

# **A historical reflection on the role of Catholic Social Communications in attaining Good Governance in Nigeria**

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## **Abstract**

Available historical documents have clearly pointed out the role of the early Nigerian Media, which was championed by the missionaries, in not only propagating the gospel but also acting as agent for preparing the minds of the people towards emancipation. The early communication outfit of the Church, just like its educational system and programs, was aimed at civilizing. It is, therefore, not surprising that as early as the mid 19th century, throughout West Africa, the logos of the newspapers and other media practitioners, especially among the Missionaries, carried this enlightenment imprint. All these, in most cases, helped both in moral upliftment and political emancipation. However, the situation today seems to run contrary to the earlier position, as the available religious outfits seem to focus more on entertainment, with little or no meaningful contributions to the issue of good governance in the society. This paper, through qualitative analysis, is an attempt at a critical analysis of the role of the Catholic Social Communications in attaining good Governance in Nigeria.

## **1. Introduction**

Political analysts have argued that good Governance implies the establishment of structures within the context of the state to ensure that services are rendered to the communities in order to promote their general welfare and quality of life. Individuals on their own are unable to provide the quantity and quality of services befitting a government. Van Niekerk et al (2002:65-66) consider the main characteristics of a system of good governance to be:

- Openness and transparency

- Adherence to the principles of the Bill of Rights
- Deliberation and consultation
- Capacity to act and deliver (i.e. establish structures to enable delivery to meet people's expectations)
- Efficiency and effectiveness (i.e. to deliver services efficiently and effectively while being mindful that there are limited resources)
- Answerability and accountability
- Cooperative government where national, provincial and local government are interdependent and interrelated
- Distribution of state authority and autonomy (this refers to the devolution of power and authority to lower levels of government)
- Government and business cooperation to achieve reconstruction
- Influencing the way politicians address basic needs
- Monitoring government activities and insisting on answerability and accountability

Available historical documents show that the Catholic Church from time immemorial has played a crucial role in promoting good governance and accountability the world over. John XXIII's encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, of which we this year celebrate the fiftieth anniversary, was of particular relevance in this regard. In her analysis of this role, C.M. Love (n.d) argued that:

*Pacem in Terris* was a successful game changer, encouraging greater participatory governance committed to human rights and religious freedom, and more effective international regimes globally. Seventy five percent of the countries that democratized after the Second Vatican Council were predominantly Catholic countries. Major armed conflicts have declined by half over the past two decades. Nuclear weapons arsenals declined by nearly 2/3 from Cold War highs of 66,000 to 23,000 today, with lower limits looming, and increased international cooperation to improve nuclear safety and counter proliferation. The effectiveness of international institutions still varies, but the Church in coalition with others has helped usher in a host of new international institutions, which try perpetrators of war crimes, genocide, and crimes against humanity, remove land mines and aid mine victims.

In line with Love's position, Orjinta (1998) argued that although the Church's position is clearly spelt out in Catholic Social Doctrine, recent thoughts in the area of ensuring good governance have been intensified through what has been described as Liberation Theology:

Basically, this has been carried out through the Theology of Liberation, which is an attempt to look at the world in terms of involvement with the underprivileged and oppressed, and to find within the Christian gospel both the analytical tools and the energizing power to work for radical change in the world. These analytical tools have also, and often initially, involved sociological and economic analysis, frequently along Marxist lines and the biblical and ecclesiastical resources have involved a critical stance toward institutional religion's long alliance with the status quo.

Orjinta further argued that particular reference must be made to the two encyclicals of Pope Pius XI *Mit Brennender Sorge* of 14 March, 1937 (Against National Socialism) and *Divini Redemptoris* of March 19, 1937 (on Atheistic Communism). Pius XI in *Divini Redemptoris* maintains:

In the face of such a threat, the Catholic Church could not and does not remain silent. The Apostolic See, above all has not refrained from raising its voice, for it knows that its proper and social mission is to defend truth, justice and all these eternal values which Communism (atheistic) ignores or attacks....

At the end of the 1994 African Synod, during which the woes of the African continent were reflected upon by the leaders of the African Church, Pope John Paul II said:

The Church must continue to exercise her prophetic role and be the voice of the voiceless, so that everywhere the human dignity of every individual will be acknowledged and that people will always be at the center of all government programmes. (*Ecclesia in Africa*, 70).

Narrowing it down to the Nigerian situation, G. Ehusani (nd), posited:

Thus, agents of the Gospel in Nigeria, nay Africa, must now be engaged in promoting democratic values and good governance if they are truly to be the voice of the voiceless; if they are to be truly agents of wholesome development of their people. Involvement in the work of justice and advocacy for

democracy can no longer be seen as an optional extra. But like the 1971 Synod of Bishops said, it should now be seen as a constitutive dimension of the work of evangelization. That is why we must now discuss what democracy is in detail, and how the promotion of this form of governance will enhance the quality of life of our people.

Unfortunately, it has been discovered that this effort has not been well propagated by most of the catholic media in the country, as they seem to have restricted themselves to news and events surrounding the local church.

## **2. Conceptual Clarifications:**

### **2.1 The Media**

The Media is often referred to as the Fourth Estate of the Realm following quickly after the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. This is because its main function is to be the watch dog of the society. While the Executive runs the day-to-day affairs of the state, the Legislative makes the laws that guide the organization and maintenance of the State and the Judiciary interprets the Laws and adjudicates in disputes among citizens and between them and the State and vice versa. The Media watches over these three organs and reports on their activities to the citizens and indeed the world at large, just as it is obliged to report to the authorities and the world on the views and yearnings of the citizens on all matters affecting their relationship with the State (Nasidi and Igoli, 1997).

In line with the above therefore, the media remains a veritable tool for good governance in any society. This is because on its shoulders lies squarely the responsibility of the watchman, decision maker as well as teacher of the society. The media is able to achieve this through informing, educating and enlightening the society. It is thus not surprising that M.A. Rimi (1995) maintained:

In carrying out its expected and heavy responsibilities, the Media is not supposed to operate with unfettered freedom as such. Rather, like the citizen and the State authorities, it is duty-bound to obey the law, respect constituted authority, respect the right of the individual as entrenched in the national constitution, be bound by a degree of morality and governed by its own rules and regulations of behavior. In other words, while the media is expected to enjoy a high degree of freedom of

action, that freedom is neither unconditional nor limited. The freedom of the press, which in this case should be interpreted to include other information media, is clearly spelt out in all Nigerian Constitutions from colonial times to date. This freedom carries with it enormous responsibilities and a reasonable self-restraint expected of an objective and self respecting and responsible information medium. Similar conditions govern the operation of the media the world over.

From the above, it is clear that Media and Communicators have the power to make or mar any nation or government. According to W. Friday (1986):

....because the media has the ability to report and to inform so effectively, it could be said with great confidence that as a change agent, it has the power to alter, even where resistance is strong, the way of life of the community either positively or negatively.

In line with the above and with specific reference to Nigeria in the formation of pre-independent political parties, R. C. Okonkwo (1981), argued:

Most Nigerian nationalists were “made by the newspapers for which they worked, for not only did they use newspapers to spread awareness and crystallize opinion against colonialism, but they also rose in popularity because they were seen as embodiment of the ideals and aspirations which they propagated amongst the people.

Thus, a society without the Media is one that has ceased to move and is heading for extinction. It is in line with this that scholars have argued that media is the backbone of the society. Thus, B. Diomansi posited that:

Doubtless, the evolution of societies is not the exclusive prerogative of the media. But it is illusory to imagine this evolution could occur without media participation (cited in D. Bombote, 1986).

For us to understand the enormous task of the media in a society, especially in one like ours in Nigeria where everyone seems to depend on the media for every piece of information, I believe we must take a look at the canon of Journalism as first adopted by the American Society of Newspaper Editors in April 1923, as well as at the Code of

Ethics for Professionals as adopted by the Society of Professional Journalist in 1973. The stipulations of these conventions could be summarized as follows:

- The professional ethics believes that the duty of the Media is to serve the truth.
- The society believes that the organizers of mass communication are carriers of information for mass discussion acting on their constitutional mandate and freedom to learn and report facts.
- Public enlightenment is the forerunner of justice and media practitioners have a constitutional role to seek the truth as part of the public's right to know the truth.
- These responsibilities carry obligations that require the mass communicator to perform with intelligence, accuracy and fairness.

A French Sociologist, Jean Louis Servant-Schribee in *Le Pouvoir d'informer*, as quoted by D. Bombote (1986), stated that:

Each country has the media that it deserves. In fact, they give an almost true picture of the essence of the society of which they are a mirror. Everything is reflected by the Media: The state of economic development by the quantity, prosperity and diversity of the news, radio and television station; the national temperament by the style and manner in which they are utilized.

## **2.2 Good Governance**

The concept of good governance as applied in this paper is in line with the position of Dwivedi and Jabbra (1988:1), which clearly gives some interesting insights into governance and the common good. These authors argue that one of the fundamental concerns of the modern state is the manner in which power and authority are wielded by those who govern in the name of pursuing societal goals and objectives. This, in the view of Waddock (2002:217-218), can be measured with the following standards: Accountability (meaning assuming responsibility for the impact of policies, practices, processes and decisions which lie behind these), Transparency (that is, allowing corporate actions and decisions to be visible to interested stakeholders), Ensuring that voting methods are open and accessible

to all stakeholders, Codes of best practice including value-based and ethical codes, and a Long-term vision.

### **3. The Media in Nigeria and the Struggle for Good Corporate Government: A Brief Historical Background**

The early Nigerian Media (with specific reference to journalism) was conceived within the framework of “colonial enlightenment”. Like education, it was aimed at civilizing. It was introduced by the missionaries as an additional cultural apparatus for gentling the native population. Throughout West Africa, the logos of the newspapers and other media especially among the Missionaries carried this enlightenment imprint. They included *Africa's Luminary* published by the Methodist Church in Liberia (1846); and the *Early Dawn* by the Wesleyan Church in Ghana. In the case of Nigeria, it was the Presbyterian Church that first established a printing press in Calabar in 1859. Later, another was established by the Presbyterian Minister, the Reverend Henry Townsend, at Abeokuta; and it was Townsend who produced the first Nigerian newspaper, in the Yoruba language *Iwe Irohin*. This subsequently became a bilingual journal with the introduction of an English language supplement (N. Azikiwe, 1957, J.S Coleman, 1963, R.L. Sklar, 1963).

### **4. Media as a Regulator of the Society: Nigerian Experiences from the Colonial Era**

A critical analysis of the media during the colonial years of the country indicates that it was one of the many weapons which the people used in fighting the colonial administration, as well as gaining independence from the colonial masters. This is because Nigerians who were educated used it as means of propaganda associated with freedom and self rule. For example, John Payne Jackson through his newspaper, *The Lagos Weekly Record*, vehemently denounced the British for waging wars against indigenous states, and condemned them roundly for unjustly attacking the people, deposing their leaders and occupying the area. In a more graphic and analytical form, R.C. Okonkwo (1987) posited:

Most of the founders of political parties at that time had been associated with the press in one way or the other. Some of them were editors or publishers, some were reporters and correspondents. Through the newspapers, they had become

associated with the struggle for popular rights, political freedom from and opposition to colonial domination. One can say also that they were close enough to the colonial administration to know of the British tradition of handing over power in time to the indigenes of her colonies. They were also aware of the British preference for, and more often than not insistence on, handing over power to well established groups under the Westminster model of the democratic government.

It was therefore not surprising that the newspaper, *West African Pilot*, under the leadership of Zik and his associates played a significant role during the colonial period in whipping up political consciousness. They carried out substantial campaigns against the very moral basis of the colonial administration in virulent language. They focused attention on the various ills attendant upon a colonial situation, highlighted news of racial discrimination in the U.S, Britain and in South Africa, and were thus able to build up an image of an oppressive, heartless and uncaring administration and the arrogant race-conscious white man. The hostility of the newspaper to the colonial administration was so noticeable that an English journalist, after a visit to Nigeria in 1945, described the press in the country as a revolutionary native press which quite seriously threatens the stability of this part of the Empire (C.Winchester, 1971)

The local administration itself was much concerned about the hostility of the press. This was revealed in a speech by the Governor in the Legislative Council:

Our Press is free - Free to abuse, to sabotage effect, to kill enthusiasm, to impute bad motives and dishonesty, to poison the springs of goodwill and foul the well of truth, to impregnate the body politic with envy hatred and malice - in short, free to do the Devil's work (G.O. Olusanya, 1981)

Even after independence, the Media continued to put the government in constant check, especially during the military era. This of course made the government hostile to the organization and at various times had to come down hard on them. For example, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of August, 1973, a journalist Mr. Amakiri of *The Observer* had his head shaved with an old rusty razor blade, stripped naked and given twenty four strokes of the cane on his bare back. This happened in the office of the then Rivers State military governor, Commander Alfred Diете-Spiff, because he published the grievances which the Nigerian Union of

Teachers, Rivers State Branch, had against the governor (L.K. Jakande, 1979); The military administration under General Buhari showed its intolerance of the media when the administration closed down newspaper houses and media practitioners were detained. (Some of the newsmen detained included Tunde Thompson and Nduka Irabor.) This led to the popular protest by the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the Guardian (cf. *National Concord*, 1985). Among the many acts of violence committed against the media by the administration of General Abacha are that within its first 100 days in office it seized over 50,000 copies of *TELL* magazine without any reason (January 2, 1994); arrested and molested employees of *Guardian Express* (January 4, 1994); aborted the NUJ Press conference (January 14, 1994); charged the editor in chief of *Razor Magazine* for sedition (January 19, 1994); and disrupted the meeting of Campaign for Democracy, a Human Rights Organization (February 15, 1994) (A. Akinkuotu, 1994).

It was the courageous activities of these and the many unknown media practitioners that are responsible for the near good governance we are experiencing today. They saw the truth, they recognized the truth and they published the truth fearlessly. However, while the secular press was so vibrant in facilitating good governance by challenging the excesses of those in government, the Catholic media is found wanting in this regard. We should now turn our attention to it.

## 5. The Catholic Church and the Media

The Catholic Church has made clear her position on the media and its uses. The church emphasizes the fact that it must be used as instrument of pricking the heart of those both within and outside the Church. This is contained in the document *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (Paul IV, 1975):

Our century is characterized by the mass media or means of social communication, and the first proclamation, catechesis or the further deepening of the faith cannot do without these means ...When they are put at the service of the Gospel, they are capable of increasing almost indefinitely the area in which the Word of God is heard; they enable the Good News to reach millions of people. The church would feel guilty before the Lord if she did not utilize these powerful means that the human is daily rendering more perfect. It is through them that she proclaims "from the housetops" the message of which she is

depository. In them she finds a modern and effective version of the pulpit. Thanks to them she succeeds in speaking to the multitudes. Nevertheless the use of the means of social communication for evangelization presents a challenge; through them the evangelization message should reach vast numbers of people, *but with the capacity of piercing the conscience of each individual, of implanting itself in his heart as though he were the only person being addressed, with all his most individual and personal qualities, and evoke an entirely personal adherence and commitment* (emphasis mine) (EN 45)

Some Catholic newspapers were used to do just this and to proclaim the message in a manner which spoke to the injustices in society. For example, *The Christian Century*, (Awake Media Print) was a Catholic newspaper which repeatedly pointed out the excesses of some Third World governments. In a particular edition, it gave a thorough examination of the system thus:

In Brazil a peasant is murdered every 22 hours. In Nicaragua 80 percent of the population falls under the category of those one could describe as the poor of the earth and yet 40 percent of the nation's economy goes into military spending. In Mexico 40 million people are said to wallow in abject poverty due to 'social injustice' while 40 percent of the population is reported to be capable of reaching "minimum levels of subsistence" and only 18 percent enjoys a balanced diet. In Guatemala 80 percent of the cultivatable land is owned by 2 per cent of the population, and 81 percent of children below the age of five suffer from malnutrition. In the last 30 years one has records in the same country of 100,000 acts of political violence and 38,000 cases of kidnapping. Then in the Philippines, 2 percent of the entire population own 75 percent of the nation's wealth. The government is no longer the custodian of law and order, equity and justice; it is their duty to protect the interest of the "sacred cows", to perpetuate fear and terror and people no longer feel at home and safe in their own countries. One coup d'etat follows the other and each one ushers in a new government band which promises the poor a better life. In fact as I was writing this, the Voice of America announced a successful coup attempt in Paraguay; initially the whereabouts of the deposed president was unknown, later it was reported that he has gone on exile (3rd Feb, 1989). Such is the usual in the Third World.

From such reports as published above, it was easier for the people to

put their various governments on their toes, as they were able to challenge those in authority to good governance. Church teachings such as *Pacem in terris* and the Catholic media in many parts of the world were successful game changers, encouraging greater participation of citizens in governance, greater commitment of governments and citizens to the protection of human rights and religious freedom, and more effective involvement of international regimes globally in issues of justice and right. The result of this, in the view of C.M. Love (n.d), was that:

Seventy five percent of the countries that democratized after the Second Vatican Council were predominantly Catholic countries. Major armed conflicts have declined by half over the past two decades. Nuclear weapons arsenals declined by nearly 2/3 from Cold War highs of 66,000 to 23,000 today, with lower limits looming, and increased international cooperation to improve nuclear safety and counter proliferation.

## **6. The Media in the Church: The Social Communications Committee/Department in the Catholic Church in Nigeria**

Available evidence of the socio-political history of the country since independence indicates that due to the absence of good governance (especially manifested in the increasing ethnic politics and reckless corruption) the socio-political terrain of the Nigerian society has been such that people have been forced at one time or the other to move from one place to another out of fear of victimization or reprisal attack. The government of the day has tended to relegate to the background the major content of governance (social contract), leading to tensions and hostility which have often arisen from the larger ethnic groups, especially from the competition between peoples for wealth and power. It was therefore not surprising that from the period of the "Wild Wild West" to the Civil war, forced migration has been the order of the day in Nigeria. The criminal neglect of the common good by a succession of self-serving leaders in our nation is responsible in large measure for the widespread violence and social insecurity. Presently, the country has millions of unemployed and unemployable youths, ill-trained and ill-motivated, waiting to be employed as political thugs and assassins. It is therefore not surprising that in every urban centre in Nigeria, these youths now constitute themselves into a dangerous mob that is ready to visit violence on their people at the slightest provocation; as such Nigerians in some part of the country

suffer what has been referred to as persecution and massacre. (Nwauwa and Korieh, 2011; G. Ehusani, nd). This has led to increasing mutual suspicion and attempt to set up groups for protection.

It has been observed that, in what may be a response to the above situation, most Christians in Nigeria, through their media, tend to stand aloof, as though the duty of their religion and religious publications is strictly the conversion of hearts and the salvation of souls (J. Odey, 1999). In their thinking, this conversion and salvation is a purely spiritual exercise, and as such anything outside this is mere politicization of the gospel message (Odey).

In a critique of this observation, I believe it is incorrect to argue that the social communications department of the Catholic Church is entirely apathetic towards political issues. Undoubtedly, the Social Communications (Media) arm of the Church in Nigeria has a crucial role to play in good governance in Nigeria and beyond. Through the activities of the early Missionary papers and later secular prints, as well as of course through other means, the country brought colonialism to an end. However, it is good to examine whether the Media as a tool in the hand of the Social Communication Department actually operated and is today operating as it should operate?

For a critical and analytical answer to this question, it is very necessary that we look first at the Constitution setting up the Social Communications Committee; then we will take a look at what the Social Communications Committee has been able to achieve from the point of view of the Constitution vis-à-vis the views of those who have been observing the Social Communications Department of the Church from both within and outside.

In the Parish Laity Council Constitution of the Catholic Archdiocese of Kaduna (Article 14), we are able to find the functions of the Committee for Social Communications as follows:

1. The general aim of this committee is to establish channels of communication within the Parish and with the diocesan office.
2. To this end it is responsible for:
  - (a) Fostering education in the media by way of workshops, symposia and seminars on how social communications can affect people's ideas.

- (b) Establishing a Parish Communications library where there will be good Catholic books and pamphlets.
  - (c) Organizing film/video shows and other forms of acceptable entertainment.
  - (d) Publishing the Sunday bulletin.
  - (e) Making sure that relevant religious booklets and newspapers, as well as chaplets etc. are available for sale and certain percentage be paid to the Parish Laity Council fund
  - (f) Publishing and propagating Catholic ideas.
  - (g) Making sure that the annual World Day of Communications is celebrated with special offering taken to assist the office.
  - (h) 20% of such offering is to be kept for the parish activities while the remaining is sent to the diocesan office which will in turn remit 33% of the whole proceeds to the National office.
  - (i) Fostering the usage of modern information technology, e.g. internet and email for church research and information dissemination.
3. This committee shall meet monthly and report to the Parish Laity Council regularly
  4. The Social Communications shall alert the people and the Parish Laity Council about reports in the media that adversely affect the Church, and initiate response to such report.

The above states clearly the functions and operations of the Committee for Social Communications. However from my analysis and interpretations of both the document *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and the Constitution, the Social Communications Department has not fared well in its duties. It seems to me that while the Parishes emphasize sub-article 2(e), (g) and (h), of the Constitution, those in the Committee are only interested in 2(d), thereby leaving a large chunk of the functions unattended.

The problem is that the aspect of communication as a tool for

enhancing good governance is left out, while focus is on stories for entertainment. Consequently, the Social Communications Department has not really impacted (and is still not impacting) on the society, by not informing and educating adequately. The impact of this neglect is summarized by G. Ehusani G. (n.d), when he posited that:

Nigeria to a large extent has been held hostage to the retrogressive forces of arbitrary rule and military dictatorship with the attendant abuse of power, corruption in public office and mismanagement of resources, and consequently economic stagnation...One does not have to be a political scientist to recognize that the absence of a genuine democratic environment in the nation has to some extent robbed the people of this country of much of the gains of modern scientific and technological civilization. Indeed, Nigeria is not alone here...In today's world, the continent of Africa is synonymous to poverty, disease (especially HIV/AIDS) and civil strife. Those who minister the Gospel to Africans must therefore look critically at the African situation and address critically the many causes of poverty, disease and civil strife, including absence of democracy and good governance in many countries.

M.H. Kukah (2007) expresses an acute awareness of the relationship between the poor quality of Catholic newspapers by way of relevant content and the dismal condition of Nigerian society with its poor governance:

It is evident from the flurry of newspapers across the dioceses that the various Catholic Churches have caught the bug for newspaper. But who is reading these so called Catholic papers? Even within the Catholic Church, how many people in the ranks of Lecturers, Assistant Directors, Directors General, etc, read these papers? They are all predictably boring and the only constant news you will find in every issue is the picture of the local bishop and his sermon at such and such confirmation. Some only stop short of giving us the Bishops dietary habits! Surely, a newspaper of that such has edited itself out of the minds of even the most generously disposed reader outside the Catholic Church.

On what should really constitute the nature of the publications of bodies like the Social Communications and other related bodies in the Church, Kukah (2007) opined

When we talk of catholic media, we are talking of a media meant to simply explain the statement from the local Bishop, the regional or national Bishops Conference, or even the Vatican. A Catholic Media will be in a position to interpret and project these Church positions as they relate to the national interest. From there, it becomes a conveyor belt – taking the aspirations of the people of the society to the top and then bringing these policies back to the people and so on. In this process, it modulates these policies by calling for restraint and intervening on the side of justice

From this examination of the problems facing the publications of the Social Communications Department of the Church we can safely say that, as it is today, the Catholic media does not really stand out from popular junk magazines in the stands. Lacking in critical analysis most of these papers have become sources of relaxation for those without alternatives.

It is in line with this and in consideration of the present reality in Nigeria that I believe there is serious need for Catholic media to change its course so as to facilitate good governance and develop societal conscience. The idea of the common good is a fundamental principle of the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church, anchored on the Christian notion of the dignity of the human person who is created in the image and likeness of God. This dignity of every man and woman is understood by the Church to be as a result of the human person's divine origin, his or her supernatural end, and his or her transcendence. The human person's happiness and ultimate fulfillment are only realizable in community. Therefore, the Social Teaching of the Church can be presented through Catholic media to teach that the goods of the earth are meant for the sustenance of all in the human society and the common good must be sought. This is in contrast to the crass individualism upon which the liberal and unbridled capitalism shown by our government today is sustained, and to the attitude of human greed that is sometimes expressed in the wholesale appropriation of all the land and mineral resources by a tiny few in Nigerian society today.

According to the Catholic Social Thought, for the Catholic media to enhance good governance is a duty which is mandatory. M.E. Smuthwaite (2001a: 2001b), described the mandate thus:

... Finally, CST contributes to our understanding of the concept of leadership. In the first instance, it serves to illustrate the difference between authentic values and inauthentic values and their importance in leadership and governance. Value means a 'good' and points to what is good for a person. However, in our society we are attuned to believing in what Aquinas called an 'apparent good'. We value what appears to be good for us, what we want. Thus our focus becomes 'things', 'having', 'it', 'achievement', 'power', 'productivity' etc. These are in fact inauthentic and destructive values. Value based leadership would strive to prioritize, live out and communicate authentic values, that is, those emphasizing 'persons', 'being', 'love', 'you', 'justice', 'growth' and 'vitality'. Our primary values here would therefore be the human person, community and life. To lead on the basis of such values is to reflect the principles of CST namely solidarity, subsidiarity and concern for the common good including the option for the poor and a concern for justice.

Consequently, if sufficient efforts were made towards enhancing good governance by the Catholic through critical and analytical publications, the situation would be different. This would make those in government (who are often Catholics) give some thought to the common good in the management of the nation's abundant national resources for the betterment of the majority. For any nation to make true progress, the leaders must develop a new sensitivity to the common good, and Catholic media personnel, as major stakeholders in the society, must continue to champion this new commitment to the common good. According to G. Ehusani (n.d), unless and until the healthy conditions inherent in the common good are present in the nation, and are very easily perceived, conflicts, destabilization, human environmental disasters and other characteristics of a failed state, may continue to hold the nation hostage and frustrate the quest for social and economic justice.

## **7. Conclusion and the Way Forward**

Although this paper does not pretend to possess the answer to the critical issues raised, the author's position, as an insider within the Catholic Church, equips him to make some suggestions pointing the way forward:

- a. There is the urgent need for the church in Nigeria, to make the

Committee for Social Communications truly free and equipped to operate as is spelt out in the Constitution. As it is presently, there is a large body of evidence indicating the fact that there is undue Interference regarding what the media should publish or not publish.

- b. The Committee for Social communications should rise above the mere production of bulletins, to the production of more educating, enlightening and informative publications. This can only be achieved through the employment of professionals, with critical minds, who can boldly confront issues as they are. In this way, it will be able to help combat mediocrity, for the common good, and to create opportunities and alternatives for others so that they may have increased freedom of choice and a growth in autonomy.
- c. The Social Communications department should engage more in organizing seminars, conferences and retreats periodically, especially on issues relating to governance, elections, peoples representation, corruption, among others, at local government, state and national levels to keep people abreast of issues that affect them vis-à-vis the nation.
- d. The Social Communications monthly papers/bulletin should be more educating and contain nation and international materials. It is surprising that till date most of these papers still pride themselves in publishing petty news, neglecting issues relating to the economy, education, health, government policies and the church's response, among others.
- e. The Media outfit of the Catholic Church in Nigeria must realize that this is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and as such must be at the forefront, speaking for both the people and the church, especially as it relates to good governance in Nigeria. Thus the media can adequately entertain, without slander or libel; inform, based on accurate, warranted facts; educate on current relevant topics from a position not of ignorance, but of knowledge established after conclusive, rather than speculative, investigation.

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