

**AN APPRAISAL OF ISAIAH’S “HERE AM I SEND ME (ISAIAH 6:8B)”: A  
CHALLENGE TO THE CONTEMPORARY NIGERIAN LEADERS.**

**Amanambu, Uchenna Ebony, PhD**

Nnamdi Azikiwe University

Awka Anambra State

[ebonyuchem@gmail.com](mailto:ebonyuchem@gmail.com)

DOI: 10.13140/RG. 2.2.26789.12001

**Abstract**

*This study focuses on the enlistment of ancient Prophet Isaiah into the prophetic and leadership agenda of God to the Israelites and other surrounding nations. The role of a prophet is to direct the people to the path of godliness and by extension, the stability and prosperity of the society. It observes that the demands of leadership played a pivotal role in the success of his calling and enlistment. It outlines some principles of effective leadership, roles of leadership to the existence or otherwise of any society and valuable lessons Nigerian leaders can sieve from the calling and prophetic leadership of Isaiah so as to confront the social, political and economic challenges in Nigeria. The study submits that if Nigerian leaders want to avert the incessant destruction of lives and property as well as the offensive poverty ravaging the populace, they must learn from all the shortfalls, weaknesses, mistakes, strengths, courage, commitments and willingness of prophet Isaiah in serving God and humanity. This will enable them adopt superior ideologies that will ensure mutual respects, relationships, justice, equity and fairness to all and sundry in the country.*

**Keywords:** Appraisal, Here, Send, Challenge, Contemporary, Nigerian and Leaders.

**Introduction**

Arguably, even the worst critic or the fiercest hater of religion and precisely Christianity will appreciate the thematic, logical, revealing, soul searching and life-touching themes in her sacred texts. There arose a man who hitherto was not notable with the prophetic line in 740BC, whose leadership changed the religious and sociopolitical tempo of Israel. Prophet Isaiah was able to provide leadership which changed the course of event in Israel. Amidst the foregoing, a revered scholar, Achebe (1983) asserts that the trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. He argues that there is nothing basically wrong with the Nigerian character, Nigerian land, Nigerian climate, Nigerian water, Nigerian air or anything else concerning Nigerian except leadership (p.1). Iweh

(1987) in agreement with Achebe harps on the fact that leadership is to a society what an eye is to the human (p.20). Nigeria is hugely and abundantly blessed with both human and material resources but her citizens because of bad leadership have continued to suffer and squalor in the midst of abundance. This has made the country a fertilizing ground for the incessant rise of crises and general instability. The agents of these social instabilities have continued to wreak havocs against the people and existence of the Nigerian state. The resultant effect has been that of a country that is drifting towards the edge of precipice. This study is enthused by the premise that no nation can grow above the quality of its leadership.

### **Clarification of Some Terms**

Unarguably, a definition makes discourse definite and therefore, some terms are needful for definitions and clarifications so that the concepts are understood.

**Appraisal:** The act of examining someone or something in order to judge their qualities, success or failure. It is the act of estimating or judging the nature or value of something or someone. Appraisal stands for an estimate of value, assessment or quality considered important to the nature of something or somebody.

**Here:** it is an adverb that indicates the place or position of something or somebody and in this case, indicates availability. It is summarily a location of somebody or something. **Send:** it is a word also that can act as a verb and a noun but the verbal form of it shall be considered in this study. It denotes causing something to go from one place to another especially by post or email. It also implies causing somebody or something to be conveyed or transmitted to a destination, to propel or throw something or somebody to a particular direction.

**Lesson:** This means a piece of instruction learned by study or experience.

**Contemporary:** It implies a person or thing living or existing at the same time as another. It means modern and existing now or at the moment.

**Nigeria** according to Meek (1925), is a name given by Flora Shaw, who later became the wife of Lord Lugard, the first Nigerian Colonial Governor-General (p.59). Nigeria can be briefly defined as the conglomerates of nations that were amalgamated into one country in 1914 but on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1960, it gained political independence from Britain.

**Leaders:** The singular form of this term, “Leader” has been given many definitions by many scholars. For instance, Rowe (2007) views leadership as a process through which an individual influences a group of other individuals to achieve a common goal. Leader can be summed up as a person, who plans, leads, directs, manages or influences a person or groups in an organization or country to achieve common goal.

Contextually, *an appraisal of Isaiah’s “Here Am I Send Me”: a challenge to the contemporary Nigerian leaders* implies the historical, theological and sociological explanations to the prophetic ministry of Isaiah and the leadership roles he provided to the ancient Israel nation. It analyses the social implications of the prophetic leadership and highlights how those salient issues should serve as a challenge for Nigerian leaders so that they could live up to their billings as leaders. In other words, “Here am I send me” is a statement of readiness and availability from an individual who wants to offer selfless services to God and humanity.

### **Theoretical Frameworks:**

#### **Human Relations and Relationship/Transformational Theories**

The study employs the Human Relations Theory developed in reaction against the formal tradition of classical models by Mary Parker Follet (1968-1933). She believes that the fundamental problem in all organizations is in developing and maintaining dynamic and harmonious relationships. Koontz and Weihrich (1980) assert that this theory posits that conflict is “not necessarily a wasteful outbreak of incompatibilities but a normal process by which socially valuable differences register themselves for enrichment of all concerned”. From the same theory, Fayol develops some useful principles that characterized successful administration and general management which can be applied to any organization including government. These principles are: Planning, Organization, Direction, Co-ordination and Control (p.46).

Similarly, the Relationship/Transformational Theory was used. Lamb (2013) notes that it is a theory that focuses on the connections formed between leaders and followers. In these theories, leadership is the process by which a person engages with others and is able to “create a connection” that will result in increased motivation and morality on both followers and leaders. It demands that leaders should possess certain qualities such as confidence, extroversion and clearly stated values so as to be able to motivate followers. The theory is used in this study because just like Charry (2012) observes, it helps leaders motivate and inspire people by making them see the importance and higher good of the task,

focusing on the performance of the people and seeing each person fulfill his or her potential. Leaders in this category often have high ethical and moral standards (p.19). Juxtaposing the message and the message of prophet Isaiah, the statement is needful and timely.

### **Background/Understanding Isaiah and his Book**

Ideally, one of the ways of understanding a man's statement sometimes is to have a look at the condition, situation, history, the background and the mission of the person who made the statement. In that case, the statement "Here am I send me" (Isaiah 6:8b) can only be appreciated when a cursory look at the possible author, date, recipients and purpose of the book has been taken.

### **Historicizing the Book of Isaiah**

The book of Isaiah in its opening statement identifies Isaiah, the son of Amoz as the author (1:1). Sharp (2003) said that his name means "The Lord saves" and he was a contemporary of Amos, Hosea and Micah. He began his ministry in 740BC notably the year King Uzziah died (6:1). He had a wife known as the prophetess who also bore him two children with prophetic names. The elder child was Shear-Jashub, meaning "a remnant shall return" and the younger one was Maher-Shalal-Hash-Baz, which means "the spoil speedeth, the prey hasteth" (7:3, 8:3). Wenham, et al. (1994) believes that he probably spent most of his life in Jerusalem and enjoyed his greatest influence under King Hezekiah (37:1-2). Isaiah is also credited with writing a history of the reign of King Uzziah (2Chronicles 26:22).

### **Authorship**

Like other ancient writings, the authorship of the book of Isaiah is not exempted from its doses of arguments and controversies. Motyer (2020) said that the strongest argument for the unity of Isaiah's authorship of the book is the expression "the Holy One of Israel," a title for God that occurs twelve times from chapters 1 to 39, the same title or expression occurs about fourteen times from chapters 40 to 66. Outside the book of Isaiah, it appears in the Old Testament about six times.

Traditionally, the authorship of the book is attributed to Isaiah while some critical scholars attributed the later part of the book to later prophets. The date of the book may not be separated from the date of the birth and life of the author. McCain (2002) argues that some historians believe that Isaiah wrote the book during his ministry that began about 739BC and lasted about 700BC. Most of the events referred to between chapters one and thirty-nine may have taken place

not long after 701BC, the year the Assyrian army was destroyed for daring the people of God. The prophet may have lived until at least 681BC and may have written chapters forty (40) to sixty-six (66) during his later years. All the same, many scholars today challenge the claim that Isaiah wrote the entire book that bears his name. Some critical scholars attributed the account in the later part of the book to other authors. According to them, the historical background of chapters between forty (40) and sixty-six (66) presupposes the exilic events. They were written as if the exile was going on at the time of writing. Some critical scholars who do not believe in miracle doubted the predictive prophesy (pp.299-301).

Wenham, etal. (1994) suggests that Isaiah the son of Amoz was born in Jerusalem and probably from the royal lineage. This is because a Jewish tradition has it that he was a cousin of King Hezekiah. He prophesied during the reigns of Uzziah, Jothan, Ahaz and Hezekiah (1:1-3). It is obvious that he had a very long ministry. Historically, McCain (2002) affirms that Isaiah lived in the troubled time in the history of Judah. He also witnessed from Judah the destruction of Israel and their captivity by the Assyrians. His prophecies were directly to Judah, Jerusalem and some other surrounding nations. The book is primarily divided into two themes which suggest two major parts. The first thirty-nine chapters talk about judgment while the remaining twenty-six chapters focus on redemption and hope.

### **The Call/Commissioning of Isaiah**

Lieberman (1979) avers that Isaiah received his call from God in the Temple of Jerusalem about the eighth century BC at a turbulent time in Israel. This is because the Kingdom of Israel that was united under Kings David and Solomon became divided during the reign of Solomon's son Rehoboam beginning around 922BC (1Kings 12). The Northern Kingdom comprised the ten tribes that rebelled under Jeroboam, while Judah and Benjamin became the Southern Kingdom. The division led to the establishment of the Northern Kingdom of Israel which was later destroyed by the Assyrians in 722BC (2 Kings 17). Tarrant (1981) affirms that it was in fulfillment to the prophecy of Ahijah about the children of Solomon. King Solomon's son had caused the revolt of the northern kingdom of Israel because of his harsh attitude towards the people and concerning forced labour. Rehoboam had to flee to Jerusalem while Jeroboam established his capital in the heart of northern territory (p.64).

The call and commissioning of Isaiah into the prophetic service gives some insight into the prerequisite required for a person to be enlisted as a good leader

because any leader who serves God well will serve and lead the people created by God very well. In the sixth chapter of the book, Isaiah received a vision about God and it was this vision that triggered off his leadership mission.

### **Isaiah as a Writer**

Isaiah is often regarded as the greatest of all the writing prophets. Many of the Old Testament scholars believe his style of writing reveals that he had a well-educated background. For example, the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia states, “for versatility of expression and brilliance of imagery, Isaiah had no superior and not even a rival. His style marks the climax of Hebrew literary art”. He employs a scintillating style of writing in epigrams, metaphors, interrogation, dialogue, hyperbole and parables which characterizes the book as a masterpiece of the Hebrew literature.

### **Some Leadership Perspectives Theories, Models and Styles**

The concept of leadership has remained an interesting discourse in the world today. Stogdill (1974) believes that leadership is usually defined according to their individual perspectives and the aspects of the phenomenon that are most interesting to them (p.259). Leadership has been defined in terms of traits, behaviours, influences, interaction patterns, role relationships and occupation of a position. Janda (1960) defines leadership as a “particular type of power relationship characterized by a group member’s perception that another group member has the right to prescribe behaviour patterns for the former regarding his activity as a group member” (p.358). Tannenbaum, etal (1961) posit that leadership is an “interpersonal influence exercised in a situation and directed through the communication process, toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals” (p.24). Katz and Kahn (1978) maintain that leadership is “the influential increment over and above mechanical compliance with the routine directives of the organization” (p.528). Koontz and O’Donnell (1984) define leadership as “the art or process of influencing people so that they will strive willingly towards the achievement of group goals” (p.661).

### **Some Leadership Theories and Models**

Many scholars have propounded different types of leadership theories and models of leadership and some of them include trait, behavioural, contingency and integrative leadership theories. Geddes and Grosset (1998) identify the kind of traits studied in trait theories of leadership to include personality, ability, motivation, power and needs. The contingency theory emphasizes the

importance of situational factors which includes the nature of the work performed, the external environment and the characteristics of followers. The integrative leadership theory attempts to combine the trait, behavioral and contingency theories to explain the successful relationships that an influential leader exerts on the followers.

### **Theories on Leadership Style**

Lewin, Lippert and White (1939) identified two basic leadership styles in their studies: Autocratic and Democratic leadership styles. The autocratic leader makes the decisions, tells employees or followers what to do and closely supervises workers while the democratic leader encourages participation in decision making, works with employees to determine what to do and does not closely supervise employees. Apart from the aforementioned two styles, there is the Group-orientated Leadership Style and this is where a leader meets with the followers as a group, explains the situation and the decisions are made on the basis of group consensus. The leader does not attempt to influence the group and is willing to implement any decision that has the support of the entire group. In the absence of consensus, the leader makes the final decision based on the input of the group. However, it can be observed that a leader may be autocratic, boss-centered, another democratic- subordinate centered and a combination of the two styles. Yukl (1989) introduced another leadership style which he called laissez faire leadership style. Laissez-faire leadership style gives followers full freedom to make most decisions and to perform work in the manner that is most convenient for them. This type of leadership works when a team is highly motivated and capable. Greenleaf (1996) posits of a servant leader style. The leadership was imparted on a person who was by nature humble to serve. The servant leader focuses on the needs of the follower and helps them to become more autonomous “freer and knowledgeable”.

### **Why Leadership is a Serious Enterprise**

The concept of leadership has lately become an exciting phenomenon. Probably, this is because of the amount of influence exhibited by those in the leadership position especially those who did not appreciate the demands of the leadership offices. Leadership is concerned with communicating the vision and developing a shared culture and set of core values that can lead to the desired future state. Leadership focuses on guiding followers towards the achievement of a common vision. Leadership is not entirely a command and control phenomenon rather it is concerned with assisting others to grow so that they can fully contribute to the achievement of the vision. Leadership is more than a set of skills. It relies on a

number of subtle personal qualities that are difficult to perceive but are very powerful. These qualities include characteristics such as enthusiasm, integrity, courage and humility. Real leadership originates from a genuine concern for others. The achievement of results makes leadership a serious business.

It can be noted from the aforementioned definitions, that leadership involves a process whereby one person exerts intentional influence not necessarily forced on other people. The exerted influence is meant to guide, structure and facilitate activities and relationships towards achieving goals in a group or organization. Leadership has much to do with the concept of management and management is an art by itself that involves planning and directing scarce resources in achieving desired results. The height and length any society can attain is determined by the quality of its leadership.

### **Accentuating the Leadership Roles in the Message of Prophet Isaiah**

As it has been noted, leadership roles are to guide, direct and help someone to grow and achieve great results. Leaders also guard people to escape dangers. Wenham, et al. (1994) affirms that Isaiah prophesied between 740 and 687BC in Judah when the city was struck by the moral breakdown of the times. Motyer (2000) observes that the recurrent themes in Isaiah's message are justice and righteousness. Justice in this case refers to a rule of law or retributive justice, whereas righteousness refers to being personally upright, mindful of the poor and ensuring distributive justice. He interchangeably used the terms justice or judgment and righteousness together in the message (Isaiah 1:27, 5:7, 5:16, 9:7, 16:5, 28:17, 32:1, 32:16, 33:5, 56:1, 58:2, 59:9, 59:14). All the terms express that justice is necessary for a good society. The word justice appears in Isaiah more than any other book of the Bible.

Looking at Nigeria today, impunity, favouritism, ethnicity, hatred, injustice, suppression, oppression and other vices seem to be the norm. There is no time the message of justice and righteousness is needed other than now in Nigeria. God through Isaiah is still reminding the leaders and followers that they have been vindictive, oppressive and unjust in their dealings. Imagine the way all the Nigerian reward systems have been bastardized. The message did not end there as Isaiah also introduced other terms such as the Day of the Lord and a time for judgment, punishment, retribution and vengeance for the sins of mankind (Isaiah 2:12, 13:6, 13:9, 34:8). This is a reminder that one day, leaders must give account of their stewardships and subsequently receive the due rewards.

The message did not only reveal the full dimensions of God's judgment but also His mercy and salvation. It describes God as "the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 1:4;



6:1). This implies that God's attributed holiness does not mean that He would not discipline His rebellious people (Isaiah 1:2). He would discipline them but would afterward redeem them from both political and spiritual oppression (Isaiah 14:1-2). In Nigeria today, hopelessness reigns unchallenged hence leaders should aim at providing hope to the people.

God sent these prophets on daunting and sometimes dangerous mission. They were dispatched for the most part in the eleventh hour to try to halt the people's headlong rush to destruction, to warn them of impending danger and then direct them to the path of safety. Isaiah's message fell on deaf ears but it did not mean that it has not produced results. This is because Prophet Isaiah influenced King Hezekiah of Judah who carried out religious reform and political freedom for the people of Israel. To defend Jerusalem, king Hezekiah built a new wall to fortify the western part of the city and he secured the city's water supply by diverting the waters of the Gihon Spring through a 1,700-foot tunnel that led to a pool within the city (Isaiah 22:9-11, 2Kings 20:20, 2Chronicles 32:30). Sennacherib laid siege against Jerusalem in 701 BC but God delivered the city as Isaiah had promised. Motyer (2000) asserts that God's message to Isaiah makes him the most quoted prophet in the New Testament and the Book of Isaiah is second only to Psalms in the number of verse quotations from Hebrew Scripture found in the New Testament.

### **Appraising the State of the Nigerian State**

Nigeria as a country was amalgamated in 1914. Having gone through the throes of colonialism she got her political independence on 1st October, 1960. At independence, the civilian rule was initially introduced but was truncated largely because of ethnicity. The military dictators in connivance with some rapacious civilians took over the governance of the country. They were forced to drop khaki in 1999 and probably being aware of the dangers inherent in the emergence of bad leadership, the framers of the present 1999 Nigerian constitution in chapters two and three outlined the following:

14. (1) The Federal Republic of Nigeria shall be a State based on the principles of democracy and social justice. (b) The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government:

16. (1) The State shall, within the context of the ideals and objectives for which provisions are made in this Constitution. (b) Control the national economy in such manner as to secure the maximum welfare, freedom and happiness of every citizen on the basis of social justice and equality of status and opportunity...) that the economic system is not operated in such a manner as to permit the concentration of wealth or the means of production and exchange in the hands of

few individuals or of a group; and (d) that suitable and adequate shelter, suitable and adequate food, reasonable national minimum living wage, old age care and pensions, and unemployment, sick benefits and welfare of the disabled are provided for all citizens.

18. (1) Government shall direct its policy towards ensuring that there are equal and adequate educational opportunities at all levels. (3) Government shall strive to eradicate illiteracy; and to this end Government shall as and when practicable provide:

(a) Free, compulsory and universal primary education;

(b) Free secondary education;

(c) Free university education;

All these provisions were made so as to ensure that Nigerians have responsible and responsive leaders at all level of governance-leadership that can objectively and purposefully uplift the people and develop the country devoid of parochialism. But the reverse has been the case as the emergence of bad leadership has jeopardized these lofty dreams. Alechenu, Ihuoma, Nwogu and Isenyo (2020) state that the country is voted the global headquarters of poverty, the World Bank added that seventy-one (71) million Nigerians lack access to improved water, while one hundred and thirty (130) million people do not meet the Millennium Development Goal standards for sanitation.

This is despite the fact that the country is richly blessed with immeasurable natural material and human resources. Poverty, injustice and bad governance have stifled the socioeconomic life of Nigeria hence the Nigerian system has been roundly heated up with agitations and counter agitations thereby making the country a scary society. The return to the so called civilian rule in 1999, gave some group of politicians the avenue to churn out the agitation for the implementation of Sharia in Nigeria. Expectedly, hundred of thousands of poor people lost their lives and property of unquantifiable costs. Simultaneously, the deadly kidnapping ventures took a wilder dimension beginning from the oil rich Niger Delta. Similarly, other ethnic national movements sprouted in the likes of EGBESU boys, OPC (Odua Peoples' Congress), MOSOP (Movement for the survival of the Ogoni people), (NDPVF) Niger Delta People's Volunteer Force, MASSOB (Movement for the Actualization of Sovereign State of Biafra), Arewa Youth Forum, Coalition of Northern (Youth) Groups, later the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and MAFO (Movement against Fulani Occupation).

Lately, the most horrible and dreadful dimension of all these have been the mindless invasion and destruction of farm lands, raping and murderous

bloodletting of defenceless and innocent people by the killer herdsmen in Nigeria. The government of the day especially the federal government seems to be looking the other side as if different laws are made for different people. But the same government has unilaterally proscribed MASSOB and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) who later took to the street with their countless processions to protest against perceived injustice.

Referring to section 14 subsection 3 of the 1999 constitution, it is made clear that: The composition of the federal government or any of its agencies and the conduct of its affairs shall be carried out in such a manner as to reflect the federal character of Nigeria and the need to protect national unity, also to command national loyalty, thereby ensuring that there shall be no predominance of persons from a few states or from a few ethnic or other sectional groups in that government or any of its agencies.

However, in flagrant abuse of this noble provision, Nigerian successive political actors seem to be promoting injustice in clear perversion of the quota system and federal character principles in appointments into key offices in Nigeria. The impunity appears much evident with the administration of President Muhammadu Buhari. Take for example, the Nigerian heads of security and para military agencies except for Chiefs of Defence, Naval Staff and Federal Road Safety Corp appointed from the south, close to twenty other heads of security and paramilitary agencies are all northerners and almost Muslims.

Many people are of the view that these parochial, clannish, lopsided and provocative appointments are aimed at promoting superiority and the expansionist zeal of some groups over others. Majority of Nigerians from the southern and Christian groups have continued to lament about this but it has been repeatedly attacked by the state actors and other vested material interests. However, in a rather surprising development, a northern Muslim challenged the president on it. Umoru (2020) presents a letter from Abubakar Umar, a retired army colonel and former military governor of Kaduna State, warning President Muhammadu Buhari that Nigeria is dangerously polarized and risks sliding into crisis because of his continued undue preference given to some sections of the country over others in the national appointments. The lopsidedness in Buhari's appointment, according to Umar, is more glaring in the leadership of the nation's security services. In his words, "Mr. President, I regret that there are no kind or gentle words to tell you that your skewed appointments into the offices of the

federal government, favouring some and frustrating others, shall bring ruin and destruction to this nation”.

In another disturbing development Enumah (2020) posits that some leaders of socio-cultural groups in the Southern region of Nigeria led by Chief Edwin Clark, Chief Reuben Fasoranti, Dr. John Nnia Nwodo, Dr Pogu Bittus, Chief Ayo Adebajo, Alaowei Bozimo, Mrs Sarah Doketri, Chief Chukwuemeka Ezeife and Air Commodore Idongsit Nkanga, Senator Kofoworola Bucknor-Akerele, Prof Julie Umukoro, Elder Stephen Bangoji, Alhaji Tijani Babatunde, Mrs Rose Obuoforibo Mr Adakole Ijogi and Dr. Charles Nwakeaku, on Monday, June 22, 2020 dragged President Muhammadu Buhari before an Abuja Division of the Federal High Court over alleged marginalization in appointments made by his administration since 2015. The suit was filed on their behalf by ten Senior Advocates of Nigeria (SANs) led by Chief Solomon Asemota and Chief Mike Ozekhome. They argued that the present composition of the federal government and most of its agencies especially the security and quasi-security architectures, the strategic government agencies such as NNPC, NIA and other strategic infrastructural and regulatory institutions are ethnically discriminatory which did not reflect the Federal Character of Nigeria. Other issues they brought before the court for determination include whether it was not “reckless and adverse to the interest of Nigeria”, for President Buhari to obtain a loan facility from the Islamic Development Bank, African Development Bank, the World Bank, China, Japan and Germany to the tune of \$22.7 billion (USD), purportedly for infrastructural development, only to allocate the bulk of the fund to the Northern region. They also sought the court to declare that the loan facility purportedly for infrastructural development wherein less than 1% of the amount is to be allocated to the South East Zone of Nigeria for specific infrastructural development, violated section 16 (1) (a) (b) and S16 (2) (a) (b) (c) of the 1999 Constitution (as amended). They prayed the court to fine the president, the Attorney-General of the Federation (AGF), Clerk of National Assembly and the Federal Character Commission (FCC) in the suit the sum of fifty billion naira for allegedly violating provisions of the 1999 Constitution and the Federal Character Principle. Never in the recent history of Nigeria has a conglomeration of ethnic nationals jointly take the federal government to court over marginalization.

Just as the prophetic leadership of Isaiah attacked the culture of exploitation in his days, that is how the message needs to sink into the hearts of Nigerian rulers today. This is because the country’s system covertly encourages massive exploitations. For example, the price of premium motor spirit (PMS) which God

freely gave to the people was close to five years ago hiked to close to one hundred percent without any tangible increment on the workers' stipends. When the thirty thousand (30,000) naira a month minimum wage was reluctantly passed into law, many states refused to pay it to workers. Before the increment by this current regime from eighty-six (86) naira to one hundred and forty-five (145) naira per liter, a bag of rice was sold for six or seven thousand naira (7,000) while the minimum wage was eighteen thousand naira (18,000). Today, a bag of rice is sold for about twenty-eight thousand (28,000) naira and the worker is being reluctantly paid thirty thousand (30,000) naira by the federal government while the state governments pay whatever they like.

The implication therefore is that, assuming the worker did not spend his/her wage on transportation, house rent, soaps for washing his/her clothes and any other need in a month, his/her earning in a month can only afford him/her a bag of rice without other condiments and firewood, kerosene or cooking gas that can be used for cooking the rice. Again must the worker only live on eating rice in a month and still survive? Has he/she got no children and other dependents? Probably, this is the reason why a person who has spent years in training and even in the university continues to wallow in abject overtly while a school dropout who is appointed into a political office can become stupendously rich and powerful within a few months.

Majority of the workers are not regularly paid their salaries and not to talk of pensioners who are dying on daily basis for lack of care from the governments they have served with their youthful days and energies. The security apparatus seems to be working optimally when it comes to protecting the wealthy and politically exposed individuals with their property. The same agencies only mobilize the remaining part of their formidability and astuteness to harass, intimidate and even kill armless and poor Nigerians while killer herdsmen (rated the fourth most dangerous terrorists in the world) carry out their nefarious activities unchallenged.

According to the Nigerian minister of Labour and Employment, Senator Chris Ngige, unemployment would rise to 33.5 per cent by 2020. Ogunmade (2020) states that a report by the Economic Sustainability Committee (ESC), chaired by Vice President Yemi Osinbajo confirmed the minister's prediction that unemployment in Nigeria will rise to 39.4 million or 33.6 per cent before December 2020. The end result of unemployment in any society is poverty and escalation of crimes and crises. It is horrifying to watch how majority of the

youths engage in illicit drug taking, alcoholism and betting activities meaning that in no distant future the country will brag more of BetNiger youths. In view of all these, Nigeria has become a country where her people are highly vulnerable, gullible and intimidated.

Official favouritism manifests in virtually every sector of the people's life. The much hyped fight against corruption has lost its acceptability among many Nigerians. To have a glimpse of how majority of the so-called corruption is fought, in the build up to the 2019 Senate presidential election, many analysts projected Senator Danjuma Goje to head the Nigerian Red Chamber. But on 6th June, 2019, immediately he had a meeting with the president, he publicly withdrew from the race and Adebulu (2019) states that the corruption case of twenty-five billion naira against him at the Court of Appeal in Jos was subsequently withdrawn by the attorney general of the federation, Abubakar Malami (SAN). Instead of fighting against electoral corruption and building strong public institutions that can checkmate impunity and corruption, Nigerian politicians are busy deceiving the poor masses with opiate slogans. Nigeria has digitalized some of her modes of payments and taxations but has not digitalized her electoral system simply because politicians use the wobbling electoral system to corruptly impose themselves on the people. The worst form of corruption in Nigeria is this unprecedented electoral corruption. This is because it has the ability to enthrone mediocre and bandits in office as leaders.

The country is suffering from a wholesome infrastructural deficit. The deficits range from the epileptic power supply and near mortuary as health centers. Majority of the social amenities are only built on the radio and television stations. Until the arrival of coronavirus, the secretary to the Nigerian government, Boss Mustapha, according to Iroanusi (2020) confessed that he never knew that Nigerian health system was in such "a bad state" (p.8). The Nigerian politicians and privileged public office holders will not feel the shambolic state of the Nigerian health system since they trot US, Europe and Dubai with their families and cohorts to treat ordinary malaria while the poor masses they claim to be serving are abandoned to their fates. The judiciary has been largely at the whims and caprices of the lords, many poor people are not getting justice today from the law court. The wealthy and politically exposed individuals usually hire the services of the best lawyers and through them delay justice and often buy it by the highest bidders. Nigeria can only lay claim to judicial system without justice system.

The result of bad leadership also manifest in the agitations that are growing especially an ethnic presidency seems to be making headline simply because other Nigerians feel rightly insecure when a politician from other tribe is in the saddle because of the level of impunity and clannishness of some accidental leaders in Nigeria. Generally, like Achebe (1983) pointed out that, bad leadership has been the only problem with Nigeria (p.1). It has affected the economic condition of the country causing the horrible experiences such as unemployment, poverty, absence of social amenities, corruption, ethnicity, clannishness, parochialism, impunity, suppression and oppression.

### **Isaiah's prophetic leadership: Praxes to the contemporary Nigerian leaders**

From the succinct study about Isaiah, it is not an exaggeration to posit that he was a man of strong character, deep faith in God, courage and conviction. He was the man of the hour who made himself available for the Lord to carry the torch of truth in the midst of spiritual darkness. He was able to deal with any class, effective in court circles, among false religious leaders and among the common people. He had the mission of turning the people back to God, thereby averting subsequent captivity. Considering the political, economic and social tempo of Nigeria today, there is no doubt that the country is in dire need of leaders like Isaiah to direct and lead her out of these quagmires. However, for such leaders to emerge, the following question needs to be answered while qualities expected of such leaders shall be considered:

#### **Who Will Go For Us?**

This is an age long question "who will save the people?" In this episode, it shows one of the thrilling things about God. God has everything and everybody at His bosom yet He chose to ask "who will go for us?" Even though God knows all human by their names, nobody's name is mentioned in the text. He could have called whoever He wanted directly. Leadership position will always be filled by somebody. But He chose to ask "who will go for us?" The answer to this is given by Apostle Paul in 2Timothy 2:20-21 "But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purges himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified and meet for the master's use and prepared unto every good work".

The law and principle is that "if" an individual is ready and willing, the person is accepted for the work of leadership. The willingness arises out of a heartfelt burden to make a real difference. In line with this, the idea of human choice

comes up and often times, God respects human choice. The word of God as prophesied in the Old testament did not name Judas as the betrayer of Jesus Christ but when he came into the scene, he chose to carry out the prophesy. In every level of the society, there are various vessels and while some of them are for noble assignments others are for ignoble uses. Paul believes that anybody who willingly and unconditionally purges himself shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use. It means that any leader who disciplines his/her taste, attitude and ambition will be a worthy leader. God made use of Isaiah because he purged himself from ignobility. God does not show favouritism rather He respects a willing and ready mind. Nigeria needs leaders who will go for the people not those who will go for themselves and other parochial interests.

### **Clean Your Cupboard First**

In Nigeria, the masses are usually bamboozled with intimidating claims from the politicians. Some of them often claimed that they are begged to come out and rule yet during elections, they share money just to buy the votes of the same people. The fact remains that they are playing to the gallery. Before Isaiah could say, "Here am I; send me," he had a problem that needed to be addressed. The Bible in Isaiah 6:5 describes how he was made aware of his own unworthiness. He had to understand that he was a man of unclean lips and lived among a people of unclean lips.

This contrasts the motives and methods of being enlisted into the leadership agenda today in the country. Many countries, parents, religious organizations, people, groups and even scholars believe that social standing, the weight of one's purse with ethnic and religious leanings should determine the choice of a leader. Some people seek leadership position without dealing with their personal deficiencies. They cook up all manner of fake credentials and doctor all manner of reports just to confuse the people. The culture of procuring intimidating credentials and doctoring and suppressing the past history of an individual seeking leadership position has been the undoing of the country. The doctoring and manufacturing fake credentials used to hoodwink the people into accepting dubious leaders are really telling on the Nigerians today. Just as it is a difficult hope for a priest to answer Altar call with well sown suits and cassocks so it is difficult to think that a leader who did not work on his/her weaknesses will work it out in office. Nigerians appear to have forgotten that the litmus test for the quality of leadership is not only necessarily experience or expertise rather it is for one to be willing, available, committed and selfless.



After Isaiah had acknowledged his sin, a Seraph took a burning piece of coal from the Altar, touched his lips with it and said, "See, your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for" (Isaiah 6:7). This implies that Isaiah could not atone for his own guilt. It takes God to atone for it. Every leader should bear in mind that he/she is accountable to another higher authority who can perform what he/she could not do. When a leader seeks selflessness, commitment and godliness in the discharge of his/her duties, God helps him/her handle his/her areas of weakness.

It was after Isaiah was cleansed of his sin that he declared, "Here am I; send me." Before then, he saw himself as an unworthy messenger. It then means that the lukewarmness and lackadaisical attitudes our leaders exhibit towards the people and their welfare have not experienced the revelatory knowledge that God gives to the leaders. The failure of leadership in Nigeria is a proof that those who found themselves in leadership positions did not handle fundamental challenges around and within them before seeking to lead other people. They hardly clean up the cockroaches in their cupboards. But Isaiah was a man of humility hence he acknowledged his sin, imperfection and faults and all of them were dealt with before he declared "Here am I Send me". The paraphernalia of offices do not clean cupboards rather it creates more cockroaches. Any leader who did not prepare himself before coming out for leadership will spend the rest of his/her time in office philosophizing, rationalizing and defending his/her inadequacies and errors. His/her achievements will tilt more towards shifting blames, manufacturing excuses, claiming perfection even in the midst of glaring inadequacies.

### **A Case of Leaders' Readiness and Willingness**

Nigeria has never been in shortage of men in leadership positions who are only apt in blame shifting, excuse manufacturing and covering and rationalizing of their faults. None of those occupying or about to occupy leadership positions in Nigeria today was forced to become a leader rather they all share monies and other gifts to the electorates and pleaded to be given the opportunity. God does not necessarily force leaders to serve but He works in their hearts so that they can desire to volunteer for service.

God and majority of reasonable people are always looking for ready, willing and faithful men and women who will provide direction and achieve results. God and reasonable individuals are ready to render their supports so as to accomplish results. It is important to note that there is nothing extraordinary about useful and resourceful men who have led and continue to lead the people. There was

nothing spectacular about men such as Prophets Isaiah, Moses, Elijah and many others. James makes it clearer when he says, "Elijah was a man with a nature like ours" (James 5:17).

They were humans just like the leaders today. They had faults, strengths, weaknesses and temptations. They did some things very significant and worthy of emulation and those include their readiness, willingness and faithfulness to serve both God and humanity (Hebrews 11). They were ready and willing to suffer for the people. Above all, they were ordinary human beings but they let God do extraordinary things in their lives. When leaders are willing, ready and available, God and social system can use them in achieving mighty things.

### **Until A Leader's Uzziah Dies...**

Historically, Motyer (2000) adds that after about fifty-two-year of relative peaceful reign, King Uzziah of Judah died of leprosy in 739 BC (2 Chronicles 26:16-23). Strategically, it was the same year Isaiah began his prophetic ministry. The implication going forward is that there are Uzziahs that are still bestriding the various leadership positions like colossus, suffocating the whole process of rendering genuine service of God and humanity today.

In Nigeria, many "Isaiah kind of leaders" are either kept docile or have not emerged because many of "the ancient and modern Uzziahs" are still the kings ruling in the forms of god fathers, dubious aids, hypocritical praise singers, greedy individuals with penchant for materialism. Those who are chronically infected with pull him down syndrome, others immersed in all manner of vices such as gang-ups, pride, humanistic reasoning, envy, jealousy, selfishness, hatred and other primordial interests. With all these, they have rather armed the masses with docility. There is no hope of getting the kind of Isaiah's leadership as long as these Uzziahs are ferociously active. The truth is that the calling and commitments of leaders will never count until they let those Uzziahs die.

### **The Offshoots of a Willing Heart**

There is yet to be another prophet like Isaiah, who stood with his head in the clouds and his feet solidly on earth. When a leader is willing to lead selflessly, part of human problems are solved. In his message to the exiles he projected into the future. Even in the midst of hopelessness, a good leader foresees the future and genuinely galvanizes his followers towards it. Whenever a man is sincerely willing and available to serve the people, there is no limit to the exploits he can achieve with his followers. Many leaders appear dry, unproductive and

cantankerous because they have not cleaned their personal cupboards and willingly made themselves available for service rather they seek to be served. There is no man or woman who makes himself/herself available for service without provable and lasting results to show for it. Isaiah's commissioning ends with God giving Isaiah instructions on how hard his calling was going to be. He was told in clear term that those to whom he was going to deliver the message to would by and large not listen (Isaiah 1:9-13). Yet, at this point, Isaiah has already made up his mind and committed himself to the cause of God. Leaders should know that to serve is not a tea party. When a leader is willing to serve and lead the people responsibly, the passion for right service will take him/her to inaccessible places and he/she will achieve some immeasurable results.

### **Conclusion**

The contemporary Nigerian state is richly blessed with both human and natural resources but the country has not got the kind of leaders who will harness these resources for equitable and purposeful development of both the people and the country. "Here am I send me" (Isaiah 6:8) is a response to a divine question, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" The question arose because God and sensible humanity want willing volunteers in services to Him and humanity. Having worked on his weakness and got an unshakable conviction, prophet Isaiah boldly and enthusiastically answered "Here am I send me." Of course, for the rest of his life, Isaiah served God and humanity because he was neither forced into it nor was he parochial about it. The great and revered biblical and non-biblical individuals such as Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Esther, Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Abraham Lincoln, Julius Nyerere, J.F Kennedy and their likes who have changed the course of history with their leadership prowess have one thing in common. They all said, "Here am I." This is a statement of unwavering resolve, selflessness, determination and commitment to serve God and humanity. It is a response to a vision that gives direction for a responsible leadership and service. Sadly, this is where many of the countries have run into a shambles today because the vision, "Here am I send me" has since stemmed out of greed, selfish agenda, greed driven ambitions and other personal aggrandizements. Nigeria needs leaders like Isaiah who can purge him/herself of all encumbrances and fiercely fight against impunity, injustice, mediocrity, lopsided mindset, winner takes it all syndromes, religious and ethnic triumphalism then enthrone equity, justice, fairness and objective reward system.

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