

**THE INTERMINGLING OF RELIGION AND POLITICS: POLITICAL
CAMPAIGNS IN SOUTH SOUTHERN NIGERIA AS RELIGIOUS
RITUAL PERFORMANCE**

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ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, politicians seek refuge in religion as security measure to ward off the evil eye and machination of sorcery and witchcraft that stand on their way to success. Since Churchmen and women arrogate to themselves the ability to protect political office seekers by covering them with the blood of Christ, there is a guaranteed security for political aspirants. It is this religious posturing that turns political campaigns into a rite of passage aimed at consolidating politics of the belly and the occult and giving lee way to corruption and impoverishment of the nation through wasteful spending. This paper holds that the posture of Nigeria as a secular state should be streamlined and politicians who use religion to foster their political fortunes should be sanctioned with appropriate laws put in place. If religious leaders play their prophetic roles in society, then they will serve as conscience of the nation.

Keywords: Politics, Religion, Political Campaigns, Ritual, Transformation

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Politics in Nigeria is unique and different from politics in many other countries of the world, especially the so-called developed countries. This is especially so in terms of Party Primaries from where flag bearers of the parties would image. Elections of the primaries in developed countries are usually conducted in a democratic way, through free and fair electoral process. However, in Nigeria, the flag bearers are delivered through what looks like a union of patronage and clientage and not through democratic process. That way, after the primaries, the political parties have acrimonies, enmity, revenge and emergence of sorcery and witchcraft to contend with.

The resultant effect of this is a new uniqueness in Nigerian politics at electioneering campaigns, where party manifestoes and ideologies are drowned in the cacophonies of what

looks like political evangelism encapsulated in Christian choruses, testimonies and spiritual anointing of political candidates by Archbishops, Bishops, Pastors and Evangelists. That way, electioneering campaigns have been transformed into religious ritual performance, with all the trappings of traditional rites of passage. During political campaigns the political party candidate thus becomes an initiate in an important religious action presided over by religious functionaries represented by the prominent clergymen and women present at the campaign grounds. This type of gathering produces double effects. First, it is aimed at shielding the candidates from repercussions of wrong doings at the primaries and demonic revenge of those who were so wronged. Second, it puts forward the political candidates as good religious men and women thereby amplifying their religious posturing.

It is important to note that almost all political campaigns in Nigeria have a central theme or what could be referred to as political slogan. In Akwa Ibom State where this research is based, the political slogan in the governorship electioneering campaigns of 2015 was: "Divine Mandate." The apparent inviolability of the slogan, enmeshed in the divine, has a note of finality and assurance about it, because if God himself is the bestowal of the mandate, who is man to challenge it? The slogan is also a pointer to the religious posturing of the campaign. It was an assuring slogan that galvanised the electorate who went out in support of the candidate, as well as strengthening the energy and the spirit of the campaign.

It is such religious posturing of political slogan that made the 2015 governorship election campaigns in Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria look like 'Political Pentecostalism,' which is the contemporary method adopted by political parties to market their flag bearers to the electorates. It is a hybrid of Party Politics and Church Conventions mounted on the soap box. The facilitators at these hybrid conglomerates are party faithful and Churchmen who shed off their religious identities and prophetic calling in order to put on the gown of political partisanship.

One may wonder why there is such intermingling of religion and politics in Nigeria. The reason is rooted in culture, and religion and politics are important ingredients of a people's culture. In Nigeria, nay Africa, it is difficult to separate the secular from the religious. It is therefore the position of this paper that, what goes on in political campaigns is a replication of the relationship between political governance and religion in the African traditional society. What exactly is religion that makes it so insidious and encompassing?

2.0 RELIGION

Some anthropologists regard religion as the beliefs and patterns of behaviour by which humans try to deal with what they feel is important problems that cannot be solved through the application of known technology or techniques of organisation. To overcome these limitations, people turn to the manipulation of supernatural beings and powers (Haviland, 1997: 639).

And religion consists of various rituals – prayers, songs, dances, offerings and sacrifices – through which people try to manipulate supernatural beings and powers to their advantage (Ekanem, 2015). These beings and powers may consist of gods and goddesses, ancestral and other spirits, or impersonal powers, either by themselves or in various combinations. In all societies there are certain individuals, especially skilled in dealing with these beings and

powers, which assist other members of society in their ritual activities. There are myths that rationalises the system in a manner consistent with people’s experience in the world in which they lived.

Anthropologist Anthony F. C. Wallace has defined religion as “a set of rituals, rationalised by myth, which symbolises supernatural powers for the purpose of achieving transformations of state in man and nature” (Wallace, 1966: 107). What lies behind this definition is a recognition that people, when they cannot “fix” serious problems that cause them anxiety through the manipulation of supernatural beings and powers turn to religion. This requires ritual, which some anthropologists see as the primary phenomenon of religion or “Religion in action” that inverts status of participants, bestowing on them ritualised persona (Wallace, 1966; Ekanem, 2015).

What matters is not whether or not a particular religion accomplishes what people believe it does, but that all religions serve a number of important psychological and social and even political functions. They reduce anxiety by downloading the unknown from the cerebral or celestial domains and explaining them in the physical order so as to make it comprehensible (Ekanem, 2005). Religion also provides comfort in the belief that supernatural aid is available in times of crises, or to what Ekanem (2005) refers to as using religion to make sense of the predicaments of life. Finally, religion plays an important role in maintaining social solidarity; even political solidarity.

What all these boil down to is that religion operates within the realm of the supernatural. This seems to be the reason for its cohesive and overbearing nature. In religion, people gather together, irrespective of their differences, to answer to the call of the divine, notwithstanding status and social standing, so that they can dance and sing together thereby creating what Ekanem (2005) calls the “Moment of Neutrality” where conflict, ethnic tensions, the high and the low in society mingle together, neutralising whatever caused division in the effervescence generated by a common idiom of religious expression. We now turn to politics.

3.0 POLITICS

Politics, according to [Merriam-Webster](#) Dictionary (1996) refer to activities that relate to influencing the actions and policies of a government or getting and keeping power in a government. And according to Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia, politics comes from the [Greek](#): πολιτικός *politikos*, meaning "of, for, or relating to citizens, and is the process of making uniform decisions applying to all members of a group. It also involves the use of power by one person to affect the behavior of another person. More narrowly, it refers to achieving and exercising positions of [governance](#) — organized control over a human community, particularly a [state](#). Furthermore, politics is the study or practice of the distribution of [power](#) and resources within a given community (a usually hierarchically organized population) as well as the interrelationship(s) between communities.

What this means is that politics is the practice and theory of influencing other people. It also involves the use of power by one person to affect the behavior of another person. More narrowly, it refers to achieving and exercising positions of [governance](#) — organized control over a human community, particularly a [state](#). Furthermore, politics lend itself to the practice

of the distribution of [power](#) and resources within a given community as well as the interrelationship(s) between communities.

For the purpose of this research work, we are concentrating on formal Politics which refers to the operation of a constitutional system of government and publicly defined institutions and procedures. It has to do with political parties, which, like religion must 'evangelise' and 'convert' (carpet-crossing) in order to get followers.

According to Wikipedia, the free Encyclopedia, many people view formal politics as something outside of themselves. This may be true, but the decisions of those involved in formal or partisan politics do have significant effects on their daily lives.¹ On the evangelizing aspect of politics, political rallies, campaigns, conventions and even house to house visitations, follow the same pattern of Christian evangelism.

Informal Politics is understood as forming alliances, exercising power and protecting and advancing particular ideas or goals. Generally, this includes anything affecting one's daily life, such as the way an office or household is managed, or how one person or group exercises influence over another. Informal Politics, on the other hand, is typically understood as everyday politics, because, just as man is a religious being, he is also a political being. Hence, it would not be an overstatement to say that there are politics anywhere there are men and women. The necessary consequence of this statement is that, even in Traditional African Society, on which present day modern African society is founded, religion and politics go hand in hand, and this is what we turn to now.

3.1 Religion and Politics in Traditional Society²

The intermingling of religion and political campaigns cannot be fully understood without linking it with the interplay of religion and politics in traditional African society. Western society has the tradition of separating politics from religion. Even though Nigeria is a secular state, there is no way religion and politics can be dichotomized. This is because in African traditional society, there is no distinction between what is religious and what is secular, no dividing line between the secular Chief and the Chief Priest.

One of the most characteristic features of African traditional religion is its pervasive nature or gripping character, where the whole of life is wrapped up in religion. Apart from this, religion binds man to the unseen powers and helps him form right relations with these non-human powers; it also binds them to their fellow human beings. Religion acts as cement holding the societies together, and providing the necessary support and stability for these societies.

Religion rounds up the totality of African culture. Normally, a person does not need any special instruction in religion. He picks it up as he grows and begins to participate

¹ One is not obliged to attend political rallies and campaigns, or to be a card-carrying member of any political party or even seek election into any executive office or the parliament. However, it does not mean that the person who has nothing to do with formal politics will be immune from the consequences of formal political decisions. Indeed they stand to be affected by any decisions or policies of government.

² The material for this section was gathered during ethnographic fieldwork conducted by the authors among the Annang people of South Southern Nigeria.

in the communal rituals and ceremonies. It is only priests, chiefs or leaders of religious associations who require special instructions (Ekanem 2002). And, although a particular society may recognize the need for leaders who have special powers or training, or both, to officiate on some important religious occasions, one finds that generally in Africa, religious leadership is diffused or widely spread. The head of a family or lineage, who exercises political authority over family or lineage, often acts as the religious head of the household (Ekanem 2017). Among other things, the regular and conscientious performance of ancestral rites and sacrifices is a prime duty of the head of the family, and the respect and reverence paid him is due, in no small measure, to his role as priest of the household. He, of course, needs to manifest superior wisdom and strength in addition, but the fundamental basis of his authority takes its source from spiritual considerations. Social bonds which unite African families together are usually also identical with religious ties, and the family becomes not only social and political unit but also a cultic one.

In traditional African society, chiefs had dual roles to play (Ekanem, 2002). They were not only political or administrative officials but also religious specialists. The Annang chief, for example, was also the religious official who represented his people before their ancestors (Ekanem, 2016). Taboos were in place to serve as reminder to the chief and everybody else that he occupied a sacred position. He was the occupant of the stool of the ancestors. For this reason he was treated with the greatest veneration.

The distinctive feature of traditional African religion lies in its being a way of life, and the purpose of religion was to order our relationship with our fellow-men and with our environment, both spiritual and physical. At the root of it is a quest for harmony between man, the spirit world, nature and society (Udondata and Ekanem, 2014).

Religion had also profound influence on the socio-political institutions of the African people, as studies among the Annang of South Southern Nigeria reveal. The various socio-political institutions of this ethnic people like *Ekpo*, *Ekpe*, *Ekong*, *Obon*, *Inam*, *Ebre*, *Ewana*, is embedded in religion, which is very relevant in the socio-political arena of society (Ekanem, 2017). Undoubtedly, this reference to the intermingling of religion and politics in African traditional society will help in the appreciation of political campaigns in contemporary Nigeria as ritual performance.

3.2 Political Campaigns as Religious Ritual Performance

Not much can be said about political campaigns as religious ritual performance in contemporary Nigeria without first exploring the politico-religious arrangement in some of the states of the Federation, especially in Akwa Ibom State. Since the establishment of the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) on 27th August 1976, the mustard seed planted on that eventful day has now grown to cover all the nooks and crannies of Nigeria with the Head Office at the National Christian Centre Abuja. There are branches of this association in each state of the federation and Local Government Areas. Initially, the election of officers of the State President of the association was left entirely in the hands of the Churches that made up its membership. Recently, even though the Churches still conduct the elections, evidence

shows that government exercises much pressure on who should be elected into the office of the president. The fact, however, is that once the CAN president is elected, he becomes an important member of the Government House Prayer Team that meets for prayers at least once every week in the Government House Chapel that changes its name according to the Christian denomination of the occupant of the house.

The Government House Prayer Team is made up of the Special Adviser to the Governor on Religious Matters, Chaplain of the Government House Chapel, the President and some officers of CAN, priests, pastors and representatives of some of the Christian denominations, along with some religious women. The Prayer Ministry of the Government House has a standing Choir. Members of the Prayer Team receive stipends frequently from government. The President of CAN, once elected is given an official car attached to his person by the government. One of the standing rules of CAN is that no Churchman can aspire to the office of President without arriving at the rank of Bishop or its equivalent. Because of what looks like the glamour of the office and attendant material benefits, some Christian denominations that had never had Episcopal tradition have had to create the episcopacy, ordain Bishops and Archbishops thereby waiting as potential presidents of CAN. Even some individuals with only one Church building with no branches and permanent followers, hire Bishops from other Christian denominations to ordain them as Bishops and Archbishops so that they also can be potential CAN Presidents in waiting.

Recently, some of the presidents of CAN in the State seem to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Governor in terms of glamour and power. Like the Governor they have security guards, whose body language is more secular than religious. They are also accompanied by Personal Assistants and they move on a motorcade for functions.

The primary task of the Government House Prayer Team is to pray for the success of government in all areas of political life and for peace and harmony in the state. It is the same team that accompanies the governor during political campaigns and some other religious outings of the Governor. And prominent clergymen and women in this team are the religious functionaries that perform what has now turned to be a rite of passage.

The spatial setting for political campaigns replicates the spatial setting for religious rally where an open space that accommodates thousands of people is provided. There is a wide and highly elevated podium adorned with exotic flowers. Communication gadgets are excellently installed and well tuned. Canopies under which politicians and clergymen and women occupy are provided. There is a choir stand with modern musical instruments and drums. Like any evangelical meeting, the atmosphere surrounding the political meeting is electrified and apparently vivified by the "Holy Spirit" whose fire, from time to time, will be invoked to wipe out political *persona non grata*. Unlike normal Church gatherings, however, hundreds of stone-faced security men and women swamp the entire arena to secure it, keep the peace and occasionally intimidate the *anawims*.

The political gathering is called to order by an outstanding clergyman in the form of an opening prayer. And after the prayer, the choir takes over and praise worship songs rent the air as political 'worshippers' lift up their eyes, raise their two hands above their heads, waving from left to right, with graceful and modest bodily movements that replicate some ritual

dance at the traditional rite of passage among the Annang of South Southern Nigeria (See Ekanem 2015). As the atmosphere is so electrified, it looks as if God has really come down to anoint the political candidate.

The next ritual action is prayer that is said over the political office seeker – governorship candidate in this instance. The prayer is conducted in concelebrated form as all the clergymen and women stand in a circular form with the political candidate in the middle. They stretch their hands over him who kneels in the middle like a fetus in the womb of a woman, ready to be harvested during the rite of birth among the Annang. But this time around, the political candidate is like a fetus in the womb of Mother Earth, delivered for his constituency as a political child of destiny. This rite of passage from fetus to living human baby politician is concluded with songs and dance during the offertory collection.

Songs and dances are part and parcel of ritual performance and they are always performed as indispensable part of the public outing ceremony. An example of this important outing ceremony in ritual performance in Africa is the Annang rite of passage during the outing ceremony of Annang *Mbobbo* initiate at the village arena after she had ritually crossed the dividing line between adolescence and womanhood (Ekanem 2015). Therefore, during the offertory collection appropriate songs and choruses are rendered by the choir, accompanied by rhythmic drumming and music that automatically set the legs moving in dancing fashion. Everyone in the arena – the governorship candidate, male and female members of the clergy, the politicians young and old, male and female and children dance together on a common ground. As the near ecstasy of dance continues, there is a leveling of relationships as hierarchy melts under the heat generated by the dance, allowing the intermingling of sweat, heat, bodily fluids and odour to wax the people together in what looks like a covenantal relationship. There seem to be a euphoric enactment of the unity and oneness that compel the African to utter without hesitation: “I am, because we are” (see Mbiti, 1969), a unity of purpose and communitarian spirit that will invariably galvanize the people to elect one of their own, knowing that he has been divinely mandated and anointed.

This is followed by intercessory prayers taken by the ordained and the non-ordained in the arena. The prayer is spontaneous, in the pattern described by Oosthuizen (1992: 62-63) and Ekanem (2005), where the tempo of the prayer rises and falls, with occasional grunting sounds and bodily gesticulations. All the prayers centre around success, preservation of the life of the candidates and that of his family members, elimination of failure, defeat of witchcraft, sorcery and the powers of the evil eye that may be directed against the candidates, and the like.

What follows is a reading from a passage of scripture which is taken by the Governorship Candidate. After the reading, the clergyman already appointed to preach takes over. The preaching is interspersed with long choruses and dance. The preaching, which is completely partisan, with an emphatic reference to the divine choice, which *ipso facto* eliminates other candidates from the opposing political parties. In some instances political opponents are even cursed and in order to make such curses effective, Jesus Christ is sometimes called upon to block the success of opponents through what they consider the destructive potentials of the ‘Holy Ghost’ generated fire. Throughout the preaching, there is no single exhortation on good governance, on transparency, humility, justice and fair play.

4.0 ANALYSIS

From what we have seen so far, the acquisition of political power through the electoral process is not an easy one for the Africans. With deep-rooted belief in witchcraft and sorcery among the people, political office holders are weary of wicked machinations of witches and sorcerers who may cause irreparable damages to their aspirations. The belief is that no matter the volume of campaigns and presentation of party manifestos, and even the divine mandate bestowed on the candidate as a gratuitous gift, if nothing is done to ward off the evil eye, then it would be nothing but an exercise in futility. Belief in witchcraft and its relevance in politics are very strongly embedded in society especially in the West African sub-region as the studies of Geschiere (1997) reveal.

The implication of this is that there must be spiritual fortification against the machinations of witchcraft and the way to go about it is through religious ritual. Indeed, this is one of the reasons politicians turn to religion. This way of thinking corroborates Haviland's description of religion as that which helps people to overcome their limitation and this is the reason why they turn to the manipulation of supernatural beings and powers (Haviland 1994).

The party primaries, with its attendant god-fatherism or patronage construct, infighting and stepping on toes usually leave fatal wounds on the body politics and on the psyche of opponents who later are naturally poised for revenge through occult or any harmful means possible, especially invisible, harmful spiritual manipulations or open physical confrontation through violence. It is therefore logical and reasonable that this religious ritual be performed for spiritual fortification and transformation of the candidate from occult vulnerability to astounding impeccability that would stand the test and rigors of the electoral process.

What stands out, therefore, is that most people take seriously the operation of invisible forces, labeled "witchcraft" or "sorcery" and this belief is an essential factor in "modern politics" at every level, not merely in rural areas. Undoubtedly Westerners, missionaries and some academics do not take such beliefs seriously, just like some of our modern evangelists and pastors (see Umoh 2011). The fact, however, is that belief in witchcraft and sorcery as means of revenge and of causing harm to others is very real and cannot be dismissed by a mere wave of the hands. In fact, the belief or instances of witchcraft and sorcery seems to be universal. This is the position of MacGaffey (1997: ix), who opines that "it is time we listened to them, but to do so it is not necessary to be able to hear in indigenous languages, to liberate ourselves from what Geschiere (1997) calls the moralizing terminology of 'sorcery' and 'witchcraft.'

This is not an appeal to the suspension of rational judgement. The fact is that even if witchcraft is not a reality; the belief in it is very deeply rooted; very real. Even in America, there had been and still are witches and witch hunts, not to mention the diviners and spiritualists in the occult (see MacGaffey 1997). However, African beliefs in the occult are highly varied. Geschiere (1997) focuses on a group of people in southern Cameroons, but closely similar beliefs about power are instrumental at the national level throughout the forest areas of Central Africa and especially in Nigeria.

When politicians use the power of witchcraft against political opponents, it is then reasonable to infer that Nigerian politicians are themselves witches and wizards. One of the

characteristics of witches and wizards is the ability to “eat” the substance of others and thus to cause them ill health and other misfortunes for his or her own personal project. And by extension, this occult capability is all about power and in the nature of power itself; it is also necessary for successful leadership and the defense of collective interests. Herein lays the reason why politicians are considered witches and wizards who practice “politics of the belly.” In the words of Bayart, as quoted by Geschiere (1997: 24), “the politics of the belly” refers both to the concupiscence of greed for material goods and witchcraft power, located in the belly, is believed to enable the successful and the politician to enrich themselves and their admiring followers, who are corruptly empowered through the sharing of the dividends of democracy which is generally referred to in Nigeria as the ‘national cake.’”

And this is the crux of the matter in the intermingling of politics and religion. Just as witchcraft is domesticated in the belly of the witch and wizards, so also are greed, corruption, grabbing, inordinate acquisition of wealth and exploitation are manifestations of the contents of the bellies of politicians. And just as ordinary witches and wizards eat the substance of humans, politicians, like witches also ‘eat’ societal substances, identified here as the national cake and other attendant wealth of the nation, thereby sickening the economy and the polity. The bye product is economic recession as is the case in Nigeria today. And politics is about power; witchcraft is also about power; when witchcraft power and political power are appropriated by a single individual, the individual becomes doubly powerful. This is indeed where Nigerian and indeed African politicians get their intimidating power and its alluring nature such that aspirants will fight and kill to get to the top and to remain there till death do them part. One will then not need to go far before one discovers the root causes of corruption in Nigeria.

The dividends of corruption benefit the Church and its leaders in a most profound way. Politicians make fat financial donations to the Churches; sometimes they build Churches for them while the ordinary people are denied the basic necessities of life. With such convergence of religion and politics, politics of the belly has also infected many Churchmen and women, who have shaken off their prophetic roles to put on armour of political partisanship, and Nigeria has become the worst for it. In the process, the prophetic role of the Church and her mission of bringing the Good News to the poor and her capacity as the moral voice and conscience of the nation have been seriously compromised, as the Churches look the other way when the wealth of the nation are being stolen by unscrupulous, avaricious and stingingly rich politicians.

From this ethnographic narrative, we can deduce that political office seekers like the governorship candidates are similar to candidates for initiation in a traditional rite of passage. An initiate is always in the state of liminality – neither here nor there. If there is any period of uncertainty and anxiety in the life of a politician, it is the period of electioneering campaigns and elections proper. What neutralizes tension and anxiety in the life of an initiate is the enactment of ritual which is generally defined as a performance, planned or improvised, that effects transition from everyday life to an alternative context within which the everyday life is transformed (Alexander 1997: 5). Undoubtedly, therefore, the rite of passage is crucial to the sustainability of the tempo of political campaigns.

This is exactly where the importance of rituals at political campaigns lies. We had already put forward that religion consists of various rituals – prayers, songs, dances, offerings and sacrifices – through which people try to manipulate supernatural beings and powers to their advantage. All these ingredients of ritual performance take place within the space of political campaigns as already explicated. Through the rituals, the nerves of the candidates get calm, hope awakened and spirit enlivened.

Without a doubt, religion is a strong uniting force in society, and at the same time it is divisive. Also, politics, as it is played in Nigeria is a source of disunity and violence, as well as being very volatile. When therefore there is the intermingling of religion and politics in a society, as it is the case in this study, such a society is heading to unprecedented instability and chaos. The incidence of violence in all its ramifications, corruption and the attendant economic recession in Nigeria are all indicators of a polity bereaved of a moral force that should have been supplied by religion.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

From the above analysis, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Politicians are close to religion encapsulated in patronising postures that tend to present them as deeply religious and god-fearing. They seem to seek refuge in religion as security measure to ward off the evil eye and machination of sorcery and witchcraft that stand on their way to success. Since Churchmen and women seem to arrogate to themselves the ability to cause the aspirants to be covered and protected by the blood of Christ, there is a guaranteed security for political aspirants. Such seemingly selfish posturing turns political campaigns into a religious rite of passage aimed at consolidating politics of the belly and the occult. In other words it seems the inspiration for political office holders is to amass wealth and not to serve the people.

The convergence of the sacred and the profane at political campaigns supports a growing interest in contemporary studies on the intermingling of religious and secular interests in ritual, as ritual, including traditional religious ritual, society and culture (Alexander 1999: 143). These interests build upon and refine the observation made earlier by Durkheim and Weber and others that religion, society, and culture are mutually influential, political ritual and public ritual, generally referred to as ‘Civic ritual’ or ‘ceremony,’ following Bellah (1974), have received special attentions as instances of overlap and convergence (Lukes 1975).

We can also conclude that civic ritual do not really stand on its own but appropriates authority and authenticity from the cosmic order. This seems to be what Turner (1982) means when he contends that “ceremony is confirmatory; it is not transformative and this is the fundamental role of ritual.” This conclusion is sustained by the inauguration of the Governor of Akwa Ibom State under this study, for example, where the divine was invoked to give spiritual sanction to the new administration and to the State form of government. Indeed, it amplifies and makes realizable the campaign slogan – Divine Mandate. Cherry (1970), makes similar reference to the inauguration of the American President.

The following suggestions are put forward:

1. Political parties, as a matter of policy, must draw up a veritable manifesto in order to sell out such manifestoes to the electorate during political campaigns through convincing oratory and stop hiding under the canopy of religious sentiments and acting Father Christmas to the various religious organizations.
2. The various religious bodies especially the Christian religious denominations must recapture their prophetic role in society. In this regard, the leaders of these Churches must undergo radical transformation and reassess their position as conscience of society and of politicians and speak out against the excesses of government and politicians without fear or favour.
3. The Christian Association of Nigeria, CAN, at various levels, must reclaim their independence and autonomy from the manipulative instincts of government, and reject scheming gratifications from them knowing very well that he who pays the piper dictates the tune. Religious bodies, as far as possible, should stay away from political campaigns grounds, where they will be forced to engage themselves in partisan prayers that turn out to be obnoxious to good taste and authentic religion.
4. The posture of Nigeria as a secular state should be streamlined and maintained and politicians who use religion as stepping stone to political fortunes should be sanctioned through appropriate laws put in place by government.

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