

IN SEARCH OF NATIONAL UNITY AND RELIGIOUS CO-OPERATION



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QUICK REVIEW

- **THIS IS THE 6TH 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**
- **6. IN SEARCH OF NATIONAL UNITY AND RELIGIOUS COOPERATION**

NATIONAL UNITY, REALISTIC OR UTOPIA?

- **Can we have a nation:**
 - **That cares for the common good**
 - **That cares for the common welfare**
 - **That cares about peace , justice and development**
 - **That does not discriminate between tribe and religion**
 - **That has heroes and patriots as role models**
 - **That has a future for the children and youth (of Mr. nobody)**
 - **That create a space Where no one is oppressed,**

INTRODUCTION

- **Whenever the lyrics of the former National anthem was echoed, the Nigerian citizens were reminded of their pledge to “serve our fatherland” as “one nation bound in freedom, peace and unity.”**
- **With this oath of allegiance to serve one nation, justice is needed to establish and promote peaceful co-existence.**
- **Incidentally, the human and natural resources are not in short supply, so we can grow a great nation of national unity if there exist the political will.**

INTRODUCTION CONT.

- **With Nigeria's independence, it was thought that the end of slavery and colonialism had been achieved.**
- **Unfortunately, Nigeria is still gasping for breath like a patient on oxygen seeking for survival.**
- **This project of national identity has been fractured into Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo and the tribes that are labelled ethnic minorities. Since independence, every leader felt that like a good orthopaedic surgeon, he or she could mend these broken bones to form one body. Really?**

INTRODUCTION CONT.

- **The civil war slogan, “to keep Nigeria one is a task that must be done” indicated that this project to build and grow one Nigeria is important and this calls for EMERGENCY RESPONSE.**
- **But can the gun and weapons of mass destruction unite a nation? Can the gun kill an ideology? Can the gun impose virtue in the hearts of human beings?**
- **What we need to grow a nation is mental re-engineering, attitudinal change and change of values.**

BEFORE THE ABURI ACCORD

What could be happening here?
What stopped this agape?



What about here? What went wrong
after Aburi in Ghana?



THE UGLY ROAD TO NATIONAL HOLOCAUST

- **1962-1963 - Controversial census, regional and ethnic tensions**
- **1962 - The Action Group political crisis**
- **1962, May - The Western House of Assembly riots**
- **1963 - Census crisis, independence and democracy questioned**
- **1964 - Federal Election Crisis**
- **1965 - Western region election crisis**

THE UGLY ROAD TO NATIONAL HOLOCAUST CONT.

- 1966, January 15 - The first bloody coup - Tafawa Balewa killed
- 1966, July - counter coup. Major-General Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi killed
- Aguiyi-Ironsi was the head of military administration who tried the unification policies
- He was replaced by Lieutenant-Colonel Yakubu Gowon. The journey to the civil war and restoration began.

THE UGLY ROAD TO NATIONAL HOLOCAUST CONT.

- 1966, May: There was a provocative Drum article
- 1966, May 20: The first massacre of Easterners in the North
- 1966, June: The first exodus of Easterners from the North
- 1966, July 29: The second bloody coup
- 1966, August 1: Gowon takes over government
- 1966, August / September: Controversy over Gowon's rule
- 1966, September: Second provocative media release

THE UGLY ROAD TO NATIONAL HOLOCAUST CONT.

- 1966, September / October: The second massacre of Easterners in the North
- 1966, October: The movement of non-Easterners from the North
- 1966, November 30: Gowon's dismissal of the Ad Hoc Constitutional conference and the threat to use force to keep Nigeria united.
- 1967, January 4-5: The failure of the Aburi Conference in Ghana
- **1967, February / March:** Anti Federal Government demonstrations in Eastern Region.

ARRIVING AT THE NATIONAL HOLOCAUST

- 1967, February 27: Eastern Region government's call on Easterners -
- **ABURI we stand slogan**
- 1967, February 28: Gowon's issued Decree No. 8
- Force to crush any form of secession
- 1967, May: Military built up stepped up on the Federal and Regional sides
- 1967, May 27: Ojukwu declared Eastern Region Independent
- 1967, May 27: Gowon creates 12 states - State of emergency

NATIONAL TRAGEDY NO VICTOR, NO VANQUISH?

- **1967, May 30:** Ojukwu declares Republic of Biafra
- **1967, May 30 - July 5:** Final preparation for war
- **1967, JULY 6: Civil war begins;**
- Three Eastern states secede as the Republic of Biafra,
- Over 3 million innocent children, women and men killed
- The most visible weapon in the national holocaust was hunger.
- This was the darkest night of the national history.
- **1970 - Biafran leaders surrendered**

GENERAL YAKUBU GOWON GCFR

- **He was born on October 19, 1934. He was the Head of State before and after the Nigeria Civil War. For him:**
- **To keep Nigeria one, is a task that must be done.**
- **No victor, no vanquished. Really?**
- **The road to national unity continue!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**



ANY LESSON FROM ABURI NATIONAL CONFERENCE

- **Kindly read this book, Page 174.**
- **The name Aburi is the adulterated version of ABUDE by the European missionaries and traders.**
- **It was located on the mountains of Ghana. An agricultural research farm was set up near Aburi by the British residents in 1891**



THE MAIN CONTENT OF THE ABURI ACCORD

- **THE COUNCIL AGREED**
- **That appointment to senior ranks in the police, diplomatic, and consular services as well as appointment to superscale posts in the federal civil service and the equivalent posts in the statutory corporation must be approved by the supreme military council;**
- **That a looser Nigerian federation would be implemented, in other words, there would be some autonomy of the regions.**

LOOSER NIGERIAN FEDERATION

- **WITH THE RESOURCES IN THE DIFFERENT REGIONS WELL CONTROLLED AND MANAGED, NIGERIA DOES NOT NEED OIL TO SURVIVE:**
 - **The land mass and natural resources in Northern Nigeria alone can feed the whole of West Africa. Where are the groundnut pyramids?**
 - **The Western, Eastern and Southern regions have what it takes to make Nigeria a first world country. Is Regional Resource Control not a synonym of Looser Nigerian Federation?**

PRESIDENT MUAHMMADU BUHARI

- **President Muhammadu Buhari lamented that Northern Nigeria is blessed with arable land that can feed the entire nation but only 2.5% of its arable land is cultivated.**
- **What happens to the remaining percentage not cultivated?**
- **Nigeria has no business with low poverty rate.**



PRESIDENT TINUBU TO GOVERNORS: PRIORITIZE NEEDS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

- **The President made this remark at a meeting with the leadership of Arewa Consultative Forum (ACF) at the Presidential Villa, Abuja.**
- ***The Daily Times, 31 May 2024***



GENERAL MUTALA RAMAT MUHAMMED GCFR

- **He became head of state in Nigeria on July 29, 1975 after a coup that deposed General Yakubu Gowon. He replaced the military governors of the twelve states that were appointed by his predecessor.**



MY INVITATION AS GUEST LECTURER AT THE NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE, FEBRUARY 13,2024

- That the military and other security agencies have religious chaplains shows that the security agencies think beyond the gun. The NDC Course 32, is an eye opener to the nation that the training organised by the National Defence College is wholistic and that the use of ideas in combating insecurity is indispensable. I thank and congratulate the academy for this effort. I pray that the security agencies will receive enough support to keep Nigeria safe and make the nation a peaceful home for everyone irrespective of tribe and religion.

SIGNIFICANCE OF FEBRUARY 13

General Mutala Ramat Muhammed GCFR led the 1966 Nigerian counter-coup that overthrew Johnson Aguiyi-Ironsi military regime. He ruled from July 29, 1975 and was assassinated on February 13, 1976 in a coup led by Col. Bukar Suwa Dimka.



LIEUTENANT-COLONEL BUKAR SUWA DIMKA

- He played a leading role in the 13 February, 1976 abortive military coup against the government of General Murtala Ramat Muhammed. Dimka also participated in the Nigerian counter-coup of 1966 which toppled the government of Aguiyi Ironsi. He was executed on May 15, 1976.



EXPERIENCE OF NATIONAL LEADERS

- What rules Nigeria is not ideas but **GREED**, hence:
- **Late Prof. Dora Akunyili** - died without realizing her dream. May she rest in peace!
- **President Muhammadu Buhari** said, “Wicked propagandists continue to spread vicious lies about me for political gain, including claiming that I once asked Muslims not to vote for Christians. This must be the height of absurdity” (2015 Campaign)

PRESIDENT MUHAMMADU BUHARI

- **HE lamented the depth of division as a result of religion and ethnicity in Nigeria. HE SAID, “The HOLY Qur’an, tells me that in the entire world those that are nearest in love to me are those who believe in Jesus Christ” (IBID).**



PRESIDENT GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN
My Transition Hours



PRESIDENT GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN

My Transition Hours

- It takes conscience to use power as a shield and ego to use power as a sword
- When some individuals preach one Nigeria in public, those who know them better in private simply chuckle. One Nigeria, where there is equity, fairness and justice is what I believe is best for the people of this country.

PRESIDENT GOODLUCK EBELE JONATHAN

My Transition Hours

- In Nigeria, during football matches involving the national teams and foreign teams, both Christians and Muslims sing and dance to the tune of the same music. That is patriotism. In politics, I am yet to see such patriotism.
- Until African politicians consider their countries' interest first in whatever they do, the continent will continue to lag behind. Politics should be about the people and not about fighting to occupy offices.

Late Prof. Dora Akunyili led the Ministry of Information and Communications in the “Rebranding Nigeria Campaign” for personal integrity and use of ideas to showcase the dignity of the nation.



If the head of the fish is bad, then, the body will be rotten.



ABUSE OF LEADERSHIP AT ALL LEVELS

- To attain national unity in Nigeria many people look at the person at the head of leadership or governance.
- **Some puzzles:**
 - If educated people are in government, the nation will be safe, secure and united.
 - If women, young people, professionals, or technocrats are in power the nation will develop.
 - The rot exposed at the 2023 elections (Failure of Heroes)

IMPLICATION FOR THE NATION

- Experience has shown that many of these group of people have failed in many sectors of leadership.
- The implication is that every citizen in Nigeria needs:
 - **Change of values.**
 - **Change of attitude.**
 - **Mental re-engineering,**

CONFLICTS IN NIGERIA

**Christian /
ATR
Conflicts**

**Christian /
Muslim
Conflicts**

**Political
related
Conflicts**

INTRA-RELIGIOUS CONFLICT

- **1900-1915: Rivalry between the Roman Catholic and Protestant Missionaries in the South East of Nigeria.**
- **Nigeria Anglican Roman Catholic Commission (NARCC)**
- **Inter-denominational rivalry - Christian Association of Nigeria**
- **Conflict between the Shi'ites, Sunnis, Amadea and other sects.**
- **Religious ministers - Greed and worldly prosperity**
- **Neglect of the message of salvation to worldly fame**
- **Why do some Religious Clerics turn against each other?**
- **Loss of the voice of the voiceless**

CHRISTIAN/ATR CONFLICTS

- ✓ **1977-1980:** The institution of “*Okuku Onye Uwa*” connected with traditional belief in reincarnation led to the conflict between the Christians and the Traditional worshippers in Awka.
- ✓ **1989-1991:** Conflicts between the Christians and the Traditional worshippers over the institution of the traditional masquerade in Northern Igbo especially in Aku. *Omaba*, *Akatakpa* and *Oliokpa masquerades* generated conflict in Nsukka and its environ.
- ✓ **1993 – 1996:** Conflicts over traditional burial rites and customs associated with them. This included not allowing a woman to view the corpse of the late husband

CHRISTIAN / ATR CONFLICT

- ✓ **1999 April 25** - Conflicts in Owerri over the uprooting of Ikenga Statue by some Christian fanatics who replaced it with a white cross. The Ofo na Ogu – symbols of justice and innocence – mounted at Cherubim junction on Wethedral Road, Owerri was demolished.
- ✓ **2000 September**– In Ogidi town, Idemili Local Government of Anambra State, Christian youths who claimed that the root cause of their stagnation in progress was the offensive deities and shrines in the town went on rampage and destroyed many traditional shrines with their valuable cultic sacred symbols and images.
- ✓ **2002 February** – Neke community in Enugu State was in disarray over traditional worship and rites in a shrine alleged by Christians to be consuming human victims as sacrifice.

CHRISTIAN/MUSLIM CONFLICTS:

- ✓ **2002 November** - More than 200 people died in four days of rioting. This was caused by some Muslim fanatics over the planned Miss World Beauty Pageant in Kaduna in December. The event was relocated to Britain.
- ✓ **2004 May** - State of emergency was declared in the Central Plateau State after more than 200 Muslims were killed in Yelwa. This was as a result of an attack by some Christian militia. There were revenge attacks launched by Muslim youths in Kano.
- ✓ **2006 February** - More than 100 people were killed as a result of religious violence in mainly-Muslim towns of the north and reprisal attack in the southern city of Onitsha when the bodies of the Easterners killed in the North reached Onitsha.

CHRISTIAN / MUSLIM CONFLICTS

- ✓ **1980 – 1984:** Maitatsine revolts in Kano, Bauchi, Katsina.
- ✓ **1985 – 1986** – The Christian Cross standing to the east of the newly built Muslim Mosque in the University of Ibadan became the bone of contention between the Muslims and the Christians.
- ✓ **1991** – Many Muslims and Christians died in the Zango Kataf riot in Southern Kaduna.
- ✓ **2002 February** - About 100 people were killed in Lagos in the clashes between Hausas from mainly-Islamic north and ethnic Yorubas from predominantly-Christian Southwest.

SEEDS OF TERRORISM

MOHAMMED YUSUF - SCHOLAR

- Mohammed Yusuf founded Salafist Sunni Muslim reform movement, known as *Jama'atu Ahl as-Sunnah li-Da'awati wal-Jihad*".
- The sect that became known as Boko Haram in 2002 in Maiduguri, Borno State. He established a religious complex and school that attracted poor Muslim families from across Nigeria and neighboring countries.



MOHAMMED YUSUF USED BY POLITICAL OFFICE SEEKERS

Following the July 2009 Boko Haram uprising, the Nigerian military captured Yusuf. They transferred him to the custody of the Nigerian police force. The police summarily executed Yusuf in public view outside the police headquarters in Maiduguri.

This extra-judicial murder enabled Abubakar Shekau and a terrorist Boko Haram



SEEDS OF TERRORISM

- ✓ **2009 July** - Maiduguri police stations were stormed by Boko Haram. Hundreds died in North Eastern Nigeria and many displaced from their homes. Security forces stormed Boko Haram's stronghold and killed the movement's leader.
- ✓ **2010 January** - About 149 people were killed during the two days of violence between Christian and Muslim gangs in the central city of Jos.
- ✓ **2010 March** - More than 120 people were killed in clashes between Muslims and Christians in the flashpoint city of Jos.
- ✓ **2010 December** - Christmas Eve bomb attacks near central city of Jos kill at least 80 people. Attacks claimed by Boko Haram sparked clashes between Christians and Muslims. Some 200 killed in reprisal attacks.

FULL TERRORIST OPERATIONS

2012 September – TERRORISTS freed prisoners from Maiduguri jail

2011 January 1- Bomb blast in Abacha barrack in Abuja.

2011 May – Post election violence in Nigeria

2011 June - Police head quarter (HQ) bombed in Abuja

2011 August - UN HQ bombed in Abuja

2011 November - Bomb and gun attacks in Yobe and Borno states

2011 December 25- Multiple bomb attacks on Christmas Day .

CHRONOLOGY OF VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM IN NIGERIA

- **KINDLY READ CORNELIUS A. OMONOKHUA, DIALOGUE IN CONTEXT, PAGE 351,**
- **THE IDEA OF THIS CRONOLOGY IS TO ENABLE US ACCESS HOW GREED AND VAULTING AMBITION FOR POWER HAS CAUSED DIVISION IN NIGERIA.**



POLITICAL MOTIVATED Conflicts



Is there conflict between
Islam and
Christianity in Nigeria or
political manipulations?



- ✓ **SOME CHRISTIANS REPORT THE DIFFICULTY OF ACQUIRING LAND TO BUILD CHURCHES IN NORTHERN NIGERIA, WHILE THE MUSLIMS IN THE SOUTH COMPLAIN OF DISCRIMINATION. RELIGION OR GOVERNMENT?**

INTER-RELIGIOUS COOPERATION ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS



INTER-RELIGIOUS COOPERATION

ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

- **Religious leaders have a role to play by**
 - Refocusing the citizens through preaching
 - Religious re-education.
- The religious leaders can achieve this
 - By witness of life.
- **They must teach by example that:**
 - Earthly wealth is not a sure road to happiness.
 - Death is a reality and this world is not a permanent home
 - Killing and all forms of rituals to be rich on earth is useless.

INTER-RELIGIOUS COOPERATION

- If political office seekers listen to their religious leaders, there could be some level of collaboration that could lead to conversion and national unity.
- It is only intra-religious harmony that can promote fruitful inter-religious dialogue
- Most Nigerians who seek leadership position are either Christians or Muslims.

NIGERIANS ARE RELIGIOUS PEOPLE

RELIGION

Promotes peace and human values

Used for political and economic interests

Used to divide and cause chaos

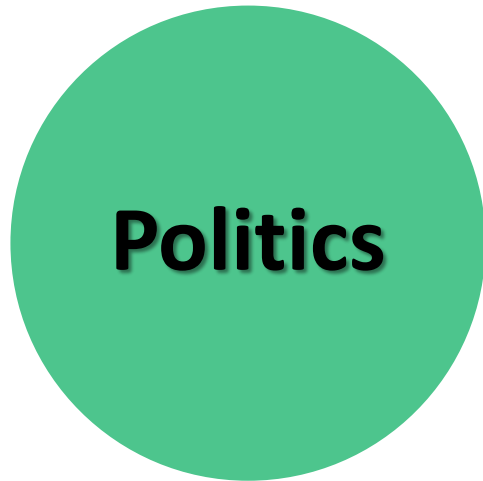
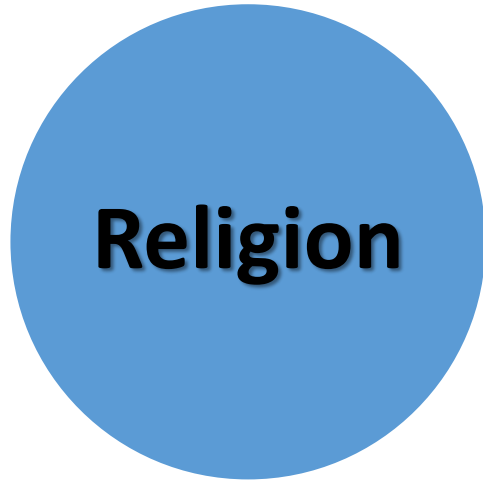
POLITICS

Good governance creates peace through justice for common wellbeing.

Some greedy politicians weaponize hunger, poverty, ethnicity and religion to cause violence.

Some Religious leaders use politics for selfish gains

The word “Politics” is derived from the Greek, “Polis” meaning city. A politician is therefore a person who cares for the common good and welfare of the citizens in the city.



INTER-RELIGIOUS COOPERATION IN NIGERIA

- The international Communities are interested in assisting Nigeria to fight terrorism through dialogue.
- November 18-19, 2011, The UFUK Dialogue Foundation organized an international conference at the Transcorp Hilton, Abuja
- On March 3, 2012, the Canadian Embassy called a meeting of a few scholars to a discussion on what the Canadian Government could do to assist Nigeria in fighting terrorism.

➤ On March 6, 2012, United States Commission on International Religious Freedom had a meeting at the Transcorp Hilton, Abuja with some religious leaders on what America government could do to help Nigeria achieve peaceful coexistence and promote human dignity.

➤ On Thursday 22 November, 2012 Tony Blair, Founder of the Tony Blair Faith Foundation and Bishop Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury met with some Nigerian Christians and Muslims in the United Kingdom for dialogue on the concerns of Nigeria.

The Department of Mission and Dialogue of the Catholic Secretariat of Nigeria (CSN) created a forum for dialogue between Catholic and Muslim Women. The department also initiated dialogue between Catholic and Muslim Youths.

**JEAN LOUIS
CARDINAL
TAURAN**

**NIGERIA IS
FULL OF
SURPRISES**



Late Jean Louis Cardinal Tauran, the former President of the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, Rome visited Nigeria from March 22-30, 2012. He visited Lagos, Jos, Kafanchan, Sokoto, Abuja and Onitsha. He had an encounter with many religious leaders, and dignitaries including the Vice President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, the Sultan of Sokoto, Emirs, the Chief of Staff to the president of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the governor of Sokoto State.

His visit to the National Mosque in Abuja was very significant. The Cardinal expressed optimism and hope for Nigeria. He appreciated the hospitality of Nigerians and acknowledged that in spite of the negative reports by the international media, Nigeria remains great and full of surprises.



3. NEEDS
FOR
DIALOGUE

- Muslims
- ATR
- Christians

- ✓ **There are many places where Christians and Muslims live in peace and harmony.**
- ✓ **We should not lose hope.**
- ✓ **Our call to religious co-operation is imperative.**

CONCLUSION

INTER-RELIGIOUS CO-OPERATION

- Inter-religious co-operation can promote peace and security.
- If religious leaders and preachers are selfless, they can proclaim unity and peace on earth.
- Religious people should be outward sign of God's presence in our midst.
- Be the light to illumine the darkness.
- Create heaven out of a chaotic world.
- The world is a temporary place where we learn how to live in heaven.
- We must learn when, how and where to talk.
- Silence is still a form of dialogue.
- If you cannot create peace, do not be a problem for the society.