

The Kingdom of God and Political Engagement in Nigeria: Exploring the Intersection of Faith and Politics

Jezreel Smith Mietuade

Baptist Theological Seminary Eku, Nigeria

Email: smithjezreel@gmail.com

Received:
November 18, 2025

Revised:
December 10, 2025

Accepted:
December 13, 2025

Online:
December 15, 2025

Abstract

The tension between Christian discipleship and political engagement has been a long-standing issue, especially in Nigeria, where corruption, inequality, and poor governance remain serious challenges. This study explores the Kingdom of God and political engagement in Nigeria, asking whether faithful discipleship allows Christians to participate in politics or whether politics risks corrupting their faith. This study aims to examine Jesus' teachings on the Kingdom of God and show how they apply to Christian involvement in Nigerian politics today. Employing biblical exegesis, theological reflection, and contextual application, the study considers the words of Jesus about God's Kingdom and applies them to Nigeria's political realities. The research shows that the Kingdom of God is not limited to private spirituality but represents God's rule that calls for justice, humility, and service. It challenges corruption, exposes oppression, and redefines leadership as service to others. Christians are therefore called to reflect Kingdom values in public life. Findings reveal that the Kingdom shapes Christian political ethics in Nigeria by stressing fairness for the poor, honesty in leadership, and peace in society. This means Christians should not withdraw from politics but engage in it with values rooted in Christ. The significance of this study is that it helps the Church see politics in Nigeria as an opportunity to witness to God's reign in a society marked by selfishness and corruption. The study concludes that faithful discipleship includes responsible political participation and recommends that churches prepare members to engage politics with integrity, justice, and compassion.

Keywords: Christian Political Engagement, Discipleship and Governance, Ethical Leadership, Kingdom of God, Nigeria Politics

1. Introduction

Christianity has long maintained a complex and often ambivalent relationship with political life. Across history, Christian communities have sometimes withdrawn from politics to safeguard spiritual purity, while at other times they have exercised significant political authority, occasionally resulting in coercion, abuse, and corruption, particularly in the medieval era when church and state were deeply intertwined (Schlossberg, 1993). Meanwhile, movements such as the Reformation expressed suspicion toward political power and redirected Christian attention toward the primacy of spiritual devotion. In modern times, Christian attitudes remain diverse: while some believers avoid politics altogether, others insist that political engagement is a crucial arena in which to pursue justice, compassion, and moral responsibility (Stott, 1992). This long and varied history reveals enduring tensions between faith and politics.

Within this broader global conversation, Nigeria presents a uniquely challenging context. Nigerian Christians, who make up a significant percentage of the population, often struggle to navigate the tension between faithful discipleship and meaningful political participation. Existing scholarship highlights three intersecting issues that shape this dilemma. First, scholars note a persistent theological ambiguity: Christians frequently wrestle with the challenge of reconciling biblical calls to holiness with



the pragmatic and sometimes morally compromised nature of Nigerian electoral politics (Olaoba & Bamidele, 2025; Gushee & Stassen, 2016). Second, the socio-political environment itself is marked by patronage networks, corruption, and ethno-religious rivalry, all of which create a hostile landscape for believers seeking to uphold Christian ethics in public office (Olaoba & Bamidele, 2025; Shehu et al., 2017). Third, despite a growing body of literature on Christian political activism in Africa, there remains an empirical gap, relatively few studies examine how ordinary Nigerian disciples, rather than church leaders or political elites, navigate everyday political decisions such as voting, campaigning, and advocacy (Akano, 2023).

In response to these problems, this study seeks to explore how Nigerian Christian disciples can engage in politics without losing their distinct Kingdom identity. It focuses specifically on Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God as presented in the canonical Gospels, examining how this teaching critiques earthly political structures and what model Jesus provides for Christian involvement in public life. By doing so, the study aims to develop a biblically grounded framework that equips believers to participate responsibly and faithfully within Nigeria's complex political environment.

Finally, the significance of this study is both local and global. In Nigeria, where political life is frequently marred by injustice, violence, and corruption, the church carries a responsibility to form disciples who can contribute to societal transformation without compromising their faith. Globally, the intersection of faith and politics remains a pressing issue, as Christians are called to be "salt and light" in every nation (Matthew 5:13-16). Integrating discipleship, governance, and Kingdom ethics is therefore not only necessary for Nigeria but also essential for the wider Christian community seeking to engage politics in a manner consistent with the teachings of Jesus.

2. Methods

This study employs a two-fold approach integrating biblical and theological reflections and contextual application. First, key New Testament texts on the Kingdom of God are biblically engaged in their socio-historical context to reconstruct Jesus' teachings. Second, theological reflection draws on patristic, historical, and contemporary Christian thinkers who have shaped discourse on faith-politics intersections. Third, findings are applied contextually to contemporary Nigerian political realities. This method ensures the analysis remains scripturally rooted, theologically informed, and practically relevant to addressing Nigeria's socio-political challenges.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Concept of the Kingdom of God in Jesus' Teaching

The concept of the Kingdom of God is central to the teaching of Jesus and essential for understanding Christian life and engagement in the world. In the Gospels, Jesus presents the Kingdom as God's reign, rule, and authority, which is both present and future (Luke 4:43; Mark 1:15). It is not a human kingdom based on power, wealth, or military strength, but the rule of God over the hearts and lives of people. The Kingdom of God represents God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven, and it is a reality that challenges human systems of injustice and oppression (Wright, 2016). Jesus' announcement of the Kingdom begins with a call to repentance and faith, signaling that entry into God's reign requires moral and spiritual transformation (Mark 1:15).

The Kingdom of God is spiritual and transformative. Jesus emphasizes that a person must be "born again" to enter the Kingdom, showing that it begins in the inner life of the believer (John 3:3-5). Transformation in the Kingdom involves a change in values, priorities, and behaviour. People are called

to turn from selfishness to love, from pride to humility, and from exploitation to service. This spiritual transformation is not only individual but also social, as the Kingdom seeks to establish justice, peace, and righteousness in relationships and communities. Through His teaching, Jesus illustrates that the Kingdom of God brings life that is abundant and morally aligned with God's purposes (Keener, 2003).

Jesus' teaching also presents the Kingdom in terms of an already / not yet reality. While the Kingdom is present in the lives of believers and through Jesus' ministry, it is not yet fully realized in the world. Jesus tells His disciples that the Kingdom is "within you" or "among you," indicating that it is spiritually present even if worldly systems have not yet been fully transformed (Luke 17:20-21). The ultimate fulfillment of the Kingdom will occur when God's reign is fully established on earth, as described in Revelation 11:15, when God will rule over all nations and every injustice will be corrected. This tension between the present experience and future hope shapes the way Christians are called to live, they participate in God's reign now while anticipating its complete realization in the future.

Justice and righteousness are at the core of the Kingdom. Jesus teaches His followers to seek first the Kingdom and God's righteousness (Matt. 6:33). This principle shows that God's reign is concerned not only with spiritual life but also with ethical behavior and social justice. In the Kingdom, fairness, integrity, and compassion are prioritized over personal gain or social advantage. God's justice is not merely legalistic; it is relational and restorative, aiming to heal brokenness and restore dignity to the oppressed (Hauerwas & Willimon, 2014).

Kingdom values are further revealed in the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus calls His followers to humility, mercy, and peacemaking (Matt. 5-7). He teaches that the first shall be last, the meek shall inherit the earth, and those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be satisfied. Servanthood is a key feature of the Kingdom; Jesus repeatedly contrasts the Kingdom's model of power with worldly systems. Leaders in the Kingdom serve rather than dominate, and greatness is measured by willingness to put others first (Matt. 20:25-28). Love for God and neighbor is the guiding principle of all Kingdom action, shaping both personal morality and public witness.

The Kingdom of God contrasts sharply with worldly kingdoms. Earthly kingdoms often rely on coercion, control, and domination, while the Kingdom of God operates on love, justice, and voluntary obedience to God's will. Political and social systems based on selfish ambition or violence are incompatible with the values of the Kingdom. Jesus' teachings challenge human leaders to reconsider their understanding of power, authority, and influence. While worldly rulers may seek status, wealth, or control, Jesus redefines leadership as service, humility, and sacrifice (Wilson, 1983). This contrast has important implications for Christian engagement in society, especially in politics, because it calls believers to act in ways that reflect God's justice rather than the ambitions of human kingdoms.

The Kingdom of God, therefore, is both a present reality and a future hope. It demands a life of transformation, rooted in God's justice, mercy, and righteousness. It reorients human priorities, teaching that true power is expressed in service and love rather than domination and self-interest. By living according to Kingdom values, Christians become agents of God's reign in the world, embodying justice, peace, and mercy in personal, social, and political life. This understanding of the Kingdom challenges believers to engage the world responsibly, ensuring that their actions in society reflect the ethical and spiritual standards of God's rule. In summary, Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God provides a blueprint for ethical living and public witness, showing that faith in God is inseparable from a commitment to justice, service, and the common good (Gushee & Stassen, 2016).

3.2. Biblical Foundations for Christian Political Engagement

The Bible provides a rich foundation for understanding how Christians can engage in political life faithfully. From the Old Testament to the New Testament, believers are called to navigate the tension

between obedience to God and participation in society's governance. Several Old Testament figures serve as examples of faithful political involvement. Joseph, for instance, rose to become the prime minister of Egypt, using his position to save nations from famine and administer justice wisely (Gen. 41:39-41). His life demonstrates that a believer can exercise political authority responsibly while remaining obedient to God. Similarly, Moses served as both a spiritual leader and political administrator, guiding the nation of Israel through legal, social, and military challenges (Exodus 18:13-27). King David also exemplifies the integration of faith and leadership, seeking God's guidance in political and military decisions (1 Samuel 23:2; 2 Sam. 5:19). Daniel, living under foreign rulers, navigated political systems with integrity, using his wisdom and devotion to God to influence government policy without compromising his faith (Dan. 6:10-28). These examples show that God's people are not called to withdraw from political life but to serve with wisdom, justice, and faithfulness.

The prophets of Israel consistently critiqued injustice in society. Amos famously declared that God desires justice to "roll on like a river, righteousness like a never failing stream" (Amos 5:24). Micah emphasized that God requires His people "to act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Mic. 6:8). Isaiah called the people to defend the oppressed, care for the widow and orphan, and challenge corruption (Isa. 1:17). These prophetic teachings indicate that political engagement must be guided by moral responsibility and concern for justice. The Kingdom of God is inseparable from ethical governance, and believers are called to be voices of justice even in hostile or corrupt political contexts (Six, 2019).

In the New Testament, Jesus provides a model for how Christians relate to political authorities. When questioned by Pontius Pilate, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). While this statement underscores that His ultimate reign is spiritual, it does not imply total withdrawal from earthly affairs. Rather, Jesus' life illustrates engagement through moral witness, service, and advocacy for the oppressed. His ministry focused on transforming society by challenging injustice, uplifting the marginalized, and modeling servant leadership (Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 4:18-19).

The Apostle Paul further clarifies the relationship between believers and governing authorities. In Romans 13:1-7, he teaches that authorities are instituted by God to maintain order and punish wrongdoing. Christians are therefore called to respect and cooperate with lawful governments while remaining faithful to God's higher moral law. Paul also encourages prayer for leaders so that society may experience peace, justice, and effective governance (1 Tim. 2:1-2). Prayer is thus a spiritual tool that complements ethical engagement, enabling Christians to influence political systems through intercession and moral example (Wright, 2012).

The early church provides additional insight into political engagement. Christians lived under Roman rule and were often faced with persecution for refusing to worship the emperor. They maintained loyalty to Christ above Caesar, yet many actively worked for the welfare of their communities, providing charity, advocating for the oppressed, and resisting injustice through moral witness (Acts 4:32-35). This dual approach of spiritual loyalty and social responsibility demonstrates that faithful political engagement requires discernment, courage, and a commitment to Kingdom ethics.

Added together, these biblical examples provide a foundation for Christian political involvement. Old Testament figures show that God calls His people to serve in positions of influence, using wisdom and integrity. The prophets emphasize that justice and righteousness must guide political action. Jesus' teaching and example redefine power as service and highlight the primacy of moral authority over worldly authority. Paul's instructions clarify that engagement with governing authorities should be balanced with prayer, respect, and adherence to God's law. The early church demonstrates that

Christians can navigate political challenges without compromising their faith, combining moral witness with practical action to promote justice and mercy in society.

In contemporary terms, these biblical foundations suggest that Christians are not called to be politically passive. Rather, they are called to participate in governance, public policy, and social reform in ways that reflect the values of the Kingdom of God. Political engagement should always be guided by principles of justice, servant leadership, and ethical integrity. Believers can use their influence to advocate for the marginalized, challenge corruption, and promote societal well-being while maintaining loyalty to Christ as Lord. By following the biblical examples of Joseph, Moses, David, Daniel, the prophets, Jesus, Paul, and the early church, contemporary Christians can navigate the complex landscape of politics with discernment, courage, and fidelity to God's Kingdom.

3.3. Discipleship, Power, and Justice

Discipleship in God's Kingdom is more than private faith or personal devotion. It requires public action that positively impacts society. Jesus calls His followers to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-16). Salt preserves and improves, and light shows the way. This means believers should influence their surroundings for good. In Nigeria, where corruption, favoritism, and political manipulation are common, Christians are called to act with honesty and integrity. Being salt and light includes speaking against fraud in public offices, promoting transparency in government, and showing honesty in daily life. By doing this, disciples challenge systems that harm people and encourage ethical leadership (Menzel, 2014).

Kingdom power is very different from the power often seen in Nigerian politics. Political power is sometimes used for control, threats, or personal gain. Kingdom power, however, is about serving others. Jesus teaches that true leadership is serving, not dominating others (Mark 10:42-45). In Nigeria, some political offices are used to benefit only a few people, leaving the majority disadvantaged. Discipleship calls believers to reject this kind of domination and practice servant leadership. This means supporting education, healthcare, and infrastructure, especially in poor areas, and always putting the welfare of the community above personal ambition (Wright, 2016).

Justice is an essential part of discipleship. Biblical justice is more than following the law; it includes fairness, equality, and care for those in need (Psalm 89:14). In Nigeria, many people are excluded from political and economic opportunities and cannot access basic services. Jesus' mission shows God's concern for the poor and oppressed (Luke 4:18). Justice requires action: fighting corruption, ensuring public budgets benefit the people, and advocating for policies that reduce inequality. Nigerian Christians are called to confront both individual wrongdoing and larger systems that keep communities poor and oppressed (Hays, 1996).

Being a disciple also means engaging with society wisely and courageously. It is not about supporting a political party for its own sake, but about promoting fairness, peace, and the common good. Speaking against election fraud, misused public funds, or discriminatory laws is part of discipleship because it reflects God's concern for justice. Supporting equal access to education, standing against gender based violence, and challenging unfair exploitation of resources are all ways believers show faith in action. Discipleship connects spiritual devotion with civic responsibility, proving that real faith affects society (Gushee & Stassen, 2016).

Nigeria's problems with corruption and inequality show how discipleship, power, and justice come together. Inflated contracts, stolen public funds, and bribery in government offices show the misuse of power. Disciples are called to speak truth to authority and advocate for accountability while keeping integrity. Social inequalities, like lack of access to healthcare and education, discrimination

against minorities, and neglect of rural areas, require believers to actively promote fairness. Acting in these ways shows that justice is practical and affects real people.

The prophetic role of a disciple is also important. Just as Old Testament prophets spoke out against kings who abused power, Nigerian Christians today are called to challenge corruption and social injustice. Speaking out, demanding law enforcement, and defending the rights of the oppressed are acts of witness. This prophetic role is based on moral authority, not force, showing the integrity and courage expected of Christ's followers (Wright, 2012).

Discipleship, power, and justice are connected. Following Jesus means challenging unfair systems, serving others selflessly, and promoting fairness. Kingdom power focuses on service, not control. Biblical justice goes beyond rules to include equality and protection for vulnerable people. Nigerian Christians who live by these principles become agents of change, promoting ethical governance, social fairness, and protection for the weak. Public engagement shows that faith is not only personal but also communal, with real effects on society.

Discipleship in Nigeria involves living faith in ways that shape society for the better. Christians are called to challenge corruption, promote justice, and serve others with humility, using power responsibly to benefit the community. Rather than relying on political systems for ultimate change, believers are encouraged to act as agents of God's Kingdom, demonstrating mercy, fairness, and integrity in every sphere of life. By embracing this role, Christians contribute to a society that reflects the values of God's Kingdom, showing that faith has the power to transform both hearts and communities.

3.4. Theological Perspectives on Politics and the Kingdom

Christian theology gives guidance on how believers can engage with politics and governance in Nigeria. Augustine of Hippo distinguishes between the City of God and the City of Man. Earthly governments are necessary to maintain order, but they are limited and imperfect (Augustine, 2015). The City of Man often shows self-interest, corruption, and power struggles, which we see in Nigeria through practices like election manipulation, bribery, and misuse of public funds. The City of God, on the other hand, represents God's eternal rule, based on justice, love, and righteousness. Augustine encourages Christians to participate in politics responsibly, promoting justice and ethical leadership, while keeping their ultimate hope in God. In Nigeria, this means acting with integrity, supporting accountability, and avoiding compromise for personal or political gain.

Martin Luther's two kingdom theory explains the difference between God's spiritual kingdom and the earthly, civil kingdom. God rules the spiritual kingdom, guiding hearts and faith, while the temporal kingdom maintains civil order and stability (Pelikan et al., 1959). Nigerian Christians can obey laws and respect authorities, but they must follow God first when human laws conflict with justice. For example, when officials engage in corruption or favor the powerful over the weak, Christians are called to speak out, advocate for fair policies, and support reforms that protect everyone. Luther's teaching helps believers engage politics responsibly while remembering that true justice and salvation come from God, not government.

John Calvin emphasizes that civil authorities are instruments appointed by God to maintain justice and serve society (Calvin, 2009). In Nigeria, where some leaders misuse offices for personal enrichment, Calvin's view challenges both rulers and citizens. Leaders are accountable to God to restrain evil, protect the vulnerable, and promote social welfare. Citizens, including Christians, must resist corruption, advocate for fair policies, and ensure governance serves the people. Political engagement can thus be seen as a calling, where believers work to reform institutions, uphold rule of law, and ensure fairness in governance.

Liberation theology is especially relevant in Nigeria. This theology highlights God's concern for the poor and oppressed and calls believers to fight injustice (Gutiérrez, 2023). With widespread poverty, inequality, and exploitation in Nigeria, Christians are encouraged to take active steps in society. They can work against mismanagement of resources, unequal access to education and healthcare, and discrimination against vulnerable groups. Supporting policies that reduce inequality, protect human rights, and empower communities reflects the Kingdom of God, showing that faith involves both spiritual life and social justice. Political engagement becomes a way to live out God's justice in real life situations.

Contemporary theologians reinforce these ideas. Wright (2012) emphasizes that the Kingdom of God calls for ethical action, not passive faith. Nigerian Christians are challenged to promote justice, mercy, and reconciliation in society without treating government as the ultimate hope. John Stott teaches that faith should guide public life, encouraging integrity, service, and respect for human dignity (Stott & Wyatt, 2006). African theologians note that political engagement must address local challenges like corruption, poverty, and weak institutions while ensuring the Church remains prophetic and morally authoritative (De Villiers, 2011). These insights encourage Nigerian Christians to act courageously, advocating for ethical leadership and social reform.

In a nutshell, a clear principle emerges: politics is a space for witness and service, but it cannot provide ultimate hope. Augustine and Luther remind believers that human governments are limited, while Calvin and liberation theology show that Christians can use political engagement to promote justice, protect the vulnerable, and restrain evil. Contemporary voices highlight the need for ethical, informed, and context aware action. Nigerian Christians are called to reflect Kingdom values, justice, mercy, service, and righteousness, while remembering that ultimate hope rests in God's eternal reign.

In practical terms, this means believers can participate in voting, advocate for anti-corruption reforms, support ethical leaders, and challenge social injustice. Political engagement becomes a form of discipleship, guided by faith and ethical principles. Christians are to hold leaders accountable, resist exploitation, and work toward equitable development while keeping hope in God. By doing this, they show that the Kingdom of God is not only spiritual but also social, bringing God's justice and righteousness into society.

The theological perspectives presented here encourage Nigerian Christians to take an active role in shaping society while keeping faith in God as the ultimate authority. Instead of viewing politics as an end in itself, believers are called to see it as a platform to live out Kingdom values. This means advocating for fairness, serving the marginalized, and resisting corruption, while cultivating integrity in every area of life. The future of Nigeria, like any nation, depends not only on its leaders but also on citizens who are committed to justice, mercy, and ethical action. By embracing this vision, Christians become instruments of God's transformative power, contributing to a society that reflects His Kingdom here and now.

3.5. Christian Engagement in Politics Today

Christians today have important opportunities to positively influence politics and society. They can promote justice, peace, and good governance by standing for fairness and transparency in public office. Being a prophetic voice against corruption is a key part of this engagement. Just as prophets in the Bible challenged rulers who abused power, Christians can speak out against bribery, embezzlement, and misuse of public resources (Wright, 2012). Advocacy for the marginalized is another essential opportunity. Believers can support policies that protect vulnerable groups, provide access to education and healthcare, and reduce poverty. By doing so, Christians reflect the values of God's Kingdom in tangible ways, showing that faith has practical consequences for society (Gushee & Stassen, 2016).

At the same time, engaging in politics comes with challenges. Corruption and compromise are real risks. Political systems often reward self-interest, and some leaders may pressure Christians to act unethically. Mixing faith with partisan politics can also be dangerous, as it may lead believers to support policies or parties that conflict with Kingdom values. Christians may face persecution or rejection for taking a stand against injustice, especially when their positions oppose powerful individuals or entrenched systems. In Nigeria, some Christian leaders have struggled with these challenges, either compromising ethical standards for political gain or being sidelined for advocating moral principles (Carson, 2007).

Despite these challenges, there are clear principles that can guide Christian engagement in politics. Integrity is essential. Leaders and citizens alike must act honestly, transparently, and ethically. Servant-leadership, modeled by Jesus, teaches that political power should be used to serve others rather than to dominate or enrich oneself (Mark 10:42-45). Accountability is crucial, both to God and to the people, ensuring that leaders are responsible for their actions and policies. Christians are also called to practice non-violence, reconciliation, and peacemaking, addressing conflicts with wisdom and seeking unity rather than division (Matthew 5:9). Pursuing policies aligned with Kingdom values ensures that political decisions reflect justice, mercy, and care for the vulnerable (Micah 6:8).

In the Nigerian context, there are examples of both success and failure in Christian political engagement. Some politicians have used their positions to promote development, transparency, and social welfare, showing that faith driven leadership can make a real difference. Others, however, have failed to live up to ethical standards, succumbing to corruption, nepotism, or self-interest. These cases illustrate the importance of applying Kingdom principles consistently, not just using faith as a political tool or personal image. Globally, Christian leaders who act with integrity and prioritize justice have often succeeded in promoting reforms, protecting human rights, and advancing public welfare (Stott & Wyatt, 2006; De Villiers, 2011). These examples provide guidance for Nigerian believers seeking to participate meaningfully in political life.

Christian engagement in politics is therefore a balance between opportunity and responsibility. Believers are called to influence society positively, advocate for justice, and serve the marginalized while navigating challenges such as corruption, compromise, and opposition. Success in this area requires a firm commitment to Kingdom values, ethical conduct, and courageous witness. By doing so, Christians show that faith is not only personal but also communal, shaping policies, institutions, and public life in ways that reflect God's justice and mercy.

3.6. Implications for Christian Discipleship and the Church

The Church has a central role in shaping disciples who live according to Kingdom values. Teaching these values through discipleship programmes helps believers understand that following Jesus is not only about personal faith but also about influencing society positively. Discipleship programmes can include lessons on justice, mercy, integrity, and servant leadership, equipping Christians to act ethically in all areas of life (Gushee & Stassen, 2016). By instilling these principles early, the Church prepares members to serve others, make moral decisions, and challenge injustice when they encounter it.

Training Christians for political leadership is another practical implication. Leaders who understand Kingdom values can influence governance, promote fairness, and implement policies that benefit the community. The Church can provide mentorship, leadership courses, and practical guidance on ethical decision making for members interested in public service. This training ensures that believers entering politics carry moral integrity, accountability, and a servant's heart, rather than ambition or self-interest, into their roles (Wright, 2012).

The Church also functions as the conscience of the nation. By speaking out on issues such as corruption, inequality, and injustice, the Church reminds both citizens and leaders of moral and ethical standards. This prophetic role is rooted in biblical teaching, which calls for believers to defend the vulnerable, promote fairness, and act as a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves (Luke 4:18; Micah 6:8). In Nigeria, where governance and accountability are often challenged, the Church can serve as a moral compass, encouraging public officials and society at large to uphold justice and righteousness.

While engaging society and politics, the Church must avoid partisanship. Christians can support policies and reforms that align with Kingdom values without attaching themselves to political parties for personal or institutional gain. Promoting Kingdom ethics means advocating for justice, fairness, and the welfare of all citizens, regardless of political affiliation. This approach allows the Church to maintain credibility, act as a moral authority, and influence society positively without being drawn into political conflicts (Carson, 2007).

Building institutions of justice and mercy is another way the Church contributes to societal transformation. Churches can establish schools, hospitals, legal aid centers, and community development programs that demonstrate God's love and promote fairness. These institutions serve as practical expressions of Kingdom principles, providing services and support for marginalized and vulnerable groups. By acting in this way, the Church models ethical governance and social responsibility, showing that faith leads to tangible improvements in society (Stott & Wyatt, 2006).

In addition, practical discipleship includes encouraging believers to act personally and collectively. Christians can participate in civic life by voting responsibly, volunteering in community projects, and advocating for policies that protect human rights and promote equality. The Church can guide members in these activities, providing both spiritual and practical support to ensure that faith translates into action. When congregations engage together, their impact is amplified, demonstrating the power of collective witness in shaping a just and compassionate society (De Villiers, 2011).

Finally, the Church can foster a culture of accountability and ethical leadership within its own structures. Leaders within the Church should model servant leadership, transparency, and fairness, setting examples for members to follow. This internal practice reinforces Kingdom values, showing that ethical behavior is not only taught but also lived out. When the Church embodies these principles, it becomes a credible force in society, influencing public policy, moral standards, and community development (Hays, 1996).

In summary, the Church plays a vital role in equipping disciples to live out Kingdom values in practical ways. Teaching ethics, training for leadership, acting as the nation's conscience, avoiding partisan bias, and building institutions of justice and mercy are all essential. Through these efforts, the Church prepares believers to engage society responsibly, advocate for the marginalized, and promote policies and practices that reflect God's Kingdom. By doing so, the Church demonstrates that discipleship is not only personal but also communal, influencing governance, social systems, and everyday life in meaningful ways.

4. Conclusion

Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God provides a compelling framework for Christian engagement in politics and public life. His message consistently calls believers to embody justice, mercy, humility, and self-giving service, demonstrating that true leadership is defined not by the pursuit of power but by the willingness to serve others (Mark 10:42-45). These Kingdom values—fairness, care for the poor, moral integrity, and compassion, offer a principled foundation for Christian participation

in society and guide believers in navigating political life in ways that honour God and uplift vulnerable communities. This study has shown that Christians bear a significant responsibility in promoting good governance, confronting corruption, and advocating for the marginalized. When believers practice integrity, accountability, and servant leadership, they contribute meaningfully to political transformation while preserving their moral and spiritual witness. The Church plays an essential formative role by nurturing disciples who embody Kingdom principles and are equipped to act ethically and courageously in the public sphere. Therefore, Christian political involvement should not be driven by the pursuit of power or partisan interests but by the desire to reflect God's righteousness in society, bearing witness to the presence of the Kingdom of God even within imperfect human systems.

In light of these findings, this study recommends several practical pathways for strengthening faithful Christian participation in politics. First, discipleship programs should intentionally integrate Kingdom-based ethics, such as justice, mercy, integrity, and servant leadership, so that believers understand how personal faith shapes societal engagement. Second, targeted training and mentorship for Christian political aspirants are essential to ensure that those entering public office do so with moral integrity, accountability, and a servant-hearted posture. Third, the Church must strengthen its prophetic voice by consistently addressing issues such as corruption, inequality, and injustice, grounding its public statements in biblical mandates (Luke 4:18; Micah 6:8). Finally, Christians should be encouraged to engage politically in a non-partisan manner, supporting policies that uphold Kingdom values while maintaining the Church's institutional neutrality. Such an approach preserves the Church's credibility, reinforces its moral authority, and enables believers to serve as transformative agents who embody God's justice, peace, and righteousness in the public sphere.

5. References

- Akano, B. I. (2023). Disciple-Making Movement as an Effective Operational Model: for Christian Missions amid Insecurity. *Missionalia: Southern African Journal of Mission Studies*, 51(1), 70–84. https://hdl.handle.net/10520/ejc-mission_v51_n1_a5
- Augustine, A. (2015). *The city of God*. Xist Publishing.
- Calvin, J. (2009). *Institutes of the Christian religion: The first English version of the 1541 French edition*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Carson, D. A. (2007). The Gospel of Jesus Christ: An Evangelical Celebration. *The Gospel Coalition*, 26(1). <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/the-gospel-of-jesus-christ-an-evangelical-celebration/>
- De Villiers, E. (2011). Public theology in the South African context. *International Journal of Public Theology*, 5(1), 5–22. https://brill.com/view/journals/ijpt/5/1/article-p5_3.xml
- Gushee, D. P., & Stassen, G. H. (2016). *Kingdom ethics: Following Jesus in contemporary context*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing.
- Gutiérrez, G. (2023). *A theology of liberation: History, politics*. Orbis Books.
- Hauerwas, S., & Willimon, W. H. (2014). *Resident Aliens: Life in the Christian Colony, expanded*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press.
- Hays, R. B. (1996). *The Moral Vision of the New Testament: Community, Cross, New Creation, A Contemporary Introduction to New Testament Ethics*. HarperOne.
- Keener, C. S. (2003). *The Gospel of John a Commentary Volume 2*. Michigan-Cambridge.
- Menzel, D. C. (2014). *Ethics management for public administrators: Building organizations of integrity*. Routledge.

- Olaoba, O. O., & Bamidele, D. Y. (2025). Christians, Politician, and Governance in Nigeria: A Critical Examination. *JASSD-Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, 5(4), 9–25. <https://acjoi.org/index.php/ochendo/article/view/6192>
- Pelikan, J., Lehmann, H. T., & Brown, C. B. (1959). *Luther's works*. Concordia Publishing House St. Louis.
- Schlossberg, H. (1993). *Idols for destruction: The conflict of Christian faith and American culture*. Crossway.
- Shehu, I. M., Othman, M. F., & Osman, N. (2017). Ethno-religious and regional rivalry in Nigeria: An old and creeping trend. *Asian Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, 5(5), 14–24. <http://www.ajms.co.in/sites/ajms2015/index.php/ajms/article/view/2455>
- Six, J. (2019). *The Kingdom of God: A Meta-Ethic for Sociopolitical Engagement*. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.
- Stott, J. R. W. (1992). *The contemporary Christian: Applying God's word to today's world*. InterVarsity Press.
- Stott, J. R. W., & Wyatt, J. (2006). *Issues facing Christians today*. Zondervan.
- Wilson, S. G. (1983). *The Gospel According to Luke (I-IX): Introduction, Translation, and Notes*. JSTOR.
- Wright, N. T. (2012). *After you believe: Why Christian character matters*. HarperOne.
- Wright, N. T. (2016). *How God became king: the forgotten story of the Gospels*. HarperOne.