The Challenges of Christians' Participation in Politics

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ABSTRACT

The political involvement is a vital tool for the development or un-development of every society today, for this reason, every community needs honest personalities that will represent them in the political cycle. Practically speaking, what this means is that there must be Christian citizens who willingly offer themselves as candidates for public office. This is where we as individual Christian's citizens come in. This researcher is not by any way advocating that the church should endorse candidates, but that members who are citizens should become involved in politics. According to Romans 13 it is God who came up with the idea and institution of Government. As a matter of fact, people who serve in government or politics are called "ministers of God" Romans 13:1, 4.

Politics is the right vested on the individual or a group of people to enjoy the benefits of the Nation be it material or intellectual. A right is a power enforced by public trust. Sometimes it happens that the exercise of a right is opposed to public trust. Nevertheless, a right is really an institution brought around by public trust, past, present or future. The growth of knowledge is the key to the history of a Nation. The more man becomes knowledgeable of what is going on around him be it physical or intellectual, the more it is appropriated.

Rights, knowledge, and benefits from the Nation are nowhere acquired in a democratic government but through political involvement in the political system of that Nation. Abstention

from political practices is not a wise decision what every may be the reason. For the Bible tells us in Matthew 5: 13-16 that we are the salt and the light of the world therefore, there is no need for us to hide ourselves for a responsibility is been entrusted in our hands to go out and share our saltiness and also shire before the world.

INTRODUCTION

Politics and religion are two deferent entities that help in the growth and development in human existence, despite the fact that both have parallel practices, but they share some common goals which are beneficial to man. As religion importance to human life so also politics, though some religious extremists do see politics as a dirty practices and abstain themselves from it and also preach the same to their followers, but still is of a tremendous important to them.

The early missionaries distant Christianity from politics especially in some African countries, and this brings a significant forbear towards politics by Christian, and they transfer that to their children, which brought about wrong impression that some Christian have on politics and its importance to human existence. Besides, the way some of the politicians are practicing it today makes it look dirty in the eyes of some committed Christians, and they sees the politicians as fraudulent people.

Political involvement is a vital tool for the development or un-development of every society today, the society that has good people representing them in the political circle are experiencing development and growth but those societies that are unfortunate to have bad (i.e. those that don't have the society at heart) are not experiencing development nor Growth as it should be, that has led to a point that some concern citizen are advocating for people to get involve in political practices with a very meticulous care and concern during the excises, for whom they should elect as their representative should be people they

know with good reputation and ambition, because development and growth of any society lied in the hands of who they elect to represent them.

However, the purpose of this paper is to stipulate clearly the importance behind the participation in political activities by Christian, besides the research is done with the purpose of yelling at the Christian to have re-think on the political activities, and to encourage the Christians to stand up and face the reality and became active in the politic for it is only through the political system one can get into the civil Government; it is only by that we can save ourselves from the hands of the world. For Jesus in Matthew 5:15 "let yet light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds praise your father in heaven, how can we shine if we abstain ourselves from the political activities? We all know that Justice, honesty accountability, fairness and above all Godliness are needed in the political circle.[566] Danladi Musa says that "it now generally accepted that one of the main ways that Christian can positively influence the society and make a difference is to get involved in politics, business and social action. By so doing Christians will truly become the light and the salt of the society."[567] If these are to be achieving for the good of the Church and the society at large then it is necessary for Christians to get directly involvement in the politics. And this should be with the purpose of giving better leadership and beneficial governmental activities in the right direction.

Politics in the Circular

Politics is about the acquisition of power and the use of such power. The Oxford Dictionary of Words defines politics as "matters concerned with acquiring or exercising power, within a group or an organization" Nkem Onyekpe defines the term politics as: "The struggle for power which itself is the authority

[566] Ibid. 35.

[567] Ibid.

to determine or formulate and execute decisions and policies, which must be accepted by the society… it is the struggle for power of governance, especially executive authority.[568] Onyekpe however gives a caveat to the first part of his definition. According to him, the struggle for or the acquisition of power and the reaction of the society to it, depend greatly on the level of political development of the country. In an undemocratic society, it does not really matter whether the decisions and policies are accepted by the society. Thus the value of political power or politics leaves little or no room for the people to have input, except where democracy has already been entrenched. In a plutocratic system of government, like we have in Nigeria in recent past, political actions entrenched in, policies and social values attached to them are function of the value system and the political orientation of the ruling stratum. Presently, the Nigeria society is in the process of demilitarization and it is not surprising that elements of plutocracy are still visible.

From the above, the researcher observed that politics is all about struggle for power as it relates to use and control of such power in governance. Thus politics involve stage governance and how the political leaders acquire their mandate. It should be stated, that we are here interested in the relationship between religion and politics in a pluralistic society, like Nigeria. `A political system is a framework which defines acceptable political methods within a given society. History of political thought can be traced back to early antiquity, with seminal works such as Plato's Republic, Aristotle's Politics and the works of Confucius. Modern political discourse focuses on democracy and the relationship between people and politics. It is thought of as the way people choose government officials and make decisions about public policy[569]

[568] Nkem Onyekpe, J.G "Politics and Political Power in Nigeria: Nature, Dynamics and Determinants",

[569] Losco, Joseph Am Gov. (New York: McGraw-Hill 2010), 3.

The varieties of political experience

According to Aristotle, States are classified into monarchies, aristocracies, democracies, oligarchies, and tyrannies. Due to an increase in knowledge of the history of politics, this classification has been abandoned. Generally speaking, no form of government could be considered the absolute best, as it would have to be the perfect form under all circumstances, for all people and in all ways. As an institution created by human nature to govern society, it is vulnerable to abuse by people for their own gain, no matter what form of government a state utilizes, thus posing that there is no 'best' form of government.

All States are varieties of a single type, the sovereign State. All the great powers of the modern world rule on the principle of sovereignty. Sovereign power may be vested on an individual as in an autocratic government or it may be vested on a group as in a constitutional government. Constitutions are written documents that specify and limit the powers of the different branches of government. Although a Constitution is a written document, there is also an unwritten Constitution. The unwritten constitution is continually being written by the Legislative branch of government; this is just one of those cases in which the nature of the circumstances determines the form of government that is most appropriate. Nevertheless, the written constitution is essential. England did set the fashion of written constitutions during the Civil War but after the Restoration abandoned them to be taken up later by the American Colonies after their emancipation and then France after the Revolution and the rest of Europe including the European colonies.[570]

There are two forms of government, one a strong central government as in France and the other a local government such as the ancient divisions in England that is comparatively weaker but less bureaucratic. Family plays an important role in politics,

[570] Miller, F.D., Jr. A Companion to Aristotle's *Politics*, (Oxford: Blackwell1991), 118-120.

without a strong family it's almost impossible to be a strong position. These two forms helped to shape the federal government, first in Switzerland, then in the United States in 1776, in Canada in 1867 and in Germany in 1870 and in the 20th century, Australia. The Federal States introduced the new principle of agreement or contract. Compared to a federation, a confederation's singular weakness is that it lacks judicial power.[571] In the American Civil War, the contention of the Confederate States that a State could secede from the Union was untenable because of the power enjoyed by the Federal government in the executive, legislative and judiciary branches.[572]

According to professor A. V. Dicey in An Introduction to the Study of the Law of the Constitution, the essential features of a federal constitution are: a) A written supreme constitution in order to prevent disputes between the jurisdictions of the Federal and State authorities; b) A distribution of power between the Federal and State governments and c) A Supreme Court vested with the power to interpret the Constitution and enforce the law of the land remaining independent of both the executive and legislative branches.

Politics in Religion

The Role of Religion Today

What do we mean when we talk about religion? Scholars have struggled and argued for many years about how to define religion. Some emphasize the idea that religion is concerned primarily with conceptions of God, divinity and the meaning and order of human existence. Others have tended to emphasize the way religion serves to draw distinctions between *sacred* (that is,

[571] Dal Bo´ , E., Di Tella, R., 1999. Democracy under Pressure: Political Parties vs. 'Nasty' Interest Groups, unpublished, Harvard University.

[572] Fiorina, M., 1994. Divided Government in American States: Byproduct of Legislation Professionalism?

American Political Science Review 88, 304 PDF.

transcendent or other-worldly) forms of space and belief and more mundane, or *profane*, domains of 'worldly' human Endeavour. Some definitions, such as that of anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973), focus on the symbolic power of religion and its ability to influence how people understand their place in the world and also to impart meaning to the actions they undertake. Other scholars have pointed out that the idea of religion as a distinct category or sphere of human activity reflects a specifically Western worldview and historical tradition. Talal Asad (1993) points out that in other cultural traditions it is not so easy to make a firm separation between religion and other spheres of life such as politics. This point will be important later when we discuss the meaning and nature of secularism, the belief that the state and morals should be independent of religion. For now, however, the researcher will assume that when we are talking about religion we are referring to individuals and groups who base their identities and ethics at least in part on a tradition and set of beliefs about the creation of the world and the order within it that locates the source of this creation and order outside purely human or natural agency. So where do we see religion at work in global politics today? Many people if asked this question right now might think first and foremost of the Islamic world.[573]

Particularly since the events of September 11, 2001 – when hijackers associated with the terrorist group Al-Qaeda flew airplanes into targets in New York City and Washington, DC – and subsequent attacks such as the London bombings of 7 July 2005, Islam has been a major subject of discussion. Much of this debate has been around questions of terrorism and support for violence. The United States, for example, declared militant Islamic extremism to be the major target of its new 'war on terror'. Considerable attention has also been paid to Islamic movements in other countries that have used violence in the pursuit of their political goals, such as HAMAS in the Palestinian territories and Hizbullah in Lebanon. Other examples where

[573] http://www.christiananswers.net/menu-ag1.html.

Islam or 'Islamic' groups have been seen to play a role in world politics include the period when Afghanistan was under the rule of a highly conservative movement known as the Taliban. Well before the United States accused and eventually overthrew their regime for supporting terrorism, the Taliban had attracted widespread criticism from the world community for violating human rights and for their harsh treatment of women. Countries such as Iran, which regard themselves as Islamic states, are seen by some as a challenge when they assert that they are subject to divine authority. Within Europe, a number of recent incidents such as the Danish cartoon affair have fuelled debates about whether 'religious' Muslims and 'secular' Europeans can co-exist peacefully.

Despite the current tendency to focus on the Islamic world, there are many other examples where religion seems to play a role in global politics. A number of recent conflicts have had strong religious dimensions. Think, for example, of Northern Ireland, where the divisions between the two conflicting sides broke down along the Protestant and Catholic denominations of Christianity. For more than twenty years, Sri Lanka has seen a civil war pitting Hindus and Buddhists against each other. In the former Yugoslavia, much of the bloodshed in the 1990s was explained in terms of ethnic rivalries between Catholic and Orthodox Christians as much as between Christians and Muslims. While many of the participants in these conflicts did not define their actions and motivations by direct reference to religion, the religious factor was important because it allowed the leadership of certain parties to raise the stakes by appealing to a greater cause. Religion is also present in world politics in ways far less dramatic and violent. For example, millions of Catholics around the world recognize the spiritual authority of the Pope as the final arbiter, globally, of matters relating to Church doctrine. We can also see today the role of various religious groups in seeking to build new bases of mass popular support, such as the recent upsurge in conversions to Pentecostal Christianity in Africa. The strength of the Christian Evangelical movement in the United

States has been a major factor in the political success of that country's Republican Party in recent years. The United States represents a very interesting case in which church and state are formally separated, but where religion features very heavily in political discourse. This has led some, such as the political theorist William Connolly (2005), to see in the United States a new form of theocracy (that is, government by religion) premised on affinities between belief in God and absolute faith in market capitalism. Religious institutions can sometimes also form alliances of the sort traditionally seen in global politics. For example, at the United Nations International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, the Vatican (the authority of the Catholic Pope) sought to make common cause with a number of conservative Muslim states in opposing birth control and abortion.

Globalization has also promoted the emergence of 'New Religious Movements' that combine aspects of various faith traditions while addressing concerns relating to environmentalism, social justice and the search for meaning and spirituality in a complex world. Some of these groups, such as the Falung Gong movement in China, seek to challenge the political status quo.[574]

Politics and Religion be Kept Separate

The notion of whether or not politics and religion should be kept apart is highly controversial in today's world. 'While religion has often been ignored as an important political factor, it is becoming increasingly clear that it plays a substantive role in world politics, both internationally and locally' Conflict has spread internationally in regards to religion, to places such as Nigeria, Israel, Afghanistan and Sri Lanka. 'In addition, the international network of Al- Qaeda has demonstrated the potential

[574] Krattenmaker, Tom. "How little we know about religion.(NEWS)." *USA Today* (April 30, 2007):

international impact of religious movements.'[575] The researcher is of opinion that politics and religion should be kept separate giving reasons through a liberal perspective. It will look at the liberal ideas of John Locke and Thomas Jefferson, The liberal approach claims that there should be a separation; because without separation conflict can spread among human beings about religion. 'Although enlightenment thinkers and their precursors differed on many important issues, they were unified in their concern to wrest the notion of legitimate government from its religious, particularly Christian foundations.'[576]

Before arguing why religion and politics should be separate, it is necessary to briefly understand why some key thinkers believed it was necessary for religion and politics to remain united. Niccolò Machiavelli believed 'religion was the foundation of state and society' he stated that 'rulers use religion accordingly since religion is under his control.'[577] Montesquieu also had a firm belief that religion should be part of politics as 'religion provides unity, harmony and social stability for society.' Thomas Hobbes argued about religion and politics in many of his works, the key argument being in the context of a religion and a world state. Hobbes argued that religion was vital for politics as 'religion drives people to obedience, makes them familiar with laws and how to live in a peaceful society.' [578]

Biblical Perspective of Politics

Many Christians have approached politics as if it lies outside their primary realm of responsibilities. Politics are often viewed are part of the "world" that we ought not to love. Often times our Christian life becomes confined to personal godliness, to church

[575] Fox, J. 'Religion: An Oft Overlooked Element of International Studies' International Studies Review [e-journal] 3 Available through: Cambridge Journals Database. Accessed [15 December 2011].

[576] Mansfield, H, C. America's Constitutional Soul. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press 1991.

[577] Ibid.

[578] Ibid.

activities, to attending liturgies, youth meetings, and Bible study. From this point of view, a Christian's involvement in politics is seen as a step into the secular world. From a biblical point of view, this dualistic distinction between church and world, between the sacred and the secular, is mistaken.

Purpose of Government: - To enforce the Law…"Government is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer" (Rom 13:4), since most people cannot be ruled by love, they must be ruled by law. That is inevitable in an imperfect world. So God has ordained that there should be ruling authorities to keep law and order.

Origin of Politics: - Government is an institution designed by God (like marriage) "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves" (Rom 13:1-2). Daniel says said: 'Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, For wisdom and might are His…He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise And knowledge to those who have understanding'" (Dan 2:20-21).

> *You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all"* (Dan 2:37-38).

Christians Duties to the Politics: - Praying for our Government "Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence, For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior" (1 Tim 2:1-3). Believer are urge to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be

ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men (Tit 3:1-2).

Submit and Obey the Authorities: - "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Mt 22:21). "Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do well. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men…Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king" (1 Peter 2:13-17).

> *Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves…He is God's minister…Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. (*Rom 13:2-6).

Times of Disobedience: - Should Christians uncritically support all actions of all governments? The Holy Bible teaches us that there are times when it is right to disobey when its commands are in contradiction to God's commands. Like Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge" (Acts 4:19).

Midwives disobeyed Pharaoh for God's sake “Then the king of Egypt spoke to the Hebrew midwives, of whom the name of one was Shiphrah and the name of the other Puah; and he said, ‘When you do the duties of a midwife for the Hebrew women, and see them on the birth stools, if it is a son, then you shall kill him; but if it is a daughter, then she shall live.' But the midwives feared God, and did not do as the king of Egypt commanded

them, but saved the male children alive. So the king of Egypt called for the midwives and said to them, "Why have you done this thing, and saved the male children alive?" And the midwives said to Pharaoh, ‘because the Hebrew women are not like the Egyptian women; for they are lively and give birth before the midwives come to them.' Therefore God dealt well with the midwives, and the people multiplied and grew very mighty" (Exodus 1:15-20).

Dual Citizenship: - We're citizens of two kingdoms: One temporal and earthly, the other eternal and heavenly. We are called to participate in both the culture and politics of The City of Man, as this world was called by Augustine, while primarily focusing on the City of God. While our focus and heart should be directed to where our bridegroom is (heaven), we cannot neglect that we do have a role in the world. We are called by the Lord Jesus to be preserving salt and illuminating light in the world. "For our citizenship is in heaven" (Phil 3:20), "Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph 2:19).

How Should Christians, Vote?: - "Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens" (Exodus 18:21).

As believers, we are citizens of two kingdoms; one temporal and earthly, the other eternal and heavenly. We are called to participate in both the culture and politics of The City of Man, as this world was called by Augustine, while primarily focusing on the Kingdom of God. The longevity and value of these dual kingdoms ought to serve as crucial guides to how invested we become in them. Eternal issues matter more than temporal ones. To allow politics and social issues to overtake our commitments to the everlasting is to risk idolatry, while losing ground in both realms.

Christian and Politics

The relationship between Christianity and politics is a historically complex subject and a frequent source of disagreement throughout the history of Christianity, as well as in modern politics between the Christian right and Christian left. There have been a wide variety of ways in which thinkers have conceived of the relationship between Christianity and politics, with many arguing that Christianity directly supports a particular political ideology or philosophy. Along these lines, various thinkers have argued for Christian communism, Christian socialism, Christian anarchism, Christian libertarianism, or Christian democracy. Others believe that Christians should have little interest or participation in politics or government.[579]

One of the great tragedies of the Protestant Reformation was the failure of the great Reformers John Calvin and Martin Luther to develop a doctrine of law, politics and the state upon truly reformed and biblical lines. The Reformers did not bring about any radical departures in the spheres of political science, statecraft and jurisprudence for the simple reason, as the German scholar August Lang has shown, that they were so involved in theological disputes, religious controversy and the very struggle for survival that they simply did not have any time left in which to develop a reformed and biblical theory of politics and government. This and many other reasons have a great impact on the way Christians are viewing politics today. [580]

Political Involvements

Christian need to change the way they are viewing politics today in other for them to get involved in it but before going to that First it is important to properly define political involvement. Some say that voting is an indirect form of involvement; the

[579] Denver Cheddie *should Christians enter politics*? From www.BibleIssues.org
[580]Ibid.

researcher defines political involvement not in indirect terms such as voting and being abreast of current issues, but directly seeking office and positions of ruler-ship, or seeking to influence local and national leaders. Christians should be aware of political issues, vote, and have personal preferences.[581]

How Christians Should be Involved?

As individuals, Christians are free to enter politics. There are numerous references in Proverbs to righteous and wicked rulers. Of course Proverbs defines righteousness in terms of social justice and equity, not personal right standing with God through Jesus Christ. So it is very possible for non- Christians to rule righteously according to the definition of Proverbs. However there are certain countries, like Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana, where the electorate is racially divided. The researcher would strongly advise against Christians in those countries going into politics, unless they wish to see the church racially divided as well. Concern is expressed that if Christians are not involved in politics, our right to evangelize cannot be taken for granted. That is a fair concern. Of course it cannot be assumed that by having Christians in politics, that right will be preserved. What we can assume and what the Bible clearly teaches is that if we wish to have that right preserved we should pray for those in.

Why should a Christian be involved in politics?

As we think upon the subject of Christians and politics it may seem odd to many that we would put the two together. Politics has gotten such a negative portrayal these days that to mention Christianity and politics in the same breath is as if you were suggesting that Christianity and pornography or Christianity and drug abuse went together! Politics is seen in such a bad light that the word itself has become synonymous with that which is evil, corrupt and deceptive. While admitting that this perception

[581] H. M. Carson the Christian and the state, (England: staples printers ltd. 1960), 24.

is widespread, we must also acknowledge that the word politics is not in and of itself evil. The word "politic" comes from the Greek word "politikos" meaning, "of a citizen". The word "politics" refers to the science and art of civil government. The word democracy means, "The rule of the people." When we put all of this together in the context of our country (Nigeria), we find out that what we have is called a democratic republic. This means that our system of government is based upon a written constitution which guarantees that our God given unalienable rights are to be protected by representatives that are democratically elected by its citizens. They are elected by popular vote and they legislate by majority vote.

In light of these definitions and what the Bible says, we come up with a different perspective than what is perceived today. For example, in Proverbs 29:12 it reads, "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." So, since this verse is true, then what makes "politics" good or evil is determined by the caliber of people who get involved in it. If the righteous are involved the citizens will rejoice, if the wicked are more involved the citizens will mourn. It was Edmund Burke who once said, "All that is required for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing."[582]

If you as a Christian citizen and stand back and do nothing you will insure that the things you dislike most about government will continue to happen! It is with this understanding that the researcher wants to discuss four obligations that require the Christian's involvement in politics.

Spiritual Obligation to God

The first obligation that the Christian has to be involved in politics is what the researcher calls "the Spiritual obligation to God." Our spiritual obligation to God says, "That being a good Christian involves being a good citizen. Being a good citizen is a

[582]http://www.frontline.org.za/articles/should_christians_be_involved_in.htm.

logical conclusion when you are maturing as a Christian. When Jesus described the character and nature of the Christian in the Sermon on the Mount, He said that we as Christians are to be as "salt and light." (Matt. 5) Notice that Jesus was not saying what we "ought to be". He was telling us what we are! True Christianity is not "trying" to be "salt and light", true Christianity is salt and light.[583]

The issue is not what we are - if indeed, we are converted. The question is: how effective are we going to be at what we are? Jesus encourages us to be "salty" and that means we need to get out of the "shaker". He encourages us to not "hide our lamp under a bushel" but rather to display it in such a way that it has the maximum amount of exposure! The researcher believes for us not to be involved and vocally heard is treason against God and His Word. As mentioned above Christians we have a dual citizenship. We are citizens both of heaven and earth. And, because of that we must guard against the temptation to be so heavenly minded that we are no earthly good!

Social Obligation to Others

The second obligation that we as Christians have to be involved in politics is what the researcher calls the "social obligation to others". Our social obligation to others says that to be a good citizen involves being willing to run for public office. So many times we think of the government as "those people" in Kaduna or in Abuja, They are our representatives. But we as a whole, the people of Nigeria are the government. And the people who serve us in Kaduna or Abuja will only be as good as those who run and whom we elect to public office! We are losing our best representative government not because of revolt or rebellion but by DEFAULT!

If we are left with nothing but unrighteous and unprincipled men and women to lead us, then don't be surprised at the laws and

[583]H. M. Carson, 29.

policy we have. Each of us as Christians has a social obligation to our families, our children, our communities and our future generations to be engaged and involved in our political process. Are we so selfish that we don't care what kind of country we will pass on to our children and our grandchildren? Is it not time again to say with the prophet Isaiah, "here am I Lord, send me."[584]

Moral Obligation to Truth

The third obligation that we as Christians have to be involved in politics is what I call **the "moral obligation to truth".** Our moral obligation to truth says that if we run for public office, we must stand for something! It's been said that "if you do not stand for something, you will fall for anything!"[585] The problem we have today with "politics" and "political parties" is that we have unprincipled people who will say, do and confess anything to get elected and stay elected.

It is clear that we have too many "politicians" and not enough "statesmen". The researcher believes it was Will Rogers who once gave the difference between a politician and a statesman. He said "a politician knows the truth but tells you what you want to hear. A statesman knows what you want to hear but tells you the truth anyway."[586]

It is a sad commentary upon the state of our society that truth is not what our citizens are looking for. It is only in the pursuit of truth that any society can have the kind of values that makes life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness worth living for. Our laws and policies must be based upon those certain unalienable rights that come from our Creator God. And it is He alone, who

[584] Ibid.

[585]Zamani B. Kafang, *Christian integrity and politics in Nigeria,* (Nigeria: Zoe graphic Nigeria, 2011), 33.

[586]ttps://ys167.infusionsoft.com/app/form/1c20b33130c4f5445820b06c40352978?iFrame=true&referrer=attachment%3A/46/christian-politics-government.htm by Will Rogers.

in the Ten Commandments has established eternal standards of right and wrong that any civilized society must be based upon. All those who run for such offices must hold fast to the moral obligation of truth. This is seen in Romans 13:9-10.

Eternal Obligation to Righteousness

The fourth and final obligation that we as Christians have to be involved in politics is what might be called **the "eternal obligation to righteousness"**. Our eternal obligation to righteousness says that if we are willing to "stand for something", we must also be willing to "suffer the consequences". This fact hits us at the very core of what drove and motivated our founding fathers in the writing of The Declaration of Independence. How can any of us forget their words, that they were willing to give "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor"! Our founding fathers knew that anything worth living for was indeed worth dying for! For the Christian this means we have to be involved in the political process of our country, even if it means running for public office, and even if it means you will lose.

I will practically say that there is more at stake than an election. Christians, more than other people, have an eternal obligation to righteousness that transcends this earthly life into eternity itself! We must realize that it is never wrong to do what is right, even if we don't see the immediate results. It is not just about us, it is about others too. It's about other generations and it is ultimately about having to stand before God in eternity and give account to Him. We know that one is never a loser unless he/she quit. Too many Christians are more worried about being a loser in the world's eyes than being a winner in God's eyes!

In conclusion, political participation is a duty for Christian that is where they can shine and give the universal salting test. The world needs change and only the elect (the called) that can exhibit that change. The bible says in Deuteronomy 28:28, if we do not obey "the Lord will afflict us with madness, blindness,

and confusion of the mind." the world is in a state of madness, blindness and confusion because the states are rule by the mad, blind, and confused people. We are the church of Christ we are the custodians of the truth we are to get up and rule so that we can rescue the world from decaying.

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