

16. THE EFFORTS OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN DIALOGUE AND PEACE-BUILDING





TITLE: THE EFFORTS OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN DIALOGUE AND PEACE-BUILDING

PRESENTATION BY:

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IHESIULOR.

President Magdala Unity Foundation and
Former Chairperson WOWICAN

DEACONESS AMB. MRS. VICTORIA BOLA IHESIULOR

- ▶ Deaconess Ihesiulor Bolanle Victoria is the immediate past Chairperson of Women Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWICAN).
- ▶ She owns a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration (B.Sc).
- ▶ She was a Director of Marketing in Nigerian Television Authority (NTA).
- ▶ She is a fellow in many institutes and organizations.



QUICK REVIEW

This is the 15th presentation 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
6. National unity and religious cooperation
7. The role of NIREC in strengthening national unity

QUICK REVIEW

8. Human destiny and time
9. The role of Islam in dialogue and peacebuilding
10. The church and inter-religious dialogue
11. Breaking barriers, promoting inclusion and integration for refugees.
12. The Efforts of Muslim Women in dialogue and peace-building.
13. The contribution of ACRL-RfP to dialogue and global peace
14. KAICIID, interreligious dialogue and peacebuilding in the world
15. Personality and Power Crisis
16. The efforts of Christian Women in Dialogue and Peace Building

THE EFFORTS OF CHRISTIAN WOMEN IN DIALOGUE AND PEACE BUILDING

Outline

- ▶ Meet the presenter and Women's Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWICAN).
 - ▶ Dialogue and Peace
 - ▶ Essence of Christian women's participation in dialogue and peace
 - ▶ Challenges
 - ▶ Way forward
 - ▶ Conclusion
- ▶ WOWICAN, FOMWAN and Girl Guides in a dialogue scene.





MEET DEACONESS AMB. MRS VICTORIA BOLA IHESIULOR (B.sc, FNIMN, FIMC, APCON)

Accomplished leader and marketer with over 30 years of service to the nation in the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA)

Retired after meritorious service as dynamic and results-driven Senior Director of Marketing with over 30 years

Elected as Chairperson WOWICAN FCT and later elected as National Chairperson WOWICAN from 2018-2023

Now President of Magdala Unity Foundation.

Led impactful initiatives, including collaborations with international organizations like The Carter Center and UN Women. Adept at fostering partnerships and driving campaigns that address societal issues such as Gender-Based Violence.

HISTORY OF WOWICAN

WOWICAN (Women CAN) Started in Kaduna by Dcns. Mrs Modupe **Adesida**, a lecturer then at the Kaduna Polytechnic in late 1984. Christian women from various Denominations in Kaduna gathered at ECWA Church, Lemu road, opposite Kaduna Polytechnic, Tudun Wada, Kaduna. There, the leadership changed hands to Mrs **Dinah Achimugu** (Late) around April/ May 1987. Sister Dinah Achimugu's leadership mobilized women from all groups – Bankers, market women, police/ military officers' wives, women church workers and states. The WOMEN CAN as it was known then spread rapidly from Kaduna to all the nooks and crannies of Kaduna and the entire North. Similar movements were going on in the West and the East of Nigeria.

HISTORY OF WOWICAN

WOMEN CAN and YOUTH CAN sought for registration as various CAN bodies in 2004 when Engr. Salifu was already CAN Gen. Secretary. The main CAN body discussed this and the former Gen. Secretary of CAN, C. O. Williams (Late) and Archbishop Okogie advised that CAN should remain One Body. A new CONSTITUTION was in progress under Primate Jasper Akinola's leadership (who became CAN President in 2003). It was then resolved that the WOMEN CAN and the YOUTH CAN become Wings of CAN instead of too many CAC registrations, hence WOWICAN (Women Wing CAN) and YOWICAN (Youth Wing CAN) were formed.

Past and Present LEADERS OF WOWICAN

- ▶ PAST CHAIRPERSONS OF WOWICAN FROM 1987 - 2024
- ▶ 1) Mrs Dinah Achimugu **1987-2006**
- ▶ 2) Lady Barr. Regina Chizube Okafor LSMKSS JP **2006-2012**
- ▶ 3) Pastor (Dr.) Mrs Mabel Oyin Sowoolu. **2012-2018**
- ▶ 4) Deaconess Amb. Mrs Victoria B. Ihesiulor **2018 - 2023**
- ▶ **General Lady Superintendent Dr Elizabeth Ayobami Akinadewo** **2023 to date**

WOWICAN

- ▶ The Women's Wing of the Christian Association of Nigeria (WOWICAN) is a multicultural, nonprofit faith-based organization and the overarching umbrella body of over 40 million Christian women in Nigeria. It is 100 % women-led and the umbrella of all the Christian blocs namely- Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN), Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), Christian Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria/Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria (CPFN/PFN), Organization of African Instituted Churches (OAIC) and Tarayar Ekkliiziyoyin Kristi A Nigeria (aka The Fellowship of Churches of Christ in Nigeria)/ Evangelical Church Winning All (TEKAN/ ECWA).
- ▶ To effectively and efficiently deliver her programmes, it is organized at National, Zonal (all the Six Geopolitical zones- South South, South West, North Central, North West, North East and South East), 36 States including Federal Capital Territory (FCT), 774 Local Governments and Council Wards. This has enabled WOWICAN in its about 40 years of existence to address institutional (policy), structural and capacity challenges of women and girls at various levels including the family. Furthermore, it offers her the opportunity to engage different structures of the Nigerian state as it did during the Risk Communication and Community Engagement project of the UN Women. Her dynamic structure was deployed to reach vulnerable women and girls in different states at the grassroots in collaboration with FOMWAN. WOWICAN also leveraged her structure to engage the Ministry of Women's Affairs and other state and traditional institutions successfully.

WOWICAN

- ▶ **Vision:** A strong, vibrant and dynamic umbrella organization of all Christian women in Nigeria, built on pillars of love and justice of Jesus Christ.
- ▶ **Mission:** To mobilize and build the capacity of women and girls to effectively contribute to personal and societal development through justice, peace and love

Objectives

- ▶ Preach the love of Christ in our grassroots activities and win souls for Christ.
- ▶ To be a hub for building the capacity of women and youth
- ▶ To provide a platform to engage with women of other faith
- ▶ To be a voice for the voiceless women in our society
- ▶ To bring about education, social and economic empowerment of women and girls

Dialogue and Peace

- ▶ **Dialogue-**'Interfaith/Religious Dialogue' refers to the positive and cooperative interaction between people of different religions, faiths or spiritual beliefs, to promote understanding between different religions to increase acceptance and tolerance.
- ▶ Environmental Dialogue-Conscious efforts to understand the environment as our home for today and that of future generations.



Peace

David Francis, (2006 p 27) “ Peace in Africa is not only the absence of war, conflict, fear, distraction and human suffering but also the absence of unequal and unjust structures and cultural practices, about security, democratic participation, respect for human right, development, social progress and justice”.

Philippians 4:7 (NIV) And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."



Why Dialogue and Peace ?

Dialogue

- Nigeria is a multicultural and multi-religious nation that is home to over 250 ethnic groups, over 500 languages and diverse religious beliefs.
- Democracy is dialogue
- The intensity of religious identity in Nigeria is regarded as one of the highest in the world (Paden, 2008). This implies that Nigerians are more likely to define themselves in terms of religion than any other identity

Peace

- ▶ A Christian calling as contained in the Beatitudes- Mathew 5:9 'blessed are the peace makers, they shall be called children of God'
- ▶ UNESCO's vision on peace states that since wars begin in the minds of women and men, it is in the minds of women and men that the defenses of peace must be constructed.
- ▶ Peace engenders personal and community development
- ▶ Mothers are committed to the tomorrow of their children as much as their today.

How

- ▶ WOWICAN as mothers deploy UNESCO's four pillars of education to dialogue and build peace
- ▶ Learning to Know
- ▶ Learning to do
- ▶ Learning to live together
- ▶ Learning to be



Learning to know

WOWICAN through her education programmes helps people to understand and discover each other- Religion, culture, democracy, Gender, Environment, Human Rights among others eg. In the picture WOWICAN educating people on elections and on diversity

Matthew 28:19A (KJV) "Go ye therefore and teach all Nations"



How

- ▶ **Learning to do** – WOWICAN helps people to apply the theoretical knowledge acquired to make choices think critically, solve problems and act in the most appropriate way to engender peace . Put into practice what have be taught.

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

- ▶ **Learning to live together** - WOWICAN in applying this, promotes non violence within the homes and communities through helping people to discover and face diversity as something normal, creation of affective bonds-boys and girls, young and old, rich and poor. This helps in strengthening of empathy (human solidarity), tolerance and respect.

- ▶ **Mark 12:31 (NIV)**

Learning to be

This relates to developing the whole person to think critically and autonomously in fighting unjust structures, promoting gender equality, enabling democratic inclusion, economic empowerment, justice and learning to be an agent and ambassador of Peace.

John 8:32 (NIV)



WOWICAN COLLABORATION

WOWICAN is committed to empowering women and girls in all aspects of life, and we believe that peace and dialogue are essential tools for achieving this goal.

WOWICAN has partnered with FOMWAN and NASFAT to support families affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in Kano, Enugu, Lagos, and beyond, demonstrating the power of interfaith collaboration in times of crisis. Through these efforts, WOWICAN has shown that dialogue and empathy can bring people together, even in the face of adversity, and foster a culture of peace and unity.

Other Partnerships include the Cardinal Onaiyekan Foundation for Peace (COFP), The Carter Center, Girl Guides, Interfaith Dialogue Forum for Peace [IDFP] and UN Women

WOWICAN COLLABORATION

Women interfaith:
WOWICAN FOMWAN
AND NASFAT collaborate
to support vulnerable
families during the
COVID-19 pandemic in
some states Kano, Enugu
Lagos to
mention but a few.

NASFAT/WOWICAN/FOMWAN

COVID-19 PALLIATIVE

**WOMEN INTERFAITH
SUPPORT FOR
VULNERABLE FAMILIES**

Venue: CAN Secretariat, 185, Olabisi Onabanjo
way, Iyana Mortuary, Abeokuta, Ogun State.

Date: FRIDAY 24TH, JULY 2020



Enquiries: +234 8034159247, +2348037044286, +2348036566160



WOWICAN COLLABORATION



WOWICAN extensively shared palliative in all the states in Nigeria including FCT to reduce the harsh effect of the lockdown.

WOWICAN COLLABORATION



WOWICAN COLLABORATION



WOWICAN Kano state organized the 2024 International Women's Day. WOWICAN & FOMWAN collaboration.

WOWICAN COLLABORATION

Women at a
workshop on
the dangers of
hate speech
and
single story.



WOWICAN COLLABORATION



The NIREC sponsored the former WOWICAN & FOMWAN Chairpersons to attend the 10th World Assembly organised by Religions for Peace in Germany where Caring for our Common Future - Advancing shared well-being by Advancing positive peace was discussed.

Challenges

- ▶ Negative Socio-cultural and religious norms
- ▶ Poverty
- ▶ Insecurity and violence
- ▶ Lack of inclusive representation
- ▶ Huge economic imbalance
- ▶ Abuse of information and Communication Technology
- ▶ Huge religious and cultural diversity
- ▶ Exclusion
- ▶ Absence of social cohesion
- ▶ Collapse of formal and family education
- ▶ Gender based violence

Way Forward

- ❖ Political
- ❖ Economic and Socio-cultural empowerment
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Family values (Proverbs 22:6)
- ❖ Promote Intercultural, interreligious and intergenerational dialogue for peace
- ❖ Inclusive governance



Conclusion

In conclusion, I leave you with these quotes -Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869) held, “There is a woman at the beginning of all great things.” In politics, Margaret Thatcher believed that if you want something said, engage a man but if you want something done, look for a woman. While one of the most powerful women in our country and generation Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, says it best "We need to work together as women to promote peaceful dialogue and prevent conflict in our communities."

Thank you for Listening.