

BASIS FOR DIALOGUE IN AFRICA

CORNELIUS AFEBU OMONOKHUA



QUICK REVIEW

- THIS IS THE FIFTH LECTURE OF THE NIREC PUBLIC WEBINAR. SO FAR, WE HAVE COVERED:
- 1. ANTHROPOLOGICAL FOUNDATION OF CHARACTER.
- 2. EDUCATION FROM WOMB TO TOMB
- 3. PRINCIPLES AND DYNAMICS OF DIALOGUE.
- 4. **CHALLENGES OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM**
- 5. BASIS FOR DIALOGUE IN AFRICA

RELIGIOUS PHOBIA

- WHY ARE SOME PEOPLE AFRAID OF RELIGION?
- IS RELIGION THE CAUSE OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORLD?
- HOW IS RELIGION UNDER ATTACK FROM WITHIN?
- HOW DO YOU DELIVER RELIGION THROUGH WITNESS OF LIFE?
- DO RELIGION AND PROSPERITY GO HAND IN HAND?
- HOW CAN WE STOP THE ABUSE OF RELIGION IN AFRICA?
- WHAT ARE THE BASIS OF DIALOGUE IN AFRICA?
- TO DELIVER RELIGION, WE MUST KNOW OUR HISTORY.

BURNA BOY – AFRICAN GIANT

(YOUTUBE.BURNA BOY. 25 JULY 2019)

- **The origin of Nigeria was put into music by Burna Boy.**
- **He titled his music "Another story" in his Album, African Giant.**
- **He says that the creation of Nigeria was never about democracy or about Christianity or (Islam). It was all about money, business, and profit.**



FROM SLAVE TRADE TO OIL

THE AREA NOW KNOWN AS NIGERIA WAS CALLED THE SLAVE COAST. UP TO 1870, THIS WAS THE POINT AT WHICH THE BRITISH HAD STOPPED SLAVE TRADING AND MOVED ON TO PALM OIL AS THEIR PRIMARY COMMODITY OUT OF NIGERIA.

OBA OVONRAMWEN NOGBAISE

- One of the main suppliers of palm oil was the Benin kingdom during the reign of Oba Ovonramwen Nogbaise. His fight for self-determination and autonomy of the Benin Kingdom is one of the greatest stories of African colonial history.



OBA OVONRAMWEN

- **Oba Ovonramwen** (died January 1914, in Calabar, Southern Nigeria .
- **Oba Ovonramwen** was a West African ruler who was the last independent oba (king) of the 500-year-old kingdom of Benin.
- **Oba Ovonramwen** tried to maintain his independence in the face of increasing British pressure but was able to delay for only a few years the annexation of his kingdom by the colony of Nigeria.

OBA OVONRAMWEN

- He was called Idugbowa until he took the title Ovonramwen upon becoming oba. His kingdom was reduced by British commercial and colonial encroachment (c. 1700).
- He attempted to seal Benin off from Europeans but by 1892, he was forced to sign a protection treaty with the British administration.
- Disputes over trade along the Benin River (1892–94) led to a campaign against Benin; the murder of the British acting consul general in January 1897 precipitated a full-scale military expedition, which captured Benin City in February 1897. Ovonramwen surrendered to the British in August and died in exile.

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE

SIR GEORGE GOLDIE set up the United African Company in 1879, which was then changed to the national African Company.

He structured the palm oil business in the Niger Delta region, and by 1884, he had a monopoly that the British could exploit.



- In 1886, Goldie violated the agreement he had made with the chiefs and moved his operations into River Niger and Benue. The company was also renamed at this point to **Royal Niger Company**.
- Goldie tricked the chiefs into signing unfair trade deals, giving Goldie exclusive rights to export palm oil instead of what the chiefs thought would be free trade.

THE BERLIN CONFERENCE (1884 -1885)

- The Berlin Conference was set up by Germany's first chancellor, Otto van Bismarck. This was where the colonial powers discussed how to carve up Africa and structure trade across the pieces of African continent that they would take. Africans were not a part of this conversation.

AFRICA



KING JAJA OF OPOBO

- King Jaja of Opobo (full name: Jubo Jubogha; c. 1821–1891) belonging to the Igbo ethnicity, was the founder and first king (amanyanabo) of the Opobo Kingdom in present-day Rivers State and Akwa Ibom State of Nigeria.



OPOBO KINGDOM GIVEN TO BRITAIN

- **When King Jar Jar of Opobo tried to export his own palm oil, he was accused of obstructing commerce and then exiled. On his way home in 1891, he was poisoned with a cup of tea. The people of Opobo made other chiefs in the region very wary of their deals with the British Empire.**
- **King Koko of Nembe Brass was one of those chiefs. He tried to take down the Royal Niger Company and attacked the company headquarters in Akasa Bayelsa.**
- **He used the 60 hostages to demand that he be allowed free trade, the agreements he believed he had signed with the british company in the first place. They refused, and he killed 40 of his hostages. The British Royal Navy retaliated by levelling the city of Brass completely.**

OPOBO KINGDOM GIVEN TO BRITAIN

- **When King Jar Jar of Opobo tried to export his own palm oil, he was accused of obstructing commerce and then exiled. On his way home in 1891, he was poisoned with a cup of tea. The people of Opobo made other chiefs in the region very wary of their deals with the British Empire.**
- **King Koko of Nembe Brass was one of those chiefs. He tried to take down the Royal Niger Company and attacked the company headquarters in Akasa Bayelsa.**
- **He used the 60 hostages to demand that he be allowed free trade, the agreements he believed he had signed with the British company in the first place. They refused, and he killed 40 of his hostages. The British Royal Navy retaliated by levelling the city of Brass completely.**

KING FREDERICK WILLIAM KOKO, MINGI VII OF NEMBE (1853-1898),

- King Koko was an African ruler of the Nembe Kingdom (also known as Nembe-Brass) in the Niger Delta, now part of southern Nigeria.



PRIZE OF KING KOKO

• On February 20, 1895, King Koko went into exile, and the British not only took control of the palm oil he once had, but also fined the people of his kingdom 500 pounds, as well as confiscating their weapons. On February 20, 1895, King Koko went into exile, and the British not only took control of the palm oil he once had, but also fined the people of his kingdom 500 pounds, as well as confiscating their weapons.

• Tragically, King Coco committed suicide in exile in 1898 after being branded an outlaw by the British company that had taken his kingdom. Palm oil and reputation, the Royal Niger Company sold its territory to the British government for 865,000 pounds.

END OF KING KOKO

- **On February 20, 1895, King Koko went into exile, and the British not only took control of the palm oil he once had, but also fined the people of his kingdom 500 pounds, as well as confiscating their weapons.**
- **Tragically, King Koko committed suicide in exile in 1898 after being branded an outlaw by the British company that had taken his kingdom. Palm oil and reputation, the Royal Niger Company sold its territory to the British government for 865,000 pounds.**

NIGERIA EMERGED

- In the late 1800, this territory was known as Nigeria.
- In 1914, the Southern Protectorate and Northern Protectorate was combined by Lord Lugard.
- The Royal Niger Company was rebranded as a country which would gain independence on October 1, 1960.



FREDERICK JOHN DEALTRY LUGARD (22 JANUARY 1858 – 11 APRIL 1945)

- He was known as Sir Frederick Lugard between 1901 and 1928. He was a British soldier, mercenary, explorer of Africa and colonial administrator, who was Governor of Hong Kong (1907–1912) and Governor-General of Nigeria (1914–1919)”.
• His political strategy did not take cognisance of the cultural, ethnic and religious differences in Nigeria.



FROM PALM OIL TO CRUDE OIL BLESSING OR CHALLENGE?

- In Nigeria, oil was reportedly first discovered in Bayelsa State, in the Niger Delta in 1956. According to the Organization of the Petroleum Export Countries (OPEC), Nigeria currently had the world's tenth largest crude oil reserves and is the world's thirteenth-largest producer of crude oil.

- *(google search)*

• QUESTIONS

- WHY ARE THE REFINARIES NOT WORKING?
- WHY ARE WE STILL IMPORTING REFINED OIL?
- WHY ARE NIGERIANS THIRSTING IN THE ABUNDANCE OF WATER?

POST INDEPENDENCE SLAVERY OR NEO-COLONIALISM?

- A slave is not free to own or manage his or her resources.
- The slave master is an expert in divide and rule. He turns the slaves against each other.
- Natural resources in Africa are processed by the colonial masters.
- The best brains from Africa are in Europe, America or other liberated continents.
- Some of our most beautiful girls are trafficked as sex workers.

THE ROOT OF RELIGIOUS PHOBIA IN NIGERIA

- THE POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS AND ECONOMIC STRATEGY OF LUGARD DIVIDED THE NIGER AREA INTO NORTH AND SOUTH PROTECTORATES.
- THE NORTHERNERS WERE PERCEIVED AS MUSLIMS AND THE SOUTHERNERS WERE PERCEIVED AS CHRISTIANS.
- THIS COULD EXPLAIN WHY A MUSLIM IN THE SOUTH EAST COULD BE REGARDED AS ONYE HAUSA.
- THE POLITICAL STRATEGY TO CAUSE THE FEAR OF RELIGION HAS A HISTORICAL ROOT. TODAY, RELIGION IS WEAPONIZED BY MISCHIEF MAKERS.

WHY INTRA-NATIONAL DIALOGUE?

- THE PEST THAT IS EATING THE SEED IS INSIDE THE SEED.
- IT IS THE RAT IN THE HOUSE THAT INVITES THE RATS IN THE BUSH TO EAT UP THE FOOD IN THE HOUSE.
- AFRICA MUST RESOLVE TO HAVE SELF-DETERMINATION.



CHINUA ACHEBE

THINGS FALL APART

- ACHEBE'S PRIMARY PURPOSE OF WRITING THE NOVEL IS TO SHOW THE CONFLICT BETWEEN CULTURE AND RELIGION, THINGS FALL APART PROVIDES READERS WITH AN INSIGHT OF IGBO SOCIETY RIGHT BEFORE THE WHITE MISSIONARIES' INVASION ON THEIR LAND.



UTHMAN DAN FODIO

- Uthman Dan Fodio was a Fulani scholar who launched a jihad in northern Nigeria in 1804 that lasted for six years.
- The goal was to revive and purify Islam, and to encourage less devout Muslims to return to orthodox Islam.
- Did this has any effect on the cultures of Northern Nigeria?



FROM SLAVERY TO INDEPENDENCE

- KNOWING OUR HISTORY CAN MOVE US AWAY FROM SLAVERY AND COLONIAL STATUS TO BE TRULY INDEPENDENT. UNTIL WE TAKE OUR DESTINY IN OUR HANDS, WE MAY NOT SEE THE NATION OF OUR DREAM.



RELIGIOUS PHOBIA OR INTER-CONTINENTAL VIOLENCE



FEMI ADESINA, FORMER SPECIAL ADVISER ON MEDIA AND PUBLICITY TO PRESIDENT MUHAMAMADU BUHARI

- On September 26, 2018, Guardian online reported that President Buhari, in a statement signed by his Special Adviser on Media and Publicity, Femi Adesina, said:
- “The terrorist insurgencies we face, particularly in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin, are partly fuelled by local factors and dynamics, but now increasingly by the international Jihadi Movement, runaway fighters from Iraq and Syria and arms from the disintegration of Libya.”



RELIGIOUS PHOBIA INTER-CONTINENTAL VIOLENCE

- PRESIDENT MUHAMADU BUHARI IN NEW YORK AT THE GLOBAL AUDIENCE DURING THE OPENING OF THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE 73RD SESSION OF THE UNITED NATION'S GENERAL ASSEMBLY.
- CALLED ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO STRENGTHEN ITS RESOLVE TO COMBAT ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS CLEANSING EVERYWHERE.



RELEVANCE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS TO POLITICAL LEADERS

- On the 20th of October, 2011,
- **DR. GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN, PRESIDENT EMERITUS OF NIGERIA**, called an extra ordinary meeting of NIREC at 8.30pm in Aso villa, Abuja, to appeal to religious leaders to seek ways of using religion to restore peace in Nigeria.



RESTORING THE STRENGTH IN RELIGION

- THIS MEETING REVEALS:
- THAT EVEN THE POLITICIANS ARE WORRIED THAT SOME POLITICAL LEADERS USE RELIGION TO PERPETUATE THEIR AMBITION .
- THAT RELIGION CAN BE USED TO CREATE PEACE AND HARMONY,
- RELIGIOUS LEADERS MUST THEREFORE COME TOGETHER TO FIGHT THE WEAPONIZATION OF RELIGION BY GREEDY PEOPLE.
- THIS IS A STRONG BASIS FOR DIALOGUE IN AFRICA

BASIS FOR CHRISTIAN MUSLIM DIALOGUE

- **BELIEF IN ONE GOD**
- **ABRAHAM AS A COMMON FATHER**
- **TO GIVE A COUNTER-NARRATIVE TO THE IDEOLOGY OF THE TERRORIST, NAMELY, TO PROVOKE A RELIGIOUS WAR.**

COMMON HUMANITY

- **THAT WHICH BINDS US TOGETHER IS STRONGER THAN WHAT SEPARATES US.**
- **ACCOMMODATE AND TOLERATE THAT WHICH SEPARATES US.**
- **BOTH CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS SHARE COMMON HUMANITY IRRESPECTIVE OF DIFFERENCES IN LANGUAGE, CULTURE AND WORLD VIEW.**

ABRAHAM, OUR FATHER IN FAITH

- ABRAHAM IS REGARDED AS THE FATHER OF FAITH FOR THE JEWS, CHRISTIANS AND THE MUSLIMS.
- THE JEWS AND ARABS ARE SEMITIC PEOPLE.



COMMON BELIEF

- **ISLAM**
- The submission of Abraham in the attempted sacrifice of his son Isaac: “peace and salutation to Abraham!” (Qur’an, Suratul Sâffât 109;
- The sacrifice of a son by Abraham (Al Sâffât 99-111).



ABRAHAM, ISMAEL AND ISAAC

- Before the birth of Isaac, Abraham married Hagar an Egyptian girl who gave birth to Ishmael (Genesis 16). Later Sarah gave birth to Isaac. (Genesis 21:1-7).
- At the order of Sarah, Abraham sent away Hagar and her son Ishmael.



ONE FAITH, DIFFERENT CONCEPTS

THE HOLY BIBLE

- Hagar wandered off into the wilderness of Beersheba (Genesis 21:15). “God was with the boy. He grew up and made his home in the wilderness, and he became a bowman.” (Genesis 21:20).

THE HOLY QURAN

- Ismâ'il went to Mecca. His descendants grew up in Arabia as Muslims. Sons of Isaac, remained in Palestine as Jews (Suratul Baqarah 125-129, Suratul An' am 86, Suratul Maryam 54-55; Suratul Anbiyâ 85).

IMPLICATION FOR CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS

- **The Christians and the Muslims have the same father,**
- **Sarah is the mother of the Jews,**
- **Hagar is the mother of the Arabs,**
- **Therefore, they should dialogue as a family to enjoy peaceful co-existence.**
- **This belief must have enabled the Abyssinian Monks and the Christians welcomed, accommodated and protected Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and his followers.**

CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS CAN CO-EXIST IN PEACE

- *When he went in a trade caravan with Abu Talib to Syria, his tender soul marked inwardly how Allah did speak in the wide expanse of deserts*
- *It was on such visits that he met and conversed with Nestorian Christian monks like Bahirah who were quick to recognize his spiritual worth. The Holy Prophet while on a caravan trip with Khadija also encountered the Abyssinian monks who were very hospitable to them (Introduction to the Holy Qur'an C.23)*

CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS CAN MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

- *Those who believe (in the Qur'an) and those who follow the Jewish scriptures and the Christians and the Sabians; Any who believe Allah and the last day and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord. On them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve (Al Baqarah 2:62).*
- **This encounter of Prophet Muhammad SAW with the Christians of Abyssinian is a strong basis for dialogue between the Christians and the Muslims.**

POLITICAL BASIS FOR DIALOGUE

- Nigeria is an amalgam of ancient Kingdoms, Caliphates, Empires and City-states with a long history of organised societies.
- Although the name Nigeria was adopted in 1898, we can still be a nation.



SYMBOL OF UNITY

This Coat of Arms is described as follows: At the top of the coat of arms is an eagle, red in colour and mounted on a wreath which is rendered in the national colours. The eagle and wreath rest on a black shield with a Y-shaped silver coloured wavy band in the middle of the black shield. Two white horses support the shield on either side.

SYMBOLISM OF COAT OF ARMS ELEMENTS

- **THE RED EAGLE** depicts Nigeria's strength.
- **THE BLACK SHIELD** signifies the fortuitous qualities of the land in agricultural, mineral and solid resources.
- **THE Y-SHAPED SILVER COLOURED WAVY BAND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE BLACK SHIELD** represents the two major rivers in the country, River Niger and River Benue.
- **THE TWO WHITE HORSES** signify dignity

RENEWED HOPE

- "Nigeria, We Hail Thee" is the national anthem of Nigeria, used from independence in 1960 until 1978, and then from 2024. Nigeria's former anthem, "Arise, O Compatriots," was adopted in 1978, replacing "Nigeria, We Hail Thee." On 29 May 2024, Bola Tinubu signed a bill reinstating "Nigeria, We Hail Thee."

RENEWED HOPE

RENEWED NATIONAL ANTHEM

- **Nigeria we hail thee,
Our own dear native land,
Though tribe and tongue
may differ,
In brotherhood we stand,
Nigerians all, and proud to
serve
Our sovereign Motherland.**

•

NEW AND ABROGATED ANTHEM

- Arise, O Compatriots
- Nigeria's call obey
To serve our fatherland
With love and strength and faith
- The labour of our heroes past,
shall never be in vain
To serve with heart and might
One nation bound in freedom,
- peace and unity.

RENEWED HOPE

NIGERIA WE HAIL THEE

- **Our flag shall be a symbol
That truth and justice reign.
In peace or battle honour'd,
And this we count as gain.
To hand on to our children
A banner without stain.**
- **O God of all creation.
Grant this our one request,
Help us to build a nation
Where no man is oppressed.
And so with peace and plenty
Nigeria may be blessed.**

ARISE O COMPATRIOTS

- Oh God of creation
Direct our noble cause
Guide thou our leaders right
Help our youth the truth to know
In love and honesty to grow
And living just and true
Great lofty heights attain
To build a nation where peace and
justice shall reign