

**AN INTERROGATION OF POLITICS AND THE ART OF NATION BUILDING; A  
CALL FOR CHRISTIAN PARTICIPATION**

**Kenneth Sunday, Ph.D.**  
Department of Christian Religious Studies  
Faculty of Arts  
Taraba State University Jalingo.  
[kennethsunday612@gmail.com](mailto:kennethsunday612@gmail.com)  
+2348122328881,

**Kwanchi Iliya Enoch, Ph.D.**  
Chaplain Air force base Calabar  
[kwandrejoice4real@gmail.com](mailto:kwandrejoice4real@gmail.com)  
08036990854

**And**  
**Benjamin Sergious Bako**  
Department of Christian Religious Studies  
Faculty of Arts  
Taraba State University Jalingo.

**ABSTRACT**

The paper aimed at interrogation of Politics and the art of Nation Building in Christian perspectives. All past Leaders and governments have been unable to effect the useful changes needed for the economic development of our dear country Nigeria. Many economic programmes were introduced by the politician with the sold aim of reforms but no significant impact has been made on the economy. Christians, therefore, as those who are called out and as the light and salt of the world we are expected to show in everything we do, the Church is an assembly of believers, who belong together in a community. When the people of the world do it wrong Christians are called out to right wrong, for a good nation building Christians are indispensable partners. We must honour the word of Christ as we don't put our Lamp under cover but we must put it on lamp stand that everyone will see the light. God has given us command that we all need to obey; we must make our light shine in the world that is full of darkness. We cannot capture political power by sitting on the fence, Leaders who cannot see clearly cannot lead others but those have sight lead their subject. We must be actively involved in the struggle to capture the power. The paper uses descriptive survey method for data collection and analysis. Effort have been made to proffer recommendations.

**Key words:** Interrogation, Politics, Nation Building, Christian, Perspectives

## **Introduction**

Nowadays the term nation is often used synonymously with state, just like, the United Nations. But a state is more properly the governmental apparatus by which a nation rules itself. Max Weber provided the classic definition of the state. However, we have to say that;

a state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory. Note that "territory" is one of the characteristics of the state. Specifically, at the present time, the right to use physical force is ascribed to other institutions or to individuals only to the extent to which the state permits it.

And the oxford Dictionary on the other hand define state as: a country considered as an organized political community controlled by one government  
[https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/state\\_1](https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/state_1).

The term nation-building is frequently used concurrently with state-building, democratization, political development, and peace-building. But each concept is different, though their evolution is entwined.

The paper focused on how the church can play a vital role in the nation building. Perusing through the scripture we were able to see perspective how the existence of the church in any geographical location ought to impact the system of governance, we also looked at how the quality of the believers raised in the church can positively impact a nation, no one can do better than a Christian who has the fear of God.

The paper focused on how the church can play a vital role by being active participants in the nation's building. Perusing through the scripture we were able to see perspective how the existence of the church in any geographical location ought to impact the system of governance, we also looked at reasons why believers raised in the church can positively impact a nation.

A closer look at the church in Nigeria showed the number of believers we have in the country does reflect in our structures of governance. How do you explain a nation that records millions of people congregating annual religious gatherings and hitherto, ills such as greed, corruption, nepotism, injustice, impunity etc are widespread both in high and low places?

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### **King Lemuel has established his position on the Church affecting our environment**

The research looks into the view of King Lemuel, according to him we are to; “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves; ensure justice for those being crushed... Speak up for the poor and helpless and see that they get justice” (Proverbs 31:8).

Aside rising men to living right and impact their surroundings with the values and principles of the Kingdom, Church Leaders who are considered as men of influence in the society ought to speak up in defence of the defenceless just as Prophet Amos says:

Take away from me the noise of your songs. To the melody of your harps I will not listen, but let justice roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream (5:23–24).

These men are quick to pray for the political Leaders, but they are not quick to correct and rebuke them when they are wrong. The only time Church Leaders rise in the people’s defence, is when Christians are being killed, particularly in a section of the country. We don’t get to hear them when these Political Leaders are stealing our common wealth with impunity, which is what is responsible for the many troubles in the land.

God had to send a prophet to the people of Nineveh to warn the people, using Prophet Jonah, the people were living in sin; according to the directives of their flesh. He warned them thus:

“Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me.” Jonah 1:1-2 (NKJV)

And the people of Nineveh responded:

So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his

nobles, saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish? Jonah 3:5-9 (NKJV)

It is disheartening that we think in our day God is no longer captivated in speaking the row truth to those in authority, or maybe God has not sent them to speak against the ills in the land. Apparently, there's dearth of such men of God who would be bold enough to deliver such a message in our society today. The principal concern of few who have political influence is building empire for themselves, while the people of God they shepherd are being oppressed by the same politicians they pray for and prophesy on.

Everyone desires and talks about change in Nigeria but less effort is put forth for the realization of the change, our Church Leaders have the responsibility to impart their voice to the issues of corruption, inequality, prejudice, impunity and other evils in the land but they do less. As long as they keep quiet, these political Leaders will continue to think that they are doing the right thing. It is the responsibility of every Christian to proclaim the righteousness of God in the land, particularly those whose voices can be heard. What are the view of the church on Christian participation? Should we be part of Politics or we should stay off?

### **The Ecclesiastical Christians and Politics**

The Church is an "assembly" or called our ones for Holy purpose, coming out of darkness into marvelous light (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:9) This kind of assembly is like a gathering in a village meeting where everybody attends and has the right freedom of speech, were voted into officers once a year and no more person dominated the office for a longer period. Church haters borrowed the word "Eklesiya" to describe the community of God's people (Palmer 30).

In the writing of Apostle Paul to the people of Corinthians (12:12-13) he said; the Church refers to individual believe or the individual worshipper of God, not the building by Implication the Church is an assembly of believer, who belong together in a community. Should the Church be involved in politics? Why must the Church be involved in politics?

### **What are the position of the church on Political participation of Christians?**

Some are with the view that Christian are to be part and others are totally not for Christian participation. Those who support Christian participation are with the view that everyone be actively involved in politics, for it is not wrong for those who have the fear of God to be involved (Sunday 9). The Church is an assembly of the chosen, with the aim of shining our light into the darkest part of the world. Because we are called to show our light in the world that is the full of darkness, for we can do better than those who have no fear of God.

The first command God gave to man on the creation was for him (man) to have dominion in the world. The youth, men and women therefore must be actively involved in the politics of our nation for without which no one makes better impression (Akanni 67).

Leaders who cannot see clearly cannot lead others but those who have sight lead their subject. There is no better time to get involved in politics of our dear country than now. Must be bold to take the bull by the horns if not we may end up as casualties. Tribalism, ignorance illiteracy and poverty are the reason for failure. We must learn from it (Paul 54).

It is a process, through which power is acquired for decision making in addition it is a war because the process involve struggle, you cannot achieve your goal in politics without being part of the war when you acquired the power you can manipulate decision that affects the entire society.

### **Why Should the Church be involved in Politics?**

The scripture explains that:

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father in heaven (Matthew 5: 14-16 NIV).

#### **We are the Light of the World**

The Church is the body of Christ as such, we are called to be the light and salt of the world (Mathew 5:13-14) as the light of the world, Christian are called to show the world the way and change the existing pattern. When the people of the world do it wrong Christians are

called out to right wrong. Re-write the narratives. Good would hardly come from the people of the world, we are called to change the taste, Christians are called to change the bitter to sweet in the world politics (George and Bitrus 87).

The World need these Qualities

Christians are called the light and salt of the world it follows that the world in which we live need the qualities. The quality we bring that would attract the people to the source of the light and salt.

We were instructed to shine our Light. The Bible says men don't put your Lamp under cover put it on lamp stand that everyone will see light. God has given us command that we all need to obey; we must make our light shine in the world that is full of darkness.

We are called to be role Models, we are called exemplary Leadership not only as it concerns the Church but it concerns humanity. Our work gives impression to our faith, and if we are called into service we must do as unto God.

Christians can do it better

Christians are better predisposed to excelling to public offices because they shall be accountable for their stewed ship before God the righteous judge who himself left us with a pattern of selfless life by the redemption of mankind. How then can we have access to political office in democratic settings if we do not fully participate? Can we capture political power by sitting on the fence? The Church must therefore, as a matter of urgency recognize as the book of Romans says; it is God who institutes every government, all power belongs to him he gives to those he wants to place in every position we must position ourselves as key players not spectators so as gain the opportunity of accessing public offices, so the as light of the world exhibit our own understanding of Leadership as Christ show.

### **Freedom for the Church**

Countries that political offices are elected by its citizens are countries that promote freedom of speech in the countries where Christians are not on the hem of affairs Christians suffer persecution and have no power to change anything, when you want to express yourself, you

do that at your own risk hence even the law of the land and policies set by those on authority forbid some form of freedom (Kukah 56).

The people you choose take decision on you

The people you choose to govern you have great influence on you, they set policies that will not favor you and will back it with laws. If am not a Christian don't think or expect me to make any law or set policies that will favor mission in the area where I am governing, consciously or unconsciously my policies will not favor Christians missions, so if you think politics is a dirty thing when you are denied of the clean what will you do? How will you feel? So if you want to have freedom even in your worship you must be fixed in a place from where all policies emanates.

Some may say they don't want politics not for any reason but for self-righteousness, they feel they are more righteous than all, feel engaging in politics well will defile them, so they don't want to be defiled. The gospel message of Christ should be seen in the complete sense; politics to some people is a critique to preaching the gospel message of Christ. We are the light of the world we must let our light shine in every sphere of life.

There would be justice and equity

A real Christian in office is better placed to guarantee justice and equity for the good of all citizens of the state, because noting in the Holy Bible limit godly service to only Christians but to the whole humanity. The story of the Good Samaritan in the Bible buttresses the call to service without selection (Tokunboh 223). There was an expert in the religious law who came to trap Jesus by asking him what he must do to inherit eternal life, then Jesus asked him what the law says, and the lawyer answered correctly but answering the lawyer's question "who is my neighbor?" Jesus said;

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, stripped him of his clothing wounded him and departed, leaving him half dead now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he arrives the place, came and looked and passed on the other side but a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed came where he was and when he saw him, he had compassion so he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine, and he set him on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him on the next day, when he departed, he

took out two denarii, gave them to the inn keeper, and said to him, take care of him and whatever you spend, when I come again, I will repay you: “so which of these do you think was neighbor to him who fell among thieves?” The man replied the Samaritan, and he said, “He who show mercy to him,” Then Jesus to him, “Go and do likewise”(Luke 10:30-37 NKJV)

Jesus calls on people to love and care without boundary, Leaders are to render service to humanity without minding where the people are coming from but for the fact that God connected them together even if it's by chance they are to show them love. The Samaritan become a figure when he renders selfless service to a man henever knew before, he was not a politician but know what it means to be blessed and also the purpose of wealth (Pandang 77). Your wealth is nothing if you cannot use it to bless the life of the less privilege. “For if we are called unto service we must do all thing as unto the lord”

The bible says;

God has given gift to each of you his great variety of his spiritual gift! Manage them well so that God's generosity can flow through God himself were speaking through you. Are you called? Do it with all strength and energy that God supplies then God will be given the glory in everything Jesus Christ. All glory and power belong to him forever. Amen (*1<sup>st</sup> peter 4:10-11 NLT*)

Every opportunity you have, use it wisely as if you will never have such again even though God may unveil other opportunities, if you can manage it well more will be given, remember the parable of the talent, those who utilized their own talent more were given to them but the one who dig a hole and bury he's even the one he has was taken from him. Be always committed, dedicated and provide positive service to those you are leading. A renown politician chief Obafimi Awolowo stated in Idenyi that,” the best way to say thank you is to render selfless service to the people” those who are there for gain only think of their stomach, the best to say “thank you” I believe is by rendering service to the people that voted you into the office you are enjoying, you can do this better if you have the fear of God (14).

The righteous must take over

The righteous must be part of politics Just as the emphasized the fact that when the righteous is on the throne the people rejoice but when the wicked is on the throne the people suffer.



Who is the wicked? The wicked is he who has no fear of God and does what pleases his master the devil. Anytime such is on the throne the people suffer. Beloved, we have suffered for our muteness allowing the state of our nation to suffer in the hand of the people who have no fear of God; we must take over our political arena that our people will not suffer as the result of our inaction.

### **Our cultural mandate**

Cultural mandate is a biblical foundation for Christian involvement in the world. It is the command that God gave to man, the very first command after creation in (Genesis 1:26-30). God himself made man master over all the things he has created, man is to multiply, control, rule, be master, king and have dominion over the earth. So God made man to be a steward of the world and he has the perfect creation that he doesn't want to see it destroyed by the evil one; he gave man to take care of it (Charles 144). You will be held responsible if you refused to take responsibilities of taking care of what God placed.

In Islam cultural mandate is applied more than in Christianity, to the Religion cannot be separated with secular state whether in region or outside it they must rule. Unless and until the Christians take cultural mandate serious, we will never contend with Islam.

The function of the Church is not only evangelism but service must not be spiritual but social, economic, cultural and political.

### **Some Christian's opinion on involvement in politics**

There are theories that over the years have taken over the mind of Christians and many Christians have taken position on how they relate, we are going to discuss the renunciation theory for this study, hence, it's the summary of some Christian grouping in relation to politics and the world.

This group of Christians who are with the view that since the world and the Church are totally opposed to each other the Church should have nothing to do with the world and anything that is in the world, the Church should be live in isolation to the world so they don't get contaminated by it. So Christians should not get involved in politics at all. This school of thought has certain scriptures to buttress their point and their leading scripture is *(1 John 2:15)* "do not

love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world. Love of the father is not in him” (NIV) so to them, if you love politics, the love of the father is not in you (Maton 44).

Another scripture renunciation’ uses is James 4:4” you adulterous people don’t you know that friendship with the world means enmity with God? Therefore, anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God” also in James 1:27” --- keep yourself from being polluted by the world”

The question that comes to mind after going through this theory is, what is the mind of God concerning this? (ibid 65).

### **Conclusion**

We cannot afford to continue watching from the sideline and suffer the consequence of our inaction. We must therefore, as a matter of urgency make ourselves relevant because we are a constituency that cannot afford to be spectators but participant (Sunday 67). We must emerge either as candidate or people who determine those who would govern them with the sense of selflessness and the fear of God. The time to stand up is now and it is ripe, so let us begin with a sense of purpose and direction. For it is a crime against redemption to remain on the same spot from the beginning to the end, year after year (McNally 23).

### **Recommendations**

- i. Forums should be created where discussions on issues relate to the development of the entire country are discussed, injecting political ideas of religion into deliberation.
- ii. Those caught in the habit of discouraging and intimidating people who have interest should be punished to discourage others from repeating same.
- iii. Seminar and symposiums should be organized to sensitize the people on the relevance of politics to the church.
- iv. Funds should be raised for those who are interested in Joining politics and the spirit of mentorship should be encouraged.

- v. Create awareness within the circle of the church to know that it is a command and that we can do it better than those of the other religion, as we are called to serve as unto the Lord.

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