

NBTS  
MDIV. TH.  
Ab 51 p

**THE PROS AND CONS OF CHRISTIAN  
INVOLVEMENT IN POLITICS: THE NIGERIAN  
EXPERIENCE**

**AN ESSAY PRESENTED TO THE NIGERIAN  
BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY**

**IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER  
OF DIVINITY IN THEOLOGY**

**BY  
ABIOYE, TIMOTHY OYEWUMI**

**JUNE, 2002**

03 — 2002

## ABSTRACT

Advocates of Christian involvement in politics insist that such a step is necessary because of the gains that will accrue to the nation in the process.

However opposers of Christian involvement in politics state that Christian involvement in politics is undesirable because of moral and spiritual reasons. The researcher has considered the arguments on both sides. It has thus been established that although some of the fears of those who oppose Christian involvement in politics are genuine, they are not enough grounds for the church to shun politics.

In essence, this research work has shown that Christian involvement in politics is not an aberration. The work has also however, revealed that politics is a calling; it is meant for only those who are gifted, vigilant and committed to both Christ and nation building.

It is instructive to note that Jesus set the pace for his followers. This explains why Jesus paid tax and even chose a Zealot, Simon, as one of His disciples. In short, Jesus was a patriotic Jew. No wonder, Yoder states that, according to biblical witness, Jesus is a model of radical political action.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, there is no doubt about the fact that the New Testament writers support Christian involvement. An example is Paul who teaches in Romans 13:1-7 that civil authority is ordained by God.

### B. Conclusion

It has to be acknowledged that Christian involvement in politics is not without risks. However, it is equally true that risks, temptations and issues like compromise are not exclusive to politics. Other endeavours in life are also fraught with such challenges. Thus, Grant observes, "The quest for power in politics is no more intrinsically evil or debasing than the corresponding struggle for power in the world of business, labor, education, the arts, or even the institutional church."<sup>3</sup> It is enough to say therefore that the fact that there are challenges in politics is not enough reason for Christians to abdicate their responsibility to heathen politicians.

Of course Christian politicians are best suited for coordinating the nation's efforts in her quest for nation building. What is more, essential requirements for nation building such as peace, justice, and internal cohesion may continue to elude the nation except the goodwill of Christian politicians is assured. With regard to nation building, Eze writes, "The soul of the nation is measured by the coherent

---

<sup>2</sup> John H. Yoder, The Politics of Jesus (Grand Rapids: Williams B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1972), p. 12.

<sup>3</sup> Daniel R. Grant, The Christian and Politics, p. 120.

*will of the people to live and work together to establish a just and harmonious social, economic, political and religious order.”<sup>4</sup>*

It can therefore be said that the nation is looking up to the church in Nigeria to salvage her (the nation) from her woes. This is a challenge that the church must accept, otherwise she will only be paying lip service to her much advertised love for Nigeria.

In conclusion, the writer wishes to state that Christians should be involved in politics because of the following reasons which this essay has established.

1. There is an overwhelming evidence in the Bible in support of Christian involvement in politics.
2. Nation building cannot be done without the participation of Christian politicians.
3. Christian politicians have made appreciable impact on the Nigerian political landscape.
4. Experience has shown that the apathetic stance of Christians towards politics has always led to the marginalization of Christians.
5. The pros of Christian involvement in politics far outweigh the cons.
6. There is evidence that the early Christians participated in politics.

In the light of these realities, the writer would like to make the following suggestions:

1. Christians should understand that politics is a calling.
2. Christians who are called into politics should not hesitate to enter it.
3. Christian politicians should go into politics to serve and not to amass wealth at the expense of the unsuspecting masses.

---

<sup>4</sup> N. Eze, "The Christian's Concept of Leadership Role in Nation Building," The African Journal of Biblical Studies, IV. No. I, April 1991, p. 96.

4. Christian politicians should exemplify Christ's compassionate concern for the needs of the poor.
5. Christian politicians should regard their participation in politics as a means of preaching Christ.
6. Christians who go into politics should be principled.
7. In order not to mortgage their consciences, aspiring Christian politicians should seek financial support for electioneering campaign only from Christian individuals and organizations.
8. Christian politicians must epitomize humility, simplicity, honesty, hardwork, and patriotism.
9. Christian politicians must be resolute in their desire to succeed where others have failed.
10. The church must pray for the success of Christian politicians in particular and the civil authority in general.
11. Ministers must use the pulpit to teach about the need for Christian involvement in politics.
12. The Christian politician should not neglect the habit of meeting together with fellow believers for spiritual nourishment and upliftment (Heb. 10:25).
13. The church should assist individual Christians, who have the potential for becoming good politicians, with prayer and counselling.

### C. Recommendations

Owing to lack of time and space, this research work has been limited to the pros and cons of Christian involvement in politics with particular reference to the Nigerian experience. Therefore the researcher would like to recommend that further studies be carried out in the following areas:

1. Knowing the Will of God Concerning Christian Participation in Politics.
2. Practical Steps Needed for Christian Involvement in Politics
3. Tips for a Successful Political Career
4. Compromise in Politics: A Reality or a Myth?