

# **The Response of the Africa Inland Church to Politics in Masinga District: 1975 -2010 (Machakos County), Kenya, 2014**

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## **Abstract:**

The purpose of this study was to examine the response of AIC in Masinga District to Kenyan politics. The study aimed at investigating the factors affecting the apathy of AIC to politics from 1975-2010. To accomplish this goal, the study had three objectives: to discuss the history of AIC in Masinga District and its influence to the response of AIC to politics, to analyze the perceptions of AIC members in Masinga District on the role of the Church in politics and finally to evaluate the response of AIC in Masinga District to Kenyan politics, 1975 -2010. The study employed a descriptive research design. Further, it used purposive and simple random sampling techniques for collecting data in Masinga District. Data were collected from four out of the five wards that constitute the District. Various District Church Councils (DCC) were sampled from the wards in Masinga Regional Church Council (MRCC) and Matuu Regional Church (MRCC) council formerly under Yatta Regional Church Council (YRCC). From the sampled DCC's local churches were sampled. A total of 80 respondents were interviewed. Questionnaires, interviews and analysis of library sources were also used. In interpreting and analyzing the collected data, the study employed a theological framework for social ethics in discussing the response of the Church to politics. The theoretical views of Hoft and Oldham, Gladden's Social Gospel Theory and Fowler's Prophetic Realism Theory were used. This theological framework revealed that the response of any Church to politics is to a great extent determined by the Church's doctrinal assumptions on the relationship of the Church and the world. At the same time, it challenged the laissez-faire spirit apparent in AIC and advocated for a prophetic task which means that the Church becomes the conscious voice of the society by showing the relevance of the Gospel values to the problems of the modern society. The study revealed that the factors underlying the response of any church to politics are not only limited to theological and doctrinal assumptions but also political, denominational, administrative structures and ethnocentrism. The research findings revealed that AIC is among the silent churches in Kenya in regard to politics. AIC does not involve herself in political issues unless they directly affect her moral and spiritual values. The study established that AIC concentrates a lot on spiritual perspectives, an aspect borrowed from the founding mission AIM. The study exposes factors behind the silence of AIC to politics and challenges the indolent spirit evident in AIC. This is through non-involvement in the socio-political welfare of the people leading to betrayal of holistic nature of the Gospel as well loss as of relevance of the Church. The study is an awakening call for the AIC leaders to refocus on the relevance of the Gospel to politics.