



# NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT - THE CHRISTIAN CHALLENGE

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## National Development – The Christian Challenge

Democracy is a game of numbers. Christians constitute a very significant percentage of the Nigerian population, by some estimates about 50% of the population. So how come there's no proportional representation at a certain hierarchy in government?

To win an election you need four things – you need intellect and strategy, you need money, you need structure, you need numbers. The church has all four. How come Christians are politically weak in Nigeria?

There are several factors accounting for this anomaly. A few readily come to mind. I'll give you seven factors.

1. There's the lack of unity in the body.
2. There's ignorance about the very nature of Christianity.
3. There's an inversion of God's blueprint for the church.
4. There's lack of understanding of the order of Melchizedek order to which all Christians belong.
5. There's disdain of intellectualism in the Body. It's generally believed it conflicts the Spirit.
6. There's poor understanding of the conceptual progression of the Church.
7. There is subscription to Essene theology in certain sections of the church.

I'll take the issues one by one.

### 1) Lack of unity in the Body

First let's make a clarification. The oft quoted passage on unity in the Body is the passage on unity of faith. That's Ephesians 4:13. It's not really talking about unity in the Body, it's talking about the historical unbalanced knowledge of doctrine in the body of Christ at the time of

Paul. It's saying ministers were called to equalise that imbalance across board, that there's a mean we must all attain.

The problem we have in the body of Christ is that sometimes the ego of ministers supersedes strategic objective. And so ministers can't work together. The cell network of the church is by far larger, wider and stronger than the ward structure of any political party in Nigeria. Think home fellowships. As long as the pastors can't come together the exponential power of that network will not be released.

## 2). Ignorance about the nature of Christianity

The bane of Pentecostalism in particular is fearful ignorance. Christians don't study the Bible. Some even elevate the word of the pastor higher than the word of God. What that does is that it creates groupthink.

Because we don't study the Bible we cannot appreciate the political dimension of the church. We fail to realise Jesus is a political figure not a religious figure. He is wholly defined by political power. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. He is a prince - Prince of peace. "God the Father" and "God the Son" are political titles not biological appellations. The Son is heir apparent to the throne. When the Bible says every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess it is referencing political power. Every shall bow and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is LORD. That is not a religious exercise, it is political genuflection before overwhelming authority. It is obeisance, an acknowledgement of supreme power.

Jesus wasn't eliminated as a religious figure. He was eliminated as a political threat. When Jesus was born the reason Herod panicked was because the wise men said a king was born. They didn't say a prophet was born.

The moment you understand the political factuality of Jesus everything changes. You'll have a new understanding of Christianity. You'll see grace as a prerogative of mercy of a king, the commuting of sentence. You'll understand the nature of sin. It's a criminal offence not violation of morality. It's why it carries death penalty. It's why you can't do good to be saved. You're dealing with criminal law not tort. The reason the wages of sin is death is because sin deserves capital punishment. Only a governmental institution can impose capital punishment. It's why you're not allowed to take vengeance as an individual. You're not the state, you're not government. Only government can. Vengeance is God's because God is government.

You'll also acquire a new understanding of praise worship. Because God is a monarch we prostrate before him and eulogise him. You eulogise kings. If God were president there'll be no praise worship. Church is a political session. Unto the LORD shall the political gathering of the people be. In that session the benevolent dispensation of the king is available. So is his vengeful power. He will execute vengeance against his enemies at the petition of his people.

Christianity is a political reality not a religious experience. The reason the Apostles were gruesomely eliminated by the state was because they constituted serious threat to political establishments.

### 3. The inversion of God's blueprint for the Church.

The reason the church is weak politically is because we inverted God's order. God's conception of the church is centrifugal not centripetal. We're a force radiating out not a force radiating in. We're the salt of the earth not the salt of church. We're trained in church to go out into the world and impact society. It's why Jesus democratised power, made it available to every Iyabo, Musa and Okechukwu.

But we have turned things upside down. We are inward focused not society focused. Everything takes place inside church. The pastor does everything. That wasn't God's idea, Nigerian Christians created that idea.

In our scheme the pastor is the called one, the congregants are his enablers. That's not Bible prescription. The Bible says the congregants are the called, the pastor is the enabler. The Pastor according to the Bible is an HR development consultant. He trains us to go out into the world and impact the world.

If we follow God's order we'll become a network of purposed and capacitated individuals going into the nooks and crannies of society, attacking different dimensions, from culture to politics, to professional and entrepreneurial spaces. The system we're running is so Old Testament. It's why pastors are trying to be like Elijah, making prophetic pronouncements about politics. It's why pastors anoint candidates for office. That's a conceptual impossibility. You can anoint a monarchical candidate you cannot anoint a candidate in a democratic system. Now you know why those declarations fail.

#### 4. Lack of understanding about the Melchizedek order

Nigerian Christians don't seem to understand the mystical order to which they belong. Our mystical order is the order of Melchizedek. That's the order Jesus belongs to. It's why he couldn't function as a priest when he was on earth. Only Levites could function as priests. Jesus was from the tribe of Judah. In the manner of men he wasn't a descendant of Aaron or Levi.

Melchizedek if you recall was that gentleman king who was also a priest. He's the typification of the Christian. Jesus revolutionised the priesthood by initiating civil servants, professionals and entrepreneurs into the priesthood. The Apostles were from the secular field. He even recruited a revolutionary, or a "terrorist" depending on who's asking. Simon was a Zealot. The Zealots were sworn to the violent overthrow of the Roman government.

The order of Melchizedek is a sacred-secular order. And so today we have priest-doctors, priest-beauticians, priest-lawyers, priest-engineers, priest-fashion designers, priest-technologists, etc. When Christians say a pastor cannot be vice president for example it's because they lack understanding about the priesthood of the New Testament.

The priests of the Old Testament served in temples. The priests of the New Testament serve OUTSIDE the temple. If the old order of priesthood were operative all of us will be in Jerusalem. But none of us will qualify as priests. Ijaws, Itsekiris and Urhobos are not listed in the Bible are descendants of Levi. Neither are Yoruba, Hausas or Igbos.

## 5. The disdain for intellectualism in the Body

The rejection of intellect in the body of Christ is a rather unfortunate thing. You can't solve Nigeria's problems without intellectual capacity. No society can develop without intellectual equity. The decline of Nigeria closely mirrors the decline in educational standard.

What many don't realise is that the Holy Spirit is an intellectual. Or he couldn't have participated in the science of Genesis. Neither could he have influenced the writings of Paul. Without the intellectual capacity of Paul there will be no church organogram. we're using Paul's organogram.

If the church wants to solve Nigeria's problems it must encourage the development of thinking capacities. There's nothing so special about the problems of Nigeria that thinking can't solve. How else are you going to solve the problems! You don't develop infrastructure with prayers, you formulate good policies and apply engineering principles. Of course if you align yourself with the intellectual capacity of the Holy Spirit you'll get access to restricted data.

## 6. Lack of appreciation of the conceptual progression of the Church.

The growth of the church after the death of Jesus necessitated a new level of organisation. Management science had to be brought in. The earliest organogram separated service functions from spiritual roles. Deacons were appointed so the clergy could focus on preaching.

The church started with a Jewish focus, but then it went international, moving from a mono-cultural concept to a multicultural concept. It's why Paul was needed. Peter couldn't grapple with that level of complexity. He didn't have the education or cultural exposure. The national headquarters of Christianity was Jerusalem but the international headquarters was Antioch.

It is not the intendment of God that the church should stop where the Apostles stopped. The Apostles were the early nationalists of the Christian nation. We're supposed to go beyond where they left. We're actually supposed to politically progress the church. The clue is in Ephesians 1:20-23 MSG:

“God raised him (Christ) from death and set him on a throne in deep heaven, in charge of running the universe, everything from galaxies to governments, no name and no power exempt from his rule. And not just for the time being, but forever. He is in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the centre of all this, Christ rules the church. The church, you see, is not peripheral to the world; the world is peripheral to the church. The church is Christ's body, in which he speaks and acts, by which he fills everything with his presence.” Ephesians 1:20-23 MSG

If Christ is reigning and exercising authority over nations and governments, and we're his body we should be in government. What that passage is saying in essence is that the church is supposed to function as the nucleus of society. It's also saying in effect policy direction for Nigeria should emanate from the church.

## 7. The wrongheaded belief we're Essenes

Lastly, some Christians believe Christians are not supposed to participate in politics. They believe politics is dirty. They want to be like the Essenes, live in an alternative society, live at the edge of society. That way they avoid contamination. They imagine themselves Essenes. The Essenes were the third political group after the Pharisees and Sadducees in the days of Jesus.

But here's what these Christians don't realise.

One: your religious rights as a Christian are determined by the State. God subjected the church to the authority of the State.

Two: most of the prayer points of the average Nigerian Christian are as a result of policy failure. The reason you pray for electricity generator for example is because there's no power. Commonsense dictates that if we fix NEPA we will have latitude to concentrate on more worthwhile stuff. You've got to participate in politics. Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23 is for you to find your place in the scheme of things.

Nigeria is waiting for sound ideas to solve her problems, Nigeria is waiting for good leadership. The question is, are you the one we're waiting for, or should we expect another?

I want to thank you for listening. God bless the Federal Republic of Nigeria.