

**PRAYERS FOR THE LEADERS: A STUDY OF I TIM 2: 1-2 IN THE CONTEXT OF
NATION BUILDING IN NIGERIA**

By

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Abstract

A sketchy look at the political cum economic situation of Nigeria shows the declining rate of nationhood and livelihood in general. The common dissatisfaction and complaints of poor leaders round about the nation is attested in many quarters. This paper aimed at x-raying the dangers and effects of a singular and face value understanding of the text (I Tim 2: 1-2) could bear on the quest for nation building in Nigeria. Religion as an organized way of worship of the Supreme Being thrives on prayers. It is medium of communicating with God and a means for expression of faith. Correspondingly, the religio-centered features primarily found in African traditional religion and culture explains why people have resolved to prayers as a way out amidst challenging leadership, political and economic crises in the nation. Consequently, attempt is made by this paper to establish other variables that could compliment the believers' duty and responsibility in nation building. A proper contextualization of the text in Nigeria would therefore aim for the realization of a comprehensive development of the entire nation. The data for this researcher is mainly derived from the Bible and extant historical recordings about Nigeria. Further, the analysis of the data collected involves hermeneutical interpretation of the text and as well detailed description and interpretation of observed events. The findings suggested that for the effectual building of a sustainable and working nation, prayers alone cannot be the sole approach and art towards nation building.

Keywords: Prayer, leaders, leadership, nation building and national development.

Introduction

Since Nigeria assumed its status as an independent state by 1960, the central recurrent challenge to its development as a nation is the lack of quality leadership. Many persons have pointed to this as a major cause for the continuous regression witnessed in the country. Though there are other factors one could mention as the cause for the widespread indigence in Nigeria, the leadership is responsible for the unrepentant and endless destruction of the country. In the midst of this seemingly helpless situation, many have given up on human roles towards the improvement and stability of Nigeria. Almost at every election season and successful transition to a civil government, there is fervor and rekindled hope that God is about to grant the people political, social and economic salvation. Perpetually, the already nauseating conditions of living in Nigeria are worsened. The high expectations of the masses are dashed by such incompetent leaders.

Nigeria and indeed Africa is a fertile ground, because of its existing rich cultural and religious heritage. Osunwokeh (2014) in agreement to Madu (2004) accepts that the African traditional attitude to religion has strong influence on the present spirituality of the people. The popular notion that “nothing happens without a cause” fuels the quest to solve political and social problems through the spiritual means. Mbiti (1975) claims that millions of Africans are followers of more than one religion. This rationale and religiosity could also explain why many may choose to turn to prayers in the face of dire and miserable state of the nation. Different religious groups in one way or the other make use of the instrumentality of prayer. Intense devotion is a feature popular amongst many religious movements. This is because man’s relation with the divine requires valid connection with the object of the veneration. In order to relate, communicate and inspire faith, prayers are made to build more on this potent reality. It was not unusual that the Abrahamic cum Jewish religion is in support of constant prayers for their leaders. These leaders in the Jewish world were not merely human appointees but divinely ordained by Yahweh for the welfare of his people. Christians in Nigeria in same like manners are acclimated with corresponding act of prayers especially as it is concerned building a great Nigeria. The Church in Nigeria apart from formulating prayers can complement its religious role by being a formidable force and voice for accountability in leadership.

I Tim 2: 1-2 chosen for the study is a classic depiction of the position adopted by many Christians. The text like many other scriptural passages that exhort Christians to pray for their leaders and those in authority, there is no limitation on the type of leaders one should pray for. This is to say they could be good or bad leaders. Okoli (2012) lists out some passages in the Bible where the Shepherd (leader) became the predator for the sheep under his care and even led them astray. The unfathomable negligence of the value of lives by these leaders over the years and their uncanny looting of the national treasury has vilely deterred the course of development of Nigeria. It is clear that the leaders in Nigeria as the Shepherd have continued to devour their flock. The research is, however, arguing for concerted effort geared towards integrating other practical measures that will ensure the rising of the nation above its present condition. Achieving stability and peace in the contemporary times requires that these other feasible approaches must also be embraced. Hence as with the believers in Pastoral Epistles, in now a Gentile/Pagan dominating authority, the church in Nigeria must include other explored pathways especially from the developed world so as to solidify its mission in framing a glorious Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

Prayer: The word “prayer” is a key term in the discourse of religion. Prayer is the link between man and God. Prayer is not a one way thing, as a form of communication there is the act of delivering a given message through a viable communication channel and then an anticipated corresponding feedback from the receiver. Until there is a feedback only then can the communication be considered complete. However in the case of spiritual cum religious affair, it is not man who determines the viability of this communication. Hence it is possible that a prayer may have no outright feedback that is to be given to the individual. In agreement to Edward (1918), Baesler (2012) affirms that “Prayer is evident in every culture with a recorded history” (p. 125). Adherents and religious practitioners normally explain prayer as a communication with the object of worship and veneration. This offers the individual (s) opportunity to understand and maintain the relationship with the deity. Prayers do not have a singularly accepted format or a particular streamlined means of expression, while it could be a private affair, some other times it is communal and involves many persons in a given religious group. There are several ways and forms of this religious expression, each group adopts that which best explains its view of the Supreme Being.

These may include; silent mystical meditations and numerous oral/vocal expressions. Chants, recitations, invocations, music, poetry, colours and dance could be means of uttering prayers.

Christianity took its posture to prayers from its backdrop in Judaism. The Jewish religion substantially promotes prayers and the need of having close relationship with God. The story of Adam in Gen 2:7-3:24 depicted his close-knitted connection with God. Clearly man from creation had intimate bond with God; He communed with man in an exceptional manner. Overtime in the Israelite history, it was paramount in the religious, political and social situation of Israelites to emphasize the role of prayer in their continued existence and prosperity. They were constantly assured of God's intervention and victory at last. Christians therefore emulate and imitate such intimate relation and communication with God. Jesus the son of God through his life and ministry exemplified and exhorted his disciples on the need of to pray always. The Gospels highlighted several instances of Jesus praying. Many stories or narratives or parables therein as well regaled in the synoptic gospels also in the New Testament epistles encourage Christians to pray.

Leaders: The words leaders and leadership are widely terms in different researches and genres in management and social science fields. The basic understanding however is, that they are charged with the responsibility to man the affairs of either a political institution or any non-political institution that may require significant managerial expertise. Malik and Azmat (2019) see a leader as a "person who sets goals for his/her people or teammates, and then leads or rallies them to achieve those goals" (p. 17). Further Anekwe (2020) in agreement comments that "A leader is someone who leads a group of people in the direction of the accomplishment of set goals" (p. 2). The leaders form the significant determining force that either expand or ensure that the society and people under them succeed or totally halt the progress and growth of their institutions. Nation building, national integration and overall national development is to a large extent somewhat dependent on them. The leadership therefore performs vital binding function in the organization. Rosart (2019) mentions three sub-processes they carry this out, "by establishing direction, aligning people and by motivating and inspiring" (p. 19). The qualities desirable and expected of any good leader include; honesty, dedication to service, accountability, diplomacy, people-oriented, and ability to carry all along among others. The problems in Nigeria point to serious shortcoming from the leaders as these remain as the ideal and not yet a reality in many sectors of the nation.

Nation Building: The word nation has derivatives and terms associated to it. Terms such as nationalism, nationhood, national integration, nation-state, nationality, national development, nation building and others generally relate to the concept, nation. Harrison and Boyd (2003) assert that the concept of nation were developed and refined in Western Europe during 18th and 19th centuries. By the 20th century, it was further improved with the creation of mass democracies and notions of popular sovereignty. Nation refers to a group of people that are united or tied together as they share common geographical area, language, identity and culture. Laitin (2007) understands the nation as a population with coordinated set of beliefs and their cultural identities whose representatives' claims ownership of a state for them through separation, amalgamation or return. Nation building as other normative concepts means different things to different people, however the common understanding is that it concerns itself with the promoting and building of a given nation. Mylonas (2020) understands nation building as the process through which the boundaries of a modern state and those of the national community becomes congruent. The desired outcome is to achieve national integration. Specifically, Udeagwu and Ugochukwu (2021) see nation building in Nigeria as the application of adequate measures to rationalize the fact of history that Nigeria is a heterogeneous society composed by people with different ethnic, religious and cultural background but into achieving a single formidable single political front and unity" (p. 118). Obielosi (2016) from a Christian perspective establishes clearly Yahweh's primordial plan which is building a great nation. His call of Abraham and the subsequent positive response of Abraham gave birth to a new religion and as well a new nation. The nation was crafted by Yahweh and will be built by him also. The New Testament also recognizes this understanding.

Leaders and Leadership in Nigeria

The traditional societies in Nigeria before the incidence of colonialism were based on monarchical, religious and sometimes the community (kinsmen) leadership. The empires, caliphates, kingdoms, chiefdoms and clans were all locally based and claimed certain level of autonomy. The antecedent of colonialism and the brash amalgamation of the country in 1914, however, altered this arrangement. The introduction of federation and re-structure of otherwise independent colonies launched a new and different political history of Nigeria. Adeyemi (2019) asserts that:

Under colonial administration, local government was known as native administration or indirect rule system. It was meant to govern the people through the native chief. The idea

was to preserve and use the authority of the local rulers, local institutions, traditions and habits rather than attempt to impose totally new unfamiliar ideas from outside. (p. 165).

Various native authorities and appointed warrant chiefs became prominent at the local levels. The impact of the British colonial enterprise in Nigeria affected the present religious, educational, administration, social and overall political settings in Nigeria decades after independence. Some scholars ascribe the problems of leadership in Nigeria to a default political peculiarity with many Africans. They insist that since British government could foster tangible development and building the nation despite that its sole interest was in the advancement of Britain. Probably then the leaders from post independence of Nigeria are the problem. Many persons, however, refuse to detach the present crises and challenges of leadership in Nigeria and in Africa from Western manipulations and exploitation of Africa. This group continues to blame and associate emerging terrorism, coups, political unrest and electoral malpractices in various African countries as those sponsored by them. Their propagandist and conspiracy theory is gaining credence in Africa. Concerning the post-cold war period in West Africa, Giymah-Boadi (2021) argues that:

Their economic and political-diplomatic initiatives toward West Africa over the next decade were to become more sharply focused on securing geo-strategic and commercial advantages such as energy and markets, stemming illegal migration, and countering terrorism as well as the growing influence of China. (p. 19).

Be that as it may, the divide which anyone may choose to belong here do not matter much here. The point is that so far the leadership in Nigeria is epileptic and has mostly been unfavourable. Udeagwu and Ugochukwu (2021) note that “Lack of implementation of policies, recalcitrant approaches to administrative functions and service delivery, corruption and lack of articulation of viable programmes, inequalities, leadership ineptitude have forestalled the advancement of nation building” (p. 136). If one were to use econometrics as a measure, then the glaring poverty and hardship in the country will no doubt be listed infinitively. The gross domestic product per capita income of the masses remains the most variable means of ascertaining development in nation. The statistics over the years is depressing.

In addition to this, the endemic nature of corruption and ethnicism in Nigeria has become a canker worm and adversary to the progress of the nation. It has persistently denied Nigeria chances of boasting of reasonable growth. Mayaki (2010) classifies corruption into three different forms; they

are “political corruption, bureaucratic corruption and electoral corruption” (p. 115). The menace of corruption is not unique to the leaders; the followers too are not exempted. The rot in the country has eaten too deep that many sectors and agencies, both public and private are not shielded from the decadence. Kabiru (2019) discusses extensively different factors responsible for corruption in Nigeria. One may thus observe that these issues such greediness, moral backwardness, get rich quick syndrome, fear of poverty, foreign collaboration, absence of credible media absence of private detective agency e.t.c. are responsible for the prevalence of corruption. The war against corruption in Nigeria has proven abortive and unfortunately it has laundered the image of Nigerians and Nigeria before overseas. The increasing immigration sanctions, embargoes, scrutiny and stereotypes leveled against Nigeria in the recent times have become a serious cause for concern. Electoral corruption is chiefly liable for the unprecedented poor leaders and abject poverty in the country. Many instances round and about the nation could point as to why after many years of being a key oil producing country, yet lack a single working refinery. The new administration at the federal level is not finding it easy in manning the nation because of the accumulated poor foreign and local economic policies taken by the previous administrations. Adversely, the resultant effect of increment in exchange rates and fuel pump prices in the last few months is untold hardship. While the cost of living is constantly going up, the meagerly income is static. The palliative method adopted by the federal government to cushion the general inflation is grossly sabotaged by those in charge of disbursing these items at the local levels.

Praying for the Leaders and the Nation in the Old Testament

The Old Testament has a registered interest on the welfare of the Israelite nation. Some of these passages in the Old Testament admonished for the peace of the land, others refer to the heart of the leaders of different nations. There were also mentions of various enemy nations whom God foils their evils plans against Israel (c.f Lev 26: 6, Psalm 33: 6-12, Isa 2:4, Jer 29:7, Prov 2:1, Job 12:23-24, Prov 11:14, Prov 14: 14: 34, Ps 47: 2-7, Psalm 102: 15, Psalm 22: 28, I Sam 2: 10). God’s creation, control and domination of nations and the whole earth gained attention in the OT also. A significant number of these passages point to sin as that which destroys a nation. Obielosi (2016) argues that starting from Gen1: 26-28, the mandate to dominate the earth was the master plan of God for his human creation. This position was buttressed in the promises God made to

Abraham. He maintains that “God initiated a process of nation building that was to have global implications with perennial significance” (p. 21). It is clear that the tenets of the blessings promised to Abraham are the qualities developed nations have attained significantly especially as it has to do with social, health, economic and a people oriented working system of government. Therefore for a true Nigeria nation to be built these cardinal components of development must be considered urgently by the leaders in the country. Further, Obiorah (2012) selected and itemized the various passages of the Old Testament that contains prayers for the king. The author asserts that Psalm 72 stands out because of its dedicated focus on praying for the leader (s).

Composition of Prayers for the Leaders, Good Governance, and the Nation in Nigeria

The first and the current Nigeria national anthems contain invocation of God of creation to direct our noble cause and guide our leaders’ right. The national anthems ended with the desire to attain lofty heights and as a nation to build a place where peace and justice reign. Patriotic song and anthem seems to be a lip service recitation with reflections on the implications of the wordings. Odinakalu (2022) bemoans the contradictions as he quips that Nigeria’s first national anthem was ultimately a failed effort at inventing a civic prayer to cover for the original sin of illegitimacy that afflicted the country’s birth. The response of the people to this ambivalence facing reoccurring dilemma was multiplicity and re-invention of prayer schemes for Nigeria. This prayer marathons and agenda to save Nigeria is not particular religion. The religious efforts of different religious are recognized throughout the nation. Gen Yakubu Gowon’s regime inaugurated “Nigeria Pray”, this was extended at intervals by other military regimes and civilian administrations. Ayeni (2021) covered the 2021 episode of the Nigeria Pray event and affirms the hope and expectations of Christians for God’s intervention. The staggering launch of prayer marathons, crusades, processions and rallies has become a steady occurrence in many Nigerian churches and also in other religions.

Relying on prayers as solution to national problems by Christians in Nigeria as already established is understood as part of religious obligations of the Christian faithful. Although there were inter-denominational prayers for Nigeria before, the Catholic Church however by 1993 at the peak June 12 political and election annulment saga composed the Prayer for “Nigeria in Distress”. The heartfelt petition/prayer by the Catholic bishops in events of daring crises and almost violent riots

that threatened to cause mayhem is considered a significant prayer seeking for God's intervention. The profundity and systematic incorporation of the past and the present in a single copy prayer must be applauded. Throughout the Catholic dioceses in the country, the prayers were circulated and further became part of the many prayers said in the church. Again in 2020, the Catholic Bishop's Conference of Nigeria proposed 40-Day prayer "for God to save Nigeria". The prayers were to seek God's intervention to end the security crisis amidst several militant attacks, kidnappings and murders targeted against Christians in many states.

Continuously, the Catholic Church and indeed others share in the collective national burden by praying for the nation in their different local and major national crusades. They are known for petitioning God for free and fair elections during state and general elections. These prayers beseech God to help the people elect peacefully good leaders. The nature of elections in Nigeria is characterized by violence and malpractices of various kinds. It has proven overtime not to always be the true test of candidate's popularity and acceptance by the people. Thus, this failure to elect responsible and good leaders continues to deprive the people chance at solid national development. Conversely, there is a current wave of dissipation and displeasure towards the obstinate troubles of Nigeria. Many are beginning to view dependency on prayers as not to be the solution to the problem. Some of these people criticize the prayers said so far for the leaders and the nation as unreasonable and lazy man's approach. This feeling of despair and sufferings in the nation contributes to the alarming exodus of the youths, from Christianity back to the traditional religion. The fever of "Japa" (relocation to better countries) is literarily the dream of many young Nigerians. Escaping the country in such an untold number in the past few years is clear evidence that people are now less tolerant and less expecting of the realization of a true nation.

A Close Reading and Interpretation of 1Timothy 2: 1-2

Prayer is one of the vital component of many world religions and an expression of faith in God. It fulfills a lot of roles for the believers and sometimes can be the only and final answer to the believers' daily life problems. Many Christians have resigned to their fate and resolved that only prayers can save Nigeria as a nation. This includes praying for their nation and leaders even though they are not responsible leaders. Usually some Christians fish out these biblical passages that support their decision and obvious passivity to political issues. A significant number of Christians

in Nigeria insist on prayer as their only contribution towards nation building and development. A brief look at the text; I Tim 2: 1-2 will help substantiate the position of the work.

I Tim 2: 1-2 (Nestle Aland 28th ed.) says: 1. Παρακαλῶ οὖν πρῶτον πάντων ποιεῖσθαι δεήσεις προσευχὰς ἐντεύξεις εὐχαριστίας ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, 2. ὑπὲρ βασιλέων καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν ὑπεροχῇ ὄντων, ἵνα ἡρεμον καὶ ἡσύχιον βίον διάγωμεν ἐν πάσῃ εὐσεβείᾳ καὶ σεμνότητι.

The translation of the text in English reads: 1. I urge first of all to make supplications, prayers, petitions, thanksgiving for all men. 2. For kings and all of (who) being in authority that may live quiet and peaceful life in everything godliness and dignity.

Παρακαλῶ: has an alternative reading in manuscripts (MSS) such as D* F G b vg^{vs}, Ambst. Παρακαλεῖ. The adoption of the alternative here indicates a choice of third person singular instead of the first persons used by the as used by the earlier manuscript. The move of the person here indicates a shift in the speaker of the sentence. Obielosi (2014) notes that “persons refer to the doer of an action” (p. 22). This can be in the first, second or third person. Basal and Bada (2012) maintain that the first person usually imply inclusivity. They argue that it is the most powerful authorial presence is use of the first person as opinion holder and originator (p. 1781).

Following the basic principle in textual criticism, the use of Παρακαλῶ as used by Nestle Aland was witnessed in earliest MSS is most likely to be closer to the original text. The alternative above is an insertion by more recent MSS. Therefore “I urge/beseech” is a better translation and could situate the author of the epistle as the one charging or encouraging the church. The appeal by the writer as given to the recipient of the letter to Timothy is for all Christian audience in the church the letter was addressed. The word Παρακαλῶ here is the only one in the chosen text with a textual problem.

Exegetical Look at the Text and its Implication

Marshall (1999) marks out I Timothy 2:1-15 as a single theme followed by a related digression. It is a self-contained unit, obviously not linked neither to theme introduced in chapter 1 nor the others later discussed in the letter. It stands out from other existing subjects in the epistle. Perkins (2008) mentions that from the outlines that the rules for church life are concentrated in I Timothy and in Titus 2. If one was to go by the general observation, then the demand and supplication was for the

Christian community, the household of God. Twomey (2009) remarks that the pastor urges both Timothy and the community at Ephesus to offer up prayers for the pagan ruling authorities. They were to pray for them as it will in turn lead “to peace and stability” (p. 32). One may however deduce that perhaps by means of prayer and, one assumes good relations with the non-Christian world and government others outside the faith will be brought to salvation. The relationship between the church and state politics even in the undisputed letters of Paul has been a complex one and not static. A cordial and amicable relationship between the Church and state was subject on who was the Emperor of the Roman government. The text however seems to suggest the extent the church ought to partake in the civic life in the secular society in ensuring the maintenance of peace. It was important to present them as non-enemies of the states. Apparently, the supplication here can attenuate the prevalent anti-national and anti-social view of the non-Christians held against the church.

The text, I Tim 2: 1-2 carries a strong stress on the universality of the gospel shared as one could observe the emphatic repetition of *πάς*. It could also be adjudged as the longest discussion and a most detailed discourse of prayer in the second century church recorded in the New Testament. The stress on *πάς* could also be a pointer to the polemic quality intended by the Pastor as against the opposing views of the Jewish false teachers that proclaims Jewish myth, law and genealogies above the message of Christ.

The word “first” (*πρῶτον*) with the addition of *πάντων* together which means “first of all”, “above all” or “first of all things” may explain the placing of prayer in such a prominent and importance of universal prayer and then prayer for the leaders. *πρῶτον* could also infer priority, probably first in time of performing a particular action or sequence of the instruction to be given in the letter.

The middle voice complimentary infinitive *ποιεῖσθαι* meaning “to make or to do” has four preceding accusative subjects which are to be done by the church. Namely (a) *δεήσεις* meaning petition or entreaty- this implies special request, actively petitioning God on behalf of somebody. (b) *προσευχὰς*-prayer in general, it could mean intercession for various things. (c) *ἐντεύξεις* meaning petition or request- it is usually referred or addressed to a superior. (d) *εὐχαριστίας*- the word simply means thanksgiving. By looking at these four complimentary infinitives, one can observe

that they are quite synonymous, however using them together points to need to be emphatic, to follow a detailed method or procedure. It also stresses the urgency and importance of the prayers.

Further, verse 2 of I Timothy chapter 2 is an addition, a breakdown of those categories of people, the specific group of people which needs to be prayed for in the Church. Its position here aligns with the traditional emphasis in the New Testament household codes on the Church's responsibility towards the state. The civic responsibility *ὑποτασσέσθαι* (Rom 13: 1-7, I Pet 2:13-17, Titus 3:1) were already part of the New Testament thoughts. Hence it is most likely that prayers for the leaders or those in authority can be viewed as an application of this principle. The text is an apt apologetic attempt to present the Christians as those not against the recognized government and authority. For Marshall (1999), certainly prayer for the authorities has the benefit of the church in view. It could also represent the second century Church's effort in building a harmonious relationship with the state or amending that which is obviously deficient since the earliest time of Christianity. The church at this point is willing to ensure that they will do whatever is necessary to foster and maintain tranquility in their environment. One could thus cite the prosperity and success of Rome in the 200 years of relative peace (*Pax Romana*) as a great example of the intention of the Pastor (writer). It is evident that peace brings progress. It is worthy to note that the understanding and practice of government in the then Roman world is fairly different from that which is obtainable in the contemporary times. This is especially so in purely democratic states. Civic responsibilities in such political system are vast and varied. It is clearly beyond submission and paying of taxes, selective enfranchisement rights, limited human rights and obeying the established authorities. There are several ways the citizens can and should participate in the sustenance of the democracy. The 1999 Nigerian constitution captures various rights, roles, duties, liabilities, privileges and roles the citizens are expected to should uphold. They include active participation in ensuring that suitable candidates are selected during elections. This is aside the rights to life, dignity, and personal liberty, right to fair hearing, privacy and family. Others include; freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom of expression and press, association, peaceful assembly, right to vote and be voted for, freedom of movement and discrimination. The Nigerian constitution also upholds equality before the law court. Here, individuals have the right to seek redress when one's basic rights are infringed.

The above discourse therefore shows that in the quest for good governance, good leaders and actualization of a holistic true nation, Christians have other roles to play. While one commend the expression of faith and demonstration of total dependence on God through prayers, however Christians must embrace other civic responsibilities in pursuit of a great nation. It is God who created the civil society, since government and those in authority for the good of His people, then it is not proper that the people continue wallowing in mediocre here in Nigeria. God has already instructed man to dominate the earth (Gen 1: 28). It is therefore imperative that the Church should utilize the instrumentality of the masses under its guide to achieve positive changes. The first therefore is to shade off the unnecessary disregard for politics. Falaye (2016) observes that:

Most Christians proof that it is very wrong to get involved in politics because of Jesus' refusal to be made king by His followers. They go on to tell any would-be Christian politician that the Christian task is evangelism, not politics that being involved in politics will cause a distraction from the Christian task of bringing lost sinners to Christ (p.3).

Christian values and virtues no doubt are most needed in different categories of the country; the followers and the leaders inclusive. The church further can take the lead in solving the leadership problems that mitigate nation building in Nigeria. It should be forthright in speaking up and against members who are not doing well in representing the people in one public position or the other. Particularly the underperforming leaders should be addressed by their various congregations even though this could be done privately. Erhueh (1989) opines that "the church in Nigeria should strain every muscle to see that Christians in government posts carry out the ideal of Christian love, justice, peace e.t.c." (p. 87). The church by this fully assumes its role as the conscience of the society and voice of the common man.

Existing Suggested Solutions for Nation Building in Nigeria

Every human society strives to improve its state. The interest and welfare of the nation is at the heart of many nationalists, scholars, and true leaders. Nigeria as a nation has its own significant suggestions and recommendation by various persons who are concerned with the development of the nation-state. In many books, book chapters, conferences, summit, workshops and journal publications one may find this concern for national integration and development well discussed in them. Unya (2022) posits that to achieve positive development and conquer the challenges

withholding development then there must be change of attitude on the part of the political leadership class. Obiefuna (2011) insists that the students as people who are enlightened have important contributions to make towards nation building by “coming out of their cocoons and launching themselves into the orbit of the national grill. It makes them part and parcel of the dynamism of national vital force” (p. 195). The 2020 #Endsars protests in many states of the nation and “obedient campaign” movement are actual materializations of the position and recommendation of Obiefuna (2011). These events shook the very core of the nation and made a strong statement of the commitment and willingness of the youths to take back the country. Other solutions recommended by different people here include: **i.** Political restructuring of the country **ii.** Corruption, looting, embezzlement of funds must be rooted out. **iii.** Nipping the bud of religious favouritism, fanaticism and nepotism. **iv.** Total reorientation and change in the attitude the electorates and entire masses. **v.** Education of rights and responsibilities of the citizens by the National Orientation Agency. **vi.** Revitalization of the education system. **vii.** Renewed in morality and moral education. **viii.** Designing practical poverty alleviation system. **ix.** Extinguishing terrorism and ethnicism. **x.** Provision of favourable systems and conditions for businesses. **xi.** Tackling unemployment.

Conclusion

Good leaders and nations achieving their set out developmental milestones is a huge blessing to its people. African over many years struggles with actualizing concrete national development and integration. When the kings (leaders) are prospering, the nation is prospering is a biblical view that is yet to be realized in Nigeria. The Bible also direct believers to submit, to obey and to pray for their secular leaders in order for them to live in peace and godliness in the society. This continues to form nucleus of faith and practical doctrine taught in many churches about civic responsibilities up to now. These petitions and prayers recommended by our text, I Timothy 2:1-2 must be accompanied by active participation in the building of the nation that everyone desire to see in Nigeria. Christians are not only to pray, they must as a matter of urgency accept and indoctrinate new understanding and approach to issues of governance in Nigeria. The Church thus must shed off its distaste for politics and sees it as an institution created by God and that which determines the peace, prosperity, health and happiness of God’s people. It is therefore grossly deficient for the Church to leave governance solely in the hands of dubious and unscrupulous fellows. The

church must also ensure that it become an ideal model in re-shaping the face of governance and politics in Nigeria by forming and registering as members of political parties, by selecting candidates that will be vying for political offices and more so by promoting and voting without discrimination and denominational bias good leaders that will serve all.

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