

The Influence of Good Governance in Nigerian Nation Growth: A Biblical Perspective

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Abstract: This paper has examined the influence of good governance on the growth and development of Nigeria from the Biblical point of view. The work explicated the importance of the political ideology of Jesus and the influence of David's leadership in Jewish nation growth to golden era. The paper, then, analyzed the commitment of Jonathan to good governance in Nigeria. Having used historical and contextual methodology, the work discovered that Jonathan administration was the dirtiest in corruption and the deadliest in insecurity. His regime has primed Nigerians into poverty trap and the nation groaned daily in unendurable insecurity. For Nigeria to develop, the work recommended that Jonathan's administration must overhaul the security system to seriously fight insurgency, ritual killings, incessant kidnapping, banks bombing and robbery. The present corrosive political system must be changed to regional federalism. The work concluded that Davidic intrepid leadership and Jesus' political ideology must be imbibed by the Nigerian leaders.

Keywords: Governance, Jonathan, Nigeria, Biblical, David, Jesus.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

Governance is a major factor in nation development. Government and development are inseparable. A nation cannot thrive without good governance. Through the machinery of governance a nation can become developed or underdeveloped. Government is a process by which people are organized for easy and equitable distribution of resources under the coordination of people that are empowered with a defined mandate. In the contemporary society it is believed that good governance can only be possible under democracy. Governance, in Nigeria, is demonstrated in the Politics of wits and caprices; the type that relegates democracy. "While democracy follows certain fundamental requisite, as obliged be equity and law"[1]. Nigerian politics does not follow the laid down rules and regulations. The Constitution of Nigeria spells out very clearly the procedure for practicing politics, but political practitioners in Nigeria subvert the procedure[2]. The refusal of the political class to abide by the rule has hampered Nigerian politics from producing good governance. Rather, it is characterized with vices and criminalities. Good governance is defined as:

The exercise of political power to promote the public good and the welfare of the people within a geographical location. The public good incorporates the norms or values of a

free, just, ordered and law-governed society as well as those of happiness and the good life. Democratic and good governance are indisputably complementary and mutually self-reinforcing[3].

According to Larry, Nigerians agitate for true democracy because:

It is a system of government that meets the three essential conditions: Meaningful and extensive competition among individuals (especially political parties) for all effective positions of government power, at regular intervals and excluding the use of force; a highly inclusive level of political participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through regular and fair election, such that no major social group is excluded; and a level of civil and political liberties, (freedom of expression, freedom of press, freedom of associations and organizations) sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation[4].

Oloruntimehin also observed that the quest for democracy and good governance in Nigeria came as a response to the political uncertainty and arbitrariness occasioned by military authoritarian rule. According to

him, the abuse of power; lack of accountability, corruption, political repression, strangulation of civil society and human rights abuse are part of the reasons while Nigeria rejected undemocratic government.

The Barriers to Good Governance in Nigeria

Nigerian democracy has not produced good governance because of the following factors:

- i. **Corruption:** Nigerian political leaders seek power for personal aggrandizement at the expense of nation building. Every facet of Nigerian society: the leaders, the followers, the peasant and the elites from the local level to the national level including all national institutions are engrossed in corruption. The conclusion of Manasseh is that you cannot trust anyone in Nigeria. He affirmed that corruption is the primary virus threatening the fabric and corporate existence of Nigeria[5]. Democracy cannot grow in Nigeria because corruption permeates the highest level of political authority. The Nigerian Senate and the House of Representatives are induced with money in most of their policies and legislations. Government ministries agencies and parastatals give bribes for their budgets to be approved. At the executive level, there are unmitigated high profile embezzlements. Bureaucratically, workers in public places shirk their responsibilities for various inducements. Independent institutions like: the Judiciary, Independent Electoral Commission (INEC), Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), etc. are also deeply daubed in corruption. In Nigeria, Justice is sold to the rich, electoral victories are falsely given to the anointed candidates and the public fund looters are shielded from being probed. Nigerians have special vocabularies such as: gratifications, payoff, sweeteners, and palm-greasing, etc that are being used to diffuse the shame of bribery and corruption.
- ii. **Nepotism, Ethnicity and Favoritism:** This is another serious form of corruption in Nigeria[6]. This includes a biased distribution of state resources to favor associates, communities, states and regions to the neglect of others. People from a particular tribe are unduly deprived of certain privileges, positions or entitlements enjoyed in another tribe. Most of the leaders at the national level are regionally inclined at the expense of the corporate interest of the nation. From the early period of Nigeria's independence, the major political parties operated on the orbit of regionalism. The National Council of Nigeria Citizens (NCNC) was affiliated to the Igbo, The Action Group (AG) was tied to the

Yoruba and the Northern Peoples' Congress (NPC) was associated with the North. These parties were used as platforms for seeking the regional interest and welfare. Ikuejube noted that:

The parties covertly and even openly used emotive ethnic symbols as means of mobilizing support. In competition for the limited number of positions and scarce resources within the regions and at the federal level, the regional parties generated antagonism and hostility among the major linguistic groups in the country. Their propaganda often emphasized some alleged conflict of interest among these groups with each parties claiming to be protecting and advancing the interest of one of the ethnic nationalities[7].

- iii. **Rigging and manipulation of Election Result:** Election manipulation has brought a serious setback to Nigerian democracy and good governance. Election is not allowed to produce the best candidate. Instead, godfatherism, power of incumbency and the ruling party advantage, bribery, terrorism and thuggish activities are employed to smuggle the unsound and the incompetent candidates to the positions of leadership. Invariably, this affects good governance.
- iv. **The Role of Security Agencies in Election Supervision:** The security agencies are used by the moneybag or government in power to terrorize the opposition and the electorate from voting for the popular candidate. In most cases, opposition leaders are arrested on the eve of election only to be released after the election. As part of the plans, security personnel are withdrawn from certain units to allow a candidate to use thugs to harass, snatch or freely replace ballot boxes.
- v. Security is an important factor that enhances good governance. The Nigerian political class are lawless, their illicit lust for power, do-or-die syndrome, acts of brigandage, hooliganism, and criminalities are part of factors that threaten democracy. Lack of internal security leads to unstable polity which makes socio-economic development elusive to the nation.
- vi. **Religious Fundamentalist:** The activities of Islamic fundamentalists have made Nigeria profoundly unhappy in the real sense of misery. There is a deep sadness everywhere. Religious savagery envelops the nation. Every

day we hear tales of unprecedented cruelty and sadistic brutalities to both young and old. The Nigerian nation regales daily with unimaginable dastardly acts of barbarity under the cover of Islam. The foundation of religious fundamentalism was laid in Kano with Maitatsine uprisings in 1982. Thereafter, the Musa Makaniki revolt devastated Yola in 1984. While the nation was still smarting from these crises, the oppressive sharia administration was introduced in some parts of the North. Talalo stated that:

In its purest and most classical sense, the sharia regime is a more extreme and total version of Boko-Haram. While Boko-Haram denounces western education, sharia anathematizes western culture and political civilization beginning with its legal foundation. Both are bound to come to violent collision with the secular state and the paradigm of the modern nation which are underwritten by western civilization and its triumph over competing modernity[8].

The Islamic fundamentalists have turned Nigeria to a nation with government but without governance. Shekau, the Boko-Haram leader, said: "There is no government existing in Nigeria." [9]. He vowed to destroy democracy, saying:

I will never allow democracy to thrive. The concept of government of the people by the People for the people will never be possible and will never exist. Democracy shall be replaced only by the government of Allah, from Allah and for Allah[10].

It is clear that religion has been used to destroy good governance and the political ideology of Jesus for good governance that brought about the golden era of good governance.

DAVIDIC GOLDEN ERA OF GOOD GOVERNANCE

The life of David was divided into four parts: First he was at Bethlehem with the Sheep (1Sam16:17). Second, at court (1Sam19:18). Third, as king over Judah in Hebron (2Sam.2-4); and four, over all Israel (2Sam.5- 1Kings2:11). The first two stages of his experience suited him for the duties of the throne. As a shepherd, he acquired the character of nurturing and tendering, as Courtier, he learnt self control and chivalrous liberality. As an outlaw, he was exposed to the intrigues of men and also developed administrative skills.

David was God's prototype of a good ruler. He was a selfless leader who ruled with justice and in obedience to God. At the age of 16, he sacrificially liberated his nation from philistine's domination by killing their leader, Goliath. This victory became a

misfortune that sent David into exile for 17 years. David had a great commitment to security, in his drive for good governance that is established on peaceful religious atmosphere, economic and political stability; he captured Salem, a Jebusites' city. Having changed its name to Jerusalem he made it the headquarters of his government (2Sam.5:6). The greatest security challenge of his leadership was the abduction of his two wives and all the wives and children of his men in Ziklag. With great courage, promptness and faith in God, David pursued the raiders and recovered all the abducted people, nothing was lost. "This pleased David more than all the rest of his achievements.[11]" David consolidated both internal and external security of his nation by subduing all the surrounding nations: Philistines, Moabites, Syria, Edomites, Ammonites, Arameans, etc. He stationed garrisons in all the conquered nations to enforce compliance to his directives and the payment of tributes. David was a brilliant planner, adept strategist, a resourceful warlord and fearless fighter (Psam144:1). With these virtues, he made his nation economically prosperous and militarily free from invasion.

Judicially, David served as the highest judicial authority of the land. He dispensed justice without fear or favor. He made Levites and elders from each clan judges at the lower level, but all serious cases including matters of appeal were referred to him (2Sam.8:15). David's reign was the most brilliant of Israelites history. Through equity and justice he united the 12 tribes into one nation and secured absolute control of the country.

His leadership rested on a religious pedigree, the will of God. Through good governance, he made his regime the golden era in the history of the Israelites (Isiah16:5, Jer.23:5, 30:9, Ezek.34:23-24, 37:24-28).

THE POLITICAL IDEOLOGY OF JESUS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE

Luke 6:27-38 contains Jesus golden rules for good governance. According to Yule, Jesus teaches liberal and rational responses to such political issues as:

- i. How we should treat enemies, opponents and the detractors;
- ii. How to respond to the contemporary unprovoked violent acts;
- iii. What should be our true disposition to riches and possessions in order to avoid corruption;
- iv. What should be the principles to be applied in the distribution of wealth and;
- v. What should be done when we are being marginalized or our right is being abrogated.

The political ideology of Jesus gave explicit answers to the rhetorical questions raised above:

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- i. That we must love our enemies, do good to those who hate us, those who oppose our views and those who censure us for no reason (LK. 6:27). Contextually, this aspect of Jesus injunction is particularly good for Nigerian polity where the level of political tolerance to opposition is abysmal.
 - ii. Jesus instructed us not to take vengeance on anybody but to overcome violence with love. Jesus taught that all forms of retaliations or reprisal attacks must be avoided.
 - iii. Jesus advocated a commercial activity that involves borrowing and lending to multiply wealth in the society. The government can through the process of borrowing provide social amenities for the society and can as well provide jobs for the citizens through microfinance loan to the poor masses. Jesus warned that the rich must not take advantage of the poor. Rather than cheating them, they should care for them (LK.6:34; 19:30-31).

The leading element in Jesus' political ideology, according to Rob Yule, is the concept of acting differently than what is expected of us, of going further than what is commonly considered as normal in human relations[12]. In fact, Rob Yule described Jesus teaching in Luke 6:27-38 as "Jesus political manifesto." Yule stresses that we can appreciate more the uniqueness of Jesus political manifesto when compared him with the different viewpoints in the political spectrum of his day[13]. For instance, while the Pharisees were a sect of religiously legalistic and politically conservative. The Sadducees and Herodias were religious liberals who believed so much in politics. Consequently, they invested in politics and participated fully in civil affairs in partnership with Roman administration. In short, they were political midwives and collaborators of Roman authority. But the Zealots were at the opposite end of the political spectrum. They were extremists, religious fanatics, freedom fighters and unrepentant revolutionaries who were vehement in their desire to overthrow the Roman Government through terrorism and violence.

Against this background, Yule observed that Jesus' political viewpoints stood out. Jesus did not adopt any of the three options available to him in the politics of his day. Jesus was not a conservative and legalistic in the manner of the Pharisees. Again, Jesus was not a collaborator or an opportunist supporting the arbitrariness of the Roman oppressive government. Jesus was also not a terrorist coordinating violent sedition against the state. He encouraged uncompromising dialogue in settling disputes with the enemies.

Yule further describes Jesus' political concept as a rejection of quietism, i.e. a way of live that makes one to ignore all desires with a passive acceptance of whatever comes[14]. This is a challenge to the Nigerian Christians who see politics as a dirty game and who believe that religion and politics do not go together. When the Church is politically apathetic pathetic things happen to the Church. The price honest men pay for keeping silence is to be ruled by the dishonest men. Jesus does not confine the Church to only faith and worship but also commissioned them to serve humanity. His injunction to the Church is to serve as the salt of the earth and the light of the world; and to shine before all men that they may see their good works (Mt.5:13-14). The Church must reach out to the world including participation in politics. As the Church is praying spiritually for good governance they must also offer themselves physically to be used by God to bring the envisaged good governance. Akinyode opined that:

The Church should not limit its outcry only to those times when their denomination or a leader of their church is threatened. Selfish complacency should be done away with... The church should not fold its hands but should be actively involved in the decision making process of the land The Church should see politics as a significant calling to follow[15].

Jesus in his political ideology advocated a social responsibility and total crusade against all civil injustice[16]. The politics of Jesus involves the policy of identification with the outcast of the society. He chooses to suffer rather than to be the cause of others' suffering. His political ideology allows accessibility, peacemaking, reconciliation, justice and economic equity.

Through his ideology of godliness, justice and equity, he counseled the agitators to render to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's (Lk.20:25). Through his ideology of reconciliation, he uses his trial to reconcile Pilate and Herod, who; "before this, had been enemies" (Lk.23:12).

Jesus political ideology has important implications to good governance in Nigeria with regard to fairness and equitable distribution of wealth, true federalism, resource control, ethno-political crises and agitation for self-determination. The Igbo tribe want autonomy as independent nation, the Ijaw and Ogoni want resource control and dignity as equal citizens of Nigeria, the Middle Belt is rebelling against the core North's domination and they call for a distinct identity, the Hausa is craving for the return of power and the Yoruba tribe continue to insist on regional federalism. The panacea for peace and good governance in Nigeria is to adopt Jesus' ideology of prudence, equity, fairness

to the opponents, nonviolent approach and a policy of reformation of the outcast, downtrodden and the poor.

JONATHAN AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

In Christianity nothing else is held more sacrosanct than good governance which can be likened to a magnificent umbrella under which people are supposed to take refuge during torrential rain or scorching sun. In a democratic environment such umbrella is owned, not by those who carry it in their hands but by the citizenry who handed it over to the holders. Its bearers are just servants holding it in trust for the people. This is not the case in Nigerian democracy. The government under Jonathan has become an opportunity for political office holders to get excessive affluence through wanton misappropriation, embezzlement, ostentation and enslavement of the poor masses. This menace has obsessively led the leaders to a total abdication of the actual responsibilities of leadership. Margaret Thatcher alluded to the Nigerian demented situation during her 80th birthday. She was casually asked by the journalists to indicate her preferred nation if she had opportunity of coming back into this world. In response, Thatcher said she would like to come back into the world as a Nigerian ruler. She explained further that “Nigeria is the only country in the world where people can be pushed to the wall by their rulers and they would rather enter the wall than turn back to confront those rulers[17].” Abubakar agrees with Thatcher that:

Nigerians are in bondage because the man at the helm of affairs lacks the clout to carry the people along. His action has brought shame to the country. Jonathan’s administration has demonstrated insensitivity to Nigerians plight. He is leading an irresponsible, senseless and inefficient government. If something is not done urgently the country will collapse[18].

The dirtiest aspect of Jonathan administration is corruption and the deadliest is insecurity. In Corruption, the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) has become a siphoning agency for Jonathan’s administration to squander public fund. Jonathan administration is deducting ₦ 700 million on daily basis as Kerosene subsidy through NNPC. But this subsidy has failed to ameliorate the suffering of the masses because a liter of kerosene is sold at ₦170 as against ₦40 per liter in 2010 before his administration[19].

In the administration of petroleum subsidy, there is a serious looting and misappropriation of fund. The provision of section 1 instead of the federation account[20]. The claim that Jonathan’s administration is subsidizing fuel for the poor masses is a willful double-tongued twaddle. Even when the national assembly findings confirmed the stealing of \$6.8 billion dollars fuel subsidy, Jonathan refuses to bring the culprits to book despite the pressure by civil society groups and trade unions[21].

According to Ogunyemi, the \$8.6 billion (i.e. ₦161billion) for 3 weeks fuel subsidy that was stolen is: Almost twice the total allocation for Agriculture in 2013 (₦81billion times 2 = ₦162 billion); more than twice the total allocation for power in 2013 (₦74 billion times 2 = ₦148 billion); more than thrice the total allocation for Water Resources in 2013 (₦47 billion times 3 = ₦141 billion); more than twice the capital allocation for Education in 2013 (₦60 billion times 2= ₦120 billion); almost thrice the capital allocation for Health in 2013 (₦55 billion times 3 = ₦165 billion); more than the capital allocation for Works in 2013 (₦151 billion); more than twice the total allocation for Niger Delta in 2013 (₦63 billion times 2 = ₦126 billion)[22].

This analysis has shown that Jonathan administration is a regime of economic mismanagement, financial recklessness, un-abating stealing and corruption. In a country where the majority still live below the poverty line, ₦10 billion was used by the Minister of Petroleum Resources, Mrs. Diezani Alison Madueke, to fly private jets on oversea trips[23].

The regime of Jonathan thrives on false propaganda. The central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) says the nation’s aggregate foreign capital inflow stood at \$4.94 billion as at the fourth quarter of 2013. The Bank said the figure represented an increase of 24.3 per cent from the \$3.97 billion recorded in the third quarter of 2013. CBN also said the development was attributed to an increase in direct and portfolio investment inflows. According to the report, direct investment increased from \$0.86 billion in the third quarter of 2013 to \$1.00 billion in the fourth quarter of 2013. It added that the increase in the figure represented a growth of 16.1 per cent.

Also, portfolio investment, according to the apex Bank grew from \$3.11 billion in the third quarter of 2013 to \$3.94 billion in the fourth quarter of 2013. The Bank claimed that portfolio investment inflow remained dominant and accounted for 79.7 per cent of total foreign inflows. It is also said that direct investment inflows accounted for 20.3 per cent of the total foreign inflow. The Bank concluded that the higher inflow of foreign capital in the fourth quarter of 2013 was a welcome development[24].

Jonathan’s propaganda of a scintillating economic growth has not translated into uninterrupted power supply, motor-able roads, regular water supply, more jobs, better and affordable healthcare services, proactive protection of lives and properties, adequately funded and technologically driven education and a better life for the masses, among others.

Obasanjo lamented that:

Jonathan must be blamed for the poor internal security management and the failing war against corruption. Most of our friends and development partners are worried and they see what we pretend to cover up. They are worried about issue of security internally and on our coastal waters, including heavy oil theft. They are worried about corruption and what we are doing or not doing about it. Corruption has reached the level of impunity. And if you are not ready to name, shame, prosecute and stoutly fight against corruption, whatever you do will be hollow. It will be a laughing matter[25].

THE INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT OF JONATHAN'S REGIME

As predicted by Obasanjo, Jonathan has become a laughing stock to the international community. For instance, Senator John McCain derided Jonathan's government as a non-existing regime. He said "We shouldn't have waited for a practically non-existing government to give us the go ahead before mounting a humanitarian effort to rescue those girls." Senator Hillary Clinton bemused that Nigeria under Jonathan squandered oil wealth, and breeds corruption." The New York Times condemned Jonathan as being "shockingly slow and inept at addressing this monstrous crime facing Nigeria." The paper bewailed that Jonathan "leads a corrupt government that has little credibility." The UK Guardian, in its vote of censure on the Jonathan's policy affirmed that "Jonathan record on corruption is a disgrace." The Globe and Mail of Canada yelled that "the recent Boko-Haram video is a taunt at the ineffectiveness of Goodluck Jonathan's administration." The Economist concluded that "Jonathan's government is incompetent, callous and very corrupt." The US State Department puzzled that the "Massive, widespread, and pervasive corruption affecting all levels of government under Jonathan is worrisome[26].

The international rating of Nigerian poverty in Jonathan's regime shows that Nigeria is in the third position among ten countries of the world with extreme poverty. Over 70 per cent of Nigeria's population lives on less than \$1.25 (₦200) per day; and 7 per cent of the 1.2 billion people living below poverty line in the world are Nigerians. Only just 10 per cent of Nigerian citizens occupying political positions embezzle and control 90 per cent of the nation's wealth and resources; leaving the entire citizenry in starvation[27]. The Transparency International corroborates the World Bank rating by ranking Nigeria as the 144th most corrupt country out of 177 nations in the world. Nigeria scored 25 points out of a possible 100 awardable points[28].

In short, Nigerians, under Jonathan are dying of hunger, diseases and extermination by insecurity.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Now that it is explicitly clear in this work that there is no good governance in Nigeria, it is important to consider the following recommendations:

- i. For the nation to have good governance, immunity clause must be removed from the Constitution. This will check excessive corruption and lawlessness among the political leaders;
- ii. Nigeria must adopt the type of federalism that will make the six regions in the country effective. "From 1954 to 1966, regional governments were almost fiscally self-independent. They were powerful and the federal government only played coordinating role. Regional autonomy came with the power to retain a large chunk of the revenue created in the regions for their development. [29]". The present 36 states is structurally imbalance and detrimental to the attainment of good governance;
- iii. There must be a regional base constitution. Nigeria attained independence with four Constitutions: the federal constitution, the constitution of the Eastern Nigeria, the constitution of Northern Nigeria, and the constitution of Western Nigeria. At the creation of the Mid-Western region in 1963, the fifth constitution was enacted. The contents of all the constitutions were agreed upon at the London Constitutional Conference of 1958 and were all consistent with each other [30]. If regional constitutions can be reintroduced it will improve internal security and abate corruption;
- iv. To ensure that the electoral process of Nigeria meets international standard, Nigeria should ratify African Charter on Democracy, Election and Governance;
- v. The 2002 OAU/AU Declaration on Principles Governing Democratic Elections in Africa should be made part of the Code of Conduct for Political Parties; and
- vi. David's intrepid leadership and Jesus' political ideology must be imbibed by Nigerian leaders.

CONCLUSION

The Davidic leadership and Jesus' political ideology explicated in this paper have made it profoundly clear that good governance is fundamentally about justice in all spheres of life according to the rule of law. (Mt.15:17-20). Good governance is about tending the lives of others for the overall good of the nation. It is about providing the needs of the people according to the available resources in the nation (Lk.6:30). It is about protecting the interest of the weak

against the oppression of the strong (Lk.6:31). It is about managing the wealth of the nation with diligent sense of accountability (Mt.25:14-30). Good governance is about securing the lives of the citizenry in terms of jobs, feeding, shelter, health and education (Mt.15:32). It is about developing the manpower, the workforce particularly, the youth of the nation and preparing them for the future without favoritism or ethnic bias (Mt.20:1-15). It is about guaranteeing adequate income per capital and ensuring a standard life expectancy (Lk.12:4-7, 15).

Any government that is found wanting in these essential areas of governance is unworthy and should not be allowed to retain the mandate of leadership.

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