

PARTICIPATION OF CHRISTIANS IN POLITICS AND DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE IN NIGERIA

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Stephen Chinedu CHIOKE

Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Management Sciences, NnamdiAzikiwe
University, Awka.

eruditescholar001@gmail.com ORCID: 0000-0002-5337-452X

Abstract: Leadership is championed through political participation starting from the grassroots to the federal. However, Christians' participation in politics/governance has not been significant and their civic responsibilities appear to be consciously eroded given the misconceptions of biblical injunctions. To address this, qualitative methods were used in critiquing areas of duties of Christians' in Nigerian politics and democratic governance from doctrinal and moral standpoints; and examining the doctrinal and moral questions surrounding Christians' apathy. The paper revealed that three areas of obligations that Christians are to fulfill comprise: duty to God, duty to the State, and duty to neighbours. Failure of the clergymen, failure of the government, political corruption, godfatherism conundrum and failure of the security operatives were the identified moral questions. The paper concluded that the level of Christian involvement in Nigerian politics is low and democratic governance is lacking in Nigeria. It therefore submitted that Christians should fulfill their duties through political involvement and advance social justice and social welfare policies as part of the hallmarks of scriptural injunctions. The implication of the paper for practice is that except the moral questions raised in this paper are tackled, Christians would likely maintain their apathetic stand on politics.

Keywords: Christian, Democracy, Doctrine, Social Contract Theory, Statesmen, #END SARS

Introduction

Public administration cannot be implemented without the participation of all including Christians who are more often than not neglected and sidelined in Nigeria's political space. Therefore, the major aim of this paper is to examine Christians' participation in politics and democratic governance in Nigeria. Bearing in mind the significance of this topic vis-à-vis present circumstances like non-inclusive governance, apathy, mismanagement of public treasury and so on, one could opine that the subject matter, Christians' participation in politics and democratic governance cannot be overemphasized, because it occupies the center stage in the political discourse of developing countries of the world with specific reference to Nigeria. Adscititiously, the fact that a pluralist sovereign country like Nigeria is fraught with political participation challenges should not be neglected and the effects thereof cannot be duly quantified. Contemporary political debates have shifted from drawing the picture of politics, election and so on to core issues of democratic governance and the symbiosis that exists between man as a stakeholder and the state together with politics itself to Biblical and moral issues. Thus, the question is: how has Bible doctrines and morality shaped Nigerian politics and administration/democratic governance? Hence, there is need to thoroughly rummage on matters that cut across Christians' participation in Nigeria's politics and democratic governance as it concerns the doctrinal and moral issues. Significantly, a Christian in the

purview of this investigation is not a person who goes to church on Sunday or other days of weekly activities and identifies him/herself as a Christian based on his/her geographical placement in a geographical setting largely dominated by Christians. For example, an Igbo man when seated among the comity of other ethnic nationalities anywhere in Nigeria is tagged a Christian chiefly because he is from South-East geopolitical zone, that is largely dominated by Christians forgetting that there are Animists, Atheists, Muslims, and so on among the Igbo ethnic nationality. Operationally contrived, one is called a Christian because he/she is indeed Christ like – a true reflection of Christ (Acts 11:26). Thus, a Christian's attitude should be the same with Christ Jesus (Phil 2:5 GNT).

Leadership is more of directing others (Chioke, 2012, p.112) and watching over others in order to warn them against deviating (Ezekiel 3:17; 33:7). Therefore, the leadership of a country is to be blamed when it fails in its duty as guide to the public (Ezekiel 33:6). Leadership is championed through political participation starting from the grassroots to the federal. It therefore becomes imperative to submit that the livewire of any society revolves around politics and democratic governance or good governance. Interestingly, "The current wave of political liberalizations in Africa which began in the 20th Century has witnessed unprecedented and monumental changes in the region's political landscape. Much of this liberalization have bordered on pressures for conduct of free and fair elections that aim at the enthronement of democratic governance. In fact, elections in Africa and elsewhere and the processes that underlie its dynamics have become one of the major parameters of assessing and promoting citizens' participation in democratic politics and governance (Onah, 2009, p.1)." Regrettably, "The history of elections in Nigeria has shown that Nigerians cannot rely on them as veritable means of installing the kind of leaders they want and by implication in changing the material conditions of their existence. This is because elections in Nigeria have been marred by the ugly incidents of electoral malpractice (Ezeani, 2004, p.144)." With the ruinous troubles manifesting in Nigeria's politicking/electioneering processes; Nigeria is yet to prove beyond doubt she is the giant of Africa in qualitative terms rather than quantitative – by mere population. Collaboratively, "one cannot therefore look askance and wallow in the pretense that all is well with the sovereign entity wrongly called the giant of Africa (Chioke & Mbamalu, 2020, p.389)." The inability of Nigeria to truly become the giant of Africa by exemplary leadership has in one way or the other given fillip to existing disenchantment cum political apathy by Christians and other adherents of diverse religions.

There are views with regard to Christians' participation in politics and democratic governance in Nigeria – the centerpiece of this investigation and on this, two schools of thought have emerged. While one strongly aligns itself with it, the other is strongly opposed to it. It is evident that political participation includes but not limited to: campaigning, voting, electoral representation and holding offices in the cabinet. Divergently stated, "This concept is related to the idea of power-sharing and the components of the political process (Hamzah, 2021, p.273)." Democratic governance has been scuttled by the predominance of apathy by Christians who are currently sidelined in the political permutation, game and leadership of Nigeria. There is no gainsaying that there is little or no participation by Christians in the national politics and this could be tied to moral and misconceived scriptural lines. The State is seen as an institution ordained by God, and their rulers regarded as God's own emissaries on earth (Abonyi, 2005, p.43). Since the state is an institution ordained by God, the paper verified why Christians have not fully identified and

participated in the political affairs of God's handiwork – the state called, Nigeria. With this, there is an association between Christianity based theology and politics/democracy in Nigeria. Civic responsibilities are the inevitable cum important areas of concerns that regulate the relationships between the state and her citizens. It is the debt citizens owe the state as seen from the lens of social contract theory. Apart from the known civic responsibilities, there exist categorically just a few areas of duties regarding Christians' political participation. The problem of this study is to critique the areas of duties surrounding Christian political participation in Nigeria from doctrinal and moral standpoints; as this has not been empirically verified by any known literature, hence the need to examine it surfaces. But then, "The meaningful participation in the decision-making entails active participation at all levels in the problem identification, prioritization, implementation, monitoring and supervision (Amoke, 2020, p.201)." This leaves us with a puzzle: have Christians been fully involved in these areas amid the wind of segregation and exclusion troubling the democratic boat of Nigeria? It seems that a lot of doctrinal and moral questions are responsible for serious instances of Christians' apathy, disenchantment and failure to key into problem of identification, prioritization, implementation, monitoring and supervision in the state politics by those who are naively conscious about their heavenly goal and other doctrinal provisions. Hence, this paper is an attempt to unravel those moral and scriptural/doctrinal questions concerning Christians' political participation.

Conceptual and Theoretical Issues

To duly relay useful impulses on political participation, 'politics' is first explicated. Politics is about the acquisition of power and the use of such power (Adetoyese, n.d, p.3). Conversely, the acquisition and use of such power gives birth to government. Nevertheless, "Politics gives rise to government and government is sustained through politics (Ewuim, 2008, p.41)." On the other side of the spectrum, politics is "a bundle of social interactions between the individual man and a centralized institution of different levels of legitimacy whose role is to make and implement decisions for the benefit of the whole society (Abonyi, 2005, p.4)." Abonyi's view supra informs, educates and socializes all with the fact that politics is social in nature. Politics is not a unilateral action and as such, decisions thereof must be multilaterally taken in a manner that it encompasses other relevant institutions of the general system. Hence, allocation of values based on unilateral decisions of the non-ruling elite, 'political godfather' is a complete negation of politics in a democratic setting. If allocation of values is strictly on the dictates of the political godfathers; then the state is no longer sovereign as it must have been hoodwinked, hijacked and sunk into internal slavery, colonialism and imperialism of the colonialist oligarchy under the guise of 'godfatherism'. Pertinently, "The modern State is, above all, a sovereign State. It seeks to be the sole authority and the only effective power within a given territory, and the independence of that territory," as noted by Bernard Crick in Abonyi (2005, p.45). This can only be achieved when meetings/decisions are multilateral and not a kangaroo typology rooted in egocentric interests. Therefore, Abonyi (supra) correctly related the activities of the person concerned (individual man) to the State (i.e. a centralized institution). Politics is mainly determining the allocation of national cake (wealth) and the way it is allocated to distinct locations at any given time. In Nigeria's political experience,

financial allocations are determined by the legislature. In some cases, capital projects that are meant for one community are usually diverted to another community by powerful/influential politicians from another community; while some are diverted into private accounts for selfish reasons. This is where the cake sharing psychosis – disconnection from the socioeconomic reality and the incoherence in the sharing and distribution of resources comes into play. This paper now aligns with American Political Scientist, Harold Dwight Lasswell who defined politics as who gets what, when, and how.

Attention is at this point turned to political participation. Contextually, political participation is synonymous with political involvement and would be interchangeably adopted. Political participation/involvement entails a situation where an eligible citizen directly seeks to acquire, occupy and consolidate political office at either the local, state or federal government or seeking to influence leaders at the local, state and federal levels. Political participation is involvement in political processes of the State. Then, how do people participate in politics? Politics is done via representative democracy anchored on true representation of those inside and those outside. Therefore, politics at any point must necessarily take into consideration the people at the grassroots, the people at the city area (metropolis) and then the international community. Again, “By political participation we mean activity by private citizens designed to influence government decision making (Huntington and Nelson, 1976, p.3).” In other words, Christians and other private citizens are politically involved in matters that concern statehood when they seek to influence government decision making. This suggests that any act targeted at attracting allocation of values through state decision making process is political participation. Another strand of conceptual explication is thrown up shortly: ...political participation will be taken as covering three main areas. Firstly, it refers to electoral representation where individuals are nominated, receive votes and gain seats in parliamentary and local elections. Secondly, it includes presence in ministerial cabinets (usually picked by the head of state and/or Prime Minister) where more decision-making takes place. Lastly, it relates to the involvement of ordinary citizens in the political process through voting in various levels of elections (McCallum, n.d, p.1). As citizens, Christians like Muslims would expect to participate freely in all three categories (McCallum, n.d, p.1). If this is ensured, the society will be politically developed to meet up with the 21st century human needs envisaged in the social contract that exists between man and the State.

Some say that voting is an indirect form of involvement; the 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 (Adetoyese, n.d, p.3). Significantly, there is nothing like indirect form of political involvement/participation in Nigeria, every form of political participation and franchise is directly exercised by an eligible citizen and not through a proxy. Something is indirectly done when it is done through a proxy or an agent. Then, direct speaks volume of something characterized by close logical, causal and/or consequential relationship. Based on this, such is done by oneself. This goes to suggest that in Nigeria’s context, political participation at the moment can only be direct and has no antithesis such as indirect political participation. But in developed cities, there exists indirect political participation – voting by proxy. Erroneously; it is widely taken, thought and disseminated that political participation is mostly in the area of voting and holding political office as the Chief Executive of the local government, state or federation. However, this paper takes a different

stand. The resultant logic for this stance is simple! That is, participation is not limited to holding political offices. However, if political participation is limited to holding political office, then it is herein reasoned that in the political processes, Christians in Nigeria seem to be greatly on the side of apathy, because the number of Muslims in the leadership of President Muhamadu Buhari supersedes Christians. Therefore, “Political Participation takes various forms such as:

1. holding public or political office;
2. being a candidate for an election;
3. taking part in political campaigns;
4. attending a political rally;
5. contributing money towards party activities;
6. taking part in political discussions;
7. wearing party badges;
8. displaying party stickers (Oyediranet al, 2002, p.68-69).”

So, whenever one engages in any of these forms, he/she is involved in politics. To crown it all, political participation is right or freedom to air views, assemble and associate with others. Taking part in the conduct of state affairs by holding public or political office appears to be the height of it. Next is a brief lesson on democracy. Democracy focuses on people oriented leadership. The term “democracy” is gotten from two Greek words: “Demos” and “Kratia”. Demos when translated mean “the people” and “Kratia” means, “rule”. National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN) (2006, p.2) relayed that, “In a general sense democracy is used to describe a system of government in which ultimate power (or sovereignty) rests with the people against other forms of government in which the final decision-making power rests with an individual (monarchy) or with a small number (aristocracy).” Abraham Lincoln defined democracy as, “government of the people, by the people and for the people.” Democracy represents a society where the people form government, a system where majority voices are upheld and the minority interest protected.

Democracy is not just about elections but in addition about how elected leaders make decisions (Munck, 2014). However, Okafor (2013) in Eze (ed) was right as she noted that: One can view democracy from the perspective of “System” and “Process.” As a system, it entails that the emergence of administrative and authoritative institutions of the State should be determined by popular sovereignty. Hence, decisions, character structures and processes of the sovereignty, authority should reflect popular interest. Invariably, as a process, it is a process of mass activity, which influences the outcome of governance. Thus, it is a process of mass awareness, consciousness and involvement in the decision making and taking of the governing machineries of the State. This process reflects on election, referendum, plebiscite, opinion process etc. Then, suffice it to say that, democratic governance is public administration based on the ideals and principles of democracy. At this point, there is need to pause and briefly examine the theoretical framework of this paper.

Social Contract Theory

The theory informing the debates and purview of this paper is the social contract theory. Social contract theory is a theory in moral cum political philosophy that originated

in the age of enlightenment with major concern on the legitimacy of the authority that the state wields over the citizen (Gough, 1936). It is necessary to state that the heart of social contract theory is that the idea that government should be based on the consent of the people/governed (Stone, 2018). This consent is gotten through political participation as against the apathy established by the activities of political godfathers of the ruling party as seen in African states like Nigeria. The central idea of social contract perspective is that morality, social and political practices and institutions or principles of social relationships are acceptable to fully rational person on the condition that they either satisfy the utility or interests (Etieyibo, 2018). In this regard, the social contract model helps this paper to interrogate the moral responsibilities of the citizens who consciously assented to being members/stakeholders of the state. According to the social contract theorist, the difference between political institutions usually states that enjoy this consent and those that do not is critical (Stone, 2018); and ought to be legally reconsidered for better improvement.

In the application, social contract theory gives cogent clarifications on the relationship between the state and the citizens by helping the researcher to interrogate and bring to the fore the areas of duties by all citizens from doctrinal and moral standpoints with specific reference to Christians in Nigeria. Also, doctrinal and moral questions with respect to Christians' political participation and democracy in Nigeria was examined from the philosophy of social contract.

Materials and Methods

Qualitative method was employed by the researcher. Qualitative methods like document analyses, personal experiences and discussions were employed in generating relevant data that were thematically presented and resultantly analyzed. Following this, the study was based on data generated from secondary sources which includes: Bible, textbooks, journals and other materials.

The qualitative data generated from the in-depth desk review of the secondary sources of data collection were analyzed using content analytical method. This was complemented with key informant interviews conducted by the researcher wherein six (6) Nigerians from different states were queried on their interpretation/views of different verses incorporated in the analysis. The choice of 6 Interviewees was in line with Morse (1994) position on phenomenological research. Participant 001, 002, e.t.c were used to differentiate the opinions of the interviewees on the following questions from 2Corinthians 6:14 and Matthew 22:21: Having been instructed not to unequally yoke with unbelievers, do you think that Christians should participate in politics and governance? Do you think that politics and governance belong to devil and as such, no Christian should partake in politics/governance? To ensure validity and reliability, multiple extant literature were equally used to minimize errors.

Christians and Politics/Democratic Governance in Nigeria: Critiquing the Areas of Duties from Doctrinal and Moral Standpoints

Fairly stated, politics is a game of numbers and not a do or die affair. It is a service oriented craft crafted to enrich the poor and make life even better for the rich. Regarding this, it is a clarion call for duty that must be obeyed by citizens and on a special note,

Christians who are already disenchanted and disappointed with the way politics and governance is being handled in Nigeria. Considering this, the paper goes a bit deeper to excavate areas of obligations that Christians have to fulfill. They are:

Duty to God – It is important to say that Christians have heavenly and earthly fathers. To this end, Christians must do everything possible to satisfy heaven's curiosity over us and do the bidding of God. To decipher this bidding we read: Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me (Ezekiel 33:7, NIV). From this doctrine enunciated in the just cited verse, it is clear that Christians have been called of God to serve in political positions and then instruct the led with the right instructions from God, our Creator through policy templates and the instrumentality of the Constitution. Indeed, this signifies a manifest indication of authority and responsibility from God. Thus, "The fulcrum of any task is authority and responsibility (Chioke & Mbamalu, 2020, p.393)." Leadership through political participation is an unavoidable task saddled upon Christians by God himself. Therefore, this point is pinned to doctrinal perspective.

Duty to the State – Citizenship has a price (Udenta, 1999). In other word, every Christian is duty bound to pay his/her price by rendering approved civic responsibilities to the State. This stems from the social contract theory of the State. To start with, why does government perform its function in a sovereign state? Fundamentally, "The reason why government must perform those functions is because of the social contract (mutual agreement) it entered into with the public (Chioke, n.d)." Social contract is the action of the general public in a certain geographical location coming together and agreed that a certain group of people or a person should be entrusted with the right to govern under stipulated conditions, principles, state laws and international conventions/treaties for service delivery and local policing of lives and properties of the people as well as the protection of the state territory against foreign aggression through a well constituted and equipped armed force. Therefore; based on morality, every citizen – Christians and non-Christians are duty bound to render support to the state via participation and other areas of civic responsibility.

Duty to neighbours – Christians owe it as a duty to care for others (neighbours). Neighbour means the person you owe a duty of care (see *Rylands v Fletcher* 1868 LR 3 HL 330) and whom your actions or inaction would affect. It does not matter whether you are related to that person by blood or not. This is the moral foundation for love, compassion, equity and fairness in all social interactions and politicking processes. In this dimension, John Stott was right to have said, "The authority by which the Christian leader leads is not power but love, not force but example, not coercion but reasoned persuasion." Also, "Our social obligation to others says that to be a good citizen involves being willing to run for public office (Adetoyese, n.d)." The debate herein is that duty to neighbor stems from both moral and doctrinal (religious) standpoints as both approve it.

As a duty to neighbours (subjects), the matter is not just running for public office, one must seek to run an Administration that is service delivery conscious and not a breeding citadel for corruption and allied inconveniences. On the contrary, Nigeria is an abyss of corruption, instability, clannish politics/ethnicity and other ugly imponderables that negate service delivery through competent leadership. It is thus on track to argue that, "Nigerians are corrupt because the system under which they live today makes corruption easy and profitable; they will cease to be corrupt when corruption is made difficult and inconvenient (Achebe (1983))."

Christians' Participation in Nigerian Politics: An Emphasis on the Doctrinal and Moral Questions

Given the divide and rule posture of Nigerian Administration, participation has remained uninteresting. Also. Sequel to the constraints superimposed by a doctrinal drunk internal ecology of Nigerian church, it is not surprising that Christians have immensely contributed to an ideological crusade which promised participation based on belonging to a particular denomination rather than being a good citizen irrespective of the denomination. When this is not met, apathy becomes predominant due to prevalent doctrinal and moral nagging issues/questions portrayed below.

Doctrinal Questions

Doctrine is a system of belief held and taught by leaders of a church denomination or the generality of the Christendom. Doctrines therefore influence the actions and inactions of Christians in both private and public matters. Now, the prevalent Biblical or doctrinal issues needing urgent attention for Christians' participation in politics and democratic governance are presented thus:

The perspective of 2Corinthians 6:14 – This verse (Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?);” is a guiding principle of many Pentecostal churches in Nigeria justifying Christians' apathetic stance on political and governance matters as they see all that pertains to politics as having an unequal fellowship with unbelievers. Participant 002 said: No! Christians should not be involved because they can deviate. According to Participant 004, “Christians should participate fully in politics and governance. Participant 005 & 006 unanimously agreed Christians should not have anything to do with Nigerian politics and governance the politicians there are worse than unbelievers. However, Participant 003 in reacting to the key informant question quoted John 1:4-5 and said: “If your light cannot supersede the darkness there, there is no need going into politics. So you need to be sure that your light will supersede the darkness there.” What this entails is that Africans associate politics with darkness, the property of the devil and one ought not to be involved if not spiritually equipped to overcome the dangers therein.

Thus, this portion of the Bible has been misconstrued and misapplied thereby causing low participation in politics. Christians who hold this view see politics as an unworthy, satanic and sinful venture done by wicked men of the kingdom of darkness. To this end, their pronounced political apathy cannot be easily diluted and corrected. Be that as it may, there is nothing bad in that biblical injunction, but the misconception and misapplication is questionable and calls for immediate arrest via reorientation. Participant 001 held a different view: I don't think that politics are not for Christians. They should be involved in order to change the country so that things will be in order. The philosophy of the Christ Left is centred on Jesus' radical stance for the downtrodden and his love, inclusion and identification with the marginalized people during His time on earth. While the author maintains conservative evangelicalism philosophy/focus on sin, repentance, salvation, holiness, and so on; the author also shares the view of the Christian Left above.

The perspective of Matthew 22:21 – It says, “...So give back to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's (NIV).” Most Christians hold the view that politics is for Caesar and not for God. Participant 002 highlighted the fact that: “If you go into politics, you will

definitely behave like them and they will definitely corrupt you.” Participant 004, “Politics is not bad. It is bad people that made politics bad. Participant 005: I must give to Caesar what belongs to him. You won’t see me meddling with politics especially in Nigeria. In the same vein, Participant 006 said: No one should find a Christian who wants to make heaven in Caesar’s domain. Differently, Participant 003 said: The Pharisees did not ask him about politics. They were talking about money. Therefore, it is good for a believer to take part in politics in a sincere way.

God instituted the politics of king making and installation of leaders (I Samuel 8:6-7; 9:15-22; 16:1-13) and the people participated (II Samuel 3:17-21; 5:1-4). The truth is that God is interested in the process of recruiting and selecting leaders, politics. That was why when Lucifer conducted the first ever attempted but failed coup d’état, He (God) frowned at such unworthy act of rebellion and selfish politicking, because the process was not according to the laws of heaven. Politics of do or die for selfish interest was frowned at (II Sam 1:13-17) and as such, politics is for the children of God – Christians.

Moral Questions

The morally inclined issues which hamper Christians’ participation and by extension the general participation in politics and democratic governance are:

The failure of the clergy – The crop of men in priestly regalia is worrisomely nostalgic – in the sense that Nigeria is replete with: men of God and men off God. The proliferation of shrines, occultic groups and social gatherings in the name of churches and ministries makes Christians’ involvement an alternative to idleness. Thus, politics has turned to be a temporary place of refuge for the weaker vessels that are unfit to be reckoned as professionals in professional fields of human endeavor. The proliferation of these social gatherings so to speak shows that some men wrongly seen as of God are unfit to be of God and as such, they are off God. What may have engineered this? It is simply the problem of stomach infrastructure. Then, “Stomach infrastructure is a reality projected by the Nigerian politicians on the vulnerable electorate who for poverty are encouraged to mortgage their fundamental right of freedom to choose who governs them in exchange for immediate gratification in monetary, food, or other material terms (Dauda, 2020, p.366).” What we see in third world countries are copious manifestations of the challenges of ‘infrastructure of the stomach’ and ‘infrastructure for the stomach,’ – that is using the commonwealth to satiate the insatiable taste of greedy men and this has subsequently created a chasm between the mass of electorates in Nigeria and the leadership at all levels. Unfortunately, the fake ones in clerical robes seem to be colossally benefitting from the anomaly thereof.

Their dogma which they systematically serve as sermons to their unassuming followership has more often than not caused Christians to remain apathetic. What must have caused this? The possible enthroning influence/factor is the doctrinal deficits/yeast of the Pharisees in the midst of the uncalled (men off God) and the untrained/undisciplined men in priestly robes. Notably, the men off God like the worldly technocrats see politics as a way of enriching and satisfying their ever insatiable wants. That is why they have turned to be sycophants surreptitiously employed to serve the purpose of singing the praise of the highest bidder among the thief executive (sarcasm meaning corrupt chief executive) at all tiers of government in Nigeria. Overtly affirmed, “A highly worrisome dimension to the apathetic culture is that the state is in denial of its existence, simply because of the activities of a sycophantic minority that usually multiply at election period to sing the praises of the

candidates that dole out the most cash (Idike, 2014, p.139).” To showcase their crass theological myopia, these men pretend to see while they are blind, and feign to hear from Holy Spirit while they are utterly unable to hear the voice of the Spirit. Resultantly, these fake prophets coin proverbs and riddles in the form of prophecies and then sell to their ever harmless, but gullible loyalists who under such spell export such demonically contrived theologies and fake prophecies in the form of political socialization to their innocent children, wards and aged parents. The aftermath is electing chief executives that are no less than tyrants, wolves and looters that run the land amok and take the ten times country anticlockwise from the condition they met the country. Thus, the failure of the clergy is a religious/doctrinal question that beckons for redress.

Failure of the government – The failure of the government at the centre and other federating units (states) to deliver its campaign promises contributes to the apathetic stance of most Christians in Nigeria. Similarly, “The Arab nationalist approach as a strategy for Christian political participation was also compromised by the wider failings of the movement to deliver its post-independence promises of political participation, economic development, Arab unity and the liberation of Palestine (McCallum, n.d, p.8).” No doubt, the reckless abandonment of campaign promises dissuade God fearing Christians from taking part in politics during the pre-election stage and election stage, because they see politics as a channel leading many to the position of falsehood. Again, “The type and extent of Christian political participation is also interconnected to the policies practiced by each state and in particular, if distinctive strategies are employed with regard to Christians in comparison to other citizens (Ibid).” With this, apathy and even the worst form, anarchy has been the order of the day.

Political corruption– Bureaucracy has been highly politicized since military incursion into Nigerian politics (Idike, et al 2019) and politics and governance have consequently been affected by Christians’ apathy due to manifest indices of corruption in the country. There are more than two but fewer than many manifest indications that one who is not abreast with the happenings in the political terrain of this country can point out to credence the fact that Nigeria is political corruption infested. What does political corruption entail? Political corruption could be seen as the use of several strategies that are often illegal and therefore unknown to the customs, traditions and constitution of the country in getting the political power of the state. With this austerity measure, Christians’ participation in politics and good governance is unachievable because political corruption negates the core doctrinal values of the church. Political corruption usually includes activities such as vote-rigging, registration of unqualified, dead, or non-existent voters, purchase and sale of votes, and the falsification of election results (Goodman (1990). Corroboratively submitted, corruption in the political sphere manifests itself in election rigging, the purchase and sale of votes and the falsification of election results (Nmah, 2017). The consequences of corruption are unfavorable for the progress of any society (Igiebor, 2019, p.493). At the foreign scene, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, political corruption has also reconfigured the system abroad resulting to citizens wallowing in apathy. Additionally, “A survey experiment in Hungary shows that exposure to political corruption makes respondents more likely to abstain from voting, less likely to support the incumbent party, and more likely to expect the anti-establishment party to win (Snegovaya, 2020, p.1162).” Perhaps, the reason for the foregoing problem is that corruption appears to have been ethnicised in Nigeria. Therefore it is believed that the major challenge that the

persistence of corruption poses to all Nigerian of integrity and conscience is on how to de-ethnicise corruption (Arowolo, 2022).

Godfatherism conundrum – Godfatherism conundrum in the church and Nigerian politics/administration deters Christians from both Orthodox and Pentecostal background from participating in political matters because of their doctrine of do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. It is important to mention that, “Godfatherism is now becoming rampant in the church or should I say godfatherism in “mentorship” clothing and many young ministers are being controlled by so-called godfathers that makes them deviate from the real message of God (Dandwyse, 2021).” In Nigeria, the menace appears to be worse than what is obtainable in other countries (Chioke, 2020, p.277). The reason may be attributed to the fact that godfathers in Nigeria are occultists in Knights apparel and as such, genuine Christians of the Pentecostal family in their holiness emphasis tend to dissociate from them and matters of politics/governance. In all godfatherism negatively affects inclusive governance and transparency needed for democracy to thrive and the dividends of democracy. Buttressing this Umahi (2013) stated that the game plan of the godfathers, since the return of democracy in 1999 is somewhat retrogressive to the long awaited democracy in Nigeria.

Failure of the security operatives –The #END SARS saga in Nigeria shows that the Nigerian Police Force has failed. Hiring guns to robbers to go and rob is one of the failures and accusations against the police by Nigerians. Nigerians prefer meeting an armed robber while traveling with huge amount of money to Nigerian police. Why? Majority say that armed robber will collect your money and let you go, but the police will kill you, take away your money, plant gun in your pocket or vehicle and label you an armed robber. Additionally, the following is just an example:

The police may not be the greatest beneficiary of corruption. But it is so disgraceful to see police men who stand at the various strategic checkpoints erected by themselves brazenly extorting money from the people in the full glare of everybody. What a shameful display! The police force in Nigeria is indeed a source of national disgrace (Omeayo, 2015, p.174). This regrettable ominous display of sheer shamelessness and integrity deficit in the system has plunged many people into degrading socioeconomic conditions.

The Nigerian Army is another source of worry and disgrace. For example, in the South East geopolitical zone, they hire young boys to stay with them and forcefully extort money from transporters. Whichever way, the legal maxim, *qui facit per alium facit per se* (he who acts through another, acts himself) is thus herein emphasized. Therefore, one should not do through another that which he/she cannot personally do. Additionally, soldiers extort money by themselves from road users. Regrettably, security operatives in Nigeria are puppets remote controlled/used by politicians to harass civilians during pre-election, election and post-election stages of the electioneering process. This no doubt deters Christians from participating. Therefore, the security operatives should not be left alone to rid themselves off the corrupt practices hanging upon their shoulders. An external body is direly needed.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Given the doctrinal questions, moral questions and matters arising; this paper concludes that the level of Christian involvement in Nigeria’s politics is low and

democratic governance is lacking in Nigeria, because the issues highlighted above are the core marks that depict a democratically governed sovereign state all over the world. Matters arising are sequel to corrupt practices by the grand corrupt masters in and outside the country's corridor of power. Therefore, as God told Hezekiah to put his family in order (2Kings 20:1; Isaiah 38:1), Christians in the world and particularly Nigeria should rise and reposition their country by becoming watchmen in their various political enclaves. Given the theoretical framework of this paper, Christians should fulfill their duty to the state through political involvement, advance social justice and social welfare policies as part of the hallmarks of scriptural injunctions in the Old and New Testaments.

To get it right, this paper ultimately recommends that all hands must be on deck to engender the following true meaning of the national 2020#END SARS campaign in Nigeria as defined by the researcher:

E – Economic and Educational Reform

N – National Interest

D – Detribalised Democratic Society

S – Security Reform

A – Accountable/Anti-graft Leadership and Anti-corrupt Public

R – Restructured Political Setting

S – Stability in Governance

This paper believes that ensuring the aforementioned variables that are currently lacking will make all to participate during and after electioneering period. Also, Christians must not neglect the clarion call to servant leadership as exemplified in Philipians 2:5-6. With recourse to the existing laws regarding election; Christians should be accorded enabling ground to keenly participate in politics by championing the course of good governance and sustainable development and contribute toward repositioning Nigeria to occupy her rightful position as the giant of the entire black nations.

Implication for Practice

The implication of the paper for practice is that except the moral questions that were hitherto raised in this paper are tackled, Christians would likely maintain their apathetic stance on politics. This has accounted for the lackluster performance of public bureaucracies, organs and agencies of Nigerian government. Again, the observations/revelations of the study implicate that political office holders need to continuously inculcate the political cultures of the state among Christians. Not just this, it shows that there is a cogent need for re-orientation of the electorates'/voters' perception of politics in Nigerian churches, as appropriate socialization exposes Christians to the dangers of taking apathetic stance. That is, it does not guarantee better life in future for all and sundry.

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