

True Religion And Nation Building: Biblical And Ethical Perspectives

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Abstract

From Egypt to Morocco, Libya to Tunisia, Iraq to Afghanistan, and from Bosnia to Central African Republic (CAR), mankind has watched nations struggle, and has sought or attempted to rebuild them. There has been a record of revolutions that have religious or political-undertone. Some of the agitated fighters have taken to arms. Mankind's record is one of failure. Nigeria is not shielded from this malady; she is a nation of two contraries: a nation with the happiest people and a nation bedevilled by corruption. Economically, several borrowing from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), different economic policies of the administrations have not yielded the much needed fruit and the religious sphere is replete with same sad experience. Against this backdrop, some look up to religion for solution. As a result of this, some peddlers of religious commodities seize the opportunity to loot the already wounded flock. The study falls within the domain of humanities and collaborative interdisciplinary tools and methods have been employed in order to arrive at findings capable of solving the present problem. Authentic guidelines for quality control and nation building cued from the realm of religious experience demand the interdisciplinary efforts of biblical and ethical scholars. At the end, the researchers offered some recommendations by applying biblical and ethical categories to myriad of problems of nation building that emanate from the abuse of religion.

Keywords: Religion, Biblical studies, Ethics, Nation building, Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Failing nations and cultural decline have made nation building a major concern in today's world. There is no shortage of persons and ideas willing to tackle the challenge. Communism, socialism, monarchism, dictatorship, democracy, theocracy and even religions are all efforts to solving this problem, yet none has found the hidden key to building a flourishing nation. Today, all

nations are struggling with their own problems. From Egypt to Morocco, Libya to Tunisia, Iraq to Afghanistan and from Bosnia to other troubled countries in the world mankind has watched nations struggle, and has sought to rebuild them. There has been a record of revolutions religiously and politically. Some have taken to arms; often, they are branded as rebels and at times, as terrorists. Mankind's record is one of failure. Nigeria is not shielded from this malady. She is a nation of two contraries: classed as a nation with the happiest people and yet one of the most corrupt in the world. Efforts abound to rebuild the apparent decadent Nigerian nation. Politically, the Nigeria-Biafra War of 1967-1970, military coups, formation of political parties are all efforts to set the Nigerian nation on the right track. Economically, several borrowing from the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, the different economic policies like Austerity measure of the Shagari era, Structural Adjustment Program of Ibrahim Babaginda and the most recent privatization policies are all stakes to wake the sleeping giant. Religiously, the story is not different. Today, Nigeria seems to record the greatest number of sects and religions than her neighbours. Owing to the crushing hardship bedevilling our nation, some seem to look up to God for solution. Worse still, some have created an imaginary God and are living in utopian world. Most so called Men of God seize the opportunity to loot the already wounded flock through prosperity preaching and false promises in the name of prophecies. It is the position of the researchers that authentic guidelines for quality control and nation building demand the competencies and praxis of scholars in the Biblical and Ethical fields.

Reflecting on the provisions of the Bible, especially in Genesis 1, 26-28, these researchers see man as the architect of his success or failure. God created man in his image. If this is accepted as true, then man must be a worker to transform nature to suit his needs just as God whose image he is worked to bring into existence all that is. Looking at the way people read, believe and apply biblical passages, it is like an average person in Nigeria gets himself extricated from his responsibilities and expects God to do what he would have rather done himself. There is no day in the week that Christians do not have one crusade or religious program or the other going on here and there. Different prayer centres with the same mode of operation function in different days of the week. Gullible and less informed people end up going from one centre to another and end up doing nothing else for the whole week. This is apart from lengthy prayers giving to them already by these 'miracle working' pastors. Evidently, this is neither a biblical nor an ethical practice. In fact, St. Paul made himself a tent maker and invariably disapproved indolence, that is, a condemnation of idleness. He puts this Christian religious ethical model succinctly:

Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you keep away from any brother who is living in idleness and not in accord with the tradition that you received from us. For you know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, we did not eat any one's bread without paying, but with toil and labour we worked night and day, that we might not burden any of you. It was not because we have not that right, but to give you in our conduct an example to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: If anyone will not work, let him not eat. For we hear that some of you are living in idleness, mere busybodies, not doing any work. Now such persons we command and exhort in the Lord Jesus Christ to do their work in quietness and to earn their own living (2 Thessalonians 3: 6-12).

Looking at the above citation, it becomes clear that hard work is not only part and parcel of Christian religion; it is a necessary demand of its faith and morals. It is like the Christians now look on to God to do everything and this explains why they spend hours in prayer houses looking for prophecies and visions and thus leaving off their part of the duty. If the biblical readings are not properly interpreted and applied, there is the fear that one may end up having unorthodox and unethical type of religious experience. Such type of religion created Feuerbach's imaginary God. People create their own God with their imagination and then turn round to worship him. In this instance, religion turns out to become opium of the people as argued by Karl Marx instead of a way that will challenge one to realize one's dreams. Thus, these researchers without repudiating religion, rely on exegetical, analytical and virtue ethics theories as the theoretical framework to redirect the readership to a proper reading, understanding and application of the Bible to real life in consonance with Biblical and Ethical principles capable of ordering one to realize his/her dreams in building a great, enviable and lasting nation. It is by so doing this that Christians and non-Christians shall transcend what Frazer (1911: 15) calls the level of magic to the level of science without which we can never have true religion.

2. Explanation of Religion

Clarification of this term has remained a titanic issue in the history of scholarship. This paper approaches it from nominal, empirical, theological and historical perspectives with a view to arriving at a concise meaning. Etymologically, religion comes from the Latin word "Religio" and Goetz (1967: 241) observes that the root of this word is itself disputed. The term has been traced variously to *relegere*, *religare*, *relegere*, *relinquere* depending on which idea influenced one. The concept means a gathering or assembly with its focus

on the things that bind for a higher value or cause, and in this sense, refers to the Supreme Being (God).

Empirically, religious phenomenon presents itself as irreducible to any other category save its own and always implies a choice that is so total and exclusive affecting the personal destiny of every human being in irrevocable fashion even in cases where there is no trace of transcendence.

Theologically, religion is seen as a revealed phenomenon and it specifies at least implicitly under what conditions a man can fulfil his destiny and so be saved. It sees religion as that which leads man to render to God the homage that is due to Him. It comprises of belief in one God, personal and infinite in his attributes, an attitude of absolute respect and submission; exterior acts expressing this belief and this attitude in worship and then institution to regulate the religious activity.

Historical definition stems from the conclusion of the science of religions. It sees religion as pragmatic embracing the belief, rite and institution that occupy in a group the place that revelation reserves for religion.

It is not the concern of this paper to delve into a deeper excursus into the disparities as to the meaning of religion. It is enough to relate with Nmah (2008: 12) that religion in African understanding means how Africans understood God from Christian and traditional perspectives. Generally, it is a response to what is experienced as ultimate reality, the most intense experience which man is capable of and a total response by man to this ultimate reality. Tylor (1958: 58) believes that it began as a universal belief in ghosts and spirits and eventually leveled at the notion of universal spirit animating all things.

The authors of this study are not unaware of many religions of the world. They have however limited their focus to Christianity using the Bible as the primary reference book. The reader is requested to limit his/her curiosity to the teachings of Christianity as enshrined in the Bible but viewed with exegetical and ethical lenses and properly interpreted with exegetical tools and Christian religious ethical theories and/or principles. Resort is made to the original languages of the Bible, namely, Hebrew and Greek only when it is absolutely necessary to understand a text; the same applies to certain ethical terms.

3. God's Definitive Purpose for Humanity: Building A Great Nation

When God began to work with Abraham, he revealed his overall intent and purpose. In Genesis 12: 2-3, he says: "... I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and by you all the families of the earth shall bless themselves". God initiated a process of nation

building that was to have global implications with perennial significance. Keil-Delitzsch (2006: 123) interprets this text as constituted of four inseparable distinct elements in an ascending climatic order: increase into a numerous people; material and spiritual prosperity; elevation of Abram to honour and glory; his appointment to be the possessor and dispenser of blessing. These four elements surely are also the dream vision of every nation for they are consistent with common good of any virtuous people. They make the primary characteristics of a great nation and according to Exodus 12: 40, it took years and time to be realized. In fact, the Israelites remained enslaved in Egypt for four hundred and thirty (430) years. Finally, a leader to actualize the purpose and plan came up after proper training – Moses. As soon as God delivered the people of Israel from slavery through the instrumentality of Moses, the process of nation building started in earnest.

4. Religious and Socio-Ethical Issues Affecting Nation Building

Even though religion is a spiritual project with the hope of reaping heavenly benefits in the here-after, it is an earthly phenomenon with implications for nation building. The varied manifestations of religious sentiments on earth can arguably be said to impinge on human development and capacity building. This is because many churches and people are attracted to religious rites and rituals in fulfillment of biblical actions of their founder, Jesus Christ. Nonetheless, a plethora of spiritual or religious actions on the part of the faithful without corresponding ethical effects thus becomes a negation of the requisite for nation building. It is a religious space replete with all kinds of activities, and yet, a dearth of ethical values gleaned from that bazaar of religious actions with implications for nation-building.

4.1 Proliferation of Churches

One gets increasingly concerned looking at the speed with which churches multiply daily in the society. Compared with other nations, Nigeria seems to be a very fertile ground for every type of religion. The way they spring up and the greater number of youths involved is indeed a worrisome development. Concerning this, Nmah (2008: 36) observes: "... new religious groups formed more often than not independent of the mother churches". This development which started gradually around 1920 in the form of the Aladura churches and then the Deeper Life Bible Church, the Redeemed Evangelical Mission and the Grace of God etc., is today a daily occurrence. Today, it is almost impossible to count the number of churches in Nigeria. Some have names and are registered; others are amorphous. Some start gradually as prayers in a home and then metamorphosed into a church. Economic hardship, quest for miracles, visions and prophecies make the gullible public vulnerable to these and so they thrive.

Religion today is one of the easiest means of making money. Naturally, therefore, many young people claim to have been called and ironically the identity of the caller is known to the pastor alone.

The concern of this paper is that a human being is an *ens religious* (a religious being) and also an *ens socialis* (a social being). No age has been known to exist without some form of religion. No person has ever lived alone. A human being is always in the midst of others with whom he/she interacts and shares experiences. If then it is correct to say that humans are always and by nature religious beings and still also social creatures always living with others, then the impact of proliferation of churches on nation building becomes very obvious. The influence is political, economical, socio-ethical and ethnic in reality or existence.

Politically, the influence of religion in the Nigeria system is indubitable. In the colonial times, decisions and policies were all made by foreign ecclesiastical and colonial authorities. The situation has not really changed. Before people are voted into power, people ask about their religious inclination. Some religious leaders come out to campaign for some politicians simply because they belong to their religious denominations. In choosing running mates, religion plays an important role. A Catholic governor for instance in South-eastern or South-southern geo-political zones in Nigeria picks a protestant running mate otherwise the gubernatorial candidate will have problems. Such an attitude or a disposition can hardly assist nation building since the effort is to please a sect and not to fight for the common good.

Economically, the researcher agrees with Nmah (2008: 40) that: "In the modern Nigeria, unemployment has forced many youths to form churches in order to support themselves..." Organizers of most of these new movements are mainly secondary school dropouts and some who got frustrated with failures in businesses. They now claim to have been called by God to evangelize. They start their so called churches and then chance for training at Pentecostal Theological Colleges on how to use oratorical power to attract members. They make sure testimonies are given and then get speakers and musical instruments to warm the 'warehouse church' and cheer people up. With this, they are not only employed but are able to make real money through tithes, sowing of seed, thanksgiving, pastor's birth day, and the likes. If they are able to fool or trick the people into believing their false visions and prophecies they become very popular and respected all over. This has a negative impact on Nigeria the nation and its people. Some people with a low-start up in business, now give up the effort and stick to the bible and turn themselves into preachers. Among Catholics, different types of oils and candles are sold today with different brand names. Innocent people spend fortunes in buying these and have been convinced by the sweet tongue of the

‘man of God’ that with the oil, their problems are over. Among Pentecostals, there are charges for deliverances, healings and all, even to see the pastor for counselling. The result is that fanatics are produced. The national economy suffers more as many men and women in their youthful prime leave their place of work to make it with bible foolery.

Socio-ethically, the impact of proliferation of churches is very conspicuous. With false prophecies, feigned miracles, false religious experiences, scandals and fanaticism, the truth is warped. People believe the false. Many end up psychotics. These touch on good and evil, right and wrong, truth and falsehood. Socially disapproved actions are thus systematically being ‘canonized’ by the abuse of religion. Some get even frustrated when after spending fortune and firm promises from pastors their expectations do not come to reality. Though there is no confusion in the Christian faith, many now suffer from confusion of faith because of contradictory teachings. Every church claims ownership to the truth and try to get more followers by criticizing others. When parameters of true religious experience are compromised both the system and the people end up becoming short-changed in their natural order of reality as well as incongruous living standard.

4.2 Involvement of Religion in Politics and Governance

Nmah (2008: 57) in line with many cited authors believe that “... religion cannot exist successfully in isolation of politics in the African society”. Anyacho (1994: 33) is of the conclusions that just as the laws of the state influence the religious practices of the people, so also do religious laws affect the machinery of the state where such a religion has been accepted. The author does not advocate for a radical and total separation between the church and the state as in some western countries. He calls for prudence and limitations. In Nigeria, the adverse effect of the involvement of religion in politics and governance is clear to all. At the Federal level, it is always Moslems versus Christians. At the state level it is always Catholics against Anglicans. Some church leaders even anoint some politicians. Some politicians have been accused of using government’s money to favour their religious denomination and even built their churches and other projects. Obviously, such involvement encourages bigotry, favouritism and partisanship. It can even make some weak believers lose their faith. The work of religion ought to be counter-current to the incipient corrupt practices witnessed in politics. It preaches against the muddy waters of rigging, looting of public treasury, nepotism, thuggery and politically motivated assassinations. The moment the church does not free herself from anointing political candidates she may not be free from involvement in some of these ills of dirty politics. This paper agrees

with Iwe (1985: 165) that the involvement of the church in politics should be essentially humanitarian with a bid to restoring human rights, dignities and values. She is there as a watchdog to see that justice is effected for all, the rich and the poor alike. Once the religion takes her rightful position in politics, we can then say that we are on the right track to building a formidable and enviable nation.

4.3 Religious Belief and Ethical Issues

Religious belief proceeds from revelations and it impacts on the immediate and extended societies. It is true that morality remains the subject matter of ethics yet religion as a discipline concerns itself with ethics in one or the other. Every religious belief ought to be ethical and ethics as a field of studies, ethics appraises both religion and religious belief especially from *what ought* and *what ought not* question. The factors of religion and ethics are key elements in nation building and their significance in the public domain cannot be ignored. Leaders and followers should always be mindful of the importance of topical issues and the need for integrating religion and ethics while drafting principles and laws that guide the people in the community.

However, there have been instances when leaders or followers are swayed by religious beliefs at the detriment of the common good. Be it the case of gender rights (feminism) or the recent bioethical matters (birth control techniques, gay marriage, etc), ethics plays a determinant role to prescribe the best practices for the nation. Religious belief as important as it is in assuaging the quest for the unknown questions, ethics should always be looked upon as a tool to guide the people. It is the view of the researchers that religious experts should uphold their tenets, however, they ought to give room for changes that come with scientific discoveries and human needs provided such changes are ethical and also aim at the common good. Indeed, the need to consult experts in different fields of studies before positing a concluding tenet is of absolute necessity if the tenets would survive the test of history and time. In fact, the evidence is that religion teaches one thing, while her adherents live another. To build the nation of one's dream, Nigeria must uphold a sound morality that is founded on sound theological, scientific and ethical convictions.

5. The Biblical and Ethical Steps to Nation Building

In the preceding section the study outlined some factors affecting nation building from the biblical and ethical provisions. Introducing the people to true religion, selection and training of leaders, and right education are some of the biblical and ethical steps to nation building.

5.1 Introducing the People to True Religion

Some scholars of religion and even ethics are of the views that God commenced his process of nation building with religion. The first thing he did was to put the entire nation of Israel under a religious footing with right religious beliefs and moral principles. He started by the searching for appropriate leaders who would lead the nation of his own dream. In Judeo-Christian tradition, it is argued that Moses was especially a religious man before his call. He was in the house of Pharaoh and according to Acts of the Apostle (7: 22), he was vast in Egyptian literature. Prior to his being chosen as a leader, God revealed himself to Moses and taught him the truth through the burning bush in Exodus 3. In other words, he was to be a leader but first he needed to be introduced into the right religion, the true God. After the people of Israel left Egypt, their religious reorientation began. He gave them the Decalogue that was to be the foundational values of the new nation. By Exodus 16, they were introduced to the weekly Sabbath and annual Holy Days (Exodus 23; Lev 23). The civil laws given in Exodus 21-22 were designed to create an enlightened and humanitarian society. To prevent disease and promote health, he introduced the health laws for the model nation (Exodus 15: 26). There were strong laws against following false gods and misguided religious practices (Deuteronomy 12: 29-32). One can therefore safely say that God's process of nation building began by establishing a right religious foundation.

For Nigeria to build nation of her dream, there is an urgent need to address the fanatical religious imbroglio of our age. Muslims and Christians should learn the true tenets of religions. All should retrace the track to true religion. Nigerians should free themselves from the shackles of religious deceits and fanaticism. It is how the nation back to authentic religious experience. It will make the citizens take up their responsibilities as human beings; by being moral and human enough to face the challenges of life. True religion has the capacity to help the people overcome the crave for mundane and inordinate desires including the ravaging penchant for corruption in the country. Onyiloha (2015: 66-70), sees the connection between religion and the formation of conscience. He argues that every religion ought to help its members to be of good conscience so as to act from good thought and right deed. In this aspect, "Christians, Muslims and African Traditional Religionists should profess their faith systems, in a way and manner suggestive of being men and women desirous to do the right thing" (Onyiloha, 2015: 76).

5.2 Selection and Training of Leaders

Achebe (1983: 1) cites leadership as one of the problems with Nigeria as a nation. It follows that good governance is a result of good leadership. In this light, Iwuoha (2012:79) maintains that:

Good governance which ensures obedience to the rule of law, provision of social amenities, leadership by example, effective capacity building, and due process, is a sure way of transforming Nigeria from a nation bedevilled by vices, to one where virtues thrive ... Hence to effectively eradicate vices and the diverse social maladies in a nation good governance is required.

Thus, the second vital step in nation building is the selection and training of leaders to provide good government. Every good government draws its character from the pool of extant leaders. In choosing leaders for his people, God puts the character of the individual leader as a priority. In contrast to the modern criteria for selecting political leaders; most often by popularity, voter appeal, good television presence, money, etc., God chose Abraham for his responsiveness to his instructions (Genesis 12: 1-4); his obedience to God's voice and laws (Genesis 26: 4-5); readiness to teach his progeny to follow God's laws (Psalm 119: 172) and justice (Genesis 18: 16-18). The bible describes Abraham as a role model and founding father of the nation of Israel (Romans 4: 16-17).

Moses was chosen by God not because he was advanced in Egyptian literature and art nor because he was a general in Pharaoh's army (*Josephus Book II*, 69-70) but because he was humble and teachable (Numbers 12: 3). He was adjointed to staff his government with able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness (Exodus 18: 21). Joshua, his successor was advised before he took up the mantle of leadership to be strong and courageous and never compromise God's law that he might prosper (Joshua 1: 6-9). David was chosen as King for his deep desire to follow the laws of God (Ps 119: 18; 27; 97; 105; 127). Thus, the character of the individual leader was uppermost in God's choice of leaders of Israel. They were appointed on the basis of character, ability and willingness to follow God's law. By implication they were strong nationalists who loved God and their nation.

Compared with the Nigerian situation, stories abound about party politics and electoral malpractice. It is the party that counts and never the individual. This is why once a party member voted into office leaves his original party to join a new one, the older party demands for his resignation from his political position. This simply means that it was the party that was voted and not the

individual. Yet it is the individual that is occupying the political office and not a named party. This is why god-fatherism and election malpractices thrive in Nigeria. Until the character of an individual is voted into power and not just his popular party, there cannot be good governance and *ipso facto* the quest for true nation building is elusive. Some leaders are not poised to lead but to please their political peers. Anyaoku (2012: xxv) observes that leadership institution in Nigeria is great crisis owing to selfishness and impunity on the part of the nation's leadership to loot the treasury of the nation. He holds that they have lost the efficiency and dedication that characterized the post independence leaders. Again, according to lack leaders with good characters is to lack visionary leadership. Soludo (2012: 1-43) rightly notes that given the structure of institutions and the politics that have evolved around Nigerian politics, it is difficult for capable and visionary leaders to emerge or endure. "Religious leaders and followers should lead by example and allow their good deeds to speak louder than homilies or sermons. At the same time, politicians should be statesmen and stateswomen inspired by vision and mission to make the country a place where ethics and values reign supreme" (Onyiloha, 2015: 76).

5.3 The Right Education for Ethics and Values

Establishment of a right foundation for education is a third major step in the Biblical and Ethical steps to nation building. A nation's educational system moulds and shapes its citizens' ideas and perspectives. If the system of the nation were not built on fundamentals of morals, ethics and values, the nation risks weakened or dysfunctional structure. The biblical and ethical model for education stands in sharp contrast to the modern methods as evidenced in Nigeria. In the bible, Moses, the Israeli leader emphasized the parental role in teaching the children (Deuteronomy 4: 9; 6: 1-8; 11: 18-21). The laws of God are presented in the bible as the most vital model to be communicated to younger generations. Proverbs 1: 7; 9: 10 teach that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom but fools despise wisdom and instruction. An educational system founded on core religious values will produce a great nation known for authentic religious experience, sound morality and ethical values needed to build a virile society where leaders and followers live examined life with its positive effects on the citizenry. The bible and cultural ethos teach that the right goals for education is to grow in wisdom (Proverbs 4: 7); to gain useful knowledge to serve others (Matthew 20: 26-28) and to develop the mind and character of God (Philippians 2: 5-11). Today, for most people the primary motivation for education is to earn money and pursue economic conveniences. Education with such an end in view produces individuals seeking for their own selfish ends and it is against national development. It is

because we have such mindset that Nigeria suffers brain drain. People bribe their way into tertiary institutions and in respected disciplines whether they have the capacity to make it or not. The quality of the nation's graduates that proves the researchers' position right; that there is something fundamentally wrong with our country's system of education.

Compared with post-independent scholarship, the researchers are of the evaluation the nation has been producing people who are no longer concerned about their religious and cultural obligations with regard to ethics and values. That the nation is replete with killings, robbery, kidnappings and other crimes shows a dearth of or a modicum of morals in the society. To arrest this apparent hopeless situation in the country, a biblical and an ethical oriented system of education is what Nigeria and other nations need in reclaiming the lost opportunity. Udechukwu (2012: 812-819) opines that education is not just about intellectual formation; it includes physical, moral, character, intellectual, and vocational trainings.

6. Conclusion

The human person is a being characterized by social, moral and religious constituents. Each element is as important as the other. To this end, man and woman are seen as human beings whose life involves complementarities of nature and nurture. Against this backdrop, in the biblical and ethical outlooks, nation building is a multifaceted project. There is no nation that can do without religion and ethics in its foundational cause. The researchers, conscious of these, argued that biblical and ethical resources are germane to nation building in Nigeria and elsewhere.

The study observes that nation building is an on-going exercise in Nigeria and it demands a number of approaches including biblical and ethical models. Citing the biblical model of nation building as outlined in Genesis 12: 2-3, the study underscores a number of actions initiated and completed by God as well as the required duties on the part of the formed people to bring about God's vision for the nation of Israel. Likewise, any country that dreams of great nationhood ought to introspect and project cherished ideals in consonance with biblical and ethical standards. This is what Nigerians should do in order to overcome the present challenges (as already outlined and explained in the early part of this research) to nation building.

Again, the researchers having analyzed the present situation of nation building in Nigeria named introducing the people to true religion, selection and training of leaders, and right education as some of the biblical and ethical steps to nation building. Through analysis and application of extant interdisciplinary tools, the

paper deduces a number of present realities in the country as some of the consequences of wobble foundations of the nation – colonial and post-colonial eras. However, the already enumerated and expiated steps leading to the reconstruction of the nation’s faulty fabrics with biblical and ethical models would salvage the pitiable condition of Nigeria among the international community. This is what Nigeria must do to regain her lost glory and retake its rightful place in the globalized world of today.

It is the informed opinion of these researchers and others that nation building remains a holistic exercise that involves a number of human and material resources. In view of this, the study gives a caveat both to the leaders and followers that unless the needful is urgently done, a worst-case scenario with unimaginable negative effects awaits Nigeria and her citizens. The research acknowledges the presence of human and natural resources to rebuild the nation and the capacities of the leaders and the followers in Nigeria to arrive at the best biblical and ethical practices in nation building if Christians and non-Christians would apply the morals and ethics gleaned from the teaching of Jesus Christ. In like manner, Muslims and African Religionists should apply the morality and ethics of their faith systems in building the Nigerian nation. For Soludo (2012: 1), Nigerians should be honest in their personal and interpersonal relationships in the secular and religious space in Nigeria and elsewhere.

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