

## The Philosophy of Imago Dei: A Key to Solving Leadership Problem in Nigeria

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**Abstract:** Man has been identified by the Churchmen among the medieval philosophers as the image of God-*imago Dei*. This idea ensued from the understanding that man is both physical and spiritual comprising body, soul and spirit. The problem of dualism has generated a lot of debate among philosophers, especially in the medieval, modern and contemporary epochs. Taking a critical stance at the Nigerian society right from independence, especially in the present dispensation where people are dying of hunger, insurgency, banditry, terrorism and all forms of social vices, one would affirmatively align oneself with the view that the problem with Nigeria is largely on leadership. This study which adopts the method of critical analysis strongly suggests that in order to get the leadership of the country right, Nigeria has to imbibe a philosophy of her own, which will serve as a guiding principle both for the leaders and the led. *Epistemethics*, which is inextricably linked to the Philosophy of *imago Dei*, is therefore, suggested as a key to solving the leadership problem in Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Churchmen, Dualism, *Epistemethics*, Leadership, and The Philosophy of *Imago-Dei*.

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### Introduction

It has to be clearly stated from the onset that this study is embarked upon from the Christian perspective. One of the most celebrated literary icons in Nigeria, Chinua Achebe, and some other indigenous scholars identified the problem of leadership as the most challenging of the Nigerian problems. When one looks critically further into the lopsidedness that has become a new normal in Nigeria, one begins to understand that though leadership is indeed a problem, but at the root of this problem of leadership is lack of a philosophy that Nigerian citizens boldly and proudly call their own. No matter the system of government Nigeria adopts, without imbibing a philosophy that Nigerians call their own, there will continue to be lopsidedness in leadership and governance of the country.

In today's Nigeria, human life is literally regarded as nothing. The rate at which innocent citizens lose their lives as a result of violence, terrorism, insurgency and banditry clearly shows that man has not yet been construed in Nigeria as the image of God-*imago Dei*. Some of the Churchmen of the medieval era like Saints Augustine and Thomas Aquinas had in line with the Sacred Scriptures earlier taught that man is the image and likeness of God and must be treated as such. As it were, such is not the case in the present day Nigeria that could be likened to the Hobbesian state of nature where might is right, where injustices are celebrated by those who advance them. Some of the politicians, for instance, employ the children of the poor to risk their lives through political thuggery and different kinds of ungodly activities. This must have been why, "The condemnation of evils and injustices is also part of that ministry of evangelization in the social field, which is an aspect of the Church's prophetic role" (John XXIII 1987:4).

In Nigeria, just like in some other countries of the world, it is through elections that people emerge as political leaders. Unfortunately, a good number of people who find themselves in government, taking part in governance do not see it as a divine mandate for service. It is so because they are yet to understand man, that is, human person as God's image-*imago Dei*. This understanding brought about philosophical debates like the problem of dualism because construing man as God's image presupposes that man is both physical and spiritual. Though the problem of dualism is not essentially this study's area of focus, it is not out of place to note that some scholars go much further to argue that man is not only God's image but also a trio dimensional being made up of body, soul and spirit. Whatever is the case, one thing is certain: there is a spiritual aspect of man, because God whose image man is, is spiritual. Man is in the world with its laws and customs, and those who truly imbibe the philosophy of *imago Dei* whether in government or outside the government do their part to change those things that work against the good of humanity like injustice. The Churchmen, who construed themselves as preferring solution to human problems truly understand that: "The Church does not exist in isolation from the world", it lives in the world, and its members are consequently influenced and guided by the world. They imbibe its culture, and are subject to its laws and adopt its customs" (Paul VI 1964:42), hence employing their philosophy in tackling the problem of leadership in Nigeria.

Similarly, lack of competence and critically articulated ideology are intrinsically submerged in lack of a philosophy in the Nigerian circumstance. When Nigeria imbibes a philosophy that is morally grounded, no leader will emerge to pilot the affairs of over 200 million people without the requisite qualification which

include but not limited to being well-grounded in education and good moral life. Until Nigerian political leaders imbibe a philosophy that is morally-grounded, Nigeria will not make any meaningful progress in leadership. This study therefore suggests that for Nigeria to get her leadership problem solved, she has to adopt *epistemethics* as a philosophy.

### **Leadership, Government, Governance, Politics and Justice**

While reflecting on leadership, the concepts of government, governance, politics, justice and some other related concepts naturally come to mind. As a complex concept, leadership can be technically defined as a process of social influence to organise the efforts of others; but most importantly, it is about maximising these efforts for common good. Leadership is the potential to influence the behaviour of others. It is also defined as the capacity to influence a group towards the realization of a goal ([www.iedunote.com](http://www.iedunote.com)>leadership Retrieved 18/9/2022).

Government, in the words of Okpalaonwuka (2015:43), “is a divinely ordained authority to exercise worldly domination by divine right. It is an order in the world, an order which bears the authority of God. This understanding of government will help those who exercise political power in Nigeria, whether they are Christians, Muslims or any other religious denomination, to recognize God as the Supreme Lord of those who govern as well as those who are governed”. On the other hand, governance, according to Merriam Webster Internet Dictionary, is the act or process of overseeing the control and direction of something such as a country or an organization ([www.merriam-webster.com](http://www.merriam-webster.com) Retrieved 17/9/2022). Both competence and ideology are very critical in the process of governance.

In defining Politics, Hannah Arendt (2005) holds that, politics does not have an ‘essence’ – it does not have an intrinsic nature, or an indispensable element according to which we can definitely, and in all circumstances, identify something as political. Thus, there are no quintessentially political acts, subjects or place. Politics, rather, is the world that emerges between us – the world that emerges through our interactions with each other, or through the ways that our individual actions and perspectives are aggregated into collectivities (<https://www.open.edu/openlearn/society-politics-law/what-politics/content-section> Retrieved 18/9/2022). There is evidence of politics in all spheres of human endeavor. Arendt’s conception of politics is based on the idea of active citizenship, that is, on the value and importance of civic engagement.

Wherever there is problem of leadership, it will not be surprising that justice is truncated in such a society. As a moral and political concept, the word justice comes from the Latin *jus*, meaning right or law ([www.iep.utm.edu](http://www.iep.utm.edu) *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* Retrieved 18/9/2022). On the other hand, the word ‘justice’, meaning the exercise of authority in vindication of right by assigning reward or punishment is over 860 years old (c. 1140 AD). ‘Justice’ was once ‘justitia’, an old French word that descended from Latin to mean ‘righteousness and equity’ ([www.whitesmoke.com.etymology](http://www.whitesmoke.com.etymology) Retrieved 18/9/2022). Some of the philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, John Rawls and a host of others construe justice from a variegated perspective. Whether formal, or distributive, or substantive justice, etc. for me, what is at the basis of all the approaches to justice is: “do not give what you cannot willingly take”, “do unto others what you would expect them to do unto you”.

### **Leadership Problem in Nigeria**

The fact that the problem of Nigeria hinges on leadership that is deeply rooted in lack of a philosophy that Nigeria calls her own cannot be over emphasized. Leadership problem in Nigeria is as old as Nigeria. The amalgamation of the Northern and Southern protectorates into one entity called Nigeria by Lord Lugard is itself a problem. And so, ethnicism, tribalism, nepotism and religious bigotry have become the order of the day because of the coercive fusion. Leadership in Nigeria has also metamorphosed into “it is my turn”, “it is my life’s ambition” and so forth. Sadly, some of the people clamoring for leadership do not have the necessary prerequisites for it. Ethnicity and religion are key among the factors that necessitated, and still necessitates age-long injustice and lopsidedness in almost all segments of the Nigerian society. It has to be clearly delineated that naturally, people are born into different ethnic and religious groups across the globe and this natural design or arrangement should not be a curse if Nigerians truly understand it as a natural phenomenon. Damian Ugwutikiri Opata (2022:2), highlighting this writes: “It is the natural state of affairs that people are born into ethnic groups. There is, therefore, no harm in being born into any ethnic group, just as there is no harm being born a citizen of a particular country...In the same vein, there is no harm in being born into any religious group in the world. Similarly, there is no harm in finding oneself being born into any generation in one’s country or community. These are natural phenomena, and there is nothing any person can do about that...”

Ethnicism and ethnocentrism have caused more setbacks to leadership in Nigeria within the past seven years more than ever. The lopsidedness which has characterized the Nigerian economic, educational, health, agricultural, transportation, and in fact, all sectors of the country’s economy and all spheres of human endeavour

can be traced to both ethnicism and ethnocentrism. In his work, "Other/Otherness", Jean-Francois Staszak holds that, ethnocentrism is "the propensity of a group (in-group) to consider its members and values as superior to the members and values of other group (out-groups)" ([www.researchgate.net>publication](http://www.researchgate.net/publication) Retrieved 29/9/2022); and "I think that it is this attitude resulting from ethnocentrism that leads to ethnicism" (Opata 2022:2).

Defining ethnicism, Opata (2022:2) writes, I define ethnicism to be the instinct, prioritization, and privileging of one's ethnicity as major determinants in taking a stand on issues that concern many ethnic groups. It is both a conscious and unconscious closure of the mind making choices when acting in the context of different ethnicities. It is not an inability of a person to transcend natural inclinations, that is, an ability to transcend the self in making 'objective' decision when relating with the ethnic 'Other'. No, one can always take a good rational and objective decision that is not self-serving when dealing with the ethnic 'Other'.

Nigerian leaders are yet to understand leadership as a call to service. That is why politicians see politics as a do or die affair in order to grab power at all cost. Taking the members of the national assembly and the governors as an example, for decades, people of various regions of the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria have been clamoring for restructuring of the country, or self-determination. The people have always argued that the lopsidedness, marginalisation, injustices and non-application of federal character among other things, are the primary reasons why they clamor for restructuring, or self-determination. For them, if Nigeria cannot be restructured, they should be allowed to stay on their own as independent states. Unfortunately, the representatives of the people clamoring for restructuring, or self-determination across Nigeria did not align themselves with their people due to selfishness. Employing the example of the southern part of Nigeria, it was surprising that in May 2021, the governors of Southern States of Nigeria, for the very first time spoke with one voice in their meeting in Asaba, Delta State capital, and strongly advocated for restructuring of Nigeria. As if that was not enough, the members of the House of Representatives from the south unanimously affirmed the position of the Southern Governors' Forum. Incredible! Why did they take that decision? The level of human rights abuses and insecurity in the country in recent times apparently shows that the face of violence knows no government officials, even those with the most sophisticated cars and security personnel. The governors felt that if things continue that way, they themselves were not safe either. In order to save themselves and their families, they suddenly awoke from their political ineptitude, slumber and insensitivity to the plights of the masses who elected them into office, whom they now pretend to be speaking up on their behalf. What a representation! What a leadership!

It is as a result of selfishness that some Nigerian politicians prefer to loot money that would be used to advance education in Nigeria into other countries that use those monies to develop their country. It is no longer news that bright students in various countries of Africa who find their ways to Europe, Asia and America are resource persons these continents employ to build and advance their economy. Some African scholars are stakeholders in education, commerce and industry, even in the military in other continents of the world. Is it not a great mark of leadership, situational sensitivity and resourcefulness encapsulated in optimism and decisiveness in decision-making on the part of African leaders to prioritise education and retain our best for the growth and development of all facets of our life as a continent? Does Nigeria have any agenda for her best in all spheres of life? Why is it that African citizens are being used by ungodly African politicians to destroy Africa? All the cases of terrorism, banditry and insecurity in Nigeria, for instance, are they executed by people from the other continents? Is that not insensitivity on the part of the led to allow themselves to be used for such purposes? What then shall Africans, especially Nigerians do to wriggle out of this problem?

Some scholars have consistently hold that Nigeria is the Giant of Africa. In that light, Maurice (2022:4) argues that when one looks closely and critically, one would observe that bad leadership permeates African continent, and in recent times Nigeria and Sri Lanka seem to be the headquarters. This sounds correct because on July 11, 2022 the people of Sri Lanka literally chased their president out of office because of indiscriminate abuse of human rights by his administration orchestrated by corruption and grounded in ungodly-leadership and bad governance. Africa has become a place where not only that leaders lead with impunity but most surprisingly, these corrupt leaders have support even from among the populace who are bearing the brunt of their bad governance, perhaps because of the peanuts they receive from them, especially during electioneering campaign. With the understanding and practice of *epistemethics* and the philosophy of *imago Dei*, the leadership imbroglio in Nigeria will be a talk of the past.

BenEzenwa (2008:59) expresses dissatisfaction with political leadership in Nigeria, even under democracy, when he writes: "The success of an election in a true democracy hinges solely on three issues, namely free and fair elections, respect for the choice of the electorate as reflected in their votes and prevalence of the law and order. It has been failure to meet these three requirements that has led to crippling national disputes over the integrity of two earliest past elections (1964-1983) to begin with, and the eventual collapse of these democratic dispensations in our country's history". Why has Nigeria continued to record failure in ascertaining free and fair elections, respect for the choice of the electorates, and prevalence of the rule of law?

The answer to this question is simple: lack of understanding and practice of the philosophy of *imago Dei*, which is inextricably linked with *epistemethics*, as it will be seen subsequently.

If man, the image of God, is given its pride of place in the Nigerian socio-political, economic, religious and cultural lives, all the efforts made by the political leaders of the nation right from independence would have been geared towards the good of humanity. One can unequivocally say that the philosophy of *imago Dei* hinges on love for humanity which invariably implies love for God. It can now be appreciated why the Churchmen align themselves with the welfare of humanity because, “it is the very same love that makes the Church constantly concerned for the true temporal good of mankind as well. Never ceasing to recall to her children that they have no lasting dwelling here on earth, she urges them also to contribute, each according to his own vocation and means, to the welfare of their earthly city, to promote justice, peace and brotherhood, to lavish their assistance to their brothers, especially on the poor and the most dispirited” (Paul VI 1986). The Nigerian experience is quite opposite because, the poor seems to be getting poorer, while the rich is getting richer. In fact, the country has been reported as the poverty capital of the world where there are about 20 million out of school children. This is a country that is richly blessed with human and natural resources (Don-Festus 2022:3). What a leadership.

### **The Philosophy of Imago Dei**

Philosophy is a critical reflection about reality namely: God, man and the universe. *Imago Dei* are Latin words, which literally mean image of God. It is as a result of the fact that the present Nigerian political leaders have not construed governance as service to God and humanity that human lives are treated with abysmal disregard and negligence. It is, therefore, an urgent call for the people in government to begin to appreciate the philosophy of *imago Dei* which holds that the dignity of man must be given a pride of place in all spheres of human endeavor; and at no point would human person be employed as a means to an end because “man fully alive is the glory of God-*Homo Vivens Gloria Dei*”.

Right from the earliest times of philosophical discourse, especially in the medieval era, the Churchmen like Saints Augustine and Thomas Aquinas strongly held in their diverse postulates that there is Divine aspect of man as God’s creature. This mindset is as true as it is still relevant today because the philosophy of *imago Dei* is grounded in the idea that man is not only a creature of the Absolute Being, but must live morally having known that he will give an account of his actions and inactions to the Ultimate Being at the end of time. In line with the philosophy of *imago Dei*, “God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them”. Mankind is described as being created in the image and likeness of God; created out of love to love and to be loved. Hence, the moral implications of the doctrine of *imago Dei* suggest that if humans are to love God, they must “love one another”, as each is an expression of God. Humans differ from other creatures, as they are self-reflective, rational and able to make moral decisions. Since we are *imago Dei*, we cannot truly understand humanity unless we refer to God. We are “His own image”, so to understand who we are as beings; we must come to know God-the Ultimate Creator. Hence, God created us with the capability of knowing and loving Him; *Capax Dei* i.e. “The mind is the image of God, in that it is capable of Him and can be partaker of Him”, argues Saint Augustine ([www.bartleby.com](http://www.bartleby.com) Retrieved 6/10/2022).

#### **St. Augustine on Imago Dei**

St. Augustine, a medieval philosopher and the Bishop of Hippo, lived between 354-430 A.D. Augustine refuses to *limit imago Dei* to a solely Christological meaning, but his account of anthropological image is built on Platonic notion that matter participates in the realm of immaterial forms. Insofar as everything that exists emanates from the One, it also images the One. Yet, because all emanation tends towards non being, an image of the One always falls short of its archetype, to lesser or greater degree. Thus any given image is at one true or false: true in a sense of bearing resemblance to the archetype, false in a sense of failing to fully render the archetype. This seems to be one of the points where Augustine’s Platonism comes in conflict with Christian belief. Because Augustine unequivocally affirms consubstantial unity of the Father and Son, he deems the Son to be an image of equal likeness, whereas human beings are images of unequal likeness. And it is precisely the incarnation that bridges the ontological gap between the eternal truth represented by the perfect image, and truth-like existence of human image (Boersma 2016 [www.readingreligion.org](http://www.readingreligion.org) Retrieved 10/10/2022).

It is important to note that, Because the image must imitate that which it images, the first Adam participates in the *imago Dei* precisely through imitation of the second Adam – Christ. Through participation in Christ, the soul is enabled to return and reunite with the source of its being. Though the twofold movement of falling away and return is thoroughly Neoplatonic, Augustine not only understands the destination of return to be Trinitarian unity, but he is also skeptical about the soul’s ability to return to God apart from the grace of incarnation (Boersma 2016 [www.readingreligion.org](http://www.readingreligion.org) Retrieved 10/10/2022).

### St. Thomas Aquinas on *Imago Dei*

St Thomas Aquinas, popularly known as the angelic doctor lived between 1225-1274 A.D. It is important to note that among the scholastics, there is no known dichotomy between philosophy and theology, faith and reason. For the scholastics, philosophy is an ancillary to theology, and that is why Uzoigwe and Chukwuma-Offor (2022:98) hold that, “The medieval epistemology articulated by Christian scholars like St. Thomas Aquinas primarily has religious cum philosophical undertone and Christocentric in approach. Their works are characterized by reactions to the postulations of the ancient Greek philosophers and those of the Middle Ages mostly on either the works of Plato or Aristotle”. So, be it in the area of epistemology, ethics, philosophy of the mind, etc. Aquinas and the other Churchmen do not actually see any strong divide between philosophy and theology. They also strongly construe man as body, soul and spirit.

In that connection, Olariu (2013) writes: “The study and philosophy of man in the 13<sup>th</sup> century was an image-based theology, whereby man was defined according to his relationship with God. The concept of image of God in man is simply rooted in the Bible. The Vulgate rendered the passage in question (Gen. 1:26-27) with the words: *et ait, Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostrum...* And God said: Let us make man in our image according to our likeness”. The image of God is used as a metaphor to express the idea that only man, among God’s creatures, shares with him the ability to think. The human soul is defined as *imago Dei*- in other words – as an image of God created as a likeness albeit imperfect of God. Nevertheless, the soul benefit from the ability to complete this likeness to the deity is by adopting a righteous attitude. To be more exact (according to scholasticism) it is the ability to think which is equivalent to the image of God in man. It is situated within the human soul and is, more precisely, the supreme part (Aquinas Thomas *Summa Theologiae*, la, q. 93, a. 6, ad 4).

In his philosophy of *imago Dei*, Aquinas emphasises that the body and soul correlate. In order to assimilate itself to God, the soul relies on the body to enrich its knowledge of the creator and depends on the senses of the human organism...man is not only a soul, but something composed of soul and body...a body that is destined to serve the soul, and is most perfect among all others... (Aquinas q.75, a. 4). The soul stands in relation to the body not only as its form and end, but also as efficient cause. For the soul is compared to the body as art to the thing made by art (Aquinas la-IIae,IIa-IIae).

The term *imago Dei* refers most fundamentally to two things: first, God’s own self-actualization through humankind; and second, God’s care for humankind ([www.bps.org](http://www.bps.org)>[imago-body](#) Retrieved 6/10/2022). Theologians have long explored the meaning of the biblical notion of the *imago Dei* for our understanding of the complexities of human personhood. In recent years the focus has often been on the “functional-relational,” as opposed to an “ontological” account of the *imago* (Mouw 2012 *The Imago Dei and Philosophical Anthropology* [www.christianscholars.com](http://www.christianscholars.com)>[the-imago-dei](#) Retrieved 6/10/2022).

### The Functional View of the Philosophy of *Imago Dei* in Relation to Leadership Problem in Nigeria

In the very first chapter of the Bible, the creation of human beings is introduced by the divine announcement that God has decided to fashion them “in our image, according to our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). This declaration of divine intent in the creation of humankind obviously sets the tone for the Bible’s unfolding story about the nature and destiny of human beings. What does that declaration offer Christian philosophers in our own attempt to look for carefully formulated answers to the basic questions about human realities? (Mouw: 2012).

There is no functional dimension of the philosophy of *imago Dei* than the fact that man is a transient being who is composed of body, soul and spirit and must give account of his stewardship on earth to the Absolute Being. The implication of this in relation to the leadership problem in Nigeria is that the political leaders should construe their positions as service to humanity, and ultimately to God in whose image man shares, and as a result should be morally conscious that account will be given at the end of time. Unfortunately, this is not the mindset of the present political leadership in Nigeria where peace, security and good governance that are inextricably linked for development to flourish. The case of political leadership in Nigeria is permeated with historical injustices occasioned by inordinate quest for power, ethnicism, ethnocentricism and religious bigotry.

In his book, *Man: The Image of God*, Berkower (1962:199). introduces various treatments by theologians of a distinction between a broader and narrower sense of the *imago*. The formal versus the material aspects of the *imago*; arguments about whether being created in God’s image and being fashioned in God’s “likeness” point to different realities; the original created image and the remnants of the image in human fallenness; the image as relational and the image as ontological; the image by itself and the image linked to a supernatural *donum superadditum*; the *imago Dei* as it is on display in the individual human person and that image as it is manifested in collective humanity; the image as partially restored in redemption and the image as it will be

manifested when as believers “we will be like (Christ), for we will see him as he is” (1 John 3:2); and much more. In all these, one thing is apparent, that is, man is God’s image and should be treated as such.

In P.F.Strawson’s 1959 study titled *Individual*, Strawson made the case that “the concept of pure individual consciousness...could not exist as a primary concept to be used in the explanation of the concept of a person.” What this meant for him is that, the traditional mind-body problem was based on a confusion. Strawson did allow for at least the sheer possibility that a disembodied consciousness “might have a logically secondary existence,” since it is not difficult for a person “quite intelligibly [to] conceive of his or her individual survival of bodily death” (Mouw 1983:30)...Strawson obviously meant this allusion to resurrection as a kind of throwaway line, “where both the leaders and the led be rewarded by the Absolute Being”.

From another perspective, Karl Barth identified the image with spirituality or rationality ‘arbitrarily invented interpretations’ that are set forth by people who simply have “ignored the explanation given by the text itself” ...Barth points to the “divine plural” in the Genesis account of creation of humankind: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness” (Gen. 1:26). He does not see this as an intentional reference to God’s triune nature, but he does insist that it rules out the notion of the biblical deity as a solitary sovereign. And it is significant, he observes, that this reference to a divine “us” is immediately followed by the reference to the creation of “male and female.” This clearly suggests, he says, that there is a “simple correspondence...between mark of the divine, namely that it includes an I and a Thou, and the being of man, male and female” (Berkouwer 1962:199). Though male and female is not a characteristic restricted to humanness, Psalm 139 gives more anchorage to the intended result because, “God knows man He created true and true, and man has no option than to give account of his stewardship on earth in the final analysis”.

According to Gilbert Ryle (1949:181), we can construe consciousness as a set of disposition to behave in certain ways. This is a fairly straightforward behaviourism. This is in line with the American discussions of philosophical anthropology in the 1960s. It is in this work that Ryle rejected “the Ghost in the Machine”. At that time metaphysical dualism was a dominant reference point for philosophical debates. In all these, both the medieval, modern and contemporary philosophers cited in this work are never in doubt that there is non-experiential dimension of man.

### ***Epistemethics and the Philosophy of Imago Dei***

*Epistemethics* is a construct of two words namely: epistemology and ethics. These two concepts are also among the major branches of philosophy. Epistemology derives from two Greek words: *episteme* (knowledge) and *logos* (study or science of). Therefore, when these two concepts are joined together, it becomes ‘the study or science of knowledge’. As a branch of philosophy, epistemology is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge about reality. It also deals with the nature, forms, scope, limitations, and functions of knowledge. On the other hand, ethics derives from the Greek word *ethos* which means ‘custom or way of living’ ... “ethics is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with human conduct, more especially the behaviour of individuals in society. Ethics examines the rational justification for our moral judgments; it studies what is morally right or wrong, just or unjust” ([www.canada.ca>values-ethics>code](http://www.canada.ca/values-ethics/code) Retrieved 15/8/2022). *Epistemethics* is a philosophy which holds that all knowledge, all education must be acquired for ‘service to humanity’. *Epistemethics* emphasises the functions of knowledge and the most important of all the functions of knowledge is advancement of the wellbeing of humanity. In that connection, when knowledge is employed against humanity, it is no longer knowledge; and the person who possesses such knowledge would be described as someone who went to school, but not educated. The educated person within the context of *epistemethics* is the person in whose life knowledge and good moral conduct are inseparable. When good moral behaviour is not practically demonstrated within the dynamics of personal and inter personal human relationships, it is not qualified to be knowledge.

Within the context of intercultural philosophy, the philosophy of *imago Dei* is inextricably linked to *epistemethics* and vice versa. In *epistemethics*, knowledge and good moral conduct must cohere and complement each other in a consciously critical way. Therefore, one cannot divorce the former from the latter; and once good moral behaviour fails to synchronise with education, or knowledge one acquires, it ceases to be education, or knowledge, because in living out one of the principles of *epistemethics*, all learning, all knowledge, and all education must be geared towards common good, general wellbeing and advancement of the course of humanity. On the other hand, the philosophy of *imago Dei* construe service to God and humanity as a noble thing to do bearing in mind that in man mirrors the image of God.

### **Nigerian Political Leaders and their Quest for ‘Anonymous We’**

Looking critically at the political leadership of Nigeria in recent times, it is not difficult to observe that nobody seems to be taking responsibility at all level of governance in the country. The level of terrorism, banditry, insurgency and all forms of criminality experienced across Nigeria and the number of lives lost go a long way to show that indeed, nobody seems to be taking responsibility.

Nigerian political elites now want to operate at the level of ‘anonymous we’. That is why the kind of solidarity African politicians, especially those of Nigerian descent advocate is the one where people would not ask questions or raise critical issues that would radically change the narrative and lead to their emancipation from neo-colonial slavery to freedom. A good number of political elites in Nigeria would not like to make the citizens understand that in solidarity no one loses his identity. Fortunately, some Nigerians are gradually saying no to the identity of ‘anonymous we’.

### Conclusion

It is a strong position of this study that leadership problem lingers in Nigeria because there is apparent lack of understanding of the fact that human person created in the image and likeness of God should be given utmost attention even in the course of governance. In the Nigerian experience, one can boldly say that the country has not had the right leadership needed to galvanise the necessary multi-lateral solidarity and collective action, with the quality of human and natural resources the country is endowed with to move forward. There is a need for the Nigerian leaders to imbibe morality as a key component in governance, and with such mindset, they will understand that the human persons in Nigeria, no matter their tribe, religion and ethnic affiliations, are image(s) of God because those image(s) as they are manifested in collective humanity are ultimately God’s image. Humanity must be given a pride of place in our personal and inter-personal relationships.

Having looked critically at the nuances of expression on *imago Dei* right from the time of the Churchmen in the medieval era down to the post-contemporary epoch, it is clearly construed that these Christian scholars like Saints Augustine and Thomas Aquinas, Gilbert Ryle, Karl Barth and a host of others are in one accord on the Divine image in man. And so, if the Nigerian leadership adopts *epistemethics*, which by way of interculturality of philosophy, is inextricably linked to the philosophy of *imago Dei*, Nigeria will move forward because leadership will be construed as service to humanity which will invariably mean service to the Great Divine whom man is His image, and to whom all the accounts of leadership on earth will be given.

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