

The Epistle According to you: A Pivotal in National Development

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Abstract

Human character is very critical to any National Development, the reason being that human beings are the instruments to be used to accumulate natural resources, economic and political organization for the development. For any meaningful development to take place in a nation, it is imperative that the place of human character must be given a priority. The paper therefore investigate the Epistle according to you: A Pivotal in National Development. It further explored factors that can help in human character, which include fear of God sincerity, integrity and living purposefully. Historical – Descriptive approach was employed here. The paper concluded that if the Nation Nigeria must join the league of Nations that are developed, human character must be vigorously pursued. It therefore recommended that every stakeholder in the Nation including the church must be willing to work in synergy.

Key Words: *Epistle, Pivotal, National Development.*

Introduction

Nigeria as a developing Nation has enough resources, both human and natural. We are blessed by God, we have a wonderful climate that other countries do not have. She is one of the most populous countries in Africa with abundant natural resources. For a very long time, we have neglected the heavy decay in human character and as a result, we have recorded little or no success in development as a nation. The significance place of human character development to a given nation's growth cannot be over emphasized. Harbison (2014) opined that human beings are the active agents who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization and carry forward national development. He further opined that a country that is unable to develop the skills and knowledge of her people and put them into use in the national economy will be unable to develop anything else.

Efforts have been made in time past to put a collection of resources – all the knowledge, talents, skills, abilities, experience, intelligence, training wisdom possessed by individuals into practice which are the total capacity of the people that represent a form of wealth, that can be directed to achieve the goals of the nation. In 2008, according to Adebola (2018), the then minister of Information and Communication, Prof. Dora Akunyili launched the Rebranding Nigeria Project, many Nigerians were in agreement that the country's image needed a revamp. The hardworking and straight Akunyili recognized that the nation was in a state of flux. She took

it upon herself to rebrand the nation's image for the better. Unlike her exploits during her stint of the National Administration for Food and Drug and Control (NAFDAC) where she put the fear of God in the heart of fake drug manufacturers, this initiative to re-engineer the image of the nation met with challenges.

Change begins into with you which was initiated by the present Minister of Information, Lai Muhammed also had same fundamental problems. None of the initiatives address the fundamental issues facing Nigeria and her people. Emphasis has not really been placed on the character development of the humans. This paper therefore focuses on the Epistle according to you: A Pivotal in National Development. The humans are the main work force and potential leaders of any nation. The lifestyle of a person is critical in the development of a nation.

The Epistle according to you is found in 2 Corinthians 3:2 – 3 “You are our Epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as you are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart”. Epistle simply means letters. It comes from the Greek word “epistole”. It is a writing directed or sent to a person or group of people, usually an elegant and formal didactic letter. Paul told the Corinthians that they were living epistle, a witness to God's way of life.

A clear understanding of the Epistle according to you must be preceded by the need to have a background study to 2 Corinthians. In this enterprise, we will look at the personality of Paul, the city of Corinth and the Corinthian church. Paul's letters furnish us with a host of details about Paul's life, his missionary toils and his relationship to the church. The book of Acts of the Apostles also provides information about him, especially his encounter with the risen Christ on his way to Damascus. Paul's life changing experience popularly called conversion is inevitable for understanding him. The key to the personality of Paul lies in his soul.- stirring experience on the road to Damascus. Constantly shining through his writings is the wonder of that divine encounter (Bruce, 1977). The encounter was distinctly a supernatural revelation of the risen, Christ to this implacable persecutor.

The city of Corinth in Paul's day was a bustling city with a cosmopolitan population drawn from all parts of Roman Empire. It was center of commerce and government. In this respect, living in Corinth was like living in big coastal cities today, Lagos, Ibadan, Warri, Port-Harcourt, Kano, Benin etc. It was a mixed population.

The founding of the church in Corinth by Paul in early A.D 51 is recorded in Acts 18:1. He came to a busy, proud and intellectual Corinth “in weakness and fear and with much trembling”. In Corinth, he lodged with Aquila and Priscilia. Like Paul, they were tentmakers. He devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. He remained in Corinth for eighteen months. The moral position at Corinth provided suitable and fertile ground for Paul's message. The Corinthian church was not without her problems. As Morris (1985) puts it, “The church was in the world as it had to be but the world was in the church as it ought not”. This gave rise to various uncomfortable situation in the Corinthian church.

Paul's letter of recommendation was the Corinthian church itself, an open letter that anyone could read (Adeyemo, 2006). Paul had no need of a letter. The very existence of the Corinthian church was sufficient testimony (Alexander, 1983). This goes to show that if anybody

was in doubt of Paul the Apostle's identity, looking at the Corinthian church was enough evidence of his identity. In other words, the very existence of the church in Corinth was testimony to the validity of his ministry (Carson (ed), 1994). By implication, their lifestyle would prove whether they were of Christ or not.

The Epistle according to you is about what your life is saying to those around you. It is also about what my life is saying to those around me. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch (Acts 11:26). They were called Christians because their behaviours, characters, speeches and activities were like Jesus Christ. Choosing to make him the Lord of our lives changes our lifestyles dramatically. The greatest desire of Christ – centered life is to please Him.

HUMAN ATTITUDE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

An exemplary life is a pre-requisite for national development. It must be reflected in every facet of the nation. The behavioural attitudes and activities of citizens can affect the development of a nation either positively or negatively. Your attitude is your A – Z and it is 100% of your life. Check the Alphabets A – Z and their numerical stand.

A	-	1
T	-	20
T	-	20
I	-	9
T	-	20
U	-	21
D	-	4
E	-	5
100%		

According to Cambridge English Dictionary, attitude is a feeling or opinion about something or someone or a way of behavior. Generally, attitude is a behavior a person adopts toward other people, things, incidents or happenings. Our attitude should commend the Gospel and make it attractive to others. A Christ – centered life becomes the order of the day. For example. If we demonstrate a negative attitude towards people in the society, the impact can be tremendously negative. If an employer demonstrates a negative attitude towards his workers, their impact can be greatly negative for the organization. The reason being that poor management attitudes negatively affect their employees motivation to work. Negative interactions can affect productivity. According to Pascual (2015) attitude is one of the most important factors that helps get through the high and lows in life. It affects performance of anything you do. Our attitude is what influences all our actions. This was buttressed by Gokhale (2019), that it is only the right attitude, which gets us good results. All the smiles and handshakes are not going to get you far, if you do not have the right attitude to help others.

Right attitude promotes national development. All along, negative attitudes have really been a stumbling block to Nigeria's development as a nation. The behavioural attitude of Nigerians have continued to impede the development of the country. This is buttressed by Babadoko (2005) who said that several Nigerians in high places continue to display negative attitudes, values and perceptions. He further went on to say that since 1990, over 20, 000 Nigerians have lost their lives in fire in connection with petroleum pipeline vandalization. And

that it happened because Nigerians have been told projects and services designed for their economic empowerment were still in the pipeline. Since they desired to see the impact of these unfulfilled promises on their lives, they went for the pipeline carrying petroleum products to get a direct impact of the oil wealth.

Apart from the above some of us have bad attitude towards sanitation, law enforcement, morality, business and maintenance of public property. We have a nation with fine policies but faint implementation. We should be capable of protecting our environment, implementing our many laudable policies, enforcing our laws so that we can actually achieve true national development. There is need to raise awareness to promote attitudinal change. Most of us are Christians in the nation and as Christians, we are asked to live to a higher standard because we are representatives of God on earth. According to Mahoney (2019), striving to live a God-centered life is important, because when we exhibit Godly behavior, we are providing a good witness to those around us. Our good living as Christians will eventually translate to national development, consistent godly behavior brings out the blessings of God upon a nation. According to Hunters (2011), consistently godly character gives you the ‘card’ of creditability, respect and influence.

Factors that can enhance the epistle according to you as a pivotal for national development.

A. **The Fear of God:** This is a great enhancer in promoting the epistle according to you. The fear of the Lord is the continual awareness that our heavenly father is watching and evaluating everything we think, say or do. Every life style’s decision is weighed on heaven’s scale and evaluated for its eternal significance. The fear of God makes one to live uprightly. A life of uprightness is key to be an epistle of recommendation. “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13). This was a statement made by king Solomon, the wisest king in his time.

B. **Sincerity:** In accessing the grace to live exemplary life, sincerity is a pre-requisite. It is the opposite of pretence, deceit or hypocrisy. Merriam Webster defines sincerity as the quality or state of being sincere, honesty of mind and freedom from hypocrisy. The common sense of the word rests in a concern for the genuine. Friendly attitude is a dignified feature of a sincere person. Sincerity comes from the heart. You cannot be sincere if you praise someone but deep inside, you hate him or her. It is not to say everything but to mean everything you say. Sincerity is one of the most powerful methods to grow relationship and it is capable of bringing huge dividends. It is therefore essential that we make sincerity a focus in our lives. It is a quality that must be deliberately developed and cultivated. A great American President has addressed this subject, Abraham Lincoln said: “Reputation is the shadow. Character is the tree. Our character is much more than just what we try to display for others to see, it is who we are even when no one is watching. God’s character is doing the right thing because it is right to do what is right”.

We should be real and true to one another as Nigerians. If we are sincere with one another, we will live well and when we live well, we fare well as a nation. Sincerity with one another will make us to live as standard bearers, it is a waste of life if nobody wants

- to be like you. Insincerity will put people on the run anytime they see you around.
- C. **Integrity:** For our lives to be epistles for people to, read, life of integrity is a necessity. Wikipedia defines integrity as the practice of being honest and showing a consistent and uncompromising adherence to strong moral and ethical principles and values. It is one of the fundamental values that employers seek in the employees that they hire. It is the hallmark of a person, Having integrity means doing the right thing in reliable way. A man of integrity honours commitment and keeps promises. According to Thorsborne Jonathan (2006), at all levels of society, there is a strong appeal for integrity, whether on the part of business, political or religious leaders. It is seen as a fundamental and essential quality of leadership. He reported on a survey carried out amongst a range of people that were asked to describe people they could identify as possessing integrity. These were the words the respondents used: strength of character, Steadfast, resolute, walking the talk, authentic, straight forward, what is inside is displayed on the outside, direct in their dealings with others, behaviour matched with values, fair, accountable, responsible, integrated, balanced, whole, mature, wise, committed, self – aware and self – reflective. For Palmer (1992), the road to integrity is sometimes a rough road, soon or later, every decision we make, relationship we have and everything we feel secured about, is tested.
- D. **Maintenance of Right Company:** Association affects destination. “Be not deceived, evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Cor. 15:33). It is therefore behooves on us to associate correctly if we must live exemplary lives. Anyone not going your direction does not deserve your association. Company also affects choices. Most of our youth who travel to Libya, Malaysia and other places by road is as a result of the bad company they find themselves that made them to make such choices. Company also affects mindset. Our mindset determines essentially everything else because our minds create our realities. What we think, we become. According to Dweck (2020), if you have two people who have a fixed mindset, meaning they do not think they can develop any of their qualities, then they will become complacent. They will accept mediocrity and not push one another to become better. They follow or company with people that do not see any good thing in life; soon or later, you will be depressed.
- E. **Given expression to life and not impression:** People should not seek to impress anybody, rather let your life find expression. Do not struggle to make yourself known. Living to give impression can lead to competition and contention. Impression deprives one of the energy to progress. Those who want excellence in life do not seek to impress people. This is buttressed by Chidozie (2017) who said that this kind of lifestyle sucks the energy away from you and makes you dejected with little energy to carry out the most important things in your life.
- F. **Live Purposefully:** When the purpose of life is not understood, the resultant effect is regret. Life then becomes a burden and disaster is therefore inevitable. A life devoid of purpose will certainly lack concentration. It is a life without priorities. A person with such lifestyle does anything and everything. According to Enenche (2020), it is only when we succeed in purpose that we succeed indeed, and that every man on earth was created for a purpose. He went further to say that our greatest success in life is to make

purpose become ambitions and that the purpose can be discovered through burdens, affection and passions. The life of purpose gives pleasure to God.

- G. **Live Ready:** This means we live with eternity in view. “Whereas you know not that shall be on the morrow, for what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (James 4:14). This buttresses the fact that one day, we will all expire, we will cease to exist. What remains is to give account of how we lived our lives while on earth. There “is” will be “was” one day. We will be out of stage. Life is terminal. Living with eternity in view makes us to live correctly. It makes us to live our lives under God’s watching eyes. According to Jonathan (2006), there will be a time for giving an account of how we have lived our lives, a judgement on our stewardship.

Conclusion

This study has critically examined how the epistle according to you can be a pivotal in national development. If a nation must develop, the exemplary life of the citizens cannot be over emphasised. The work tried to examine the background of it from its biblical perspective, with the quotation from 1 Cor. 3:2 – 3. It therefore concluded that if our nation must be developed and be a better place to live in and seek the welfare of others, premium must be placed on exemplary life of Christ to be lived out by the citizens. And it is a life of love, sacrifice, forgiveness and selflessness.

Recommendations

- a. Right attitudes should be cultivated by everyone of us, because it is only right attitude that gets us good results.
- b. Nigerians should strive to live a God – centered life. It is more than 21 days fasting and prayer.
- c. We must live constantly in the awe of God and making Him the centre of attention always.
- d. There is need to raise awareness in promoting attitudinal change.
- e. We should shun the behaviours that impede the development of a country.
- f. Every stakeholder in the nation, including the church must work in synergy.

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