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AUTHORITY AND CHARISMA IN THE BIBLE

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ABSTRACT

The first frame of the discussion is concerned with the innate authority and charism of God, as God is God's self. Authority and charism constituted who and what God is, God is all powerful (potestas) and God is full of goodness (charisma). This is called constituted and immanent authority and charism of God, as they exist in eternity and transcend time. The second aspect discusses the authority and charism of economic Trinity, in creation, in redemption and in sanctification, as God relates to the human family in history, time and place. This is called the extension of economic authority and charism of God, in temporality and historicity. While the third dimension deals with the transfer and delegation of this authority and charism to the human family and their praxis and problems in the Church and in the world and their obligations within the human society. In praxis, the twin concepts authority and charism relate to the service and mission of empowering human potentialities and improving of human conditions on the socio-economic, political and cultural levels.

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THE QUESTIONS OF THE FUNDAMENTAL THEOLOGY

The question of the fundamental theology at issue in this study is to determine the relationship which exists between authority and charism through the relationship which exists between the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, in the *Missio Dei* -in the mission of God - and in the mission of the Church which is ultimately the *Missio Dei* itself.

Authority is subject to a complex interplay with charism. Authority and charism express the most organic dimension of God's nature: on the one hand, God is all powerful, God is almighty and omnipotence, and on the other hand, God is a gratuitous God, the Giver of every good gift (charis). Authority and charism are fundamental to God's uniquely divine nature and to the common *ousia* (substance) that are shared by the Father, Son and Spirit: might, power, majesty, equality, honour, which are in concord with goodness, mercy, graciousness and gratuitousness that identified the God, the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

The unity within the Trinitarian community forms the unity between authority and charism. The inseparability of the divine nature of the Trinity leads to the inseparability of authority and charism, in the divine work of creation, redemption and sanctification. In the order of creation, redemption and sanctification, authority and charism belong to the one divine/human and undivided family of God, the Church. Authority and charism are united in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and they are lived in the Church.

The Church, the *semper reformanda*, is not always living at that oneness of the Trinity. In the Church, there exist many traces of conflicts between authority and charism and they re-echo from time to time in the history of the Church, and they change from place to place all over the world. The Church has been divided between the Church of authority and the Church of charism. Who among us has not sighed upon seeing the conflict between authority and charism in the Church, the conflict between the institution Church and the charisms of individuals or groups? Does the exercise of authority and the gift of charism divide the Church? Today, they are negative tendencies towards authority and charism in the Church and the specific parental authorities in the human family are gradually waning away by the corrosive force of disobedience. If we are one and the Spirit of Christ unites us into one Body in Christ, the Church: why are we not working and walking like a human body and why are we lacking in solidarity with one another? Why are the Christian and civic leaders, the members of this Body, lacking in their obligations to service of humanity? Why are they not using their positions of authority and God-given *charisma* to serve humanity?

AUTHORITY AND CHARISMA IN THE CONTEXT OF DIVINE REVELATION

Authority (*potestas*) is a power or right to command action, obedience or compliance. In its very nature, authority is good. From the side of God as Creator, the authority that emerges into a faith community is beyond human control or judgment and which human beings may and



must accept as the self-goodness of God (*charis*).

God is freely good and gracious. As Aquinas says, “God is not good because he causes good” (that is also held by neo-Platonism), “but rather goodness flows from the nature of God, because he is good. In the words of Augustine...because he is good we exist” (Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 1, q. 13 a. 2).¹ There is a goodness and grace (*charis*) in every authority, because every authority comes from God who is goodness in Himself.

In this grand interplay of factors, there is the peculiar role of God, in relation to authority and charism. God did not leave creation behind in order to attain something higher. In creation, God confirmed redemption and sanctification.

In the context of creation, only God, the Almighty possesses the fullness of authority, we creatures of God share in God’s authority, in various limited degrees, for instance the authority of God that the parents are exercising towards their children, the authority of the state towards the citizens and the authority of leaders of the Church towards the believers.

In the context of Redemption, God’s authority is transferred to Jesus Christ. Jesus is the first born of creation and Redeemer of the world. In the context of Redemption and Salvation of the human family, power and authority in a faith community are transmitted through Jesus Christ, who is the embodiment of all powers and authority, in the universe.

In the apocalyptic reading, we come across the centre point of Jesus’ authority:

“now the salvation and the power, and the Kingdom of Our God and authority of his Christ have come” (Rev 11:12).

In the order of redemption, teaching is one of those gifts (*charismata*) of the Holy Spirit that unites authority and charism together in Jesus Christ, “*Jesus taught the people as one who has authority*”(Mark 1:21 – 28). Authority and charism combine together to form the single ministry of Jesus. Jesus is the Embodiment of Authority and Charism. As we see in the Gospels, Mark in particular tells us that Jesus teaches the people with great power and authority (Mark 1:27). Jesus’ teaching brought a new world order and Jesus sees Himself as the herald of the new world. The old world order created a society, where people have to live on the edge of the knife. In the old world order, a political culture will always use authority and power in totalitarian manner in order to achieve its purpose.

In the context of sanctification, the Holy Spirit sustains this authority continuously in a complete manner, by equipping and directing the hierarchical and charismatic gifts of the Church and adorning the Church with spiritual gifts of nature and grace. Authority in Church of Christ is not separated from the Spirit of Christ, but as the important paragraph of *Lumen Gentium* five affirms, “by the power of the Gospel, the Spirit makes the Church keep the freshness of youth. Uninterruptedly, the Spirit renews the Church and leads the Church into perfect union with her Spouse. The Spirit and the Bride both say to Jesus the Lord, “Come.” (Vatican II, *Lumen Gentium* 5).

In the context of Christian tradition, the source of authority in a local Church is



Jesus Christ, Himself: “Jesus who exists in history as a fully human being, Jesus who is also at the same time and in the same appearance” (Lennan, 1997, 17). “the Self-Communication of the invisible God. In the arena of creation, power and authority in a faith community, like all other powers and authority in our global community is built on the power and authority of God, who is the Creator of heaven and earth, the universe. God is the primary source of authority, in the sense that He created everything that has life. He created human beings and gave them the human faculties to direct the community for the common good.

THEOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF AUTHORITY AND *CHARISMA*

Etymologically, the word authority comes from the Latin, *auctoritas*, and acquires diverse meanings at mundane level, such as source, authorship, weight, might and power. In the primary locale, the Holy Family, the Saints, and the natural family are icons of authority. In the sense of organic structure, the Scripture, Tradition, Creeds and Ecumenical Councils, and the Teaching Magisterium stand as authority in a faith community. The sense of hierarchical structure of authority begins with the pope, the bishops, the theologians, the pastors of the Church and *sensus fidelium* – the whole community of faith. This requires us to explore the meaning and the purpose of authority in a faith community. Our theological focus is succinct and unambiguous, namely the source of authority in the context of divine revelation.

Contemporary theologians speak about fourfold authority of the Scripture, tradition, reason and experience. Scripture is

an authority or a source of authority – the *norma normans* and *principium theologiae*. In the Christian theology, the Scripture is very decisive and plays an irreplaceable role in matters of theological discourse. It is a unique centre where God reveals himself to his people. The Holy Spirit reveals the mystery of the Scripture to finite beings, who understand, accept and believe in the spiritual and religious truths through faith (1 Cor 2: 10-23). Authentic faith offers finite beings a criteria on the reality based on the authority and veracity of God and God’s revelation, over and above any human ability or reasonable evidence.

In the Scripture, the term that expresses authority is *exousia*. *Exousia* is a word, coming from the Greek culture and language. In the Greek secular culture, *exousia* means power to command action or right to act. As an internal reality, the foundational structure of authority has been shown to be Trinitarian. The origin of authority resides on the Triune community. The Scripture witnesses that the Supreme Being has a supreme authority, definitive will and intrinsic prerogatives over the entire creation (Psalm 47:2, 93:1; Isaiah 46:7). The Supreme God is the ruler of the entire universe and the sole King of heaven and earth (Deut 4:39; 1 Chron 29:11, 2 Chron 20:6). The name *Lord and Most High God* are expressions of the authority and sovereignty of God (Psalm 83:19).

In connection with the *definitive will* of God as His authority, the *saving will* of the Father “ *will be done on earth as it is in heaven*” (Matt 6:10). The Church in every culture and in every tongue prays *thy will be done* and when the Church says this prayer



she is praying that God the Father, after the examples of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Saints, will unite the will of her sons and daughters to the will of the eternal Son of God, who came into this world to obey the will of the Father.

In praying *thy will be done on earth as it is heaven*, the Mother Church prays that the eternal plan of God in history be fully realized on earth as it is in heaven. In Christian theology, the *definitive will* of God is called his *ultimate will* or his *salvific will*. The *definitive will* or the *saving plan* of the Father is that all humanity will be saved (1 Tim 2:4). For this purpose, the eternal Word of God came in time in human flesh to perfectly fulfill the eternal plan of the Father. It is only through the means of prayer that God's sons and daughters on earth will be able "to discern the will of God" (Rom 21: 2) and have "the strength to do it in every event of their life" (Heb 10:36).

The intrinsic prerogative authority of God the Father is expressed with the words of the Psalmist, "As for me I have installed my King upon Zion" (Psalm 2:6). In his mission authority to the Church, Jesus declared "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth" (Matt 28:20; John 21; Phil 2:11; Rev 19:6).

In the history of salvation, the Second Person of the Trinity, Jesus Christ controls power over history and the destiny of the faith community, the Church. In his power and authority, the Holy Spirit distributes spiritual gifts (*charisms*) to every member of the faith community, individually and in groups, just as it pleases him to do (1 Cor 12:11).

In the Catholic tradition, authority is vested on a bishop who has a charge over a particular Church, which is the Church of Christ existing in a particular place, culture and time, and deeply connected with diversity in unity, apostolicity of faith, holiness of life and catholicity of the entire universe. Such charisms that are embodied in the person of a local ordinary are (1) the leadership personality qualities of governance (2) *charisma* of teaching the doctrines of the Church to the faithful (3) admonition of the People of God (4) the gift of sanctification of the Body of Christ (5) *charisma* of encouraging the weak and strong members of the Family of God.

In speaking about the leadership qualities of a bishop as a gift to the Church, we have the following qualities in mind: firmness of purpose, decisiveness, perseverance, dedication and readiness to take initiatives. In a nutshell, there are a number of leadership personality qualities that are essential *charisma* incarnated in a bishop of a local Church. Particularly, the *charisma* of a bishop to teach as it belongs to his office as a teacher and especially the *charisma* of administration and leadership as it belongs to him as the leader of a local Church.

The fundamental issues involved in the exercise of authority are the use of power and the exercise of right. A power invested on a leader or individual may be misused. This power may be misused on the ground of human elements, imperfections or weakness. They are many who had been actual victims of authority. While others remain targets and some are being threatened. As the saying goes, *absolute power corrupts absolutely*.



Equally the right that is invested on an individual or a leader, who has authority over others may be abused. African leaders are prone to the abuse of human rights and freedom of expression of their subjects.

BIBLICAL CULTURE OF AUTHORITY AND CHARISMA

The Old Testament Horizon: The Old Testament expresses *charism* as effect of grace with the Hebrew word *hen* (grace), emphasizing the way, God's care and favour are bestowed graciously and independently of the recipients' merit (Ex 33¹²⁻¹⁷). In the OT community, *chrism* means, first of all, grace, then (in the plural) the capabilities that grace brings with it, as well as the bestowal of these for the good of the believing community, and in a special way the gift of the Holy Spirit (Delpi, 2008, 63).ⁱⁱⁱ

Missio Dei informs us how God relates to his family Israel and how authority relates to charism, in the context of *calling*. In a theocratic institution, such as the nation of Israel, authority is theocentric. God elected his beloved son Moses to lead and guard his beloved sheep. God is the sole source of authority of its leaders and this follows a clear calling of a leader to come and rule a state. There was no conventional election by the people. The person who had received the call through a prophet and accepted such calling usually possesses energy, vision, passion, commitment, caring and *charisma*.

There was no campaign or political rallies. When a change was needed in internal politics, God made the necessary changes himself. God changed Moses with Joshua. God even made changes in

international politics. God raised up Cyrus, King of Persia. In this way God changed the international politics, from Babylonian kingdom to Persian kingdom, from Nebuchadnezzar to Cyrus (Chronicles 36: 14-23). What an effective change.

The two hands of God are completely engaged in the politics of the nations and peoples around the world. This is very visible in God's calling of Nehemiah in the history of the Israelites. In conventional society founded by the free accord of men and women living together, who set the ideals and purpose of a state, God is Ultimate source of authority and the human beings are the secondary factors. God is the Ultimate source of authority, in the sense that God is the Creator and Planner of everything. God created the persons who form the state and nations and gave the gifts, talents and human faculties to run the affairs of the state. This is visible in authorities who possess these gifts of nature and grace: ability, talent, insight, communication skills, character, caring and clear vision.

The highest vocation/calling of any leader in an authority is to enable people develop their God-given potentials. In the Old Testament, Nehemiah's calling as the President to rule his people Israel brought a sustainable change for all his people. The best leaders in authority help others reach their potentials. The gift for others is primarily what charism is all about. Charism is a special gift of the Holy Spirit given to leaders in authority for the sake of others. That is exactly what Nehemiah was for others.

Nehemiah became an instrument in God's hand and hundreds of thousands of



people enjoyed the fruits of his presidency. Nehemiah was a person with great mission and vision. He emerged into the scene of Israelites' politics when the national life of the people was completely sick and unhealthy. The principal cities like Judah had been overtaken by the Babylonian gallant soldiers and efficient warriors. In the same vein, Jerusalem had been vandalized. The magnificent buildings of the city, including her prestigious Temple were destroyed and the city walls raised to the dust. Equally, many citizens and their officials, including Nehemiah were forcefully dragged into exiles in foreign lands. They completely lost the vision of the future and inwardly thought that God had abandoned his people. The return-mission of Nehemiah to Jerusalem completely *changed* the political landscape of the Israelites. The way he tackled the classical and colossal mission of nation-building and development is a healthy example of visionary leadership.

In biblical tradition, Gideon's calling was another typical example. At early stage of his calling, he doubted his steps and asked for multiple signs to confirm his mission. Once Gideon accepted the calling, God's *charisma* transformed him into a new human being, bold and passionate to his mission. With 500 men as standing army of the Israelites, Gideon attacked and overrun the entire army of 120, 000 warriors of Ephraimites (Judges 8:10). The greater the attraction of the *charisma* assets a leader in authority possesses, the more likely people will want to follow him. This is substantially the secret of *charisma* that draw leaders in authority towards their mission.

The Old Israelite people were a missionary community. Moses had the *mission authority/mandate from God* to lead the people of Israel from their bondage of slavery and suffering in Egypt to the Promised Land (Exodus 3). In order to be equipped in his mission, God gave Moses miraculous power/authority (Exodus 4). The Old Testament broadened the concept of authority and *charisma* to the gift of the Law of Moses.

In the Old Testament, authority was not solely configured on figureheads, like Moses, Nehemiah, Gideon, David, Solomon and so on, but also on the Law. The Law was an embodiment of authority and *charisma*: the Law came through Moses as a gift (charism) and remained an authority in the community of Israel. In the Old Testament, the Law carried an extravagant authority in the community of Israel. It was given by God to the people of Israel through the two hands of Moses on Mount Sinai (Exodus 20:1-17). God gave the Law through Moses, but Grace and Truth came through Jesus Christ (John 1:17).

Authority and Charism in Gospel Witness: In the New Testament, all authority and power is given to Jesus Christ (Matt 28:19). All "authority and power is given to him and he will bring peace to the people"(Revelation 6:4). The New Testament adapted and adopted Isaiah's characterization of the peaceful reign of messianic age to Jesus Christ: "the government should be upon his shoulder and his name will be called Wonderful Counselor...the Prince of Peace and his government will be firm" (Isaiah 9: 6-7).



In the life of Jesus, Grace and Truth walked hand-in-hand, stand together and work together in good relationship. Jesus is the Incarnate Truth, who condemned the corruption and oppressive actions of the political and religious leaders of his time. In Jesus' time, at the top of the society was one person, the ruler, who had authority, usually the king or queen. The rulers control the people and "had complete access to at least twenty-five – and often fifty – per cent of the gross national product." (Rohr, 2009,71).^{iv} Those in authority or the ruling class possessed the lion's share of the gross national product. People outside the corridor of power accept what they have. In Israel in the time of Jesus, religion and state were tied together.

There are actually some positive aspects. Jesus waded into the system, as the *charis*, as the grace of God. Grace and truth came into this society through Jesus Christ.(Halsey, 2015,72).

Jesus is full of Grace: He welcomed sinners, and ate with the tax collectors. He had compassion and companion with those following him. He fed them when they are hungry. He cured them when they are sick. These, and other more, are the elements and dynamics of graces coming from Jesus Christ.

The mission of Jesus is holistic, as it relates to the human person and Christological as it relates to the Person of Christ. In Christological language, Jesus Christ has only One Person, the Divine Person that He shares with the Father and the Spirit. In relation to human person, the doctrine of the Church teaches us that Jesus has no human person, but two divine natures.

Jesus shares our human nature with us, in order to save humanity from destruction and *recapitulate* the entire creation to God. Accordingly, "the Word of God voluntarily becomes the Mediator of human salvation which includes the becoming Incarnate. So the Incarnation is the contingent, not necessarily event (*kairos*) in the divine life."(Crisp, 2009,59).

In the mystery of the Incarnation, the *exousia* (authority) of God came into limelight in time. In time (*chronos*): "the Word became a human being and, full of Grace and Truth, lived among us. We saw his glory, the glory which he received as the Father's only Son'(John 1:14). In reference to the Blessed Virgin Mary, she is considered as pure gift of God (*charis* of God) and *plena gratia* – full of grace (Luke 1:28).

In a particular time, and in a particular place, the Eternal Son of God took the human nature in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of the Incarnate Word of God: "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God's power (*exousia*) will rest upon you. For this reason, the Holy Child will be called the Son of God"(Luke 1:35).In the divine plan of God, Mary is a blessing, a pure gift of God within the mystery of Christ. Mary is included in the divine plan of God to restore and recapitulate all things in Christ.

PRAXIS OF RECAPITULATION OF AUTHORITY AND CHARISMA IN CHRIST

In the New Testament theological language, the terms *restoration* and *recapitulation* are used to describe the



reconciliation of the entire creation to Christ at the end-time (Colossians 1:20). Irenaeus of Lyons developed this original Pauline theology into the doctrine of recapitulation in Christ. For Saint Irenaeus, this is *recapitulation* of all things in Christ. In redeeming the fallen human race, Jesus recapitulated all creation to himself.

According to Saint Irenaeus, God created the world with his two hands – the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity and the Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity. The Gnostics kept God aloof from creation by posing intermediate beings, on the contrary Irenaeus forcefully emphasized that God's two hands are completely involved in the work of creation (Mambrino, 1975, 355-370).

In a nutshell, the two hands of God are the Second Person of the Trinity, and the Third Person, the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the hand of God, who through preaching (*kerygma*), service (*diakonia*), fellowship (*koinonia*) and communication (*communio*) brings forth to a new birth, a new creation of priests, kings, rulers and prophets who bear the *charisma* of God. These priests, prophets, rulers and kings are the engines that move the day-to-day politics of a nation and continue to move the political life of a country into an electronic age or electronic voting.

In this electronic voting, Jesus himself is the Way (John 14: 6). But Jesus Christ will not personally tell us how to vote in political 2019 election, we are of age – we are franchise citizens. But he will show us the way to various political boots with our registered voters' card at our hands. The two hands of God will be guiding our hands to

vote, in order to change political structures, which cause a country to be sick and fail to promote justice and peace. This involves restoration.

The idea of restoration entails, reconciling fallen human beings from their battered state of loss and damnation into a new state of *peace and harmony with God*. Jesus as our Reconciler *heals* the division forged by sin and restores the communion between God and the human family.

Irenaeus' Christological perspective of recapitulation defines the human family in a new particular relationship to God and to the entire creation. At the same time, it tells us that God enters into history and into the lives of human race. It discloses that God has a mission – *missio Dei*. Like all good theologies and patterns of thoughts in Irenaeus' writings, the doctrine of recapitulation is a theological thought, which posited that Christ was sent to sum up (recapitulate) all that was lost through the corruption of the sin of Adam.

Christ himself is sinless and therefore redeemed those in sin and in corruption of Adam. He stood as a powerful example or model of all those fighting corruption. This sends a powerful signal to our present agenda of change. A government that came into power through corruption cannot fight corruption or usher in a sustainable change.

The fundamental *kairos* or an event which took place in time is the mission of Jesus Christ which changed the world. Jesus Christ is the summation of the *missio Dei* – the Mission of God. The missional activity of Jesus Christ drove the structures of social injustice into a dialogue for real change.



Jesus engaged with many of the social issues of his day and pointed the way forward for the Church of today how to address such social maladjustments and to triumph over them.

Jesus in his life and mission spoke very strongly about the political, economic, spiritual and social welfare of human beings and their society, namely, in the situation of their times: The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me. He has sent me to bring the Good News to the poor, to set prisoners and captives free and to proclaim the year of favour. Jesus chose the way of affective solidarity with the weak and oppressed in the society, in order to create a community of justice and peace.

The community of justice and peace is what Jesus meant by ‘Thy Kingdom Come on Earth.’ In other words, the Kingdom of God can come on earth only through concrete actions of justice and peace directed towards righteous human relationship. The community of justice, peace and righteous human relationship is surely the sign and instrument of Kingdom of God on earth. In brief, *charism* requires us to work for justice, peace and created integrity.

The Church is the People of God, she is a reconciled and recapitulated community in Christ, the first born of all creation. In the Church of Christ, the theology of *charisms* transparently stands on the forefront as the gifts of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 12 -14). In theological context, *charisms* are no longer tied to the doctrines of office and ministry in the Church, but to the *mission* of the Church. Considered as the gifts of the Holy Spirit, *charisms* are currently understood to be at the service of the newly catholic-

comprehensive mission of the Spirit-led local Churches in the world.

In the theology of the Church as a Family of God, *charisms* have become a topical issue, by a new understanding that every member of the Church is an indwelling place of the Holy. In this way, *charisms* are integrated with the vocation and mission of every baptized member of the Church as a Family of God: the clergy, the religious, the laity, for example the politicians and political aspirants, teachers, medical doctors, industrialists, carpenters, mechanics, traders, business entrepreneur, farmers, engineers and so on. In them and with them and through them a charismatic authority emerges in Nigerian democratic society.

The Church is the People of God, “a building from God, a house not made with human hands but with God’s hands”(2 Cor 5: 1), the Temple of the Holy Spirit, a charismatic community through which a charismatic authority emerges. A charismatic authority comes from God through the Church, the People of God and penetrates into a political community through the access of a genuine political election.

A charismatic authority or charismatic leader comes from God: it is a special gift of grace – *charisma*. In the Old Testament, charismatic leaders had qualities or capabilities that spelt out the meaning of *charisma* – gifts of grace. In the Jewish society, the leaders of the communities had qualities such as net-working capacities, nurturing the community, empowering the young people through functional educational system and provision of material and spiritual resources for the people that attracted them to the nation of Israel.



Theologically speaking, on the one hand, *charism* incorporates those gifts of the Spirit for the service (*diakonia*) and building up of the Body of Christ, the Church. In this case we link charism with ministry in the Church. On the other hand, charism means also liberative grace (free gift) that sets people free from oppressive powers that suppress the gifts of the Spirit in them. In the former sense, charism is subjective. It is part of the individuals or groups that possess the charism and gears toward dispensation of charity, feeding the hungry and the poor. In the latter instance, *charism* is objective and moves towards justice and human rights, by asking the question of *why* people are hungry, and speaks to the political structures that made people poor and to the issues of social justice, peace-making and human development. Both senses imply, directing charism toward mission, especially towards a political community. A genuine charism cannot neglect the joys and sorrows of the people of this present age: the joys and sorrows of the people of this age is the joys and sorrows of the Church (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes*1).

Jesus loved and served the system of human society. In his authority, Jesus sends us to go into the world and make disciples of all nation. This biblical mandate for missionary activity is a mandate for the social action of justice and peace. The mandate calls on us to do justice. In his ministry, Jesus restored hope and joy to the sorrowful. Our mission today must be the same as Jesus carried out in the form of ministry of *recapitulation* and *redemption*. Redemption means “liberation from the slavery of sin. This means also liberation from those powers which tries to suppress

God’s place of Lordship, the power by which man in his individual and collective, social, political, economic and cultural life is enslaved” (England, 1982, 38).

At this juncture, we adopt a great President of Africa, a charismatic leader, Julius Nyerere as our primary model for our re-orientation of charism toward mission. Nyerere read the realities (signs) of his times with disturbing clarity and then injected a radical change into Tanzanian democratic society:

We may say the human being was created in the image of God. I refuse to imagine a God who is miserable, poor, ignorant, superstitious, fearful oppressed and wretched. If the human being is really the image of God, we have to do something about the flies in the eyes of a child, as those flies are ruining God’s temple(Nyerere, 1972, 13).

This means that we will know how to vote in the coming 2019 political election. We will know how to relate politically the mission of the justice of the Kingdom of God and peace among men and women that we want to achieve through voting and political election. We can read this directly from Nyerere’s life. In the issues of human rights, we have to know better what we do not want, and positively what we want and how best to realize and achieve them.

Doing something about the flies in the eyes of a child is actually all about what politics in African context means, and this too implies doing justice. Julius Nyerere himself is the model of all who call themselves Christians in politics. In Nigeria



politics today, we need leaders who are configured in Christ, just as Nyerere was configured as a true Christian in politics, in his own time.

In conclusion, so how are we to understand the interplay between God's change of leaders in authority and our efforts to change our leaders or vice versa the efforts of our leaders to change our society? Our theological equation sounds like this:

“When our leaders cannot change our society we change them ourselves. When we cannot change them God will change them through our prayers. In this sense, the special Synod for Africa in 1994 “prayed fervently to the Lord that there would arise in Africa holy politicians – both men and women – and there would be saintly Heads of State, who profoundly love their own people and wish to serve rather than to be served”(*Ecclesia in Africa* 111).

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