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Appropriating John Stott's Concept of Holy-Worldliness towards Reformulating the Political Curriculum of Christianity in Africa: Components from Nigeria

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Abstract

This study applies John Stott's concept of 'holy-worldliness' to God calling Christians from the world and sending them out to be immersed in the affairs of the world as Christ's ambassadors, by localising Christ's political curriculum to Africa. Examples of this localising process were generated from Nigeria. This question guides the study: how can John Stott's concept of holy-worldliness be appropriated towards reformulating the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa, using examples from Nigeria? The study concludes by calling African Christians to consider establishing one 'African Christian school of politics and governance', under the auspices of theological schools in Africa. This school would be mandated to train African Christian politicians at the highest levels in the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa.

Introduction

This study continues a related article titled 'Appropriating John Stott's Holy-Worldliness Concept to Deficiencies in the Political Curriculum of Christianity in Africa: Viewpoints from Nigeria', published in the *African Theological Journal for Church and Society*. Two research questions guided that study:

1. “What are the basic elements of John Stott’s concept of holy-worldliness, in the context of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa?” (Dogara 2024:160)
2. “How can deliberating on the deficiencies in the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa [...] be facilitated by an understanding of John’s [sic] Stott’s concept of holy-worldliness [...] using examples from Nigeria?” (Dogara 2024:160)

A detailed presentation of John Stott’s concept of holy-worldliness is contained in the earlier paper.

Sequel to the prior paper, this study also appropriates Stott’s concept of holy-worldliness to facilitate reformulating the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa. The prior study identified several deficiencies in the current political curriculum of Christianity in Africa: it lacks proper definition; it is not people-oriented; and it is not different from non-Christian political agendas. It is also purposeless, reactive, disunited, unplanned, inferior, non-influential, and lacks truth and critical thinking, lacks holy-worldly interconnections, lacks Christian political ideology, and lacks structural understanding. To address these deficiencies, this paper considers this research question: how can John Stott’s concept of holy-worldliness be appropriated towards *reformulating* the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa, using examples from Nigeria?

The study concentrates substantial attention on the politicians, theological schools, and curriculum specialists in Africa, to develop the political curriculum of Christianity on the continent. The findings of this study apply to them. These constitute a major component of the church, which this document presents as the most important structure in the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa.

While the study randomly engages cases from across Africa, it primarily generates examples from Nigeria as the largest democracy in Africa. Furthermore, the study interconnects ‘political curriculum’ with curriculum in general, null curriculum, societal curriculum, and rhetorical curriculum, as key terms designed to offer multi-dimensional perspectives on reformulating the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa.

Methodology of Study

The study engages the qualitative research methodology via mixing documentary analysis with systematic theology when addressing research questions. The researcher studied Stott's *The Contemporary Christian* (1992) as a primary document, in synergy with relevant scriptural passages to facilitate a theological grasp of the concept of holy-worldliness. The legal material engaged to support this foundation is the 1999 *Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria*.

Appropriating John Stott's Concept of Holy-Worldliness towards Reformulating the Political Curriculum of Christianity in Africa

How can John Stott's concept of holy-worldliness be appropriated towards *reformulating* the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa, using examples from Nigeria? There are several components that should not be missing from the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa. The term 'manifesto' is attached to each of the components. The list of the components is not exhaustive. While a Christian vying for an elective public office may have a personal and/or a political party manifesto, either or both manifestos need a basis in the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa.

Component 1: Manifesto on Constitutional, Fundamental, and Legal Rights

The political curriculum of Christianity in Africa needs to recognise the constitutional, fundamental, and legal rights of all citizens without any form of discrimination or partiality. This recognition must be taken beyond theory (which is the case in many African countries) to actual practice. In being practical the distinctiveness of the Christian, as a politician, is revealed. In Nigeria, being practical means addressing impediments to the rights of citizens, including religion and citizenship.

Religion

The voices asserting that religion is an impediment to Nigeria's progress are growing louder, although there is no consensus on this assertion. In fact, 'at the mention of religion, most Nigerians will freely turn off their brains' (Ismaila 2024). A way of addressing this impediment is via the political curriculum of Christianity, which, if implemented, will provide a thriving ground for all religions.

First, all specificities on religion need to be expunged from the constitution for this component of the curriculum to be realised. On the one hand, this should mean ensuring freedom of religious choice, practice, and propagation and non-compulsion even in one's religion. No one should be harassed for any religious reason, just as it was rumoured (although the reports were denied) that non-Muslims in Kano State, Nigeria, faced threats of arrest if they ate in public during the 2024 Islamic Ramadan fast. Open Doors International statistics have shown that Nigeria is the deadliest country for Christians. 'More believers are killed for their faith in Nigeria each year, than everywhere else in the world combined' (Open Doors International 2023:1–2). It is easy to become a Muslim in Christian-dominated states like Plateau, Benue, and Anambra, but to become a Christian in the northwestern and northeastern states is a matter of life and death. On the other hand, addressing this impediment means expunging terms like 'Shariah' or 'Islamic' and any pointers to a specific religion or religious affiliation from the constitution, thereby ensuring impartiality towards all religions.

Second, this component of the political curriculum should make it possible to remove religious lines from government-owned public places such as schools, military establishments, and prisons. Religious bodies interested in creating a separate arrangement for their adherents should do so privately in their own religious centres or schools. Churches and mosques need to be de-established in government-owned schools, and even government houses and secretariats, in Nigeria.

Third, the constitutional statement that 'the government of the federation or of a state shall not adopt any religion as state religion' (*Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* 1999:Section 10) needs appropriate qualifiers. These qualifiers need to unquestionably establish Nigeria as a secular state

where government resources are not allocated to further religious purposes. The term 'secular' should also be defined clearly in appropriate places in the constitution. Moreover, unless the financing of Muslim and Christian pilgrimages to foreign places considered holy by these religions by governments at all levels in Nigeria is scrapped completely, the statement of government not adopting any religion will remain vague.

Fourth, though religion needs to be expunged from the constitutions of nation-states in Africa, Christian politicians in Africa need to be guided by the right model of Christian religion in their activities. Being properly guided by the right model of religion means pre-deciding to which side of eternity one will belong, knowing that a politician's actions in earthly governance count in eternity. This pre-decision was implied by Jesus when he said:

Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.' (Matthew 25:34–40, NIV)

Accordingly, the right model of religion is having the capacity to discern real human needs, to recognise hunger, thirst, strangeness, the need for clothes, sickness, and being in prison. Christian politicians who align themselves with the right model of religion will provide customised solutions to existential problems. They will provide food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, shelter and protection for the stranger and the exposed, clothes for those who lack, care for the sick, and visitation to the prisoner.

Politicians on the right side of religion are driven by the desire to meet human needs. In Jesus' parable, the righteous did not even serve as if 'unto the Lord', because they were not even aware that the Lord was monitoring them or had any expectations from them. Those called by Christ to politics are called to respond to whatever human need Jesus is willing to satisfy. The *Africa Bible Commentary* notes, 'We are called to respond to all human need, for that is what love does' (Kapolyo 2006:1164).

Citizenship

Although the constitution has guaranteed citizens the right to movement and possession of properties in any part of Nigeria, the question of being an indigene or a settler in a particular area remains unaddressed. For example, people fear that allowing equal status to indigenes may distort the commanding demographic majority of a Muslim state (like Kano) or a Christian state (like Plateau), or the ownership of the majority Hausa population of a state like Katsina or the majority Yoruba population of a state like Lagos. Therefore, this question of citizenship as it relates to what it means to be an indigene is an agenda for the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa. Settling it could mean creating a clause in the constitution that allows the status of indigenes to all Nigerians wherever they decide to settle. When matched with the religious component of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa, it would favour all religions since, for example, Muslims could more easily penetrate Christian-dominated states and vice versa.

Elected officials in Nigeria do not necessarily consider themselves as having equal citizenship status with other Nigerians. They send their children to the best schools overseas, receive medical care in Europe or America, assign to themselves and their families the best security services, allocate better government jobs to those closely connected to them, just as if Orwell's satirical fable "Animal Farm" is being dramatised in the political realities of Nigeria where some citizens appear to be considered as more equal than the others (Orwell 1945).

Component 2: Manifesto on the Security and Welfare of the People

The Nigerian constitution clearly mandates that ‘the security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government’ (*Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* 1999:Section 14.b). For those who have been called to implement the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa, this component can be understood in at least three ways.

First, it focuses sufficient priority on ensuring affordable, available, accessible, and quality healthcare, food, shelter, clothing, education, and water equally to all Nigerians in an environment that enjoys protection from destruction. These should be constitutionalised as rights enjoyable even by Nigerians at the lowest end of the economy. No citizen’s existential needs should be beyond the capacity of the government to address. The political curriculum of Christianity in Africa effectively engages this constitutional provision to solidify this capacity:

The State shall direct its policy towards ensuring that all citizens, without discrimination on any group whatsoever, have the opportunity for securing adequate means of livelihood as well as adequate opportunity to secure suitable employment. (*Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* 1999:Section 17.3.a)

Second, the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa needs to focus on subsidising expenses for the general citizenry. As it is now, the government makes policies, rules, and laws and implements actions that favour the rich and the powerful while the poor suffer from inhumane policies. For example, on 29 May 2023 the government withdrew the fuel subsidy from Nigeria, while politicians and the elites in all branches of government at all levels were living large, displaying ill-gotten wealth with unmindful extravagance, and taking all manner of actions to direct state resources to support their expensive lifestyles. The American president eats at his own expense except for work-related meals (Newsom 2018) and receives a monthly bill for all meals (Bell 2016). It is doubtful if this is the case in Nigeria.

Third, the focus of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa is on security and public safety. The current attempt in Nigeria to answer the call for state policing deserves commendation. However, it is time to consider placing policing systems under the ownership and operational control of local governments. Agencies responsible for public safety such as fire brigades should be developed, modernised, widely deployed, and constantly expanded to satisfy the growing population of Nigeria. One deficiency in the public security and safety system of Nigeria is that it lacks the principle of security for all; it is rather security for the elite, the rich, and the powerful. Even pastors who preach that their membership should depend on God for security are seen moving under police protection, although some may have exceptional reasons for that. Security and public safety for Nigerians should translate into the freedom to go to the farm, to go hunting, to travel at any time of the day or night, and to be rescued when in danger.

Component 3: Manifesto on Social Justice

The political curriculum of Christianity in Africa must seek to address social injustice in the country. Four examples arise from Nigeria.

Federal Character

The legal instrument termed ‘Federal Character’ is enshrined in the constitution of Nigeria in order to ensure unity. It states:

The composition of the Government of the Federation or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to promote national unity, and also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few State [sic] or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that Government or in any of its agencies. (*Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* 1999:Section 14.3)

One way of interpreting the federal character is to consider its balance in religious, sectional, ethnic, majority/minority, and merit terms. That is to say, when a Muslim or northerner is president, a non-Muslim or southerner should be vice president. When a Christian is governor in a Christian-dominated state, a non-Christian should be deputy governor. In practical terms, there would be

a Christian deputy governor in Kano State (a Muslim-majority state) or a Muslim deputy governor in Plateau State (a Christian-majority state). However, Governor Nasir Elrufai of Kaduna State (a Muslim state) abandoned the federal character by having a Muslim deputy governor in 2019–2023, and the current governor, Uba Sani (a Muslim), has continued to retain a Muslim as deputy governor. Likewise, President Bola Tinubu (a Muslim) is currently violating the federal character with Kashim Shettima (also a Muslim) as his vice president. There has been widespread non-implementation of the federal character mandate of the constitution.

Right to Self-Determination

The level of social injustice in governance in Nigeria has brought about various agitations for self-determination, with some even advocating for splitting the country into Oduduwa nation, Biafra nation, Hausa nation, middle-belt nation, and other sovereignties. In view of the forceful amalgamation of the Northern and Southern Protectorates to form Nigeria in 1914 by the British colonial governor, Sir Frederick Lugard (Falola and Heaton 2008:116–118), it can be said that there is a basis for these agitations. Based on the clear practical and constitutional challenges between regions in Nigeria, it is difficult to simply dismiss these agitations.

A preferable course of action for implementing the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa could be considering the provision, ‘Nigeria is one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign state to be known by the name of the Federal Republic of Nigeria’ (*Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* 1999:Section 2.1), as a social-justice matter. The politically correct thing to do is to support this provision even when there are clear deficiencies in it.

But the political curriculum of Christianity must be politically incorrect, whenever necessary. In this instance, the politically incorrect thing to do is to agree that with God all things (including restructuring Nigeria or creating a completely new constitution) are possible. At the minimum, this agreement means reformulating the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa to support people who consider themselves marginalised. For example, at the state level, some people in southern Kaduna State desire to have their own state called Gurara. This would address some of the agitations for splitting Nigeria. However, the alternative course of action is either to support or to not

interfere with the call for restructuring Nigeria to allow the emergence of as many different countries as are necessary and practical to represent the rights of the people to self-determination. If the alternative course of action becomes necessary, it should not be surprising because in historical actuality it is questionable if Nigerians ever collectively declared that

We the people of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Having firmly and solemnly resolve [sic], to live in unity and harmony as one indivisible and indissoluble sovereign nation under God
(*Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* 1999:preamble)

British Colonial Legacies

It is difficult not to blame the current social injustices in Nigeria on the refusal of the political and military leadership who have ruled Nigeria at various times to address British colonial legacies. Yusufu Turaki's well-researched *British Colonial Legacy in Northern Nigeria: A Social Ethical Analysis of the Colonial and Post-Colonial Society and Politics in Nigeria* addressed social injustices in Nigeria consequent to the British colonial legacy (1993:325).

One of the British colonial legacies is the policy or practice of selective development or differentiation in the provision of services such as education. For the British, the elites and the masses were educated differently, with concentration on the elites. Development concentrated on Muslim areas while non-Muslim areas were abandoned, only to be rescued by the missionaries. Kaduna State is an example where this British colonial legacy is still in effect. Southern Kaduna State mainly has campuses of schools or lower-level schools: Kaduna State Polytechnic campus at Samaru Kataf (with the main campus in Zaria), Kaduna State University campus at Kafanchan (with the main campus in Kaduna), and Kaduna State College of Education Gidan-Waya (whereas the Federal College of Education is in Zaria). Even politically, it seems southern Kaduna State has been condemned to be a zone of deputies, capable only of producing deputy governors of the state. The political curriculum of Christianity in Africa must concern itself with the task of addressing negative colonial legacies wherever such are found, thereby ensuring balanced human development.

Righteousness and Justice

The social justice component of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa needs to be hinged on righteousness and justice, which constitute the foundation of God's throne (Psalms 89:14, 97:2). God works righteousness and justice for the oppressed (Psalm 103:6). Righteousness and justice are missing in the Nigerian justice system. It is a common thing in Nigeria to come across people complaining that someone who stole a goat may spend years in prison in Nigeria while someone who diverted billions in various currencies may not spend even a single day in prison. The stories of how senior judges in Nigeria tilt judgment to favour the highest 'customer' – the politicians, senior government officials, the rich, and the elites – have already saturated the public sphere. Most Nigerians can describe how government officials regularly refuse to observe traffic lights, which sometimes causes accidents. The cost of accessing legal services or the best lawyers is beyond the reach of the common person. Government-aided legal agencies are so under-funded and lacking in personnel that they are of little or no effect, thereby further putting the poor at a legal disadvantage. The endless delay in the court processes, with corrupt judges, lawyers, and police, makes seeking justice in Nigeria nothing more than a waste of time and resources. Christian politicians, as principal implementers of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa, need to comprehend politics as a way of delivering righteousness and justice in favour of the oppressed and for the development of the society.

Caveat to Components 1-3: Christians and Party Politics

In the political curriculum of Christianity, active involvement of Christians individually and/or of the church corporately should not translate into a union between the church and politicians. This union usually occurs for political gain or selfish reasons. It becomes more pronounced with pastors and other church leaders who also use politics and/or religion to for their own gain. As Mbewe writes:

This is usually around political election times. Usually, the politicians entice those pastors who have huge congregations to support to exchange them in exchange for financial favors or government favors if they win the elections. Sometimes the politicians woo entire pastors' fellowships to their side in this

way, and these pastors then try to convince their church members to support the candidates who have done them such favors. This is very common, but the fact that it is happening everywhere does not make it right. (2020:248)

Clearly, the need for Christians to be active in politics, even party politics, should not interfere with the distinct identity of the church, as God's kingdom on earth. The church must not miss the point of the irreconcilable difference between God's kingdom and earthly kingdoms, irreversible decay in politics, and its existence as a parallel government. These elements of the church are explained further below.

Component 4: Manifesto on Democratic Dividends

This component of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa seeks to make citizens at the grassroots active partakers of the democratic dividends. Delivering the dividends of democracy interconnects with at least three items: democratic ideals, freedom of expression, and examination by the radar.

Democratic Ideals

In line with John Stott's holy-worldly component of double listening, listening to people is important for the purposes of giving them feedback, getting feedback directly from them, and ensuring transparent communication, accountability, and relationships. Transparency, accountability, and feedback are important democratic ideals necessary for the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa. Unfortunately, politicians in Nigeria generally behave as if they are accountable to no one, just as former Nigerian president Muhammadu Buhari said during his inauguration on 29 May 2015, 'I belong to everybody, and I belong to nobody' (Osewezina 2015). However, there is no time when elected politicians do not belong to everybody. They should not dare say 'I belong to nobody'. Christian politicians are to set an example by subjecting themselves to the citizens in terms of transparency and reporting. If, for example, Muniyaya Pezuwa, a woman from Kabene-Surubu, was elected as chairperson of Kauru Local Government Area of Kaduna state, Nigeria, in 2024–2025, residents of the area deserve to have regular comprehensive details of her salary, other earnings as a politician, and expenses from those earnings. Pezuwa should supply these details voluntarily, without compelling

her constituents to use legal means to make her account for her office. Accountability is necessary because she is working for the citizens, in whose hands is vested the constitutional authority to hire and fire their representatives.

Freedom of Expression

Nigeria's constitution mandates:

Every person shall be entitled to freedom of expression, including freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference. (*Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* 1999:Section 39.1)

By this mandate, it is necessary for operators of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa to accept and study all kinds of criticisms as they seek to deliver the dividends of democracy.

On the one hand, it is not in their purview to define what constructive, obstructive, or destructive criticism is. Biblical revelation presents God as not afraid of any form of criticism or questions, nor does he punish people for holding views contrary to his own. Rather, God encourages people to express their opinions and actively listens to them:

‘Come now, let us settle the matter,’ says the LORD. ‘Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool.’ (Isaiah 1:18, NIV)

On the other hand, Christian politicians who try to silence any form of media or the voice of opposition, as is usually the case with politicians in Africa, are clearly violating the holy-worldly component of double listening. In Nigeria, the media is constitutionally empowered to hold government accountable to the people.

The press, radio, television and other agencies of the mass media shall at all times be free to uphold the fundamental objectives contained in this Chapter and uphold the responsibility and accountability of the Government to the

people. (*Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria* 1999:Section 22)

The political curriculum of Christianity eschews any attempt by the political or civil service leadership to interfere in any process designed to hold them accountable to the people.

Examination by the Radar

There are always various governmental and non-governmental agencies that constantly direct their radars to the political and developmental activities of countries and societies. An example of these agencies is the United Nations Development Programme, which produces an annual Human Development Report, with summaries via the Human Development Index. Nigeria was ranked 152 out of 188 countries in the world in terms of overall human development in the 2015 Human Development Report (United Nations Development Programme 2015:210). The report was based on the situation during the regime of the People's Democratic Party. However, in the 2023 Human Development Report, Nigeria was ranked 161 out of 193 countries in the world in terms of overall human development (United Nations Development Programme 2024:276). That report was based on the situation of the country during the regime of the All Progressives Congress. Most of the time, these reports are credible, but politicians usually only accept the reports that are favourable to them. Based on the holy-worldly principle of listening, Christians in politics and governance will deliberately put themselves under the radar so that the consequences of their leadership can be examined.

Component 5: Manifesto on Governance

As soon as elections are over and politicians occupy government positions of leadership, people expect effective governance for the benefit of all. Though the challenges of governance are many, operating the political curriculum of Christianity necessitates addressing some serious questions of governance.

Questions of Budget

How can the cost of governance be reduced, thereby saving money to provide better services to citizens? Why is the budget for projects in the constituencies of legislators necessary? How can there be more effectiveness, efficiency, and

transparency in the tax system, without overloading the poor? How can budget padding, inflation, and other forms of corruption be addressed in the budget system? Why expend money to organise, locate, and attend official retreats and workshops in foreign countries? What subsidies are needed in the budget in order to make life easier for the citizens?

Christian politicians have no excuse whatsoever not to include various subsidies in the budget. Even without the constitutional mandate on the government to exist primarily for the welfare of citizens, the scriptural mandate 'Do not withhold good from those who deserve it, when it is in your power to act' (Proverbs 3:27, NIV) cannot be ignored. Every citizen deserves good, but the poor deserve more subsidies. It is not a secret how in Nigeria governments at all levels either did not provide or provided insignificant subsidies to the poor during the COVID-19 lockdowns. For example, Nigerians' requests for an electricity subsidy was turned down.

Questions of Balancing Politics, Governance, and Statesmanship

Given that government-sponsored primary and secondary schools offer Islamic religious studies and Arabic language as academic subjects, did President Goodluck Jonathan, in the build-up to the 2015 presidential election in Nigeria, establish special Almajiri schools for political reasons or because of real needs? How can governance be distinguished from, and emphasised over or against, political patronage? How can the next election not interfere with current governance? How can the politicians be purpose-driven, progressive, futuristic, and strategic without letting personal interests and politics interfere? What steps need to be taken to purge corruption and ensure independence, protection of fundamental rights of citizens, and restoration of public confidence in elections, justice, crime-fighting, financial crime investigation, police, and other strategic agencies of the government? Do traditional leadership institutions need to be democratised and/or assigned constitutional roles in a democratic government?

Questions of Distinguishing between Priorities and Trivialities

There are pundits in Nigeria who consider Nigeria to be a country where trivial issues thrive, while priorities are abandoned. Some of the trivialities include assigning unnecessary public space, budget, and official treatment to unelected Nigerians like the wife of the president (even recognised as holding

the ‘Office of the First Lady’), and fully sponsoring or subsidising religious tourism (called pilgrimages) for Christians and Muslims. Politicians in Nigeria are also fixated on cars and foreign travel (in the name of scouting for investors), the execution of needless projects, and a general misplacement of priorities. The political curriculum of Christianity in Africa must distinguish itself by focusing on priorities, instead of majoring on trivialities.

Component 6: Manifesto on Glocal Politics, Diplomacy and Leadership

This component of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa acknowledges that politics is both local (local, state, and national) and global (regional, continental, and international); that is, politics is ‘glocal’. This acknowledgment is both strategic and pre-conditional, especially for Christians who participate in local politics in a manner that either directly or indirectly connects with global politics, diplomacy, and leadership. Such participants include members of state houses of assembly and the national assembly, political party officials at state, regional, and national levels, the president, and the vice president, as well as state governors and deputy governors.

Strategic Acknowledgement

Because politics is glocal, the Nigerian politician must, first, have an intellectual grasp of the constitution, history, development, operations, and legal frameworks of the Economic Community of West African States. This is the immediate international body of governments to which Nigeria belongs.

Second, credible knowledge of the African Union in its various stages of evolution, as well as its aspirations, is also key. Of strategic importance to Africa is *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*, a fifty-year roadmap for Africa launched in 2013.

Agenda 2063 is Africa’s blueprint and master plan for transforming Africa into the global powerhouse of the future. It is the continent’s strategic framework that aims to deliver on its goal for inclusive and sustainable development and is a concrete manifestation of the pan-African drive for unity, self-determination, freedom, progress and collective prosperity pursued under Pan-Africanism and African Renaissance. (African Union 2013a)

The Agenda 2063 encapsulates Africa's aspirations for the future and the flagship programmes that should facilitate achieving those aspirations. However, at this point, the majority of elites in the political class in Africa behave contrary to the demand of *Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want*. For example, the mentality of politicians is still colonial: eating foreign food, divulging national information via foreign media channels, defending political agendas through agencies like the Royal Institute for International Affairs (Chatham House), going to foreign hospitals, buying foreign cars, wearing foreign clothes, buying houses in foreign lands while in office, and generally prioritising foreigners and foreignness over citizens and the country. However, *The Africa We Want* clearly states, 'All remnants of colonialism will have ended and all African territories under occupation fully liberated' (African Union 2013b).

Third, understanding continental and intercontinental political bodies and processes is necessary for knowing how to locate Nigeria's interests in the international arena. The Commonwealth of Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, and the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, with Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates) are some of the intercontinental bodies with which the serious Nigerian politician must be familiar.

Fourth, the politician must be well oriented in global politics as represented by the United Nations, its bureaucracy, and its affiliated or related agencies. Otherwise, the 'giant' position of Nigeria in Africa will be of no significant benefit to Nigeria and Africa.

Strategic acknowledgement of the glocal situation of politics is only a preparatory step to preconditional understanding of this level of politics. Preconditional comprehension distinguishes the Christian politician from other politicians.

Preconditional Acknowledgement

Acknowledging the principle of holy-worldliness is a requirement for Christian politicians; without it their qualification for elective positions is questionable. What does Stott's principle of holy-worldliness mean for a world-class Christian, as opposed to a worldly Christian or self-centred Christian? Being a

world-class Christian as a politician is recognising that God saved you from the world in order for you to serve him in the world. Beyond this recognition, the political curriculum of Christianity requires Christians in politics to make some mental shifts in four areas.

First, it requires shifting from self-centred political thinking to other-centred political thinking. Unless this is done, Christian politicians will keep looting public funds and amassing illegally acquired wealth that even their future descendants cannot exhaust. Why should governors in Nigeria, for example, allot well-funded, lifetime pensions to themselves for not more than eight years of service in elected positions? Why are they receiving their pensions on a regular basis, while civil servants who spent three to four decades in active service die without receiving their meagre pensions?

There are a few examples of Christian politicians who practised other-centred political thinking while in public service. Peter Obi, former governor of Anambra State, is among the few. There is no evidence so far that he allocated lands or properties to himself while serving as governor. A way of shifting to other-centred political thinking is to view politics as a call to service for the number of years the electorates decide they need the politician. In other words, this component of politics does not view politics as an occupation, but a call to service.

Second, Christian politicians need to shift from local thinking to global thinking. Thinking this way is necessary because Christians serve a global God: 'For God so loved the world' (John 3:16, NIV). One way of learning to think globally is to undertake short-term political mission trips abroad, especially to more advanced countries. Peter Obi visited and studied Egypt prior to the 2023 presidential election in Nigeria, at his own expense. No public funds or official resources should be spent to fund such trips.

Third, this calls for a shift from here-and-now thinking to eternal thinking. Shifting to eternal thinking means fixing eyes on the eternal, invisible, and permanent.

So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen,
since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
(2 Corinthians 4:18, NIV)

A way of fixing eyes on life in the eternal is to work to improve life and the average life expectancy of citizens on this side of eternity. According to the 2023 Human Development Report, life expectancy in Japan was 84.8 years (the highest in the world). In Nigeria, life expectancy was 53.6 years, below many other West African countries: Senegal (67.9), Ghana (63.9), Gambia (62.9), Togo (61.6), Liberia (61.1), Sierra Leone (60.4), Benin (60.0), and Burkina Faso (59.8) (United Nations Development Programme 2024:274–277). Another way to fix eyes on eternal life is to seek to elongate the earthly component of it. This calls for the political leadership to be generational or multigenerational planners, thinking beyond the next election. Instead, planning should consider at least the next generation measured by life expectancy, which in Nigeria means planning in cycles of fifty years.

Shifting to eternal thinking also means doing God’s will on earth. For this to be done politicians need to understand the political implications of being citizens of heaven (Philippians 3:18–21), while serving as Christ’s ambassadors on earth (2 Corinthians 5:18–20). One of the implications is to refuse to take glory in shame. The way elected politicians, including Christians, shamelessly loot public funds, disobey the law, and bear fake documents and identities is appalling. These politicians are also arrogating preferential treatment to themselves and the people closest to them, lying on national television, and staunchly refusing to resign when clear evidence of violations of laws or inexcusable gross incompetence exists. The reconciliation element of being Christ’s ambassadors on earth means governance and application of the rule of law for all citizens, not the deployment of the powers of government to witch-hunt or unnecessarily fight political enemies.

Shifting from here-and-now thinking also means eliminating excuses for not attaining people-oriented development. The dictionary of the political curriculum of Christianity does not have the word *impossible*. What is there is this: ‘I can do all things through Him who gives me strength’ (Philippians 4:13, NIV). If a Christian were elected to occupy the office of President of Nigeria, for example, they must appoint ‘I can do’ people to the leadership of

ministries, departments, agencies, commissions, and other bodies. The 'I can do' principle means to keep hiring and firing, for as many times as necessary, so long as 'I cannot do' people keep obstructing progress.

Fourth, eternal thinking requires making it practical by investing resources in heaven.

But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. (Matthew 6:20–21, NIV)

This passage refers to legally-acquired treasures. Warren (2002:192) appropriately observes that storing up treasures in heaven can be done through heaven-bound people:

You've probably heard the expression 'You can't take it with you' – but the Bible says you can send it on ahead by investing in people who are going there!

That being the case, the tradition of Nigerian politicians donating huge amounts of money for building churches and mosques, while people need funds to start and support businesses, pay school fees, build community schools, supply drugs to health centres, develop farms, and increase food production, etcetera, does not necessarily make sense.

Recommendations and Lessons for Africa

Recommendations to Politicians

1. Ensuring the fundamental rights of all citizens, including religious rights, should be a key occupation of the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa. For Nigeria, this includes the rights of Muslims to know about Christianity and decide to be Christians, and vice versa. It is also means ensuring the rights to inter-marry and engage in other social interactions. To encourage this, practitioners of the political curriculum of Christianity in Nigeria should seek to explore the possibility of making it a law that no Nigerians who attended only their

own religious schools prior to service in the National Youth Service Corps should be qualified for the service until this deficiency is cleared. The deficiency would be clearable with a semester's worth of academic work in a school where members of other religions are present. There must be evidence of having achieved a level of study between primary and undergraduate level in a school owned by non-religious bodies or proprietors.

2. The political curriculum of Christianity in Africa promotes the removal of trivialities from governance in order to direct resources and attention to the real needs of the people. In Nigeria governments should stop sponsoring religious pilgrimages. Doing so lacks fairness and goes against the principle of social justice for all. In many African countries, the creation of an 'Office of the First Lady' with all its attachments and budgetary support is a triviality. Implementers of the political curriculum of Christianity need to work towards scrapping it from the systems of such countries. If the president's wife needs executive or constitutional powers, let her contest for elections like any other citizen.

Recommendations to the Church

3. There should be regular presentations on 'Christians and Politics' from pulpits. This could happen as question and answer sessions on a quarterly basis, with competent Christian personnel invited to speak.
4. There is a need for quarterly and annual political evaluation reports on Christian politics in each African country where Christians are already actively involved in politics. In Nigeria, this responsibility could be assigned to the Christian Association of Nigeria. To facilitate this report, a national Christian body should have a master list of Christians holding political offices, Christians vying for political offices, and Christians in positions of leadership in parties. There should also be criteria for supporting and evaluating politicians and political parties, whether Christian or non-Christian, for measuring success in politics and governance, and for decision-making even within the Association.

Recommendations to Theological Schools

5. A core general course, 'Public Theology and Politics', should be formulated as part of the undergraduate curriculum in African theological institutions. This would be a way of giving learners deeper exposure and orientation for involvement in the world of politics.
6. Theological schools in Africa should introduce an annual 'Week of Politics'. Both Christian and non-Christian politicians could be invited as resource persons, so long as they have the competence and have met laid-down criteria for the event. Materials necessary for the conference include the Bible, the national constitution, and electoral laws. With proper planning, students could have these materials free of charge or at a minimal charge. This would increase awareness of the holy-worldly element of politics in theological colleges and universities.

Recommendation to Curriculum Specialists

7. Christian schools in Africa need to start offering courses on politics, as independent academic components instead of as part of other courses. A course, 'Civic Education and Politics', should be designed, constructed, and delivered from a Christian political perspective.

General Lessons for Africa

8. Theological colleges and universities in Africa should come together to facilitate the establishment of one African Christian School of Politics and Governance. This would be a place for training Christians doing politics at state, regional, national, and international levels to be trained in the political curriculum of Christianity in Africa.
9. The political curriculum of Christianity in Africa requires politicians, whether Christian or non-Christian, to know that they belong to the people of their various countries. Politicians occupying positions, particularly, at national levels should not act as if their loyalty lies in Britain, France, China, America, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, or any other foreign power. This means politicians should develop homegrown strategies for dealing with foreign powers and

organisations and to give more priority to national and continental interests.

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