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# Political Leaders as Agents of Peace and Good Governance in Ancient Israel and its Implications for Nigerian Leaders.

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**Abstract**
Political Leaders in ancient time were considered as divine appointees. As Ambassadors of Yahweh the leaders have been entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining law and order so that peace can reign in the society and nation under their watch. However, some of these rulers failed to fulfill divine mandate by championing idol worship, corruption, oppression, injustice and the likes which eventually led to anarchy, violence and all forms of ungodly practices in the society. The focus of this piece is to examine how King Josiah of Judah maintained law and order in his reign with the view of establishing its relevance in political structures in Nigeria. Historical method is used for this research. It was gathered that the nation of Judah was governed in the fear of God in the time of King Josiah. There was peace, justice and prosperity in the land. The Nigerian nation has been governed by political leaders that are selfish, corrupt and lack the fear of God. This is the reason for ppression, corruption, injustice, poverty, nepotism, terrorism and the likes that have bedevilled our nation today. Political leaders in Nigeria are enjoined to rule in the fear of God so that peace and prosperity can be realized.

**Introduction**
It should be noted that the political structures and religious ideology of ancient Israel were inextricably associated with the political structures and ideologies of its neighbours namely ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Syro-Palestine. It should be noted that the political structures of Israel's neighbours were far advanced than theirs, and as such it had profound influence on the political thought of Israel from inception. It could be recall that one of the reasons why Israel demanded for a king was to be like other nations .Political leaders are persons saddled with the responsibility of providing leadership for the people in their constituencies or kingdom.

In ancient Israel, political leaders are considered as persons chosen by Yahweh for the good order and governance of God's people. Prophets were used by Yahweh to confirm and affirm the choice of a political leader. One of the main functions of political leaders is to maintain law and order. The political leader is to ensure justice and equity for all and sundry.

At this juncture, it is expedient for me to define the key terms in this paper. These are: political leaders, peace and good governance. Political leader is a compound word: political and leader. The word political is from the word politics. The word politics came from two Greek words: *polis* meaning city and *ikos* meaning art, skill or method (c. 800BC-300BC). Therefore, politics is the art of governing a city (Adebayo, Edema 1988). In other words, politics is the art of organizing men in a society to live and interact with one another for the realization of their social

nature. Politics includes the act and the process of governance. It is difficult to separate politics from human culture. In fact, politics is part of the culture of humans. Politics should be aimed at shaping the behaviours and well-being of the people in a political community. A leader is someone who is in-charge of an organization. In other words, a leader is the one who guides, directs, and command others to achieve a desired goal or objective (Awojobi, 2011:40). Therefore, a political leader is someone who is organizing men and women in the community to live and interact together for the realization of the community goal and objective. Political leaders are expected to formulate policies and laws that will make governance a delight to the leader and the led. To facilitate interaction social structures such as legal and governmental systems must be put in place. It is the responsibility of Government to provide social services such as good education, healthcare, housing, job creation and so on for the general well-being and improved quality of life of the citizens. It is expected that political leaders in any nation will put in place policies that could engender good governance protect citizen rights and enhance quality of life.

Peace is a state of undisturbed quiet and calm (1992:847). Peace is a situation where citizens abide by the norms of the society in which they live. War is the opposite of Peace. In a peaceful environment and society people have respect for one another.

To the Oxford Advanced learner's Dictionary, governance is the act, fact and manner of governing through the control of public affairs. Also, governance has been defined as the exercise of power of a person or group of persons for the benefit of the populace. It is clear from these definitions that the government in power at a point in time determines to a large extent the political, social and economic lives of the citizenry. Good governance is not negotiable. It should be noted that power resides in people but it is transfer to the leaders during elections. The leaders are expected to exercise the vested power in the interest of the overall good of the people and the nation. Governance can be adjudged successful or otherwise depending on whether the ideals for setting up a government are realized or not.

Governance is God's idea. God is the ruler of the Heaven and Earth. However, from time immemorial God has always appointed leaders to govern His people on earth for no leader can emerge without His approval. (See. Daniel 5:18-31). The choice of a leader by God has nothing to do with the age of the individual. God is at liberty to choose from the youngest to the oldest. The primary responsibility of a ruler is to maintain law and order so that peace can reign in the society. As soon as a leader emerges it is expected that every human being no matter his or her status or religious affiliation will support and respect constituted authority. The rulers are also expected to rule in the fear of God.

This paper explores how political leaders in ancient Israel became agent of peace and good governance in their days with the view of establishing its relevance in the Nigerian political structure. To do this effectively, we consider governance in ancient Israel with reference to king Josiah of Judah. We also attempted to consider the activities of the political leaders in Nigeria by a way of evaluating their contribution to peace and governance by suggesting ways for improvement.

**Political Governance in Ancient Israel and Biblical Literature**

Monarchs in ancient Near East were regarded as divinely approved. According to Gottwald, politics were understood to have arisen independently in Egypt and spread over a wide area by reason of conquest and imitation (Gottwald 2001:113). Israel's political structures and ideology can only be understood and meaningful ly taken into account the entire political situation of the ancient Near East. This is because the origins of kingship in the ancient Near East are closely related to the origins of the nationhood. It should be noted that the emergence of political structures in ancient Near East around 3rd and 2nd millennium BC had great influence on the origin and development of nationhood and kingship structure of ancient Israel. Rulers were



expected to rule in their respective kingdoms by the delegated authority of the gods (Lambert 1998:55).

Kingship was the most stable system of government in the Ancient Near East. Another form of government at this time was Theocracy. According to Heywood Theocracy means "the rule of God" or "a regime in which government posts is filled on the basis of the person's position in the religious hierarchy" (2002:37). A variant of the concept is hierocracy, meaning "a theocracy led by the priesthood" (1995:588).

As mentioned earlier, the political structures and religious ideology of ancient Israel were inextricably associated with the political structures and ideologies of its neighbours in the ancient Near East. For some scholars, Israel's political ideology was greatly influenced by that of her neighbours from inception. This is because of close interaction between Israel and her neighbours. Gottwald described the influence thus: "It is generally agreed that a core of culture, material and intellectual, runs through both the history of Egypt and of Mesopotamia, with Syria-Palestine developing local features that were heavily influenced from the older valley center" (1985:68). According to Mowinckel, the kingship in Israel is fundamentally the same as the rest of the ancient Near East. The king is considered has the representative of the gods. The king becomes the conduit through which the gods exercise and demonstrate their power (Mowinckel 1955:284). Also, it is though the king that blessings, fertility and happiness flow from gods to humanity. When a king enjoys the favour of the gods, material and spiritual welfare of the nation is guaranteed (Mowinckel 1955:284)

1 Samuel chapter 8 occupies a unique place in Israel's literature on kingship (Brueggemann 1990:60). One of the reasons for Israel demanding for a king in this passage was to be like other nations. This is an indication that the relationship between the ancient Israel and their neighbours was very close. Scholars over the years assumed that 1 Samuel 7-15 contains valuable and intricate account of the origin of kingship in ancient Israel (Whitelam 1992:41). Whitriam further argued that two opposing views that emerged in biblical tradition must be noted in the study of the origin of kingship in ancient Israel (1992:41). They are: critical scholarship as an early monarchical source (1 Sam 9: 1-19:16; 11:1-11, 15; 1-14) and anti-monarchical source (1 Sam 7:3-17; 8; 10:17-27; 11:12-14). In the same vein, Robinson claimed that the emergence of kingship in ancient Israel was preceded by a conflict between two opposing groups who had vested interest in economic progress of early Israel. The outcry for a new political dispensation; "to be like the nation" is viewed as an act of apostasy against Yahweh (1 Sam 8:7; 10:19). The Deuteron mists considered the demand for a king as a form of treason against Yahweh, "the real king". However a more positive view of monarchy is advanced in Psalm 72 and Isaiah 11: 1-9 (Lemche 1988:231). These texts make it clear that the king rules under Yahweh's leadership.

Canaanites religion appears to have had more in common with Mesopotamian culture than with Egyptian culture but Israel fashioned their bureaucracies around the Egyptian kingship model (Polley 1989). To this end, Dijkstra (2001) commenting on the relationship between the religions of Israel and their neighbours with reference to the use of EL and Yahweh said: "Whoever wants to see the religion of as a mere 'counter- religion', as an independent and unique religious phenomenon in the ancient world, has to play down or even to deliberately negate the contribution of ancient Near Eastern cultures to the cradle of Israel" (Dijkstra 2001:93).

The Hebrew Bible is considered as the primary source for the Israelite world-view of kingship. In ancient Israel, kingship was inextricably linked to their cosmology. The relationship between divine realm and earthly kingship was closely interwoven. As far as Whitelam is concerned (1992:40), kingship is derived from the Hebrew root *sufi* with its derivatives indicating monarchical government. *Melek* means king in Hebrew while *sar* stand for "official" or "prince". Whitelam, further state that the noun melek is frequently used in the Hebrew Bible for neighbouring or foreign monarchies such as Philistia, Ammon, Edom, Moab, Hamath, Aram,

Tyre, etc. However, the word is used for the ruler of the kingdom of Judah and Israel. For instance, Saul was anointed by Prophet Samuel as the first king of Israel (1 Sam 9:16; 10:1).

To the pre-monarchic populace of Isreel the absence of kingship resulted in the natural consequence of chaos and anarchy. Wolf (1994:367) speaking on Judges 21:25 observed that: "From the stand point of monarchy, the period of the Judges was indeed a time of anarchy and upheaval. The often leaderless people wallowed in idolatry, immorality, and hatred." Kingship is a tool for stability, peace, law and order in any human society.

Gleaning from the Biblical accounts we observed that God created humans as male and female (Gen. 1:26-27). Both were created in the image of God and given dominion over other creatures. God is a God of order. When it was time for Israel to be set free from Egyptian bondage God called Moses and commissioned him for this task (Exod. 3). All through the era of the Old Testament, God appointed and commissioned spiritual and political leaders like Samuel, Saul, David, Solomon, Hezekiah, and so on. The task of political leader in ancient Israel was to maintain law and order in the land. Justice and equity was the watchword of the godly kings in Israel. Whenever there was the breakdown of law and order in the land the king is to be blamed. Kings in ancient Israel were considered as Yahweh's ambassador on earth.

Although while Jesus was on earth, He did not run for public office, He did take a prophetic stance against social issues of the day to the point that He was regarded as a threat to be eliminated. For instance, Jesus spoke on fair wages, unjust trade, oppression of the widows and economic injustice and corruption of His days (Matt. 12:40). It has always being the desire of God that righteous and God fearing people rule the World so as to promote peace, and prosperity. This was evidence in the time of David, Hezekiah, Josiah and Daniel.

Besides, God does govern and carryout political activities. He makes laws and covenants, has immense administration of angels, has heavenly courts and books and dispenses justice. He is impartial and exalts some and demotes others. God also acts to ensure that He stays in power and that the Kingdom of darkness would be defeated. He governs in wise and stable way (Psalm 18:25-40). The skill of discerning people and situations and responding to them with justice and good government is one of God's main activities. The eternal destiny of nations, to a large degree, depends on their governments (1Timothy 2:1-4).

At this juncture, it is crucial to mention that every political office holder especially the king has the responsibility of dispensing justice. Prophets in ancient Israel represented the ideal of justice against the backdrop of the political reality of their time. Weinfeld (1995) opined that the term justice and righteousness may be a character trait granted by Yahweh to the kings. Yahweh is petitioned to grant justice to the reigning monarch and righteousness to heir apparent to enable him to dispense ideal justice to all the people especially the widows, the orphans, and the foreigners (cf. Psa 72: 1-4). Yahweh is the overall ruler over all the creation and will exercise his judgment with fairness (cf. Psa. 96:10). As divine and righteous judge, Yahweh is able to maintain order; peace, security and well-being (cf. Psa 96:10-13; 97:2, 8; 98:9; 99:4) because these are fundamental to his divine kingship (Whitelam 1992:43)

Also, Yahweh is concern about justice and peace for the underprivileged classes in the society (Psa 82). This is an affirmation of his primary role in the divine council. According to Anderson, the essence of the psalmist's problem is the question why the weak and the defenseless are continually deprived of justice. This is due to mismanagement of the subordinate divine beings that have been saddled with the responsibility of jurisdiction over mankind (1972:592). Yahweh, having dealt with the divine beings that failed to secure universal order and defeated chaos assumed leadership of divine council. He established his throne on righteousness and justice as reflected is Psalm 89:14 (Anderson 1972; Whitelam 1992).

In the New Testament, Jesus is pictured as a servant leader who sacrificed Himself for His people and became the king of kings ruling over the nations of the world. Jesus was involved



with humans and their transformation. He left His glory in Heaven and came to an oppressed, politically corrupt world. In the same vein, Donald Guthrie (1990: 203) opined that Jesus was concerned about the dignity of man. Human beings should be respected without distinction because all were created by God in such a way that they all think about God.

Jesus will eventually govern the whole world. Jesus was given the title "ruler of the kings of the earth", (Revelation 1:5). His kingdom will crush all the kingdoms that are of this world, (Revelation 2:26-27); which are passing away, (1 Corinthians 2-8, 7:31, 1 John 2:17). His kingdom is everlasting (Daniel 2:44). The Church will be co-rulers with Jesus in His kingdom (Revelation 2:26, 27; Romans 8:17, Luke 19: 17-19).

It is clear from Biblical literatures that it is not wrong for Christians to be involved in political leadership. David, Hezekiah, and Josiah were kings that rule well in their days. Daniel and Joseph did well in their political offices. Governance is part of our destiny in Christ Jesus.

**King Josiah as Agent of Peace and Good Governance in Judah**

The name Josiah came from the Hebrew word *yo'shiyahu*, meaning Jehovah supports him. King Josiah was the son of Amon and grandson of Manasseh, the son of Hezekiah (2Kings 22:1). Josiah became King after the palace officials murdered his father Amon in 642BC (2Kings 21:23). Josiah proved to be a good King over the people of Judah (640-609 BC). He was the greatest king in Judah (Merrill C. Tenney, 1987:548-549).

Josiah reign for thirty-one years and was the last surge of political independence and religious revival before the fall of the southern kingdom and the destruction of Jerusalem in 586BC. A careful study of the Bible revealed that Josiah was a Youth when he began to reign in Judah. He succeeded his Father Amon at the age of 8years and was a good king (1kings 13:2; 2Chronicles 34:3). King Josiah lost his parents at the age of 8. He was introduced to scenes of violence, outrage and civil wars. Josiah, as an orphan did not become a thug or join any associations that will disrupt the peace of the nation. He conducted himself very well.

The imposing international influence of the Assyria declined rapidly during his reign. Insurrections and rebellions in the East and the death of Ashurbanipal were instrumental to the smooth rise of the nation of Judah. By 612 BC, Nineveh the Assyrian capital was destroyed by a coalition of Media and Babylonian Army led by Nabopolassar. It was during this time that Judah gained her political independence and was able to extend its influence into the northern Kingdom (1987:549). Josiah sought after God at the age of 16. He turned from the evil ways of his father Amon and grandfather Manasseh to seek after the God of his ancestor David. He began to purify Judah nationally of its high places and idols. Josiah's religious leadership ranks him with Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah as an outstanding righteous ruler. Josiah shunn corruption. He was a God fearing leader. He purged Judah and Jerusalem when he was 20years. Youth did not deter Josiah from necessary reformation. Josiah destroyed all forms of idolatry. For instance, Gross idolatry- Baal altars, Asherah poles, star planetary worship, child sacrifice to molech in the valley of Ben Hinnom, astrology, occultism, altars for worshiping the host of heaven in the temple court, and the shedding of innocent blood that permeated the land of Judah during the reign of Manasseh were completely wiped out (2 Chronicles 33&34) As a Youth, he was full of zeal and passion. He rebuilt the Temple when he was 26years. This consecrated young man saw that it was of no use destroying idols unless he had something better to replace them. Thus, he began to rebuilt and repair the house of God. Offerings and contributions were collected throughout the nation for the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem. It was in the course of renovating the temple that he discovered the book of the Law which later brought political and spiritual revivals in the land (2 Chron. 34:15). Josiah's faith in the holy Scriptures encouraged Judah to put her confidence in YHWH and this kept the nation's hope alive during the exile through most of the

succeeding century (cf. Dan. 9:2), during the time of restoration (Ezra 7:10; Mal. 4:4) and the Inter- test mental period.

Economically, Judah prospered in the reign of Josiah. The political independence experienced in the reign of Josiah encouraged trade and investment which was a boost to the nation's economy. He fought corruption and any form of ungodliness in his domain. With King Josiah leading the reformation movement, changes in personnel occurred. Priests serving by royal appointment of former kings dedicated to idols were removed from office. Josiah was committed to Justice for all and sundry. Josiah made temple revenues available for the support of godly priests and thus creating favorable condition of service for the Priests. (2Kings 23: 8-9).

**Political Leaders as agent of Peace and good Governance: The Nigerian Experience**

Nigeria became a republic in 1963 and as a republic it was patterned after the United State of America with executive power exercised by the President. The 1979 Constitution provides a system of government in which the President, who is directly elected, exercised power as the Chief Executive and Head of state. He presides as both head of states and head of the national executive. The President is elected by popular vote to a maximum of two terms of four year each. The President's power is guided by the National Assembly which consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Nigeria parades three tiers of government namely, Federal, State and Local Government. There are a total 36 States in Nigeria and Abuja is the Federal Capital Territory. There are many political parties in Nigeria. The major political parties presently include the People Democratic Party (PDP), All Progressive Congress (APC), Labour Party (LP), Social Democratic Party (SDP), and a host of other registered parties in Nigeria.

Today, many political analysts, and stakeholders in this country are of the view that it is not yet time to celebrate democracy in Nigeria. This is because violence has become mutual bedfellow in Nigeria's political landscape. When the 2019 general elections were approaching, many people believed that terrorism will re-surfaced in the land. There is constant violation of and abuse of human rights and freedom in the land. The politics in the country is characterized by violence, bitterness, hatred, killings, rigging, vote selling and buying etc.

For political leaders in Nigeria to be agent of peace and good governance the following must be the other of the day:

(a) **Justice and Equity** – Justice is defined as "the strong and firm will to give to each his due". Social, economic, and political institutions in any society are organized around Justice. In other words, justice implies that persons have obligations to be active and productive participants in the life of the society in which they live, and that the society has the duty to enable them participate. Justice demands that the right of every person be always and everywhere respected. The leaders in any society have the divine mandate to make available to all their subjects everything necessary for leading a good life. It is regrettable, today that our nation is plague with injustice. The rich buy justice at the expense of the poor. Our judicial system is nothing to write home about. By reason of corruption in our Judiciary citizens no longer have confidence in the system again. Our Judiciary must conform to divine standards of justice and righteousness for the expected peace to be realized in our nation (1994:871).

(b) **Exemplary leadership**

Exemplary leadership is crucial to the peace and stability of any nation. As mentioned earlier, Josiah was a leader worthy of emulation. Despite the fact that he was not influence by corruption, violence, and the likes in and around his territory he was not influence by these vices. As a young and respected political leader, he focus and exemplary in conduct. Our leaders are expected to live life that is worthy of emulation. Political office holders



are expected to govern the nation with justice, integrity, honesty, and the fear of God. Our leaders are to shun bribery and corruption, vote buying during elections, looting of the nation's treasury, injustice, deceit, violence, fraudulent acts, ill-gotten wealth, tribalism, nepotism, and any form of vices.

**Spiritual and moral development**

King Josiah sought the Lord. He was devoted to the God of Israel. His passion for God made him to destroy all the Idols in Judah in other to return the nation back to YHWH. Judah became spiritually inclined because of Josiah. There was a great spiritual development in Judah during Josiah's reign. Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people (Prov. 14:34). Most of our political leaders in Nigeria are spiritually and morally bankrupt. Spirituality and morality must be paramount when considering persons for political office. Irrespective of the religious affiliation any person aspiring to be a political leader must be very sound with high sense of devotion in religious matters. Godly leaders will lead the nation in the path of God.

(c) **Socio-ethical and Economic Development**

There was great improvement in the socio-ethical and economic lives of the nation of Judah in the time of Josiah. Political leaders in Nigeria are expected to work hard to improve the standard of living of the citizenry. This will enhance the socio-economic development of the nation. There will be reduction of insecurity, poverty, fraudulent acts, indolence, robbery, murder, assassinations and all forms of criminal activities in the land. Political leaders in Nigeria should make efforts in making our country's environment conducive for foreign investors to come and invest and as such creating more jobs for the Nigerian populace. Nigeria is very rich in terms of human and natural resources but lack good political leaders.

**Conclusion**

In ancient Israel, political leaders are considered as persons chosen by Yahweh for the good order and governance of God's people. Prophets were used by Yahweh to confirm and affirm the choice of a political leader. One of the main functions of political leaders is to maintain law and order. The political leader is to ensure justice and equity for all and sundry. Political leaders to a large extent determine what happens in a given society. Leadership determines the destiny of the people. Whenever godly political leaders are in power there will be peace and good governance. Injustice and the likes will be abated. This was the case in Judah in the reign of Josiah.

The Nigerian political structure lacks godly leaders and this account for injustice, violence, shedding of innocent blood, poverty, oppression, and the likes. Our political leaders can only become agents of peace and good governance if they rule the nation in the fear of God.

The Church is to champion peace and good governance by preparing young men and women to take up leadership roles in the society. Politics is only dirty and bad when only bad people are involved. The involvement of good persons will make politics clean, meaningful and beneficial to all and sundry.

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# 18

# Post-Independence Disillusionment in Ngozi Chuma-Udeh's *Teachers on Strike* and Helon Habila's *Waiting for an Angel*

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**Abstract**
Literature is a tool, a mirror through which writers explore their societies. It has become a means of self-expression, an avenue through which writers express their experiences, observations, sense of sympathy and patriotism to their various societies. As an instrument of social change, the writers studied brought to limelight the social vices in their environments and advocate the reformation and rehabilitation of their societies towards a beautiful and glorious future. In this research entitled "Post-Independence Disillusionment in Ngozi Chuma-Udeh's *Teachers on Strike* and Helon Habila's *Waiting for an Angel*, the novelists satirized the corruption among the ruling class, and how the spirit of discernment has been long dead in the heart of the ruling class. The novelists showed us the society reekingin corruption that gave birth to the literature of post-independence disillusionment. The texts studied are the primary sources of data while library texts, journals, abstracts and internet are the secondary sources of data. The theoretical framework adopted is Maxism. The researcher believes that the novelists succeeded in exposing the issues that undermine the lives of the people; hence they set out to address those ills and expect rebirth, reformation and equity. Thus, both novelists are advocating good governance, honesty in leadership and elimination of intimidation, man's inhumanity to his fellow man, and intolerance.
**Keywords:** Disillusionment, Oppression, Disappointment, Crime, Betrayal, Unemployment, Starvation

**Introduction**

Literature has been a medium through which artists crave for equality and for the well being of the society. For instance, before the attainment of independence in Nigeria in 1960, many thought that immediately the white man leaves the seat of power, the road to having a good society will open. They hoped that corruption, degradation, political and economic exploitation would stop. But, ironically, these ills rather than diminish, increased with the departure of the colonial masters.According to Kofi Awoonor in *A Survey of the History, Culture and Literature of*