

“GRAB YOUR DESTINY” KICKS OFF IN STYLE

For money, negligence or parochial sentiment many Nigerians are wont to give away the right of deciding who should lead them. Upon announcement of election results, winners go thanking the electorate for supposedly choosing them and then someone asks: who voted you, me? The aftermath would be disaffection plus political apathy which equals underdevelopment.

The Christian Awareness Initiative of Nigeria (CHAIN) considered it necessary therefore to sensitize citizens on benefits of democratic participation while also trying to elicit their active support for the nation’s impending voter registration.

The awareness campaign christened “Grab Your Destiny” will cover all local governments of Kaduna State, utilizing the mass media in addition to hand bills, posters as well as public enlightenment tours and meetings.

Grab Your Destiny campaign flagged off in a town called Kabala West on Sunday, September 19, 2010. It began with public screening of a football match between Manchester United and Liverpool. The Premiership encounter, shown at Let’s Go There viewing centre witnessed a large turnout of young and middle-aged, male and female.

As Berbatov of Manchester banged in the goals and Gerard of Liverpool replied with spectacular spot kicks, the crowd went wild in excitement, ignoring suffocating heat within the jam-packed hall. At half time, CHAIN took time out to talk to her audience about the need for a positive change in the nation’s electoral conduct.

Significantly, a section of the viewers had echoed the word “PDP” as the game progressed to emphasize Man U’s domination of the match. PDP is the acronym for Nigeria’s ruling party, and thus a symbol of power. That then became the launch pad for our talk on political participation.

Our speaker made a passionate appeal that all should shun bribery, violence, political apathy and ethnic politics. The importance of registering to vote was stressed.

Asked what was responsible for Nigeria’s electoral failures, some said it was the political parties, others thought the elite were to blame, but one person asserted that youths were the problem. All were right in their own right. We made it clear then that the time had come for all to work towards credible polls if Nigeria is to make good progress. Youths were admonished to resist all forms of electoral malpractice and insist on proper elections.

Refreshment time followed and each participant was given a bottle of soft drink to sip while enjoying second half dribbles. Some smart young chaps made brisk business packing up the plastic bottles for sale (makes economic sense, doesn’t it?).

In the end, Liverpool went home with a 3-2 defeat but our audience returned better informed and apparently poised to grab their destinies.