



AGGREGATING & INSTIGATING CHURCH LEADERSHIP INTENTIONALLY FOR IMPACT UPON THE STATE

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Aggregating & Instigating Church Leadership Intentionally For Impact Upon The State

First, I'd like to thank Pastor Paul Adefarasin and the local government community of House on the Rock for inviting me to speak at this conference. The title I've been given is quite instructional to say the least: Aggregating & Instigating Church Leadership Intentionally For Impact Upon The State. This has actually been my focus for quite some time now and I intend to continue. I strongly believe the church has a pivotal role to play in the development of our nation. I hope to use this lecture to instigate the leadership of the church to God's political intent.

As with lectures like this I am careful to abide by the directional development given. This is because conferences like this are prophetic platforms. They help chart strategic direction for the church.

Personally I am at that point in life in which I am re-examining issues. I am examining conventional thinking inside the church vis a vis the national agenda. This is an exercise we all must undertake periodically if we don't want to end up prisoners of outdated thinking.

As I thought about the church I unfortunately came to the conclusion the church ignores realism. We have subscribed to an idealism that can't hold in the face of realpolitik. And when the church is confronted with realpolitik she retreats into the shell of spiritual escapism.

The church is engaged in asymmetric warfare. An asymmetric warfare is one in which the combatants are at strategic cross purposes, though in the same war. And the church has been engaged in asymmetric warfare for decades. This is why we record woeful results on the national question. And this despite

the prophecies. The problem is not the prophecies. It is the absence of wisdom for mechanisation of prophecy that is our challenge. We're locked in a belief system that is lacking in pragmatism. But faith is not unintelligent. The Bible advocates intelligent faith. When the Bereans did fact checking on Paul's exegesis the Bible called their effort noble. Intelligent faith is noble. An unexamined belief is not worth keeping.

I want to take you back into history this morning, show you how the church missed certain cues and why the church is where it is today, and by extension the nation. We're in a cul-de-sac.

In the mid 1970s and the 1980s God unfolded a new agenda. He moved into university campuses and began recruiting young men and women to his cause. They became his strategic focus. With the benefit of hindsight we now know it was a long term vision. The vision was at least a 30-year vision. The coming of age for these young men and women was supposed to coincide with the national diary. In the given period the nation would transit from experimentations in military rule to experimentations in democracy.

There was something peculiar about that generation of students, and this is the pointer to their generational purpose. They were the experimental set on the forging of a new Nigeria. The whole purport was "unity and faith." That was later amended to "unity and faith, peace and progress." These students sang a new national anthem, recited a new thing called the "national pledge," got into university through a unitary admission system called JAMB, were posted to universities outside their domains, were exposed to the possibility of an artificial linguistic concept called WAZOBIA, listened to national radio and national TV, saw the roll out of a national

development plan, and they dated across regional barriers. All that mattered was “Nigerian.”

What was particularly curious about that generation was their self-propelled belief in the concept of nationhood. These kids, as they then were, would go to the sports arena of their various universities and fast and pray for the nation. No one mandated them, no one compelled them. They just knew they had to pray for the nation. They prayed people out of power though they hardly prayed people into power. But they prayed. They were the ones who came up with those prophecies about Nigeria. Those kids saw a future.

Their training regimen was rigorous to say the least. Take the average law student of the University of Ife, now Obafemi Awolowo University. In the first year of study he took the following courses: Greek philosophy, Sociology, Economics, Science and Maths, Logic, English, Religious Studies, General studies. Then for the next three years he studied the discipline of law across societal spectra. He studied constitutional law, administrative law, land law, commercial law, company law, family law, etc. These are critical courses in nationhood. The course system was so rigorous an ambulance would be parked near the examination hall as these students took exam. That ambulance shuttled back and forth between the exam hall and the health centre.

They were put on very healthy diet. And you will see the relevance of this as we go along. They ate sizable portions of chicken and jollof rice on Sunday afternoon for example, accompanied with ice cream. They had tea with milk every night.

Now, if you were a foreigner visiting Nigeria for the first time at that time and you learnt about the training regime you're bound

to conclude this was a special breed. It was the same for all the students across various disciplines, not just the law students. All the students were rigorously trained. The cost of training per student will average about \$100,000 in today's money. The state subsidised that cost, meaning God paid for the training. Not many parents would have been able to afford the cost in real terms.

Permit me the expression but it will be insane to imagine that those law students went through such an extensive, expensive and rigorous course of study just to do divorce cases, settle land matters and litigate chieftaincy titles. It just doesn't add up. When the philosopher, Plato set up the first institution of higher learning in the western world, the purpose was to raise statesmen. He called his university "Akademia." It's how we got the word, "academic." If Plato could set up a university to raise statesmen it would seem illogical for God to spend billions of dollars training charge and bail lawyers. Plato can't have a better vision than God!

There was a second part to the training regimen. Our budding statesmen learned secular disciplines by day, but they learned spiritual disciplines by night. They learned about Satan's political organogram, they learned spiritual political responsibility, they learned about authority and power, social responsibility, ethics, etc. They learned how to make decrees as well. Decrees are political imperatives. They learned all these in Christian fellowships. They even learned a new tongue, became initiates of the gifts of God's Spirit. To give them political leverage God imbued them with nobility, called them his sons and daughters. They were adopted into God's Royal Family. Again, you will see the significance of all these.

There was a Part 3 to the training schedule. At graduation from university they were sent on field study. These young men and women had to go into the nooks and crannies of the nation for one full year. The Nigerian government called it National Youth Service Corp (NYSC), but the discerning know it was NSFC – National Statesmen Field Course. The NYSC scheme afforded the young graduates opportunity to see the lot of the people, assess living conditions, understand local terrains and deduce points of intervention.

Now, this is what is curious. That generation of Christians are now the very same people complaining about the state of the nation. But that was what they were trained to sort out! It was their responsibility.

The problem was, they never moved into government. They got into convoluted, incomprehensible, mind-numbing religious altercations with themselves about the desirability of Christians going into politics and governance. They also argued over scarfs and trousers by the way, but the un-contextualised argument for not going into politics or governance was that Jesus said his kingdom is not of this world. Thus they repudiated politics and governance, deemed it unspiritual. They had no understanding about their training. They were supposed to be clones of Daniel. It's why their training was suspiciously molded on the training template of Daniel & Co., even up to food specification, as well as the mystic dimension of their training. To bring you into remembrance this was Nebuchadnezzar's specification and instruction concerning trainee state administrators: Young men "from the royal family and nobility – young men who were healthy and handsome, intelligent and well educated, good prospects for leadership positions in government.... Indoctrinate them in the Babylonian language and the lore of fortune telling... The king then ordered that they be served from the same menu as the royal table –

the best food, the finest wine. AFTER THREE YEARS OF TRAINING THEY WOULD BE GIVEN POSITIONS IN THE KING'S COURT." Daniel 1:3-5 MSG.

The points of congruence between that generation and Daniel's generation are nobility, family heritage, mystic training regimen, secular course discipline, diet, and the number of years required for training. Unlike the Daniel generation however, the 1970s and 1980s generation got all the training, but they never moved into government. They got lost in religion.

They didn't realise they were of the Order of Melchizedek. The Melchizedek anointing is a spirito-secular anointing. They were supposed to be priest-kings, just like Jesus. But ignorance and foolishness afflicted that generation. They never knew the reason they exercised the intelligent gifts of the Spirit in secular geographies was so they could exercise same gifts in a secular geography called Abuja. They didn't know that if they could prognosticate the future at the sports centre they could do the same at Eagle Square; that if they could speak in esoteric language in the hostel they could do the same at the state house. Neither did they know they could use the word of wisdom for predictive projection of the national economy, use the word of knowledge for economic analysis and national planning. They didn't know that just as they could lay hands on the sick they could also scale things up to the Ministry of Health; didn't know that just as they preached Jesus is light they could dimension the concept to provision of electricity; didn't know that just as they cast out demons they could scale that up to national security; didn't know that just as they mentored new believers they could scale things up to Ministry of Youth Development; didn't know that just as they took care of the poor they could scale things up to social justice for the poor. If they could teach righteousness surely they could scale things up into fight against corruption. Even the sports arena

they met in was an environmental nudge towards the Ministry of Sports. The world was theirs. But they limited God by limiting themselves.

Now, here's the sad reality. The church is repeating the very same mistakes. Satan is recycling militating ideas from four decades ago and the church is buying into it. It's why you hear Christians repudiating politics thinking they're heavenly minded. Satan has found a working formula – appeal to their ignorance through pseudo spirituality. These Christians don't realise the church is a political organ. If the church were a religious organ it will not suffer persecution at the hands of the state. Neither will Satan's organogram be populated with political appointees and titles. Principalities, Powers, Rulers of Darkness are not religious titles, they're political titles.

As that specially trained generation watched and refused to participate in politics and governance the educational system that produced them was destroyed, the concept of Nigeria they grew up with was infected with virus, injustice stalked the land, wickedness became normative, the health sector went comatose, hope became diminished and prophecies hibernated. It's important a generation understands its purpose. Even though members of that generation succeeded in varying degrees in different callings but the wealth they produced became decimated by mismanagement of the national economy. Their living standard plummeted with bad roads, lack of electricity, poor healthcare system and absence of cultural expression. At some point cinemas and theatres disappeared. The parks also disappeared. They could not go out at night because of insecurity. They had to procure their own water supply, generate electricity for themselves, tar their own roads, provide their own security. Life became expensive for them.

They had to send their children abroad or to very expensive local schools for the quality of education they had. When you don't pay attention to political context everything becomes expensive. Those same people who were attended to in high quality health centres are now being shipped to UK, India, Dubai, USA, South Africa and Canada for medical treatment.

All this happened because they locked themselves up in church and turned themselves into Essenes. And they're still locking themselves up in church playing religion, hoping for fulfilment of hibernating prophecies.

When you talk to some Christians about the need to participate in the political affairs of their nation they'll tell you the disciples never participated in politics. As if there was democracy in the days of Paul and Rome was a presidential system of government. The ignorance is grating. They forget the church was seen as political opposition in the days of Rome. That's because Christians spoke of another king, Jesus. They forget Jesus was not assassinated as a rabbi, he was assassinated as an insurrectionist. It's why the charge sheet read, King of the Jews. He was crucified for treason.

Paul laid out a progressive vision for the church. He himself could not step into it but he set it out nonetheless. This is what he wrote: "God raised (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

In other words, the church is the political nucleus of society.

So what should the church do?

One of the major problems of the church in Nigeria is that it faces the state with the wrong organ. Neither CAN nor PFN is conceptually designed to deal with the complexity of politics or governance. There’s no technical capacity.

There are two things the church must do. The church must create a consultative forum comprising the clergy and the market place assets of the church – business executives and professionals in various fields. The two sides can thus feed intelligence to each other. The clergy will field spiritual intelligence, the executives will field market place intelligence. In this way the church will have a balanced structure that resonates with the concept of the Order of Melchizedek. Without the consultative forum pastors will just be making proclamations from pulpits. And then what?

The second thing the church must do is establish a public policy think tank, something like a Council on Foreign Relations. That institute will drive the Christian agenda in the language of policy. It will employ economists, political scientists, media and communication specialists, sociologists, statisticians, researchers, anthropologists, etc. It will release papers on various national issues as it affects Christianity, confront policy challenges with statistics, amplify Christian concerns in the language of policy. The institute will also organise trainings in the art of governance. Prophetic

declarations are important but equally important is the need to mechanise prophecy.

The trusteeship of the institute will compose the religious hierarchy but the staffing will be professional. In this way the church and the clergy can avoid confinement to religious and moral issues. The church can talk economics intelligently for example.

Bottom line the church needs an intelligent approach to national issues.

Our approach to solving Nigeria's problems have not always been intelligent. We have sought to cure poverty by feeding the poor and teaching the law of sowing and reaping – the financial seed principle. But that's like using a spoon to dig a well. It can scoop sand but it's a wrong and inadequate implement. Only policy can cure the problem of poverty in a nation. The poverty figure in Nigeria is too high. How many people can the church feed? Food digests in eight hours. Hydrochloric acid is brutally efficient. The financial seed principle only works at the individual level. It is a retail solution not a mass market solution to poverty. For that you need the instrumentality of the state. You need policy.

For these two institutions to take off however there must be cooperation among pastors. It's time for pastors to bury hatchets, subsume their ego and respect one another. One church cannot fund the institute, and one church should not establish the consultative forum. There can be anchor sponsors but many churches need to come together.

What history has shown concerning the challenges of Nigeria is that when a demon is cast out and the place is swept clean the demon becomes enterprising and goes in search of senior

implementation partners – executive demons. It's why we keep going round and round in circles. We're like Israelites in the wilderness. We've been on this journey for almost sixty years and we're still in the wilderness. Obviously whatever the church is doing is not working. It's time for strategic change of course.

Here are three other recommendations:

1. A strategic blueprint on the agenda of the church for Nigeria needs to be developed. What kind of Nigeria do we want and how do we achieve it? How do we tackle peculiar challenges Christians face?
2. The curriculum of churches must change to reflect the imperatives of nationhood, especially the curriculum of children's church. Those kids are the future. What we're teaching in church is too shallow to carry nationhood. We can't keep teaching our kids to obey the Ten Commandments for example. They should only learn the Ten Commandments as context for grace. They're not under the Law. Balanced theology must be taught. Enough of sound bytes.
3. Christians must be encouraged to go into politics. Let's stop putting our best talents in the parking lot. Let's stop promoting executive talents into the pastorate. Push them into politics. Righteousness cannot exalt a nation when the righteous won't participate in governance.

Can the church get its act right? Certainly! But if we stick with old formulas that haven't produced appreciable results in four decades chances are we won't get there.

I want to thank you for listening. May the Lord bless you and bless his church. Amen.