

# A Religio – Ethical Analysis of Clergies Compromise and Its Impact on the Social Development of the Society

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## Abstract

Religion is seen to be a product of society. Religion is an instrument of social control in society. Every deviation from fundamental religious beliefs and values is compromised; compromise has to do with lowering the standards, and ignoring integrity for the sake of gaining lust and greediness. Compromise takes away the anointing of God's calling and purpose for living. The study adopts ethical analysis and critical thinking skill to examine the issue. Compromise opens the door for corruption, compromise causes misplacement of calling and position that has great spiritual implications to the congregation and society, ministers need to exhibit a variety of traits such as faithfulness, moral purity, integrity, spiritual leadership, teaching ability, and a teachable spirit. Every positive progress is assumed to be the result of social development religious institutions' major role is to build people with good moral values to be able to grow a prosperous social development society. The absolute work of the clergies is the teaching, training nurturing, and empowering the people from the cradle of good moral values such as honesty, self-control, godliness, kindness, righteousness, trustworthiness and love among the people would help build a prosperous, peaceful society for social development. Findings: 1. Compromise creates a bad impression about the calling of God on the clergy 2. Compromise of the Clergy receiving gratification of money or other gifts will compromise what is right and true 3. The use of the pulpit for partisan politics is a compromise on the sanctity of the pulpit. 4. Compromise through lust, greed, and gains destroy the integrity and public trust in the individual. 5. Compromise opens the door to corruption, and corruption hinders social development 6. Religious institutions should be a place to build bridges across people, tribes, languages and communities, and cultures, good relationships and friendship of love and harmony will create an atmosphere for social development in the society. 7. Religious clergies are cautious about teaching sermons that give a false impression about life, when people get disappointment; they end up frustrated and fall into various temptations and compromises that affect the social development of the society. In conclusion, the clergies and religious institutions should uphold their religious ethics, and standards and avoid compromising their integrity even if heaven should fall. the clergies and religious institutions should be mindful of their actions and teachings in other to create a society and atmosphere for social development.

**Keywords:** religious institution, clergy, compromise, social development.

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## 1. Introduction

Religion is seen to be a product of society. Jacob Okechukwu stated that “it is the society that creates religion and uses it as an instrument of social control”<sup>1</sup> which means religion has influence that controls the society. He further argued that “religion is unique among all the social institutions in the society because of its sacredness, yet for it to be relevant in a human environment”<sup>2</sup> that means religion is sacred and to be respected among other social institutions also in the book A guide to ministerial Ethics and Etiquette J.J Hyslop defined ethics as the science of the phenomena of human character and conduct, and will towards the ideal order of life. This means ethics is the study of ideal human character and actions that can produce an ideal society. The study adopts ethical analysis and critical thinking skills to examine the issue

The biblical principle of integrity without compromise

Psalm 15 gives a biblical description of integrity without compromise

Lord, who may abide in your tabernacle? Who may dwell in your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and walks righteousness, and speak the truth in his heart, he who does not backbite with his tongue or does evil in his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend, in whose eyes a vile person is desired, but he honors those who fear the Lord, he who swears in his hurt and does not change, he who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent.

He who does these things shall never be moved, these men and women who will choose to do the right thing no matter the cost, people who will choose to be punished rather speaking lies.

<sup>1</sup> Jacob okechukwu Onwukwe, Sociological Conceptualizations of Religion and Ethics in the Development of Africa Religion, Ethics & Development (Ibadan: Hope Publications 2019)37.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid

Kenneth Copeland also added his ministerial counsel that “the young people of today don’t hear about it, because it is not taught to them in our society often what they are learning is situation ethics that right and wrong depend on the situation” This seems good to those who do not know God and experience God way of integrity Copeland further argued that “ we ought to be the world’s greatest example of high integrity and the most honorable men and women on the face of God’s earth, we must take the time to teach and display honor and integrity to our children”<sup>1</sup> keeping integrity without compromise to do the duty of a parent to pass to the children of the younger generation so by this it will be sustainable in our society.

Samuel Waje stated that “all ethical issues have links to fundamental religious beliefs and values.”<sup>2</sup> this also means compromise as an ethical issue have link to fundamental religious beliefs and values wise Jerry Savelle stated that “there are some honest men that can so into politics, men of integrity, and they get into that arena and realize that they are a little fish in a big pond, they end up compromising their ethics their standards, and their integrity”<sup>3</sup> compromise has to do with lowering the standards for the sake of gains, lust, and greediness.

Compromise takes away the anointing of God-given calling and purpose for the living. According to the ministerial council of Parker Maxey that “A preacher is a called man of God separated into the gospel of God. For him to divide his interest with something other than his calling is to cheapen the ministry and failed in the stewardship for which God has set him apart” That means compromise of one calling is making cheap the value of the calling of God for the sake of other gains from Gods given assignment Parker Maxy further stated that “A Minister should avoid using the pulpit to promote partisan politics”<sup>4</sup>

This is the church and the minister of God should not use the pulpit for partisan politics which results in compromise of the uses of the pulpit to lay a good spiritual foundation to guide the congregation to do what are right and good values. Clergy receiving money, gratification to compromise what is right and truth Parker’s Ministerial counsel is that “the preacher of the gospel must keep a clear testimony to his integrity. As a pastor, he should never allow himself to be involved in a public gathering that would violate his conscience or be involved in any kind of moral compromise. His one purpose in any involvement should be to promote morale and spiritual ends”<sup>5</sup> That means clergy should be careful in the issues of money, to avoid lust, greed, and compromise of integrity, the clergy should be aware that his life is under public watch, possible scrutiny and he is like a book that everyone read. The clergy should avoid anything that will jeopardize his calling integrity and public trust. Compromise open door to corruption in the bible 1samuel 2:12,16-17 “Now the sons of Eli were corrupt they did not know the Lord and if the man said to him, they should really turn the fat first, then you may take as much as your heart desires, he would then answer him, No, but you must give it now, and if not I will take it by force. Therefore the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord, for men abhorred the offering of the lord” In fact, it is highly unethical for clergy to be under any trial of financial crime prosecution of any public authority, all because of compromise or misplacement of calling and position that has great spiritual implication to the congregation and society. The Seventh Day Adventist Ministers handbook stated that “Ministers need to exhibit a variety of traits, such as faithfulness, moral purity, integrity, spiritual leadership, intelligence with common sense, relational skills and teaching ability and a teachable spirit. Those called by Christ.”<sup>6</sup> That means the trait and virtues to be upright in every aspect of integrity means the clergy needs closeness with God that is called and also empowered to do the work.

## 2. Clergy’s compromise and impact social development

Every positive progress is assured to be the result of social development that improves the living conditions in society. Aruna and Ngwu Stated that “ Social development as a development concept encourages the active, participation of people in development, an initiative that ultimately improves their prior living conditions”<sup>7</sup> That means social development is the transformation of people’s living conditions to bring about a prosperous society. Ellen G. White stated that “we are living in a perilous time in the fear of God I would say that the true exposition of the scriptures is necessary for the correct moral development of our characters. When the mind and heart are worked by the spirit, when the self is dead, the truth is capable of constant expansion and new development. When the truth molds our character, it will be seen to be true indeed.”<sup>8</sup> That means truth is the only thing that is constant and prevails over everything in life

Religious institution major role is to build people with good moral values to be able to grow a prosperous social development society the absolute works of the clergies are the teaching, training, nurturing, and

<sup>1</sup> Kenneth Copeland, *Walking in Honesty, Truth & integrity*. (Fort Worth: Kenneth Copeland publications, 1992)33

<sup>2</sup> Parker Maxey, *A Guide to Ministerial Ethics And Etiquette* ( Lagos: West Africa Theological Seminary Publications , 2017)34

<sup>3</sup> Jerry Savelle, *In the Footsteps of Prophet* (U.S.A: Jerry Savelle publications, 2005) 157 prophet

<sup>4</sup> Ibid 349

<sup>5</sup> Parker Maxy.....350, 351

<sup>6</sup> Seventh-day Adventist Minister’s Handbook (U.S.A: the General Conference of Seventh day Adventist Publication, 2009)17

<sup>7</sup> E.O Aruna and A.N Ngwu. *Social Development in Nigeria: A Case Analysis International Journal of Development and Economic Sustainability*, Vol 6, No1, 1-9, April 2018. Published by European Centre for Research training

<sup>8</sup> Ellen G white, *Ye shall receive power*, *A daily Devotional*, 12<sup>th</sup> April 2023/

empowering the people from the cradle with good moral values such as self-control, godliness, kindness, honesty, faithfulness, righteousness, hardworking, trustworthiness and love among the people who would help build the prosperous, peaceful society for social development to strive and sustained.<sup>1</sup>

Religious institutions should be a place to build bridges across people, tribes, languages, communities, and cultures. Good relationships and friendships of love and harmony will create an atmosphere for social development in society. Religious clergies should take up the responsibility of helping society build people with good character and trustworthy individuals.

Religious clergies are cautious about teaching and sermons that give false impressions about life by making people believe that everything in life is about prosperity and making money and when people's hopes rise with high expectations and the people get disappointed, they end up frustrated, fall into temptation and compromise that affect the social development of the society.

### 3. Findings

- i. Compromise creates a bad impression about the calling of God in the clergy
- ii. Compromise of the clergy receiving gratification of money or other gifts will compromise what is right and truth
- iii. The use of the pulpit for partisan politics compromises the usefulness of the pulpit
- iv. Compromise through lust, greed, and gains destroys integrity and public trust in the individual
- v. Compromise opens the door to corruption and corruption hinders social development.]
- vi. Compromise creates a misplacement of calling, a position that has great spiritual implications for the congregation and society.
- vii. Every minister need to exhibit a variety of trait, such as faithfulness moral purity, integrity spiritual leadership, good character, teaching ability, and a teachable spirit
- viii. Religious institutions should be a place to build bridges across people, tribes languages, communities, and cultures. Good relationships and friendships of love and harmony will create an atmosphere for social development in society.
- ix. Religious clergies are cautious about teaching and sermons that give false impressions about life by making people believe that everything in life is about prosperity and making money when people get disappointed, they end up in frustration, fall into various temptations, and compromise that affect the social development of the society.

### 4. Conclusion

The clergies and religious institutions should position themselves and portray themselves as light to guide, direct and inspire society in the right direction and impact people to be trusted, honest, and faithful and build men and women who will not compromise the truth even if the heaven falls, the clergies and religious institution should uphold their religious ethics, standard and avoid compromise of their integrity. The religious institution must be mindful of their actions and teachings in other to create a society and atmosphere for social development.

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<sup>1</sup> Research training and Development, [www.eajournals.ng](http://www.eajournals.ng) accessed 29<sup>th</sup> August, 2022

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