

Christians and Partisan Politics in Nigeria: A Sociological Investigation of their Challenges and Effectiveness

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Abstract. There are many challenges that are capable of standing in the way and the resources that are available to make one very effective in his divine calling as a Christian politician for the benefit of his constituency and the society in general. Christians have succeeded in many other areas of endeavours in this country and beyond, but not in the political terrain because they were discouraged from involving in partisan politics. For the few Christians that have been involved since the seventies, how effective have they been in the politics of Nigeria? Have they been able to influence the political system that is consummated in corruption, suppression, oppression, wickedness, and in a leadership that is without vision and mission? And if they have not, what has been the cause for their inability to bring meaningful change for the better? Have they gone into change things for the better for the generality of Nigerians or have they gone into partisan politics simply to get their own share of the national cake, minding less about the plight of the majority of Nigerians languishing in a state of abject poverty, insecurity and injustice? If these Christians have gone into politics for their own personal benefit, are these Christians the right people called by God to govern us and should these be the right people the church should support into the political arena in Nigeria? This is the burden of the writer in this researched work; and the study is approached from sociological perspectives.

Keywords: Investigation, Christians, Partisan Politics and Effective.

1. Introduction

From the biblical point of view, Christians as light and salt of the world and people vested with the good news of salvation or liberation of the poor and captive, it is imperative that Christians should be involved in partisan politics and aspire to political leadership. As a result, the mission of the Christian politician should not be to amass wealth for himself, his immediate family and friends but to ensure the effective management of the national resources, security and justice for the benefit of all Nigerians. The Christian politician as light and salt must make a difference in the governance of the country or else he would be of no use to society and the church. As light, his presence in the political arena should help to drive away corruption and mismanagement of the resources of the country and ensure its equitable distribution. As salt, his involvement in partisan politics should be able to make politics palatable, interesting, pleasant or give it the good taste it deserve (Ajanaku, 2004).

Besides, the work enumerates some challenges that are before the Christian politicians to performing credibly well. Such challenges include high expectations of stakeholders, being a minority in the field of politics, the temptation to get rich quick, demonic attacks, the urge to compromise, sexual temptation, lack of finance and lack of skills based or a genuine political mentor.

The investigative study does not leave us without a road map to becoming an effective Christian politician. To be effective and successful, the Christian politician must for example seek the will of God, have the right vision, mission and strategy to go into politics, walk daily with God who calls him into partisan politics, apply biblical principles in his politicking, acquire knowledge and skills in the art of governance and development programs, network with other Christian politicians, have godly advisors and be firm and at the same time flexible in his dealings with other politicians and electorate.

2. Why Christians should Be Involved in politics?

Over time and especially now, many churches and Christians have realized that it was a mistake to discourage Christians from getting involved in politics. This became very glaring at the advent of Islamic fundamentalism and fanaticism that led to riots, killing of Christians and destruction of church buildings in the northern parts of Nigeria beginning from 1980 Maitatsine riots in Kano to date. There are many reasons why Christians should be involved in politics and seek elective offices.

2.1 Divine Origin

God is the author of politics and government. If this is true as substantiated by the Christian scriptures, abstinence would be failure to be involved in God's business. In other words, political authority came directly from God. God said in the Bible, "By me kings reign" (Proverbs 8:15). This implies that divine authority gave legitimacy to political authority, in such a way that a man who revolt against political authority is revolting against the very order established by God. As a result, disobedience to the political authorities is not only a crime, but a sin, because of the close connection between divine and human law. No wonder, it was to Pontius Pilate that Christ said, "You would have no power over me had it not been given you from above" (John 19:11). If God refers to leaders as His ministers (Rom. 13: 4 – 6) then the Christians cannot but seek to serve God in this capacity.

2.2 Integral Mission

This is about visible impact of Christian religion on the lives of the people. The mission of the church is to build the Kingdom of God where Jesus Christ reigns supreme through the proclamation and practical demonstration of the gospel to a suffering world. Integral mission is a combination of evangelism and social action which indicates that Christians should touch the life of others in need through practical assistance for meaningful life. The church must, therefore, be involved in evangelism and social action. This is what integral mission or holistic ministry is all about. It is a known fact that evangelism and social action are intertwined and cannot be separated. Jesus said, "*The Spirit of the Lord is on me because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed*" (Luke 4: 18). Being actively involved in politics is seen as part of Christians' involvement in social action. Christian involvement in politics should be regarded as part of the mission of the church as it provides opportunity to demonstrate the gospel (Hunter, 1983). Thus, service to humanity and seeking the common good of the citizens through Christians' political involvement is of paramount importance to integral mission of the church.

2.3 Light and Salt of the World

Christians are supposed to be the light and salt of the society (Matt. 5. 13-15). Jesus said, "*Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven*" (Matt. 5:16). How can Christians be light and salt of the world if they are not involved in politics? As light of the world, Christians are God's instruments to illuminate the world. Christians have to come out of their shells and make a reflection of the good works that will glorify God. A lighted candle (Christian) that is hidden under a table (political apathy) serves no useful purpose, but a monumental waste. Also, Christians should be salt of the earth as well. Nigerian political situation can be best compared to a soup being prepared with all ingredients added without salt, it would not bring the desired taste. Thus, two things might have occurred: either the salt was

not added at all or the quantity added was not enough. The latter best describes Nigeria's situation. Christians that are practically involved in politics are not enough as to effect any notable change. For Nigerian politics to have taste for peace and progress, salt must be added through effective Christian participation. Condemning a tasteless soup through a mere criticism of the wrong doings cannot make it change in taste and is not good enough for the political development of the state. Christians' involvement will draw many people into the polity, because everyone wants to have a taste of a sweet smelling soup. For the ideal desires to manifest, the state political process must be seasoned. By so doing, they will truly become the light and salt of the society. The allegation that politics is dirty is not a sufficient reason for abstinence by Christians. Thoburn (1984) argues that there is dirt everywhere, not just in politics. There is dirt in business, in Churches, in families, in medicine, law, lecturing, in schools, everywhere. Beach's (2014) words are very apt regarding this:

The political ordering of society is God's providential provision for fallen humankind. God does not ask the 'good people' of society to stay out of the political governance process and leave socio-political and economic control in the hands of 'evil doers'. Christians are to be the Salt and Light of the societal world and therefore cannot simply opt out of the political process. Actually, such an abdication is in itself a political action, which opens the way for political control by those supporting less than Christian values. 'Do-nothingism' is a sure prescription for sin, becoming the master.

2.4 Development of the Poor

Christians need to get involved to ensure that the resources of the country are effectively harnessed and managed so that all people especially the poor benefit from development programmes. The focus should be on the poor and less privileged. The Apostles emphasized the importance of the ministry to the poor just as Jesus did. Paul specifically stated in Galatians 2:10 that the reputed pillars of the early church (Peter, John and James) asked them to remember the poor in their ministry to the Gentiles. At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus stated that God

had anointed Him to preach good news to the poor (Luke 4:18). I believe that in this passage, Jesus was referring to both spiritual and material poverty. By getting involved, Christians would gain experience in governance, lay down patterns, provide security, ensure moral standards, human dignity and national development (Ryan, 2002). Christian politicians must show concern for the people they encounter, especially the poor, not only because they want their votes, but also because this is what God expects of them. National resources must be used for the benefit of all people especially the poor. They should refuse to enrich themselves at the expense of the poor by providing selfless services to the people.

2.5 God's Glory

From past experiences of Christians in politics, there is the tendency to think that politics cannot be played to the glory of God. This is not so. I believe that all legitimate activities, including politics, can be done to the glory of God. Christians are mandated to do all things as unto the Lord and to the glory of God. "*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it to all for the glory of God*" (1 Cor. 10:31). Christian politicians should go into politics with the aim of glorifying God and not themselves. This means that their allegiance must first be to God and not to political parties or godfathers. Christians who are already engaged in politics or who intend to go into politics should assess their motives. Why are they involved or want to go into politics? Is it for God's glory or the desire for power to control resources for their own personal benefit to the detriment of others? Are they concerned about the increasing poverty of Nigerians? Are they concerned about the increasing corruption in the country and its effects on development? This should be done through a process of self-reflection. Christian politicians should be determined to accomplish what they have set out to do to the glory of God.

2.6 Compassion for Mankind

Compassion involves applying oneself to heal people's wounds no matter the cause, correcting injustices, fighting corruption and working in a loving way to bring about peace and reconciliation among people. In other words,

compassion is love in action which is based on selfless love. Christians must be involved out of compassion for mankind and love of their brothers and sisters. The future of the nation depends largely on politicians. Even if God intervenes, He will intervene through men who are politicians. Christians cannot therefore leave matters of the economy, the school system, medical conditions, housing, security morality, etc. to chance. To be concerned would be to be involved in politics in one way or the other. A compassionate Christian politician will never be at ease nor happy seeing people living in abject poverty, while knowing that such poverty is man-made and caused by injustice, corruption and mismanagement of resources. What gives a compassionate Christian politician joy is to see justice being done to all people irrespective of their tribe, state and religion. Apart from this, he or she rejoices in doing good and seeing that people are living in peace with one another.

3. Challenges Facing Christian Politicians

It is of paramount importance to examine some of the key challenges Christian politicians face in the country that have prevented them from being as effective as they should be. These are by no means exhaustive, and may not apply to all Christian politicians. For some Christian politicians, it may just be one or two factors that are responsible for their ineffectiveness while for others, it may be more. For most of them, it might be a combination of these factors that lead to their ineffectiveness.

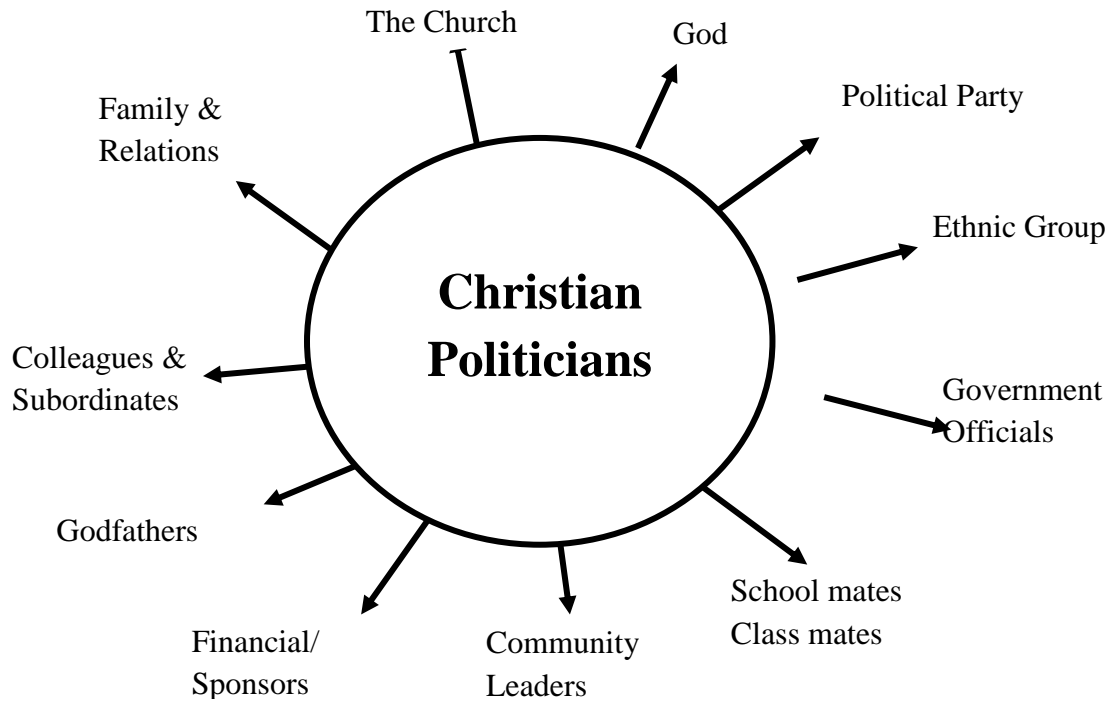
It is noteworthy to say at this point that considering the challenges Christian politicians face does not amount to passing judgment or blaming them at all. The sole motive is to enable us to better understand the situation they face with a view to developing strategies that would encourage them to be more effective.

Moreover, it appears that these challenges have not been properly understood or appreciated by the church in Nigeria and Christian politicians. If these challenges are not clearly understood, it would be difficult to effectively address them

either by Christian politicians or by the church. It appears that no efforts have been made to carry out an in-depth analysis that would provide information that can be used to develop strategies for enabling Christian politicians to be effective. This is based on discussions we have had with a few Christians that are in politics. It is believed the challenges will stimulate Christian block such as Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), to chart the way forward. These challenges include:

3.1 Expectations from Stakeholders

It is obvious that Christian politicians face different types of demands and expectations from different stakeholders. This work has identified some stakeholders that would make some form demands or have some sort of expectations. How do they cope with these expectations and demands? To which stakeholders do they give their priorities? The diagram below shows how stakeholders can pull a Christian politician in different directions.



The above show expectations or demands expected to be met by Christian politicians. It is generally believed that politicians including Christians, at all levels acquire wealth within a very short time. Many people do not care how this wealth is acquired, but expect all politicians in leadership positions to be rich (Danladi, 2009). It is painful that this belief and expectation is also common among Christians and the church. Hence, there is a lot of demand by Christians and churches for financial assistance from Christian politicians. Besides, politicians in leadership positions are often encouraged by key stakeholders to use their executive powers to enrich themselves, their associates, family members and other stakeholders. Politicians are, therefore, always under enormous pressure to acquire wealth for their own benefit and those of their relatives and associates. Those who do not meet up to this expectations from non-Christian groups such as Muslims and Traditionalists. Christian politicians elected into leadership positions are expected to represent the interests of all groups of people including those who are not Christians.

3.2 Being a Minority

As had earlier emphasized in the introduction, only few Christians have gone into partisan politics. The number is gradually on the increase. Nevertheless, Christian politicians remain a minority. Since politics is a game of numbers, they often find themselves going against the tide when major decisions have to be deliberated upon. What should they do in situations where they have been clearly outnumbered? A Christian politician has had to struggle with great opposition because of his stand against malpractices in government. He has been persecuted many times through demotions and removal from key positions, yet has maintained his integrity. There is no doubt, such Christian politicians cannot be effective since they have not been given the opportunity to perform well. Thus, being a minority in political circles is a dilemma that Christian politicians face every day. The issue of being a minority can be addressed by getting more committed Christians involved in partisan politics.

3.3 Get – Rich – Quick Syndrome

There is no gain saying that the desire to get rich quick through many means is widespread among many Nigerians, especially the politicians. The Nigerian people tend to glorify the rich no matter how they acquire their wealth. It appears that many Nigerians are not bothered about how people acquire wealth as long as they can benefit from it. It is only when they do not benefit that they begin to grumble, but once they are able to get a share of it, they keep quiet. This kind of attitude fuels corruption and mismanagement of resources. The tendency is that those who are wealthy use their riches to influence people in their favour. When Christian politicians who may want to do things right see that it works, they are tempted to do likewise. They are often advised to acquire wealth in order to use it to influence decisions in their favour and told, “This is your time to get rich”. Such money used to influence decisions is sometimes referred to as public relation funds, but in reality, this is bribery. Thus, since the rich are the ones most often honoured, Christian politicians face enormous pressure to acquire wealth, and are encouraged to do so by their associates, advisors or relations.

3.4 Demonic Attacks

It is not exaggeration that many politicians go into occultism in order to succeed in politics. We have heard stories of politicians going to witch doctors and herbalists in shrines to make sacrifices in order to be elected into positions of power. Some go to the extent of making human sacrifices. Many politicians go to the herbalists not only to ensure that they win elections but also, to ensure that their opponents or rivals do not succeed. Some go to the extent of planning to eliminate their opponents. In most cases, the herbalists or witch doctors use demonic power to get what the politicians want. Hence, Christian politicians may be subject to demonic attacks from their rivals or opponents, especially when they see that such Christians are popular and have high chances of winning. As a result of this, some Christian politicians have resorted to seeking protection from witch doctors, herbalists and occultism (Ezeogu, 2007). This should not be the case as it is only God that can provide sustainable protection.

3.5 Urge to compromise

In partisan politics, pressure to compromise is very high. How can a Christian politician withstand the pressure to compromise? It is a challenge Christians have to face squarely and overcome. One time advisor to a state Governor told me that one of the greatest challenges of Christian politicians is compromise in dealing with different stakeholders who are not Christians and have different values and expectations. He said they find it difficult to handle requests or demands that are contrary to Christian ethics from non-Christians (Jayeola, 2016). Another area of compromise is using money to buy votes. It is a known fact that politicians who are elected spend huge sums of money to buy votes. Many Christian politicians always compromise their stand by yielding to the pressure to provide funds that would be used to buy votes or rig elections. There is also compromise where a situation demands that they be truthful and honest for political expediency.

3.6 Sexual Temptations

This is particularly a serious challenge for male Christian politicians who are exposed to women or girls of easy virtue. One of the things that can really tarnish the image of a Christian politicians is unholy relationships with the opposite sex. Unfortunately, in political circles it is considered normal for male politicians to keep a horde of girlfriends. Many people do not see anything wrong with it as long as nobody gets hurt. Politicians who travel often may not be able to frequently go along with their wives and so are liable to sexual temptations. They are also victims of pornography. The Bible says that our bodies are temples of God and that we should use them to glorify God (I Cor. 3:16). Christian politicians should follow the example of Joseph who when tempted by Potiphar’s wife fled from her. It is indeed very dangerous to think that one cannot succumb to sexual advances from women and men.

3.7 Finding, Appropriate Sponsors/Financiers

A lot of money is required before going into politics and seeking to be elected into leadership positions for campaigns and other logistics. Much funds are required depending on the area of coverage. Most Christians who want to go

into politics do not have adequate funds to sponsor themselves. Thus, inadequate funds make Christian politicians to depend on wealthy individuals to provide financial support for them. These sources of income of some of the people they look up to for financial support may be questionable. Most sponsor who are often referred to as “godfathers”, do not follow biblical values or Christians principles, and often exert a lot of pressure and influence on the politicians they assist to be elected into positions of leadership. Politicians usually find it very difficult or impossible to resist their sponsors who are so powerful that can engineer their removal from office.

3.8 Finding Competent Advisers

One of the serious challenges Christian politicians frequently face is how to choose their advisers and what kind of advice they receive. Many politicians have been accused of surrounding themselves with sycophants who tell them what they want to hear, keeping them out of touch with the reality. It appears that many Christian politicians are not different, they seem to have surrounded themselves with people that give them ungodly advice, this, their decisions are faulty. It could be that some of their advisor are imposed on them by their sponsors, or have been inherited from previous leaders.

3.9 Support from the church

Although churches are now encouraging Christians to go into politics, but there seems to be no strategy but in place by any church denomination to prepare their members who want to go into politics and to support them after they might have been elected into positions of power and authority. Many Christian politicians have observe that their church tend to neglect them after going into politics. They complain of getting the necessary support they need in order to enable them be effective (Alabi, 2015). On the order hand, church leaders say Christian politicians distance themselves from the church after they have been elected and do not consult them on crucial national issues (Ojo, 2015). Whatever the case may be, the fact is that there is inadequate support from the church to Christian politicians in terms of prayers, advice

and encouragement not to conform to worldly standards. It also gives the Christian politician the impression that they are only considered relevant when the church needs money.

3.10 Sabotage

There is no doubt that Christian politicians who want to stand for the truth and do things right will face big challenges. One of those challenges is sabotage. People who benefit from the corrupt system will normally react negatively when their means of making money is hindered. Sabotage is usually carried out in the form of damage to machinery, vehicle, houses, equipment or materials meant for a particular purpose. It could also come in the form of disruption of work on a particular project, slander, betrayal, intimidation, harassment, fire and arson, smear campaigns, etc. The aim is to portray the Christian politician being targeted in bad light, and to ensure that that whatever he does fails.

Network among Christian politicians

A Christian politician has said that one of the issues he has faced in politics is that there is no forum where Christian politicians can meet together to encourage one another. Related to this is that there is no teamwork among Christians in politics unlike Muslims who seemed to be more united, work together and support one another (Olalere, 2016). A related challenge is how Christian politicians belonging to different political parties can support one another. It appears that Christian politicians often allow ethnic and church differences to keep them from working together to fight corruption and injustice in the country. The fact of the matter is that the amount of pressure being exerted on Christian politicians to conform to the corrupt way of doing things is enormous.

How Christian Politicians can be Effective in Nigeria

Many committed Christians are hardly encouraged to take part in partisan politics because it has been a convention to regard partisan politics as a dirty game and therefore unfit for a committed Christian. Nevertheless, we will now discuss how Christians can be effective as politicians. We have seen that the challenges Christian politicians’ faces are

enormous. Christians going into politics must be aware of these challenges and be determined to address and overcome them by the grace of God. It is when these challenges are not taken into consideration that Christians become ineffective in politics. This makes some Christians believe that it is impossible to play clean politics in contemporary Nigeria' or go into politics, and come out unpolluted. I believe that in spite of these challenges, it is still possible for Christians to be effective in politics and make a difference in the way things are done.

Besides, to be effective, Christian politicians must have good, meaningful and close relationship with God, the church and the people they want to serve (including political parties). They must strike a balance in these relationships and be in constant communication with them. Any break in any of the three relationships will make a Christian politician to be ineffective. There must also be a willingness to learn from others and have a teachable spirit. They would also need the support of the church in terms of prayers, encouragement and constructive feedback. For them to succeed and truly be the light and salt of the society, they would need to relate very well with the church.

4. Suggestions

Based on this, outlined below are suggested steps that Christian politicians should consider taking to be effective in bringing about good governance and make a positive impact in the country so that poor people can benefit from developmental programmes.

4.1 Seeking God's Will

It must be noted that it is not every Christian that should go into partisan politics. The decision to go into politics should not be based on assumptions, feelings or a push from other people. Thus, Christian politicians must seek the mandate of God for whatever position they want to vie for. Once God has given them the mandate for a particular position, it would be easier for them to get the people's mandate. They would not have to strain themselves too much to get the people's mandate if it is the will of God. They would not have to get involved in

all kinds of tricks and manipulations to get the people's mandate, as it is usually the case today. All they need to do is to clearly outline the strategy God has given them for the people and share this widely. There may be opposition but with persistence and perseverance, they will succeed.

4.2 Having the Right Motivation

Christians who are already engaged in politics or who intend to go into politics should assess their motives. What drives them into politics? The assessment must be done sincerely and honestly if they want to make any meaningful progress in their political career. Our motivation determines our actions. That is why having the right motivation is a very important basic factor for Christians to be successful in politics. Any motivation that is self-centred, focusing on acquiring power in order to amass wealth, which is usually done at the expense of the poor masses, is wrong-service to the people has to do with being the light and salt of the society. Christians are to be models of excellence in whatever they do including contributions to alleviate poverty, ensuring that things are done in the right way and to correct injustice so that the less-privileged and poor people in the society can benefit from development programmes.

4.3 Seeking the Support of the Church and Christians

Christian politicians should seek the support of the church right from the time they feel called to go into politics and not limit it to the times of elections. The church should be one of the major support bases of a Christian politician. Regular dialogue should continue with various church denominations and para-church organizations with regular visit and sharing challenges and experiences, successes and difficulties encountered, praise and prayer requests. Drawing from the strategy they have already developed, the Christian politicians should spell out the areas where they need support from the church. For this to be effective, they must share their strategies with the churches through the leadership.

4.4 Developing a Strategy

A strategy can be defined as a map for a journey for an individual or an organization based on what they know at a particular point in time. The process of planning something or putting a plan into operation in a skillful way (Hornby, 2010). It can also be looked at as a designed, flexible means of achieving your intentions. A well-designed strategy provides focus and direction for an individual or an organization. Without a strategy, a Christian politician may find himself or herself being tossed around by every wind of doctrine. Each Christian politician should develop a strategy based on the knowledge of the political, economic and social situation of his or her locality and the nation at large.

4.5 Willingness to Change

Many politicians make very good speeches about what they would do if elected, but do not fulfil those promises. Those who want or desire to see change must themselves be willing to change. Change at the national level must begin at the individual/personal level. If Christian politicians want to effect change in the governance and political system in the country, they themselves must live exemplary Christian lives, and be willing to change. When they speak against corruption, they themselves must not be corrupt. When they talk about their subordinates being accountable, they themselves must be accountable. When they talk about the importance of unity among the different ethnic groups, they themselves must not sow seeds of discord among the ethnic groups by their actions.

4.6 Accepting Financial Support only from well-Meaning and Honest People

Since it is obvious that he who pays the piper dictates the tune, Christian politicians must be very careful, about whom they accept funds from for their political activities. They should avoid accepting funds from people who have corruptly enriched themselves or persons with dubious and questionable characters, but only from well-meaning and godly people. This may be difficult as there are few well-meaning and

godly people that are wealthy. Even though it may be difficult, it is impossible. Moreover, this is an area where the church can come in and provide assistance in cases where it is very clear that particular Christians have been called by God to go into politics.

4.7 Applying Biblical Values and Principles

Values are beliefs and principles that a person or an organization holds high and they serve as the basis for decisions and actions. In other words, our attitudes and behavior are shaped by the values we hold dear. From the attitude and behavior of politicians in Nigeria, it is clear that most of their values are not in line with the Bible; otherwise, there would have been a much greater level of development in country than it is now. For a Christian to be effective in politics and make a positive difference, he or she must imbibe Biblical values. How can Christian politicians know the values they hold? This can be done through a process of values clarification, that is, through a process of self-reflection.

4.8 Engaging Credible Advisers

It is an established fact that the quantity of decisions taken by any person depends very much on the accuracy of information provided or received, and the quality of advice given. Quite often, politicians make wrong decisions because of deficiencies in these areas. Christian politicians must therefore prayerfully consider the sources of their information and advice before they act on them. They should verify all information they get. Before engaging advisers, they must first pray and ask for God's direction, as He alone knows the heart of people. Secondly, they should develop criteria for selection: persons who are faithful, available, show integrity, are trustworthy and honest.

4.9 Setting up Accountability Groups

Christian politicians should consider identifying a group of about three to five Christians or church leaders of high integrity, who can be trusted, and with whom they can meet regularly to discuss their experiences, struggles and

challenges in politics. He or she should be accountable to this group. Discussions with members of the group should be confidential. It is ideal for every Christian politician to have an accountability group. There must be a willingness on the part of the Christian politicians to be open to their accountability group. Such groups provide opportunity to give and receive feedback on what each member is doing, and for sharing ideas, strengths and weaknesses (Danladi, 2009).

4.10 Networking with other Christian Politicians

The need for Christian politicians in the country to liaise with one another for sharing information, challenges, difficulties, experiences and ideas can never be over emphasized. Such liaison among them will provide encouragement for them to continue to do what is right in terms of making proper decisions, fighting injustice, corruption and proper management of resources. Regular meetings are very essential for effective liaising with one another. Through such meetings, they will encourage one another to do the right things and enhance their effectiveness. However, regular meeting of Christian politicians should not be taken to mean that they would not meet or liaise with non-Christian politicians. It is not wise in politics to isolate oneself. They cannot be effective if they do not relate well with their non-Christian counterparts (Danladi, 2009).

5. Towards Effective Involvement and Conclusion

Over time and especially now, many churches and Christians have realized that it was a mistake to discourage Christians from getting involved in politics. This became very glaring at the advent of Islamic fundamentalism and fanaticism that led to riots, killing of Christians and destruction of church buildings in the northern parts of Nigeria beginning from 1980 Maitatsine crisis in Kano. The church by its lukewarm attitude to partisan politics, has contributed very much to the increasing level of corruption in Nigeria. Many church leaders only show interest in politicians when seeking

financial assistance for projects such as buildings, vehicle, schools etc. Christian politicians must show concern for the people they encounter, especially the poor, not only because they want their votes, but also because this is what God expects of them.

In the same vein, the need for Christian politicians to acquire knowledge and skills in development approaches, good governance, resource management and appropriate technologies cannot be over emphasized. A Christian politician may have the right motivation, willing to apply biblical principles and values, but if he or she does not have the requisite knowledge and skill in good governance, management and appropriate development approaches, he or she will not be effective. In order to provide good governance, the Christian politician must apply appropriate leadership styles that are not dictatorial but consultative and participatory.

Conclusively, we have seen that many Christian politicians in Nigeria are not as effective as they should be in bringing about positive changes in the political system and governance of our country. This is because they face many challenges that appear insurmountable. There is therefore the tendency for Christian politicians to give up and instead participate in corrupt practices. We have also discovered that the church has not provided the necessary support that is required to enable Christian politicians to be effective. Although it is difficult to be an effective Christian politician in Nigeria given the way politics is played, it is not impossible. I firmly believe that Christians whom God has called to go into politics can be effective and make a difference in the society. Christian politicians themselves must be willing to change their perceptions attitudes and behavior for them to be effective. The church in Nigeria has a very crucial role to play in enabling Christian politicians to be effective in deed. Above all, Christian politicians need to be completely dependent on God to enable them overcome the challenges they face.

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