

# Workshop on Religion, Peace, Security and Understanding

Organized by  
Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding,  
(CBCIU) Osogbo

African Traditional Religion in Fostering Peace, Security and Understanding

By

Aderemi Suleiman Ajala, PhD  
Department of Archaeology and Anthropology  
University of Ibadan

[asajala@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:asajala@yahoo.co.uk) ; [as.ajala@ui.edu.ng](mailto:as.ajala@ui.edu.ng)

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-4966-9878

+234 (0)803 490 6801

# Preamble

- ▶ Opening
- ▶ Appreciating CBCIU
- ▶ Dr Atanda an Ifa priest and I are handling the panel on traditional religion. We have structured our discussions into seven sub topics. I am going to handle three and Dr. Atanda handles the remaining four subtopics as follows:
  - ▶ Introduction: religion and national security in Nigeria
  - ▶ Religion as instrumentality of humanity- Theoretical discussion
  - ▶ The centrality of traditional religion in fostering peace, security and understanding
  - ▶ Ifa on peace and security
  - ▶ Lessons for national security and international understanding
  - ▶ Traditional religious approaches in fostering peace, national security and understanding
  - ▶ Conclusion

# Introduction

- ↻ (i) The state of insecurity in Nigeria and globally is alarming.
- ↻ (ii) It seems improbable if any decade since 1960 has witnessed such level of insecurity that Nigeria has witnessed between 2000 and 2022, mostly caused by insecurity non-state actors .
- ↻ (iii) The period between 2010 and 2022 has witnessed different versions of insecurity ranging from violent civil protest to banditry and kidnapping.
- ↻ (iv) Specifically, insecurity suffered in Nigeria includes:
  - ↻ Political/Election violence;
  - ↻ Intra-labour union crises like the NURTW in Ibadan, Lagos and Osogbo;
  - ↻ Inter-ethnic crises;
  - ↻ Institutional leadership succession crises in several universities;
  - ↻ Kingship tussles; inter communal crises;

# Introduction (Contd)

- ▶ Armed robbery;
- ▶ Street gangsterism;
- ▶ Cult invasion/crisis;
- ▶ Kidnapping;
- ▶ Banditry;
- ▶ Various types of domestic violence;
- ▶ Violent students unrests in tertiary schools;
- ▶ Separatists movements like Boko Haram;
- ▶ Inter religious crises; and
- ▶ Violent civil protests like End SARS

# Introduction (Contd)

All the above listed insecurity have generated bad effects which include:

Poor economic growth.

Destruction of public infrastructure.

Threat to life and property.

Lack of mutual trust.

Murder, arson, maiming and violation of human rights.

Political instability.

Unemployment and poverty.

National disintegration.

International bad image for the country.

Loss of sustainable developmental diplomatic relation.

## Introduction (Contd)

State has initiated approaches to tame the tide of insecurity.

Efforts made include:

1. Regime change: 2015 President Jonathan lost his re-election as the Nigerian president due to his regime's incapacity to check insecurity.
2. Change of heads of security agencies like the Police and armed forces
3. Re-equipping of security wares in both the police and armed forces.
4. Social intervention programmes aimed at reducing unemployment, poverty, and school drop out.
5. Collaboration with international agencies and foreign governments.
6. Creation of localized complimentary security agencies like

# Introduction (Contd)

Despite all these approaches, decline in insecurity is still abysmally low.

New forms of insecurity such as kidnapping, internet frauds and ritual killing continue to surface.

Efforts against insecurity failed partly because community and religious approaches are least employed to tackle insecurity.

Family, community and religious groupings are essential units of human organization.

Every human being belongs to family and community; and most humans are members of religious groupings.

## Introduction (contd)

Religion rests on faith and belief and all those who believe in same faith and belief are bounded together as one.

Therefore religion and security are linked together and religion can be employed to solve insecurity challenges in Nigeria.

In recognition of the above, holding of this workshop is timely as it is relevant to Nigerian insecurity challenges and international understanding

The workshop parades scholars that will discuss religion and security using approaches in the three major religions in Nigeria.



# Religion as Instrumentality of Humanity

Religion is an invention of man, maintaining organic solidarity and linking human with supernatural.

Evolved at around 2.5 million years ago when some other important inventions like fire and hunting tools were also invented for security.

Linked with evolution of Neanderthal man- an hominid associated with burying its dead.

Archaeological interpretation of burying the dead is to establish life after death.

Early theology scholars, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim and contemporary secularists have suggested six approaches explaining the link between religion and security.

These are:

1. Psychological balance/Emotional adjustment
2. Materialism
3. Group solidarity
4. Theological justice
5. Existentialism
6. Social identity

These theoretical perspectives establish religion as an institution with potentials of fostering peace, security and understanding.

# Centrality of African Traditional religion in Fostering Peace, Security and Understanding

The following features of African traditional religion establishes the religion as central to building peace, security and understanding:

1. Sacredness
2. Non evangelistic
3. Indigenous mode of communication and liturgy
4. Retributive justice
5. Plurality and accommodation



# **Workshop on Religion, Peace, Security and Understanding**

**Organized by  
Centre for Black Culture and International Understanding,  
(CBCIU) Osogbo**

**The Role of African Traditional Religion in Fostering Peace, Security  
and International Understanding**

**By**

**OLUOMO Dr. Oluseyi Olaboyede Atanda**

**MBBS (Ogb), FMCOG (Nig), D.MAS (China), FIMC, CMC  
President, Traditional Religion Worshippers Association, State of Osun  
TRWASO.**

# HOMAGE APPRECIATION

## - RELIGION ?

A social cultural system of designated behaviours and practices, morals, beliefs, .. particular system of faith, worship of a super human, especially a personal God.

- How many Religions? In Nigeria and In the world

## - IFA AND ITS ATTRIBUTES

- HISTORY

- SCIENCE

- PHILOSOPHY

- MEDICINE, SCIENCE AND ARTS

- A COMPLETE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF LIFE – THE WORD!!!

## IFA DISCOURSES ON

### PEACE

PEACE – ALAAFIA. Kolanut a phenomom confirming belief in peace.

Ifa identifies aspects of human behaviour that may affect peace in the land

- Leadership, the recognised head is the most important
- Truth and disobedience
- Pride ... OWONRIN OBARA
- Trustworthiness
- Patience ... OGUNDA OTURA
- Greed and Benevolence ... OBARA OYEKU
- Harmony and love ... IWORI OYEKU
- Good health ... OWONRIN OGUNDA
- attributes of our leaders today!!!

# IFA DISCOURSES ON SECURITY

- PRIDE AND DISOBEDIENCE ... OWONRIN OBARA
- DIVINATION ... OSA IRETE
- GREED AND BENEVOLENCE ... OBARA OYEKU
- OLD STANDARDS, NORMS ... OTURA BATIE
- TRADITIONAL SYSTEM/ COMPETING WITH CIVILIZATION
- OBAS AND POLITICAL LEADERS!!!

TRADITIONAL MEASURES FOR SECURITY STILL EXIST



## IFA DISCOURSES ON INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

- KNOWLEDGE AND SINCERITY ... OGBE OYEKU
- TOLERANCE ... OKANRAN OYEKU
- RESEARCH .... OKANRAN OYEKU
- FEAR OF FOLLOWERSHIP
- UNITY AND NEED TO COOPERATE ... OTURA OBARA

# OKANRAN OFUN STORY

- SOCIETY IS STRATIFIED
- NEED TO ACCEPT AND NOT TAKE UNDUE ADVANTAGE OF POSITION
- PATIENCE AND LOVE
- SHOW OF SHAME AND NOT BOTHERED
- SPIRIT OF FORGIVENESS

# CONCLUSION

- LEADERS MUST BE TRUE LEADERS
- IFA RELIGION MUST BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS, IF ONLY FOR MORALS
- SYSTEM OF SWEARING-IN OF LEADERS
- WE ALL NEED PATIENCE, LOVE, UNITY, FORGIVENESS, EQUITY
- TO ACHIEVE PEACE, SECURITY, AND UNDERSTANDING.
- THIS ALONE CAN BRING ABOUT **DEVELOPMENT**

