating the people of God from sin"?

In Chapter five, this research argued that, without delving into the exegesis of the text, a literal interpretation leads to the conclusion that Christ's ministry of liberation, as specified in Luke 4:18-19, is more encompassing than liberation from sin. It entails liberation from all circumstances that have held God's creation captive from living life in all its fullness. Liberation from sin and the influence of the devil is a subset of the liberating ministry. The PCC Constitution's parochial position on the Church's liberation mission limits the ambit of operation of the Church and inhibits the engagement of any action for liberation from political bondage and social enslavement. The Mission Statement of the PCC as stated in the PCC Constitution should be revised.

In addition, PCC's adherence to Basel Mission theology is an issue to be considered for review. The Constitution makes it clear that the PCC does not intend to depart from the theological stance of the Basel Mission. The Preamble of the Constitution, amongst other things, states: "It [the PCC] maintains the spiritual, theological, and material continuity of

that missionary society [the Basel Mission]” (PCC Constitution, 2014:5). The PCC gained independence from the Basel Mission in 1957. Sixty-five years after independence should the PCC still hang on the theological apron strings of the Basel Mission?

As argued in Chapter Four, PCC’s continuous allegiance to missionary theology of the Basel Mission has tied her down to the Theology of Oehler, who Dah (1983:71 & 72) posits had a great influence on all the missionaries who served in Cameroon between 1886-1914. This is compounded by Dah’s assertion that Oehler himself, upon appointment as Inspector of the Basel Mission, doubted his qualification for the office given his lopsided education in theology and his inexperience in missionary work. This served as a major fetter on the feet of the PCC to move beyond rhetoric in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

For PCC to be relevant to the nation, she should chart her on theological path, which resonates with her context.

4. PCC’s role and the Bonhoeffer paradigm

In Chapter Five, the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon was analysed under the three steps of Bonhoeffer’s paradigm: rhetoric, indirect action and direct action. This research has demonstrated that the PCC was very active at the level of rhetoric. The church mostly communicated the message at the opportune time to the right persons, some lapses of content notwithstanding. Letters and communiques were addressed to the right persons (Christians, political party leaders and the President of the Republic), speeches were made, and sermons preached to conscientise the listeners and worshippers.

At the second step, indirect action, this research found mostly outreach to prisoners as action taken by the PCC. Chapter five argued that if any other actions were taken which were not documented, they might have been too insignificant to be remembered by the interviewees. The Chapter also justifies why the PCC might have found it difficult to engage in social actions to assist the victims of the crisis. It presents the precarious financial situation of the PCC as culled from the Financial Secretary’s report to Synod

during these years under review, which showed a huge deficit with calls for downsizing the various departments, laying off workers and reducing salaries, as solutions. The PCC was on financial fire, thus could not stretch out her hand to assist others in need. For a Church to be able to engage in this step, she needs financial stability.

Chapter Five further argues that in spite of the financial challenges of the PCC, the church should have reached out to international partners just like the case of South Africa where partner organisations came to the assistance of victims of Apartheid.

This research found no evidence of anything done in the light of the third step, direct action. It seems the debilitating effect of the financial crisis in the church, and the church's dependence on the government for subventions for her schools, which were also in difficulties, was enough to hold back the church from taking further action. Added to this, as earlier argued, was the Church's position on politics and the Constitution.

5. Church-state relations in Cameroon.

One of the tasks this research work addressed in Chapter Five was locating the model of Church-State relations in Cameroon amidst the various models propounded by scholars.

Following Forester's three models for church -State relations, this research located Cameroon in the third model – a secular State. This is stipulated in the following three articles in the Preamble of the Constitution of the Republic of Cameroon:

... no person shall be harassed on grounds of his origin, religious, philosophical or political opinions or beliefs, subject to respect for public policy; the State shall be secular. The neutrality and independence of the State in respect of all religions shall be guaranteed; freedom of religion and worship shall be guaranteed (Constitution, 1996:2)

The contextual framework of church-State relations in Cameroon, within which the PCC operates, as presented in Chapter Five, is in Ahmed's Laicite model patterned after the French system. Ahmed (2017:9), examining the relations between religions in general terms and States from a constitutional perspective proposes five archetypes. The first archetype (which Cameroon adopted) is the Laicite (strong secularism): This archetype,

practiced by France, defines the state as a lay or secular state. By this, the state recognizes the existence of various religions and guarantees their rights to exist but is against the public show of any particular religion and rather propounds its own ethos in its schools that cuts across religions. Its public ceremonies have no religious coloration (Ahmed 2017:9). The State of Cameroon hides behind this façade to evade church criticism. The State courts the Church to vet its actions, but reminds the Church of the separation of Church-State realms when the Church raises its voice against State atrocities. The Church is asked to leave politics to politicians and to focus on the preaching of the gospel. The Church-State model adopted by Cameroon inhibits Church action against the State especially as the State authorizes the existence of the Church and reserves the right to shut it down.

The operational latitude of the PCC within this context is limited by the constitutional provisions and cannot be compared to that of a Church operating in a different model. Dietrich Bonhoeffer's model of Church -State relationship was birthed in the context of the "pluralist accommodation" model which views religious bodies as partners in development. This research work argues in Chapter Five that this difference in context impacted on the role the PCC played in the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon in the light of the Bonhoeffer paradigm.

For the Church to properly play her role as the conscience of the government, the watchdog of society and the custodian of truth, justice and peace, this research resonated with Haselbarth's second model for church state relations – the Kingship of Christ in Politics model. This model puts Christ at the centre of everything. This model sees the world as unsaved and places the burden of reaching out to this world through the church and its members. Members have the duty to show the light to others since they have been privileged to know that "... freedom, justice, development, civil rights, etc. need to be implemented... because God's love to men became manifest in Christ.... Since also the political realm belongs into Christ's influence, the political action of Christians can become a signal which points to God's Kingdom to come" (Haselbarth 1976:200).

This research holds that the Church, the bearer of the liberating gospel of Christ, and its members, should be front liners in championing the course of freedom, justice, peace, human rights etc. The Two Kingdoms model inhibits the church from engaging in political discourse thereby limiting its role in public affairs. Kretzschmar's 'critical engagement'. (Kretzschmar, in Bentley and Forester, 2012:133) category in which the church "... seeks to interact actively with the State (and society), but not in a subservient manner" (Kretzschmar, in Bentley & Forester 2012:133-134) is PCC's position espoused in the Book of Orders. As argued in Chapter Five, PCC's understanding of "critical engagement" seems to be limited to "rhetoric" as evidenced in the role she played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon.

6. Proposed model for the public role of the church in Cameroon

One of the key findings of this research work is the inapplicability of the Bonhoeffer paradigm in the Cameroonian context. This finding leads this research, inspired by the Bonhoeffer paradigm, to propose a model adapted to the realities of Cameroon. In this proposed model, the first two steps of Bonhoeffer's paradigm are maintained. However, this proposed model has suggested practical ways to actualize these steps. The major departure from the Bonhoeffer paradigm is in the third step. While Bonhoeffer proposes putting "a spoke in the wheel" of government machinery, this proposed model suggests advocacy and the creation of the "Ambassadors for Christ" group.

6.4. Recommendations

- The PCC should revise her stance on Church and politics, as stated in the Book of Orders, to face the present realities and accommodate new challenges.
- The Mission Statement of the PCC as stated in the PCC Constitution (2014:7) should be revised.
- The clause in the Preamble of the PCC's Constitution stating: "It maintains the spiritual, theological, and material continuity of that missionary society" (2014:5) should be taken out. PCC should develop a theology that resonates to her context.

- The PCC should put strategies in place to make her financially independent of State subventions thereby giving her a strong political voice.
- The PCC should create an NGO to take care, amongst other issues, of the needs of the victims of crisis.
- The PCC should create “Ambassadors for Christ” group made up of politicians who are PCC members as a force for advocacy.
- Partner organisations should be used for foreign advocacy.

Conclusion

Given the challenges in implementing the Bonhoeffer paradigm in Cameroon this Chapter has presented a contextual model for the public role of the church in Cameroon with the major departure from the Bonhoeffer paradigm being replacing “Direct Action” with “Advocacy”. This Chapter has equally summarised the various chapters of this research work, presented research findings, and recommendations to conclude the study.

This research aimed at critically examining the role the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon. To realise this the following was done:

- The Dietrich Bonhoeffer paradigm was elaborated as a tool for the analysis of the role the PCC played in resolving the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon and its inspiration on the South African and El Salvadoran models was examined
- The remote and immediate causes of the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon was established.
- The various roles the PCC played in addressing the 1990-1992 political crisis in Cameroon were identified and examined.
- The role the PCC played in addressing the crisis in the light of Bonhoeffer’s paradigm was critically analysed, the impediments to the role the PCC played in addressing the crisis and the challenges in adapting the Bonhoeffer model in the Cameroonian context were analysed.

- A contextual model for the public role of the Church in Cameroon was proposed. The work rounded off with key research findings, and recommendations.

From the findings of the research, it can be concluded that the PCC was very active in Bonhoeffer's first step of the public role of the church which this researched termed "rhetoric", lame in the second step which this research termed "indirect action" and completely absent in the third step which this research termed "direct action".

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Interviews

Buma Kor, interviewed in Yaounde on 17/5/2017

George Ngeke Likiye, interviewed on 10/4/2021 in Buea
Forsab Joseph, interviewed in Yaounde on 18/6/2017
Ndive Mosuka, interviewed on 11/4/2021 in Buea
Ngale Kinge Jacob, interviewed on 17/3/2021 in Buea
Njie Samuel Kale, interviewed on 17/3/2021 in Buea
Peter Tazeh, interviewed on 12/4/2021 in Buea
John Fru Ndi, interviewed on 6/10/2017 in Ntarinkon, Bamenda
Rev. Achowah Umenei, interviewed on 28/9/2020 in Bamenda
Rev. Dr. Jonas Dah, interviewed on 7/10/2017 in Bamenda
Rev. Dr. Muyo Joshua, interviewed on 3/4/2021 in Bamenda
Rev Fr. Humphrey Tatah Mbuy, interviewed on 15/7/2015 in Bamenda
Rev. Joe Set Aji-Mvo, interviewed on 8/10/2020 in Bamenda
Rev Mary Ekinde Salle, interviewed in on 21/11/2020 in Buea
Rev Neba Muangu, interviewed in on 21/11/2020 in Buea
Rev Ngu Paul Tah, interviewed in on 21/11/2020 in Buea
Rev. Profesor Anyambod Emmanuel, interviewed on 17/5/2017
Very Rev. Dr. Nyansako-ni-Nku, Interviewed on 6/8/2017 in Kumba

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Le Messenger No. 028, June 20, 1991

vol. II No. 021, June 9, 1992
vol. II No. 040, November 12, 1992
The Herald No. 003, August 12, 1992

Audio

Sermon preached by Rev. Dr. Michael Bame Bame in Bastos on 29th September 1991.

Audio CD transcribed by researcher 21/10/2020.

Appendix 1

Interview questions

Student Name: Mokoko Thomas Mbue

Department: Church History

Student Number: 14164958

A critical analysis of the role played by the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon in addressing the political crisis in Cameroon, 1990 – 1992

Facts Sheet

1. Sex
 - Female
 - Male
2. Age
 - Below 20
 - 20 – 40
 - 40 - 60
 - Above 60
3. Denomination
 - Presbyterian
 - Roman Catholic
 - Baptist
 - Pentecostal
 - Other
4. Education
 - FSLC
 - GCE 'O' Level
 - GCE 'A' Level
 - University Graduate

Interview Questions

1. Where were you between the years 1990 – 1992?
2. What were you doing then?
3. What can you remember about the 1990 – 1992 political crisis in Cameroon?
4. In your opinion, what were the causes of the crisis?
5. What role did you play in this crisis?
6. Which of the Churches below came out outstanding in her strategy to face this situation? i) The Roman Catholics ii) The Baptists iii) The Presbyterians iv) The Pentecostals v) Others
7. State how and why
8. Did the Presbyterian Church in Cameroon (PCC) get involved in any way in the crisis or in the process that led to the resolution of this crisis?
9. Is there something the PCC could have done that they did not do?
10. Is there something they did which they could not have done?
11. If such a crisis has to reoccur, how involved would you expect the PCC to get
 - a. Remind the government of its responsibilities
 - b. Take care of the victims of the crisis
 - c. Get actively involved.
12. If the PCC should get actively involved, how far should it go and why?
13. If the PCC should not get actively involved, why not?

N/B:

- *This interview will be conducted with people who took active part in the Crisis (government officials, Social Democratic Front party leaders, and religious leaders of the PCC). It will also be conducted with Christians and non Christians.*
- *This list of questions is not static as some responses will solicit follow-up questions for clarification.*