

A RE-APPRAISAL OF AFRICAN TRADITIONAL RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE ON THE NIGERIAN COMMON WEALTH SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT	KEYWORDS
This article attempts to showcase how African traditional religious models can be utilized to resolve the overwhelming multifaceted problems of the Nigeria common wealth issues bothering on injustice, natural resources sharing, religious intolerance, political structure and its office sharing, animal rearing/husbandry, social welfare distribution, religio-cultural values, indiscipline and lawlessness, corruption, electoral processes and even boundary delineation, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-religious differences etc., which are all overwhelming, indices that all is not well with Nigeria as a nation. It adopted the descriptive approach as its methodology pointing out the shortfalls in this issue. The paper ends by pointing out the use of African traditional paradigm in the process of resolution and advocates for a way forward by using these mechanisms as its solutions.	African Traditional Religion. Resources Sharing. Corruption. Social Welfare Distribution.

Introduction

It is heartening to note that on daily basis Nigerians are becoming convinced that nation building that is enduring will be based not only on the material aspect, but also on the spiritual aspect hence Religion's contribution is being sought after nowadays as to bail out the Nigerian nation from its multifaceted commonwealth problems that have engulfed the nation over the years. No doubt, Nigeria as a nation had been having commonwealth challenges over the years. This is because our national leaders have played lip service to the spiritual dimension of man on which Africans are traditionally brought up with. In other words, leadership in traditional Africa can best be understood and interpreted in terms of the sacred, because it is the spiritual agencies that guide people towards paths of moral rectitude and integrity. As conceptualised by the Africans, they are, the Supreme Being, the divinities, spirits, ancestors, who are in fact the real leaders of the people. In Africa therefore, the earthly kings or chiefs or elders merely act on behalf of the gods, meaning that the earthly leaders or rulers only exercise delegated authority from the gods as they lead their people.

Just as Nwaghaghi (1991:113) once observed "national integration cannot be achieved if the necessary ingredients of nation building- justice, peace and love are lacking in a nation", just as it seems to be the reality in our nation in recent years, arising from the poor management of our commonwealth by

the successive administration of the nation, the military and civilian alike. No doubt, it is religion that naturally helps to inculcate the above mentioned virtues in citizens of a nation; both on the leaders and the led. They can never be imposed on citizens through the barrel of a gun, and hence any meaningful task of nation building must simultaneously take cognisance of the spiritual and material aspects of man.

As Chinyere Ukpokolo (2011:152) observed, “religion reflects human attempt to connect with the metaphysical world, with practices embedded in complex belief systems that may not be visible and meaningful to non-members.” Yet humans practice religion in a social world, a world intertwined in social relation which shape human behaviour and conducts. It is not surprising therefore to assert that it is the loss of the sacred character of the traditional society that is responsible for the deteriorating values in all sectors of the Nigerian society, thus necessitating the unfortunate sufferings of Nigerians in the midst of plenty in our nation, Nigeria.

It is only when the country and its leadership accept the truth that without the contributions of the religious institutions no meaning development will be possible in the nation, as the theme of this 39th Conference of the Nigeria Association for the Study of Religions (NASR), seems to be suggesting to our national leaders.

Unrestricted corruption, has made public office in Nigeria a fast track to wealth, and has intensified the struggle for elected office, thus making election “a do or die affair”, thereby creating conflicts and instability in the national polity as we now are witnessing more negative indices in our electoral system. Successive administration in Nigeria had always told the youths of the country that they are what now appears to be “illusory future leaders”, yet there is nothing realistically and sincerely being done to begin to position the youths as those who will actually take-over from the elders. Who is fooling who? In view of these stated realities, one would agree with the view expressed by Obiora Ike (1993:33), that “Africa is a striking feature and embarrassing paradoxes and contradictions”. This is because it is the second largest continent in the world and perhaps the richest continent in terms of natural resources and potential wealth. Yet Africa appears to be the weakest continent on the globe. Her sons and daughters rank amongst the poorest of the world and her societies among the least developed. Recently, it was in the News (both electronic and print media), that Nigeria is the first among the poorest countries of the world. Poverty in the midst of plenty. What a contradiction!

Continuing, he says, “Nigeria is a painful and disgraceful reality- a very rich country with a distressing scene of vast majority of desperately poor people living side by side with an aristocratic, privileged and shamelessly few opulent few”. What can we boast of as a nation of fifty-eight (65) years of independence when all indices that make for an independent nation are virtually absent? On what basis do we as a nation peg the often taunted slogan of “a united, indivisible and progressive nation” when in practical terms, there is nothing suggestive of such a unity, indivisibility and progress in our national polity? How, with injustices all over the place for which there are spates of agitation of marginalisation in every nook and crannies of the country?

One would have thought that the gruesome killings of Nigerians in the unfortunate Nigerian civil war of 1967 - 1970 had thought the Nigerian nationals a bitter lesson as for one to assume that the mistake that led to those civil war days would never have appeared again. Unfortunately, nothing, I repeat, nothing seem to have been learnt by both the nation leaders and the led as evidenced in the fact that drums of secession, separatism, exclusionism, nepotism and tribalism, marginalisation, injustices are on daily basis increasingly being drummed here and there in our national polity.

This article attempts to show how African Traditional Religion's models can be utilised to resolve the multifaceted problems of the Nigerian commonwealth bordering on injustices, natural resources sharing, religious intolerance, political structure and its office sharing, animal rearing/husbandry, social welfare distribution, religio-cultural values, indiscipline and lawlessness, corruption, electoral processes and even boundary delineation, multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-religious differences etc, which are all overwhelming indices that all is not well with Nigeria as a nation.

Clarification of Terms

Two terms are worthy of attention in this discussion, namely, "Commonwealth" and "African Traditional Religion", hence, their clarification has become necessary here.

(i) Commonwealth: In political administration, the word "commonwealth" refers to assets and liabilities which belong to the whole body of people of a nation or a state, hence we can here talk of the Nigerian commonwealth. Again, "Commonwealth" according to Patrick Hanks (1971:339), derives from the word "Common weal" which refers to commonwealth, the public good, what is owned or shared commonly'. In our context, the nation, Nigeria, and its assets and liabilities naturally belong to all Nigerians. Ironically, however, the processes of sharing or participating in those "common welfare" or "wealth" otherwise called "national cake", over the years had generated unimaginable tensions, strikes, acrimony, crisis, secession, climaxing in the two and half years civil war of July, 1968 to January, 1970.

On the other hand, "Commonwealth" can also refer to a federation of former colonies of the erstwhile colonial power or political overlord. For example, in this regard, a typical example is the Commonwealth of all former British Colonies always referred to as the "Commonwealth of Nations"; even though they had attained their independence several years from their British colonial masters. They are all bound together by a common allegiance to the British Crown and they recognise the British Monarch as head of the Commonwealth of Nations, accepting English Language as their official Lingua Franca and meet regularly on rotatory basis to attend the Commonwealth of Nation Meetings, and Commonwealth Games usually presided over by the British crown. The list of the Commonwealth Nations include the following independent Nations: Australia, Botswana, Canada, Ceylon, Cyprus, Gambia, Ghana, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Malta, Malaysia, Mauritius, New Zealand, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Tanzania, Trinidad and Tobago, Uganda, United Kingdom, Zambia.

(ii) African Traditional Religion

African Traditional Religion (ATR), on the other hand, is referring to the indigenous religions of the Africans as practised by the forebears of the present generation of Africans and is still being practised in various forms and intensities by the present Africans as handed over to them by their forebears. In its scholarly study over the years, African Traditional Religion had been seen and described variously as African indigenous religion, African religions, and most recently Afrel. This notwithstanding the views of some scholars that both Christianity and Islam are too old in Nigeria and so known to most families so much so that to such families, Christianity or Islam can as well assume their own traditional religion.

Locating the Root Causes of the Nigerian Commonwealth Problems

The first major issue of the Nigerian Commonwealth problem is the heterogeneity and size of the nation. Nigeria is an amalgam of many different ethnic nationalities, each with its cultural patterns and historical experiences. It is such that an average Nigerian thinks first of his/her ethnic nationality before thinking of himself or herself as a Nigerian, notwithstanding the often “illusory” view being canvassed by Nigerian politicians of “one united, indivisible and progressive nation”. The heterogeneity of the country is a fact that must be accepted as a national reality and factored into how the “national cake” must be shared in cognisance of this fact, be it in political, social welfare, educational, developmental project distribution or else the end of the cry of marginalization will remain a mirage.

Next is the related factor of “unmanaged inclement climatic weather conditions”, which make living condition and sustenance difficult in some parts of the country, thus necessitating Nigerian migration from one’s place to the other in search of viable means of livelihood for themselves, especially for those with herds and other traditional animal/livestock which happen to be their economic mainstay as evidenced in the recent frequent herdsmen and farmers clashes in the Nigerian middle-belt region and elsewhere in the country. Thirdly is the human factor of the unjust economic order in which the wealth of the nation appears in few private individual’s pockets at the detriment of the poor masses. How can they be happy? This is exacerbated by the incompetent corrupt political office holders. This is followed by the failure of the successive governments of Nigeria to recognise the need to appreciate the values of the African traditional religion as to utilise its sustaining teachings to govern this country. There is no doubt that the African traditional religions contain strong ethical norms which people are yet to properly understand and utilise in administering the country over the years, except people are being hypocritical about their religiosity as it appears most people do in the foreign religions being practiced in Nigeria.

The question of corruption has remained a hydra-headed national problem of the successive administration of the country because people have lost the African traditional moral values. People are now more pre-occupied with making money at all cost and will do anything for material acquisition; the type of which Uzorka and Ebisi (2004:113) would say that,

“Corruption may ultimately kill democracy in Nigeria, and for this not to happen, all hands must be on deck in renewed war against corruption at all levels of governance. Ostensibly, we should reawaken the moral values inculcated in us by our grandfathers.”

It is obvious that the corruption of the country in today Nigeria, especially in political arena has scared away many genuine and competent persons from contesting elections and thus, offered opportunity for charlatans to dominate the political arena.

Factors Responsible for Incessant Conflicts in the Nigerian Commonwealth:

The major cause of conflicts in the Nigerian Commonwealth is Injustice. Naturally people will react most times negatively if they feel unjustly treated in things they think they co-own with others. Few instances will suffice here. A typical example is what has now become a perpetual cry of the people of Niger Delta over ecological degradation of their natural environments over the years in order to sustain the nation. As we all know, Nigeria operates almost a mono economic mainstay of oil and gas. All you hear in the case of Ogoni Clean-up remediation exercise is “it is almost ready”. Yet, we now hear that another new Refinery is almost ready for commissioning now somewhere in the Northern part of the

country, whereas the older Refineries in Port Harcourt, Warri and even Kaduna have gone comatose with the attendant mass importation of refined petroleum products from abroad in order to perpetuate and perpetrate institutionalised corruption via the “Cabal syndrome” in Nigeria.

The oil producing communities, the Ijaws of Ondo State, were on peaceful demonstration in the first week of August to complain to government that their communities had been without electricity for over ten (10) years, all to no avail. Afam, which supplies National electricity to Rivers State and Abia State, had no light in their communities until the boys there protested before they were listened to. An International Airport Port Harcourt sited in my home town Omagwa, in Rivers State, was the reason that attracted electricity extension to the Ahoada, Elele and Isiokpo parts of Rivers State in the 1980s. Yet, Omagwa community who donated the large hectares of land for the siting of the Airport and other ancillary projects like the Airport Hotel was not considered qualified enough to enjoy the electricity light until the first electrocution consumed an Omagwa indigene through his contact with the electric high tension wire. This infuriated the youths who staged their protest to government, yet all to no avail. It was not until in the year 1990 before they stepped down the high tension wire to give my Omagwa community electricity light. It is only in Nigeria perhaps that Pensioners (senior citizens), who had meritoriously served their nation in the civil service die without receiving their pension / gratuity, and those who ever receive, do so after much suffering, demonstration and maltreatment.

A trip to Oloibiri in Bayelsa State will make one weep for this nation as there is nothing to show practically development-wise. Yet, this was the land where petroleum oil exploitation began in this nation in the mid-1950s. The cry of marginalisation and oppression occasioning communities protestation to government by both major and small ethnic groups of the nation is on daily basis such that one begins to wonder and ask, who is actually “this expert or supreme marginalizer” since both the major and smaller ethnic groups of the country are all claiming marginalised? All the cry for resource control and restructuring had fallen on deaf ears because it will not perhaps allow those “supreme marginalizers” to continue their selfish amassing of the Nigerian commonwealth in the dangerous and false federalism being practised in Nigeria, especially since the military seizure of power in 1966. The question people often ask is, if University of Nigeria, Nsukka, could be built and funded with the palm oil and palm kernel money from the Eastern Region, if the Ibadan Cocoa House, University of Ife, Ile-Ife (now Obafemi Awolowo University) and free education could be built and sustained with the money from cocoa of the Western Region, if Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria could be built and sustained with the money realised from the Groundnut Pyramids sales of the Northern Region and each region developing appropriately at their own paces within true federal structure of the pre-civil war Nigeria, why is the successive leadership and politicians of this country reluctant to heed to the call for restructuring and resource control; thus aggravating ethnic protest and cry of marginalisation?

Nigeria’s wrong priority inclination blindfolded her leaders such that they failed to invest with the petroleum money for future sustenance. Rather, leaders and followers embarked on unbridled stealing of oil money until now that they are realising that oil and gas resources have terminal date, apart from the vagaries of economic factors that could affect oil prices as it is currently happening. Otherwise, how can a country like Malaysia that got its oil palm seedlings from Nigeria, and was taught how to cultivate oil palm by Nigeria could today be, not only a leading exporter of oil palm products and on whose economic mainstay thrives on oil palm proceeds and Nigeria importing their oil produce from

the same Malaysia? What a shame? No wonders John Waliggo (1993:3) can be said to be right in his assertion that,

the failure to present an effective development within the African world view by colonial and post-colonial administrators is the major explanation for the backwardness of Africa, a backwardness which as scientific indicators show, will continue to place the African continent at the sick position of the world in the foreseeable future.

In the mid 1970's and early 1980's, most Ghanaian and Indian Professors and their other technocrats were trooping to Nigeria to make a living and train their children. Today, has it not become shameless pride for Nigerians to brag that their children are schooling in Ghanaian Institutions of higher learning? Infact, most Nigerians are relocating to Ghana and India for means of livelihood. What a shame? No wonder Uzorka and Ebisi (2014: 112) are of the view that: "corruption has eroded the capacity of government at all levels to provide public services of quality and quantity needed to improve the living standard of the people."

It is regrettable that many African Countries with their elites and leaders got carried away by the euphoria of modernisation. Consequently they lost touch with original sources of African culture, but have not succeeded in becoming Europeans. The European models of development conceived in Western nations and transported to African nations appeared to have failed Africans. Attempts by people of non-Western culture, Nigeria inclusive, to develop themselves according to their cultural priorities and their own innovative rationality have all too often been dismissed as irrelevant. Anjov and Gemade (2010:71) have summarised the cause of the current Terrorism in Nigeria to include,

Political, economic, social and psychological deprivation. Political, in the spirit of sit-tight by mostly old generation leaders still interested in leading, disorganisation of the zoning arrangement of power rotation between the North and South, economy of poverty in the midst of plenty, money (Nigerian commonwealth) in the hands of few politicians, yet these politicians using religion in the guise of Boko Haram to impose one religion on others, whether they like it or not and still exploit religion to whip up cheap sentiment.

Resolving the Problems of the Nigerian Commonwealth with African Traditional Religions Models

My first concern is to be convinced that the leaders of governments that be in the Nigerian nation, namely, our political leaders will genuinely listen to and accept that religions, especially the African Traditional Religion, have the wherewithal to salvage the nation from the quagmire it had plunged itself over the years because religion's contributions to national development had been rarely appreciated by successive administration of the country. The following are, therefore, the African traditional religious models this paper is offering for the resolution of the problems of the Nigerian Commonwealth.

(i) On Religious Intolerance

African Traditional Religion (ATR) is no doubt the most peaceful, most accommodating of all the religious traditions recognised by the Nigerian Constitution or being practised in Nigeria. Firstly, it does not impose itself on anyone, let alone by way of force as some other religions do. It was only in few instances when the religious extremists of other religious traditions deliberately burn down traditional religious shrines that one hears few skirmishes ensuing from the traditional religionists. Neither is it jealous of other religious traditions which have well developed theologies and documented scriptures. This is evidenced in the fact that the prayers from this African traditional religion practitioners is not called for during opening or closing sessions of any public national/official gathering, yet adherents of African Traditional Religion do not protest. Can either of the other two religious traditions practised in Nigeria tolerate this?

(ii) On Religio-Cultural Values and Norms

A return to the already eroded high premium of our traditional religious cultural values as practised by the African forebears has now become imperative. This include values for hard work before one makes money or eat, not the nowadays premium of making unaccounted for wealth/money and being worshipped by others.

African Traditional Religious values also include creating in the citizens the cultural value that abhors violence, murder, human kidnapping and trafficking that have become common place in Nigeria of today. It involves the value of “live and let’s live” which upholds human right, dignity of fellow human lives, abhors religious discrimination, political exclusion, socio-economic deprivation/marginalisation, sincere dialogue in settlement of disputes and promotes good governance, which are all lacking in present day Nigerian commonwealth.

In traditional African Societies, cherishable cultural values of good neighbourliness, loyalty among friends, selflessness, truthfulness, honesty, pre-marital chastity for women, good name, high religiosity, equality, industry etc, formed the bedrock of many families but now people value material wealth more than their life and will do anything for material acquisition. Among the Yoruba, like most Nigerian traditional societies, Oyeshile (2004: 150) informs us, Yoruba traditional morals systems abhors selfishness, wickedness, greed, adultery, covenant breaking and such other vices. There are in every African traditional society prescribed traditional modes which discourage vices and those that promote virtues.

If the present Nigerian populace, the leaders and followers can genuinely and sincerely embrace the African traditional moral values enshrined in the moral ethos of African Traditional Religions, it will no doubt go a long way to overcome some of the many problems bedevilling the Nigerian Commonwealth.

Unfortunately, and as Wotogbe-Weneka (1996) rightly observed, most Nigerians nowadays erroneously think that for one to be in tune with modern life meant abandoning and undermining every aspects of the indigenous religious life and culture. This probably accounts for the high rate of ignorance of these traditional values recorded against most youths in Nigeria today.

And hence, arising from the apparent failure of the western moral models in achieving for us a moral upright society, Wotogbe-Weneka (2011:151), had advocated that time is rife enough for our recourse to the teaching of African indigenous religious morality, using the traditional pedagogy. This, he believes, will be capable of enthroning once again a morally sound society once enjoyed in our

traditional society, namely, respect for elders and constituted authority through gerontocracy, sense of justice, love, chastity, peaceful disposition, hospitality, truthfulness, industry, sense of decency, cleanliness, forthrightness, sense of live and let's live corporate existence of J.S. Mbiti's "I am because we are, or "because we are", therefore I am" etc. In Ikwerre, like in most African, nay Nigerian traditional societies, the joys and sorrows of an individual are the joys and sorrows of the group which principles had now been abandoned in preference to the highly individualistic pattern of western societies. This understanding as observed elsewhere, Wotogbe-Weneka (1996:144), is based on the traditional philosophy that no man lives to himself; and it is only on this basis that an effective general well-being (commonwealth) of man can be attained. This is in line with the views, expressed by E.B. Boluade (1978:57) that,

the African World is a world of relationships. No one is a person by his own self-identity, but by his own involvement in the lives of other beings in his world. Everyone is his brother's keeper. Every life is rooted in the family; here the son recognises his filial duty to his father and mother, and his fraternal relationship of brothers and cousins. The parents in turn know their responsibility to protect their descendants and also their duty to tow the line of their immediate forebears and more distant ancestors who are equally members of the family.

And so, recourse to this valuable traditional religious moral pedagogy as just outlined here is advocated. They are unfortunately jettisoned by Africans, Nigerians inclusive, in preference to the westernised values which are no doubt at variance with the African traditional ethos. It was obedience and adherence to this traditional morality in the past that guided African, nay Nigerian traditional societies unto paths of moral rectitude, even in an era devoid of modern means of moral and social control.

(iii) On Indiscipline and Lawlessness

Laws, taboos, sanctions were strictly obeyed and enforced in traditional society and defaulters were punished by the gods of the land or through the traditional age grade systems. The laws and sanctions were enforced by one's age mates, who are of the same relative age bracket with one; hence offenders do not go scot free. Today, a criminal can manoeuvre his way with a brilliant lawyer, even if he was caught red handed in the act. That is why today with overwhelming evidences of things stolen, robbers plead "not guilty" and before you will realise it, they are discharged and acquitted for want of evidence or what lawyers may term "technicalities" or "not proving ones case beyond reasonable doubt."

(iv) On Political and Electoral Processes

This paper believes that time is ripe enough to adopt African traditional religious models to extricate the nation from the precarious precipice it is gradually plunging into; believing that the governments of the Nigerian nation will be willing to adopt African socio-cultural models which had successfully sustained African traditional political institutions/governance over the years.

As a panacea to the problems of the Nigerian commonwealth bordering on political and electoral processes, this paper recommends that traditional oath-taking be used in swearing-in ceremonies of public office holders, irrespective of the Nigerian's foreign religious affiliation. I mean, the use of

African Traditional Religion, because it is the religion Africans appear to understand better and dread its effect, rather than camouflaging on the foreign religions in swearing-in with either the Holy Bible or Holy Quran, only for them to purposely and with impunity, ruin the economy of the nation (our commonwealth), through financial embezzlement. It is not in doubt that the western oath-taking methods have not affected the desired truthfulness in public office holders in this country. Hence, in the views of Ilesanmi (2004:131), “Nigeria has gradually become a nation where individuals mistrust themselves and others. This mutual mistrust is responsible for our attitude towards oath taking.”

Again, oath-taking and pouring of libation should be used for voting, in fact, should be incorporated by the National Assembly for whatever electoral reform being proposed for the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), since the western electoral “Card Readers” and “Permanent Voters Card” (PVC), have all failed us because of insincerity and hence violence, ballot snatching, and presently, vote buying now characterise our electoral system. Similarly, queuing behind the candidate of one’s choice or his/her photograph, otherwise called option A4 is the African traditional system of voting, not a Nigerian Government creation of Prof. Humphrey Nwosu’s 1993 National Electoral Commission (NEC). After all, the early Greek practiced it and it worked well for them, thus crediting the Greek in history as banqueters of modern democracy.

Our political electoral systems that have now become “a do or die affair” with all forms of intrigues and manipulations will be sanitized if the country citizens will be willing to adopt this African traditional means of choosing leaders. With this queuing behind candidates of one’s choice, all the time and resources (Billions of Naira),wasted and the violence and incredibility characterising our electoral systems over the years will disappear, simply by physical counting of electorates after queuing behind candidates of one’s choices. There should be recourse to the traditional systems whereby the gods who discern the minds of men choose those who will lead. In most traditional African societies, Steve Larry (2015:58) informs us, the natural rulers are chosen by the gods and their oath of office administered with the presence of the symbol of the god that chose them and hence they, in most cases, rule with the fear of the gods. F.N. Nwaghaghi (1991:120) is of the view that when earthly leaders are exercising delegated authority from the gods, they are consciously aware that the eyes of the gods are constantly on them, taking note of every action of theirs. This is a traditional checks and balances of activities of the leaders in traditional African societies. It is believed in African traditional societies that a society enjoys peace and prosperity when she is collectively and individually at peace with the gods and ancestors. Conversely, a society that is plagued with various catastrophes such as epidemic and drought, when there is disharmony between her and her gods avoid calamities, the ruler or leader and his people must try as much as possible to maintain a harmonious relationship with her gods. All these safeguards, though present in other foreign religious traditions most Nigerians claim allegiance to, yet the fear of the gods seem absent in the psyche of the Nigerian leaders of today who claim adherence of those foreign religions as evidenced in the leadership confusion all over the place.

Recently, many Ikwerre Traditional Communities of Rivers State, Nigeria, were invoking their local deities to intervene and flush out all the Cult boys causing all sorts of troubles in Ikwerre communities. Amazingly, many of such bad boys are either dying, renouncing their membership in the cult groups or running away from their communities because they understand that such traditional gods are merciless. This is a feat all the modern means of crime control (the Police, Army SARS, Joint Task Forces, etc), have been unable to achieve all these years.

(v) On Land Ownership/Usage/Boundary Delineation/Disputes

In most traditional African societies, land is either privately owned when purchased or communally owned when it belongs to the entire community. The land and its natural resources constitute the mainstay of each traditional society such that the people depend on their land resources for private or public communal sustenance. That is why it is said that in some western societies such as the USA and Canada, farmers are the richest class of the citizenry because of the individuals' ownership and cultivation in large hectares of land. The Nigerian nation's attempt to legislate over forceful acquisition of a grazing land for Fulani herdsmen will continue to generate lots of controversy and loss of lives if not properly handled in the light of the neglect of this traditional land ownership model. It will not work until the governments that be, realises this and apply this African land tenure system. Let the people be allowed to utilise their lands as they wish and rather pay a determined commensurate tax to the government. The Fulani herdsmen could buy their grazing lands from the willing owners. Alternatively, let them develop their vast hectares of Sahel Region Lands as a viable forage lands for their cattle's private business enterprise.

Alternatively, where there is land/boundary disputes/delineation, there are accepted African traditionally rancour-free models of settlement which are devoid of endless court cases/ litigation of the modern western modes of land/boundary dispute settlements. That is why in some African traditional societies such as the Ikwerre of North Eastern Niger-Delta, the people plant a live tree which the Ikwerre call IKPO, to delineate boundaries. This is a well-respected traditional symbol for land/boundary delineation among the people. If people are quarrelling over land boundary, this is the tree that is planted at the mutually accepted boundary spot to perpetually determine the boundary. Even if the tree is cut off, it germinates again through the roots; with that, land disputes are minimised or eliminated among the people.

(vi) On Multi-Lingual, Multi-Ethnic and Multi-Religious Differences

The unity of a heterogeneous, multilingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious Nigeria may remain an illusion, except something is done urgently linguistically. One fundamental way of coming out of the many lamentations of our Nigerian commonwealth is a sincere recognition and acceptance of the fact that Nigeria is a nation made up of diverse, ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic group. It is only when this is realised and factored in the national scheme, including sharing of whatever our national commonwealth, the so called 'national cake'; which is causing most of the troubles can relative and appreciable peace and unity be attained. But how can the Nigerian nation overcome her hydra-headed problems in the midst of mutual mistrust of one ethnic group of another? How can that be in a nation with over two hundred and fifty (250) ethnic nationalities and languages apart from thousands of dialectal differences? And hence, one would like to suggest in this paper, that it is high time the nation took the challenge of national integration seriously. A starting and most important point would be the question of a lingua franca. Cameroon, as well as some other African nations are bilingual with English and Cameroon accepted as their official languages and it further helped these nations in national integration. This paper is of the view that our educational curricula should be reviewed to make the learning of English, French and two (2) of the three (3) major Nigerian languages compulsory right from Nursery, Primary to post primary levels. The advantage is that at the end of the post primary school level, a Nigerian will be able to speak and write fluently in English and French foreign languages, as well as in two (2) of the major linguistic groups of the nation, namely, Hausa, Igbo and

Yoruba. Otherwise, the linguistic and ethnic cum religious divide of the nation will continue to vitiate all attempts at our national integration for a very long time.

Once that is done, the beauty of the unity in diversity will be evident in the one human family of our diverse ethnic nationalities.

(vii) On Social Welfare Distribution

It is the candid opinion of this paper that the major cause of the apparent failed state status of the Nigerian nation can be situated in the neglect of the valuable and veritable cultural principle of equitable distribution of communal resources with which the traditional African Societies were used in governance prior to the coming of the Western means of social and moral control in preference to the Western models which had never helped matters in our political governance as a nation since 1960 independence. This African communalism or socialism when reintroduced, argued Ihejirika and Markson (2014:138); will afford us the opportunity to consider Nigeria as a wider and extended family, when people of different ethnic, linguistic and religious differences learn to trust one another, help one another, interact culturally and economically.

This is why in advocating for the reintroduction of the African socialism/communalism ideology being practised by traditional Africans before their exposure to the world and values of the white man, I am of the view that it is the only ideology that can curb or kill this “grab it all” mentality being shamelessly displayed on daily basis in all aspects of our national life or else, peace will continue to elude the nation because Nigerian commonwealth are not equitably distributed.

On the other hand, self-amassing of national wealth to oneself and one's family (the national cake mentality), is such that public money (commonwealth) are nowadays discovered in the private homes, soak away/toilets, public building, are all attributable to greed of modern Nigeria because of their lack of patriotism and nationalism as well as the flamboyant lifestyles being lived by public office holders because they had access to public funds which they can amass as they like without anybody questioning how did he make it. Rather, such are adored; even worshipped in the Nigerian society. What lessons is being taught the youths of the nation said to be the future leaders and what hope for the country under such continuous trends?

(viii) On Corruption

As the former President of Nigeria has always remarked, “corruption is so endemic in Nigeria that we either kill corruption or corruption will kill Nigeria” Human trafficking, prostitution, stealing by false pretence (419), child labour, kidnapping, Armed day Banditry/Robbery, Baby Factories Syndrome that have become the reality of our national polity are all indices of a corrupt nation. Some are, however, attributable to joblessness of the teeming youths of the nation who are in the majority of the population range that perpetrate and perpetuate these regrettable ills of our present Nigerian society; evils most of which were unknown to our Nigerian ancestors.

The youths/children upbringing nowadays is a false method. The African vocational skill and traditional technology are thrown overboard, whereas these were used in the traditional societies to inculcate industry and hard work in children and youths, and through which they earn decent living later in life. Children are over pampered that they now think hard work is a punishment, and hence creativity that would have introduced them to vocational training are hated by the youths of Nigeria today. Thus, Agriculture courses seem the least subscribed by JAMB Candidates. Parents pay money

for handwork subjects, school fees payment for grass cutting instead of the pupils cutting the grasses themselves as to get used to hard work to earn a living later in life. I subscribe to the views of Nwanyawu (1997:147) that creativity involves all mental attitudes, processes and manipulative skills that could result in the generation of new ideas and objects. As once observed in, Wotogbe-Weneka (1988:54), to many youths in Nigeria today, what is uppermost in their minds is how to make it materially with little or regard to hard work or morality. That mentality can only breed corruption.

Conclusion

Thus far our excursion into the role of the African Traditional Religion in grappling with the numerous problems of the Nigerian commonwealth. No doubt our Nigerian commonwealth is bedevilled with myriads of hydra headed problems arising majorly in the false federal system we have been practising under a false unitary system of an illusory one Nigeria in the midst of the woes of the nation identified by this paper. Fundamentally, Nigerians must know that it is not all that the westerners do that can work in Nigeria. The bane of our Nigerian society is the illusory notion of Nigerians wanting to become the white man in all the good things that the white man is associated with. Ironically, the same Nigerians are not willing to practise or apply the principles the white man applies to achieve those ideal results. Hence, most Nigerians are today between and betwixt as they have lost sight of all the traditional religious morality that guided the once traditional societies unto paths of moral rectitude in the absence of modern means of social and moral control, yet they have not succeeded in becoming the white man they want to become.

For there to be an enduring solution to the problems of the Nigerian commonwealth bordering on corruption, bribery, economic exploitation, religious extremism, immorality, ethnic chauvinism, economic sabotage, terrorism in all its various forms, favouritism, nepotism, tribalism, prostitution, materialism and a host of other features of inept, corrupt and oppressive governments in Nigeria, this paper has advocated among other things, a return to the world views of Africans which fundamentally have cultural, religious political, economics and ethical values at the centre. These negative attitudes undoubtedly portend great danger to our Nigerian commonwealth and corporate existence as a nation, but God forbid.

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