

CHRISTIANS

AND

NIGERIAN POLITICS

BY

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to all the Nationalists who staked their lives for the independence of Nigeria.

To visionary leaders and pragmatic Christians who are interested in the development of Nigeria.

And

To my miracle son – Master Onwiabasi Effiong Esedeke.

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To the Ven. Owen Azubuike through whom this work is published.

Finally, I am sincerely very grateful to all of you. God bless you all.

FOREWORD

The author of the book, “Christians And Nigerian Politics,” is a clergyman, a lecturer in Trinity Union Theological College, Umuahia and more than any other thing, a Christian.

Like the prophets of old, he has a burden in his heart. His worry is not the multi-ethnicity and religious pluralism of Nigeria of which he is aware but the inability of Christian Politicians to play their role as “light of the World and salt of the earth (Matt.5,13-14). It is not only that many have failed to influence society but worse still, they are in the band wagon of corrupt practices – one of the factors of under-development of the nation.

He asks questions and offers answers by way of suggestion after sighing over the appalling state of the society. In the Old Testament the prophets had a hard time showing old Israel that they had failed their God-given responsibility of being witnesses in the social life of the people. So the Holy Spirit is telling Christians, the New Israel to live up to Divine expectation. Socio-political injustice whether done by Israel, the Bible says in 1 John 4:17 "...as He (Jesus Christ) is, so are we in this world." This has socio-political implications, like the statement of "light" and "Salt" already quoted. Christians are like Jesus in love and God who is Love lives in us by the power of the Holy Spirit. Before His execution, Jesus boldly denounced wrong religious teachings and practices. He was challenged by the Herodians about the payment of tax to Rome. His

positive reply is in Mark 12:17. Therefore Christianity should uphold government while condemning the sinfulness of men which corrupts the system. The author re-awakens his fellow Christians to their responsibilities because Christians exist to exercise beneficial influence on society as a whole. This is because the place for the salt is not in the salt-cellar, any more than the place for the lamp is under a bucket. Christians, like their Master, are in Nigeria as those that save. I recommend the book to all Colleges of Theology and to all practicing Christians.

Rev. Canon Prof. V. N. Uzoho

Rector of Trinity Union Theological College,

Umuahia.

WORD OF WISDOM

DO NOT IMAGINE THAT YOU IN THE KING'S PALACE, ASO ROCK VILLA, GOVERNMENT HOUSE, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CHAIRMEN AND COUNCILORS, HIGH GOVERNMENTAL AND POLITICAL OFFICE CAN ESCAPE ANY MORE THAN ALL THE NIGERIANS.

FOR IF YOU REMAIN SILENT WITHOUT PRAGMATIC ACTION AT THIS TIME, RELIEF, AND DELIVERANCE WILL ARISE FOR THE NIGERIANS FROM ANOTHER PLACE AND YOU AND YOUR FATHER'S HOUSE WILL PERISH (REMEMBER ABACHA). AND WHO KNOWS WHETHER YOU HAVE NOT ATTAINED ROYALTY, ADDRESSED AS HIS EXCELLENCY, HONOURABLE, GIVEN AUTHORITY AND POWER FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS?

(ESTHER 4:13-14 NASB)
AMPLIFIED BY THE AUTHOR
FOR NIGERIANS.

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CHAPTER ONE

“Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen as His heritage” (Psalm 33:12)

INTRODUCTION

This book is a treatise that deals mainly with the ‘Christian’ in relationship with the political problems of our country, Nigeria. It is an attempt to find the Christians highest order with regards to attitude, manner or conduct and most general reason which justifies their action or what their position should be in the area of Nigerian politics.

I know that there are Christian books or literatures that may have treated Christian and politics but the arguments in this book are those, which no Christian must miss to read carefully. I am not saying the above out of my rhetorical power.

. The scriptures have over the years been misquoted, church divided and fellowship broken because of a mere mention of the word ‘POLITICS’

It is my
delight
that
Christi
an(s)
should

not continue as complainants in the Nigerian society. There are quite a lot of factors that seem to be dragging Nigeria backward in politics and through these factors, politics in the Nigerian context is basically considered to be dirty, if not a very dirty game. Some nomenclatures to which Christians have developed phobias on the mention of such word would be considered.

Christians both in quote or underline are followers of Christ their master and they believe that the world belongs to God Almighty whom through Christ is their father. Therefore they have specific roles to play in earthly things in order to take the world through their direction. For over ten years I have been inclined so much into knowing what is happening in the world as a global village, the role of some Christians, so-called or real, in the political affairs of their country. The scriptures have over the years been misquoted, church divided and fellowship broken because of a mere mention of the word 'POLITICS.' The scripture is going to be our yardstick as we go through this book.

All scriptures is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteous

*ness, so that everyone who belongs to
God may be proficient, equipped for
every good work (2 Tim.3:16, 17 NRSV)*

Within the Christian fold are to be found about four groups of people with four different views or standpoint about 'Christian' and politics. The first set are the hardcore fundamentalists or extremists whose opinion about politics is that Christians should have nothing to do with elected public offices or positions. To this group it is nonsensical for any Christian to think about anything that has to do with politics. It is a sin to talk about politics in their mist and to be a partisan politician.

The second group is the one, which is made up of 'I don't care people.' This is 'I don't care group, 'with their 'I don't care attitude' towards anything political. So long as the word 'politics' is mentioned, their position is that of being neutral. Neutral in the sense of not knowing what their role should be, as Christians. Like people in the first group, they do not fail to complain about some bad government, politics and governance but then, theirs is that they do not know whether they should turn to the right or left. They do not

know their privileges and fundamental Human Rights. My final designation for them is "anything goes."

Thirdly, we have a group that is a little bit midway. They stand both for and against politics, political affairs or politics. On one hand, people in this group appreciate the lower cadre of Christians to be involved in politics while the higher cadre – the elders, leaders and Pastors of the churches should not have a say in anything political. Some of the questions raised by this

group are: can any serious Christian be a politician? Politics is too dirty for any church leader or pastor. How can

"can any serious Christian be a politician? Politics is too dirty for any church leader or pastor"

a church leader or a pastor be involved in such a dirty game? Can a Christian be a politician and still be a Christian? In other words, politics is only for the so-called Christians and not for the real Christians.

Finally we have the last group to which I personally belong. In this group, there is

nothing wrong or evil or in other words sinful about a Christian being a politician, politicking and contesting elections. Firstly, because man is a political animal and that there are records of politics and elections in the Holy Bible even within nuclear families. For instance, the politics of who should lead in the family of Isaac between Esau and Jacob his brother. Even God himself was concerned in the choice of Jacob before they were born.

*Yet before the twins were born or had done Anything good or bad in order that God's Purpose in election might stand: not by Works but by him who calls – she was told.
"The older will serve the younger". Just as it is written: Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated (Rom.9:13 NIV).*

Apart from God's purpose of election as recorded, we should not lose sight of the fact that the whole world belongs to our God.

The earth is the Lord's and the fullness of it, the world and they who dwell in it (Psalm 24:1 AV).

Well in this group, a great deal of encouragement is given to the Christians both

lay and clergy to see the issue of leadership or authority as coming from God.

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established.. The authorities that exist have been established by God.(Rom. 13:1 NIV).

It is absolutely wrong for Christians to fold their hands and watch their God-given land being taken over by the wicked, caterpillars, cankerworms and destroyers who do not have an iota of the fear of God in their heart. The Bible says that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom. The question is: is it proper for any given family to hand over the affairs of the control of may be their father's hard earned wealth into the hand of a bad son or daughter? Can such family be handed over into the hand of wicked son? No family that is in their right mind would do that, which is allowing a criminal in their home to lead them. But I think this is acceptable in most families in the Nigerian context because rogues and thieves are made Chief, Eze or Emir in their respective homes or society. This is also the case with Christians keeping away from politics and leadership, thereby handing over the good world of their

good God into the hand of the devil, Satan and his agents – wicked men.

Accordingly, it is improper and incorrect therefore for Christians to have handed over the world in which God Almighty through Christ gave them an unquestionable dominion over to the devil and his agents.

Indeed, we live as human beings, but we do not wage war according to human standards: for the weapons of our warfare are not merely human, but they have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, and we take every thought captive to obey Christ (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NRSV).

Imagine the looting of public funds and the property of the public now belonging to just very few people. Marginalization becomes the order of the day as the minority ethnic nationalities are being sideline by the majority ethnic nationalities. Lives and properties of those from the minority groups stand the risk of being pulled down by the government's evil agents representing the wicked people who were given the opportunity of leadership in this great country of ours. And for over forty years

of independence both the so-called Christians and their Moslem brothers became perpetual looters because they operated the system of government known as "kleptocracy." Apostle Paul says:

"What shall we say then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin: how can we live in it any longer?" (Rom.6.1, 2 NIV).

Instead of democracy and good governance, we have "kleptocracy," dictatorship, authoritarianism and militocracy.

Instead of democracy and good governance, we have "kleptocra-

cy", dictatorship, authoritarianism and militocracy. These are the systems that have been militating against the proper development of this great nation – Nigeria. The backwardness we have today is a consequence or result of the people we planted in government, the selfish opportunists and mediocre. People who do not possess intellectual capability to be leaders in all ramifications. We are simply getting the reward of what was executed.

"Do not be deceived and deluded and misled: God will not allow Himself to be sneered at (scorned,

disdained, or mocked by mere pretensions or professions or by his precepts being set aside). He inevitably deludes himself who attempts to delude God. For whatever a man sows that and that only is what he will reap”(Gal.6: 7 Amplified Version).

I shall accordingly consider the tenets or ethics of Jesus Christ and St. Paul in this book by bringing what are the unethical or immoral actions, which Christian should not be partakers. This is to bring into a proper admonition of what will sound Christian or unchristian, ethical or unethical, acceptable or unacceptable according to the Christian faith.

A proper or adequate space will be given to discussing the entity called Nigeria and how she came to be. The colonial leaders and ethnic nationalities that made up the country Nigeria and the amalgamation that forced both the Northern part of the country and the southern zones to come together as one nation. The issue of indirect rule and some of the atrocities caused by the colonial masters in destroying the lives of Nigerians whenever they protested of being maltreated or under paid in their job.

The peculiar factor of Nigerian Politics shall be considered one after the other and the

use of the scripture for a proper enlightenment of the reader of this book taken into consideration.

*“Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account”
(Heb.4:12,13, NRSV).*

The above scripture if considered and understood is just that it talks about the rest we should receive as Christians from the hand of God at the end of our faithful journey here on earth.

*‘Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience
(Hebrew 4:112 NRSV)*

The children of Israel disobeyed God and the word of God from Moses His servant and God did not allow them to enter into the ‘rest’ of the Promised Land. It is also an exhortation to us to make every effort to enter into the