

JOSEPH C. IBEKWE

POLITICS
IS A
KINGDOM
BUSINESS

HOW A CHRISTIAN SHOULD DO POLITICS

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Politics is a Kingdom Business

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To those Christians who dare to enter public politics for kingdom promotion and not for personal advancement.

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THANK YOU

This book went through the mills. A number of people read the first and second drafts. My friend, Mr. Jide Attah, read the first draft with the initial title, “Politics is Everybody’s Business”. He was so intrigued by the content that he gave it to his own friend to read as well. Both of them made very useful suggestions; however, Atta’s friend described the title of the book as “lazy”. I incorporated their views into the second draft which I later sent to Professor Paul Omaji, former Vice Chancellor, Salem University and Dr. Sam Amadi, former Chairman, Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC). They read through, made a few observations and said, “Go ahead, it’s worth publishing.”

I appreciate everyone who read the different drafts, even when it was only an eight-page idea. This book is possible because you supported it.

Thanks everyone.

Introduction

Politics is for everyone. Politics is also kingdom business. This is a fact of life, but not many Christians know this. People naturally resist what they don't know or what they have little understanding about. They even argue blindly, ardently, trying to validate their ignorance. Many people take a stand on issues, most times based on perception, and not on facts or reality. And perceptions can be stronger than reality. Sometimes, people create perceptions to deceive others or to dissuade others from probing them or contesting with them over certain the benefits of which they enjoy.

Politics is one issue that many people have taken a stand on, purely on perception. A segment of our society that has strong perceptions about politics is the Christian community. Over the years, professional politicians have succeeded in creating the impression that politics is dirty and not meant for decent people. They tell you politics is deep, ugly, risky and full of danger, meanwhile they are actively involved in it. Unfortunately, sincerely ignorant Christian folks have soaked up this perception, and therefore, shut themselves out of politics on grounds of spirituality. "Politics is carnal," they say. The result is that the majority of Christian folks have pushed themselves out of politics and public life because of misinformation. I want to deal with this perception.

In writing this book, I have deliberately avoided getting into the polemics associated with the concept of politics. I chose to dwell in the simplicity of the term and not drag you, my reader, into the academics of politics. There are, of course, many definitions adduced to the concept of politics, but for the purpose of this book, I choose to describe politics in two ways. First, politics is a contest for power. It is also about the way people relate with each in an attempt to determine who has the prerogative of resources control and how those resources should be distributed or administered for the advantage of whomever, at any given time. These resources could be material or non-material; tangible or intangible. It is the dynamics of this relationship that determines the nature of politics prevalent in any society or polity. Politics, essentially, is the doorway to the acquisition of power and power is supposed to be used for governance in the public space. God governance is the natural expectation of citizens in any responsible political engagement. Unfortunately, responsible politics cannot be picked from off the shelf. Citizens have to make conscious decisions to practice responsible politics.

I have written this book for that wonderful pastor or cleric who believes that no serious-minded Christian should engage in politics. I have written this book also for the sincere Christian person, who has been socialised to view politics through the dark glasses of dirt and disdain. I am here to engage you in an intellectual and theological exploration

on the issue of a Christian's participation in politics. I am here to interface with you on the issue of politics.

In the following pages, we will examine the argument for and against Christians' participation or involvement in politics. I will take you into God's prophetic agenda for Nigeria concerning politics and why you must locate yourself within this divine agenda. I will show you how you could become a political actor or mobiliser beginning from your immediate area of influence.

There is urgency in this book. Nigeria is fast emerging into a strong democratic nation in Africa and the world. As a Christian person, you must understand the intrigues, the nuances, the issues and the stakes involved. You must recognise the huge opportunity democratic politics offers you to contribute to national development and to advance God's Kingdom business right now, while you are still here.

This book is a wake-up call. By the time you finish reading, I believe you will be inspired to see politics as a platform to do good to more people for the Kingdom through responsible participation and service.

In this book I have used the term "Christian" in a generic sense, not differentiating. I did not intend to make any distinction between the orthodox, Charismatic or Pentecostal Christians in terms of doctrines or depths of spirituality. I am focused on whosoever bears the appellation 'Christian' not giving recourse to any other descriptive adjective that may confer spiritual superiority to any group or denomination. However, not all Christians are obtuse with regards to politics. I admit that when it comes to public politics, Christians of the Catholic Church are much more enlightened, particularly among the clerics, than Christians in the orthodox and Pentecostal groups. Although the matter I discuss herein pertains to all Christians, my major focus is on those of the Orthodox and Pentecostals who are often 'too spiritual' to be political in the public space. One thing I would like you to take away from this book is that any Christian involved in politics must do so in strict adherence to Kingdom principles. Once you get this message, take it to the nooks and crannies of your sphere of influence. Politics is for you! It is your Father's business. Follow me and let's begin the conversation.

Joseph C. Ibekwe
2017

Chapter One

The Power of Political Democracy

There is a reality with us in our time. Democracy is that reality. All over the world, democracy is becoming the accepted system of political governance. Like wild fire, it is spreading around the globe; even countries that hitherto had been authoritarian and monarchical are embracing democracy, albeit with pains. Around the world, more and more citizens are demanding, and in some cases fighting, for the right to participate in the governance processes of their country and society. They want their voices heard and respected.

Many observers believe this growing clamour for more democratic space is not mere happenstance. It is a movement whose time is due. The gale of democracy, like wild fire, is raging fast throughout the nations. Nobody can stop it, though in some parts of the world, some people because of the freedom it offers, do not think democracy should be allowed to take root around them, as it challenges their religious beliefs. Nonetheless, democracy has become the world's most popular system of governance. In fact, the modern world gravitates toward democratic norms and values, not minding the secularity of those values.

However, there is something about democracy that raises and frustrates people's hopes at the same time. To begin with, ask any high school student around you to define democracy for you; you are sure to hear something like: 'Government of the people, by the people, and for the people'. This is classically correct, but absolutely anachronistic, out-dated and too theoretical to be of any practical relevance; and this is where the problem starts.

Think about it! Where in the world do you have such democracy in operation – where citizens are in charge of governance, acting for themselves and on behalf of themselves? Perhaps none you can think of. Yet the masses of our intellectuals and political gurus still peddle this worn-out concept of democracy. The reality is that if you are conceptually wrong, chances are you will be operationally flawed. This could explain why the democracy we presently practice is illusionary and frustrates people. For instance, the very few among us, elected and appointed, who are the political actors, decision makers, power-brokers, and law makers are also the law breakers. They are responsible for the mass poverty in the land. This is a reality of our developmental democracy.

Once and again, politicians talk about the dividends of democracy, which itself is a seductive expression that begs the issue. Seductive in the sense that it gives the impression that the people are the real stakeholders in our democracy, which ought to be the case. But are they? If citizens are the real stakeholders and are supposed to be the beneficiaries of democracy, why then have political leaders made beggars of them, in the name of democracy?

It's painful to recall how life was in the days of military dictatorship in Nigeria, and in fact how straight-jacketed life can be under any authoritarian regime. You don't have to think; you don't have to be creative, because you are only supposed to take orders and carry them out. The stifling of creativity, in a military regime, breeds apathy and laziness because someone will do the thinking for you. This is the reason creativity does not thrive under any authoritarian regime.

Essentially, democracy offers space for citizens to engage and participate. Democracy provides the atmosphere for the pursuit of happiness. It is the only known governance system that allows and challenges the people to think, talk, and harness their creative energies to do things for themselves that could bring them prosperity and happiness. However, prosperity and happiness lie in the hearts of the people and not in the political system – not in democracy itself.

To generate this prosperity and happiness, citizens must participate in the democratic process and take responsibility for their lives. Politics is for every citizen, including you. You must realise you have enormous power to influence change in the polity by participating in politics. Politicians by their own volition or magnanimity cannot offer the kind of change that ensures you have a long term socio-political and economic benefit. You have to ask for this change, demand for it and work for it. It doesn't come by wishing for it.

There is a religious dimension to politics. This is true, although not openly admitted. Politics and religion may seem like strange bed fellows, but they actually Siamese twins; inseparable. In fact, the politics of many developing countries are grounded in religious beliefs. The irony is that instead of religious morality determining the political morality, political morality now dictates religious morality. Unfortunately, political morality is warped, vague and convoluted. Religious morality is simple and straight forward: black is black and white is white. But nay! There is politics in religion, and there is religion in politics. The matter is not to try to separate or isolate them, but to understand how religion influences the way we play politics and how politics determines how we practice our religious faith.

An attempt to isolate them and view each from a different lens can only complicate matters. The political turf is not a holy ground. It's neither a neutral ground. We just need to learn how to manage the issues around it. This would certainly be too difficult for many straight-jacketed religious people. Talking about religion in politics, I would like to focus my attention on the Christian faith, but drawing inference from the Islamic religion; this is without prejudice to practitioners of traditional religion. I would like to review political participation from the perspectives of Christian and Islamic religious faiths in Nigeria.

Politics in Islam

Nigeria is a multi-religious society. Almost everyone is connected to one religious group or the other. What it means is that Nigeria's politics draws participants from different religious influences. Indeed, Nigeria is a religious society. Most religious people in Nigeria have a mind-set concerning politics and democracy. Some groups do not make a distinction between politics and their faith, while some other religious faiths believe in the separation of their faith from politics. This is our reality. Within this multi-religious milieu, two major religious groups hold sway: Christianity and Islam. Adherents of both faiths have their different misgivings about their participation in politics.

Among the Muslim communities, religious and traditional authorities are inter-twinned. Usually, the Emirs are both spiritual and traditional leaders; and they also exercise strong political influence in their domains. The emirate system is both a religious system and a political governance structure, in one. According to Sklar and Whitaker (1966), cited in Dauda (2014), emirate rule is theocratic in the sense that an Emir is thought to personify the Islamic fusion of political and religious authority. Furthermore, the introduction of Sharia in most Northern states of Nigeria at the return of democracy in 1999, was seen by many as a way to institutionalise the fusion of political and religious authority in those states, even when that contravenes the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, which does not allow for state religion. At best, Sharia seeks to integrate all aspects of human development, be it religious, social, economic or political into the fabric of the daily life of a Muslim. In fact, Sharia is about wholeness in the lifestyle of a Muslim. In almost all cases, there is no distinction between the state and religion in Islam. This is commendable within the practice of Islamic faith.

This clarification is important to make because it provides a basis for understanding the nuances of our national political attitudes and behaviour. Recall that Sharia legal system is recognised in the nation's Constitution. This was prominently captured in the 1999

Constitution. The Islamic legal jurisprudence is well developed. That is why you have Sharia Courts in parts of Nigeria, while in other parts you have Customary Court, both of which are funded from the public treasury. But have you stopped to ask why is it that the Constitution does not have a place for Christian Courts, which could handle matters that border on Christian religious faith. By substituting Sharia Courts for Customary Courts, the assumption is that, any Christian that has a case bordering on customs and traditions in any state where Sharia Law is in force, will be required to appear before a Sharia Court. This situation is a product of a political decision taken years back, and is still in force. It further illustrates the fusion of religious and political authority which I talked about earlier; and now extends to legal authority and representation. The implication of this fusion plays out in the domain of our national politics. Democracy and political participation are also viewed from the perspective of this fusion. Because of this, an average Muslim does not require special persuasion to participate in politics. Apart from the religio-customary practices that weigh against women's full participation in politics, the majority of Muslims, men or women, participate in politics as part of religious duty, drawing from that fusion of religion and politics.

A faithful Muslim sees politics as an extension of his faith. In fact, a good Muslim is in politics for the simple reason that politics empowers him to be in charge of the affairs of state; politics gives him the power to influence and decide who gets what and how things are done in the public space. He is not in politics particularly to get rich so he can show off his wealth, rather he is in politics, primarily, to have access to public resources which could be deployed to promote his religious beliefs, when the need arises. This is great and remarkable. I commend it because one should be able to use their resources to support whatever they believe in. In other words, for an average Muslim, politics is a way of life. It is a 'culturized' practice. Participating in politics is essentially an extension of faith practice. That could explain why Muslim parents teach their Children to think politics and to play politics from an early age.

Essentially, Islam is a political movement wrapped around religious practices. That is why a Muslim would always want to have the lead any political environment. Muslim faithful are more political enlightened and more strategically organized to participate in the political processes and to take political leadership at whatever level. They do this because they are trained to function that way. This is not the case with adherents of the Christian faith.

Chapter Two

Politics and the Gospel of the Kingdom

Within the different groups in the Christian Faith, there is a long-held misconception of whether a Christian should participate in politics or not. Many Christian scholars, clerics and laypeople have debated on this question for years. And in our time, the debate rages on. I want to discuss this matter in some detail.

For sure, the relationship between Christianity and politics is a historically complex subject and has been a frequent source of disagreement throughout the history of Christianity. Even in modern politics, the relationship remains frosty. There have been a wide variety of ways in which thinkers have conceived the relationship between Christianity and politics. Many argue that Christianity directly supports a particular political ideology or philosophy. Others believe that Christians should have little interest in politics or government. I want to explore this controversy from different perspectives and provide some insight into ways to navigate round it. I believe and affirm that every Christian should participate in the democratic process, but not every Christian is cut out for partisan politics. There is a difference.

Many of us already have our opinion on what politics is and what it is not. I want to invite you to follow me on this journey of discovery and affirmation. I want us to interrogate the different perspectives on the issue of politics to see if we can have a common point of understanding for action. Recall that at some point in history, God felt so bad about His people that He lamented saying *My people perish for lack of knowledge* (Hosea 4:6). Why was He disturbed? Because the people did not know what they ought to know, and therefore, were not living up to their potential. There is paucity of knowledge among everyday Christians regarding politics and the Kingdom dimension to political participation. This knowledge gap is perpetuated through what I call ‘narrow perspective’ scriptural teaching in our churches. The average Christian person is single minded. He is scared to interrogate issues, because from the church he has been taught not to ask questions, lest he is accused of challenging authority. This in itself is a contradiction as the Scriptures exhort us to diligently search and inquire. Out there in the society, the Christian approaches almost everything from an intellectual point of view. He advocates on public issues from the point of distinction between religion and politics. You will easily hear some of them say, “Don’t bring politics into this.” Their Christian philosophy does not make any allowance to accommodate a political worldview. Their economic engagements and religious morality are distinct; there are no connections or points of convergence. The Christian lives a dual life.

Dualism is common place among the Christian people of our day. It is indirectly taught in our churches and practiced in the streets and marketplace. That is the reason his life outside of church is devoid of real power and testimony. There is incongruence.

This is the bane of our lives. It has cost us so much in the political space. There is a lifestyle in the church and there is another lifestyle in the marketplace including political space. Most Christians lack a Christian worldview. They interpret, analyse, and respond to issues of the day, purely from an intellectual, secular mindset. They do not interrogate issues from the perspective of ‘What does the Word say about this?’ How does this policy affect God’s purpose for the nation and for the people? We pick and choose what corroborates with our intellectual exposure, not our biblical or spiritual awareness. God is multi-dimensional. His eternal purpose is to reconcile the whole of creation to Himself through Jesus Christ. Therefore, Christians must begin to approach their lives from this multi-dimensional, inter-connected perspective.

Let’s back up to Genesis, the very beginning, to draw some truths in order to establish and validate this point. At the fall of man in the Garden of Eden due to disobedience, man lost salvation – he became naked. He lost his economic power to the devil. He became needy and began to try to provide for himself – he sowed leaves to cover his nakedness. At that moment too, God lost the kingdoms of the earth that was rightly His, which He had given to Man. From then, Satan took over the kingdoms of this world. Man was no longer in control of the kingdoms which God had originally given to him to oversee. Man lost salvation. God lost the kingdoms. When Jesus came, His mission was not only to save man but also to restore to man what he had lost so that man could restore to God what God lost through the Fall.

There are three dimensions to Jesus’ restoration mission.

1. The Cross
2. The Church
3. The Kingdom

Salvation is the door that ushers us into the multi-dimensional operations of God. Jesus accomplished the work of salvation on the cross and it was validated by His resurrection from the dead. The purpose of the cross is to procure the redemption of everything that Adam lost. This salvation is a work of grace and appropriated through faith in the finished work on the cross. The gospel of grace is preached to restore to man what he lost. It is about what God has done for us. Those who receive the Gospel of grace become members of the Church - the ‘called out people’ who have been redeemed by the blood of His cross. The Church then has the responsibility to execute

the mandate of the cross, which is to tell people what God has done for them in Christ Jesus: to accept it, and hence receive salvation. The kingdom mission reveals the applicability of the outcome of the cross on earth. The kingdom dimension brings God to the people. It focuses on harnessing the political, economic and social dimensions on the earth. It is a combination of these three: The Cross, the Church and the Kingdom that ensures a full restoration of what man lost and what God lost.

The Gospel of the Kingdom is to bring to an end the present age of injustice, poverty, oppression and violence in order to usher in a new reign of justice, peace, and equity. The Gospel of the Kingdom is about what we must do to apply the will of God on the every sphere of human society. The Gospel of the Kingdom is the other side of the coin. It focuses on what we are to do with our lives for God. The Gospel of the kingdom is about animating the word of God and making it relevant in the marketplace through the lifestyle of believers. It is about superimposing kingdom values and principles in the social system. It focuses on enlisting every Christian to become a minister for kingdom advancement. It is about empowering every Christian to ensure that the will of God is done everywhere and anywhere. The Gospel of the kingdom is about transforming the social systems to conform to divine order through the word and the practice of Kingdom principles in the market place. The Gospel of the kingdom puts a demand on the Christian to translate Kingdom values to the social systems of this world and ensure they conform to divine laws. It is the Gospel that demands character, sacrifice, and suffering from the Christian as he attempts to enforce the will of God in every sphere of human endeavour. As he tries to do this, he is confronted by the forces of darkness that have long occupied those spheres.

Since God restored man through Jesus Christ; man, through the Church, is to restore to God what God lost: the kingdoms. It is the responsibility of the Church to preach both the Gospel of Grace and the Gospel of the Kingdom (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; 24:14). This is where the church has failed God. We have concentrated on the Gospel of grace which brings us into salvation in Christ, but have preached and taught sparingly the Gospel of the Kingdom: the gospel that strongly emphasises our responsibility to take-over the kingdoms of this world and consecrate them to our God. We just want to get saved, stay saved, enjoy God's blessings, and wait to go to heaven. We are too complacent and laid-back to put our lives on the line to snatch away from the hands of Satan and his children, the kingdoms of this world, which rightly belong to our God. Government and politics are part of the kingdoms that the enemy stole from us. And we must step out to take them back for our God. The gospel of grace is the introduction; the gospel of the kingdom is the next level. The whole creation waits for our manifestation as the sons of God: to dominate every realm or sphere of life, including politics and government.

Pastor Sunday Adelaja, in his bestselling book, *Church Shift*, reacted to this narrow perspective teaching, when he said,

Jesus brought a total gospel, the salvation of man and his surroundings. Our Churches must also have a kingdom message to change the whole society, including crime, poverty, stewardship of the earth, business, the arts, the GOVERNMENTS (*emphasis mine*), and many other spheres.

He regrets that some churches preach the gospel of salvation without teaching about transforming society. “The Kingdom and its gospel is a totality. The gospel of salvation, in isolation, will not change the earth,” he affirms. The transformation of society cannot be achieved by jostling ourselves within our denominational churches.

It is painful to observe that many Christians have hitherto castigated politics due to ignorance perpetuated by wrong teachings and wrong beliefs. For instance, there are nice and sincere Christians who are grossly naïve and passive when it comes to politics. They mean well. But they are sincerely wrong. Incidentally, in real life, sincerity is not enough; because you can be sincerely wrong. For us to infuse righteous values and ethics into the public domain and fulfill God’s purpose for our nation and communities, we must be grounded in the truth; be conversant with the present truth; and be skillful in the application of the truth to everyday life.

Our present examples

There are a number of respected Christian leaders, some from the Pentecostal bloc, who have made the move from the pulpit to the political turf. I would like to mention the Rev. Christopher Okotie, pastor of the Household of God Church in Lagos. He is one Pentecostal cleric who through doggedness has provided strong inspiration and impetus for Christians’ participation in Nigeria’s political space. When he came out in 2003 to contest the Presidential election, many conservative Christians criticised his involvement in politics. Many took strong exceptions to him. Being a man given to positive controversy, he was not deterred. Despite losing the elections, he went ahead to form his own political party, Fresh Democratic Party, on which ticket he re-contested in 2007 and 2011 Presidential elections, in which he came fourth. It is without equivocation that his single-mindedness has inspired other prominent Christians to come forward to participate in Nigeria’s current democratic dispensation. Unfortunately, Fresh Democratic Party could not survive itself and make real impact on the national political space due to paucity of internal democracy.

Dr. Tunde Bakare, senior pastor, Later Rain Assembly, Lagos, is another cleric who has made a foray into Nigeria's politics in recent times. His emergence was greeted with skepticism given his fiery spiritual posture which many believe is not in sync with conventional politics. Nevertheless, Pastor Bakare contested as the Vice-presidential candidate with Gen. Muhammadu Buhari of Congress for Progressive Change (CPC) in the 2011 presidential elections in Nigeria. They lost the elections, but he (Bakare) did not lose the experience of participating in the political process. He remains a voice in the nation's public space.

In the 2015 general elections, a legal luminary, ordained cleric and academician, Prof. Yemi Osinbajo emerged as the Vice-Presidential candidate of the All Progressives Congress (APC). He was thrown up by divine circumstances to be the running mate of Gen. Muhammadu Buhari in the elections. They won, and the rest is history. As I write this book, he is carving a political niche for himself and clearing a new pathway for other aspiring Christians who desire to enter the public space.

We must not forget that former Vice-President, Dr. Alex Ekweme, Presidents Olusegun Obasanjo and Dr. Goodluck Jonathan are other prominent Christians have played pivotal roles in the nation's democratic politics. All these people are part of our story and collective experience. There are others in the national assembly, too numerous to mention. At the state and local levels, there are Christians that have stood out in politics. But we still need more Christians to come forward and be counted in Nigeria's emerging democracy for obvious reasons. I cannot guarantee that these leaders entered politics as Christians, that is, whether they saw themselves Kingdom ambassadors. I have not inferred any value judgment on the performance of these Christian political leaders. The important thing to me at the moment is to highlight the need for Christians participation in politics, truly as Christian people. Participation enables us to learn the ropes, make the mistakes, discover the purpose of our participation in the political process, and, of course, re-define the nature of our participation.

Facts and perception

Recently, two young Christian ladies walked into my office to see one of my partners. They just graduated from their Church's Bible School. As we got talking, I poked them by saying, "Now that you have graduated from Bible School, you should be ready to participate in politics." In a knee-jerk reaction, they responded: "We are not supposed to be involved in politics. It is a dirty game." The unanimous unrehearsed response from them caught my attention. I got the feeling that their perception about politics negates their theology. I tried to explain and get them to see the other side, but they

wouldn't listen and even felt I was about to 'drain their anointing'. I felt sorry for them, and left them alone. But that incident got me thinking.

One reason put forward by some people why Christians' should not participate in politics is on account of Paul's charge to Timothy: *No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him who enlisted him as a soldier* (2 Timothy 2:4). The argument is that every Christian is a soldier, and therefore engaged in warfare. Any involvement in politics is an entanglement which is capable of distracting you from your primary call. While this argument sounds good and solid it does not provide a holistic view on the subject. What if we stretch the point a bit further to say that Christians should not be employed to work for the Government because Government plays politics? Common sense tells us that that particular interpretation would amount to stretching the Scriptures too far. The point is, if a Christian can seek employment in government, then a Christian can also seek political office through active participation in party politics.

Some others affirm that politics is dirty. They say politics is synonymous with lies, half truths, compromises and deceptions. While this could be true, it is only a half truth. It does not fully represent what politics is meant to be. The question to ask is this: "What is the authority or source of these myths upon which the majority of Christian folk have built a belief system about politics?" You must understand that everyone who joins politics comes on board with their values, beliefs and philosophical leanings. Just as government workers are a mix of people of diverse beliefs and philosophies, the same applies to public politics. It is unrealistic to single out politics and label it 'dirty', and therefore designate it a 'no-go area' for Christians. If a Christian can work in Government Ministries and agencies in different capacities, why should a Christian also not be actively involved in politics at all levels?

There is also the argument that during the earthly ministry of Jesus and that of the apostles, they did not get involved in the politics of the day or the political affairs of their time. While that is true, you must understand the nature of Jesus' ministry. His ministry was short, focused and was intended to introduce a new kind of life to be lived by His followers. But before he left, he commanded and said: *Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature* (Mark 16:15). This is a clear mandate to Christians to go beyond borders; to go everywhere and talk about the good news and live out the new life. It means you are to go to wherever people are to tell them, show them and demonstrate to them the reality of the gospel.

You are commissioned to do this through diverse platforms. Politics is one of the platforms to fulfill this mandate. Furthermore, it is important to understand the nature of

governance in Jesus' day. It was autocratic and non-participatory. Citizens did not have much say, the king had all the powers, to do and undo. Democracy was not born then. In our day, the situation has changed. We must also change. Democracy is here, and it requires the participation of all citizens, at one level or the other. That is why, Christians, as responsible citizens, must participate in the democratic processes and public politics.

Participation enables us to learn the ropes, make the mistakes, discover the purpose of our participation in the political process, and of course re-define the nature of our participation. I am always appalled when Christian people criticise, lampoon, and lambast other Christian leaders in public office. The criticisms are often hard and pungent. You can easily hear Christians castigate their brethren who serve in public space simply because they did not live up to expectations. That's how extreme we can get when it comes to performance assessment of our Christian leaders who are in politics or serve in public offices. I make no excuse for them; rather I admit that many of them have performed below expectations. But by no means does that take away the fact that they are part of us, and require our support especially in the place of prayer.

We owe ourselves the responsibility to go beyond the Gospel of grace and expand our teaching and preaching to the Gospel of the Kingdom. We must rise to take on kingly responsibility in politics and public space.

Chapter Three

Understanding the Political Times

God is not a partisan politician, but He is interested in politics, and by extension, could be regarded as a politician; albeit not in the sense we understand politics. But He observes with keen interest how we play politics. Given the failure of politics and political leadership, many Christians seem to have a vague idea about whether God is interested in the affairs of nations and society even though it is written in the Bible, “He rules in the kingdom of men . . . and that, He is the Governor among the nations”. Further still, many cannot reconcile God's concern for the salvation of mankind and human politics. The first appears spiritual and heavenly, while the second seems carnal and earthly. The truth is that nations were created by God to fulfill certain divine purposes in the course of history. That is to say, every nation exists to fulfill a specific divine agenda. Although God is not directly involved in the affairs of nations by way of daily running the affairs, He, however, pays keen attention to know who leads the affairs of men and how they lead. God is always excited to see any particular leader or nation that aligns itself to the divine purpose. Such leaders or nations are a “toast of the Lord.” This is why the Scripture says *Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord. . .*” Psalm 33: 12.

God deals with nations. And every nation is unique, and is expected to carry out a specific mandate in the course of its existence. Of course, nations are made of people, sometimes a mixture of people. Nigeria is a clear example of a nation with a mixture of people. In Genesis 15:13-16, God's prophetic agenda for the nation of Israel was revealed to Abraham. It has to do with temporary slavery and bondage in a strange land, but with a promise of eventual restoration. In another generation, God revealed His plan for the restoration of the nation of Israel to the prophet Jeremiah. He said:

For thus saith the Lord, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. For I know the thoughts I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not evil, to give you an expected end (Jeremiah 29:10-11).

In the same vein, and in our generation, God has revealed His prophetic agenda for our nation, Nigeria, both to the Church, and to several gospel ministers, missionaries and intercessors around the world.

Nigeria in Prophetic Context

I first came in contact with God's prophetic declaration on Nigeria in September 1988. I was attending the “Go Festival,” a Youth Mission Conference organised by the Nigerian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (NIFES). The event, originally scheduled

for July 25 - August 1, 1988 at the Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU), Ile-Ife, had to be shifted to September 10 -16, 1988 at the Redemption Camp, Lagos because OAU was shut at the time. With the theme, “So Send I You” the conference aimed to mobilise the Church in Nigeria for missions. More than 5000 participants from tertiary institutions in Nigeria as well as gospel ministers from across the country and beyond, attended. The conference was led by the then African Vice President of World Missions, Rev. (Dr.) S. Odunaike, a Kenya-based Nigerian Missions Administrator Tokumbo Adeyemo and Rev. Paul Jinadu, a UK-based Nigerian Bible teacher. The power of God was in full manifestation and the Lord spoke clearly to us through prophesy that a new wave of revival was about to begin in Nigeria, and that Nigeria was going to be in the forefront of sending numerous missionaries to other parts of Africa. The Lord illustrated to us that Nigeria's position on the map of Africa was at the trigger point, indicating that Nigeria was to take the lead in spreading the gospel to the rest of Africa.

A magazine, The Messenger, in its April 2016 edition chronicled some of the prophetic declarations about Nigeria. For instance, in 1983 at the first National Convention of the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI) held at the Presidential Hotel, Port Harcourt, God spoke through a visiting delegate from New Mexico, USA: “Thus saith the Lord- Nigeria and Nigerians will be used by the Lord to preach the gospel in the marketplaces of the world in the last days.” Also, Cindy Jacobs, an American intercessor and prophetess, gave a word about Nigeria at a Global Prayer Conference in Guatemala in 2002, saying: “I have given you a missionary spirit and I'm surely going to change the nations of the earth through you. But I will give you the anointing to change your nation.” Furthermore, the renowned evangelist, Reinhard Bonnke during one of his crusades in Nigeria is reported to have said “Watch out for the country called Nigeria. She will teach America true Christianity.”

In 2002, the Social Security Organization (SSO) arm of Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (PFN), Ikeja Branch published a collection of prophecies received in 1984 on Nigeria. These include:

- That God has raised and is still raising men and women who will go forth in the power of His might to declare His whole counsel to the nations of the world.
- That for this task, Nigeria will not need help from abroad because God , who put oil in this country has also deposited other vast mineral wealth of untold value in the bowels of this land, which will remain undiscovered until the time is right.
- That for this purpose, God has prepared men and women who will govern this country, and channel this vast mineral wealth as He desires.
- That God desires the Christians in Nigeria to rise up with one accord, pray, seek His face, and be led by His Spirit to vote into power, the men and women whom God has prepared to govern this country.

In May 2013, I was sitting in class as a student of the Kenneth E. Hagin's Rhema Bible Training (RBTC), in Abuja, when Rev. Matt Beemer, RBTC Director, stated that recent research estimates that 'by the year 2020, Nigeria will be the centre of the global Church.' He gave a historical insight to reinforce his assertion. He averred that the first global move of the church age started from Europe. Thereafter, America took the lead in spreading the Gospel around the world, and in these last days, Nigeria will take this gospel to the rest of the world, before Jesus comes back.

These are clear statements that show Nigeria's strategic position to champion the end time gospel programme. There are evidences to support the view that Nigeria is currently one of the largest Missionary - sending nations in the world today. It is on record that some of the largest denominational churches in cities around the world are pastored by Nigerians. The largest single in-door Church auditorium in the world today is located in Canaanland, Otta, Ogun State, Nigeria, run by the Living Faith Church Worldwide, under the leadership of Bishop David Oyedepo. Also, the single largest gathering of Christians at one place anywhere in the world today is in Nigeria through the annual Holy Ghost Convocation of the Redeemed Christian Church of God under the spiritual leadership of Pastor Enoch Adejare Adeboye. We also have other Indigenous Global Churches (IGC) including Mountain of Fire and Miracles Ministries Worldwide, Christ Embassy Churches, Deeper Life Bible Church worldwide, The Lord's Chosen Charismatic Renewal Ministries, Cherubim and Seraphim Worldwide, etc. The emergence and global spread of these churches are not mere happenstance. They are part of God's agenda to raise for Himself more people from Nigeria for His end time programme.

In recent years, the Church in Nigeria, comprising the Catholics, the Orthodox, and Pentecostals, has become very wealthy and influential. The Church today has huge followership from which members could be encouraged to come forward to participate in partisan politics and also become political actors. Particularly, the Church as an institution should harness its wealth, the number it commands, and the influence it wields to bear on the public space. Church leadership should create pockets of 'Think Tanks' to advise them on political participation, not on the basis of partisanship, but from the perspective of Kingdom responsibility.

The Church needs to be strategic without taking sides. The grand purpose should be to help shape public morality and contribute to socio-economic development, and particularly contribute to political stability. Political stability is so critical for the gospel to be preached and the word of God to be taken to everyone that needs to hear it. It is through indirect influence on the political direction of the society that the Church could guarantee it continues to carry out its core mandate of evangelisation, in an atmosphere of peace. This is God's will, and God expects His will to be implemented by those who understand it.

It is important we recognise what God is doing and how He is operating in our time so that we can follow His leading to get things done for Him. It is also important to realise that nothing happens in the affairs of men that takes God by surprise. Nigeria is at the centre of God's prophetic agenda for two important reasons among others: for the end time global evangelisation, and for the liberation of Africa from poverty and under-development. God's purpose is ever constant, but His operational strategies change with time.

Chapter Four

Is it Democracy or Theocracy?

I have heard some Christians say that democracy is not God's will. Yes, they are right to an extent. Democracy is God's permissive will for human governance in our time. God's perfect will is theocracy – direct governance of society through divine rule and order. This theocracy will be led directly by Jesus Christ Himself, not like the one that is surreptitiously being imposed on people around the world today by some groups. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines theocracy as “government of a country by religious leaders.”

The first nation on earth that practiced theocracy is Israel. God was their invisible King who chose certain men to lead His people. The nation of Israel at the time did not have political parties, campaigns or elections to select popular candidates to lead her. According to Bible scholars, theocratic rule lasted in Israel for 1,400 years, and ended with Samuel the prophet. This was after the children of Israel went to Samuel to demand a king to rule over them like other nations, thus rejecting the rule of God. Samuel was displeased with this request, but God instructed Samuel to protest their choice and make it plain to them that this would increase their burden and suffering. God warned them of the consequences of seeking a king of their own. But they were adamant. This story is told in 1 Samuel 8:1-20.

With the end of theocracy in Israel, the Hebrew Monarchy began with the choice of Saul, the first king of Israel. Monarchy is not the same as Theocracy. King David was a Monarch, like all the other kings of Israel. Theocracy is a simple form of government requiring only faith and dependency on Jehovah. Theocracy will begin again at the second advent of Jesus Christ to be continued forever. There is abundance of scriptures to validate the fact that Jesus will return to the earth to physically take possession of the kingdoms of this world and He shall reign forever. There are scriptures often referred to as Messianic Scriptures; they include Isaiah 9:6-7; Daniel 7: 13, 14, 18 & 27; Zechariah 14: 1-21; Luke 1:32 - 33; 1Corinthians 15: 24-28; Ephesians 1:10; and Revelation 11:15. They all speak about reign and rulership of Jesus Christ on earth as King, with us as kings. But before Jesus returns, we shall have to depend on any generally acceptable form of government to organise society; in this case democracy, which is now the generally accepted option.

I have to make this clarification because there are some well-meaning people who desire and actually want the establishment of a form of theocratic government. This is a good intention, but it is not about good intention; it is about understanding the

dispensations of God in His dealings with man on earth. Theocracy is not possible in our world today as constituted. God does not rule the nations by good intentions; but according to His prophetic and dispensational order. Ignorance, couched in good intentions, is what leads people to error.

The reality is that theocracy is God's perfect will on how the world should be governed. But right now, Satan is the god of this world. In this age of grace, God has allowed humans to choose how to organise themselves. The people choose their leaders and God only endorses their choice and works with that leadership for the time being.

Theocracy is only possible in a mono-religious society. Theocracy does not require the conduct of elections. Leaders in a theocracy are not selected by popular votes. The world we live in today is multi-religious, which means that different people adhere to different religious persuasions and practices. Everyone's religious persuasion is good in their eyes, but society has to accommodate different religious views in order to maintain some level of social stability. In a country like Nigeria, with a multi-religious configuration, theocracy is not realistic. It does not make good sense for one particular religious group to try to impose its religio-political system upon the entire citizens. This will only create confusion, disharmony and possibly lead to violence. Political democracy is the permissive will of God for now pending the return of Jesus Christ who will oversee God's theocratic government on earth. This truth is a hard pill for some religious faiths to swallow. They can't stand it and they can't take it, and that is why every effort is made to thwart God's programme on this matter. But such efforts shall come to naught, not by physical power or human intervention, but by divine operations at the right time. However, before Jesus shows up to take up physical political leadership on earth, His follower, the Christians, must be actively involved in the present democratic system and use it as a platform to pursue the Great Commission.

A political platform is critical to the fulfilment of God's prophetic agenda for Nigeria. That is why politics must be approached as a Kingdom enterprise – with every sense of responsibility. This requires the active engagement of God-fearing individuals to come to the centre stage of Nigeria's political action. God wants them to get involved and help bring about positive change in the life of Nigerians through effective governance. The full participation of Christians in politics is not a matter of self-conviction; it is simply obedience to the will of God. Why is it so? Because it is written: *When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice* (Proverbs 29:2). Why will the people rejoice? Because they have someone who will protect the interest of the weak in society; promote justice and equity; empower citizens to be prosperous; and ensure transparency and accountability in governance. If you are righteous, then understand

that you have a place in politics. God is looking for covenant-minded righteous people to come forward and participate in the politics of the day. Political leadership is a divine mandate (1Pet. 2:13-14), that is why God commands Christians to pray for political leaders. In the same vein and because God is interested, He has had to plant or remove political leaders in the course of history (Daniel 4:25; Dan. 5:18-21).

While God is concerned about the political process and the operations of political leaders, there is no guarantee that political leaders will do what God wants them to do. You must understand that every political leader is at liberty to obey or disobey God in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities. However, they will be held accountable for how they used public office. By extension, the fact that you are a Christian in elective or appointive political position is not a guarantee that you will live up to divine expectation. We have seen cases of Christians whose Faith got shipwrecked once they got into politics. We also have cases of Christians who have served faithfully in the political arena. Christians in politics and public offices should not see themselves as private citizens, but as ambassadors of the Faith. The inability of Christians in politics to properly represent the Faith is responsible for the decay in our political system. Most of them, unable to bear the pressure, soon resign themselves to the saying, "If you can't beat them, join them." It is a shame that Christian politicians, instead of working to reduce the level of political corruption in our system, are actually enmeshed in it.

What happens when you stay away from politics?

You need to understand that the major cause of poverty in Nigeria is not the absence of wealth but an unequal distribution of wealth. This is as a result of the excessive greed and selfishness of leaders at various levels of government. Greed makes public office holders to illegally acquire personal wealth far beyond their legitimate need, at the expense of the system and citizens. Selfishness of political leaders undermines public service, destroys institutional integrity, discourages investors and breeds unemployment. When political leaders and public servants engage in a lifestyle of greed and selfishness, the nation's overall development is short circuited. We are living witnesses of this reality in our nation. This scenario is enough reason for public-hearted, God-fearing people like you to come out into the public space to participate and influence the system for good.

The message of John the Baptist to the people of his day lays credence to this point. When he encountered the Publicans, he did not tell them to resign from their jobs; he told them to change their conduct. He did not tell the soldiers to retire from their profession; he told them to change their conduct. These were public officers. In the

same vein, there is nothing wrong with politics; the problem is that people without godly values have long dominated the field. And these people have enjoyed, and are enjoying, the perks and benefits of operating at the centre-stage for a long time. They have entrenched themselves. They are positioning their children to take over, thereby perpetuating the culture of profligacy and impunity. Someone has to step in and stop the trend. It should be you!

If politics in Nigeria is dirty, isn't it so because God-fearing people have abstained from participating in it? Politics has been left to persons of questionable character to occupy and control. Meanwhile, there is a charge to us to "Occupy Till I Come" (Luke 19:13). We are to take charge in all spheres of human endeavour including the political arena and to provide leadership, until He comes to take full charge of all things, including the government of the nations (Isa. 9: 6 & 7). If those who claim to know better, like you, don't come out and take their rightful places, professional politicians, the ones you call 'bad people', will continue to govern and to rule.

It is high time you stopped wishing that 'someone' will get into political office to deliver to you the 'Eldorado'. It is time for you to change what you doing if you truly want something to change . It is time to become interested in politics. You have had enough regrets and complained too much over the kind of political leaders that have run our system in the past; you cannot continue to live in perpetual lamentation. Rise and get involved.

Chapter Five

Politics and the Contest over Resources

There are many reasons why Christians should get involved in politics. Dr. Oluwayomi Atte, former Commissioner for Education in Kwara State believes Christians should participate in politics. He says “God desires full participation by Christians in the politics and administration of Nigeria for two reasons . . . this world belongs to Him and . . . He has adequately equipped Christians for the job of administering it, even though we have pretended otherwise.” He regrets that many Christians are so heavenly-minded that they have forgotten God’s purpose for the earth. He contends that the struggle between God and Satan is for real estate, it is for the kingdom of this earth. “The control of the earth is so important to God that He has made plans to rule it not just spiritually, but physically and practically,” Atte posits.

The contest for the earth is to recover the dominion Satan took from Adam in Eden. God gave man *dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth* (Gen1:28). Man is to subdue the earth. How is he supposed to have dominion and subdue the earth without political power? In other words, God gave man political power to administer the earth on His behalf even before the Fall. Man however lost this political power to Satan following man’s disobedience. Immediately Satan took over the reigns of the earth, he corrupted the system and everything there is on earth. That is why most political powers around the world today are influenced by satanic forces. The apostle John affirmed this when he wrote, *The whole world lieth in wickedness* (1John 5:19)

Therefore, the contest for political power is kingdom business. It is something that God is particularly interested in. Part of Jesus’ mandate when He came was to restore political power to man through those who accept Him as Lord and Saviour. Lordship is about rulership and taking charge. It was prophesied of Him that *The government shall be upon His shoulder...of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end* (Isaiah 9:6). Futuristically, it is written of Him, *The kingdoms of this world shall become that of our Lord and Christ, and he shall reign* (Rev.11:15). These scriptures point to one thing: Political power is a matter of Kingdom concern. If God is particular about political power, should we be so holy and righteous not to take it seriously?

You must understand that God placed in every nation all the resources required for the citizens to live on, succeed and maintain quality life. God did this so that the people can apply themselves to fulfilling God’s purpose for that nation. In Nigeria for instance, God has blessed us with more than a fair share of human and material resources. But it is one thing to be endowed with resources; it is yet another thing to harness those

resources for the common good. In God's scheme of things, government is the trustee of a nation's resources. The resource-base of a nation is a national commonwealth. Governments are established to ensure effective, efficient and equitable management of a nation's resource-base for the common good of the citizens. But if those who run institutions of government lack vision, are self-serving and have little or no fear of God, they will not administer the resources effectively. In fact they will waste them. This is where politics comes in.

The general description of politics is that it is about the contest for power and the control of resources. This contest is everywhere: in the home, in the corporate world, in religious institutions, and in the society. While others engage in this contest for their selfish reasons, others are in it for public good. Also, the strategies and values underlying the contest for power and control of public resources differ.

There is a contest over resources, and everyone should be involved at some level. There is a strong contest of 'values' in the public space. There is a growing level of liberal secular mindset trying to destroy everything our Faith represents. It draws energy from the devil and seeks expression in the political domain. Politics is everywhere. There is nothing wrong with politics. Life is a political experience. Politics is about the way we relate with each and how we share and distribute the resources around us. You are constantly making political decisions about yourself. You make decisions to take control of your life and to effectively harness your personal resources and to deploy them to better use. To deny the existence of politics amounts to denying the very thing that determines what happens to you. Politics affects you, it affects your family, it affects your business, it affects your liberty to worship, and it affects your capacity to prosper. If you neglect to be politically aware, you will limit your capacity to fulfill God's purpose for you and for your nation.

In every nation, whoever has political power also has economic and social power; and in most cases, the person also has power over religious activities. This explains why you should be politically aware and to actively engage in political issues. The children of this world understand this principle very clearly, and that is why they work hard to secure and keep political power. As Jesus lamented, *the children of this world have become wiser than the children of the Kingdom*. Why should you resign to fate when you have what it takes to participate and help create change in the system? You must wake up from your slumber and naivety. Don't just be a consumer of political ideas, be a generator of those ideas. Don't get angry and opt out of politics because you perceive it is ugly and dirty. Would you stop going to market for your household shopping just because pick pockets prowl the market? You wouldn't do that! Why then would you

jettison politics because those who play the game haven't played by the rules? You must get involved. If you don't, when you should, you have failed.

Make no mistake about this. Getting into public politics is for public service, not for personal enrichment or an opportunity to fleece the citizens of public resources. The fact that you are a Christian and are involved in public politics is no guarantee that you will obey God as a politician. You can equally get lost in the system and become a political failure, like the rest of ordinary politicians. It depends on your knowledge of the workings of politics; your commitment to the doing things God's way; and your spiritual maturity. The involvement of Christians in public politics does not mean an immediate transformation of the entire political process. In fact, **the central purpose of a Christian's participation in politics is not necessarily to make the system a 'holy ground,' but to influence changes in strategic places within the system.** You can only do what you can do, and take responsibility for that. You cannot do for others what they ought to do by themselves. Everyone will take responsibility for their actions and inactions.

However, if as a Christian, you do not consciously get involved in politics, you would have short-changed yourself in the scheme of things. Politics is for you, it affects you in so many ways that you cannot afford to be unconcerned about how politics is played, either in your immediate community or in the nation. A Christian participating in politics must do so with the understanding that he/she is taking sides with God in order to harness public resources for public good.

Understand that by our Constitution, Nigeria is a multi-religious state, not a secular state, as secularity refers to godlessness. This means there are people of other faiths who are Nigerians. They are also entitled to participate in the political process. These people also have ideas that could help move the country forward. You must respect their views without necessarily giving up on your faith. As you enter the public domain to serve and to contribute, you must learn to work with these other people for the general good of Nigerians.

Your participation in politics is not to serve only the interest of your religious group, but to serve the interest of all Nigerians under God. This is important because God loves everyone equally and unconditionally, including those of other faiths. Remember that the peace and stability of Nigeria is more important than the 'success' or 'failure' of any political party or individual politician. As you participate, also be on the alert. Don't get carried away by the whims and manipulative tendencies of vain politicians.

You must be different and participate with knowledge! Politics is for everyone. It is for you. You must own it.

Chapter Six

The Christian and Partisan Politics

Participation in politics is quite different from being a partisan politician. It is critical to make this distinction. It is one thing to belong to a political party and quite another thing to be a political activist or to be politically informed. Basically, people join political parties for four main reasons. The first reason is to have a platform to aspire for political office in order to serve the public. The second reason is to enjoy pecuniary benefits accruing from being a loyal party member by way of contracts, opportunities and political contacts of influence. The third reason is to contribute to the development of party politics in a democracy.

The fourth, and the most important one for a Christian, is to use politics as a platform to promote Kingdom purpose on the earth. A Christian that does not think in terms Kingdom purpose is being disobedient to the heavenly vision. We are a Kingdom people. We are here to advance and promote God's Kingdom values in every sphere of human life. Politics is not exempt. We are to evaluate everything we do from Kingdom perspective: how does it add to or subtract from the Kingdom? We are a different people.

We should participate in politics with Kingdom-mindset. That's the only way we will not talk the way 'they' do; not act the way 'they' do; and not sneak and maneuver the way 'they' do. We participate in and work in the trenches of politics and political parties to 'show them how things ought to be done. A Christian politician should not explain things away in the name of politics. The instruction is; "Let your yes be yes, and no be no". This is a statute of general application for every Christian to live by in every area of social intercourse, including politics.

When a person takes on membership of a political party, he/she subscribes to the philosophy, manifestoes and programmes of that party. By this membership, the person sees everything, including political, economic, social and even religious matters from the perspective of his or her political party's position. The person interprets almost every public issue from the coloured lens of his political party.

Being a member of a political party makes one a partisan politician. Partisan politicians operate in different capacities including political office holders, party leaders in different hierarchies, party staff members, party patrons, party elders and party members in general. Being a party member reduces the capacity of an individual to be

objective on public matters. It is important to understand this to enable you know how to judge and evaluate the utterances, views and postures of politicians.

It is 'normal' for partisan politicians to interpret everything from the perspective of their party and for their party's interest. **It is almost impossible for a partisan politician to be neutral or objective on public issues.** Objectivity could be interpreted as anti-party activity. Partisan politicians are almost always contentious, seeking to castigate opposition and portray their own party in 'good light'. But how can a Christian politician play partisanship without being anti- Kingdom or become an adversary of another Christian who has a different political opinion? This is an issue that requires a great deal of maturity to handle and navigate around. I have seen many Christians in our present political milieu who abuse, disparage and literally heap insults on each other because of political differences. It's absurd and goes to show how little they understand this Kingdom matter. To them, 'politics is politics and should be played as it is.' How wrong! Secularisation of our worldview is the reason Christians who enter politics or are sympathetic to a particular political party can't isolate politics 'as is' and politics as 'it should be.' Politics 'as is', is shrouded in devilish intrigues and selfishness.

There is a class of people who are non-partisan politicians. This class includes political activists or political commentators who do not belong to any particular political party. These people follow political developments, comment on them and actually promote political issues, but are not aligned to any particular political party. They contribute ideas that shape public perception of issues without taking sides. Either as a partisan or non-partisan, every Christian is enjoined to actively engage in politics.

Christian political taboos

There are things that ought not to be spoken of among Christian politicians. These are what I refer to as Christian Political Taboos (CPT). Brazen deceits, lies, and double speak, should not be associated with a Christian in politics. That's taboo. Everyday politician separates politics from morality, but a Christian must play politics with a clear sense of morality. This is what sets us apart; else it's the same game.

It's taboo to use church pulpit to discuss and canvass partisan politics. The church pulpit is too sacrosanct to be used to canvass support for any one political party at any time. There are many reasons for this. The most important is that the church is a gathering of different people; some political, others apolitical. The church comprises people who belong to different political parties and those who are simply non-partisan.

Political issues often evoke strong emotions which could becloud people's sense of objectivity. Bringing partisan political issues to the pulpit divides people's loyalty and in some cases creates deep animosity among members who belong to different and opposing political groups. The immediate consequence of 'pulpit politicking' is that church members who ordinarily fraternise and pray together may no longer feel free to do so again because of opposing political views propagated from the pulpit. Another reason is that pulpit politicking injures the weak conscience of ordinary Christians who do not yet understand why they should either participate in politics or vote any particular political party.

The local church pulpit should never be used to canvass support for or oppose any political party at any time. In some denominations where the sanctity of the pulpit has been violated and the political sensitivity of members overlooked, the result has been less than tolerable. People have had to leave their cherished particular denominations to another one because of political differences inspired from the pulpit. Clerics should simply raise political awareness and mobilise the congregation to participate in political processes: to join political parties of their choice; offer themselves for elections within their parties and in general elections at all levels; and to register and vote in elections. Once that awareness is done, the decision of which party to join or support, which candidate to vote for, should be left to the discretion of each person. Scriptures say, *Wisdom is profitable to direct* (Ecclesiastes 10:10). Individuals should be allowed to make their choice, and whatever choice they make in a democracy is right in their own eyes. They should not be persecuted for their choice, though they may suffer the possible consequences of wrong choices.

In the same token, the practice of offering public prayer for a candidate of one political party during church services and then giving political aspirants the pulpit to make political statements in from the pulpit while the church is in session should be stopped. The church pulpit is not a political campaign podium. Let's honour the high place in God's House where His people congregate to pray and worship. There is a place for one thing; there is a place for another thing. It is inappropriate for a Christian cleric to convert his pulpit into a platform for partisan political promotion. Let's not trivialise and emasculate the sacredness of the church altar and pulpit. Many young Pentecostal pastors around the country in recent years have used their pulpits to play partisan politics and try to win favours of politicians. This is indecorous and should not be allowed to continue. It sends wrong signals to young Christians and even emboldens half-hearted Christian politicians to think their actions are validated. Doing things right and doing them in the right way are critical for our distinction in the political space.

Chapter Seven

The Importance of Political Families

Everything in life works in families, even in the animal kingdom. Politics is no exception. Those intending to enter public politics must consider joining a political family or starting their own families which they can lead and nurture. Family breeds loyalty and mutual support. In politics, loyalty and support are critical ingredients for success. Politics requires people-support. This support is better generated from within a political family. Unlike biological families which are basically ethnic and geographical in nature, political families go beyond the borders of religion, tribe, language and geography. The common interest among this family is how to capture political power and share political opportunities among the members. When people in a political family quarrel or disagree, it is usually on the basis of one person or persons trying to disrupt existing internal power equations.

Christian professionals coming into politics must understand the power of belonging to a political family. Youths and women coming into politics must identify with a political family. It is almost a fact that if you don't belong to a political family, you can't go far. Single candidacy in elections does not reduce the importance of belonging to a political family.

Sometimes, a political family can transcend a political party; that is, members of a particular political family could belong to different political parties. This could be a strategic approach to make sure that at any given time, members of this family occupy in key leadership positions in order to continue to enjoy political opportunities, wherever, somehow. This is a strategic ploy of informed politicians. However, some political families in the system operate like secret cults. The family members actually swear to some oaths of secrecy and allegiance. This is real. The main purpose of this oath is to secure loyalty and be assured of protection in case any member commits 'evil' in the public space.

How to build a political family

How do you build a political family? In politics, like attracts like. As it is said, ornithological specimen of identical plumage invariably conglomerate to the nearest proximity; which means, birds of the same feathers flock together. First, people of like minds would begin to associate. This association could be deliberately created or emerge unplanned. If you have a long-term view about political engagement, it would be better you start your own political family. What it requires is that you have an idea

of where you want to be in politics, that is, you have decided to take up politicking as a long-term or life time engagement. There is nothing wrong with this. There are a number of steps to take in building a political family.

1. Start humanitarian activities in your community. You must realise that every politics is local; therefore it's important you start from where you are; your immediate locality, where you will need the people's support someday. You may need to institute a scholarship scheme for the less privileged in your area. Scholarships could be as little as N2000 per term for a specific number of children in primary and/or secondary schools. You could start a Sports Academy or Football Club for youths in your area to engage them. You could sponsor skills acquisitions training for women and youths. Depending on your financial capacity, you could as well renovate community schools, drill bore hole for the rural people, organise medical outreaches, or any other projects that are sustainable and empowers the people to be self-reliant. I will not advice the practice of giving people rice and food items. This promotes dependency and poverty. Over time, you must expand your scope of humanitarian projects to places not immediately within your community but are critical to your political success.
2. Create a Think Tank. This is a group of men and women with whom you share your political philosophy. You meet with your team regularly over a period of time to prepare them and get them to buy into your ideals. This Think Tank could be created in different locations depending on how large you want your political family to be. It could be within communities, in senatorial districts, in cities, on campuses, and in states across the country. The Think Tank members become like your disciples. You need to stand with them in their individual needs so you can best attend to them in a non-dependency manner.
3. Connect your Think Tank with beneficiaries of your humanitarian activities. This is the stage where you begin to give more publicity to your community impact activities. Please note that a political family is not the same as a political party. Some people could be part of your political family because they identify with your political philosophy, but they themselves do not belong to any political party. In raising a political family it is important that you go the extra mile to make the family heterogeneous in terms of age, sex, religion, ethnicity, professions, exposures, experiences, skills and financial capacities. Different members of the family will bring different resources to help the family succeed in the political space when the time comes. The things that bind the family

together are their desire to remain politically relevant in order to continue to influence the course of things in the public space, while they enjoy the benefit of political opportunities.

Every political family has things that set them apart. It could be ideological or value-based. They have things that make them strong; things that they subscribe to which unite them. Most political families that are ideologically focused understand that they need to operate from different platforms to enable them mainstream their ideology and have it implemented somehow.

Examples of political families in Nigeria

In Nigeria's mainstream politics, one can find clear examples of political families. For instance, before and after independence, certain political families emerged including those of Dr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, Chief Obafemi Awolowo, and Sir Ahmadu Bello. In recent times new families have come up including those belonging to Dr. Olusola Saraki, Gen. Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, Gen. Ibrahim Babangida, President Olusegun Obasanjo which he created through his Africa Leadership Forum (ALF), Asiwaju Ahmed Bola Tinubu through the ACN Party, Chief Emmanuel Iwueke, former Vice-President Atiku Abubakar whose political family spreads across the nooks and crannies of the country, President Goodluck Jonathan, through his former aides, and President Muhammadu Buhari through the CPC Party.

Apart from the big names, there are also mid-sized and small-sized political families around the country promoted by former state governors, ministers of the Federal Republic, former legislators, and so on. Given Nigeria's current level of democratic development, more political families at the nuclear and extended levels are needed. Political families could transform into movements especially if they mature to have specific ideologies that they pursue. Where there are similarities in political ideologies, political families could merge to achieve specific political purposes.

I believe forward-thinking Christian leaders in professions, business and politics should begin to build political families that run across the length and breadth of Nigeria. I believe that leaders of large denominational churches in Nigeria should also support the emergence of political families headed by Christian people of repute. Whether you build your own political family or join an existing family, the key thing is loyalty. However, loyalty must not be misconstrued to mean swearing to oaths of secrecy to some idols or selling your soul to the devil because you want to join a political family to enable you gain political power. You must not give in to the pressure to join such a

family. If you are not in a hurry, you could raise your own political family and work with others to make impact in the political space.

Chapter Eight

Power Behind Political Power

The political arena is designed for continual contest; not only contest over material resources: who controls them; who distributes them; and who gets what; but also spiritual power contest. Don't be a fool. Understand that this is the way it works. Political leadership is backed up by power. It is not neutral. The power is in two dimensions: physical and spiritual power. The physical power of political leadership is vested in the armed forces including the army, the navy, the airforce, the police, and other para-military agencies that exist to enforce the policies of political leadership.

The spiritual power of leadership draws and flows from two different domains or kingdoms: the Kingdom of light where God reigns, and the kingdom of darkness where Satan reigns. This is the reality. You don't have to believe it for it to be true, but it will do you a lot of good to believe it so you can make the necessary adjustments. It is the spiritual power that controls the physical power. You cannot operate in political leadership, no matter the level, without paying allegiance to either of the two sources of spiritual power.

Political leadership is not for the naïve and faint-hearted. There are centrifugal and centripetal forces around leadership, any leadership. You must be 'spiritually initiated' to function boldly in political leadership, otherwise you will be swept away by those forces. These forces seek to draw political leaders in different directions. Those people who are naïve and simplistic wave off the influence of spiritual powers on political leadership.

Political activities and political leadership are in a state of flux. Things are constantly changing. Most of the changes are spiritually orchestrated. It depends on which side of the spiritual domain you are operating from. What is *not seen* is far more than what *is seen*.

In fact, no political leader can survive without drawing 'strength' from some form of spiritual power. This explains why politicians who are not Christians or who are Christians by mouth, but not in heart, have to belong to occult groups or fraternities. They must belong in order to survive otherwise they will lose out in the power contest. Therefore; they have to hire "people" to make sacrifices, bury live animals, and make incantations for them, continually. These activities go on everyday in the darkness of nights, and usually financed with public funds. I said this not to endorse or condemn those who do that, but to state the fact on the ground.

God understands the place of power in leadership. Political leadership is ordained of God to administer society and ensure people enjoy good life. True political leadership exists to teach righteousness, promote social justice, and human welfare. This is the purpose of God for political leadership, at any level. There are people who try to divorce political leadership from religion. Political power is connected to religious beliefs. It's a leader's religious persuasion that determines which type of power the leader submits to.

God's purpose for political leadership cannot be implemented by leaders who simply have 'good intentions.' Divine power is required to 'do good,' as God expects. To do good in this world is to work against the course of this world; it's like swimming against a high tide in the ocean. Even Jesus Christ, the very Son of God had to wait to receive power before He could start off 'doing good' in this world, even though He created the world. It's amazing how Jesus submitted Himself to the status quo in order to break the status quo. It is written, *For how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with POWER (emphasis mine): who went about doing good . . .* (Acts 10:38).

Satan is the god of this world. It is clearly stated in 2 Corinthians 4:4, *In whom the god of this world hath blinded that minds of them which believe not . . .* Jesus called him the prince of this world. *Now is the judgment of this world; now shall the prince of this world be cast out* John 12:31. Again, Jesus said, *Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me* (John 14:30). Jesus also declared: *Of judgment because the prince of this world is judged* (John 16:11).

Paul, in one of his epistles, referred to Satan as the prince of the power of the air: *Where in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience*" (Ephesians 2:2). The apostle John further tells us that the world lies under the influence of Satan: *And we know that we are of God and the whole world lieth in wickedness* (1John 5:19). The Living Bible puts it this way, *We know that we are children of God and that the rest of the world around us is under Satan's power and control.* Could there be any greater attestation?

Satan has been here for a long time. He hates whatever is good. He empowers people, his own children, to do evil and ensure they make life difficult for the rest of humanity. His two-pronged strategy in our world is deceit and violence. He deceives people through persuasive lies; but he resorts to physical violence when people refuse assent to

his lies. Anyone who determines to do good in this world has taken a stand against Satan and must be ready for a rough fight. What it means is that any political leader that truly wants to promote human welfare must be ready to be confronted by the forces of evil, through Satan's children. Those political leaders that don't want to face this ugly challenge simply do the next thing: submit to the membership of occult groups and fraternities. That is why they can never, ever promote public welfare in the manner you would expect.

Recall that before the apostles could go out into public ministry, Jesus told them to wait until they received power from on high. You may say, "That is for ministry, and not politics." True! But God also calls public officials His ministers. God endorses political leadership. He wants political leaders to do 'good': to develop human capital and promote human welfare. Therefore those in political leadership or those aspiring to assume political leadership must also be endued with power in order to be effective.

Political power and spiritual authority often clash. Three instances will suffice. Mordecai was a Jew in exile but did not forget his spiritual allegiance. Haman wanted him to bow to him, he refused. Haman therefore hatched an evil plan to destroy all the Jews in the realm because of Mordecai. The matter was presented to the king as a political issue. The king took a political decision that could have led to the extermination of the Jewish people. Esther and the rest of the Jews took to prayer. Esther approached the king on the matter; she obtained favour, and a political decision was taken to reverse the decree of death against the Jews.

Daniel was a political leader in Babylon. He was blameless. He drew power for his survival from God, to whom he prayed three times a day. Accusations were levelled against him; it was presented to the king as a political issue, and a political decision was taken to throw Daniel into the lions' den for not bowing to the image King Belshazzar created. Finally, when you study the trial of Jesus as recorded in Luke 23: 1-2, you will discover how the Jews presented their perceived offences against Jesus as political matters in order to appeal to the leadership of the day. Jesus was accused of three offenses:

1. Perverting the nation to rebellion against Caesar. Of course, this was the opposite.
2. Forbidding people to give tribute to Caesar; instead He taught the people to render to Caesar the things that were his (Luke 20:25).
3. Claiming to be king to replace Caesar. This He did not do, for He said His Kingdom was not of this world (John 18:36). In actual fact He had refused the offer to be king and taught that the time for His kingdom hadn't come yet.

As Satan and his agents have used lie and deceit to pervert the truth, they are still at it. These same things happen every day even in our time. People hide under political issues to antagonise religious practices and persuasions. They initiate policies to checkmate the progress of people of different religious inclinations.

The power you should understand

There are powers behind political leadership. Understand it. Don't be naïve about it. Don't try to wish it away. If you to want enter the public space, prepare yourself for power confrontations. Politics is a contest of power: physical power and spiritual. Political leaders are constantly engaged in this contest. The contest is about who controls the kingdoms of this world. Satan lays claim to the kingdoms of this world because Adam gave them to him. This was the case before Jesus went to the Cross.

Satan told Jesus the same when he tempted Him: *And the devil, taking him up, into an high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto him, All this power will I give unto thee and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomever I will I give it. If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine* (Luke 4:5-7). This was a statement of fact. Jesus did not contest the validity of it, instead He countered Satan by affirming, *It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve* (Luke 4:8b).

Power for political leadership comes from worship. Every political leader must worship something. Some of them worship the Lord God; others worship Satan in order to receive power. There is no neutrality. As a Christian you need to know you have power. Jesus secured this power for you. You have to take it and work with it. When Jesus rose from the dead, he took all power from the devil. Jesus declared: *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth* (Matthew 28:18). Jesus has given this power to the Church to go into the world and preach the word, teach the word, and enforce the will of God everywhere, including the political space.

If you are a member of the Church by identification in Christ, you have this power. Satan no longer has the legal right to any power, but he deceives people into thinking he still has power to offer them. He longs to be worshipped, like God is worshipped. That's why he demands people; those that do not have God's power in Christ, to sacrifice their soul in order to receive fake power. Any covenant child of God is empowered by God to lead and to serve in the public space. The power of God is available to you. Be bold. Be confident. Trust in God. Depend on God. Be persuaded

that God is with you. Step out into politics and work with God to take over what belongs to Him: the kingdoms of this world.

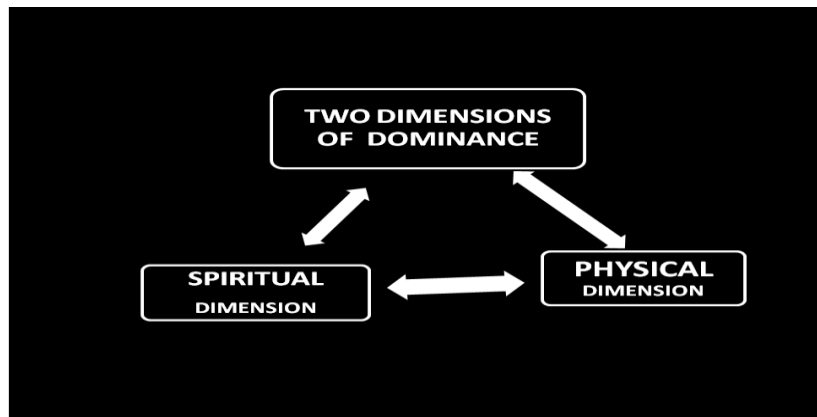
The wise King of Israel, King Solomon wrote: *See the way God does things and fall into line. Don't fight the facts of nature* (Ecclesiastes 7:13 TLB). Understand that democracy has a nature. Political party is the legal platform to seek elective political leadership, at least at the moment. Even if you are persuaded God has appointed you to be the president, governor, senator, or representative of your people, you still need to join a political party. That is the 'natural' operation of democracy. Don't fight it; adapt yourself to it. David was anointed by God to be king of Israel, it took Israel to recognize him and eventually install him as their king, years after his anointing. God did not impose David on the people; He anointed him, and waited until the people accepted David as their king, before he could begin to reign.

Even today, God does not impose leaders on people without their co-operation. He could anoint a person to be in office, but God has to work through the leadership recruitment process in place in order to bring His chosen candidate to office. I know a few people who say God has anointed them to occupy certain political positions in this county, but have chosen to remain aloof of political participation. They expect God to take them from their bedroom to government house – by appointment, by announcement, by miraculous intervention. They say 'After all, Joseph was taken from the prison to the palace without going through any political processes.' Of course, God can do that, but what point would God be trying to prove by circumventing the existing process just to make you a senator or governor? I guess it adds nothing.

Chapter Nine

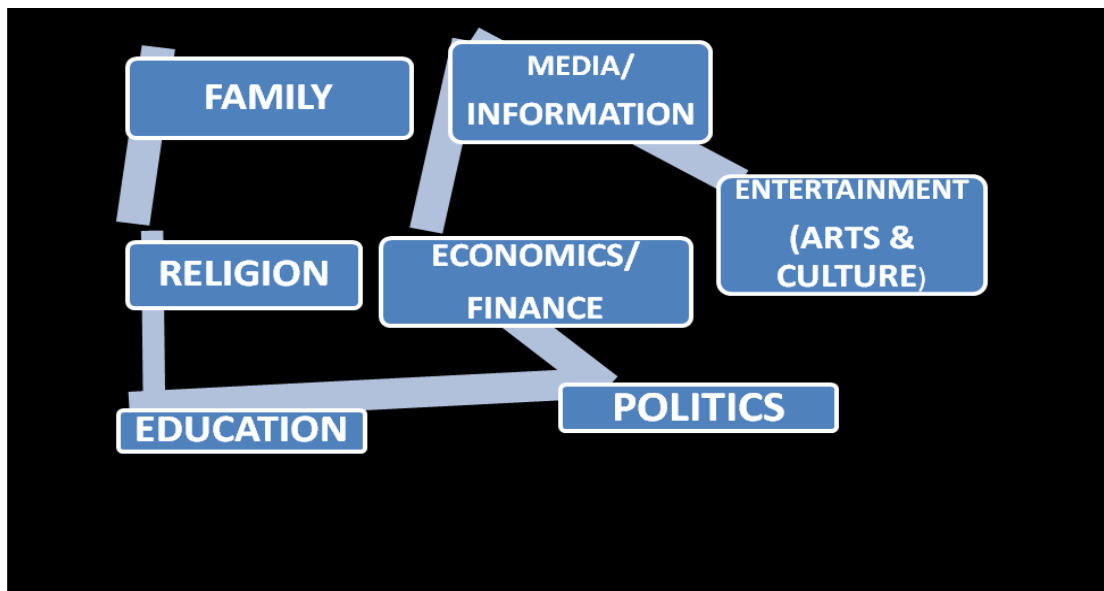
Taking Charge and Making the Power Connection

There are two domains wherein I believe we must exercise dominion in order to enforce the will of God on the earth. To enforce the will of God does not imply any use of physical force to get things done, as some other groups are inclined to do. Instead, we deliberately and peacefully step out to take charge of things in different spheres in the public space. First, we take our place in the spirit realm through prayers and other necessary spiritual exercises and activities to bring everything under subjection. Next, we step down into the physical realm to affirm our dominion by actively participating in all areas of public life.



Talking about the physical realm many people are aware of the seven realms of power or seven mountains of influence. These include Family, Religion, Education, Politics, Economy and Finance, Media and information, and Entertainment (Arts & Culture). As God's people, we are supposed to be in charge in all of these realms, but we are not at the moment. One of the reasons is lack of proper understanding of the interconnectedness of these realms of power and how they affect our capacity to fulfill, not only the Great Commission, but also to take dominion as we ought to. It is within these realms that all activities that influence citizens' daily lives are conducted. Those who control these realms of power determine your liberty, your prosperity and your ability to fulfill your potential in your community or nation.

It is regrettable that, for many years, the Pulpit has not been used to help the congregation to understand the import of the seven mountains and how each one of us should identify with them and assert ourselves over them.



Instead, the Christian community in Nigeria and around the world has devoted itself to promoting denominational ideologies and differences. The dichotomy between Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Pentecostalism remains rife. While Christian denominational leaders were protecting their individual territories, some groups and individuals in the world are busy articulating and implementing strategies to undermine the very fabrics of the Christian Faith.

Two sets of people who have greatly distorted the Christian world view are worth mentioning here. There are the secular humanists and Alice Ann Bailey.

Secular Humanism

Secular humanism was born in 1933 in the United States of America and promoted by John Dewey, a renowned American Educationist. Webster's Dictionary defines Secular as, "Pertaining to the world or things not spiritual or sacred;" and Humanism as, "Any system of thought or action concerned with the interests or ideals of people . . . the intellectual and cultural movement . . . characterized by an emphasis on human interests rather than . . . religion."

According the Council for Secular Humanism founded by Paul Kartz, secular humanism is a vital force in the contemporary world. Since its introduction, it has been a powerful force in world culture. For instance, democratic secular humanism has creatively permeated modern life with the growth of freedom and democracy. Countless millions of thoughtful persons have espoused secular humanist ideals, including

sincerely ignorant Christian people. Yet secular humanism negates the foundation of Christian faith.

Alice Bailey's Agenda to Destroy Christianity

In every generation, the devil always has children programmed and trained to subvert the plan of God. One of such children was Alice Bailey. She was born on June 16, 1880 in Manchester, England, but moved to the United States of America in 1907 where she lived till her death on December 15, 1949. She was a prolific author on occultism and the high priestess and prophetess of the New Age movement.

She founded the publishing company called Lucifer Trust which later changed to Lucis Trust. Alice Ann Bailey, often known as Alice A. Bailey set out what is today known as the Alice Bailey's 10-Point Agenda to destroy Christianity. Her purpose is "To change Christian tradition or to redeem the nations of Christian tradition." Alice's ideology has been accepted by the United Nations and is presently shaping global morality. Unfortunately, many Christian people are unaware of this reality. I have downloaded Alice Bailey's 10-point Agenda from the Internet and will briefly comment on each of them.

1. Take God and prayer out of the education system

She said: "Change curriculum to ensure that children are freed from the bondage of Christian culture." She understood that children go to school to be equipped to face life, and that they are willing to trust and are willing to value what is taught to them. Therefore, if you take God out of education, children will unconsciously form a resolve that God is not necessary to face life. They will focus on those things school considers worthy to be taught and they will look at God as an addition, not necessarily important in their life for success and survival. This informs the nature of curriculum schools run these days including the introduction of yoga and Transcendental Meditation (TM) in schools which take children to altered states of consciousness to meet with demons , which is a New Age practice.

2. Reduce parental authority over children

She says: "Break the communication between parent and child, so that parents do not pass on their Christian traditions to their children. Children should be liberated from the bondage of their parents' traditions.

- a) **Promote excessive child rights:** with the UN Charter on Rights of the Child, a child is able to say to the parents, 'I do not want to hear that, I don't want to do what you are telling me. Teachers cannot talk to children, children can step up and say to their teacher, 'I have my rights; you cannot talk to me like that.'
- b) **Abolish corporal punishment:** In many countries, corporal punishment has been abolished and made enforceable by law. This is a subtle subversion of the Word of God which says, *Do not withhold correction from a child, for if*

you beat him with a rod, he will not die. You shall beat him with a rod and deliver his soul from hell. (Proverbs 23: 13-14). Is it any wonder that society is raising more and more rebellious children today than ever, even from Christian homes? This is an organised attack on the fabric of Christian Faith.

- c) **Teachers are the agents of implementation:** Teachers are to make sure this agenda is implemented in the classroom. It is regrettable that many Christian parents that send their children to private schools today do not give due diligence to know the belief background of the school owners. In some schools, children are told, “Your parent has no right to force you to pray or read the Bible, you are yourself, have a right of your own, you need to discover yourself.” Today, self-expression, self-realisation, self-fulfillment are all buzz words. Where do you think these are coming from? Do children have rights? Yes, but within the boundaries of parental guidance and approval.

3. Destroy the Judeo-Christian family structure or the traditional Christian family structure

Alice Bailey reasoned that the Christian family structure is oppressive and that the family is the core of the nation. If you break the family, you break the nation. Therefore individuals must be liberated from the confines of this structure, by doing the following:

a) **Promote sexual promiscuity** – encourage young people to accept the concept of premarital sex, let them have free sex, lift it so high that the joy of enjoying sex is the highest joy in life, fantasise it; so that everybody will feel proud to be seen to be sexually active, even those outside of marriage. This is contrary to the word of God which says “. . . *But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints. . . for this you know, that no fornicator, unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God*” (Ephesians 5: 3-5).

b) **Use advertising industry, media** – T.V., magazines, film industry to promote sexual enjoyment as the highest pleasure in humanity. If you want to know whether they have succeeded or not, check out how the advertising industry does everything to catch your attention. Nearly every advert comes with a sexual connotation; be it advertisement on cars, soft drinks as well as alcoholic beverages, ice cream, toothpaste; they must show you a thigh of a woman and a bikini, something to set off a trail of sensual thoughts. They will show you more thighs than ice cream. The idea is that whatever captures your mind takes hold on your life.

4. If sex is free, then make abortion legal and make it easy

The strategy is to build clinics for abortion. Sexuality education has a strong tinge of promoting free sex and offering options to abet the consequences of free sex. If people are going to enjoy free sexual relationships, they don't have to be afraid, provided they can have access to abortion in case of unwanted pregnancies. Alice Bailey rejects Christian's position on abortion, which she considers oppressive. “If a woman does not want the pregnancy, she should have the freedom to get rid of that pregnancy painlessly

and as easy as possible.” Even though abortion is illegal in Nigeria, do you know how many Christian women consider abortion as a necessary option, even against biblical injunctions?

5. Make divorce easy and legal, free people from the concept of marriage for life

Alice wrote in one of her essays that if you go together for some time and find that love has died, don't be held in bondage by the Christian values. What you need is an easily arranged divorce to allow another love bond to come forth, so that you can enjoy life again. On the contrary, God's word says in *Malachi 2: 16; For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce . . .* Today, people enter into marriage as a contract rather than as a covenant relationship. There are growing cases of divorce in the church now than ever before; with more children growing up in single-parent and dysfunctional homes, giving rise increases social consequences. In the past, divorce was unthinkable. These days, there is lightness around the issue of marriage. Alice Bailey, set the stage for what you now see happening.

6. Make homosexuality an alternative lifestyle

Alice Bailey preached that sexual enjoyment is the highest pleasure in humanity, no one must be denied and no one must be restricted on how to enjoy themselves. People should be allowed in whichever way they choose, whether it is homosexuality or in incest or bestiality, as long as the two agree. In our world today, laws have been made that promote homosexuality giving so much latitude to gay rights. Very soon it will be illegal for a preacher to mention that homosexuality is an abomination in the eyes of God, or to read Scriptures publicly that condemn homosexuality. Presently, the European Union sanctions African countries that have resisted homosexuality, with threats of withdrawing foreign aid and investments. In some parts of the world, many churches marry gays/lesbians and ordain gay priests. These are deliberately orchestrated to undermine Christian precepts doctrines, and values.

According to the Bible, this is an abomination before the eyes of God.

Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it [is] abomination. (Leviticus 18:22).

If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood [shall be] upon them (Leviticus 20:13).

7. Debase art, make it run mad

She urges the promotion of new forms of art which will corrupt and defile the imagination of people because art is the language of the spirit. That which is inside, you can bring it out in painting, music, drama, etc. When you consider the quality of the music and films coming out of Hollywood, Bollywood and Nollywood, you will understand what is going on. If it is not pornographic and horror, it is not worth

showing on screen or played on radio. The producers of these films and musical works are acting out Alice Bailey's scripts.

8. Use media to promote and change mindsets

Alice notes that the greatest channel you need to use to change human attitude is media. She encourages full utilization of the press, the radio, TV, cinema. Then ask yourself, "Who controls the media?" The New Age people do. How many media outfits are owned and run by Christians according biblical values? So much money is pumped into media and advertising to spread pornographic contents. Promiscuity is being promoted as natural; gay sex is shown on TV and in homes where children's minds are being neutralised so that they lose their sensitivity to these things.

9. Create an interfaith movement

Promote other faiths to be at par with Christianity, and break this thing about Christianity as being the only way to heaven; by that, Christianity will be pulled down and other faiths promoted. She supports the idea that man has the right to determine his own future and destiny – Humanism. This is where the secular humanists got inspiration for their operations. Alice said: "Tell man he has the right to choose what he wants to be and he can make it happen; he has the right to determine his cause." This takes God off their lives and that's what most motivational speakers are indirectly promoting: You can make it if you desire. Interfaith movements are rising everywhere in the world today. Interfaith says 'We all serve the same God,' but we know we actually don't serve the same God with others. This fact must be clear in the mind of every Christian. We don't stop those who want to believe or practice whatever they want to, but we are certainly not serving the same God. Period!

10. Get governments to make all these laws and get the church to endorse these changes

Alice insists that the church must change its doctrine and accommodate other people by accepting these things and put them into its structures and systems. Today, governments around the world are legislating laws contrary to the Bible and the church is compromising the Word of God. Pastors and Gospel ministers are aligning to these ideals in the name of liberality. This deception has crept up unobserved by so many people. Many people in the church are spiritually suffocating, but don't know it. The old-time Christian values are now mocked by present day Christians.

The two greatest assaults on Christianity in the 20th Century came from the works of Alice Bailey and the secular humanists. Unfortunately, many Christian leaders and lay people do not realise how they themselves have subscribed to the teachings of these two forms of ideology in our world today. Their teachings subtly crept in on churches in the West which was the primary focus of the New Age Movement (NAM) in the 19th century. The New Age Movement has a school called the Akanni School, which is the school of all the leaders of the Western world. Having succeeded in the West, but suddenly realised that Christianity has migrated to the rest of the world, the NAM

decided to use every resource in the West to deal with the rest of the world. In Africa, South Africa is the number one state; Nigeria and Kenya are their other major targets.

I have given these details to get you to realise how secular humanism and the ideology of Alice Bailey have permeated the seven spheres of influence in the society today. At the very heart of these spheres of influence is politics; politics determines public policy; and public policy determines people's liberty to associate, to worship and to prosper. If we are not at the table where public policy is framed or in a position to set agenda for policy makers, we will suffer the consequences. Politics is critical to our capacity to implement the Great Commission. Have you seen why you must get involved in politics?

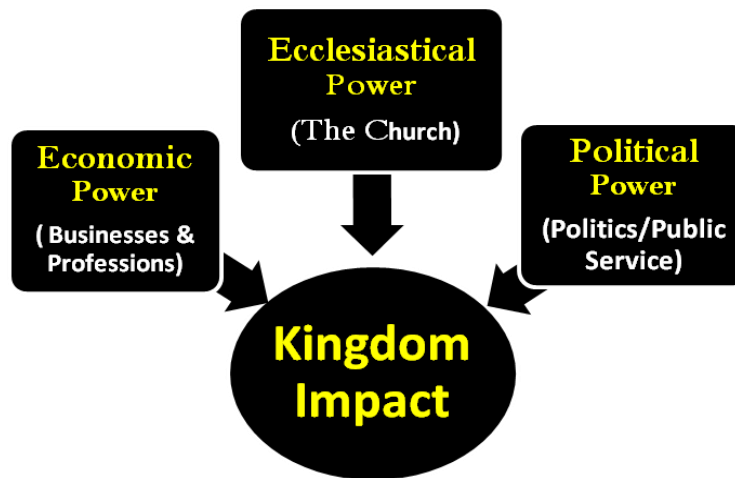
Chapter Ten

The Tripartite Connection

There are three dimensions of power that we must understand in order for us to function as kingdom personalities on earth. First, we ask, who is a kingdom personality? A kingdom personality is a purpose-driven Christian person who:

- Views every aspect of life from God's perspective.
- Takes his/her work or profession as a Kingdom assignment, not just as a career to earn a living.
- Deliberately chooses to positively impact the society for the Kingdom, starting from his/her immediate sphere of influence.

Although there are seven dimensions or spheres of influence that exist, three of them must be taken very seriously if we are to make impact for the kingdom in substantive ways. These are Ecclesiastical Power (the Church), Economic Power and Political Power.

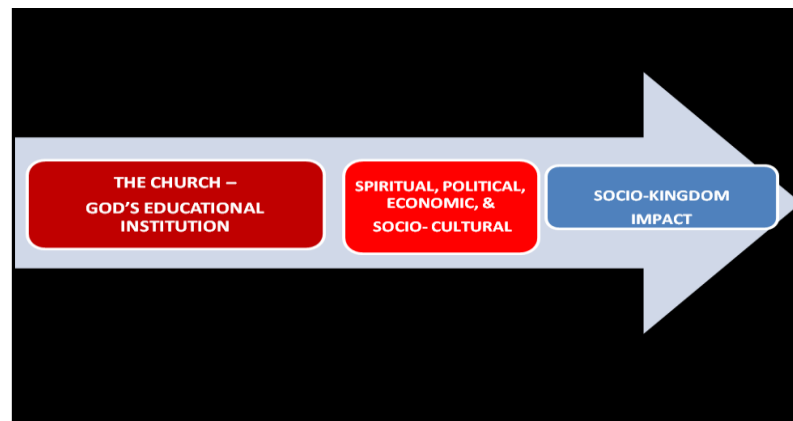


For a long time the body of Christ, the Church, has operated in a disaggregated form. We have run a compartmentalised life – secular and spiritual, which ought not to be so. There have been no concerted efforts to connect our spiritual life to our economic empowerment and political participation. Instead of preaching the full gospel of the kingdom, we have concentrated on one side of the gospel – the gospel that gets us born again and teaches us to get ready to make heaven.

We have neglected the gospel that commands us to take charge of the earth and occupy everywhere till He comes. The Church is God's educational institution for His people. We are supposed to be educated on spiritual matters, educated on Kingdom-style economics, and on political dynamics and participation. The church should give equal

attention to these three dimensions of education in order to prepare God's people to fully take dominion over the affairs in their world.

Regrettably, many lay people in denominational churches have been under-educated by the pastorate and the clergy. We have given a disproportionate attention to spiritual education and neglected the other dimensions of education. Little wonder people like Alice Bailey and the secular humanists have cashed in on our lop-sided education to capture the minds of many Christian people. Denominational church leaders don't want to teach strongly on political participation and the dynamics of politics for fear of being termed 'partisan or political.' This is the reason many Christians are naïve about the subject of politics and its impact on our pursuit of the Great Commission. The only knowledge we have about this critical Kingdom subject matter is the one we glean from the conventional educational system, whose curriculum is framed by secular humanists.



The importance of a balanced education for Christians

Balanced education that Christians should have include giving equal attention to the spiritual, political, economic and socio-cultural education, all from a biblical perspective. The purpose is to prepare the people to make impact in the society for the Kingdom. We live in this world, we operate in this world, even though we are not of this world; but we must understand how the world's system affects our effective operations as Kingdom representatives.

I still cannot understand why the pastorate and the clergy have remained slack in providing this the manner of broad-based education to church people. More than 90 percent of preaching and teaching from most denominational pulpits is focused on the spiritual dimension. This explains why most Christians cringe at the thought of politics and are ignorant about the concept of Kingdom economics. Christian people need this knowledge to survive and function; the world can't give it to them and the church can't

teach them about it; so where do they get this knowledge? It is sad that our denominational leaders have grossly under-educated the mass of church people.

One of the reasons for this, I believe, is the lack of exposure of most denominational pastorate and clergy to holistic education themselves. Many of them are trained in spiritual matters but are grossly ignorant of the other critically important dimensions of knowledge. And even when some of them have received secular education on economics and politics, they still find it difficult to preach and teach Kingdom operations in an inclusive manner.

For instance, I attended one of the best Bible Schools in the world, the Kenneth E. Hagin's Rhema Bible Training Centre (RBTC), where I spent 28 months to obtain a Diploma in Ministerial Training with emphasis on Societal and Spiritual Leadership. I also attended the Word of Faith Bible Training Institute (WOFBI) where I obtained a Leadership Diploma, having completed the Basic level and Leadership level Certificate Courses over a period of 24 months.

At Rhema, I took about 36 courses, while I took 38 courses at WOFBI. Wonderful and renowned as these Institutes are, none of them taught any course on politics and political participation and their relevance to fulfilling the Great Commission. In Bible School, every course is given this spiritual aura and hallows, which though important, but does not prepare bible school graduates to face the intrigues and nitty-gritty of the political environments where ministry is to be carried out.

Bible school students are not taught about politics as a Kingdom enterprise, instead they are tacitly told to avoid politics, being labeled as a dirty game. I don't know about the curricula of other Bible colleges or schools in Nigeria, but I can attest to the fact that this deficiency in the curricula of our Bible schools could be the reason most of the graduates may be knowledgeable in spiritual matters but are illiterates in political issues., The consequence is that lay Christian people are under-educated and ill-prepared to enter the public space as Kingdom personalities.

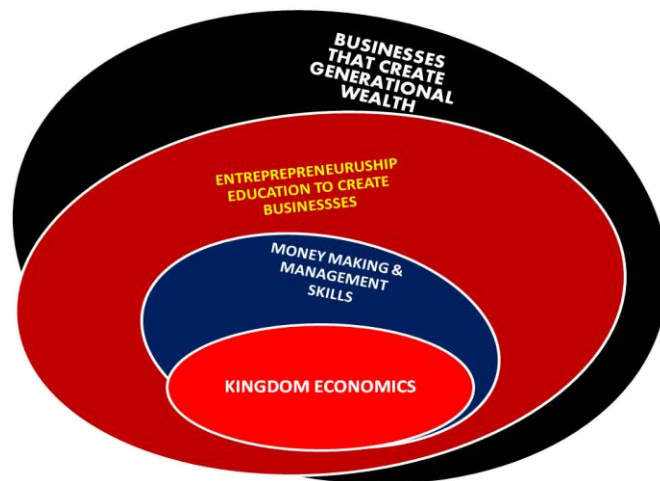
About economic and political education

Kingdom economic education is a mass-mix of knowledge that revolves around teaching God's people how to make money, how to manage money, how to create businesses that create generational wealth and how to use business proceeds to finance the Great Commission and influence public policy. I know that many pastors and

priests often teach about how to give, the importance of giving to God's work and sometimes, the benefits of giving to support God's work.

We teach about tithes, offering, seed sowing, prophet's seed, firstfruits and many more of those windows of giving. These are commendable, but I ask, "How many times are God's people taught in Church, on how to make money, how to manage money, how to create businesses that could serve Kingdom purpose, not necessarily serve denominational church purpose. How many churches teach entrepreneurship and biblically empower their people to start and run mission-based entrepreneurial businesses? Do we consider it imperative to teach our people to understand how they can use their businesses to influence public policy at the local, state and national levels for the preservation of Kingdom purpose?

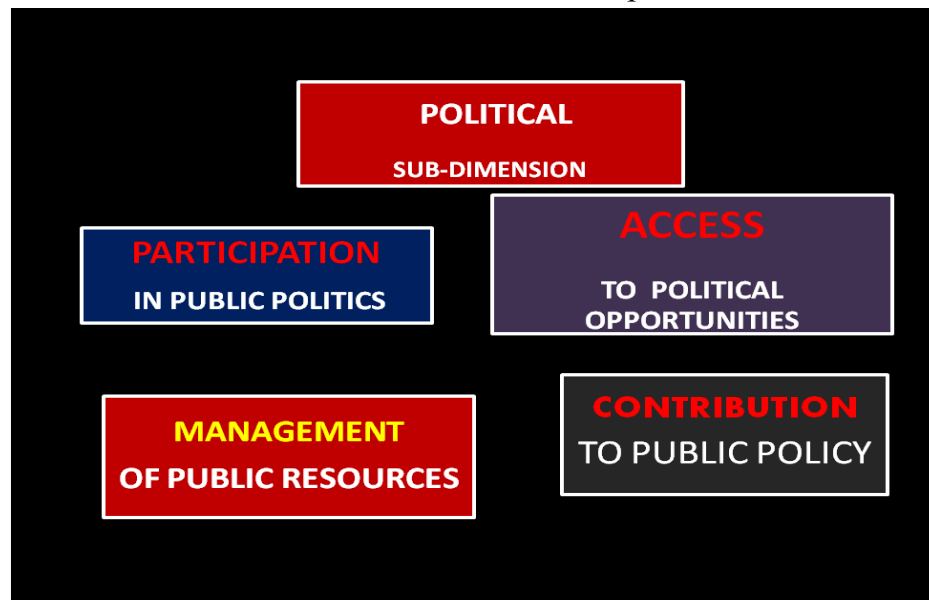
We are talking about money and the things money can do in the public space. Money speaks; it has a voice. We need to have plenty of money so that we can speak strongly without fear of intimidation. We need to strategically raise businesses that will create generational wealth capable of financing Kingdom enterprises at anytime. We have to be deliberate about this. For instance, in the United States, most of the American Jews do not participate in mainstream politics, but because they control most businesses in America, they use their business interests to influence those that emerge as political leaders at almost all levels.



Political education is very important in order to prepare Christian people to effectively participate in mainstream politics. I have discussed in detail the importance of citizens' participation in the democratic processes and the concept of public politics in my book, *The Quest for Political Leadership & Citizens Democracy*. You may need to get your copy.

There are many reasons why politics is very important. But I will mention only three at the moment.

1. Participation in public politics enables us to become involved in the management of public resources. Public resources are divine commonwealth. For too long we have excused ourselves out of those that manage this wealth and have suffered the consequences.
2. Participation in public politics gives us access to political opportunities which include appointments into offices, contracts to execute public works, and other sundry opportunities. All of these are legitimate windows of economic empowerment.
3. Participation in public politics gives us the chance to be part of policy formulation, implementation and monitoring. As we participate at policy levels, we could conduct integrity checks on public policy when it is still at the formative stage to ensure it does not harm our short and long term interests. Many of the apparent marginalisation Christians face today in Nigeria is as a result came either because our people were not aware of their formulation or did not understand the implications.



As the Church in Nigeria, we must connect the spiritual, economic and political dimensions in our teaching and preaching if we are to effectively make impact in the nation's socio-political landscape. The Church is God's education institution. Therefore, the pastorate and clergy must take the lead to provide a holistic education for God's people.

On the economic dimension, we need to help our people to build strong economic base . The focus should be to:

- Teach Christians on to run Mission-based businesses .
- Teach Christian business owners how to use their businesses to influence public policy

On the political dimension, we must realise that politics determines the nature of public welfare. Political decisions have far reaching implications for our economic prosperity, our freedom to worship and our liberty to associate. We must not isolate ourselves from politics because our God is interested in what happens in the political space. We should focus on how to:

- Build the leadership competencies of Christian politicians to enable them serve as Kingdom ambassadors in the public space
- Mobilise Christian professionals to actively participate in politics for Kingdom impact
- Mobilise resources in support of Christians seeking political office, beyond political party distinctions.

We must be alive and active on this power nexus. We must not play second fiddle any longer. We must put our money where it will answer questions for us in the public space. There is a link between the spiritual, the political and the economic power domains. We need make this power connection and use it to make positive impact in our nation .

Chapter Eleven

Economics of Political Participation

Political activities require diversities of resources. Money is one aspect and plenty of money is required to run political campaigns. Many Christians appear to underrate the role of money in politics. There is a place for prayers - and fervent prayers for that matter; but there is a place for money - tangible money. In politics, money speaks, and it speaks loud. Money is required to mobilise people to create awareness and share political vision; money is required to print posters, produce jingles for radio and TV, and to actually pay for their broadcasts. Money is required for newspaper advertorials. You need money to pick nomination forms; money is required to embark on campaign travels.

Apart from tangible money, there are other resources including human and material resources to ensure full participation in the electoral process as a contestant. These resources have to come from somewhere. Incidentally, money spent in electoral processes is never regained except the contestant wins in the election. In other words, contesting in an election in Nigeria is a critically risky endeavour. Yet someone has to dare to contest. If one person or a few people raise this money, the burden will be too much on them, and they may have good reasons to insist on recouping their money once elections are won. This is the reason we must think of ways to reduce this burden on our well-meaning, but not-so-rich politicians by supporting them with our resources.

There are diversities of ways to mobilise financial resources in support of those seeking political office, outside what political parties do internally. The Christian community takes this for granted. Members of the other camps are more organised in funds mobilisation for political pursuits, because they understand the importance of political power. On the other hand, individual Christians contesting in elections for public office are often left to raise their own funds by whatever means. This has been the case. The desire to contest and help bring about change in the system, and the lack of a backbone of financial support from the Christian community is a major reason many, either decline to contest, or are pressured to join the occult in order to receive support from the political god fathers, many of whom belong to secret societies.

We have to wake up and be strategic in the way we engage the public space. We can't continue to play safe, naïve, and non-committal, and still expect things to fall in place for us. At the moment, there is no organised system through which Christians can pool financial resources to sponsor or support candidates for political office on a non-partisan basis. That is, a person is supported because of what he/she stands for;

irrespective of the political party they belong to. The primary interest for us should be find individuals that will represent Kingdom interest and have capacity and track record of standing for social justice?

Once individuals are indentified and they pass through their political party processes, they should be supported in electioneering campaigns with resources. Even prior to winning party nominations, individuals could be assisted with finances to help them do all the ‘political needful’. Interestingly, our friends from the other camp have well-structured systems for pooling their resources to pursue whatever it is they want. In the political space, he who has the connections and the money gets the space and actually dominates the space.

If you run your own business or you work and earn income, you should dedicate some portion of your earnings to supporting Christians contesting elections in any political party. The money could be pooled into a common fund that could be administered by an established Christian Institution. It could also be contributed directly into the individual’s campaign fund. This is important. We must begin to put our money where our mouth should be. If we want to have a voice on the political turf, then we must be ready to commit our money and other resources into it. Many people who want to participate in public politics and contest for offices as councillors, state or federal legislators and other positions, don’t usually have all the money to do the ‘runs’. They will need our tacit support and financial empowerment to enable them pull through. You could do this alone, or mobilise your friends and network to do it. Christian groups could learn the art of fundraising and how to mobilise support for their candidates running for public office.

Reasons why Christians fail in Politics

There are a number of reasons Christian politicians fail. I will mention only four.

1. Once a person declares to join politics on a more serious basis, he/she is taunted by the brethren. They tell him you can’t get into politics and remain holy. In other words, they discourage him from the outset.
2. Christian political aspirants are abandoned to their fate. They are left to fend for themselves financially and otherwise. And once they are abandoned, those on the other side quickly embrace them and persuade them to join their ‘camps’ with the assurance of support in order to succeed. Oftentimes, these ‘abandoned Christian politicians’ succumb to the persuasions, and before you know it, they begin to talk and act exactly like the secular politicians do.
3. Christian people enter politics as private citizens and not as Kingdom citizens. They see politics as a means of securing political opportunities including

material, financial and social networks; all for personal and family benefits. That's why you have Christian politicians in the public office, who appropriate resources of their states and constituencies for their personal benefits; using those resources to build empires around themselves, while the rest of their people wallow in poverty and penury. Meanwhile these same Christian politicians will go to church and offer propitiatory thanksgiving. These ones are not Kingdom representatives; they represent themselves and their political career.

4. The most important reason why Christian politicians fail is that many of them do not understand the power dynamics of political participation and political leadership. Many enter politics as one of those fields where you could just walk in and make impact, because you have good intentions. The terrain is far deeper and ominous than what you see on the surface, but it is not what you cannot handle, if only you understand how it works. There are powers behind political leadership and this must be understood and you must prepare to engage in it. I discussed this in detail in the previous chapter.

Secular Universities offer courses in political economy. Shouldn't the Church run teachings in political economy? Politics and the economy are inter-twined. But because of lack of knowledge in this area, church people are ill-prepared to participate in politics and do not understand how their economic activities could be used to influence politics in the public space. There is the economics of political participation. Once we understand it and put ourselves to apply the knowledge; we are set to take over. I hope you will.

Chapter Twelve

How to Become a Political Mobilizer

Political activism is good, but it is not enough. It is not enough to talk and discuss political issues with your friends or fellow free readers association (FRA) members at newspaper stands. You need to take a step farther. You must learn to become a grassroots political actor. Political decisions are strategic decisions, but political mobilisation takes place at the grassroots level. Your ability to mobilise will greatly enhance your chances of being a political strategist. You must understand this fact. Who do you mobilise? Human beings of course; people of voting age including women and youths. These are people that have power to decide who governs, through their votes. They probably don't know they have this power, but someone has to educate them. This is where you come in.

In this book I have tried to show you how important it is that you participate in the political process at any level you can. I have written with a sense of urgency. I hope you have understood the issues at stake. I need to remind you that "Faith without works is dead." Knowledge, not put to use is sterile. Now that you know why you should be involved in politics, I would like to take you through a practical guide on how to put yourself to work. It begins with changing the way you think. Let's go over them step by step.

What you should know

1. You must know that life is about politics. Politics is everywhere beginning from your immediate family, to your place of work, your church, your community; everywhere people interact, there is politics.
2. You must understand that politics is for you and is about you. What happens in public politics affects you, so you should show interest in it and be informed about it.
3. Understand that participation in public politics is open to everyone including you.
4. The truth is that everyone plays politics to some extent. But you need to find where you fit in and make your own contribution to the process. By writing this book to encourage you to participate, I'm making my contribution

5. Understand also that you don't have to be a politician to participate in politics. You could participate as a voter, a civic activist educating people on political issues or even as a non-partisan local mobiliser of voters.
6. Understand also that if you do not participate in politics through any of the available options, you would have denied yourself the opportunity to contribute to the development of your community and nation. Therefore you cannot blame politicians for the woes you may see.
7. Recognise that not everyone is called into partisan politics for the sake of seeking elective or appointive positions. But everyone is expected to be politically aware and contribute ideas to deepen the political process; and to support those called into partisan politics with their resources.
8. Understand that women and youth are the back bone of any electoral process. The majority of voters are women and youths. Therefore, political mobilization must be specially targeted at women and youths.

What you should do

1. Change your mentality of thinking that “politics is for them.” Or that “politics is dirty.” Politics is what political actors make it to be. You can be one of those actors and help change this perception. Politics is a kingdom business and if you are a kingdom personality, then you must be involved in this business. It our Father's business.
2. Make a habit of reading at least one newspaper daily and listening to radio or television programmes where politics is discussed. If you can, create a personal file for keeping vital political documents and articles. You may need them someday to validate your point on certain issues. Be current on political developments around you, even in the neighbourhood where you live.
3. Find out who your representatives are, and those contesting to represent you as councillors and Local Government Area chairpersons. Get reasonable information about them: their values, their political ideologies and their attitude toward public funds. You have a responsibility to track these people for accountability, not just about money matters, but also about legislative processes and outcomes.

4. Get yourself a copy of the Nigerian Constitution, The Electoral Act and the Freedom of Information Act. Buy or obtain copies of manifestoes of different political parties. Read them and be conversant with their contents. You need these documents so you can knowledgeably engage the political system.
5. Use your Social Media platforms (Facebook, Tweeter, Whatsapp groups etc) to discuss political issues as they concern you. Your language must be decent and appropriate. Do not use your platform to disparage or insult those that hold different political views from you. Use your platform to educate those in your network on why they should participate in the political process, at least as voters in elections.
6. Always discuss issues about Nigeria with the view to providing solutions, instead of finding faults, finding reasons why our unity cannot stand, condemning government officials and politicians. Instead, pray that the will of God concerning Nigeria stands, and that whoever and whatever that opposes the purpose of God for Nigeria be frustrated.
7. Ensure you have a voter's card. Encourage those around you to obtain their voters' card. Christians from Southeast Nigeria must realise that their inability to register enmasse and vote during elections puts them at a disadvantage, every time. Politics is a game of numbers. If you don't vote and prefer to go about your businesses or stay at home on election day, you cheat yourself. Make sure you always cast your votes for the candidates of your choice during elections. In a democracy, your vote is your main voice. If you don't use it, don't blame anybody. You need to close your shop or business on election day to go cast your vote.
8. If you have the interest, join any political party of your choice to build your skills on how to participate in political activities. Be active enough to help enrich your party's philosophy and operations. Remember that there is nothing like a 'Christian Party' in Nigeria at the moment. We probably won't need it any time soon. Therefore, if you must be in the political mainstream, you must join a political party and serve there. Let's distribute our membership in different parties and not cluster around and put all our eggs in one political party. Wherever we may be, our interest remains the same: to support Christian politicians to take up their rightful places in the political space, irrespective of the political platform. After all, political party is nothing

but the legal platform to contest for public office. What you do with the platform is more important than the platform.

9. If you are an undergraduate student, you should be interested in the Departmental, Faculty and Students Union politics on your campus. Groom yourself to participate by contesting in those elections or support those who are contesting. If you are eighteen years and above, you should join a political party and work to recruit members for your party on your campus. If you work in organisations where staff associations and unions exist, ensure you join and offer to serve in the executive of those associations. Don'ts shy away, and leave it to 'others' to run. Anywhere you are, be the light. Shine forth. Provide leadership. Reign!
10. Learn to tolerate opposing views of people in other political parties. Everybody cannot see matters in the same way all the time. Political tolerance is a mark of political maturity. To disagree on political issues is no reason to disagree on other issues. There are always areas of common ground. Find those common grounds- where you agree with others - and use them as a basis to continue to relate and engage with other people. It is a fact that all Christians cannot belong to the same political party, therefore, all cannot agree on all political issues. However, you must look beyond political differences to understand that you have a more enduring relationship with other Christians. This is very important.
11. You should take some leadership training courses and attend some seminars to enhance your political skills. Effective participation in a democracy requires systematic democratic education; it requires you to understand how to function and interact in a democratic culture. Don't assume you know what to do or you understand how the process works. Politics is more than you think. You need political skills; you need advocacy skills; you require lobbying skills; you need to learn how to build consensus; you need networking skills; you need deliberative skills; you need to know how to communicate your political views with others without being manipulative. You simply need personal dexterity and political deftness. Therefore, you must avail yourself of every opportunity to sharpen your political skills. It's not enough to pray, you must be politically skillful. God's wisdom empowers you to be 'ten times better than your fellows' in politics.

What we should do

1. **Mentoring:** we should develop systems of political mentoring. The idea of Christian politicians just going into politics as private individuals and coming out as private individuals must stop. We must raise a continuing pool of emerging political actors and politicians, groomed and tutored in the art of politicking. Mentoring is central and critical to our survival on the political turf. Christian legislators and others in political offices should spare time to share their experiences with the younger generation of Christians; to inspire them, encourage them, guide them, and support them to learn the ropes of politicking. This kind of mentoring must not be turned into the negative god-fatherism concept perpetuated among politicians in the world. I have already discussed this issue in my book: *Promoting Sustainable Human Development through Mentoring*. If you want to enter into public politics, seek out a mentor. If you are already in public politics, take deliberate steps to mentor others. Let's help ourselves to serve the kingdom. Christian leaders in ministry, politics, business and professions should be available to mentors younger people.
2. **Leadership Recruitment:** we should create leadership recruitment system that Christians could have a reservoir of potential leaders to serve in the public space. We could start from secondary schools. We identify young people that have made a commitment to a godly life at that stage and begin to groom them, mentor them and expose them to leadership opportunities. This is what Nebuchadnezzar did with the Jewish exiles in Babylon including Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. He recruited the best among those with the greatest potential, took them through training, and engaged them in Babylonian public service. This is what people in the world do. We need to be deliberate in our leadership recruitment drive. We must be upfront, forward-looking and proactive. Wherever we identify potentials, we must go for them irrespective of political party.
3. **Volunteering:** we should cultivate the spirit of volunteering. Political campaigns require foot soldiers. Young Christian men and women should offer themselves to volunteer with politicians during elections. Volunteers should organise in support of candidates of their choice. Volunteering is to be done without asking for benefit. The immediate motivation must be to see that the Christian politician you identify with makes it through. Other things will follow.
4. **Establish DEEP-E:** every church should immediately establish what I call Department for Economic Empowerment and Political Education (DEEP –E).

This should become functional to seriously attend to the issues of economic empowerment of their members and non-partisan political education of their people, in a more organised and goal-oriented manner. For help on how to set up and operationalise this department, contact the author, through Fled International Leadership Institute (email:fledinstitute@yahoo.com).

What you should not do

1. As a Christian and a good citizen, you must not conduct yourself in any manner that could lead to the breakdown of law and order in your community or elsewhere, on account of electoral processes.
2. Do not discredit any political party; instead intelligently engage them on the basis of issues and policies. Discuss facts for facts, issues for issues, not personalities. Learn to disagree without being rude and disagreeable. Aim for peace through dialogue and demonstration of understanding.
3. Never engage in any acts of violence during electoral campaigns, during elections, or after elections no matter the level of provocation. Electoral violence is anti-democratic, and it does not align with your Faith as a responsible Christian.
4. Do not despise Christians who opt to become partisan politicians. Instead, support them with your prayers, ideas and resources. By doing that, you can hold them accountable when they begin to act in manners unbecoming.
5. Don't dishonour the high place. Sometimes, in fact most times, dishonourable men occupy honourable offices in high places. But that doesn't change the game. We are supposed to still honour the office in spite of the person that occupies it. The bane of most people, including well meaning Christian political commentators, is their inability to separate the office from the person occupying the office. That's why they join the ignorant public to disparage their leaders and speak about them with disrespect. Leadership is spiritual, but leaders are human beings, many of whom are not spiritual, but carnal. They are subject to weaknesses and personal failures. But that does not change the fact they are leaders. If you are in the habit of disparaging 'the high place' – that is high office, you will never get to occupy that office. Why? Because what you don't respect, you cannot attract. Honour the high place. Respect the office even if you

dislike the person occupying the office. Learn to separate the office from the person occupying the office.

Chapter Thirteen

Praying for Politicians and Those in Authority

Not every Christian will take to partisan politics. Not many will be interested in political commentaries. Not even everyone will be inclined to discussing government matters. But there is something every Christian can do: Pray for those in politics and for those in authority.

You need to understand that the president of Nigeria, the governor of your state or your local government chairperson does not have to be a Christian before things work. Much as it is good to have Christians in public office, it is not a pre-requisite for the fulfillment of God's purpose for the nation. At any rate, it may never happen that every public office holder in Nigeria will be a Christian. We need to establish this fact. What's the implication? Simple! God can use whoever is available to pursue and preserve His purpose.

Once someone assumes position in public office, the person becomes God's servant, and therefore deserves respect, not necessarily because of the person, but because of the office he/she occupies. It is for this reason that God commands us to pray for those in authority.

I exhort therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2: 1-4).

Whoever is in the saddle of political leadership needs our prayers. We are not particularly to pray that they become Christians, which would be good, but that their hearts be amenable to God. When we pray for those in authority according God's word, we restrain the forces of darkness that work in their minds from being operative. There are ruling spirits that influence the minds of those in authority and cause them to be insensitive to the needs of the people. These spirits influence them to make unrighteous laws and make terrible decisions with adverse effects on the nation and the citizens. Have you wondered why it is that some people talk wonderfully well on how they will work to better the lives of the people only to get into public office and do the direct opposite. If you don't understand what's going on, you will curse and insult them for

failing, but that will avail nothing. When we pray, we invite God to intervene in the affairs of state, working through those in authority. But when we spend time complaining and cursing them for non-performance, we empower them to be more insensitive to the plight of the citizens. It's a simple spiritual law.

Perhaps the most important reason God commands us to pray for those in authority is so that there will be peace to allow us preach the gospel. It is obviously difficult to preach the gospel in war times or in a situation of national crisis. The recent Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast of Nigeria is a practical example of the gospel being restricted because of insecurity. We are to bring the hand of God to bear in our polity. Kenneth E. Hagin in *The Triumphant Church* (1993:323) reiterated this point on why and how we should pray for those in authority:

We are to pray for those in authority including politicians. But praying for those in authority doesn't mean we are to pray that the politicians in our favourite political party will be voted into office. We can't judge by political party alone which candidate is best to fill the leadership positions in our nation. In other words, we don't need to get involved with *personalities* in praying for our government; we just need to pray that the right candidate be elected to office. We may all have our *opinion* who is the right one for office, but only God knows for sure. Therefore, we just need to pray that God will have His way in the matter.

This is instructive for those of us who must pray for those in authority, particularly in our democracy. When the people you don't have personal liking for, get elected to public office, you are still supposed to pray for them in spite of your feelings about them. This is what God expects you to do.

Prayer team for political leaders

Political leadership often challenges religious activity. When political leaders want to deal with religious matters, they don't come direct. It is framed as a political issue. But the real target is religious freedom or practice. Until today, many Christians in some parts of Nigeria are denied certain Government benefits through the enactment of certain policies. The policies could be in the area of education or access to land for place of worship or other matters. This is why Christians must get into political leadership so they can participate in taking decisions that could affect their religious freedom.

A Christian getting into public politics must be grounded in the word and power of God. He must have a strong personal relationship with the Lord. He must also have a

prayer team. There is nothing like, 'I can go it on my own.' A Christian politician in the frontline would need the strong prayer support of the brethren to enable him' or her remain victorious over the inevitable onslaught from the kingdom of darkness operating ferociously in the political domain.

The public domain includes all levels of leadership. You need a prayer team; a team that understands its assignment: to uphold the leader in prayer and help provide prophetic insight into critical issues. Nominal Christians, and there are many of them, who enter public politics, often do what non-Christians do to secure power for their sustenance in the public space. Because they are not grounded in the spiritual dimensions of their faith, they easily resort to spiritualists to receive power. Some of them actually belong to the occult and fraternities. These ones are neither here nor there: they give a public impression that they are committed Christians, but they are not. They are Christians by association, but not in practice.

Prayer for those in authority could take the following form:

1. Pray for the president, all the state governors, and LGA chairpersons: that God will grant them wisdom to make the right decisions that are in line with the will of God for Nigeria.
2. Pray for all the federal and state legislators: that God will continue to guide them in making righteous laws that will govern the affairs of the nation and promote social justice.
3. Pray for all cabinet ministers at the federal level and commissioners in the states: that God will grant them wisdom and boldness to effectively administer public resources at their disposal for the benefit of the citizens.
4. Take authority over satanic forces that influence the minds of our leaders and command those forces to take their filthy hands off the minds of our leaders.
5. Demand that the will of God be done in our Government at all levels and in other sectors of the nation.
6. Pray that the minds of all those in authority be amenable to the Holy Spirit.
7. Thank God for the change that is happening in the nation because of these prayers, in Jesus name.

Chapter Fourteen

Politics is a Kingdom Enterprise

If we agree that politics is a Kingdom business, what are the critical values that Kingdom operators should bring to the public space in order to make a difference? We bemoan the fact that Nigeria, for instance, is stagnated due to massive corruption in the public space, how then are Christian politicians going to act differently? If corruption is the most trending word when Nigeria is mentioned, how does that make us feel?

I believe **corruption is a symptom of a decaying society because of poor leadership** at all levels. To reverse this trend, there are certain scriptural values that Christians must bring into politics. These values are applicable everywhere. They include integrity, fairness, accountability, humility, responsibility, commitment, diligence, contentment, respect for constituted authority, compassion, courage, decisiveness, and social justice. In addition to these values, a Christian politician must have aversion for violence and fraud; whether electoral fraud or financial fraud. A Christian politician must be clear in his/her mind on what is right and must be committed to doing it. You must gauge your public performance by how far you are aligned with these values.

Everybody is welcome

Politics is not only for Christians; it is for everyone. I have not espoused the formation of a Christian political party or the exclusive support for Christian politicians. What I have done is to raise awareness on why and how Christians should participate in Nigeria's political space. It is not only Christian people that can provide credible leadership in the political space; this is very important to note. The core message of this book is that more responsible Christian leaders should get into politics to help Nigeria get out of the quagmire of poverty occasioned by lack of patriotic and visionary leadership at all levels of society.

You must understand that if you want to win elections, you must learn to interface with people of other faiths, because they are also voters. You will need them to win elections, and you are to serve them when you win elections. Do not forget that when you serve in public office as a Christian; you stand as an Ambassador of Jesus Christ. You are a politician standing for righteousness and justice. Righteousness is about doing what is right, not necessarily doing what is popular. You don't have to be

politically correct, but you don't have to be politically rigid. You should be flexible, within the ambit of what is right.

Social justice is the heartbeat of God for society. Therefore, you must be a strong advocate of social justice and freedom of choice. Of course freedom of choice must also be within the ambit of public safety and morality. As a Christian, you must see politics beyond political party lines. You must also see your participation beyond ethnic lines. The base line is: if you are Christian, then you are one of our own. We must cultivate the "our own mentality," and we must treat politics as a kingdom business. You should not allow partisan politics to becloud your sense of rightness from God's perspective. Political parties are merely platforms upon which you stand to serve in public office. While we don't encourage you to desecrate the platform, you shouldn't elevate the platform above what you are supposed to do from the platform. Governance is what matters; not political party, per se.

Christian politicians must learn to defer to their Christian spiritual leaders, and not to always take up matters against them. Christian politicians have a way of acting alone and posing themselves competitively superior to their ecclesiastical leaders. Our friends on the other side easily defer to their religious leaders on political matters. That's why you hardly see them make media mockery of their activities.

A Christian with a *secular mindset* can hardly represent the cause of Christianity in the public space. Such a politician will almost always view issues merely from intellectual perspective. Don't be that kind of a Christian politician. You should be persuaded that what you believe is true based on the revealed Word of God, not on your interpretation of it. You should be ready to take a stand for the truth whenever you notice any infractions of your belief system. This is the main reason why you are in politics, in the first place. When the chips are down, your faith must take pre-eminence.

Your participation in politics is a divine expectation and responsibility, not a matter of convenience. God is interested in how you treat political matters; He is also concerned about how public politics is run. Your participation in politics is not to acquire wealth and share in political opportunities and benefits, but to represent God's interest in a system that is powerful enough to affect the destinies of human beings. God cares about people. Politics determines peoples' welfare. People's prosperity, liberty and freedom of religion are often determined by the type of political system in place and political leaders in positions of authority. This is why politics is a Kingdom business.

The Kingdom we belong to has rules and operates for a purpose. God's purpose is to ensure the prosperity of human lives. Political leaders are to use public resources God created for citizens' prosperity. Therefore, we must conduct this political business heartily and with a righteous panache.

To succeed in politics you necessarily need a bit of adjustment. You will need to change and expand your perspective. Politics requires certain ways of thinking, of talking and of acting. You need to learn the savvy of politics and learn to be flexible and accommodating. In politics, there is no single way of dealing with matters. The terrain is both gray and slippery. Therefore, you require a high level of astuteness and open-mindedness to survive in politics. Political terrain is not for the faith-hearted. There are multiple layers of interests to consider and attend to. You don't ignore any of them. You need a large heart to forgive and let go of something things, if you must go far in politics. The reason is that a lot of people are going to hate you somehow, others will say nasty things about you, and some others will deliberately do things against you. You will not always need to defend yourself through media rebuttals. But you must learn to ignore some things and fix your eyes on the ball. You must resolve in your heart on why you want to be active in public politics: to serve people or to serve yourself and then become important. This is what will determine how you respond to whatever you will encounter in politics.

Take a walk

This book has spoken to you. What will you do differently? What will you do with the knowledge you now have? Will you still complain and lament over what politicians do? Yesterday is gone. Today is yours. Do you have regrets? Would you like to do things differently if you had the chance? What exactly would you like to do differently? You can start right away to make adjustments. You can't change yesterday. But you can make something out of today. Step out of your yesterday. Build your capacity to participate in the public space. Be involved in the political affairs of your community. Become a mobiliser. There is so much you can offer the society. You are not expired. Your life has a meaning. Find a way to serve the public and your life will count when things begin to count.

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About the Book

Politics is a Kingdom business. Over the years, professional politicians have succeeded in creating the impression that politics is dirty and not meant for decent people. Christians in Nigeria readily bought into the lie and were edged out. But God is interested in politics because politics is a matter of interest in the Kingdom.

Politics is Kingdom Business deals with the misinformation and myth about politics and examines the argument for and against Christian's participation in politics. It makes the point about why you must locate yourself within God's prophetic agenda for Nigeria. You will learn:

- How you can participate to contribute to national development.
- Why political platform must be used to advance God's purpose on earth.
- How to become a political actor and mobiliser beginning from your immediate area of influence.

This book is a wake-up call. Politics is your Father's business. You must do it with all diligence.

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Joseph Chinenyeze Ibekwe is a development journalist, a leadership development consultant, a life coach and a minister of the Gospel. He is the publisher of Future World Magazine, a human interest magazine.

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