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The Governments authority (Rom 13:1) versus the Clergy's charisma towards the ongoing Post Covid-19 Vaccine among Nigerians		
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Abstract: Using qualitative evaluative method, this paper will discuss the authority of the government of Nigeria and the clergy's charisma towards the ongoing issue of Post Covid-19 vaccine among Nigerians. Findings indicates that there is high level of apathy towards the intake of the vaccine and the government is using their force to force the intake of the vaccine and the clergy on the other hand is discouraging the notoriously religious citizens not to take the vaccine through their teachings and beliefs. The paper recommends that the clergy must as necessities obey government's sincere policies because they were first put in authority by God as indicated in Romans 13:1.		
Keywords: Covid-19 vaccine, apathy, Nigeria, Government, Authority, Clergy, Charisma		
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INTRODUCTION

The people of Africa, especially Nigeria are notoriously religious, in as much as they are also politically (government) conscious. Thus, most issues of life that should be explained empirically are often clouded with metaphysical inclination. The reverence for the sacred concerns; such as the priest, the church, mosque and sacred shrines thus becomes paramount if not primary in their dealings. So, when the cases of the world dreaded corona virus came alive in Nigeria as a country, most of the people first turn to their pastors, imams and priest for explanations before they listened to the government. This brief paper will therefore, first discuss the brief report on Covid-19 Globally and the Nigerian situation, before looking at the Government's authority on the Covid-19 spread as well as the apathy demonstrated among Nigerians during the administering of the Covid-19 vaccine. Finally, the paper will look at the clergy's charisma among the notoriously religious Nigerians as a big factor towards the apathy situation of the vaccine intake among Nigerians. The paper will then offer recommendations and conclusion.

BRIEF REPORT ON COVID -19 GLOBALLY AND THE NIGERIAN SITUATION

In 2019, there was an outbreak of a virus called novel corona virus disease 19 (Covid-19) also known as SARS-COV2 (Severe acute respiratory Syndrome Corona virus 2) but formerly known as 2019-nCov. It was discovered in December 2019 in Wuhan city, Hubei province, China and was declared a public health emergency of international concern on 30th Jan, 2020. On March 11, 2020, WHO declared it as a global pandemic. This is owed to the way the virus spread simultaneously across different countries of the world (Ambrose, 2021).

It surfaced in Nigeria in Late February 2020 and by April 2020, it became so widespread that as at 13th, May 2021 and still counting, 165,612 cases of Covid-19 have been confirmed in Nigeria with 156,387 discharged and 2066 deaths. The most vulnerable states affected badly by the virus included Lagos, Ogun and Abuja (Oti & Adeleke, 2021).

THE GOVERNMENT'S AUTHORITY ON THE COVID-19 SPREAD

The government of Nigeria in response to the pandemic decided to put measures in place to curtail the virus. They included; the enacting of protocols like social distancing and lockdown measures imposed in Religious centres, markets, public gatherings, airports and land borders. Others were the procurement and administration of vaccines free to its citizens (Kenneth, 2021). Anyone who dares disobey the Covid-19 response measures was made to face the law. At this period, none was exempted including the clergy. Some churches that disobeyed the order were beaten by the police and the clergy's in-charge, arrested. Yet, the complete obedience and strict adherence to the government's demands from their citizens was going to meet a harsh response based on certain factors that will be discussed below later.

THE COVID-19 VACCINE APATHY AMONG NIGERIANS

After a relentless short period of research and several clinical trials, the Astra Zeneca-Oxford vaccine was shown to have 63% effectiveness in controlling the pandemic and was proposed to be generally accepted by the WHO across the globe (Goody, 2021). It was in that report that the Nigerian government also made available large quantity of the vaccine to be administered to Nigerians and even members of the executive council and the president were shown on Television regularly taking the vaccine (Udejinta, 2021).

But despite the exemplary attitude demonstrated by the people in government over the intake of the vaccine and the supremacy of the government and their authority over the citizenry, the administering of the vaccine was met with harsh resistance. To explain the situation, many schools of thought posited differently that the controversy of the European Union and France suspension of the vaccine on the claim that it can cause blood clotting in the brain of the people was the reason for the apathy. While others reveal that the failure of the Nigerian government to deliver good governance resulted in lack of trust among their citizens and the misinformation of the mass-media as well as the refusal of Kogi State Governor (Yahaya Bello) to take the vaccine was a key loophole on trust (Oguntoye, 2021). However, there is a school of thought that many did not consider too well as a contributing factor towards the apathy intake of the Covid-19 vaccine among Nigerians, which is;

THE CLERGY'S CHARISMA TOWARDS POST COVID-19 VACCINE AMONG NIGERIANS

Religion, especially in Africa (Mbiti, 2015) has continued to be an indispensable factor in influencing the responses of people in certain phenomenon. The degree of acceptability by a large population of the society like Nigeria, concerning issues like this mostly center on the influence of the clergy. For instance, out of over a 150 million population of Nigerians, about 80million Nigerians (48%) are Christians (Religion in Nigeria, n.p).

In support of the researchers claim, Oguntoye (2021) confirms that a survey of religious leaders in Oyo metropolis reveals that failure of the government to deliver good governance resulted to lack of faith and trust from their citizenry. However, in the researcher's opinion, this is beyond that. But in Goody's assertion, the questions arise from how religious institutions, beliefs and their teachings contribute positively or negatively towards the ongoing Covid-19 vaccination in Nigeria. And the answer to this question is that yes, religious institutions especially the beliefs and the teachings of the clergy has actually contributed negatively towards the vaccine apathy in a number of ways below;

First is the assertion that Covid-19 vaccine is an anti-Christ vaccine. In the words of Evang. Gbadeyan IJJ (3rd, April, 2021) of Kingdom of God Evangelical Ministries, Ibadan, Ado-Ekiti and Lagos branch of the church, the vaccine will only lure people to hell and it is the sign of the mark of the beast. The evangelist went as far as disobeying the government's order to shut down his church during the lockdown protocol. Thus, all his members throughout the branches of his church have to comply with his directives.

Taking a personal visit to my home church in Ihugh, known as the Assemblies of God church, in Vandeikya LGEA of Benue State, (3rd, Oct. 2021) there was a mixed reaction amongst the members when the issue was opened for debate. At the end, the pastor in charge concluded that the vaccine is not safe; as such should not be taken, but you can take it if you feel like.

Omega Fire Ministries with Apostle Johnson Suleiman remarked on the Covid-19 vaccine and I quote "What I saw in it, I'll not take it. Forget all those ones they are showing you one governor taking it. Oh, you think that thing they are putting in him, you think that's what they are coming to put in you? (Sahara Reporters, 04/01/2021).

In Christ Embassy, Pastor Chris Oyakhilome, founder of Believers Love World, added his voice to the 5Gdebate, claiming that the outbreak of COVID-19 in Nigeria was a decoy to sequester the population for government to covertly deploy 5G (Adelakun, 2020). That means he downplayed the pandemic saga to purely propaganda. This must have had a negative impression of the virus and its vaccine.

In the end, the clergy won the fight. This is not owing to the brief evidence presented above, as it is too insufficient to suffice for the fact that the clergy had a final say on the matter. Rather, it is just a glimpse to the pointer that Nigerians might have bowed to the advice of the clergy more towards the government post Covid 19 vaccine policy. It is rather unfortunate that so many people up till now have not taken the vaccine. Report has it that only 10% of the population has taken the vaccine (World Corona-virus tracker and maps, n.p) Even though the government made it compulsory for their workers to take the vaccine, they could not impose it on the larger population of the unemployed.

Response / Recommendation

From the foregoing, it can be deduced that there is a greater level of influence the clergy has over Covid-19 vaccine intake than the government. The common man in Africa is notoriously religious and pays more attention to the clergy than to the government. This is hinged on a shallow difference between the two parties, which is mostly on the issue of 'trust'.

The problem of countries in the third world is hinged on technology. Since most developed nations of the world operate mobile (online) institutions, including churches, schools and others, it is rather unfortunate that when the Nigerian government imposed a lockdown on physical gatherings of religious institutions, churches, markets, and other places, the clergy saw it as an attempt to cripple the body of Christ, and therefore mobilized the common religiously inclined citizens to rebel. Not knowing that the church of God cannot be crippled or shut down. The church of God can exist in the air (social media), in the hearts of people, and in their houses. The church of God is not just a place where physical gathering is witnessed, but can also be a heavenly gathering (Col.1:15-20) or as a body (1Cor 12:17-20, Eph. 1:23); a temple; where the church now dwells in us (1Cor 10:16-17). It can also serve as a replica of the kingdom of the kingdom of God to come, before it can be referred to as a local assembly or congregation of Christians (Gal.1:2, 1Cor 7:17, 14:33 & Rom.16:4), or a house church (Phile. 2, Acts 16:15, 40, Rom 16:23)

Paul advised Christians in Romans 13:1 to obey (υπακούω) those in government; for they were placed by God. Clergy men and women must understand this fact, especially when a government is trying its best to curtail a deadly virus of this nature from a sincere point of view. It will be normal and reasonable to rebel against any government that implements rather anti-religious policies that seem to persecute the people's religion, but it will not be right if the religious bodies turn down any sincere policies the government is trying to bring on board in a bid to curtail a spread of a deadly virus. Thus, no form of suspicion should be created on the side of the clergy and the citizens, as no government would want to carry out genocide when already the citizens are dying from a virus.

The government and the clergy should walk hand in hand and not counter one another, since both are concerned with the plight of their citizens.

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