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# **EXPONENTIAL CHURCH**

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First, let me thank Pastor Godman and the management of Elevation Church for inviting me to speak at this conference. Today is actually my birthday. We shall therefore celebrate by sharing the meat of God's word. For drinks, we'll take the water of life.

The thematic moniker for this conference is Exponential Church. It's a rather interesting theme. The word, "exponential" of course relates to the word exponent. An exponent is someone who expounds or interprets, someone who champions and exemplifies. An exponential church therefore is a church that expounds and interprets scriptures, AND a church that exemplifies and champions causes.

Clearly, we have a one-part challenge with that word, "exponential". Pastors no doubt expound and interpret scriptures but the church hardly champions causes. The reason is obvious. You can't champion a cause without political clout and intellectual equity. The Pentecostal system lacks both. Yet the church has a long history of championing causes. It was the church that championed the abolition of slave trade. That project was spearheaded by the Clapham Sect. William Wilberforce belonged to that society. They sponsored the bill in Parliament. The Clapham Sect were a group of wealthy evangelical Anglicans. When you hear of CMS Grammar School in Lagos that is a legacy of the Clapham Sect. They founded Sierra Leone. It was founded as a colony for the settlement of freed slaves.

The church in Nigeria is politically weak. Those in doubt should ask themselves a simple question: Do you control government? And if not, who does? You cannot fulfill the mandate in Isaiah 42:6 if you're politically weak. If you're going to be a light to guide the nations, open the eyes of the blind, free captives from



prison, release prisoners from dungeons you need political clout and you need intellectual capital.

Our pastors have to take moral responsibility for the political and intellectual weakness of the church. Pastors are the primary channel for the dissemination of knowledge to the body of Christ. As pastors go so goes the church. The efficiency of the church is directly proportional to the amount of knowledge at the disposal of pastors. When pastors drum down the gospel, when they refuse to teach theological substance believing their congregants are simpletons, the church weakens. When we reduce Christianity to a crass mercantile proposition the church weakens. You cannot give what you don't have. *Nemo dat quod non habet*. If the church must become exponential pastors must be exponential.

Instead, the church is reactionary. We hardly lift our weight in politics despite our huge numbers. Politicians know the potential of those numbers. It's why they show up in church every election cycle, canvassing our support. They show up every four years like a leap year phenomenon. It's an anomaly to have a huge number in a democracy and not be reckoned with in policy design. All we get are declarations of our traditional holidays by Government – "The Federal Government has declared Tuesday, December 25<sup>th</sup> a public holiday." How can we be satisfied with such? It's almost like we're more than grateful for being acknowledged.

Our political weakness has become an endangerment to Christians all over the federation. It's because of this weakness there are no repercussions for the slaughter of Christians. How can 72 humans be slaughtered at a go? We'd rather be prayer warriors. Now, I'm not saying we shouldn't pray. There's nothing wrong in praying. But even the Bible says watch and pray.



For those struggling to find the nexus between spirituality and politics, here's a piece of information: most of our prayer points are based on government policy failures.

We pray for divine healing because our healthcare system is practically comatose.

We pray for means to buy generator to supply our homes with electricity because our electricity grids are not functioning.

We pray for protection from robbers, kidnappers and terrorists because there's insecurity in the land. These terrorists, who incidentally are being rebranded bandits in a fit of revisionism are laying claims to swaths of land and local governments.

You pray for journeying mercies any time you want to travel because our roads are hellish. Nobody prays like that in Europe or America. You just jump into your car and embark on your journey.

You pray to secure Canadian immigration because you just want live in a decent environment where there's water supply and electricity is available, where the healthcare system works and education for your children is guaranteed.

A lot of our deliverance cases are mental health challenges. The commonest of these is depression. Our environment is too tough. There's so much oppression.

The average European or American Christian can't relate to our prayer points. We're praying for things they take for granted. Our Christianity is thus deprivation defined. It is problem denominated. And so our theology is poverty induced.

It stands to reason that if we solve our governance challenges 99% of our prayer points will disappear. Then we can focus on kingdom issues, issues that really matter to God.



As long as pastors don't purpose people to go into government and solve our challenges, they will keep fulfilling roles which on the surface seem to validate their calling, but in reality is a misapplication of grace. Solve the leadership challenge in Africa and 80% of the workload of the African pastor will disappear.

We ought to set up schools of government not just schools of ministry. A school of ministry is just a personnel training institution. It's not enough for the context in which we operate. The Bible recognizes two sets of ministers of God: those in the temple and those in the government house.

Surprisingly there are still Christians who believe Christians shouldn't participate in politics, the basic justification being the fact Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world. This reminds me of an incidence in school, when I was in university. A Christian brother was running for President of the Student Union, but the Christians were ambivalent about his candidacy. They wondered whether a brother can vie for student union office. So, they called a prayer meeting. They finished the prayer meeting at 6.30pm but the election ended 6pm. They had the numbers yet their brother lost. And he was the better candidate. Yet those same Christians kept complaining about corruption in the student union.

How did we get into this dogmatic cul-de-sac? We found ourselves there because pastors are not teaching the complete revelation of Christ. And I am not trying to cast aspersion on that honorable calling. I am only stating a fact. We tend to have a granular focus on a few verses of scripture, and then we develop a complete theology on incomplete information. You soon run into contradictions if that's your approach to theology. Let me illustrate my point.

Chances are, if I ask you to tell me about Jesus you will regale me with the narratives from the gospels. You will talk about the man from Galilee, who walked the shores of Galilee calling seafood entrepreneurs to follow him. You'll talk about Jesus healing the sick, raising the dead, feeding the poor, ministering to invalids. But that not the full revelation of Jesus. It is indeed a quarter revelation.

There are four blocks of information about Jesus in the Bible:

1. He was the creative agency in the book of Genesis. He created the universe and called for collaboration in the creation of man. The scriptures tell us, For by him were all things created, things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities.... (Colossians 1:16). He is the Logos, the principle of divine reason and creative order. This was what Paul was referring to in Colossians 2:3 when he wrote, "In him lie hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." It's also what John was referring to when he wrote, "God created everything through him, and nothing was created except through him." (John 1:3)
2. The second block of information about Jesus is his pre-incarnate theophanies or Christophanies. He appeared to Abraham and Sarah in Genesis 18, wrestled with Jacob in Genesis 32.
3. The next block of information was his incarnation as a man. He would end up spending thirty-three and half years in that state, three and half of which he spent with the disciples. This is the block of history everyone knows.
4. In the fourth and last block of information we see Jesus in his essence. His hair is white as wool, his eyes like flame of fire. That is the real Jesus, the Jesus in Revelation. John fainted when he saw the real Jesus. (Revelation 1:13-16) This is the governmental Jesus. He was the one

who came to Mount Sinai in an elemental convoy of thunder and lightning to give the Law to Moses. He's the one who commuted our death sentence from sin.

When we rationalize these blocks of information three dimensions of Jesus emerge:

1. The dimension of intellect
2. The dimension of compassion
3. The dimension of government

But the church only operationalizes one dimension – the dimension of compassion. We tend to ignore his intellectual dimension, as well as the governmental dimension. Yet God gave us the nine gifts of the spirit so we can function in all three dimensions. The word of wisdom, word of knowledge, gift of prophecy, and discerning of spirits are gifts of intelligence. Those gifts reference the intellectual dimension of Jesus. The gifts of faith, healing, and working of miracles are his gifts of mercy. Those gifts reference the compassionate dimension of Jesus. The gifts of diverse tongues and interpretation of tongues point to nations and government. We saw this at Pentecost. Those gifts reference his governmental dimension. For the church to be exponential we must function in all three dimensions.

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Let me take you further into the governmental dimension of Jesus, since that is the focus of this lecture. Do you know that all the titles of Jesus are political titles? "Christ" simply means anointed one. It's political. The word comes from the Greek word, Christos. It's the same word translated "messiah" in Hebrew. Messiah is not a religious title. In Jewish eschatology messiah is a political figure and military leader. Jesus is heir apparent to God's throne. He's the crown prince. In that



capacity he's the Son of God. "Son of God" is not a biological appellation it's a political title. God is not a man. He doesn't give birth.

The reason we do praise worship in church is because God's system of government is monarchy. Jesus is King of Kings. You worship a king, you genuflect before kings. And you can see this in African culture. If God had taken on the title of President like in a democracy, there will be no praise worship in church. We will all rise when he enters the church auditorium on Sunday, sing the national anthem and that will be all.

Salvation is a nationality program, the creation of citizenship. It's not a religious exercise. In Ephesians 2:19 the Bible says we're fellow citizens with other saints. We are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy NATION. (1 Peter 2:9)

All the powerful concepts that undergird Christianity are political in nature. Righteousness for example is a constitutional principle emanating from God's sovereignty. We got saved because God exercised his sovereignty. Grace is based on sovereignty. The Bible says God overlooked angels and chose to help us. (Hebrews 2:16)

As long as we don't take time to study the political dimension of Jesus and then operationalize it the church will continue to struggle politically. We need teaching in this area. We have a knowledge deficit. God is a political entity not a religious totem. He has a day job and it's political. He administers heaven and the universe.

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Let me put a nail on the coffin of the argument Christians cannot go into politics because the apostles never did. Whoever said that has not taken time to study the book of Ephesians. Neither does he realize that in the book of



Revelation the apostles are regarded as political entities, founding fathers of a new nation. It's why their names are inscribed on the foundation of the wall of the new Jerusalem. (Revelation 21:14) The apostles laid the foundation for the church. But they didn't mean for us to stop where they stopped. There's a progression of revelation. Let me show you a much overlooked scripture. We probably don't get it because most of us are besotted with King James edition of the Bible and so struggle with 17<sup>th</sup> century English. I'm going to use the Message translation. Talking about Jesus Paul wrote in Ephesians 1:20-23: "God raised him 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's in charge of it all, has the final word on everything. At the center 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."

In other words, the church ought to be the political capital of any geographic expression, the administrative headquarters of any nation. The church ought to be the locus of society, not tangential to society. We're not Essenes. We're not meant to be on the sidelines. Policy ideas ought to emanate from the church. Churches ought to establish think tanks to drive policies in society, bring society close to God's ideals. The first and foremost of those ideals is the sacredness, worth and inviolability of human life. If we value human life in Nigeria for example our educational system will not be run down, our roads will not be death traps, our children won't die needlessly in hospital, there will be security.

The apostles didn't have the opportunity to step into this vision Paul wrote about. But it is the next progression of the church.



Am I saying the church AS AN INSTITUTION should dabble into politics, dictate who Christians should vote for? That's not what I'm saying. That will violate the free moral agency of church members. They have the right to make their choice of candidate, they can contest on any platform they like. What I'm saying is, as pastors purpose people for heaven, they should also purpose Christians to serve their nation. Some people have been wrongly promoted into the pastorate in church. They ought to be in the political field. We must stop promoting people to termination of purpose. We must stop burying human capacities in the church yard. When Christians refuse to participate in the political process, they forfeit the moral authority to complain about oppression and suppression. Bottomline, we need a paradigm shift.

I do want to thank you for listening. I do hope my message resonates and will galvanize you to deliver Israel from the hands of the Assyrians.

May God heal our land through us.