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I Brought ICT Awareness To Kaduna, Making It Among First Five In Nigeria

- Dr Dave Obiora

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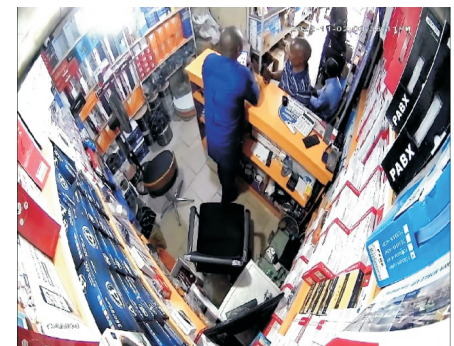
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From the Team Leader



I am indeed happy to introduce to you this Christmas edition of Stadt. My deepest gratitude is to God Almighty for fortification and the grace of trustful and persevering members of my Team. It is the commitment of these diligent colleagues that made it always effortless for us to stick to our core mission of unfailing devotion to the needs of our increasingly expectant clients and the general public who are now eager for the nourishing contents of Stadt.

To the customers that have consistently trusted us with the promotional needs of their businesses, I am once again thanking you and pledging a commitment not to fail in any of our obligations to quality service. For those of you who failed to be part of this edition in spite of the efforts, I am assuring you that next edition is on the way. Stadt has come to stay. Our challenge is not the so called hard times, but meeting every commitment to quality content and satisfying our clients.

To the people who blamed hard times and 'politicians' for failing to be part of the Stadt's winning team, I say, hard times are nature's invention to make us smarter. You can neither wish the hard times nor the politicians away. They have been there from the beginning and will continue to be.

Your duty is to work diligently on your business tactics and you see the problems no more. If hard

times are removed, the potentials God gave us will surely die, and without the politicians our society will never be governed. My submission, therefore, is that hard times and politicians are necessary evils. Stop the endless complaints, give your businesses the priority, the commitment, honesty and the big plans they needed and they will expand.

Businesses, like plants do not grow if they are not nitrified. The nutritional requirements for businesses are active strategies to expand the frontiers and magnetise patronages. No business is small, it is the plan you have for the business that makes it look small and become smaller. Make a bigger plan for your business and it blossoms. The nutrients that grow every enterprise are big plan, (good strategies) and determination. Every business needs exposure.

The exposure magnetises the substances that facilitate the growth. The mission of Stadt is to give you the publicity or coverage your businesses needed in the right proportions. As a newspaper, STADT is unique in every way: informing, educating, entertaining and working with you to give your businesses windows for sustaining growth by providing you the exposures and the contacts. Be part of us! We are determined to take you from the points you are now in your businesses to the points where great successes are inevitable.

We are dedicated to rebranding. Rebranding has magical effects. We have the tools and with us rebranding works. Our business friendly promotional packages are targeted at anyone wishing to let the public know what he or she can offer in terms of goods and services. We have priceless packages for schools, hotels, eateries, buying and selling activities, mechanics, panel beaters, tailors, barbers, hair dressers, car sellers, agriculturists and indeed all in urgent need of publicity to unleash the potentials of their arts.

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Stadt is a product with unique classifications. This brand of newspapering is popular in most developed societies around the world where efficiency and productivity determine business decisions.

Finally, I extend my profound gratitude to all who in one way or the other contributed to the successful production of this edition. On behalf of STADT Team, I say Merry Christmas.

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The Kaduna Bureau chief of Galaxy Television, Mr. Bosan Yakusak has on Saturday taken his heartthrob, former Miss Amanda Jacob to be his lawfully wedded wife. The wedding mass held at St Dominic's Catholic Church, Ungwan Pama and reception at Eli- Amanta Event Centre, Barnawa

Galaxy TV Bureau Chief Weds His Heartthrob

attracted seasoned journalists, politicians, clergy men, among others.

The homilist, a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Zaria, Rev. Fr. Felix Yayock, in the concelebrated mass congratulated the couple for the privilege of being administered with the sacrament of matrimony and noted that marriage is a vocation.

Fr. Yayock said "to be a Christian and have a Christian name is a wonderful thing" He however, emphasized the need to have a good name and live life that reflects the values of the name. according to the Priest, "the name Bosan means a Saviour, one who fights for another and the name Amanda, also means one who is worthy of all,". He pointed out that Bosan should be the savior of Amanda and Amanda should be worthy of the love of Bosan. Fr. Yayock however, said that both can be unworthy if they eventually live unworthy lives in the course of their marriage. While urging them to be submissive, faithful and responsible, prayed and admonished them not to be people of bad reputation. He emphasized the need for the couple to live exemplary lives.

Similarly, the Special Guest of Honour, Kaduna State Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) Chairman, Rev. Joseph Hayab, noted that on the issue of marriage, there are no experts or

perfectionists, that even amongst those who have put in decades, they still have issues. "There is no expert when it comes to marriage, even those who have 30, 40 or 50 years still have errors, but the beauty of it is that, you just go on track, with your heart and with your mind, you will make it".

Rev. Hayab said "listening to advise is good but you need to make your own decisions as a couple to make your union work". To the couple, he added "you must learn to love and respect your wife in a unique way, you learn to love and respect your husband in a unique way and together you will grow and have what people call the experience". Finally, the clergy man wishes Bosan and Amanda a wonderful and blissful life, a joyful experience in the journey and prayed that what makes others succeed, they will also succeed, or where others failed to succeed they will succeed and that their own marriage will be another school and lesson for others to learn.

Earlier, the Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Hon Samuel Aruwan, called on the newly wedded couple to be patient in marriage. The Commissioner described patience as the key to a successful married life, adding that when the wife respects her husband and the husband loves his wife, then their home will be point of reference for good. Also speaking, Chairman of the occasion, MD/CEO Khemsafe Computers, Dr. Dave Obiora,



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Cont'd from Pg. 2 ICT Awareness - Dr Obiora



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go into private business?

Ans. Just as I said there were few of us then; there were few companies too. I remember if we were to repair some of our systems, some people will be called from Lagos, some even came from the UK outside the country then. And I had been why should we invite personnel from Lagos, from abroad to repair the systems then? Why not train and have those who can do it locally? And as time went on both... in fact that's what also took me into lecturing in Poly in KadPoly and ABU; because they came, the head of department then came to me, Maths and Computer: please can you be taking my students because we don't have lecturers that majored (in computer science)? So I was taking that and I was also taking students of Business Admin then... Professor Sheik Abdullahi, came from ABU too invited me to offer some help which I did. And also the demand in the society then I said why not I establish something by the side that I could use to be attending to people and also working. At a point I observed that the demand outside became more than the services I was offering to the Bank, because a lot of people needed both accessories and training. I started from training before I got into the accessories. I started doing some corporate training then some students training and... that's how I started. So when I observed that there were more of my services needed outside, I quit.

That's interesting. Now still sticking with ICT: From our conversation I understand that you are more from the hardware side of it and not the software?

The software too... in fact I trained in software. But the hardware, yes. That time we were trained both in hardware and software but I am more in software development.

What is your thinking about ITC training in let's start from Kaduna State and then of course Nigeria with respect to the possibility of competing at the global level?

Yes, ICT awareness in Kaduna: I believe I think we created the awareness, because in Nigeria now Kaduna in terms of ICT is rated among the first five. It's just when Abuja came that some people moved but Kaduna was among the first five; even now it's still among the first five. Most of the institution around – especially Zaria and Kaduna – we have many organizations that are fully computerized; both research institutes... I think Kaduna has a lot of ICT awareness.

The worry is, if you check countries like China, India, you see young person's developing apps (applications), you know, either for mobile devices or for computers. You do not see such from the Kaduna

axis: is it because we do not have the hubs here to train young people? Because we want to see young programmers from Kaduna...

Yes, actually what happen is the environment, not only Kaduna but Nigeria as a whole. First is our environment because many manufacturers prefer to us these already established software, we called them "off-the-shelves-software". They don't engage our local developers to do create for them. We are not given the opportunity. And also, you see, software is big business and it's something that once you develop it, once it works for point 'A' here, it will also work the same for all over. So software for Word or for presentation can be used by anybody all over the world. So you see there is competition there. The major competition is, once these big names develop theirs, every other person tends to use it all over, so your own that

you are doing may not withstand theirs. That's one. And again there are still many other things that are peculiar to some companies, we called it tailor-made-applications, but they don't give such opportunities (to local developers). I know when the banking software came out, many were rushing to UK just to pick off-the-shelf banking apps and come here and only to realize it... then we were battling on you see many signs, dollars signs, pounds signs and naira signs wasn't there. So I think we have not been given... the local developers have not been given the opportunity or encouragement by the government of Nigeria. But recently this small-small web development and other stuff, which is peculiar, that's the one you can see most of our people are keying into; but some of the pure general accepted apps are done by some big companies and the big names. You can't compete with them.

Do you think it is possible, because in other countries they do some of these things, like China...: is it possible for some government policy to come up to say look if you are going to operate in Nigeria, you must do this or that?

Yeah! In America, China even now you can see competition among those big ones, even in (tele) communications, because is the same thing. Once a big name comes and picks like 5G you see the competition between the big ones, because if one software is taking on a particular design or specification it applies to all. That's why you will see the big ones always take the jump; they all compete. And then for Nigeria there are small ones. I still believe that there is future for software developers.

Ok. Look at our basic education from primary to JS3. Do you think that enough effort is being made to entrench involvement in ICT for

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Cont.on Pg 6 ICT Awareness - Dr Obiora



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children so that they grow with it? Are you satisfied with that level?

No, we have not started on that. Yes, some may argue some big private schools are already moving in that direction; but there are many public schools, in fact we have not started. In America once you register your child they give the child a pad but here you have to buy it. So we have not started because of funding. Our education requires a lot of funds. The educational sector is highly underfunded and the rural areas are suffering the most; and that is why we are having major challenges because we have not even provided the basic literacy and numeracy not to talk of ICT which is on the high scale.

You have been here and have developed your business from scratch. It is very heartwarming that

you started small and gradually you have expanded: look where we are!

Two things: number one, what is your call to young persons who want to start business? If you had seen this place like as it is today, would you have had the courage to go in, or you just took it one day at a time and here you are? Then number two, what kind of community service are you into?

The most important thing in life is dedication, perseverance and having a focus in what you are doing. Then trust in the future and trust in God. When I started, I started small but I didn't see it as something that can grow to this; but I knew that hard work dedication, being focused... I take it as my lifestyle; I take my work as my life. Outside my creator, the next is my work. And that is something so many

young people don't understand: take your work... after your God the next is your work! That's when you will also have fulfillment. The one you are looking at money or looking at various directions without being focused, you may not have that fulfillment. But (when you're focused) gradually it will grow. Success is not when your pack it in one time, no! It's gradual, and be contented at each particular time. Be hardworking, and then focus. Don't look, "oh this thing came up, people are making more money on this", you jump there; no! Whichever one you choose, face it. Then my advice to young people: there is no shortcut to success. Pick whichever field you see yourself, work hard, develop it, and believe. As you go you'll see that the little you make... sometimes you see that you make

small progress: you will be happy and it will make you to do more. Sometimes there may be setbacks or challenges: but whenever you have challenges know you that the focus is keep moving forward; just get yourself together, correct yourself, and learn from your mistake. These are my pieces of advice. There is no shortcut to success! Look at when we started close to 40 years now. When you are looking, ah, see this building! It's not in one day! It took me almost 40 years. So it's gradually, gradually, gradually; and each step you pass, be happy and contented with it; the one that is challenges, you face it out and then learn from it. That's my advice. The best community development is bringing up the youth especially the people that have lost hope: to give them hope. That is where I have a

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Cont.on Pg 7 ICT Awareness - Dr Obiora

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passion; that's why I started from training. When I started my training school, because I saw that, that time, the computer operators, that was what was reigning then, to enter information in computer... so most of them, you had to go to Lagos to learn it. When I started, sometimes for those who did not have the means to pay, I just say free, because it takes the same effort to train 5-10 people as to train one. And why my establishment became popular then was that in fact half of my students are just for free whereas others paid for those that were for free. And that time if some churches, if Living Faith... I think that time when Living Faith started... as they are closing I will be helping the people, carrying the church members home and come back, and on the way I will just be telling them about computer, because I didn't have the money to go to radio or TV. So I was doing personal service plus advertisement. Some of them could not

pay but I said, ok come and do free and also tell others. And that's how I started and people were coming. So those that paid sustained the organization, those that were for free also benefited and then told people. That's how I started. I still remember one incident of a student that came and said that the uncle said he will pay I said who is the uncle, he called one name; I could not recognize the name but I said ok you can go ahead. He started. After the diploma he said he wanted to do maintenance, and he had not paid at all. So after he was staying with us, and he was just helping around; But one thing: he was very active and dedicated. He would come before everybody and he would close with us. After the school he would just joined us in small-small work. Sometimes we would send him out to customers and just give him some TP (transport fare). So at a point one of the companies then, Save the

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Children UK, employed him. It was when they employed him that an issue came up, the certificate so that they could place him. He came, he did not know what to say. He said "please they took me in this place and I don't have certificate to give them, they said I should bring my certificate and I don't want to tell you this". But he came with Hajiya Laila Dogonyaro, because then she was operating a motherless babies home, this Jam'iyar Matan Arewa... he came with her and one other woman that "please I lied to you that is my uncle that sent me", but actually, he is from a motherless babies home. He was an orphan. I felt touched! First is the wisdom. And I knew that he was very very dedicated. I felt touched. That's how I even gave them the certificate, Hajia Laila appreciated and also I then donated my first computer to that orphanage. If you can help somebody who has no home, no hope and he has gotten to the extent of getting a job to be fully

independent... and you know Save the Children pay well, so he was happy. I think that was fine, within me I was satisfied that I could touch a life and from there I also started extending such a gesture. During Namadi Sambo (as governor of Kaduna state), we trained almost 100 plus students of the less privilege which some companies also help employed, because the best way of re-scaling or training some of these physically challenged is by giving them computer education. Most of them are very intelligent like every other person, but because they cannot walk or whatever. And when the Kaduna Rehabilitation Board had the first Braille computer, donated by government, nobody operate it. We studied it and we are the one that installed it and then trained them and even trained the six geopolitical zones in Nigeria. So the passion is putting a smile on the face of those that seems to have loss hope. ■



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Leadership Is Duty Not Positions Or Titles

By Chris Nwedo

It is incontrovertible that the values of any society determine the quality of its people and leadership. The quality this of leadership defines the character of the socio-political, cultural, economic order and the merits of the society to a larger extent. The merits are measured in terms of the intrinsic worth. A distressed and lawless people speak voluminously of a people from dysfunctional society, a failed state, a social order riveted by endless predicaments, instability and awful management. People tend to have imprints of the environments that influenced them. In compliment, Aristotle noted that the virtues of a state are proportional to the virtues of individual persons in the state. According to him, civic virtue is essential for recognition of justice which is indispensable for harmony, progress or development of the state.

The above proposition explains why it is often the case that most lawless and impoverished societies have fraudulent, self-absorbing and treacherous crops of citizens and leaders. The people are deceitful and literally feed on others to live while the leaders, (rulers) espouse negative cultures of governance. This is a situation where rulers metaphorically cannibalise quality development, peace and stability of the polity tactlessly. The rulers simply manipulate the society self-centredly and the people themselves ride on each other feverishly to survive. The orientation here is that the stronger preys on the weaker and those who cannot be 'swallowed' are weeded off violently. This means that surviving daily is a supernatural favour, undeniably a miracle.

It seems every Nigerian is now forced to be abandoned by an enveloping national culture of political deceit and insensitive leadership. This is a government that wants to go on without responsibility, notwithstanding campaign promises. And this government has been allowed to carry on exculpated, defended and praised. The situation is appropriately expressed by the

government of the Federation through the Minister of Budget and National Planning, Senator Udoma Udo Udoma. The minister allegedly berated Nigerians to stop blaming Buhari's government for asphyxiating economic, social and indeed intolerable insecurity in the country. Udoma said the government "did not cause and is not responsible" for the objectionable situations Nigerians found ourselves. The minister contended that the widespread sufferings in the land, should be tolerated because they were caused by the previous government and therefore not the fault of Buhari and his administration. By this position, the impression is that the ruling Party, All Progressive Congress, APC took over the government for the sake of titles and riches that come with it and has no compulsion to accept the responsibilities and obligations that are associated with the position of national leadership. Udoma does not appear to realize that as a minister he is in a position to fulfill a purpose.

"A great misunderstanding about leadership today is the impression that leadership is all about positions and titles. We call people who have titles leaders. Nothing can be further from the truth. Although titles confer some measure of positional authority on someone, it does not confer leadership on that person. While leaders sometimes have positions and titles, having title does not automatically make one a leader". For Maxwell Ubah "look at it this way- a male is different from a man. Being a male is determined by your sex chromosomes; being a man is determined by your sense of responsibility and maturity. So are positions and leadership. Leadership is beyond having titles; it is developing the sense of responsibility and discharging your duties with or without titles. A leader is simply someone who accepts responsibility for others for their benefit. True leadership is not occupying a position but

fulfilling a purpose." From the temperaments of the Nigerian political elites, leadership is not about responsibility but titles and license for impunity. For Ubah "your position does not make you a leader; your sense of responsibility does. Leadership is measured by impact, not titles. Leaders add value to others, not accumulate titles for themselves. Leaders lead from the essence of who they are and not from their positions and titles". Leaders distinguish themselves from rulers".

Rulers do not lead, they rule, command and demonstrate powerful authority of Emperors and live sumptuously on the sweat of their subjects. They take no blame and accept no responsibility. They are totalitarians, who dictate their will to the people and give no one reason for their actions. A ruler is beyond reproach by definition and disposition. Fellow citizens are subjects and attendants. He is imposed on citizens by those exercising lordship over the people. We have so many examples of these brands of condescending 'leaders' in Nigeria and beyond.

For Donna Mckeregan, 'we often turn to examples of leadership to describe it, and attempt to identify what is common to it, in order to abstract a definition of leadership. It is no wonder that we conflate the terms 'leadership' and 'leader'. Using this method, we must look at leaders to find examples of leadership. This implies that we already know the definition; else we would not be able to identify leaders.' Leadership is not actually separable from leaders. The separation is only analytical, it is a distinction that is necessary to make for the sake of communicating our understanding, but it is not real. Problem arises when we reify our categories as if they were actually distinct, but this cognitive practice is common..." And as a result of difficulties associated with every definition, leadership is often defined with considerable controversy. Even in identification, people constantly disagree on particular leaders.

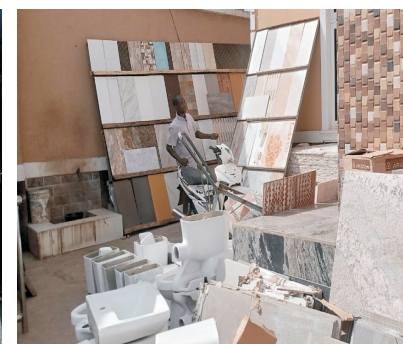
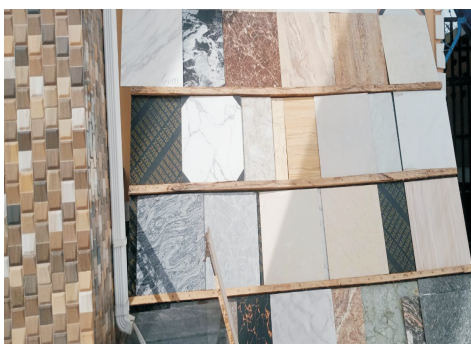
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Motto: The Lord is my Strength

Cont.on Pg 9



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These controversies or disagreements informed the imperatives for development of different concepts of leadership or even addition of some appendages. The concept, 'servant leadership' is one of such appendages. According to Larry Spears 'servant leadership' emphasizes "increased service to others, a holistic approach to work, promoting a sense of community, and sharing of power in decision making. Servant leadership idea therefore 'is more than accumulation of a set of techniques or skills; it is an orientation to a way of life, a shaping of one's character through the practice of certain habits.'" Maxwell Ubah noted that "Leadership is about responsibility, not titles. Your position does not make you a leader, your sense of responsibility does. Leadership is always measured by impact, not titles. Leaders add value to others, not accumulate titles for themselves. Leaders lead from the essence of who they are and not from their positions and titles". Ubah contended that "to make the world a bit better, to contribute your quota, and to leave your footprints as a guide for the next generation are at the heart of leadership... The do-or-die mentality in despotic politics is a manifestation of erroneous belief that leadership and positions are synonymous".

For Spears, "listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and building community are identified ten characteristics of a servant leader." A leader

'should be responsible, compassionate, intelligent, just, wise, patient and energetic. A leader is a virtuous person, not just accidentally, but essentially. This follows from an understanding of the goal of human action as happiness. This aspect of conceptual model is familiar to many as Aristotelian virtue based ethics.'" For Hayford, J.J. "leadership is the unity and inspiration in action." Leadership is the art or function of successful mobilization of the people for positive development. It is predicated on the ability to galvanise, motivate and mobilise the redundant or misdirected energies, the diverse physical and psychological potentialities of the people in transformation of often unpleasant situation, consequently, positive leadership is magical and magnetizes desirable results. Plato developed divergent images and analogies in description of the concept of an ideal leader. He compared a leader to 'shepherd, the ship's pilot and the physician. He developed a preferred conception of the ideal leader as a 'weaver' who skilfully combines the contributory 'arts' of other social roles into kingly art of ruling the state".

Leadership is service, service to the people. 'Leadership is not the giving of directions; it is the facilitation of directedness... Commonly, a leader is assumed to possess a vision towards which he attempts to mobilize a group of people...' It is the communal process of envisioning. Chukwudum A. M. said the greatest glory is the opportunity to

serve others in whatever capacity. A leader is called upon to serve. You cannot measure the magnitude of serving others in terms of money for no amount of money is equal to serving a fellow man. Out of multitude a leader is called by the people or through circumstance to lead, nay to serve. Good leadership or ability to mobilize people successfully is an art.¹⁵ "Just as leadership is not about position and titles, leadership is also not about power. Leadership is about influence, and influence transcends power to personhood-who you are.

Chukwudum correlated a bad, treacherous leader to a proverbial pig that waded into the mud to grub for earth worms after its master had washed it and brushed its fur and went as far as anointing it. Poor master, he wanted to favour the pig in preference to his dog that had hitherto monopolized the privilege of going out with him." Dine, G.U. sees leadership as a shared direction; according to him it 'implies that all parties to leadership relation have a common goal or at least similar or comparable goals. Leadership implies inter-individual relationship. Mckeregan contended that "the leader has a responsibility for his conceptual framework that is twofold. He must maintain his own views and guide the strength and modify the weaknesses of the views. He must also find ways to be accessible to others. In effect therefore, 'leadership entails responsibility for self and others, not only in the identified leader but also in each member of the group within which leadership takes place and develops. Leadership implies not only the interrelatedness of persons but also their common direction. A leader impacts the community through legitimate exercise of his influence, control, authority or power. The effective of a leader is the function of the extent his or her skills are relevant to the needs of the society or groups he or she leads. In the 2023 general election, my advice is that the electorates should be wiser to vote in leaders that can provide solutions to Nigeria's many challenges."



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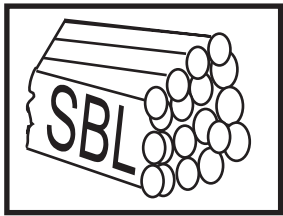


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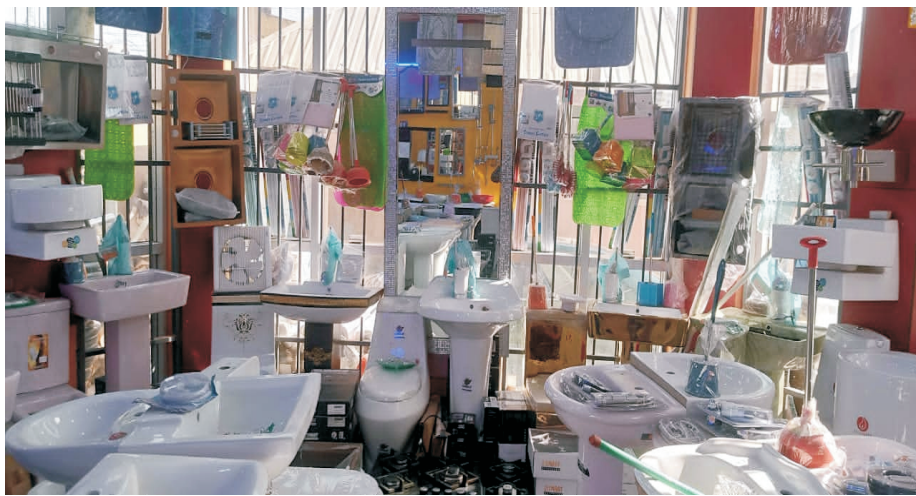
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Mistrust Between Christians And Muslims - Rev. Hayab

Insecurity Has Deepened Mistrust Between Christians And Muslims In Kaduna

- Rev. Hayab, Kaduna CAN Chairman

..says Continuous Dialogue Between The Two Major Religious Bodies Is The Way Out



Rev. Hayab

Kaduna State Chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Rev. Joseph Hayab has noted that insecurity has further worsened mistrust between Christians and Muslims in Kaduna state in the last few years.

Rev. Hayab lamented that insecurity suddenly reared its ugly head at a time the faithful of the two major religious bodies were beginning to trust each other after many years of suspicious coexistence.

The CAN chairman in this interview, however, said that there will be light at the end of the tunnel if the two religious bodies continue to engage in round table dialogue to understand themselves for peaceful cohabitation.

He also spoke on the forthcoming general elections, saying that insecurity might be affect smooth conduct of the elections.

Rev. Hayab however, appealed to electorate to ensure they work in unity to protect theirs votes, just as he

expressed confidence in INEC Chairman in conducting free, fair and credible elections in 2023.

Excerpts:

There is a lot of insecurity now in the country, how has that affected inter-religious harmony in our society: in Nigeria and of course in Kaduna State?

The increase of insecurity in Kaduna State, and in Northern Nigeria as a whole, has actually affected our interfaith engagement. You don't go to the table of dialogue without having some levels of trust and hope. When you go to the table of dialogue and already you have formed prejudice, you don't even trust the person you want to talk to, then you can't talk, you can't discuss, he will not pay attention, he will not listen to you. Today people are living with prejudices against one another: whether it is Christians versus Muslim, North versus South, different tribes versus other tribes;

we have actually grown to not believe and accept one another. You know the pretence around is that we are together is one of the thing that sometimes confuse people, we really don't trust much on our being together. Even when you come sincerely to the table of dialogue, not everybody will listen: show me a woman whose son has been killed and the people who kill her son are living in denial, how do you go and sit at the table and discuss with them? Because in the first place, they don't even accept that something has happened. I was discussing with somebody the other day and talked about restorative justice; and you see, where do you come restorative justice or discussing with someone about justice when in the first place the person is denying that he has even offended you? People just live defending evil, defending those who killed the other people, defending what has happened: I am the one who has a scars or has been injured and 'am telling you that there is something wrong and you are saying something else; so how can we sit in dialogue? Where is the sincerity that we will come to the table of dialogue? So is sad that the insecurity has further created more doubt in the minds of the people and further makes the people think, wait a minute; are they sincere? But there are still many few ones they are saying "look we better dialogue even when it's not sincere than not dialogue? But let's be honest that there is a problem: that's why the dialogue has not yielded fruit. And to add to that, you even the title we give to some of our crises makes it impossible for us to dialogue, to discuss trust even the conversation. My people were sleeping in the night and someone came and gunned them and killed them and you are telling me that the matter is farmer-herder crisis, so let's discuss; how am I going to trust you to discuss when I know it's not about farming since I have not issue of farming with you, I

have not issue of cattle route between me and you, I was just sleeping and you came... So these are the reasons why people find it difficult to trust even going for interfaith dialogue. The other day, we had a challenge about piece of land that a Mosque and a Church were to be built side by side. We have that understanding and went to a meeting to discuss the matter; when we were waiting to be called into the meeting, our group and the other group had a good understanding that this is not a problem; this is something we can resolve. But the moment we entered into the meeting and started the conversation, we got the shock of our lives that those people were now defending the siting of the mosque despite the fact they told us before we entered that yes they agreed... So you see, that lack of sincerity just further makes people not to trust the dialogue. That's why those of us who are involved in interfaith dialogue, we need to ask ourselves sincere questions, are we really dialoguing sincerely? Are we really dialogue or we are trying to cover up?.

In spite of all of these doubts, what is CAN doing to mitigate this problem?

Well, I just told you the reality of what is happening, but that has not hindered CAN from engaging a lot of people of other faith, even pagans or people who have no religion around us, to talk about the issue because we must not keep quiet and allow this evil to grow. CAN has opened her doors to engage people in dialogue. CAN has opened her doors to even engage Government in dialogue. CAN has opened her doors to engage political interest group in dialogue. So dialoguing, to CAN, is what we will keep doing, whether we trust the people or the people are pretending or the people are acting funny, we will continue to... we don't have a substitute to the dialogue as far as CAN is concerned. But we are just saying that, honestly speaking, are we getting the result? Not at the

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Cont. on Pg 12 *Mistrust Between Christians And Muslims - Rev. Hayab*

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speed we want; because if we want 40 percent, we've just gotten 3 percent and that is not good enough. I'm not saying 30 percent: I said 3 percent! It's not even up to 10 percent. But what we just hoping is that, ok let's hold on to the 3 percent and keep dialoguing and we may move to 6, we may move to 10, one day we may move to 15 percent and gradually we will move to 40 percent: that means we are out of the fail zone. So we have to get talking. What CAN believes is that, as we continuously engage people in dialogue, we will eventually have honest and genuine dialogue partners. At the moment, I'm not saying that all the partners are not honest but to a large extent they have been too slippery; not consistent! The lack of consistency in the process is the reason why we are having problems, because, ok like myself Rev. Hayab today, I have engaged in dialogue with people; I have talked to them about Christians and Muslims are members of one family under God; I want us to be together. But tomorrow the same people we're dialoguing together, there is something that will affect us and instead the two of us to come together and find solution, they will turn the other way. It will discourage me as if I should not dialogue again... because I have seen Christians who come and say "Rev, what is the value of this your dialogue? You're dialoguing and they are still killing us; you are dialoguing they are still taking our daughters and forcefully marrying them; you're dialoguing and they are still denying us admission: So what is the profit of this your dialogue? I said "look brothers, honestly you may not see the visible product of this dialogue; but this dialogue is reducing the harm by far! Because there is a time that someone will not kill you and also will not speak bad about you; but if he wants to speak bad about you he will speak aside. At least it reduces that damage. So we are just hoping that we can increase the speed and make some progress. If yesterday we had five people how understood, we want to hope that we will grow to have ten people, we grow to have twenty people, we grow to have thirty people, we grow to have forty people and eventually one day we will have sixty people. The day we reached sixty people, who understand, we would have won. But we cannot say because only few people are understanding then lest drop it; you will not grow, the figure will not grow, so, CAN everyday is saying, lets continue the dialogue at the Local Government at the ward level... that's why, if you observed today in Kaduna, so many

Churches have begun to deliberately introduce programs of inter-faith collaboration by saying that they will organise a programme and then invite Muslims around them to come. That's what we are telling Christians to do, if it will even help; because one day someone whom you've shown kindness as a neighbour may see something that will harm people of the Church and come and say we see this and we don't understand just because of the conversations. So you see, that's the product and result of the something. But at the larger level can you say we have achieved much? Not much! But let's continue with the tiny ones, you know, it's the small-small drops of water that make an ocean. So I believe that as CAN we have no option, and the new National President of CAN in his inaugural speech gave us a matching order and said look, we will not compromise: yes things are no going on right, yes there is so much mistrust, yes people are slippery; but let's hope that from holding a slippery hand, gradually we'll have somewhere on that hand that we will hold that's stable. So let's just hope that people will be patient because dialogue is not what we do without patience; dialogue is not what you do without having hope for something. If you go and think that it will work instantly, it will not happen, it will even look as if it's not going to happen. Keep doing! And the most painful one is that the people you think you are dialoguing with them can do something tomorrow that can make you feel bad but don't lose hope, don't give up. Something good will come out of it. There is a scripture verse that I love in Proverbs 6:22 says "train up a child in the way he should go so that when he grows old he will not depart from it". You know as a father you tell your child "don't do this! Stop doing this!!" He will even stubbornly do it, but the Bible says train him in the way he should go because the result is when he grows old, he will not depart from it. There are many things our parents told us when we were children and we thought they were disturbing us; but now we are grown... So when you engage in dialogue with people that you think will not understand, keep doing it. At time you are doing it, you are just like training them, helping them to understand the conversation. A situation will come in their life that they will value it and say, "but the other time if I had listened, we wouldn't have been where we are". So there will be a change, from one who was not committed to dialogue to someone who is committed to

dialogue. But when you give up then you kill everything: and I'm not going to give up, and I know CAN is not going to give up. Thank God for Archbishop Daniel Okoh who is saying that look, we are not going to give up yes there is not tangible result that we can celebrate but we will continue until we are able to catch the result.

Obviously the issue of trust and confidence is very huge in this conversation and there are different sides on the table. But have you taken any self-examination that the other side too, do they have reasons not to trust your own side and you are trying to see how you ameliorate?

...you see, long ago there was this existing prejudice between us and our counterparts: they don't trust us, we don't trust them; they think we plan to hold meetings to harm them, we think they hold meetings to plan to do us evil. I think we all have not done enough to prove to each other that those meetings do not exist. When you meet some people, as educated as they are, as exposed as they are, when they start telling you stories and twisting narrations to suit these sentiments from both ends you will be shocked; whether they are Christians or Muslims. You know, people now say behind any rumour there's an element of truth. I have come to know that behind one million and one rumours there is no one truth! But people like it that way from both ends! They will say if you think they are joking it's not just a rumour; it's happening somewhere! That's why in the world of social media today, it is those kind of insinuations or

assumptions that someone can go and create a video that looks near it and send to us and we jump and say, yes! It takes great wisdom and patience to analyze what you hear, what you see, to know that this does not look real. So that is the situation. I remembered when I became CAN secretary of Kaduna State in January 2003, there many Muslim who assumed that they could not visit CAN office because it's dangerous. I could not believe, because I have been with CAN all this years I have never seen us plan harm to any Muslim. But they were told that those things do happen. Until I started educating them, I started engaging them and inviting them to the office; and they realized that they could come to this office and sit and talk with us and nothing bad ever happens to them. Then the perception, the wrong thinking, started changing and more people started coming. I remember I did something again, apart from this one: what was that? I began to attend Tafsir, when there was Ramadan tafsir... I remembered NTA and FRCN and Voice of Nigeria will join and organize a Ramadan Tafsir which will be air live on Television and Radio, I will put my (clerical) collar, sit in their middle. And in one of those tafsirs I became the centre of conversation: people were asking me "why did you go?" I said "sir, if you think that when I just go to their midst they will harm me, so now you saw I went and know body harmed me. So the same thing, if they come to our midst no one will harm them!" Imagine the teacher wants to preach and preach hate message he watches his audience and sees

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Cont.on Pg 13 Mistrust Between Christians And Muslims - Rev. Hayab

someone with collar; that will force him to speak a favourable sermon! I have forced him to speak only Godly words, not what will create problems. So there is no way he will start speaking negative knowing that someone from that system is sitting and watching and listening to him. So look I did that and within 8 years I served there was a new collaboration cooperation, understanding between us and our Muslim partners in Kaduna. I will say something people may have not taken note of, that after the Miss World Beauty Pageant crisis of November 21 and 22 2002 – I was elected just 6 days after that incident – we started this engagement immediately, Kaduna did not have any other violent crisis for 9 years. Because, why had we been having crises? Leaders didn't engage each other and discuss. That's why sometimes I subscribe that, can we have a way of setting up a network of Peace Ambassadors of religious leaders to be discussing in Kaduna State? So that if there is any bad story that comes and its circulating and trending among Christians, throw it in that forum; the Muslim will respond to it, Christians will understand, and from that forum we will bring it out and tell each other to disregard it or this is the truth of it. The same thing; if it's trending among Muslims, we should throw it in that forum. But you know, what we have is that each group have their own; so when there is a negative story, instigating people, inciting one another, it just flows among the different groups, and before you know damage has been done and people have form opinions on even a story that does not exist. Recently something happened in Kaduna State, we just woke up one morning and there was a story all over social media that there is a bill in the National Assembly that Kaduna State's name has been changed... I felt I was too big to belittle myself with that one and I told people No! No!! No!!! I did not wait for the man to refute it because

my knowledge and exposure cannot allow me belittle myself; and it was not long, the rebuttals came, and you can check the details and you'll know the truth of it. But you know people have a way of stirring up sentiments. We do know that the other party also have trust issues with us, and it may be that we have had leaders in the past, and some leaders among us who says something in the public and say different things in the dark, which I've always told people no no no. If we want to correct the evil going on in our land as religious leaders, what I tell Christians is what I'm going to tell Muslims. People who have been in workshops and seminars where I spoke will know that I have always been frank. When it comes to Christianity when I want to analyze the issues from the Christian point of view, I will tell Christians pastors, tell me what I'm saying is not true; likewise to the Muslims, I will say Malam tell me if what I'm saying is not true! So when they know that in their presence you will say the truth and when they are not there you will say the truth, and then it balances. But we have so many of our clergy from both religious who say things different openly and say something else in the hidden. That's why this lack of trust is. And sometimes they also do not have the mandate of the Church to speak, they're just saying those things to eat food, and then they make people feel like we are all the same. I want people to know that there are many Godly clergymen in Kaduna State who have been engaging in dialogue. Yes, they know that result is not coming, but yet they are committed and have never compromised one minute, and we will continue this until the result is achieved; and I know we will soon get there because the speed at which we will get the result will come. You know as a preacher, when I go to preach at a revival services, and after good sermon and we make invitation and people stand up to make decision; don't think you are the one that

pushed them first: someone has been watering their hearts with that understanding but their eyes was not opened and they didn't understand. But the moment you came and you said few words, and they now said "yeah! So that's what the other preacher said last week! So that's what I heard the other year!" Then people will now come en-masse giving themselves, and you now think highly of yourself... No Sir! So we are trusting God that one day there shall be a mass harvest of people turning their mind to God, turning their minds to peace, turning their minds to unity, turning their minds to tolerance, turning their minds to understanding. But at the moment, yes, we know that there is a problem and there is a lack of trust, and people come to the table without sincerity. I think I need to clear this also that, not just lack of sincerity, there are people who come to the table of dialogue with arrogance and pride; they feel I'm "just tolerating him, I'm not listening to him". No. Unless we come to the dialogue table looking at each other as equal partners... "What is it about you that I don't understand? What is it about me that you don't understand?" Then we can dialogue and we will understand. But when you come and you make up your mind just going to listen to me, you are not

going to talk, you are not going to change and you are not going to shift base, then we are not discussing. So we have that. But another good thing is such people probably do not have enough understanding of what dialogue is all about, so with little patience, with effort, we will come to know. The man who refuses it today will receive it tomorrow; the man who is twisting it today will see it straighten tomorrow. But when is that tomorrow? I may not be able to tell you, but let's continue we will get to that tomorrow.

There is a body we know you are a part of, Global Peace Foundation Nigeria, and it is an International outfit; to what extent is the body synergizing with CAN to foster peaceful coexistence within the country?

Ok! The Global Peace Foundation Nigeria is an innovative peace building initiative where we try to mitigate identity based conflicts using a value based approach to peace building. You know that all human beings share common human identity and values that do not separate them because of culture, neither do they separate them because of religion; neither do they separate them because of colour; because they are human. When people go back to those values they will see that they are interconnected. So those things that separate us are titles or captions names; but as human beings we are the same. Ok, give me a woman, a woman is a woman whether she's a Muslim or a Christian, whether she's Hausa or Yoruba or Igbo or Ham or Bajju, Atyap; she's a woman! They all pass through labour and she could die and she could give birth to a child, she will want that child to survive. But you see, people don't talk about her as a woman but as a Muslim, a Christian, she's Hausa, she's Ham, she's Yoruba, and she's Igbo. Now people get angry with each other because of those captions and not those common values and humanity that connect them. The slogan is that, we are one family under God; so we try to preach that human beings are part of one human esteemed family; that means that if I have a challenge today and I need blood transfusion, any other human being, whether he does not come from my tribe or religion, can donate blood to me as long as we are of the same blood group. And there's no blood group by tribe, no blood group by colour of skin; blood group is blood group of humanity. So we know all this things and we try to help people to see and then respect one



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Cont.on Pg 14 *Mistrust Between Christians And Muslims - Rev. Hayab***Tel: 08036252943, 08023113012****ADDRESS: NN 22 CONSTITUTION RD, KADUNA**

another, tolerate one another, embrace one another. We do it more at the community level because we realize that peace builders are who have come before us have been doing well but some, of them have focused on a city kind of activities where you come and call the president of CAN in Kaduna and call the president of JNI in Kaduna and you keep them and put them on television and you say you are working on peace and keep paying tea for them... it's the people in the local community whose minds are distorted about their differences. Why can't you work with them at that level? Because the man who will grow to become the CAN president will come from a community; let him learn at the grassroots how to tolerate people of other faiths, people of other colour, people of other identity, so that whatever he becomes in the future he will use it. The same thing applies to schools. So these are the things that the Global Peace Foundation is doing. The foundation is working in over 24 countries of the world. In Africa we have four countries: Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya and Nigeria. Going back to your question: at the Global Peace we try to work with organizations and one key organization we work with is CAN. In all our programmes you see our logo, we are one family under God because the word God becomes very key to us: when we simply say we are one family, we could be one family in a cult, or one family of

criminals. But we said we are one family under God. We cannot effectively preach our message without bringing the religious organizations. Like in the areas we're working in Southern Kaduna we bring CAN, we bring J.N.I, we bring women, we bring youths, we bring community leaders, we bring Fulani communities, the Hausa communities and other tribal communities just to get people engaged and begin to talk among themselves and find solutions. So we cannot even operate without CAN, and CAN knows that she has been one of our great partner in preaching this our message with J.N.I. When we were in Kajuru Local Government, we did that effectively because those institution are key and if we don't work with them we can speak to the people because we leverage on the respect that the religions leaders have among there people. When you build the capacity of the faith leader and he goes out to preach this kind of message, you will talk to 20 but he will talk to thousands; and if they see him relating with another of a different faiths, he is influencing people even in millions. So these are the things the Global Peace tries to do. At the moment in Nigeria we are spreading across the entire 6 geopolitical zone we are operating in South-South. We have started operating in Northwest Northeast, North-Central. We are yet to go to the Southeast and Southwest but we will soon be there. Our effort is to preach this message one human esteemed family everywhere. Let

children grow to see another human being as their brother, let people grow to see another person on their place of work as their brother; let people grow

to see another person they see in the bus or in the park, or in the train or on the plane as their brother. Because when the common humanity becomes

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our basic goal: respect for one another, tolerance for one another, dignity for one another... then we will begin to stop all this rejecting or denying people their rights. It is going to be bad of you to think that because larger number of people in your village is all Christians so anybody who is not a Christian does not belong; that's danger! In another village where everybody is a Muslim and a few are not and then they feel those who are not Muslims don't belong, no! Whether we have just one Christian in your village, there is a Christian in your village; whether we have only one Muslim in your village, there is a Muslim in your village. After all he is a human being, he is your brother. Look when you're in danger and someone is coming to help you, you won't ask him to tell you his tribe or his religion; you will just want to be helped by a human being.

The 2023 elections are coming; do you have any concerns, especially given the context we have spoken?

Truly if anybody says he has no concerns then he is not familiar with the happenings around. The insecurity around is a concern. We want to come out and vote and we want credible results. How do we get credible results, and how do people come out and vote when there is insecurity? The insecurity will make a larger number of voters not to come out. Because this insecurity has been going on without concrete action by government, people just feel that in the day of election instead of going to waste my life I better stay at home. Now voter apathy will come in! People may want to vote but assurance of security becomes their number one problem. Have you forgotten that so many people today in Nigeria are really poor? Are they talking about gathering food to eat or they are talking about going to cast votes? So we have concerns about that: how can you conduct elections amidst insecurity

and poverty? How can you get credible elections with these two challenges? There are many others but just consider this two. When people are poor and hungry, poverty and hunger can make themselves their votes; and when people are afraid, fear and uncertainty of what will happen will make them not to come out and cast votes. So, now 20 people may just come out to vote and then the riggers will take advantage of 20 and make it 2,000; because when they add two zeros at the end, it will change everything. The insecurity, the poverty and hunger in the land could affect the election and that is why we are appealing to the people that look, those things are true but we want a better future; we must do something; don't allow the fear of insecurity to stop us from casting our votes. In some of the seminars which I have been holding around recently, I told the people that just as we want you to secure yourselves security-wise, that's the same thing you are going to do to secure yourselves during the elections. If we have an election polling unit where there are 500 people or there are 600 people, and we know that the place is sensitive to insecurity, we share ourselves according to timing and numbers: first 100 come for accreditation, the other ones are watching; second hundred come for accreditation, the other ones are watching; until we finish. The same thing we will do in the voting. We must not go to sleep. If we just organized ourselves to secure our community, to secure our votes, that itself shows that we have awoken from our sleep. It will give people confidence to come out and vote. Days or weeks before election, all these measures should be put in place so that people can guard themselves. We don't want people to panic! We must come out and vote. Talk about hunger: when you sell your vote you are

adding longer periods of hunger. Show me a man who collect N2,000 and he will suffer for four years because of the N2,000. Is your life only worth N2,000? So we are appealing to our people that you must not sell your vote, you will not collect N2,000 and compromise, you will not do anything that will cause you sorrows tomorrow. We must do something to take back our country. I tell people who care to listen that I will not be intimidated in this country; I will tell my people what I believe is right to the best of my ability, because when we keep quiet and we're shying away from our responsibility, evil will grow and all of us will be victims including those who think now that thinks are well. It's because of that commitment that we did a lot of massive sensitization for people to come out and register. And I must say to you that a lot of people did register and we have good registration number and we are making progress. Let's see what happens going forward.

Finally, you have just mentioned that you call to the people and the kind of the sensitization you have been making towards the 2023 elections; what is your call to the political class and then to election umpire, that is INEC?

Well, politicians must know that if you play a crooked game to win, you will have to use crooked means to rule the people. So winning shouldn't be the only thing, but also how will you govern the people. Some of the issues we are facing today in Nigeria is because people used propaganda, lies to get to power and when the opportunity was given to them, they did not have what it takes to deliver. So through their propaganda and lies they won the trust of so many people, and the weight of that trust overwhelmed them that they lost focus, not knowing what to do. So, politician, just tell us what you can do and don't lie to the people; don't use crooked ways to get power, because it has always backfired. So please, lead and serve to make a good name, if not for yourself, for your children and for the place you come from.

Alright, finally what about INEC?

I said it somewhere and let me just repeat it: I just trust this INEC and I told someone a day before yesterday when I was watching him talking on television: I said this man is the reason why I trust INEC. But for the purpose of not exposing him to those who will read will understand and know whom I mean. I know he has fought to see INEC doing the right long before he became part of INEC; and I know, from what I have been discussing with him; the man will not lie to me. I want to continue to trust until I have fact to prove that he is lying. But for now I just trust this INEC and I want to test it and see how they will do. So I just want to appeal to INEC that this trust some of us have for you, confirm it! I beg you in the name of God just confirm it, that this we have is not in vain. I want to appeal to Nigerians that let's just trust them. Let them fail, and then we'll know what to do. But for now, let's just trust them. The INEC Chairman, from his body language and from the recent speeches I've been hearing from him, I just want to give him and his team the benefit of the doubt. Why am I doing this: the Bible says that the heart of the king is in God's hands, and God can turn it in every direction like a water course. So everyday I say: that "The hearts of Mahmud Yakubu and all his team are in God's hand". Let them collect money, their heart is in God's hand; let them go to private meetings, their heart is in God's hand; let them do any wuru-wuru, their heart is in God's hand; let them plan some wrong things, their heart is in God's hand; God can turn it to every direction like the water course. God will turn their heart to see the cry of Nigeria and do what is right. Because if we don't have a credible leader that we actually vote for, he will not see himself accountable to us. So INEC, give us leaders we vote for; that know that if they fail us, we can vote them out. The reason why we are seeing people acting like demigods is because they never won election; if they have won election they will respect those who sent them there. ■

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Dry Ports Difficult To Operate In Nigeria Without Effective Rail Transport System -Achilike, Shipping Expert



Mr. Achilike

An expert in commerce and industry as well as shipping, Mr. Augustine Achilike has bemoaned activities of dry ports in Nigeria, saying that it will be difficult to sustain movement of goods without effective rail transport system in the country.

Mr. Achilike noted that the haulage burden is too much on the nation's highways which may make them not to last long, adding that all over the world dry ports are not run without effective rail transport system.

The shipping expert who is a member of National Executive Council of the National Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (NACCIMA), added that it is too expensive to use roads to move containers across the country.

He called on the Federal government and the Nigerian Railway authority to fix the rail lines to make movement of goods easier.

In this interview, Mr. Achilike who started as a furnishing business company owner in Kaduna close to 40 years ago, advised business owners to ensure that they keep their customers, "because I tell people that I use my customers as my own advert points for being honest and prudent with them and it has worked for me".

Excerpts:

Let's get to know you Sir?

My name is Augustine Achilike, the president of SKYBLIND NIG. LTD, a furnishing company established in Kaduna about 32 years ago, with the headquarters here in Kaduna, which is my main business. SKYBLIND has been taking care of the furnishing homes, offices, schools hospitals and so on. Everything pertaining to furnishing we have been fully involved for the past close to four decades now. We have a factory where we produced our furniture ourselves. We don't depend on importations of furniture but we produce and mostly why we are different is that we produce customer's specifications as they give us their designs, pictures and catalogue and we bring it more than what they saw at the pictures. That is what SKYBLIND has been doing for close to forty years now.

Ok Sir, I think it will be interesting to know your business journey because

you started this business from the scratch and given where Nigeria is inching to move to entrepreneurship.

People like you have been doing this for close to four decades; tell us your journey?

The journey so far like you know, has not actually been easy surviving. When I started in Kaduna the business atmosphere was actually very ok and we kept pushing. I had been in Lagos... established business in Lagos, Port Harcourt, Aba and when I came to Kaduna I found that it's the environment I love so much because of the peace and everything about Kaduna. That is why I decided to settle in Kaduna so I could tell you that I spent more than half of my years in Kaduna and also my children all were given birth to here in Kaduna. So Kaduna has been a kind of a base. Living and starting up business here was initially rough but I think it's God.

Is it everywhere or it's just in Kaduna that starting a business used to be rough?

Yeah, starting business in Nigeria you know is very hard because in business you are on your own, the government doesn't care about you if you want to start business so you have to struggle on your own and then think out the business and then go into the practice and everything before you will be able to establish it. So it is a very rough journey, because the system we have in the country does not have any provision to help the up starters: it is something that you need to see how you source your finance then get yourself a location, then start that business and how you could possibly improve on that business. Everything, so much burden, is on you.

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How do you overcome?

I will tell you it's God, because once God is on your side you can always overcome every situation. That's what I can tell you because I can't take the story away from God because He is the one that pioneer it. And then I think one thing that kept me on the business is the quality of service and the honesty: that is what I discovered people like in business. Because if you are into production and you tell a customer that "look, 'am producing this kind of chair for you and it will be ready in two weeks", and before two weeks you will tell him that it is ready, that is what a customer want. But a customer that will come and you will give him two weeks and the two weeks elapses, entering the third week and you have not even finished it, he loses that confidence; and that's how you are losing him and that confidence you are also losing other people that he would have linked to you. So that honesty, integrity and prudence it's what

keeps me going, because I tell people that I use customers as my own advert points and which has worked for me. I started in Kaduna with curtains. In those days SKYBLINDS was known for curtains. What made me tick was that I used to select curtains which quality was special; apart from being special and qualitative, they would last. So I found that customers would come and buy curtains and would say "oh the curtain we bought from you since five years, and ten years, is still intact and nothing has happened to it". So that kept referring people to me: when this person buys he tells another person, another person comes... that was how I grew up in business and that was the most important advert I can tell you I have experienced in life.

Now, we will come back to that because there is an interesting question I will like to ask you but before then, I will like to go into your other endeavours.

You have been involved in Chambers of Commerce and Industry both in Kaduna State and the National level, and ordinarily you are not from Kaduna State, but by business by everything you are fully a Kaduna man. So how did you get into the Kaduna Chamber of Commerce and Industry and then also up to the National Level?

Ok, you know whenever you are in an environment and you need to improve on that environment, you don't stay out but you try to make yourself relevant. So when I found out that for promotion of commerce and industries in Kaduna State, the Kaduna State Chamber of Commerce is the only stop point that you can show case that; so I joined the Chamber I think 1994 or 1995 as an ordinary member. What brought me to the Chamber was when I started to do exhibition in every Kaduna international trade fair; so as I was exhibiting I was picking interest in the organizers of the trade fair so that was how I now enrolled as a member into the Chamber. Then from being a member I rose to become a council member. I serve on the council for more than twelve years. After twelve years I came out,

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Cont. on Pg 17 Dry Ports Difficult To Operate In Nigeria

but within those very twelve years I served in different offices: I was Chairman of commerce in different other different groups as they are in the Chamber of Commerce. I chaired the Industry, I chaired the Commerce, I think about two or three of them. So I served in so many other groups within the Chamber, because the Chamber is an institution that enlightens you and grows you up into your local business and the international business world. So I started getting my exposure into the international business from the contacts and connections from within the Chamber: that's one of the advantages of being a Chamber member, because every country that is trying to come in to base in Kaduna State will go first to the Chamber of Commerce in the State, that is where he will meet the players in that industry: the agric, commerce, industries, mines, everything; and all of them and every person is there. So international business people will always like to keep up with the Chamber; that is how you will be able to sail and then get your international contacts.

So what you are saying is that, belonging to the KADCIMA (Kaduna Chamber of Commerce, Industry, Mines, and Agriculture) has helped your business to diversify?

Yes its help me to diversify and also worked... like I can tell you that when Obasanjo came into power, with our problem of ports in Nigeria, he sought advice on what to do on the decongestion of ports. We have Apapa port and we have TinCan port; so these are the two major ports in Lagos and they were congested. So they started by having bonded terminals, where they bring containers and they shift them to there

so that you could clear from there so that the port will be decongested. They now went further to tell him that look you need to do what we call inland dry ports (open dry ports): it will operate as the normal ports like TinCan and Apapa, but the only thing is that there is no water that ships will drop containers. The containers come to the Lagos ports but they are moved and cleared at the dry ports. So when Obasanjo set a committee through the shipper council, they then took a tour to the states, meeting the Governors and the people to enlighten them about what dry ports is all about and why they need to make the dry ports. I was opportune, I was with the team that was able to go round and then meet the Governors and the people under the Shipper's Council and under the team for the formation of dry ports in Nigeria. I was opportune to be in that very team so and that was when I was in the Chamber, so when I left the Chamber... I think I was also from the Chamber going to Shippers Association meeting for my company.

What is Shippers Associations about; what is Shippers Council about?

Shippers Council is the Government owned regulatory body that regulates the ports; the Shippers Association is an association that has importers and exporters, the players. Once you import and once you export, that makes you a shipper, that is the phrase we used for it.

So you actually do not have to have a ship on the sea before you become a shipper...

No no no! You don't need to have a ship before you become a shipper, because the main players of the shipping industry or the maritime too; they are the shippers, because if I do not ship items to other countries the



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vessels are down and the vessels are useless. The people at the port, the NPA (Nigerian Ports Authority), they don't have anything to do; and so too many other agencies. Therefore because I export and import, they have work to do, and the Government uses the shippers council to regulate the ports. So we, we have the Association of people that import and export. In that particular association for the Kaduna State, I have been the president for the past five or four years now.

So during the consultation with Governors by the then Federal Government about the dry sea ports, you were involved in Kaduna State?

Yes I was involved in Kaduna State, I think we met Gov Makarfi who was in power then. We talked at length with him to see the leverage to have a dry port in Kaduna. But we had only one bonded terminal, inland containers there at Kakuri. They could clear goods but they were not a dryport. So when that opportunity came, I think it was during Gov Elrufai, he is the one that now grab the opportunity to convert it to a dry port.

That has to convert what?

The former inland containers to a full dry port, like if you go there now every agency you see at Apapa and TinCan: customs, every person; quarantine, NAFDAC everybody is there now.

How has the presence of that inland port in Kaduna impacted on the economy of Kaduna State?

Yeah, it has actually done a lot because, formerly when your containers comes in Lagos is either your agent has to go to Lagos or you the owner have to go to Lagos to make arrangement for shipping and clearing; but now it is something that you can sit at the comfort of your

office in Kaduna and then your agent will drive down to Kakuri and clear your container in less than 24 hours because it's a new dry port, because they don't have much of load like Lagos. The customs there are cooperative; they give you less than 24 hours your containers are cleared and you pick them.

How many of such ports are there in the country or in Northern Nigeria?

Yeah, one was commissioned... I don't know if it's commissioned, they have finished it. They call it... the Kano one, Dala Dry Port is ready. I don't know; they are actually waiting for the Federal Government to commission it, but it is ready for business. Then we will have one in Katsina which it has gone up to 80 percent, so any time they are ready they will also come on board. Then we have at Ibadan we have one at Ibadan, and then we have one at Isialangwa, Aba, but that one has not come up they have not actually started it. It's still on paper, so there are other ones because, some states, if they are interested, they can now pick and the Government will approve there and then they can establish also.

But these dry ports, do they belong to the Federal Government or they belong to the respective state governments?

No actually, it depends because it's a private business enterprise.

Ok, I don't understand what you mean by private?

Like the owner of the ports, because the license was giving to individuals to operate but you have to operate under the umbrella... the way ports operate in the country. Like for Kaduna inland dry port, the state government has some stakes together with the owners of the port. The same

Cont.on Pg 18 Dry Ports Difficult To Operate In Nigeria

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thing in other states and other dry ports.

The dry port in Kaduna has been in existence for about five years as you said, and I think we still hear some people go to Lagos for this thing. Has there been enough sensitization or because, if not, why go to Lagos?

Yeah the managers of the port or the owners are trying in the advertising for people to know that this thing is at your doorstep in Kaduna, so that you will not be actually be suffering yourself going to Lagos. What happens is that, when you are importing in filling in your papers "port of final destination". Instead of you putting Lagos or putting Tin Can or Apapa, you will put it Kaduna inland dry port (KIDP). So once you put Kaduna inland dry port, because is there in the shipping map all over the world. So they will know that for the container, the final destination is Kaduna. So once it comes into Lagos by sea, they move it by trailer or by train to Kaduna; once it comes to Kaduna you go and do the necessary clearance there without having any hitch. So I think the people still need more enlightenment to know that this port exists in Kaduna.

So far how operational?

Operational, it is there 24 hours. If you go there every day there are containers coming in; I think they usually have not less than 20 containers coming in every day.

Would you think that the quality of transport network, either road or even rail, is also a factor working slightly against the operations of these ports?

Yes, I can tell you because once a

container comes into Lagos you either move it by train or by road; now you find out that the trailers which is the major means of the moving containers, for example, recently when the diesel went up, the container of 40 feet used to get to Kaduna for N900,000.00 or N1million, but we are now getting it for N2million or more: only transportation from Lagos to Kaduna, before you start clearing your goods. So, to tell you that... the Federal Government we have actually been on them, through the Shippers Council and the Nigerian Railway, for them to fix the rail lines because it is easier. All over the world you don't run dry port without the rail; they don't do that, because it will make it expensive to use roads to move your containers.

And the infrastructural pressure?

Yes the infrastructural pressure. That is why you get so much bumps, the roads are bad and you find out that the container that reaches Lagos in one week it takes two weeks before it comes to Kaduna because of the bad roads. So these are the problems that transportation causes.

Kindly tell us about your play at the national level of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry?

Like I said when I finished serving in the Kaduna Chamber of Commerce as Exco Member for 12 years or so, I was opportune that the president, i.e. the immediate past president of NACCIMA, Hajia Saratu Aliyu, who is our own Kaduna person, I served in the council with her when she was the

president, so when it was the turn of her to be National President, she was the one that handed over to John Udeagbala who is the National President. NACCIMA is a body that is structured, that I will tell people that look, if Nigerians can learn leadership from it, I think we could get some problems solved easily. NACCIMA is the place that you have succession you do not struggle. You have the president; if the president comes you must have the first and second deputy. The first deputy is the person that, once the president tenure of two years elapses, he does not have to waste time, he has the right of succession automatically; then the second deputy now move to first deputy. How they do it is that, they look at the rotation based on the six geographical zones. For example, it was the turn of the Northwest When Hajia Saratu Aliyu became the president. She served for the Northwest. Her First Deputy was the Igbo man, John Udeagbala from the Southeast. Immediately she left, he entered as the president which he is up till now; and the first deputy now to John Udeagbala is Dele Oye from the Southwest. So once John Udeagbala is going, the Southwest is taking over, and so on. So you can see how the thing moves. The succession graph clear, so each zone that has not been represented will be represented and it will be going on like that. And when it comes to business, both international and the local level that is how it is. That is the way NACCIMA is well organized. So, when Hajia Saratu became the National President, she co-opted me into the National Executive Council of the NACCIMA. When she finished the tenure, the current president again co-opted me into the National Exco. So I am still serving in the National Executive

Council.

Interesting. Finally, Nigeria today there have been pulls from all over: you hear people from one place saying leave our part of the country; others will say we are leaving and stuff like.

You have been in Kaduna State for almost 40 years, you have done your business you have prospered and all of that; for whatever reason will you want to leave Kaduna State?

Oh no! Because like I have told you that I have lived more than half of my years in Kaduna. I was 56 in March, 2022, and I have stayed in Kaduna for about 35 years. I don't have any other place I call a home than Kaduna. My original home I go at festive season and I come back. All my life has been revolved here. So... but like I tell people when I came to Kaduna over thirty years back, it was a very cool environment and a very good environment, I enjoyed it and I decided to stay here. The crises and other things started coming and after all God has kept us alive and we continue moving because life itself is about risk. I have been having reasons from abroad and in Nigeria saying: what are you still doing in Kaduna? If you do not like yourself why then send your children and then stay in Kaduna since you have two lives? The pressure has been there, but I tell them look, God is the only person that saves lives; and this is home. Because I have seen people, after or during crisis, relocate down to the East and you find out they say within some time they are dead or something happened. So whatever it is, I find Kaduna to be a home, and I can always maintain it to be my home and the home of my children.

Thank you very much for your time.

The pleasure is mine. ■

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Aims And Purposes Of Marriages In Igbo Land

By Stephen Anomhu Okeke Ph.d

The most essential property of marriage among the Igbo people is procreation and the perpetuation of the family lineage. A childless marriage is as good as nothing. Professor Celestine Obi in an interview succinctly put it 'a child that is begotten should as well beget someone else' [amuta nwa ya mutakwa onye ozo] He further stressed the importance of having a male child in a family because of the distribution of land and economic crops since girls do not have a share of any of these. A childless wife is looked upon as equivalent to a man and sometimes considered as a curse in the marriage.

Basden commented on the problem of the childless couples in these words: "if, in due course, no children are forthcoming as a result of the union, serious differences arise between husband and wife, each mutually accusing the other of being responsible for this state of affairs. Should matters continue so, the wife is at liberty to cohabit with another man in order, if possible, to secure the desired result", [p.76] the resultant children from such relationship belong to the husband of the woman as if he were the biological father.

The Igbo people believe that a child is a great blessing and a confirmation of a real marriage. Every child is welcome, but a male child is highly desired because in him the hope of family continuity rests. It has to be noted that the Igbo marriage is a patriarchal one and so a male child is expected in every marriage.

Nwabude insists that: "among the Igbo, the survival of the race is very paramount. The young couples are aware that marriage implies begetting

children, formation of a family and consequently acquiescence to be continued existence of the race". Thus, the couple accepts the responsibility on behalf of the family, race, clan, Igbo people and entire humanity.

The Igbo express belief in lineage continuity is some of the names they give to their children. [Afamuefula- may my name never be lost; obiefuna- may our ancestral lineage never get lost; ikemuefula- may my strength not be in vain; ifeadikeanwa- nothing is more precious than a child; and so forth] The cry of a newborn child announces a gift of the gods and hope of posterity. Everyone welcomes the arrival of a child because the people believed that a child belongs to member of the community.

People sing songs and perform dances in jubilation for arrival of a child and they visit the newborn and his/her parents and they offer gifts. As the child grows, every member of the community takes responsibility in the moral training and upbringing of the child in the community. In each child every member of the community sees an extension of self, and does everything possible to inculcate discipline in the child.

A man is expected to marry a wife when he is of age, in order to have a helpmate. In Igbo land, a bachelor who lives alone and cooks his own food and does other domestic chores is looked upon as incomplete and there is a great expectation from the society that he should be thinking of marriage. In actual fact, if he is unable to marry because of financial constraints, his

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parents and family members [umunna] might contribute money and get a wife for me.

It is believed that a wife brings either good luck or bad luck to the family. The wife helps to organize the life of the husband, and even helps in economic management of the family. She helps the man to gather and not to scatter or squander. Thus some women are given names like Odozi-aku [wealth manager] Oso di ya alu [co-worker with her husband] and other similar names that define the role of the woman in the family.

Farming was the chief occupation. And marriage was considered a great investment because women are very helpful

in farm work. Men do their work but women do greater and longer work on the farm like the clearing of the bush and weeding and even crop cultivation. A hard working -woman is a great asset for her husband. Men basically do the harder work like tilling the ground.

A lot of women engage in buying and selling of their farm products and other small business and this boost the economy of the family. It is an accepted fact that men are supposed to provide for their women in our culture, but men do not engage many things women do. The men can provide the money with which the women engage in small business, and the daily running of domestic affairs.

In Igbo cultural setting, the roles of men and women are clearly spelled out, and everyone goes about his or her

responsibility religiously. For instance, married men are not expected to enter the kitchen and cook food nor women expected to tap palm wine or climb trees in order to cut branches. Both compliment each other in their respective duties in the family.

As it is the dream of every man to be married, so it is the dream of every woman to have a husband and have a change of last name. Women automatically inherit the husband's last name by their marriage. It is a common Igbo worldview to think of the man behind an elegant and beautiful lady. In Igbo land, a woman with college degrees and wealth, but without a husband, has no status.

In order words, a woman is socially defined and identified by her husband. Women are given names like: Di bu ugwu nwanyi- A husband is a woman's prestige or pride; Mma Nwanyi bu di a woman's beauty is inhered in her husband.

A man gets fulfilled if he marries a good wife and has children in that marriage. It is a testimony to the biblical truth: "happy is the husband of

a good wife; the number of his days will be doubled. A loyal wife brings joy to her husband, and he will complete his years in peace. A good wife is a great blessing and she will be granted among the blessings of the man who fears the Lord" Sirach 26:1-3]

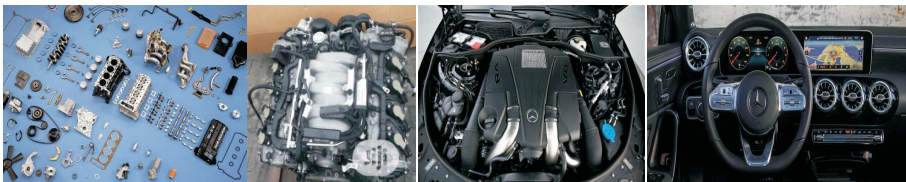
Married men and women also fulfill societal obligations by their marriage, and they live to the expectations of society. Married couples are expected to continue the work of procreation. Every child is welcome and accepted in the community because God is the giver of every life. The Igbo people do not believe in the numerical counting of children because one can have as many as possible. It is one of the reasons birth control is difficult to be accepted by majority in Igbo land.

There may be other reasons for marriages in Igbo land, but these are the commonly accepted reasons for marriages. People may have particular or minor reasons for engaging in marriage based on their cultural setting. Tribes and clans have some slight variations in their perception of marriage and even in its celebrations. ■



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Ndigbo In Zaria Celebrates New Yam Festival As Igwe Unogu Advocates Help For The Needy

By Olivia Obijiaku



Ezeigbo II of Zaria, His Royal Highness, Igwe V.I. Unogu (KSM), his cabinet members, and some key members of Igbo Community in Zaria, (ICA) celebrated the annual New Yam Festival at his palace in Graceland Zaria, Kaduna State on Sunday, 18h September, 2022. At the event which was chaired by Prof Reginald O. Obiako who asserted that 'the Igbos are known to be peace-loving and highly organized people', the mouthpiece acknowledged how God has been protecting him and his people despite the challenges confronting the nation. He reminded Ndigbo in Zaria and environs of the need to shun acts that

are capable of tarnishing their identity pointing them to the less privileged members for whom he canvassed assistance.

"Yam is the king of all crops." His Royal Highness intimated. "New Yam Festival marks the beginning of a new year. This festival shall bring us progress and peace. God has blessed us with bountiful harvest. To the glory of God, we will eat this yam with joy and happiness. As we celebrate, let us remember those who have nothing to eat. May God answer my prayers for Ndigbo and Nigeria as a whole. He shall continue to protect us." Delivering a paper titled *The Role of New Yam Festival Ceremony in the*



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Promotion and Sustenance of Peace and Unity among Ndigbo in Zaria and Environs, a lecturer at Federal College of Education Gombe, Mr. Aliakor Josephat Onyekaozuru kicked against segregation of any kind within the groups calling on the traditional leader and the President of ICA, Engr. Chief Vincent Oriah to ensure peace and unity among Ndigbo in the territory as well as work towards surpassing already established and bequeathed legacies.

During the *iwaji* (yam cutting) session when key members of the Igwe's cabinet and ICA as well as representatives of the six members states cut the yam on behalf of their people, Chief Oriah prayed that peace and joy abide with the community. He further explained in an interview with Stadt daily.news that "the culture

demands that the Igwe cuts and eat the yam first before any other community. But unlike in Igboland where we have villages, we are partitioned into states and local governments." On the challenges confronting the association, he asserted that they are handling whatever issues there may be.

Stadt daily .news also learnt from a member of Igwe Unogu cabinet, Chief Pius Egwu (*Ananu akamu anaeze okpukpu na Umuchu*), that Ndigbo celebrate new yam festival outside Igboland "in order to update our culture and translate what we celebrate at home in towns so that our children may also learn and uphold our traditions." He then tasked parents and guardians to point their children and wards to the roots. ■

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Galaxy TV Bureau Chief Weds His Heartthrob

advised the couple to "love themselves, exercise patience and tolerate one another and most importantly, communicate effectively". He prayed that God will bless them, prosper them, increase them, by giving them children and they will live long enough to see their grandchildren".

On his part, the sponsor of the marriage, Sir Cyril Oparaocha, KSM, admonished the couple to be mindful of the institution that they have just entered, as this is the only institution certificate is issued on the day of admission. This for Sir Oparaocha signified that "there is no graduation. Marriage is an institution for continuous learning. So Bosan and Amanda have together to continue to study one another. They must not digress from this endless learning part, they must continue to learn to love and cherish one another". Sir Oparaocha concluded the brief speech by praying that "God's love and love of one another will help the couple to cherish and value what is imparted on".

In a joyful mood, the groom, Mr. Bosan Yakusak described how it all started. "Amanda has been a friend I have known for a while. We have been friends for about eight years, and I dated her for about three years, so I have known Amanda for over 10 years. She has been someone I have admired from a distance until I finally made my decision that I wanted to marry her. In brief the relationship started in Jos. I met Amanda in Jos

when I went to the university

"The day I proposed to her, I let her know that I am not just wanting to get married, I let her know that I needed somebody that will be a friend, somebody that I will spend the rest of my life with, somebody that I can cherish, somebody that I wake every morning and see and not be sad". I "married Amanda because of her beautiful soul, she has an amazing soul, she is welcoming, she is charming and she knows how to cook. These qualities made her irresistible". "For Amanda and me, this marriage is a celebration of our love for one another. As people of faith, we believe our marriage is Divine". Bosan maintained that Amanda's qualities are complimentary. She is an achiever, very detailed and calculating.

The Amanda corroborating the entire husband (groom) said, explained that she was endeared to him, because, "he's a very amazing man, patient, understanding, distinct and kind hearted. We were just friends, we met in Jos, and I was on and off, and I got a job in Kaduna and now by God's grace after all, we are now married," she exclaimed.

On her part, the Chief bridesmaid, Miss Keshia Ngam, said, It is still dreamlike that my Sis Amanda just got married and I feel very excited for her as she starts this new journey and it is even more beautiful because she found her better half someone who compliments her.

I Will Continue To Ensure Christians And Muslims Coexist Peacefully - Sheikh Maraya

By Emma Y. Zwahu and Cyril Oparaocha



Sheikh Maraya

A Kaduna based Islamic preacher, Sheikh Haliru Abdullahi Maraya has vowed not to give up preaching that will ensure peaceful coexistence between Christians and Muslims in Kaduna state and the country in general. Sheikh Maraya who was the Special Adviser on Islamic matters and pilgrimage to late governor Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa said there is no basis for Christians and Muslims to hate each other because they are of the same parents from creation.

Maraya is the Coordinator of a Global Peace Foundation. The Cleric works with other religious leaders in Kaduna to build bridges of tolerance, understanding and respect across religious divides in the volatile state and beyond. In this interview, he revealed he had a lot of friends who are practicing Christianity". He also spoke on the forthcoming general elections in the country, and advised Clerics of the two major religions not to bring

religion into politics.

Excerpts:

Stadt: First of all, we would like to know your name and the kind of work you have done in the areas of peace building, conflict resolution, and inter religious dialogue.

Thank you very much. My name is Haliru Abdullahi Maraya, a former special adviser to the late executive governor of Kaduna State, Sir Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa on Islamic matter and pilgrimage. Once again, it is a pressure meeting you. As you know, Kaduna State recorded its first sectarian crisis in 1980 in Kasuwa Magani in the present Kajuru Local Government Area, many lives were lost and also properties worth millions of naira as far back as 1980 were destroyed. Many places of worship were vandalized, it was a horrible experience since that time I began to inculcate in our people the spirit of human unity, that people should believe that we are one, regardless of our religious differences because the two major religions we practice in Nigeria are Christianity and Islam. All their Holy Books, the Holy Bible and Holy Koran affirm the entire human race is from Adam and Eve regardless of any difference, so we have been working towards inculcating that in people because once people have realized that their source is one, definitely that relationship will be allowed to flourish. And people, regardless of any difference will live peacefully with a view to achieving growth and development. As you know no society can secure growth and development in an atmosphere of chaos and therefore we cannot achieve peaceful coexistence without the understanding that our source is one. Since I was in secondary school I began to inculcate in my people this idea. Therefore, there is no need for us to be killing one another because once you killed a human being, you have killed your elder and younger brother because you are from the same family as I have said earlier, so far we have achieved a lot.

Now we have insecurity all over the country and even more so in

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Northern Nigeria, how as that affected inter religion harmony?

I can tell you that, that has not affected inter religious harmony because the present insecurity in the country is affecting both Christians and Muslims. The kidnappers are kidnapping both Muslims and non Muslims, they are killing both Muslims and non Muslims, that is why it is very important for Muslims and non Muslims to be united in confronting their common enemy. The common enemies in this perceptive are the bandits and insurgents because they attack Mosques, Churches, markets and communities regardless of whether they are Muslims or non Muslims communities. These really stress on the need for Muslims and non

Muslims to come together to confront the enemies. It is very disheartening that as I am talking to you now many people are under captivity, many people have lost their lives in many communities, children are at home they cannot go to school because of the fear of bandits and insurgents. Many markets in the remote areas are really not functioning because people are afraid because if they go to the market they could either be killed or kidnapped and this is very disheartening because the economic activities has been paralyzed because of the activity of the bandits and the insurgents. And there is a need for both of us to be more united, you notice that the current insecurity is not pursuant to misunderstanding between the Muslims and non

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Muslims, in order word I will like to say that in some areas the activity of the non state actors have even brought the Muslims and non Muslim together because they have started to realize that they have been killed, kidnapped and maimed by a common enemy. Unlike, in the past for instance, during the Kasuwa Magani sectarian violence in 1980 it was a violence that erupted between the Muslims and non Muslims, that means the Muslims fought vis-avis in 1980 and also during the Kafanchan crisis, Zango Kataf crisis and sharia but what we are currently facing is absolutely difference from what we have in the past. Today, people are being killed in their communities and villages regardless of tribes, ethnic groups and

religion.

Alright, you earlier mentioned the kind of work you are doing from your school days as regards to conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence but this one is difference and you have stated the reality, now what are you doing to mitigate the present situation?

One, during my preaching sessions, I always draw the attention of the government to either its actions or inactions that are in one way or the other contributing to what is currently bedeviling the country, for instance, you notice that in all the 36 states of the federation, the police are short of manpower, presently Nigeria has a total number of about 371, 800 policemen and women, this for a

country whose population is over 200 million. According to the United Nation recommendation, police citizen ratio should be 450 to one, that means in every 450 people, there should be one policeman. Going by that recommendation, Nigeria is supposed to have far above what we have now, but we are having a situation whereby we are far away from the number recommended by the United Nation and of the 37, 000 police officers, you will notice that a very significant portion has been attached to the VIPs, some are providing security to the Executive Governors, some to the Deputy Governors, some to the members of the National Assembly, some to the Ministers and some to the Commissioners. Take for instance, Egypt, the country has the population of about one hundred and ten million people but it has more than 500,000 policemen and women.

The population of Egypt is less than that of Nigeria with about fifty percent but in spite of that the number of police personnel in Egypt is more than that of Nigeria with about two hundred thousand that is why you notice that there is sufficient peace in Egypt compare to Nigeria. Secondly the

welfare of the Nigeria police is something that is very discouraging, As I am talking to you today a Police Constable is earning a salary of about N48,000 per month, this is very alarming, if you come to the area of logistics, you will notice that some police stations has less than ten rifles, no sound vehicles some of the officers don't even have uniforms, stationeries etc, these are some of the ills I always mention during my preaching session so as to draw the attention of the government to this menace. Nigeria is a country that is blessed with abundant human resources but the significant portion of our young people are unemployed and today they are willing to be recruited into the police force but the government is doing nothing toward achieving that recommendation of the United Nation, this is so appalling, for instance, there is a town called Tegna in Niger state, this town was attacked some months back, during that attack the town had less police men, that was why the attackers didn't experience adequate resistance from the police who are saddled with the responsibility of the protection of lives and property. As you know the military is saddled with the responsibility of protecting mainly the country's territorial integrity, theirs is to compliment the efforts of the police, it is imperative to note that the police are doing all they could but they are handicapped.

I have always drawn the attention of the government to this fact. Also I always tell my congregants the importance of peaceful coexistence that if human family will be more united definitely the aggression the human family is experiencing will be easily mitigated because unity is very important in this nation building, peace keeping etc. and I also tell my congregant that security is business for all, we have to be very vigilant when we see someone we don't know and whose activities becomes suspicious we have to report to relevant authorities. In terms of insecurity as a religious leader we have limitation but we have been doing what we can to ensure that insecurity to our beloved country is

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currently experiencing become history.

We like to know the level of collaboration with people of other faith in this regard?

Presently, I am the coordinator of a Foundation call a 'Global Peace Foundation', the Chairman of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Kaduna State, Rev. John Hayab is the country Director of the same Foundation here in Nigeria, for the past 10 years. The objective of the foundation is to achieve peaceful coexistence not only in Kaduna State chapter but in the country as a whole and we have a lot of friends who are practicing Christianity. We relate very well, we exchange ideas in relation to the unity of human family. I always frequent gatherings of Muslim and non-Muslims with the view to exchange ideas on how to move our dear Kaduna State forward. I could remember in 2011 election as a Muslim, I came out openly to support a Christian governor, Sir. Patrick Ibrahim Yakowa, a Christian who as at that time was the gubernatorial candidate of People's Democracy Party (PDP). Yakowa was that time the sitting governor of Kaduna State not because he was a Christian but because I realized that he was a qualified person to be a governor at that time. This was so strange to most people that a Muslim cleric was supporting a Christian candidate and that has really created a better understanding between a non Muslim of the southern part of Kaduna and my humble self. That too, clearly showcased that all the Muslim who are campaigning against a Christian candidate, we were doing that pursuance to self-centeredness, it was not the teaching of the Islamic religion to prevent a non Muslim to be a governor. And up till now, it is part of my teaching that people should vote on the basis of merit not on the basis of ethnicity, faith, or geographical consideration because this country is the only country we have, therefore, we have to get our best to be our leader in all spheres of

leadership so that the country could move forward.

Sheikh, we have talked much on your Foundation, Global Peace Initiative, you highlighted what you have done so far in achieving peaceful coexistence among the citizenry. We know you cannot do this alone, we want to know if you are synergising with CAN and JNI?

Yeah, let me answer this question in a way, in Kaduna State we have visited many local government areas and whenever we went we made sure we contacted a religious leader, Islamic religious leaders and Christian religion leaders, we are also inviting CAN and JNI of those local government areas to participate in our programmes. What we normally do wherever we go, we interact with the youths, the women, traditional rulers and religious leaders in the areas, so that we collaborate on how to sustain peace in their various communities. So we have been working together with both CAN and JNI because fundamentally our work is to also promote religious tolerance so we have to practice a religion of our choice

and also allow our brothers and sisters to practice any religion of their choice. We have to respect any religion that is not ours. It is our constitutional right to practice a religion of our choice but in doing that we have also to respect the

religion that is not ours and this has really helped in calming nerves in many communities.

We have really frequented the southern part of the state and also the northern part of the state, for instance

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Finally, did you have any concerns with respect to the upcoming 2023 election?

Yeah, my concern is that if care is not taken, in some areas the election may lead to the eruption of violence and in some areas. If the relevant authorities allow some religious leaders to be preaching in their mosques or churches, telling people to vote on the basis of their religion that will really plunge the country to some chaotic situation as it happened in the 2011 general election. I would like to call on the relevant authorities to enforce section 97 of the electoral act of the 2022. ■

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Cont'd from Pg. 23

2023: Nigeria Is Broken; A Chance To Fix It Is Here

By Chris Nwedo

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Nigeria is today engulfed in intense and irrational violence, widespread poverty, substantial and criminal expropriation of the national resources and political rascality. What is particular about the prevalence of these very unfortunate developments is that they are pervasive and ostensibly uncontrollable. In the faces of the deeply threatening national crisis the government has presented many conflicting signals in respect of appropriate actions against the ills. There are signals representing damaging lack of political will to deal seriously with the issues and then what seems like connivance of the agents of the government in the criminal intents to implode the nation. Exemplary cases that buttressed the appropriateness of the above propositions are the stealing of Nigeria's crude oil and mining of mineral resources across the Federation by hardly anonymous criminal syndicates.

Consider the way the society has been rendered vulnerable and intolerable by criminals who on daily basis slaughter the citizens and caused the society to be unsettled through all manners of violence, kidnapping for ransoms, ritual murders and the brands of killings that suggested something very ideological. The suspicion is that there is no proof that Nigerian Security Forces' institutions have no capacity to bring the needed order in the dreadful chaos. Nigerian Military according to experts have distinguished themselves in many International Peace Keeping Assignments, the best in the continent and significantly powerful in global ratings but could not save itself from imminent annihilation from uncoordinated bandits and other violent groups.

Endless numbers of these security men and women have been pitifully ambushed and slaughtered across Nigeria as they are the more targeted victims of the irrational violence. The most common explanation many commentators give for the insecurity is that the government for unknown reasons decided to allow the violence to fester. The similar explanations were rendered for the massive stealing of the crude oil and illegal mining; the

same is also used to explain effortlessly the corruption and appalling mismanagement of resource, policy instruments, institutions and idiotic political decisions.

Particularly in the last eight years, there is no evidence that those determined to ruin Nigeria have been appeased by the excruciating difficulties they plunged the nation and the pitiable circumstances of Nigerians. The nefarious have continued to breed threats and have decided to maintain the statuesque. There is an election on the way, they intend to use the occasion to readjust their postures, get more grips on power and make it more legitimate their evil plots against the nation.

The discreditable conducts of the majority of our political classes has made it necessary that Nigerians should actively stand-up in defense of rights to safety, economic buoyancy and quality governance. The bleak events in the polity should be potent pressures on ordinary Nigerians to start understanding that they are practically unrepresented by their representatives at the critical points in national policies and programmes. It has become essential that Nigerians begin to think for themselves and

standing out to demand for what are rightly theirs in terms of service and positive leadership direction.

The sickening prettiness of the leadership evident in ubiquitous corruption, incompetence, insensitivity, political unruliness and overt neglect of obligations as governments have strongly impacted damagingly on the quality lives and prospects of meaningful engagement in the system by the rest of the citizens. These realities justify appeals against abandonment of the project, Nigeria, in the hands of the treacherous. The unhelpful nature of the indifference and erroneous submission to whims and caprices of the few have become challenged by the imperatives of doing the right thing for real change we deserve in our society. The challenge to do something constructive for the positive future of the nation has become overwhelming particularly as 2023 general elections approaches. The choice of continuing with the exasperating rot or sustainable departure has been presented lucidly to us in symbolic forms by the candidates seeking endorsements. Some of the candidates asking to be endorsed as president are the embodiments of national predicaments.

Figuratively speaking, grounds have been shifting to provide atmosphere for Nigerians to begin to access proper handles for steering clear of political deception, oppression and deprivation. It is the duty of all to be essential component of a successful national narrative as participants and not as ill-fated spectators. I believe that it is an inviolable obligation for the people to breathe in the service consciousness, swiftness and efficiency in the management of Nigeria's national wealth in favour of collective interest.

It can be explained that the reason why the national condition got deteriorated and unchallenged is that most Nigerians are corrupt, hypocritical, prejudiced and gullible. We have always had leaders that profoundly reflect the nature of our people. Many

of our national media institutions are despicably biased, and more uncontrollably is the social media that is seemingly 'kidnapped' by rebellious armies of propagandists who do everything to market all conceivable falsehood to favour evil politicians in 2023 elections. These detestable armies of sharks invade, attack and attempt to drown every objective criticism of the present government and the politicians behind the national misfortune.

During the political campaigns one naturally would dismiss these media viruses as campaign tools but the continued havoc is incomprehensible. They have neither respect for truth, objective analysis of the national conditions nor the sacrosanctity of the individuals' views. I am afraid of the immense potentials of these awful militants for further devastation. No society veritably grows with this brand of virus infestation. When you quieted the truth, how do you get the right? When things are not right how will they be good? I do not think that with these vicious propagandists that judge every statement with scripts in their hands are well disposed to see Nigeria wriggle free of the suffocating grips of the unscrupulous.

Sustainable reconstruction of Nigeria is a onerous task. Nigerians must be open to constructive actions capable of helping them retrieve their country from intensely damaging crucibles. These opportunities for some things significantly powerful, helpful and wonderful are in the offing as we approach political decision time. This is a time to drop your idiotic religious or ethno sentiments and pickup rationality in the choice you are bound to make about whom to vote. Discarding detrimental emotions and making objective choices are the significantly powerful, helpful and wonderful things. This is because your country, Nigeria, will start working again and you become better. You have a challenge to be meaningful and concerned that your country is turned upside down, you must partner constructively. Resist the temptation of doing bad thing, rather go out and

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In a face of constant assaults of political sorts, Nigerians are in dire need of active methodologies, more pragmatic apparatuses for steering the wheels of the society away from those in power who do not mean well at all. We have been hoodwinked for so long by these vicious groups of politicians who used misleading tools such as false ethnic and religious propaganda to readjust positions as they criminally subvert the will of the people. Threatened by imminent forfeiture of the felonious advantages, they caused divisions among their ranks and have re-converged more potently ready to use the fools and dump the idiots after the elections. The political fools do not ever learn and the idiots repeat the same self-destructive political blunders.

I believe a productive change Nigerians need is incomplete without disappearance of the nation's human-worms who are absolutely responsible for the depletion of traditional values of fraternity, care and patriotism. These values have become substituted with bestial deprivations that are orchestrating prevailing national damages and causing pains. No one disputes that the tools in the hands of Nigerian human-worms are criminal violence and corruption in all ramifications. Corruption has become a surreptitious weapon diffusing the

hardship and tribulations among Nigerians. Corruption hurts the vulnerable

disproportionately and undermines the nation's potentials for catering for the needs of the people. While it is blamed for crimes and joblessness, it is responsible for mismanagement of material and human resources readily available in the nation. For Femi Fani-Kayode, the Nigeria has continued to be ruled by charlatans while those who deserved to rule had been denied the opportunity.

Nigeria cannot regain her true identity without a change structured on a

transparent institutions and processes where the powers of the people are absolute and irreproachable in the determination of needs. The idea of people determining their fate as a collectivity is now imperative considering the failure of the leadership in the areas of right judgment.

The deficiencies in the management of recurrent crisis within the national elite establishment and the traumatizing culture of misrepresentations by the elites exposed the difficulty of the rulers in terms of right judgment; consequently, it is irrational to leave the politicians without effective control. Our new political dispensation is today marked by narratives of vicious legislative radicalism, confusion and disillusionment. The discomfiting developments have always been defended by denigrating lies and deliberate falsehood by the wrong doers.

As some disgruntled parliamentarians shamelessly engaged in fierce reckless physical fight for leadership positions, the disgrace is continuously and effortlessly defended as the means of substantiating the robustness of national democracy. Indeed, nothing was done to denounce the national embarrassment. It is disgraceful that the legislators never considered as priority the urgent needs of the nation for security. Imagine that continued violence that displaced about 1.6million people in Nigeria does not appear to have any impact in the decisions of many of them. These vulnerable victims of man's inhumanity to man seemed successfully abandoned in camps scattered between Nigeria and Cameroun. The catastrophic devastations of the 'Jihadists' have become compounded by ubiquitous banditry, kidnapping and dare-devil armed robbers.

The helplessness most Nigerians found themselves today in the faces of the calamities is blamed on the allegations that the security

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institutions were infiltrated and compromised. The allegations looked incontrovertible. The victims of these atrocities particularly those driven out their homes due to the senseless violence decry abandonment in ill-fated camps unprotected against scorching sun, rain, flood and impoverishment. The victimized citizens are treated cosmetically and remembered if it matters politically, and by means of their calamities many of the politicians and fortunate contractors have become

stupendously rich and influential. The politician contracted as humanitarian agents purportedly expropriate for personal use monies and other helps targeted at the victims. The ruling party appeared perplexed. It has not done enough to demonstrate commensurate capacity to deal with the many challenging Nigerian questions. The confusions are not permitting any fanciful speculation that the government knows it has obligations. It is part of the national fraudulent culture in governance that

the unreasonable procrastination that points to incompetence is rationalized and blamed on the past PDP governments.

It is the opinion of many that Buhari and the APC led government are yet to demonstrate to Nigerians that they have the capacity to impress the citizens. The government must realize that people are becoming drained for want of action. Can we afford to excuse the government's incomprehensible procrastination on a hypothesis of slow and steady wins

the race? The race has already been woefully lost because the tenure has approximately finished. The slowness has proved stupidity because few months to the end of the administration Buhari and the party APC have done nothing to redeem the deplorable images as people that grounded the Nigerian nation. The government has done most things wrong, including the choices of flag bearers in the 2023 presidential election. ■



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