

CHALLENGES OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM



QUICK REVIEW

- ▶ THIS IS THE FOURTH 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**

CHALLENGES OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

- ▶ **IF GOD WANTED A WORLD WITH ONE LANGUAGE, ONE RELIGION AND ONE CULTURE, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE FOR HIM TO DO.**

LET US WORK FOR UNITY
IN DIVERSITY



CORNELIUS AFEBU
OMONOKHUA

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM



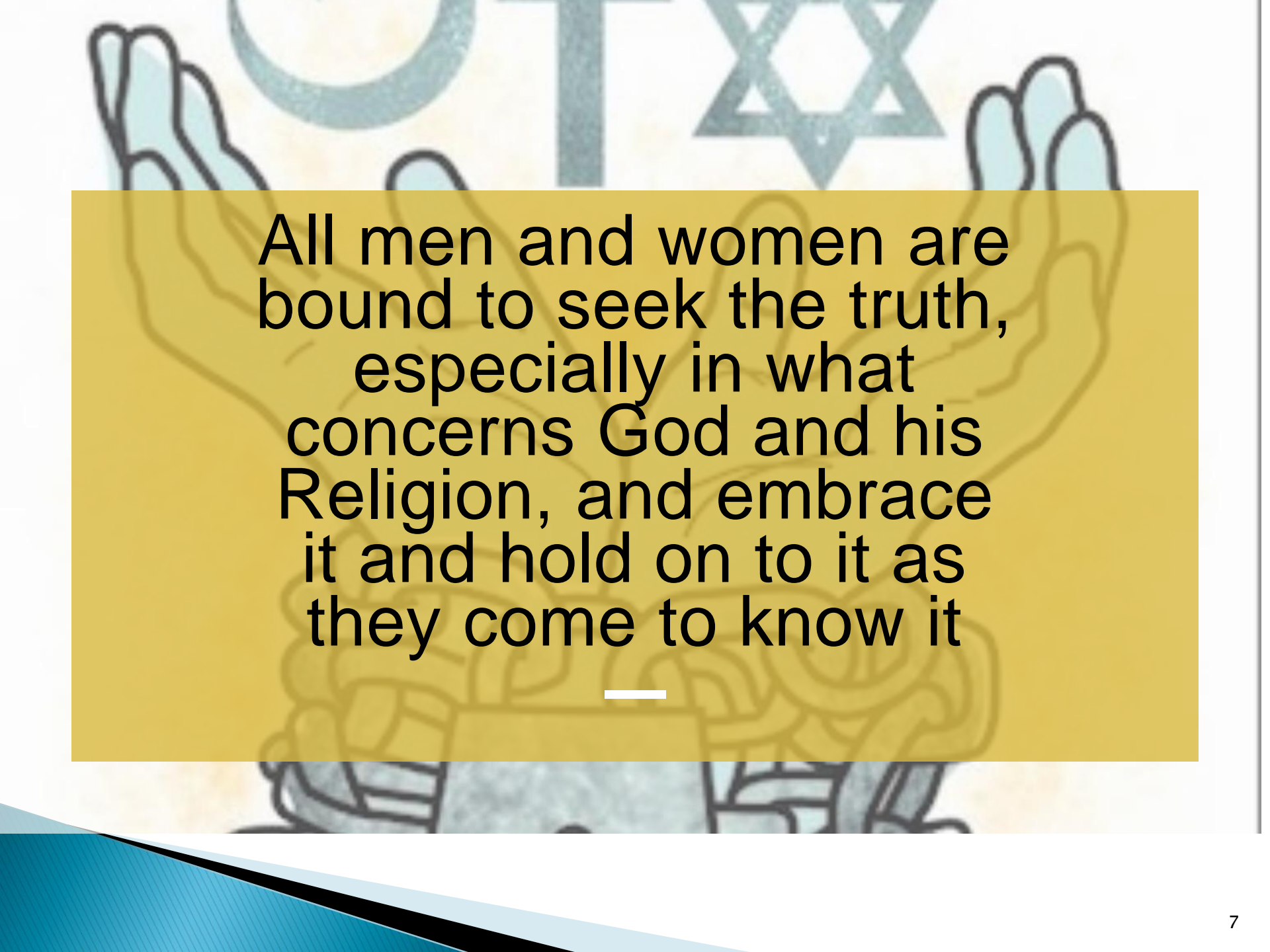
YOU ARE NOT BORN A CHRISTIAN, JEW, OR MUSLIM; A REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRAT; A CAPITALIST, SOCIALIST, OR COMMUNIST.



**YOU ARE BORN A HUMAN BEING.
LIVE AND FIGHT FOR HUMANITY.**

WHY ANARCHY?

- ANARCHY IN THE SOCIETY IS NOT THE DESIGN OF GOD.
 - TO PROMOTE PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE, THE KNOWLEDGE THAT OUR COMMON FACTOR IS HUMANITY IS IMPERATIVE.
 - THE ROOT OF INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFLICT IS RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.
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All men and women are bound to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and his Religion, and embrace it and hold on to it as they come to know it

ONE GOD, MANY RELIGIONS

ONE GOD, MANY RELIGIONS

There are so many religions in the world. These religions believe in God but their concept of God is not the same. We may attempt the groupings of religion into:

- **Abrahamic,**
- ▶ **Indian,**
- ▶ **Iranian,**
- ▶ **East Asian and**
- ▶ **Indigenous traditional religions.**

ABRAHAMIC RELIGIONS

- Bahá'í Faith
- Christianity
- Gnosticism
- Islam
- Judaism
- Rastafari movement
- Mandeans and Sabians
- Samaritanism
- Unitarian Universalism



INDIAN RELIGIONS

- ▶ Ayyavazhi
 - ▶ Bhakti Movement
 - ▶ Buddhism
 - ▶ Din-i-Ilahi
 - ▶ Hinduism
 - ▶ Jainism
 - ▶ Sikhism
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IRANIAN RELIGIONS

- ▶ Manichaeism
 - ▶ Mazdakism
 - ▶ Mithraism
 - ▶ Yazdânism
 - ▶ Zoroastrianism
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EAST ASIAN RELIGIONS



1. Confucianism
2. Shinto
3. Taoism
4. Others

- **INDIGENOUS TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS**

1. African
2. American
3. Eurasian
4. Oceania/Pacific



HISTORICAL POLYTHEISM

1. Ancient Near Eastern
2. Indo-European
3. Hellenistic



NEW AGE, ESOTERICISM, MYSTICISM

1. Esotericism and mysticism
2. Occult and magical (or magickal)
3. Left-Hand Path

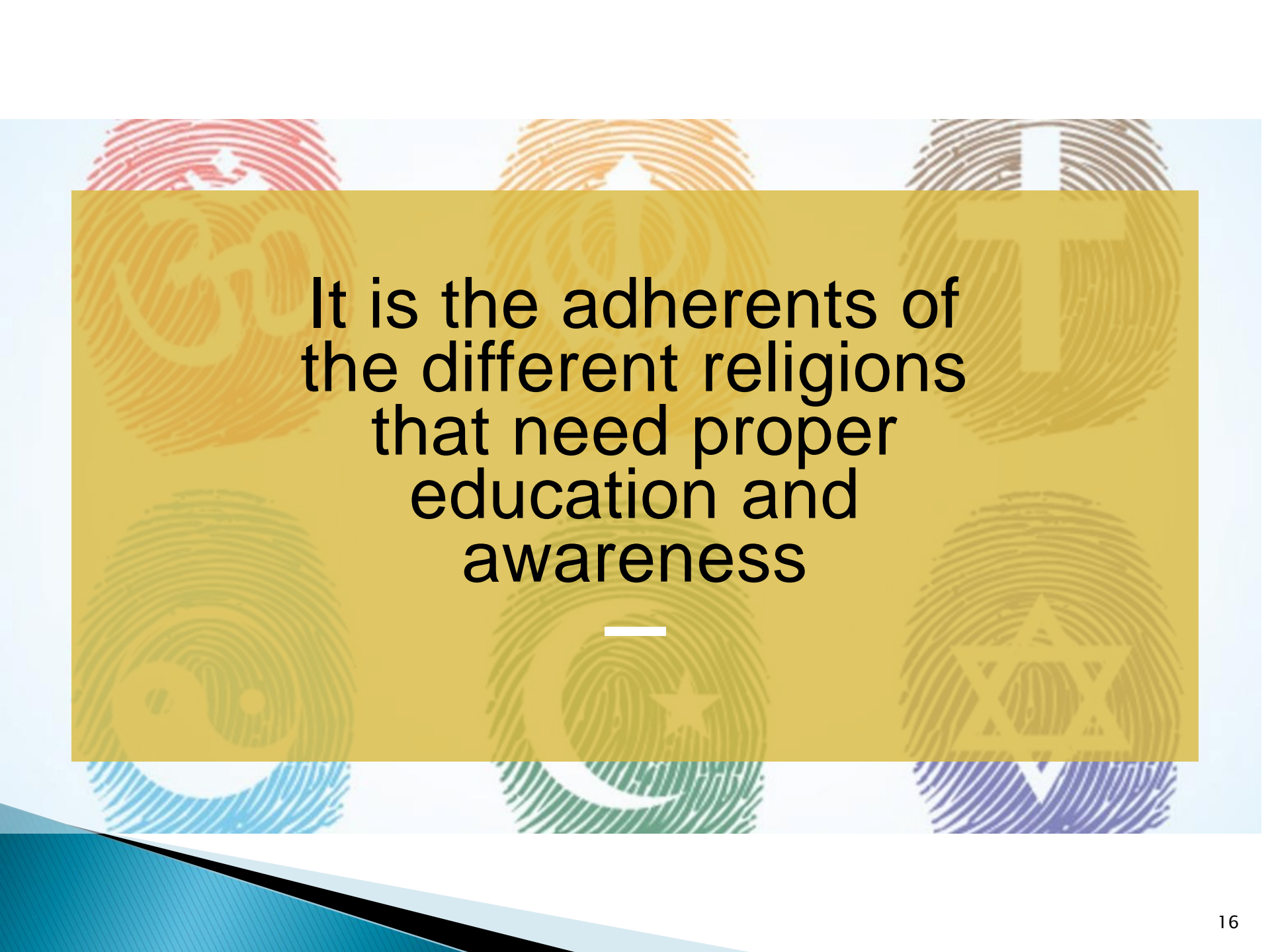


There are **classical world religions** that are often described for historical reasons but the "World's Major Religions" that are **functionally-oriented**, yet still strongly classical are:

- ▶ Baha'i
- ▶ Buddhism
- ▶ Confucianism
- ▶ Hinduism
- ▶ Islam
- ▶ Judaism
- ▶ Orthodox Eastern Church
- ▶ Protestantism
- ▶ Catholicism
- ▶ Shinto

CHALLENGES OF RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

All over the world, there have been challenges of religious pluralism. For instance, in India there is tension between adherents of Hindu, Buddha, Islam and Christian religions. China and the Middle East have their stories to tell. Europe and America is not even spared. We remember vividly the terrorist attack on America in September 11, 2001 (now popularly know as 9 / 11). We may find ourselves anywhere in the world where there is religious intolerance and conflicts. How do we approach dialogue in conflicting areas?

The background features a light blue gradient with several circular fingerprint patterns in various colors (red, orange, brown, green, blue). Each fingerprint contains a different religious symbol: a crescent moon and star, a triangle, a cross, a yin-yang, a crescent moon, and a six-pointed star. A large, semi-transparent yellow rectangle is centered on the page, containing the main text.

**It is the adherents of
the different religions
that need proper
education and
awareness**

IMPLICATION OF DIALOGUE FOR AFRICA

JUSTICE AND GOOD GOVERNANCE

EVERY MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY
SHOULD BE INVOLVED

EFFECTIVE COMMITMENT OF
FAITH BASED ORGANIZATIONS



The relation of a
mentally-challenged
person has a duty to
prevent him from
roaming the forest and
streets

INFORMATION

- Conflict has never brought success or progress to a person, community or nation. We must therefore promote only the information that is true, good and useful to build a healthy society.

POLITICAL WILL & HUMAN ATTITUDES

- Government at all levels must have the political will to manage ethnic diversity and religious pluralism. Let us strive to harness the innate beauty and strength of our diversity.

In dialogue, *understanding* is the key word. Nigerians have gone through many faces of

- ▶ violence,
- ▶ slavery and
- ▶ colonialism to the extent that the value of trust has been replaced with:

- ▶ prejudice,
- ▶ preconception
- ▶ and mutual suspicions.

These, call for education, debriefing, healing of memory, mental reconstruction, reconciliation and compassion.

JOHN WESLEY:



I have no more right to object to a man for holding a different opinion from mine than I have to differ with a man because he wears a wig and I wear my own hair. We think and let's think. In other words While we think, we should let others think their own way.

TERROT.R. GLOVER

- ▶ Remember that whatever your hand finds to do, someone thinks differently!



FETHULLAH GÜLEN

- ▶ One way to get others to accept your ideas is by persuasion.
- ▶ Those who resort to force are intellectually bankrupt; people will always demand freedom of choice in the way they run their affairs.



BISHOP GODFREY .I. ONAH

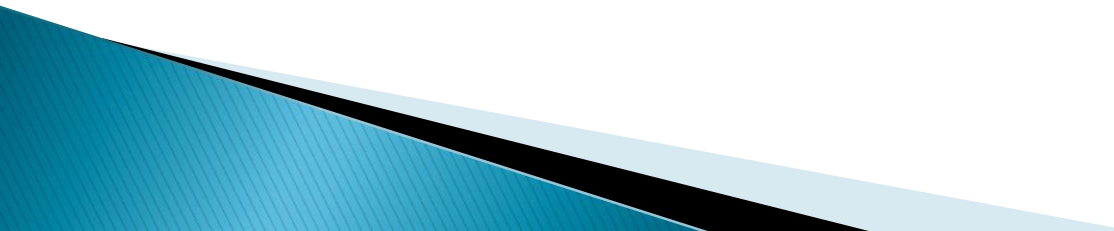
- ▶ Inter-religious dialogue is first a dialogue between human beings before being a dialogue between religions.

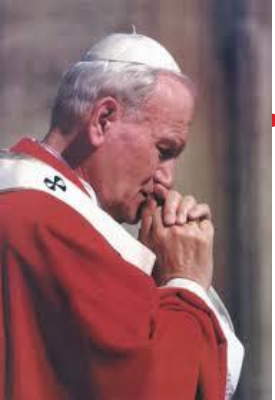


DIALOGUE IS THE INITIATIVE OF GOD

- ▶ Dialogue is the initiative of God and a mission which Jesus Christ has given to the Church and humanity. In the Genesis creation narrative, the author presents God as a community of persons: “*Let us make man in our own image*” (Genesis 1, 26). The fall of Adam and Eve is marked by a dialogue between God, Adam, Eve and the Serpent (Genesis 3). The trial of Job was preceded with a dialogue between God and Satan (Job 1) and concluded with the dialogue between God and Job (Job 42).

- ▶ The act of the redemption of the world was an agreement through a dialogue between God and Mary to become the mother of the Redeemer (Luke 1). Dialogue being a divine initiative becomes the mission of the Church for every Christ Faithful. The Church has responded to this call to dialogue in a unique and official way. The Second Vatican Council exhaustively discusses Inter-religious Dialogue in so many documents among which we can mention the following:

- ▶ Nostra Aetate (Oct. 28, 1965)
 - ▶ Lumen Gentium (Nov. 21, 1964)
 - ▶ Dignitatis Humanae (Dec. 7, 1965)
 - ▶ Ad Gentes (Dec. 7, 1965)
 - ▶ Gaudium et Spes (Dec. 7, 1965)
 - ▶ Apostolicam Actuositatem (Nov. 18, 1965)
 - ▶ Christus Dominus (Oct. 28, 1965) and so many others
- 




At the beginning of his Pontificate, Pope Benedict XVI reminded believers in the following words: *“We are not some casual and meaningless product of evolution. Each of us is the result of a thought of God. Each of us is willed, each of us is loved, each of us is necessary.”*

- ▶ In his *Message for the World Day of Peace in 2007* he reiterated: *“As one created in the image of God, each individual human being has the dignity of a person; he or she is not just something, but someone, capable of self-knowledge, self-possession, free self-giving and entering into communion with others.*





▶ **POPE BENEDICT XVI**

- ▶ In the world there is too much violence, too much injustice, and therefore that this situation cannot be overcome except by countering it with more love, with more goodness. This ‘more’ comes from God: it is his mercy which was made flesh in Jesus and which alone can ‘tip the balance’ of the world from evil to good, starting with that small and decisive “world” which is the human heart”.
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POPE BENEDICT XVI

- ▶ Dialogue cannot be reduced to an optional extra.
- ▶ Peace is not something only to be sought in halls of government and religious houses but in our hearts.



EFFORTS OF THE MUSLIMS

In Nigeria, a lot of dialogue is going on between Christians and Muslims. The following are key indicators:

- ▶ **EFFORTS of the Federation of Muslim Women Association in Nigeria FOMWAN**
- ▶ **Efforts of the Nigeria Supreme Council for Religious Affairs (NSCIA)**
- ▶ **Efforts of the Muslim youths.**
- ▶ **The breaking of fast during Ramadan**

SUPREME COUNCIL FOR ISLAMIC AFFAIRS (NSCIA)



DR. LATEEF ADEGBITE



**ALHAJI IBRAHIM
SHEKARAU**

SUPREME COUNCIL FOR ISLAMIC AFFAIRS (NSCIA)

- ▶ Late "Secretary General, Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, Dr. Lateef Adegbite and Kano State Governor Alhaji Ibrahim Shekarau stressed the importance of dialogue in promoting peace and religious harmony (April 28, 2004 *AllAfrica.com, Daily Trust (Abuja)*).

SULTAN MUHAMMADU SA'AD ABUBAKAR

- ▶ THE PRESIDENT OF NSCIA HAS PASSION FOR DIALOGUE AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE. HE IS A CO-CHAIRMAN OF NIREC.



JOHN CARDINAL ONAIYEKAN

- This dialogue has been beneficial to both religions.
- Things would have been worst.
- Recall the famous letter on “A Common Word” by over 250 high level Muslim leaders from all over the world,
- the Christian–Muslim dialogue initiatives from Saudi Arabia and Jordan,
- the visit of the Saudi King to Pope Benedict XVI in the Vatican, etc
- John Cardinal Onaiyekan was a co–chairman of NIREC



CONCLUSION.

- Adherents of the different religions need to come together and work against the enemies of peace
- ***“No religion preaches violence”.***
- We must continue the project of dialogue in the spirit of God who created all human beings in peace and freedom.
- We are destined for salvation and peace here and hereafter in eternity.