

# Church and Politics of Resource Control in Niger Delta, Nigeria

FRIDAY IFEANYI OGBUEHI

Department of Religious Studies, Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta, Nigeria

## Abstract

Niger Delta is a region in Nigeria that produces oil which is the Federal Government's main source of income. The oil boom in 1970 marked the beginning of an intensive mining of oil in the Niger Delta that is responsible for the constant pollution of water, land and air that endanger the Niger Delta people's source of drinking water, aquatic life, farm crops and more importantly the life of the people. The people of Niger Delta lack good roads, electricity, food, water and shelter. The incessant agitations in Niger Delta are borne out of the Federal Government's neglect of the area to suffer without considering the disaster caused by continuous mining of oil in the area. However, the Niger Delta has been characterized by militancy in a bid to drive their agitation of resource control home. There is no doubt that the church is suspected of playing politics with resource control in the Niger Delta, rather than addressing the injustice in the area that resulted in the clamour for resource control. The paper examined the role played by the church in addressing the agitation by the Niger Delta people over resource control. In this paper, contextual hermeneutical approach was used in describing and analyzing the data. It was discovered that the church through its teaching has indirectly sensitized the Niger Delta people to fight for their right of controlling the resources (oil) endowed by God which they will give account at the end of the age. The paper recommended that the church should be on the side of the Niger Delta by using non – violent approach in fighting for resource control for justice to prevail. It is expected of the church to caution its members not to own oil wells at the detriment of the Niger Delta people.

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## 1 Introduction

The link between resource control and politics (governance) stems from the fact that without good governance - those imbued with the authorities to lead, there will be no effective management of resource control. There is no way bad leadership can guarantee good management of resources (Okereke 2011). This accounts for poor resource control that is evident in the Niger Delta. Therefore, bad leadership is one of the justifications for agitation for resource control by the owners of the resources. There is no doubt that the government that is saddled with the responsibility to control the resources has failed the masses. In some communities in Niger Delta the people lack basic amenities: good hospitals, roads, hospital, electricity, shelter and food and they have been host communities where the income of the country is derived. The Niger Delta people are the major advocates of resource control that is occasioned by the nonchalant attitude of the Federal Government concerning their plight in the area. The mining of oil in the area has destroyed the land rendering it useless for farm activities and other purposes. There is no gainsaying the people have passed through injustice and deprivation over the years. They have employed several strategies to agitate for resource control like, delegation, court litigations and of recent they have used militancy as an option to compel the Federal Government allow them control their resources (crude oil). These efforts made by the people have not yielded the desired results.

Natural resources include arable land, water resources, forest, fruit trees, vegetables, mineral resources (petroleum, natural gas, iron ore, limestone, tin, coal and so on) (Ehusani 2003). Natural resources are gifts from nature. Traditional understanding of resources covers land, palm trees, wives, children and yam barns etcetera etcetera. Today resources have gone beyond that to include cement, iron, crude oil, gold, zinc, sand and stones (Sibani 2011). The resource control in the context of this paper is the control of crude oil mined in the Niger Delta by the people.

Resource control is a generic term. Resource control is "all about allowing the Niger Delta to control their oil wealth and pay adequate taxes to the central authorities as it is done in a true federation" (Egugbo 2016). It means the ability of a person to control his resources without interference. Resource control is an economic term which means the ability of federating units in the federation to have control over the resources produced in their area and pay taxes for the maintenance of the centre (federal government) (Okolo and Raymond 2014). The extremist approach to resource control vests absolute right on the federating units in terms of controlling the resources. "Resource control involves the access of communities and state government to natural resources located within their boundaries and the freedom to develop and utilize these resources without interference from the federal government" (<https://steemit.com>). It becomes a necessity to examine the role of the church in addressing agitations over resource control with the aim of challenging the church to resolve the controversy that surrounds resource control for peace to reign in the region.

## 11 Background of Resource Control

Prior to the discovery of oil boom, agricultural sector was the main-stay of the economy that sustained the regions in the country (Okeke 2011). All the regions were endowed with natural resources for which they were known for. The Eastern region was known for production of palm oil and kernel, the Mid-west specialized in the production of rubber. Cocoa was produced in commercial quantity in western region and northern region was famous for cotton production and groundnut (pyramids). He further maintains that the constitution of the country up to 1966 conferred on the regions the power to harness the resources found in their localities and paid taxes to the federal government (Tamuno nd). As stated earlier the regions competed among themselves which resulted in rapid development and self reliance. However, the weakness of regional government was that the same political leaders (premiers of the three regions) were alleged of perpetrating fraud (Ikubaje 2006). The military intervention in 1966 scuttled the whole arrangement, thereby, abolishing the regional control of resources. It must be stated that the federal military decree number 23 of 1966 reversed the regional control of resources and entrusted it to the supreme military council and the federal executive council (<https://steemit.com>). This marked the beginning of Federal Government take over of resources from regions where the resources were found. The decree was further strengthened by 1979 and 1999 constitution in which the solid mineral acts gave the Federal Government an exclusive right to control the mining and other solid minerals in the country. Similarly, the land use act has made it compulsory for private miners and developers to get mining and building permits from the government.

Oil was discovered in the country in 1956 at Oloibiri in Rivers State. The economy took a different dimension during the oil boom of 1970s when the attention of the Federal Government was diverted from agricultural economy to crude oil (Adekunle et al 2017). Indeed, the oil boom was a golden era. Oil boom was characterized by high increase in the production of crude oil. The country occupied the ninth position in the production of oil worldwide when it hit 1.68 million barrels per day. There was a significant increase in the production of oil from 84 million tonnes in 1972 to 100 million tonnes in 1973. It was no mean feat when this country produced 3.5 percent of 2598.9 million tonnes of crude oil produced worldwide in 1974. Crude oil production rose in Nigeria from 3.5 to 6.7 percent of OPEC oil production that was equivalent to 1330 million tonnes which represented 50 percent of oil produced in the world (Arnold 1977).

### 111 Resource Control in the Colonial Period

Resource control by the British was characterized by exploitation, discrimination and deprivation of people's resources (Madukwe 2012). It is a common belief among the African that it was from Africa that Europe derived resources that developed their continent. The colonialists pretended as if they were interested in developing the country. It has been discovered that their ulterior motive was to exploit Africa and their resources and labour (Nwankwo 2010).

The injustice of resource control is traceable to Lord Frederick Lugard who promulgated the obnoxious mineral ordinance in which all lands, waters and minerals under and above the soil and water were ceded to the British Government immediately after the amalgamation in 1914. This ordinance is known as 1914 mineral ordinance. He affirms that a former Attorney General and minister of Justice once said "how can we explain what Lord Frederick Lugard did by appropriating our lands and everything therein and thereon without our consent. Only a wicked slave master could have done such a thing to dispossess his servant of all his belongings"(Aboro 2005). It was this mineral act that gave the British the exclusive right to exploit and export the natural resources to Europe at will. In colonial era, the natives had no control over the resources. The colonial government exported raw materials like palm oil and kernels, rubbers cocoa, cotton, groundnuts and timber. It substituted raw materials with clothing, foot wears and bicycles which were imported and sold at exorbitant prices (Igbo and Anugwom 2011).

### 112 Resource Control in Niger Delta

The ethnic groups that make up of Niger Delta are Urhobo, Itsekiri and Ijaw (Okai 2008). All the states that produce crude oil are included in the Niger Delta oil producing states, hence the formation of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) that cuts across Niger Delta to oil producing states. The key advocates of resource control are Lagos, Delta, Edo, Rivers, Bayelsa, Ondo, Akwa Ibom and Cross Rivers states (Tamuno nd). Resource control dates back to the colonial domination of trade in palm oil in the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta leaders like Nana Olumu, Bekederemo, Jaja Opobo and Dore Numa served as middle men between the colonialists and their people in the trade of palm oil. They also fought relentlessly to stop the colonialists from having monopoly of the state in palm oil (Ukperi 2019). It is noteworthy that the agitation for the control of palm oil gave way for the agitation for resource control of crude oil. Consequently, Dappa-Biriye led delegations of Rivers Chiefs and peoples over resource control to several constitutional conferences in London in the 1950s (Tamuno nd). Isaac Adaka Boro, an undergraduate student of Chemistry and the President of Student Union, University of Nigeria dropped out of the University to become the leader of Niger Delta Volunteer Force

(NOVF). He masterminded the blowing up of oil pipe lines, attacks on police stations and finally he declared the independence of Niger Delta Republic on 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 1966. The Federal Government sanctioned this group by death (Ugwu and Oben 2010).

Other movements were formed to fight for the control of resources by the Niger Delta people. For instance, there were Ogoni Bill of Rights made in August 1990 and Kaiama declaration of December, 1998. The Ogoni Bill of Rights was championed by the leader of MOSOP on 26 August 1990, which increased the tempo of resource control in the Niger Delta. It was the high rate of agitation by the MOSOP that inspired the Federal Government to cede 13% derivation from crude oil to Niger Delta. The Niger Delta people were not satisfied with the decision of the Federal Government to take lion share and give them only 13%. This anomaly in sharing the money accrued from oil attracted the wrath of the elders and radical youths that vehemently rejected the Federal Government self-allocation of 87% and 13% to the Niger Delta. Sequel to the disagreement between Niger Delta and the Federal Government over the sharing formula, the Federal Government and the people of Niger Delta had serious misunderstanding that degenerated to national concern. Rather than accepting the 13%, the Niger Delta fought for the restoration of 50% principle in which the Federal Government took 50% and 50% was given to the people as it was enshrined in 1963 constitution. Unable to contain the serious crisis, the Federal Government for the first time took the matter to the Supreme Court. The case was given its first hearing in April, 2001 and final verdict was made on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2002. Finally, the controversial resource control of 2002 and 2005 went in favour of the Federal Government that was allocated 83% while the remaining 17% was given to the Niger Delta people (Tamuno nd).

It is pertinent to state that Niger Delta, particularly, Ogoni land was brought to International limelight when the leader of the Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Kenule Saro-Wiwa organized a protest against the federal government's exploitation of the people by depriving them of their oil and consequently abandoning the region to their fate. Following this ugly development, the MOSOP under the leadership of Ken Saro-wiwa resisted the Federal Government by putting a stop on further mining of oil by the Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC) in their land. The sudden stop of the operations of the SPDC resulted in the total break down of oil activities in the area. In respect of this crisis, the leader of MOSOP, Ken Saro-wiwa- a Journalist and eight others were executed by the Federal Government in 1995. Although, the execution of ken Saro Wiwa did not bring to an end the uprisings in which the Niger Delta people were known. Rather, it was the beginning of greater unrest to come. It is observed that the closing year of the last millennium witnessed an unprecedented restiveness in the Niger Delta region. The relationship between oil and gas companies like Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Mobil in Nigeria, Nigeria Agip oil company, Chevron Nigeria limited and EIF Petroleum Nigeria Limited and the communities where they carry-out their oil operations have been characterized by hostilities and violence. Unfortunately, the violence and hostilities range from forceful close down of operations, seizure of oil and gas installations, kidnapping of oil companies' staff to hijacking of vehicles, vessels and helicopters owned by the multinational oil companies in the region. All these hostilities and violence are in a bid to drive home their anger against the Federal Government over resource control.

Experience has shown that the response of the Federal Government to the agitation of the people of Niger Delta has not been cordial. In order to suppress them the Federal Government has resorted to rolling out military tanks and armoured cars that have destroyed both lives and property. For instance, the military invasion of Ogoni land, Rivers State and Odi in the Kolokuma in Opokuma Local Government Area of Bayelsa State incurred massive destruction of human lives and property (Orukari 2010).

### **113 Factors that are Responsible for the Agitation for Resource Control**

The pre-civilian government was championed by the military heads of state which posed an obstacle to the growth of the economy owing to the fact that resources were plundered for personal gains. The immediate effects of military dictatorship were assassinations, robbery, bombings, ethno-religious and political clashes, unlawful detentions, missing persons and forceful seizure of property (Ugbor 2004). From the discovery of oil till now, the colonialists, military and civilian governments have neglected the Niger Delta where oil is being produced. The oil exploration activities in the Niger Delta which began in 1938 and took off in earnest in 1950 have generated oil wealth used in developing other regions in the country (Orukari 2010). The oil producing region has nothing to show except poverty, misery and backwardness.

There is an allegation by people that resources are dominated by dominant ethnic groups that allocate resources to their favour. This has triggered off conflicts, agitations for resource control by the oil producing region (Egugbo 2016). It has created a big gulf between the major or dominant group and minority group of Niger Delta. It is observed that unequal revenue formula, particularly, when it does not take cognizance of minor ethnic groups and oil producing regions leads to incessant distrust, marginalization, inequality and abandonment; when resource control is handed over to the people, there will be justice, stability and cohesion (Aguene nd).

The core Niger Delta people are the worst hit of deprivation and marginalization by the Federal Government. For instance, Ogoni people that play host to the multinational oil companies are stricken by poverty.

It is noted that “even the impact of poverty on the land affects the agricultural productivity. They spend more to cultivate but reap less in the output” (Sibani 2011). This low agricultural productivity is attributed to the ecological disaster caused by oil exploration and mining in the Niger Delta. Oil exploration is a serious problem that has resulted in marine, air and land pollution in the oil producing areas (Anyacho 2009). It causes havoc to both human and animal health. Oil exploration and its attendant health hazards are responsible for the reduction in life expectancy of the Niger Delta people. There is no doubt that if exploration is not controlled it may cause climate change and other climate related disasters (Ogedegbe 2010). It is not in doubt that the Niger Delta people are exposed to health and economic risk, yet they benefit little or nothing from the oil exploration. This has been the cause of their anger and has led them to take arms and protest for their rights (Okwueze and Kanu 2003). It gave rise to militancy in the Niger Delta region. The leaders of militant groups include Tompolo, Alex Preye, Asiri Dokubo, Henry Okah that fought for resource control. The militant groups were movement for the Emancipation of Niger Delta (MEND), Federated Niger Delta Communities, Niger Delta People’ Volunteer Force (MDPVF), Niger Delta Vigilantees (NDV), People’s Liberation Force (PLF). These movements were formed for the emancipation of Niger Delta from resource exploitation. Militants attack oil installations and kidnap expatriate staff of the oil companies. They rendered Niger Delta area a violent zone. The president then Musa Yaradua granted amnesty to the ex militants in 2008 (Ugwu and Oben 2010). The term amnesty was derived from the Greek word *amnestos* which means “forgotten” and *amnestia* meaning “forgetfulness”. It means an act of granting pardon to a large group of individuals that have repented from a crime (Kiogora 2003).

#### 114 The Church and Resource Control

Christianity is an agent of change that influences all sectors of society. The advent of Christianity brought change on religious, economic and political life of the country (Ejizu1986). There is a fundamental relationship between Christianity and economy. Christianity determines production and distribution of resources. Religion (Christianity) influences allocation of resources and personnel that manage resources. It has been doing that through the inculcation of values (Asu 2010). This is not so in the country where the church is not doing much in this regard. Rather, it is observed that:

while issues of theology and social questions are much discussed in academic circles not much attention of these are given in the mission and evangelical vision and efforts of the church. Environmental issues require theological education to address. The destruction of ecosystem through deforestation, crude oil spillage in the rivers leading to destruction of the aquatic life (as the Niger Delta in Nigeria), destruction of the pristine forests and its effects on global warming may seem irrelevant to the church but the effects are inevitable (Imaekhai 2015).

The church should not lose sight of the fact that resource control has become a national problem that poses a challenge to the church. Missionaries that evangelized the country had ulterior economic motive which influenced their ideology of resource control. The major motive that attracted the Missionaries to Africa was to seek for an opportunity to expand their trade and acquire wealth (Agha 1999). There was no way the Missionaries that had such motive could have supported policy on resource control that would be favourable for the people. The attitude of Missionaries to resource control was “ownership of key resources” (Elmer 1993). For them, controlling the resources meant controlling how the resources were used.

In the contemporary church, resources are misconstrued to mean *mammon*. The term *mammon* is the Arabic word for riches. Also, *mammon* embraces various ancient languages in which it is described as wealth or greed. It is used to mean false deity (Wotogbe-Weneka 2017). Some churches classify money or resources as *mammon*. The church is expected to rise up and be on the side of the poor just as God opts for the poor not due to they are economically or materially poor but on the grounds that they are the victims of injustice. Niger Delta people were not created to be poor. They are poor which arises from being victims of injustice occasioned by the Federal Government domination of the resources derived from their region (Ngwoke 2005). The church should be in the vanguard of fighting against unjust economic structures that inflict pain on the people of Niger Delta (Obiefuna and Azuakor 2011).

The Missionaries introduced education and European culture that created consciousness of independence in the minds of the people. It was the national consciousness that created enabling environment for self-determination which further brought the idea of independence. Nationalism goes beyond political independence to include economic self-determination (independence). This was the reason behind the Missionaries’ fight to stop the incessant plundering of resources by the British government which paved way for the country to control its resources without external and imperial control (Iwuagwu 2002).

The term stewardship is a Christian root word. It emanates from the fact that all gifts comes from God and should be employed to His glory. Stewardship is both a spiritual principle and biblical teaching. It covers vital aspect of life like human actions, attitudes, personality, personal influence, acquisition of wealth, spending, saving, investing and giving money, use of land, resources, profession, job, place of work, education, purpose, goal and testimony. Stewardship teaches man that God is the giver of gifts and man is the care taker (steward) of

God's gifts (Gitau 2000). Stewardship is an aspect of Christian practice and life that is motivated by the Christian belief that God endows people economically for the welfare of others. Pauline epistles make stewardship comprehensive by stressing on the necessity of Christians to use their God-given wealth for the good of others (Wotogbe-Weneka 2017). Resources are gifts from God, they are not man-made. Therefore, they belong to God (Ireoba 2013). There are scriptural passages that support stewardship. The parable of the talents explains why people should give account of their stewardship. The master of the servants gave talents to them before he travelled to a far distance. On arrival, he called his servants to give account of their stewardship (Mathew 25: 14-30).

In Old Testament, there is frequent reference to God as the giver of good things to Israel. God is described as the giver of good things like wealth, children, honour, husband, wife, job and houses for the good of man and for the benefit of others. It is abomination for a stranger to dispossess the weak of their precious property. Yahweh condemned injustice when he said "they sell the righteous for silver, and the needy for a pair of sandals. They trample on the heads of the poor as upon the dust of the ground and deny Justice to the oppressed (Amos 2:6-7). It should be noted that when Ahab the king of Israel planned to take Neboth's vineyard, he refused to give king Ahab the vineyard due to God forbade anybody from giving his inheritance from his father to another person; based on that Ahab murdered Neboth and took his vineyard. God frowned at David's act of wickedness when he took Uriah's wife and gave him his due punishment (2 Samuel 12:9-10).

The Diocese of Niger Delta responded to the sufferings of the victims of exploitation by giving them Alms in 1984. In Port Harcourt, the Diocese of Niger Delta visited asylum, old people's homes, Chesire/motherless people's homes, remand/reformed home, prisons (women section) and hospitals as part of their stewardship and care for the less privileged in society (Wotogbe-Weneka 2018). The church has done a lot to cushion the effects of disaster in the Niger Delta. Ogbuehi (2018) affirms thus:

a humanitarian agency in the seventh day Adventist church known as Adventist Development and Relief Agency provided succor for the Ogoni people during the Ogoni and Shell crisis by providing food, clothing and shelter for the displaced people. It also assisted in the provision of rehabilitation centre for the less privileged and physically challenged people at Edeoha community in Ahoada East Local Government Area in Rivers State.

He further said that the Roman Catholic Church has made impact in rendering services like prison decongestion, fight for human rights, conflict resolution, medicare and so on for the people of Niger Delta.

### **115 Challenges Bessetting the Church and Resource Control.**

Lack of resource control by the people affects some churches in the Niger Delta region. Poverty caused by the deprivation of the people of their source of income has rendered their financial support to their churches very low. They manage to give their widow's mite which is not enough to sustain the churches. It has been observed that the churches suffer financial handicap given the high level of poverty in the region. Again, most Ogoni people do not feed well and this has affected their regularity to church worship. Some of them do not even have offerings to give to God (Sibani 2011). The contradiction of the high rate of economic poverty that is visible in the Niger Delta is showcased in the huge sum of money some of their political leaders stash away, thereby depriving the people of the money allocated to the states for the development of Niger Delta area. Some of the past and immediate governors of the states in Niger Delta are corrupt. The Federal Government has earned over US\$ 400 billion from crude oil since 1970 and a good percentage of the money has been allocated for the development of the Niger Delta, yet there is nothing to show for it in the region (Bestoyin 2017).

There is no political will in arresting corruption and mismanagement of the resources (crude Oil) since its discovery at Oloibiri. Adamo (1997) describes this anomaly when he says :

I strongly believe that the major problem in Africa is not lack of economic resources, but lack of proper management of such resources, and 'good' leadership. Our countries in Africa are in chaos because of lack of 'good' leadership and 'proper' management of our resources. 'Good' leadership and 'proper' management would enhance peace and justice.

This country is endowed with abundant human and natural resources and at the same time the citizens wallow in abject poverty. There is selective mechanism as well as divide and rule in matters of resource control in the country. Resource ownership and control by the constituent units has remained like that in the north that has control over some of the products and minerals produced in their states and the same north has been benefiting from the money generated from the south. Consequently, the Northern Rulers only altered resource control of oil and gas, VAT, the ports system which they have ceded to the Federal Government to control (Igwe 2018).

The church is not exempted from the decay that has marred resource control in the country. Resource control has given some members of the church an opportunity to be wealthy by enriching themselves from the ill-gotten wealth from crude oil. The wealth gotten from corrupt acts from the sale of crude oil is reserved for their families alone (Obeng 2000). It is embarrassing to witness a situation where church members that have no

land in the Niger Delta own oil blocs. A former senator of the national Assembly once said that more than eighty percent of the oil blocs in Niger Delta are owned by people from a particular ethno-tribal group in the country (Ukperi 2019). It is pathetic that the church that supposes to condemn the corruption that is associated with private ownership of oil blocs directly or indirectly benefits from it. There is no gain saying that the immediate challenges that confront both the church and government over resource control are corruption, under payment of taxation, royalties, gas flaring, bribery, tax evasion by the oil companies, disregard for due process in award of contract for oil rigs and under declaration of oil revenue by the stake holders (National Petroleum Company – NNPC) and the (Central Bank of Nigeria – CBN) (Ikubaje 2006). Again, lack of technological know-how has affected processing and refining of resources in the country. It must be noted “presently, many African products are processed outside the continent. Those processed at home are done in industries owned by foreigners” (Getui 2003). This has become a great challenge considering the amount of money involved in exporting the crude oil to overseas and the money paid for the services.

### 116 Recommendations

There should be prudent management of resources by the Federal Government which will help to restore confidence in Niger Delta people on the federal government control of the resources. It is expected to diversify the economy in order to avoid much pressure on oil. The Federal Government should allow the states where mineral resources are mined to control the resources and pay tax to the Federal Government. It is pertinent for the Niger Delta not to take laws in their hands, they should follow the due process of fighting for their rights. The church should sanction her members that illegally acquire oil wealth at the detriment of the Niger Delta. There is the need for the Federal Government to checkmate the high rate of human rights violation in the Niger Delta. The Niger Delta Development Company (NDDC) should embark on massive infrastructural development in the area. It has become a matter of urgent concern for the Federal Government to probe those that are involved in embezzling the money derived from the sale of oil and other minerals. Multinational oil companies should apply caution in oil mining and use strategy that is ecology friendly. The church should opt for the poor in the Niger Delta as Jesus was on the side of the poor. To arrest the allegations of embezzlement of money allocated to the states in the Niger Delta, the Niger Delta people should elect credible leaders that will manage the Federal Government allocations to the states judiciously. The Federal Government should treat all the regions at par in terms of resource control. There should be quick intervention by the Federal Government to checkmate gas flaring, tax evasion and under payment of taxes. The Federal Government should pay more attention to technological development and build oil refineries in the country that will reduce the cost of refining the crude oil in foreign countries.

### 117 Conclusion

Resource control is a controversial issue that has elicited much debate in socio-political, economic and religious sector. It has to do with the control of resources either by the Federal Government or the people concerned. Resource control has been a perennial problem that makes some parts of this country restive. The federal government has made frantic efforts to contain the crisis occasioned by the mismanagement of oil that is the mainstay of the economy but to no avail. For the fact that the host communities are not satisfied over neglect of their area and the imbalance in the distribution of the money accruing from the resource control by the Federal Government, the efforts of the Federal Government to end the hostilities have ended in futility. The federal government should not discriminate between onshore and offshore. This is a mere play of words targeted to cheat and exploit the people. According to the federal government onshore means the resources that are gotten from land and offshore consists of resources that are found in the water. The offshore and onshore dichotomy should be abolished and should be treated as one. It is a serious matter that the church has not done enough to mediate in the conflict between the Federal Government and the aggrieved party with the aim of restoring lasting peace in the region. The church is expected to engage in social programmes that will alleviate the plight of the people.

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Dr Friday Ogbuehi is a lecturer at the Department of Religious Studies, Crowther Graduate Theological Seminary, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria where he teaches graduate students. He specializes in Sociology of Religion. Dr Ogbuehi is also the Registrar of the Seminary.