

Political Education Initiatives by the Mizoram Presbyterian Church

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Abstract

Political education aims to guarantee that individuals possess political literacy and are well-informed. Nevertheless, there is considerable controversy regarding the primary emphasis of political education. There is a debate regarding whether education should prioritize teaching individuals about the functioning of government and politics or whether its main objective should be imparting ideals and principles. The Mizoram Presbyterian Church has undertaken numerous initiatives to educate persons through the Church, highlighting the involvement of God in politics since its inception. Providing knowledge and instruction to individuals on the true nature of politics, the biblical principles that guide political actions, how the political landscape of Mizoram has been shaped, and the specific flaws within Mizoram's political system.

Keywords: Politics, Political Education, Religion, Church, Mizoram

INTRODUCTION

When we discuss the word "politics," the general Mizo idea tends to tilt toward a humdrum perception, including the fact that even congregation members grow reluctant to participate in the political process. However, throughout the subsequent years, we have also learned to adapt and enhance our perspective, and as a result, it has become a topic of conversation that is less contentious. In light of the current upsurge in populism and political conflicts, it is becoming increasingly crucial for citizens worldwide to have a solid understanding of politics and its numerous components. A strong foundation of political knowledge enables us to recognise and appreciate the perspectives and ideas of others, which in turn allows us to develop empathy for others with whom we disagree and to engage in constructive discourse regarding current events. Finally, recognising the interconnected nature of today's politics rather than viewing them as a competition can only result in the expansion of society.

Politics

The word "politics" is derived from the Greek word 'polis', which means 'city', and it is translated to "politicos," which means affairs of the cities. With the passage of time, the word has an expanding interpretation in local and national government affairs. Upa Dr. Lalchungnunga states, "The simplest explanation of the word politics can be said to be the process of creating and using the power of the state."

The centrality of politics is the fight for power. In our state, where democracy is practised, the fight for power is battled through the people's votes. Power is only given to the party that wins more than half of the available seats.

It should be noted that this process may also have negative impacts depending on how it is being used. Politicians can manipulate the public to disrupt their opinions on certain agendas and circumstances of different individuals, which can also give rise to corrupt politics. Thus, it is essential and necessary that the public be made aware of such probabilities, which is why the Church is also enthusiastically supporting education on politics. In the case of Mizoram, politics and religion have become two sides of the same coin; the government and Church have administered all the schools within the state. During the insurgency, the pastors would exhibit themselves as people's representatives in making peace. Thus, we must become aware and be involved in the steps taken by the Church to educate the people on politics.

Need for Political Education

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We know that politics refers to the affairs and administration of the government. But why do the people need to know? Is educating just the politicians not enough? Unless we fully grasp the impact and significance of political education, this topic we are about to discuss will amount to little in the future. So, let us look into why it is necessary to have a basic knowledge of political education:

To educate the community: By using political education, the people in different communities are provided information and education on the basics of politics and how it works. This will encourage the public to make rational decisions and speak the truth about politics with other members of their respective communities. It is also vital if church leaders become aware of political education due to their high status and influence in society.

Improving the cooperation of the community: Political education raises public awareness by notifying them of their obligation towards society as citizens of the state and encouraging them to engage in activities like casting votes, helping to organise fair and just elections, and supporting groups that aim to improve the community.

Demand for details and research: Political education instils in people a sense of curiosity and a demand for detailed information on state governance. It inspires people to question leaders on several matters and form their own opinions.

Value for democracy: It educates people to appreciate the teachings of democracy—individual freedom, justice, equality, and equity. The role of political education is to help the members of the community learn to live with one another and understand and acknowledge the different opinions and perspectives of each individual.

Change in societal norms: One of the many goals of political education is to find out the causes of societal issues and to make progressive changes to improve society's standard of living.

Preservation of Democracy: It is one's duty to preserve the ideology of democracy. Political education aims to inform the people and educate them to be aware of any threat against the ideas of democracy in the country.

A Brief Summary of Politics in Mizoram

Mizoram, in its earlier times, had been governed under an autocracy. The reason behind this was that the people requested it. They lived in clans exclusively, and since they wanted a better chance for survival and better governance, they would select candidates who they believed would be able to guide them and protect them from becoming their chief. However, as these chiefs rose to power, their sons inherited these powers, and as their influence grew, they became so powerful that the people could no longer question their authority. Thus, the villages with a noble and good chief thrived, while those with an incompetent chief suffered.

Foreigners would have tea plantations within the borders of these chiefs, to which the chiefs grew hostile towards their actions and would loot these foreigners. The retaliation by the foreigners was given the name 'Vailian'. The British Government began their attack on Mizoram in 1872 and retrieved Mary Winchester from the hands of Lal Bengkhuaia during their attack on the tea plantation. The second Vailian in 1889 resulted in the governance of Mizoram by the British.

The British government took control of Mizoram for 58 years, during which time it was officially a district within the state of Assam. However, the Assam Governor personally governed the state, appointed a Superintendent to supervise, and was given very high power.

The Superintendent ruled over Mizoram from Aizawl, appointed Mizo chiefs to rule respective villages, and used them to govern the state in a disciplined manner. As a result of the harsh and rigid discipline carried out by the Superintendent through the Mizo chiefs, R. Thanhkira wrote, "The life of the people was very poor, it was suffocating... As it was the wishes of the British government that the chiefs reigned terror in their villages." elaborating the harsh standard of living.

Moreover, they did not allow any advancement in agriculture and education, inferring that the Mizo people did not require education above the middle school level. G.A. Small, the Director of Public Instruction in Assam from 1930 to 1940, stated, "The policy of the British is to put away the Naga and Mizo in a place where one puts old things, like a museum."

In addition to this, Lalchungnunga also shares his opinion that after the British defeated the Mizo chiefs, they had a significant loss in power over their people. This resulted in greed for power, which led to the discrimination of the people and also resulted in many diplomatic clashes with the Governor.

The agitation shown by the Mizo evolved into a desire to terminate the chieftain system. After the introduction of the Gospel and education, it provided new perspectives on the Mizo community. This led to the yearning for a new political system like democracy, which was being used by other states. The British leaders also wanted the Mizo to be more involved in politics, encouraging many individuals to become interested in politics. Also, the few Mizo individuals who received early education became more aware of politics, and Deputy Commissioner AHR MacDonald approved the formation of the first political party in Mizoram on April 9, 1946, the Mizo Union.

Another political party, the United Mizo Freedom Organization (UMFO), was also established on July 5, 1947. This party was thoroughly supported by the Mizo chiefs, their ministers, and those who claimed to be higher in social status. However, they could not achieve influence on the public as compared to the Mizo Union party. This party had an agenda that Mizoram would join Burma after India's Independence. In 1957, after the Mizo Union party was disbanded, the Mizo Union Right Wing and the UMFO collaborated to form the Eastern India Tribal Union (EITU), which was an organisation that aimed to unify the inhabitants of the hills of Assam and to create a separate state from Assam.

In 1961, A. Thanglura of Shillong established the Indian National Congress (INC) in Mizoram. Still, it resulted in a prolonged process of expansion. It was almost disbanded until the end of 1967 when R. Dengthuama revived the party and reorganised new leaders with their slogan, "Remna leh Muanna", and also won the District Council elections held in April 1970 over the Mizo Union Party. However, due to poor performance by the INC government, the party separated into two sides, with one side of the INC governed by newly elected leaders. The other side of the INC joined forces with the Mizo Union to create the United Mizo Parliamentary Party (UMPP) and continued to govern the District Council.

Mizoram was announced as a Union Territory on January 21 1972, which led to the unification of the Congress party, which overtook the power of the UMPP government. Moreover, the central government disbanded the District Council system on March 30 1972, since it was a Union Territory.

The Union Territory Assembly election was held for the first time on May 5 1972, with a massive victory for the Mizo Union party, with 70% of their candidates elected. After 26 years of being Mizoram's most significant and first political party, the Mizo Union joined the Indian National Congress on January 21, 1974. Hence, the Mizo Union and its political history in Mizoram were buried. This resulted in the Mizo Union government being replaced by the Congress government.

The Mizo National Front (MNF) was established in October 1961. The organisation fielded candidates in the District Council elections 1962 but could not get the required votes. They then changed their purpose into forming a military organisation and fought for the Independence of the Mizo, converting from a political party to a movement. On March 3 1966, a shooting took place, which shaped the next 20 years till 1986 as one of the darkest eras of Mizoram history. As the peace treaty between the MNF and the Indian government was about to be signed, the MNF leaders appealed for a change in the Chief Minister of Mizoram to Pu Laldenga. Pu Lalthanhawla was the Chief Minister at the same time. After that, Lalthanhawla passed on the authority to Laldenga to become the Chief Minister of Mizoram. The MNF continues to be a political party to date. It should also be noted that several organisations and church members contributed to the success of this peace treaty.

While the state of Mizoram was in turmoil, Indian Army Officer Brig. Thenphunga Sailo returned home to Aizawl after his pension in 1974, and in the next year, on April 17, he formed a new political party called the 'People Conference'. This era saw the oppression of the Mizo by the Indian Army, imposing curfews and maintaining rigid discipline within the community, controlling the conditions of the state. The return of Brigadier Thenphunga gave hope to the Mizo community, and they supported him through his political party. He eventually rose to power by winning the 1978 Mizoram UT Assembly elections. Unfortunately, due to

internal affairs within the party, the ministry was dissolved in 1978, and Mizoram was put under the President's Rule. The PC party won the election in 1979 and continued governing the state till 1984.

The MNF won the MLA elections in 1987, but since nine members declined their positions, it came under the President's Rule on September 7, 1988. The 1989 elections were dominated by the Congress party, and the 1993 elections saw a coalition government between the Congress and the MJD. The MNF later won the 1998 and 2003 elections, while the Congress party won the 2013 election, and the 2018 election was won over by the MNF once more.

Before every election, the Church would organise a counsel to encourage a fair election, which may have seen a number of supporters. It can be considered that the Church's opinions significantly influence the outcome of elections. It has resulted in recruiting outstanding individuals to candidates for elections who are not necessarily an active member of a political party. Thus, a number of church ministers have often become MLAs in the past as well. The collaboration of the Church and other non-profit organisations formed the MPF on September 1, 2005, and proved to be a successful regulator in organising fair and just elections. These undertakings can be a result of the involvement of the Church, the support it has given and the notion of the people executing the Lord's deeds.

It can be argued that our Christianity has protected us from a number of unfortunate circumstances. Our ethnic solidarity, as well as the support of the NGO and the Church, all contribute to a calm and peaceful election. It is also evident that the people respect the wishes of the Church and society, and how they organise campaigns is an exquisite experience, with joy and laughter and also asking the Lord for guidance.

After observing the procedure and administration of the past governments, we find that these political parties have become more unified and have developed positively with time. They have worked with great effort, and consequently, the state has gone through great progress. In this remark of the politics of the state, it can be stated as follows:

Our initial perception of politics needs to be revised: The motive behind the formation of the first political party in Mizoram, the Mizo Union, may be the desire to abolish the system of being ruled by the chief. This may result from the oppressive nature of the British government and the chiefs under their command. Commenting on this motive, Rev. Zairema writes, "At the time, India was very close to having its Independence, so the British government, in their attempt to show their empathy towards the people, made an effort to teach politics in a concise period, but this was somewhat imperfect. In addition, the hatred towards the British government was the basis of the country's unification, which led to India's Independence. This hatred towards the British and the chiefs was the fuel that fabricated the formation of political parties, affecting our perception of politics. This was also the reason behind the hostility towards the new UMFO party.

Since this is how politics was introduced, it has created an environment of hatred and competition among the political party members, creating an unending battle among one another and causing unnecessary harm to ourselves. We refuse to cooperate with other party members and dismiss their efforts to develop the condition of the state rather than supporting each other and offering a hand to them. The inaccurate introduction of politics has caused a drastic effect on the public to this day.

Favoritism has become an issue: It has been earlier stated that political parties are being used to create a sense of hatred towards other parties, and favouritism has become an admired trait amongst party members after the acquisition of the District Council. Rev. Zairema writes, "We show favouritism towards fellow party members regarding land, government jobs and contracts." This favouritism has evolved into providing jobs to fellow party members rather than compatible and hardworking individuals, resulting in a tremendously negative effect on education in the process. Apart from this, some individuals have become hungry for power and authority. They would prioritise being elected again for the next term rather than completing their duties while governing the state. All these factors have caused an increase in corruption.

The involvement of God is evident in Mizoram politics: One can see the acts of the Lord after carefully observing the details of the history of politics in Mizoram. It can be said that God has provided freedom from the oppression and unjust system implemented by the British and the chiefs by using his people to establish

the Mizo Union party, which received a tremendous amount of support and influence from the people who were against the chiefs and their ministers. During the insurgency in Mizoram, people feared for their lives and became anxious of the condition of the state. However, the return of the well-respected Mizo Army officer Brig. Thenphunga Sailo proved to be a reassurance to the people of Mizoram, which could be considered the prayers of the people being answered. It is also important to note the commendable act shown by the Chief Minister of Mizoram to relieve himself of his position during the peace agreement between the Indian government and Mizoram. On the other hand, there are several loose ends in terms of the political administration. This has affected our perception of politics and how the leaders govern the state today.

The negligence of God in the history of Mizoram Politics: We have stated earlier how God's presence is observed in Mizoram politics and how it has become a tremendous blessing. However, let's read the history and archives of how these political parties were formed, how the people desired to abolish the chieftain system, the elections and how the government carries its duties. We seldom find the acknowledgement of God's presence and His power over us. It is a sin as followers of Christ that there is little to none in terms of the gratitude and praise of the Lord in the hearts of the politicians. Unfortunately, there is no effort in seeking the Lord's guidance, and political parties are being formed without considering it an opportunity to deliver the Lord's work. There has not been a single politician who has claimed that the task of leading a state is a dutiful work towards God, nor has it been recorded that a politician has chosen this occupation to serve the Lord. The irony that a state that claims to be Christian has leaders and political parties who do not seek the wishes of the Lord is appalling, and it may be the cause of the many tragedies of the state.

The substandard proceedings of Mizoram politics: Looking back on the journey of politics in Mizoram, let us discuss a few topics of the substandard qualities worth mentioning:

Every political party prioritises the party itself rather than the state it is to serve. They put more effort into winning elections rather than developing the state.

The government has a high salary profit, which strongly influences the politician's choice. People have become drawn to practising politics to earn a high income rather than an opportunity to develop the state. The only motive for people joining political parties who have a chance of winning before elections is money.

Creating hatred and making enemies of our neighbours or neighbouring communities has become standard due to different stances on political issues.

People's expectations of candidates and MLAs have become a significant issue. This has made many politicians to become corrupt.

There is no boundary one would cross to gain votes. One would spill out lies and, if needed, would indulge in unfair means if necessary.

The exemption of taxes may have been attributed to the low quality of infrastructure on the state government because there is no sense of ownership from the public. For instance, we provide donations to the Church, which gives us a feeling of ownership.

There is a vast difference in the work rate of the ruling and the opposition. Parties hardly continue the ongoing projects of other parties out of spite.

Several people prioritise their status in the parties they are associated with rather than their responsibility in the Church.

People tend to frown upon being a part of politics as it is perceived to be not worthy for a Christian to indulge in. However, we all are affected by it.

From the given statements, we can conclude that certain changes are necessary to overcome this obstacle. It may require new faces, new laws, or even time, but the most important of all would be a new mindset. The Church has given its utmost dedication to resolving this problem even though there is a slow progress rate. Nevertheless, we all would have been in a more troubled scenario if they had not done so.

Biblical teachings of politics

It is crucial to understand how the word of God describes how to rule a nation. Let us study the words of the Bible on how politics should function.

Old Testament

The responsibility of ruling over His creations was given to man:

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." (Gen 1:26-30).

The responsibility of appointing a leader: It is essential to take caution in this matter. A leader should prioritise the security of his beliefs and set aside worldly desires. He must not associate himself with foreigners to acquire riches. "When you enter the land the Lord your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, "let us set a king over us like all the nations around us," be sure to appoint over you the king the Lord your God chooses. He must be from among your brothers... The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself to make the people return to Egypt to get more of them..." (Deut 17: 14-20)

We humans are magnificent in the eyes of the Lord, thus taking care of man should be done with dedication: "What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honour." (Psalm 8:4-5)

God is present in every nation's administration: (Daniel 4:30-33)

"The Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes."

(One can also look into these verses for reference as well. Gen 9: 1-17; Deut 28: 1-14; 1 Sam 8: 19-22; 1 Chro 29: 11-14; 2 Chro 7: 13-14; Is 43: 15; Amos 5: 24; etc...)

New Testament

Our devotion to God must be absolute irrespective of our work: "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." (Mat 6:24)

Jesus came to heal the people's physical struggles and spirit. Jesus was a great politician: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Lk 4: 18-19).

God sits above the leaders, and He does not favor anyone: "And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him." (Eph 6:9)

Leaders must serve their people and God: "Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven." (Col 4:1)

(One may also explore these verses: Mt 22: 15-22; Mk 11:15-18; 12:13-17; Lk 20: 10-26; Rom 13: 1-7; Rev 19:2; etc...)

From the Bible verses, we can find that:

Politics is of God's creation; He is involved and so must we as believers. (This does not mean to be involved in party politics)

Politics is not to be used for profitable purposes, whether it is personal or party association. It should be evenly distributed within the people.

We must put God first in everything, not just in religious matters but also in political matters.

We require great and responsible leaders.

The perfect political manifesto is the manifesto of Jesus Christ.

Leaders as well as people both have significant responsibilities.

Positive and negative impacts on the public depending upon the ruling government

It is evident that we must strive to have a fair government after researching the Bible and the condition of the state. Let us dive deeper into it.

Religion and ethnicity: Religion is one of the most important features in the lives of mankind. Religion speaks about God, who monitors us even when no one is around. This in turn disciplines the life of man. Religion can only be secure if the government is competent. For example, we live in India, and the leaders of the Indian government follow different faiths. If the government is not firm in its belief, then our leaders would not have the courage to fight for our religious security.

God created man with different races and ethnicities, with different opinions and interests. This liberalism cannot be secure if the government cannot provide protection. Foreigners have authority over us because we do not have IAS officers to be put there. A good government prioritises the safety of its people, which brings security of religion, ethnicity and land.

Economy: A good government is often based on its economic power. The people have responsibilities, but there is a limit to what we can do. Our leaders are responsible for seeking business with other states and the central government, paving roads, and establishing industrial businesses

Has the government's flagship program proved to be a beacon of hope for the success of our economy? We require capital to start a business, and the government only provides capital to those it favours rather than those who actually need it. If the gap between the rich and the poor widens, then it is time for our leaders to reflect upon themselves.

Mindset: In a corrupt government, success is owned by party members, those who know how to persuade their leaders, and those who extravagantly spend money rather than hardworking individuals. This caused the people's minds to think that being cunning is a better road to success than being hardworking. We would fight over our lands and belongings while those in power would take everything and raise failures. This would affect our society, our families, and our Churches as well. Consequently, our ethnic heritage will extinct. Apart from this, an incompetent government creates issues on electricity, education, and many more.

We all have a responsibility in the governance of our state. Everyone has a role to play in order to have a well-functioning government, although our responsibilities may differ in value.

Responsibility of the Government

Cultural and religious security: There are several leaders in the Central Government who despise Christianity, thus Christian missionaries and followers are publicly tortured from time to time. Churches and a number of important Christian places have been vandalised. It is important that the government become brave enough to take responsibility and necessary action.

Apart from this, there are a number of cases where the state and our cultural heritage may be affected, all in the name of development. The construction of new railways and the new education policy implemented by the Central Government should all be taken into consideration. These visually progressive developments may become the source of future cultural and religious issues.

A sustainable development: Before every election, political parties would publicise their manifesto and organise flagship programs promising the people their plans if they get elected. One can summarise one's intentions after observing these events. It is also essential to analyse development plans in economics; whether or not their development plans have the potential to become sustainable is to be taken into consideration. Will there be a huge profit but at the cost of people suffering? Are there any scenarios where our ecosystem might become hazardous? We must keep these questions in mind before making any decision.

Opportunity for hardworking individuals: In his book, the renowned German scholar Max Weber wrote that there is a significant progress rate in those communities that follow the teachings of the Protestant Church in Europe. This is because John Calvin has put the responsibility for the development of society into the hands of the Church and has also preached the hard work of successful individuals. There would be a significant rate of development if the government supported these hardworking individuals and provided them with their necessities. It is essential to end this culture of favouritism, which requires a Minister's recommendation on trivial matters. If not, there will never be a reason to work hard, and we will only promote lethargy.

A government of the people: The Mizo chiefs had a way with the people, which was their strength. The young bachelors preserved the famous Mizo *tlawmngaihna*, the administration was functioning, and gossip had meaning. If only our leaders opened opportunities for the people to become more involved in government administration, then the people would have a sense of responsibility. If they ignore the voices of the people and only favour their own party members, the people face the consequences. Suppose there were plans to involve the youth with great potential and ideas that could seek out more significant development opportunities. However, since favouritism among party members still exists, the people can only get involved to a certain level, never having a sense of responsibility and being quick to criticise. As long as the party unit leaders have more power than the YMA and VC/LC, it is only possible to observe the work of the government.

The responsibility of the people

Although there are important topics to explore regarding the responsibility of the government, it would be more informative to discuss the responsibilities of the people.

A neutral mindset: Since we function in a party system, leaders are necessary for the unit, block, and central parties, and it would be preferable if the majority of the public did not enrol in these parties. We must have a sense of neutrality, loyalty, and courage to vote for candidates who prioritise the development and advancement of the state. It is time to stop voting for candidates representing the party we support and start voting for dedicated candidates who will commit to their goals.

Research on their manifesto: It is important to analyse and research the manifestos of these political parties. We must consider the practicality and necessary steps taken to implement their propaganda.

Research on the candidates: It is a relatively easy task to study the candidates' backgrounds. One can easily search for them through social media or mutual acquaintances to get information about the candidates in our constituency since we Mizo are still tiny in numbers. It is possible to get information from these candidates about their behaviour, their role in the Church and society, and their families' economic conditions. It is important to know if they are devoted followers of God and if they are committed to developing the state.

To vote for loyal and committed individuals: We tend to vote for candidates who belong to a party that has a high chance of winning the elections. Even if they belong to the ruling party, they do not have value if they are not loyal to a cause or are lethargic. The MLA funds amount to a lot, so creating a significant impact within their constituency is easy, even if they belong to an opposition party.

Politics should be used to develop the state: Many people consider politics a source of income, but only a few benefit from it while the majority are taken advantage of. Our expectations of the government have become toxic.

Failure to grant being bought off in the elections: The MPF has regulated and prevented the corrupt practice of buying off one's vote to a significant extent. We, the people, need to be aware that candidates who believe that our votes can be bought off do not have any respect for the voter. We should be careful not to vote for those candidates, especially those who have breached their agreement with the MPF.

To support fairness and justice: It is fundamental to have the courage and know when to speak the truth. If we witness corrupt practices, we must not hesitate to inquire about government offices and MLAs; in return, we gain their respect for speaking up.

Our status with God is more important than our political status: It is essential to prioritise our responsibilities in the Church over our status in these political parties. We must respect and follow the guidelines stated by the Church, as it is disappointing to see people indulge in corrupt practices because they are done in the name of politics.

To support the government: Indulging in snide comments about opposing parties with the intention of having a functioning government is not ethical. As Christians, we must allow ourselves to praise the government's good deeds, criticise its poor performances, and support its commitment. There is a significant difference between destructive and constructive criticism.

Looking at the bigger picture: The main objective of fighting over the status of unit leaders and other important designations in these political parties is that we have to feed ourselves. Focusing on the development of the state rather than our families is essential to having a fair and functioning government. We must understand that our children will be affected when we vote for candidates who promise us something in return.

Begin your quest to develop the state by starting from your household: The refinement of the state lies in the hands of the condition of our household. We must begin from our own homes to have a well-functioning government. We must act upon our jobs, capital, perception of politics, our spouses, etc., with the intention that it is pure in the eyes of the Lord. If we can influence our families to distance themselves from the sins of corruption in our homes, there would be none left to practice corruption. No one would be bribed into corruption, and no one would try to take more than they deserve. Let us take a step forward in our effort to develop this state to the best of our abilities.

Prioritising our commitment to God when Church leaders indulge in politics: Church ministers and clergymen are not meant to serve the Lord only within the confines of the Church walls. They should serve the Lord everywhere they go, to whomever they find at any time. If we associate ourselves with a political party, we must serve the Lord through the party. Shouldn't our presence in the administration of our associated party change for the better? We often vote for Church leaders with hopes that they would support a government that would stand for fairness and justice, but that is yet to be found. One must only associate oneself with a political party intending to serve the Lord and with a pure heart, and we will provide our support to the best of our abilities and through prayer.

CONCLUSION

This land is a gift from God to us, and we are obligated to care for it. The next elections require us to put our brains and emotions into them because God would not accept us, ignoring the blessings He has bestowed upon us. If we send out missionaries while the person holding the other end of the stick is incompetent, our impact will be insignificant. We must have the bravery and self-respect to decline any personal gain and to view this decision as a commitment to God, even if it causes us to suffer due to having made this decision. We must consider this our mission field and commit ourselves to enhancing the quality of our land.

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