



NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY
WILBERFORCE ISLAND, BAYELSA STATE.

51st Inaugural Lecture

Conflict and Insecurity in the Human Heart: The Religious Antidotes

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NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY

Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria

Motto

Creativity, Excellence, Service

Vision

To be a centre of excellence defined by well articulated programme that will produce creative and innovative minds

Mission

To strive to maintain an international reputation for high quality scholarship, research and academic excellence for the promotion of the socio-cultural and economic well-being of mankind

NIGER DELTA UNIVERSITY ANTHEM (THE BRIGHTEST STAR)

Like the brightest star we are, to lead the way
To good education that is all our due,
The dream of our fathers like the seed has grown;
Niger Delta University if here to stay.

In all that we do, let us bring to mind
Our duty as staff and students of N.D.U
Ev'rywhere to promote peace towards mankind.
Creativity, Excellence and Service

Let us build on this noble foundation
And with love, let our dedication increase,
To rise and uphold this noble vision
Ev'ry passing moment let our zeal never decrease.

CHORUS
Rejoice, great people old and new, rejoice
For the good fruit through us is shown;
Be glad in our worthy contribution
To the growth of humanity (x2)

Dedication

This inaugural lecture is dedicated to the memory of Chief Joseph .M. Saale

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Protocol

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Ladies and Gentlemen

Preamble

Vice Chancellor, Sir, thank you for giving me the privilege to share my research findings and contributions to knowledge with the university community and the public. My studies and teachings in sociology of religion and ethics are centered on the relationship that exists between religion and society, religion and social/cultural changes, human personality and values, religion and conflict resolution/peace studies and comparative ethics in a pluralistic society.

Over the years, I have focused my research and publication on the determination of the social roles of religion in societal development in enhancing a healthy human personality and values. My concern has been to bring religion from obscurity to reality by giving explanations to its latent contributions. Religion is left in obscurity by man whenever and wherever its social functions in societal development are ignored and neglected.

It is also my concern that there will be a paradigm shift and scholars in this area of specialization will use principles of world religions in the study of societal issues like conflict and insecurity. It is common knowledge that sociologists use sociological theories to draw their conclusions about religion.

In this lecture, the principles of African Traditional Religion and Christianity are used as examples of world religions in my study of conflict/insecurity in Nigeria using Niger Delta as case study. Vice-Chancellor, Sir, my opinion and perspective of conflict and insecurity in a way rejuvenate the views of Jesus Christ and other great world religious leaders of old on the roles of religion in solving societal problems. This is my contribution to knowledge.

This lecture seeks to address my research findings on the contributions of religion in peace making. I titled this lecture, “Conflict and Insecurity in the Human Heart: The Religious Antidotes”.

Summary of my Thesis

The human heart is the domain of conflict and insecurity. All types of social conflict and insecurity originate in the human heart before they manifest in society and then return to the heart in a vicious cycle.

Religion remains the possible antidote to social conflicts and insecurities because it has the power and word capable of discerning the opinions and objectives of the human heart being the Centre of all human activities and issues of life. The notion that religion is non-empirical and intangible, having nothing else to offer towards societal development is a

weapon of prejudice implored by those who denigrate religion in their wars for supremacy over human society in order to advance the chances of science and technology.

Religious antidotes are latent contributions of religion towards societal development that are ignored and neglected by denigrators of religion in peacemaking. Conflict and insecurity persist in human societies because experts and policy makers have continued to treat the outcome and consequences of conflict and insecurity as sources, instead of involving religious leaders who have identified crises of ethics and morality, human violations of conscience and laws, man's drive to enhance his personality and values, mistrust, suspicion and prejudice as sources of conflict and insecurity.

My thesis is premised on the following Biblical and Realists' principles namely:

1. Guard your heart with all diligence because out it are the issues of life. (Proverbs 4:23)
2. The heart of man is deceitful, corrupt and difficult to understand. (Jeremiah 17:9)
3. It is that which comes out of the man's heart that defiles the man. For out of it comes evil thoughts such as adulteries, fornications, murders, covetousness,

wickedness, deceit, pride, foolishness and so on.
(Mark 7:20-23)

4. According to Koestler in Faleti, (2004). Man is selfish and individualistic in nature and will always in that state aim at achieving his set goals to enhance his personality. Individual and group enter into conflict with those they think are responsible directly or indirectly for their disappointment or frustration when their desires are denied.

Introduction

Conflict and insecurity are worrisome to man. They are both emotive and normative concepts that require some clarifications in a study. This task is necessary because the irruption of both conflict and insecurity with their attendant historical antecedents in human societies make people feel strong emotions about them.

There is a long-standing division, especially, among scholars of the functionalist school of thought on social conflict who have concluded that conflict is both negative and positive. Sociologists who took the functionalist's perspective, consider conflict as a negative force. They assert that peace in human society is attained through consensus on important questions of values. , Social conflict according to Goldthorpe, (1985) is seen as a disruption of the normal functioning of the social system. It is abnormal and usually transitory, since there are in-built forces in a social system that restore equilibrium.

The Marxists view conflict as a normal, positive and inevitable universal phenomenon linked to man's daily experience in the society. According to the Marxists, scarcity in itself is enough to cause conflict. It becomes inevitable as people in any group try by one means or the other to increase their share of scarce resources, if necessary, at the expense of

others. Also, conflict occurs as one engages in the affairs and activities of life such as the agitation over his right of claims with another person. Therefore, conflict is neither a taboo nor a curse, it is good and necessary in society. (Asukwo in Faleti, 2004).

From the foregoing, conflict as a multi-dimensional fact of life is not always negative but sometimes constructive (positive) depending on how it is handled. (Faleti in Saale, 2008)

The Realists of theological and biological school of thought such as Thomas Hobbes, St. Augustine and Sigmund Freud argue that conflict are inherent in human nature because man in an imperfect world will always pursue his individual and group interests that makes him conflictive and selfish in human society.

What relates conflict and insecurity is the fact that both are inner flaw in human beings by way of violation of divine and societal rules of conduct guiding human relationship; thereby bringing forth frustration, aggression, disagreement, unhealthy fear and injury. Feelings of insecurity do not just occur until individual or group is unsaved. According to Learner's Dictionary of Current English 6th edition, one is insecure when one is not confident about oneself or one's relationship with others; not safe or protected. Insecurity and

conflicts are linked together and they occurred where the legitimate desires of individual or group is denied either directly or indirectly from the way society is being structured. This feeling of disappointment and frustration may lead such a person or group to express fear of being unsafe through violent aggression directed at those he or she holds responsible. (Anifowose, Aubrey, Leonard in Saale, 2008)

Vice -Chancellor, Sir, why are all these clarifications necessary for any person's interest? It is my sociological approach in giving explanations to the social role of religion which essence is to control the negative nature of man driven by a natural quest that is, 'will-to-live', 'will-to-power' (to seek power and security) at the expense of others around them; and to maintain cordial relationship between man and God.

The Human Heart: Domain of Conflict and Insecurity.

All human beings think conflict and feel insecure in the heart. Hornby (2000) defined human heart as the organ in the chest which pumps blood through the body. The import of this definition is that blood as a vital element in the human body is in the heart. The blood of animal (man) is identified with its life. According to Leviticus 17:14, the life of all flesh is the blood.

Stamps (1991), observed that contrary to people's general perspective of the human head with the brain as the center of human activities, the bible speaks of the heart as the center of issues of life(proverbs 4:23). Conflict and insecurity are inclusive among the issues of life which the Bible enjoins man to guide with all diligence.

According to Stamps, the human heart basically is the totality of someone intellect, emotion and volition. The heart is the centre of human intellect because people think, meditate, commune with themselves and others in the heart. They hear, listen to words and information in the heart. People also imagine things, reason, doubt, ponder, believe and keep things in the heart.

The heart is the center of human emotions because people love and feel loved in the heart. They are excited, glad and angry, feel grieve, pain, troubled, hurt, discouraged and disappointed in the heart. In addition people feel courageous, humble and repentant in the heart. The heart is the center of human volition because people intent and desire to do something good or bad in the heart. They seek and want to receive from someone in the heart. People incline to doing good or evil, refuse to do what authority commands, decide to obey or disobey laid down rules to remain hardened and unrepentant in the heart.

The above descriptions of the nature and features of the human heart reveal another vital function of the heart as the director and controller of the whole human personality and values. All these actions are primarily issues involving the mind, emotional character and activities that take place in the human will. Human intellect, emotion and will (volition) are constituents of human personality and values, containing integrity, fidelity, prestige, power, security and virtues linked with human values.

Human personality according to Longmans English Dictionary is a person's character, revealing his relationship with other people. The same Dictionary points to the quality of someone's character that makes one interesting or enjoyable to be with. This definition reveals that the notion of human personality that hinges on human relationship is determined by quality of behavioral character of individual and group towards one another. This human relationship is the enterprise of the human heart. The issue of social conflict and insecurity is linked to strain or unhealthy human relationship.

Human character is linked with human heart because it reveals the quality of someone's internalized behaviour in society while he or she relates with other people. Also, human character is linked with conflict and insecurity

because someone weakness in character is what strained human relationship. Someone who is weak in character is weak spiritually and morally in the heart. He or she cannot be brave or determined to deal with ethical and moral issues. For instance, he or she cannot conform to norms of society, keep agreement reached with people and uphold approved beliefs and practices. And such a person with weak character is insecure because he or she lives with fear, feels, unsafe and lacks confidence in society. Therefore, human character is the determinant of social conflict and insecurity.

Vice Chancellor, Sir, my thesis is that the human heart is the domain of social conflict and insecurity. Both conflict and insecurity are activities involving man's intellect, emotions and volition. Also, human personality and values are directed and controlled by the heart. What relates conflict and insecurity is the fact that they reside in the human heart and operate in a vicious cycle. In most incidences it is the internalized conflict and insecurity, which manifest outside in human society, while at other times, the conflict and insecurity occurrences in society give rise to conflict and insecurity in the heart of individual. Conflict help to determine nature, type, cause and impact of insecurity; insecurity helps in determination of conflict.

Types of Conflict and Insecurity in Nigeria

Social Conflict and Insecurity:- I implore Federal Government and ASUU to illustrate my claim with some

examples, starting from the known to the unknown. It was the fraudulent and corrupt payment scheme developed and used by previous Accountant General of the Federation of Nigeria that led to the introduction of Integrated Payroll and Personnel Information System (IPPIS). At present, it is alleged that the IPPIS is fraudulent and corrupt in practice and therefore should be abrogated and replaced with University Transparency and Accountability Solution (UTAS) developed and proposed by the Academic Staff Union of Universities. This is one issue linked with the conflict between the President Mohammadu Buhari led administration and ASUU. It is my prayer that the UTAS would not fail like the IPPIS and others at the point of implementation.

In the context of this lecture, IPPIS, UTAS and many other beautiful, transparent financial schemes developed and used by the Nigerian government to check fraud and corrupt practices were manifestations of human intellect. Some patriotic Nigerians in search of solution to fraud and corrupt practices which constitute the bane of the nation's conflict and insecurity have considered, ponder, doubt and commune with themselves the idea of IPPIS, ,UTAS in their hearts. The fear, anger and grievance being expressed by ASUU and other concerned Nigerian of the danger of the continuous use of IPPIS to perpetuate fraudulent practices by few people are also actions of the heart.

Intention to cling to fraudulent and corrupt practices in order to get rich quick by some individuals in the finance and accounting departments of government and public cooperation's and their refusal to listen to voice of conscience are activities that take place in the human volition of the heart.

Boko Haram: Is a socio-cultural and religious conflict and insecurity which proceed out of the heart. This group believe that Islamic cultures and education should be respected, projected and protected within Muslim communities, particularly, in Nigeria. They doubted, if western culture and education are capable of effectively enhancing the self-esteem, worth and the quality of life Muslims live; and they reason that western cultures and education forcefully imposed on Muslims in Africa should be resisted. The group insist that all those suspected to be agents for the imposition of foreign cultures and education on adherents of Islam in Africa should be resisted as well. Boko Haram values, influence the attitudes, actions, reactions and feelings of adherents towards other people, particularly, those who do not share same ideology with them. Conflict occurs anywhere between Boko Haram group and those who opposed their ideological belief. The modus operandi of parties in such conflict trigger insecurity in any society. In Nigeria conflict occurs between some politicians, Muslim

clerics, state security personnel and any suspected pro-government citizens living and doing business within the Muslim enclaves. This conflict takes the form of unknown gunmen on motorbikes assassinating state security personnel, politicians and anyone critical of the group. Muslim clerics who disclose information regarding their whereabouts to state security service are also target of the group. Militarization of affected Muslim zone, ,especially, the north-east equally send insecurity signals into the heart of people. All of these actions are primarily involving the human mind, emotions and volition because people believe, reason and doubt issues of values that give direction and purpose to their lives and society in their hearts.

Niger Delta Conflict and Insecurity: Is multi-facetted because of its social, economic, political and environmental issues. This is also a conflict and insecurity that proceed from the human heart. It is an inter-play of incompatible ideas and interests of stakeholders in petroleum business.

According to Ibaba (2009) Petroleum was discovered in the Niger Delta region in 1950s and since then there has been pressure on the people and their land as a result of the years of degrading effects land and people of oil producing communities due to activities of oil companies. This conflict takes the form of debate over the nature and content of the

constitution of Nigeria as it relates to rights of the minority ethnic groups and competition over resource control.

People of oil bearing communities in Nigeria believe that land is indigenous inheritance therefore, greater percentage of benefits from the land should be given to them. Whatever happen to the environment happens to their existence and survival because life is bounded in their environment. The oil company operators doing business within Nigeria have reasoned that they are responsible first to government and not just their host communities hence, they pay rents to the federal government alone. Government has continued to claim that by the 1968 and 1978 Petroleum and Land Use decrees in Nigeria, all land and resources therein within the Nigerian state are owned by the federal government. (Saale, 2008).

Conflict occur between the stakeholders as the people of Niger Delta commune with themselves, consider and reason over their plights within the Nigerian federation. In their heart, they think that exploring some sections of the Nigerian constitution allow her citizens the rights to freedom of association, expression etc. to demand their rights to control their own resources and complain of environmental degradation, poverty, injustice, deprivation, marginalization, neglect etc. for years since crude oil was found in large quantities in the zone, would bring solution. The government

of Nigeria has remained insensitive to demands and complaints of oil bearing communities because of the fears that ethnic protests or agitations of the oil bearing communities would escalate to other parts of the country and is capable of causing a nationwide crises that could lead to secession and subsequent disintegration of Nigeria. The multi-national oil company operators are also afraid that the awareness created by the protests of the people of Niger Delta would have adverse effects on their business operations in other oil producing communities around the globe, thereby leading to low productivity, great losses and possible closure of their businesses.

The Niger Delta people faced continuous feelings of insensitivity about their plights and are troubled with fear of extinction due to continued degradation of their environment. They have reasoned that the Nigerian government does not practice true federalism because in true federalism each ethnic group no matter how small is entitled to same treatment as any other ethnic group, no matter how large. However, majority ethnic groups in Nigeria dominate and exploit minority ethnic groups. Again, people of Niger Delta region alleged that both Government and oil companies operators collude themselves to devastate Niger Delta environment through oil exploration and exploitation to enrich some individuals and a section of the country.

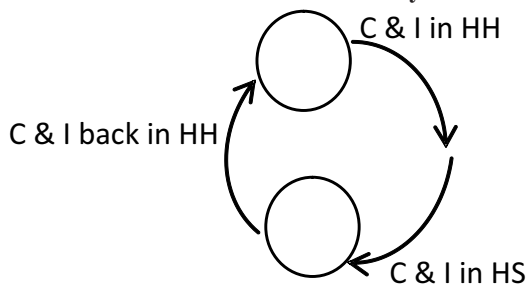
The Niger Delta Conflict develop into insecurity at the point of escalation into violence in human society. Feelings of insecurity became common as operators in the oil industries militarized the region in order to repress the people's agitations. And the government unleashed polices of repression on the people in their attempts to stop multinational companies from doing business through vandalizing oil pipelines, kidnapping, oil theft and any supporter of Niger Delta militancy are enough insecurity indicators in the region.

In Nigeria, conflict and insecurity have reached their crescendo as some cultists and criminals have joined militant groups to resist federal government repression of their people and to survive are by-products that some selfish politicians and ethnic fundamentalists now recruit and use during chieftaincy tussles, inter-communal clash, inter-personal and inter-group disputes and elections to achieve selfish goals in Nigeria. All these actions are primarily issues involving human intellect, emotions and volition which take place in the human heart and from there manifest in conflict and insecurity in society.

Vice Chancellor, Sir, all these actions and activities of human intellect, emotions and volition in the heart are sources of all types of conflicts and insecurities in human society;

including, social, cultural/religious, economic, political, environmental etc.

Figure 1; **The Vicious circle of conflict and insecurity**



Key word: C = Conflict, I = Insecurity, H = Human, H = Heart
HS = Human Society, (Saale, 2022)

The above diagram shows the movement of conflict and insecurity from the human heart into society and how conflict and insecurity return back to the heart from society in a vicious cycle. Individuals who are conflictive and insecure in heart are contagious in society. They share and spread their thoughts, opinion, desires and values with other people living and doing business with them in the same society. Nowadays, conflict and insecurity spread faster and from society to societies because of globalization.

The way society is structured, encourages the spread of conflict and insecurity. Conflict and insecurity as aspects of social and cultural changes are dynamic in nature. It is common feature with society inhabited by conflictive and insecure individuals to have high incidences of conflict and

insecurity. Individuals in such society share and spread the activities of their intellect, emotions and volition in their hearts with other members of that same society. The modus operandi of individual and group sharing and spreading conflict and insecurity may differ but the source, nature, cause and impact of conflict and insecurity in Nigeria is the same.

Conflict and insecurity do not remain in society, it returns to the heart of people living in society. When conflict and insecurity is allowed to last long in any society it becomes the people's culture. Children born into that society are contaminated with conflict and insecurity. John Locke (1660 in Elechi, 2014) observed that the mind of a new born baby is like a blank white paper 'tabula rasa' on which fresh information received from his immediate social environment is written as he grows and develop in life.

The import of this assertion is that people who are less conflictive and insecure become more conflictive and insecure when they move from a social environment with less incidences of conflict and insecurity to where there are more incidences of conflict and insecurity as they imbibe conflictive and insecure thoughts, opinion, desires, and values of those they interact and relate with. How conflict and insecurity that is allowed to last long in any society can affect

a new born child is exemplified in the case of Isaac Adaka Boro and Ken Saro Wiwa renewed complaints and agitations in the Niger Delta region over injustice, neglect, marginalization, oppression, exploitation of their people; initiated in the 1940s by Harold Dappa-Biriye, and many other patriots. In the same spirit children born in the same society later, like Tompolo, Asari Dokubo and many other sons and daughters of Niger Delta, have continued with the struggles of their fathers on conflicting issues with the federal government of Nigeria.

Quest for Biafran Nation by the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in South-East is a renewed agitations by Nnamdi Kanu and many young Igbos born in then Eastern region where Odumekwu Ojukwu and others have earlier made the same complaints and agitations that triggered Nigerian civil war. Again, Boko Haram demand for the establishment of an Islamic State in Nigeria which should be governed according to sharia law and its opposition to the westernization of Nigerian society is a renewal of demands of some Muslims and Islamic sect in the northern Nigeria. In 1999, during the Olusegun Obasanjo led civilian administration, Governor Sani of Zamfara State and other northern Muslim politicians moved for the introduction of Sharia Law in the Muslim dominated northern Nigeria. (Armies in Saale, 2009). Fanatical Muslim politicians, who

were born in northern Nigeria where one Alhaji Matasitne had in the 1980s in Kano State began the movement for Islamization of northern Nigeria, argued that the constitution used to govern them (Muslims) is English law drawn from the principles of Christianity.

In the same vein, ASUU struggles had continued and will be continued by children of university lecturers as long as their demands are not satisfactorily met by the federal government of Nigeria. Lecturers who relocate from other Universities in the world to Nigeria would join the ASUU struggles. Unemployed, and poor Nigerians and non-Nigerians who move into the Niger Delta, South-East, South-West and Northern parts of Nigeria would equally join the peoples in their struggles thereby increasing the rate of conflict and insecurity. From the above illustrations conflict and insecurity move from the human heart into society and from society back to the human heart in a vicious cycle.

Manifestation of Conflict and Insecurity in the Human Heart and society

Conflict and insecurity of the human heart manifest in human society as bad or negative values (vices). Conflict and insecurity originate in human society the moment cherished positive values of our society clash with some negative (bad) values in the heart of individuals living in any human society.

Cherished positive values are societal norms, beliefs and principles which society has tested and approved and expects from its members. While the negative values are norms, beliefs and principles which society abhors, rejects and condemns and also discourage members from upholding and practicing them. A society has laws, rules, and regulations that control the conduct of its members. (Ukegbu, et-al (2014).

The Christian religion like other world religions have attempted to give explanations to the origin of conflict and insecurity in human society, linking it with man's depravity, called Sin. The stories of Adam, Eve and serpent, Cain and Abel in Genesis chapters 3 and 4 are illustrations that are familiar and should not take our attention in this lecture.

Conflict and insecurity of the human heart manifest as bad leadership, strike actions, inter-personal, intra-group protests/agitations, cultural/religious fanaticism, violence, riots and war; bribery and corruption, stealing, cheating, armed robbery, ritual killing, human trafficking, indecent dressing, prostitution, drug addiction, vandalizing of pipelines and public projects, local and international advance fee fraud (419), examination malpractices, electoral fraud/malpractices etc. in society. These vices are prevalent in the Nigerian society and the government has set up bodies

and agencies to fight them. The government bodies and agencies include: Economic and financial crimes commission (EFCC), Independent corrupt practices and other related offences commission (ICPC), National orientation agency. (NOA), National drug law enforcement agency (NDLEA). Over years efforts made by these bodies have remained inadequate as conflict and insecurity remain unabated in the country.

Causes of Conflict and Insecurity of Human Heart in Society

Vice-Chancellor, Sir, Niger Delta conflict and insecurity is caused by the conflict between 'Divine Command Ethics and Morality and 'Ethical Relativism. Birsch, (2002) argued that religious and ethical principles are God's requirements for man conduct. While Moore and Bruder, (2002) opined that the theory of Ethical Relativism, stipulates what an individual and group consider to be right or wrong conduct.

Niger Delta activists and their people believe in the Divine command ethically and moral principles of conservation of environment because their lives is bounded up in their environment. Whereas multinational oil company operators and the government of Nigeria hold on to principles of ethical relativism that individual or group happiness or pleasure are all that counted in ethics and morality.

Conflict and Insecurity occur when indigenous people of Niger Delta complain of environmental depletion and life extinction (genocide) of their land and people following the desacralization of the land by oil company operators. Niger Delta activists are judged ethically and morally wrong and are sometime condemned to death by stakeholders in the crude oil industry because of their beliefs in the divine ethical and moral principles and their love for their environment. It seems that what stakeholders in oil industry want from the Niger Delta region at all times are income from oil production that will give them happiness and pleasure even at the cost of the indigenous environment and life extinction (genocide).

Insecurity becomes an outcome of conflict as a result of persistent demand for conservation and sustainability of their God given environment by the indigenous people of the Niger Delta, while multinational oil company operators with the permission and approval of the federal government of Nigeria explore and exploit crude oil based on their beliefs in western ethical relativism principles that people's happiness and pleasure were all that counted in ethics and morality.

Man's quest to enhance his personality and values.

From the perspective of religion (Realists position), the root cause of social conflict and insecurity is man's quest to enhance his personality and values. The term personality is

the totality of an individual character that distinguishes him from other people. While value is how much something is worth, considered important or useful. (Hornby,2002). The constituents of human personality and values include power, security, dignity, prestige, integrity and so on. These constituents of human personality help to enhance human values as societal values are determined by them.

Every individual and group in any human society has personality and values which make them famous and noticeable, interesting and attractive to other people. The qualities of the place and things found where someone or group lives helps also to make or destroy their personality and values. Therefore, man's desire in society is to pursue and develop the place and things that enhance their personality and values at all times. The influence human consciousness of his personality and values have on societal development is great. It is so much that there are likely to be tensions caused by personality and values clashes in any society. Conflict and insecurity in human societies are direct or indirect outcome and consequences of personality and values clashes between individuals and groups in their quests to enhance their personality and values.

All social, economic, political and environmental types of conflict and insecurity are direct outcome of man's quest for

power, security, dignity, prestige, integrity etc. that are constituents of human personality and values. Insecurity occurs in any human societies where conflicts caused by personality and values are allowed to last long.

Let us look at some examples of conflict and insecurity that are direct outcome of personality and value clashes in human society. The people of oil- bearing communities in Nigeria value their environment (land) and resources embedded in it as indigenous inheritance that can be used to develop and enhance their personality and values for life. The operators of the multi-national oil companies also have value for the oil found in the region because it helps in developing and enhancing the personality and values of their people and nations. In this situation, conflict and insecurity becomes inevitable and direct outcome of stakeholders' quest to develop and enhance their personality and values.

Complaints of people of oil producing communities in Nigeria of environmental degradation, exploitation and poverty are informed by their unhealthy and mal-adjusted personality and values. Also, people complain of neglect, marginalization, injustice because a situation exists in Nigeria whereby Niger Delta region which should become one of the richest regions by reasons of being the host region of oil that the nation depends on for its development, has

remained undeveloped, infamous, unattractive and uninteresting, depicting the people's personality and values before the world.

The issues of greed used to explain Niger Delta conflict and insecurity by some social scientists have direct link with some stakeholders' quest to enhance their values to the detriment of the values of many Niger Delta people and Nigerians. Conflict and insecurity persist in Nigeria as long as the values of citizens remained mal-adjusted and unhealthy due to the enforcement of the 1968 petroleum and 1978 land use decrees and other draconian laws which deprive people of their rights. This is because issues of human personality and values bother so much on people's life, security, dignity, integrity, power and prestige which individual and group never liked others to trickle with in any society.

Mutual Mistrust, Suspicion and Prejudice

Mutual mistrust, suspicion and prejudice are primarily emotional aspects of human character that cause conflict and insecurity in human society. These emotional actions are direct outcome and consequences of a fearful, heavy, angry, pained, grieved and troubled human heart. These emotions are steered up whenever there are feelings of dissatisfaction, disappointment, humiliation, hatred, victimization,

oppression, frustration, infidelity, powerlessness expressed by individuals and groups in a relationship in society. Mutual mistrust, Suspicion and prejudice from one individual or group against the others are common in a pluralistic society where there is religious pluralism, cultural/social pluralism and legal pluralism. Furthermore, in a society where there is inordinate quest to enhance human personality and values by individuals and groups in the midst of scarce or mismanage resources feelings of dissatisfaction, disappointment, frustration, hatred and so on are prevalent, causing conflict and insecurity. Mistrust is a feeling of lack of confidence in somebody or something considered harmful. Suspicion, is human thinking that a person's action is wrong even without a proof. While a term prejudice is used to describe a person's dislike for another person even without justifiable reasons.

Vice Chancellor, Sir, Mistrust, Suspicion and Prejudice have caused social and economic conflict and insecurity in Nigeria. Tensions and violence between Muslim and Christian communities or Muslim sects and Christian denominations are nothing new in Nigeria. Violent conflict between political parties and ethnic groups or politicians and ethnic fundamentalists themselves are rampant in Nigeria. All these conflicts that send insecurity signals to the society are orchestrated through mistrust, suspicion and prejudice coming from the heart of man. In Nigeria, many politicians,

ethnic fundamentalist, religious leaders, academia and top civil servants who want to perpetuate their monopoly of power with violent means would take a group's identity as nationalism, to exclude others. Although, religion seeks to promote justice and peaceful co-existence of people of different tribes, ethnicity seeks to promote, in as much as possible, the theory of political, economic and social equality of cultural groups. In Nigeria, religion, ethnicity, commensalism and ethnocentrism as used for quest for identity have roots in the search of self-identity and both ethnic and religious belongings. Religion, ethnicity, commensalism and ethnocentrism are used as ideological tools by holders of political, religious and cultural positions even when these have no democratic, religious and cultural ideals, to unleash mistrust, suspicion and prejudice that ferment conflict and insecurity in society. (Gatwa, Irene, Wee in Saale, 2009).

Consequently, claims and counter claims by all parties in the Nigerian conflict have given room to mutual mistrust, suspicion and prejudice from individual against individual, group against group in Nigeria thereby causing interpersonal and inter/intra-groups conflicts. Mistrust, suspicion, prejudice are used as weapons to divide the people during general election in Nigeria. Some selfish politicians and ethnic fundamentalists use these emotional sentiments to

recruit vulnerable youths as thugs, cultists and militants who form groups and gangs against one another. In such situations, government would send State security to protect lives and property of citizens, governments and multi-nationals living and doing business within the country. All these activities send insecurity signals into human society.

Human Violation of Conscience, Ethical and Moral Laws as causes of conflict and insecurity.

Society, having multiple or variety of rules on the conduct of particular aspect of human behaviour is prone to conflict and insecurity. In such a social system, citizens have options and make choices of the very rule that suits the conduct of their behaviour and actions in the heart. The multiplicity of laws on an aspect of people behaviour and actions inform the establishment of two parallel legal systems and courts of jurisdiction by State Authority to allow people make choices, of which legal systems and courts of jurisdiction should hear their cases. Consequently, individual and group behaviour and actions can be judged right in a legal system and court of jurisdiction; while another legal system and court of jurisdiction can judge the same behaviour and actions of the same individual and group wrong. This is the bane of conflict and insecurity in human society as claims and counter claims, appeals and counter appeals and complaints of injustice by individuals and groups become rampant.

Vice Chancellor, Sir, the issue of human rights contained in both the national (traditional) legal system and the international law is the cause of conflict and insecurity because citizens sometimes take advantage of varieties of court of jurisdiction on the same issue of human rights and carry their complaints of injustice to any court of jurisdiction of their choice within the country, regional and international courts. In many incidences, one court of jurisdiction may give ruling on matter of abuse of human rights in favour of individual or group against the State, or another group. And the aggrieved party may appeal the same matter to another court in the same country or region and sometimes to international courts and win or lose the case while the other who won or lost in the first court of jurisdiction may lose or win, causing conflict and insecurity.

In the opinion of this lecture, the disagreement and lack of confidence on the part of ASUU and Federal Government which may not take our attention here; has remained unresolved despite the ruling of the industrial court and the appeal court because of human violation of conscience, ethical and moral laws.

Religious Antidotes

The term 'religious', is an adjective used to qualify a person believing strongly in a God or gods. Etymologically, religion

is a relationship that exists between man and God. The phenomenon religion is as old as man on earth. (Omoregbe, 1993). The term 'antidote', is used to describe substance which stops the effect of a poison or something that makes an unpleasant situation better (Hornby, 2000). The terms 'religious and antidote' are used in this lecture to explain the various positive contributions of religious leaders towards solving societal problems. Religion has continued to serve as the source of social cohesion and solidarity in human societies as it fulfills its ethical and moral functions. Religious leaders provide antidotes to conflict and insecurity more than any other agents engaging themselves in conflict resolution and peacemaking. In their efforts, psychologists and social scientists have tried to find the most enduring and stable antidotes to conflict and insecurity in human society but painful to note that the more intervention measures they recommend to alleviate conflict and insecurity the more incidences of conflict and insecurity in human society.

Whenever it comes to matter of conflict resolution and peacemaking, it is religion that provides the right answer. There are about four types of people in the business of peacemaking, namely: Peace breakers, Peace fakers, Peace keepers and Peacemakers. Peace breakers are those who say the wrong things, do the wrong things, confront, disagree and cause division among parties in conflict. These people

undermine religion and its latency in peacemaking process. The sacred scriptures have strong words for such individuals and groups, “watch out for those who cause divisions---keep away from them (Romans 16:17-18). Peace fakers are those who prefer peace to truth and they regard peace simply as absence of any kind of argument or discord. Although peace fakers give the impression that they are for peace, in reality what they are for is avoiding troubled waters. Peace keepers are those who make attempts to maintain peace at any price, using force. Peacemakers are those who are equally committed to peace and truth (justice) and are prepared to be misjudged or hurt in their pursuit of bringing together those whose relationships need to be reconciled or re-established. Peace makers ensure that there are no unresolved conflicts within themselves in order to make their peace making effective (Hughes in Saale, 2008).

Work done on the Roles of Religion in Alleviating Societal Problems

Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I want to share my research findings on the roles of religion in societal development in this lecture.

In Saale, (Values Re-Oriented and National Development) we have argued that religion remains the source of societal ethical and moral values whose re-orientation would lead to national development and will continue to serve as the source of social cohesion and solidarity. (Saale, 2018)

Moral laxity has remained the bane of Nigeria's national problems from the 1960s when the country gained her independence. The problem of decaying moral values in contemporary Nigeria is evident in crime and criminality, corruption, armed robbery, environmental degradation, ethnic conflict/violence, religious conflict/violence and so on. (Okolo, 1993 in Saale, 2018).

Nigerians faced with these nefarious social problems, which in this lecture are considered outcome and consequences of the intellect, emotions and volition of the human heart have since 1960 embarked on several value re-orientation programs aimed at achieving national development. These programs among others include: Umaru Musa Yar'adua/Goodluck Jonathan's Seven (7) Points Transformation Agenda, Buhari's Change Agenda etc. It is worthy of note that before all these re-orientation programmes with civil faces there were military coup d'etat and counter coups in the name of value re -orientation. In all these exercises, government has continued to use parenting education, mass media, economy, infrastructural approaches. Scholars have continued to argue that the causes of failure of value reorientation in Nigeria is leadership. Achebe (1983) concluded that the trouble with Nigeria is failed leadership. But we have argued that the practice of leaving the moral sphere to religion while neglecting and ignoring the roles of

religion in values re-orientation for national development by successive administrations in Nigeria in pretense of practicing true separation between Religion and the State is not only 'unAfrica' but also that it makes religious value re-orientation inadequate and less effective.

African cultural values are religious values and it is not possible to embark on any meaningful value re-orientation in isolation from religious re -orientation. Successive administration in Nigeria in their helpless situations to grapple with Nigeria's social problems have resorted to appeal for the involvement of religious leaders in moral orientation. (Imaekhai, 2010 in Saale, 2018).

The phenomenon called religion is dominant in all human societies and its influence permeates all spheres of life. Religious orientation is used to inculcate in people cherished societal values for the development of the individual and group in traditional, modern and contemporary African societies. In fact African cultures/ ethos which is religious cultures and ethos are known for good character development. Virtues in African societies has a close affinity with human value. This is because virtues enable man to achieve those things which are internal of practices and the lack of which prevents people from accomplishing such good things for individuals and groups.

Religion has continued to ensure the development and maintenance of good moral values such as sanctity of human life, peace, human dignity, beauty, artistic expression and happiness, safety and security, justice, common good, integrity, honesty, loyalty, purity, chastity, humility, selflessness, public spiritedness etc. through various structures in traditional African societies. The family is where parents and relations who are morally upright give moral direction to members from childhood to adulthood. At the Village, the responsibility of traditional rulers and elders in council make rules to guide the conduct of its members. While the peer group/age grade enforce and maintain morality, good values, social order and harmony of the communities (Okwueze, 2004). Nowadays, churches and mosques have joined in the task of values and religious re – orientation for Nigeria's meaningful development. It is interesting to state that the spate of conflict and insecurity is rampant in rural communities and cities in Nigeria where there are frequent clashes between structures both traditional and civil that enforce the morality and values of the communities and the criminals who perpetuate vices.

The Role of Christian Bodies in Conflict Resolution: The Ogoni Example

This study examined various contributions made by Christian organizations and Christian leaders in the search

for peace in Nigeria, using the ogoni conflict as example. It reveals that church leaders supported the ogoni struggle for resource control in Nigeria that triggered conflict between the people, multinational oil companies and the federal government of Nigeria because ogoni's complains have biblical backings. Also ogoni people adopted the Christian nonviolent approach to resolving their conflict.

We argued that Christian leaders have played crucial roles in peacemaking through various peace initiatives. This peace initiatives include independent investigation into the ogoni conflict sponsored by world council of churches (WCC) in 1996. It is interesting to state that the recommendations of the world council of churches to parties in the ogoni conflict based on its independent investigation exposed conflict and insecurity in Nigeria to the international community. As it were the finding of this investigation triggered reactions from individuals and groups across the globe that necessitated pressure on the military junta to consider sociopolitical changes in Nigeria. It was observed that during the same period, Pope Johnpaul II, personally visited the military leader, General Sani Abacha and held talk with him on the human right abuses in Nigeria. The Catholic Church was most active and outspoken on the ogoni issue that on the 27th November 1995 issued a statement on injustices, poverty, and human right abuses in Nigeria. The Catholic Church was

on ground to establish an effective communication network so that there can be an efficient flow of timely information on the happenings in the Niger Delta. Churches also organized the procurement of emergency medical supplies and other relief materials to take care of victims in ogoni land. (Saale and Ofuru, 2010).

Another Christian initiative during the military campaign in ogoni land was Christian Women Intercessory Prayer Group called, “Gbobia Zion”. This group of local Christian women was formed to seek the face of God in prayers for the restoration of peace of God in the region they were militant in their beliefs and prayer approach. They do not carry arms but fight evil in ogoni and Nigeria through prayers.

Again Bishop Matthew .H. Kukah initiative was based on his familiarity with the ogoni issue, as he once served as principal initiator in the Ogoni and Shell reconciliation process in 2005; attended a meeting arranged by the federal government among the ogoni leaders, Royal Dutch Shell (RDH) and Shell (SPDC) 1999 as member of the Oputa Panel. Kukah personally as a Christian leader embarked on a 2-day tour of Niger Delta (Ogoniland) to feel the situation of things before he commenced work as secretary to the national political reform conference also Kukah personally produced and sent to the ogoni and multinational companies (Shell,

SPDC), a draft which should guide the reconciliation talk between parties in ogoni conflict. Both SPDC and MOSOP responded to the draft positively by accepting to meet and dialogue together. His effort opened the door for the aggrieved parties in the conflict that have never accepted to come together to meet and work out possible ways of resolving their differences.

Also it was through Kukah's effort that the former President Olusegun Obasanjo visited Ogoni land twice to dialogue ways of resolving the issues in ogoni conflict. Kukah was indeed instrumental to Shell (SPDC) accepting to sponsor cleanup of ogoni land as recommended by the United Nations on Environmental Audit a commitment Shell has refused to accept since 1993. Kukah was indeed instrumental to the inauguration of a memoriam in honour of ogoni 13, who died during the military campaign in Ogoni land. His peace initiative was equally instrumental in the reunion amongst members of the ogoni four (4) and ogoni nine (9) families. (Saale and Ofuru, 2010). The import of Kukah's effort as a Christian leader filled the leadership vacuum that existed for too long in Ogoni, Shell and Federal Government of Nigeria reconciliation process. The Church appeal to the conscience of parties in conflict through ethical teachings, prayer for world peace, humanitarian activities and public pronouncements in condemnation of injustice produce transient peace in human society.

The Church and the Fight against Corruption in Nigeria.

We observed that the church and other religious organizations have not sat on the fence as it were, in the fight against the monster called corruption in Nigeria. Church roles appear passive and inadequate considering public expectations and demands for a fall in the rate of corruption in the country. The church does not fight corruption with carnal weapons instead it engages members in spiritual warfare, while exercising patience with corrupt persons desiring to see them repent. The church in its attempt to meet public expectations appear hypocritical speaking against corruption perpetuated by some public officials in Nigeria without first fighting against the corruption within the church. The study argued that the church fight against corruption in Nigeria will be effective when it start to fight corruption from within as things are so twisted in Nigeria; teaching members how to be simple and straightforward in the way they do things with others.

Conclusion

Vice-Chancellor, Sir, I have over the years, examined the relationship which exists between religion and society. The roles of religion in societal development are latent. Latent, in this context means a thing existing but not yet very noticeable, active or well developed. It is this latency of religion that advocates of philosophy of secular humanism

used to denigrate religion. They argue that the phenomenon called religion is non-empirical and intangible and it has nothing else to offer towards the development of secular society. Some scholars like Fredrick Ludwig Feud Bach, Karl Marx, Sigmund Freud and their followers who held this notion have insisted that religion is an illusion, an infantile behavior, man's attitude of self-alienation, an opium of the masses. For these scholars, forces responsible for the development of human society, science, technology and politics should be considered first before any mention is made of religion.

Some other scholars like August Comte, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and their followers have in their own thinking considered religion as a form of culture responsible for social solidarity and cohesion. Although, these scholars recognized religion as form of culture, religion, according to them is the construction of man and not decreed by God. (Giddens, 2003). This humanistic thinking is an affront on God's existence. The above perspective explain how the relationship between religion and society is being determined by prejudice, mistrust, suspicion and hatred, thereby making the various contributions of religion in solving societal problems inadequate and ineffective.

It is unfortunate when religious people who should in the face of hostilities to religion by atheists fail to develop the latency of religion and make it effective in the development of society. Adherents of world religions instead of unifying themselves and forming a formidable force for adequate and effective contributions to develop human society, are divided in their perspectives on the role religion should play in social matters. Two traditions exist in all world religions whereby advocates of the Contemplative Asceticism hold the beliefs that religious people should not take the place of God in the affairs of this world, they should reject it. While the advocates of Active Asceticism hold the views that adherents should not withdraw from the imperfection of the world but conquer it (Bendix, 1977).

These divergent views are the bane of denominationalism in Christianity, sectarianism in Islam and pluralism in African Traditional Religion along the lines of ethnic diversities. Nowadays, some scholars of the African Traditional Religion who borrow the methodologies of 'contextualization and acculturation of foreign religions like Christianity and Islam in Africa, advocate for the name 'African Religions' to replace the primal name 'African Traditional Religion'. Although, this should not be the argument of this lecture, it is worthy of note that this very development is being explored

and exploited by some ethnic fundamentalists and politicians in a pluralistic society like Nigeria to agitate for Hausa Religion, Yoruba Religion, Igbo Religion.

In the opinion of this lecture, “RELIGION QUA RELIGION”, that is, the essential religion which emphasize what religion is, “God and man in a relationship which produces religious experience”, is not a form of culture. Rather religion is an aspect of a people's culture when it involves “man and man in a relationship enforced by the expression of religious experience, using cultural elements that emphasize culture. The fundamental philosophy of religion remained sacrosanct, emphasizing man's recognition and worship of God. Culture talks about people's predilections and idiosyncrasies.

Advocacy for ethnic religions in Africa where African Traditional Religion have no need of contextualization and acculturation is for ethnicity that has different meanings from religion. It is culture that has similar meanings with ethnicity. There is unity in diversity of African cultures and not African Traditional Religion. African cultures can be carefully studied in diversities in schools, colleges and universities to emphasize people's cultural elements used to explain a group expression of their experiences in life. Barth (1970) agreed that ethnicity is similar to culture and not religion qua

religion. According to him, ethnicity, as a social phenomenon, is a category of ascription and identification that characterizes interaction between the people. In the same vein, Gatwa (2000) asserted that ethnicity or the belonging to a particular group is the manifestation of the diversity received as a gift from God to human beings. The reduction of African Traditional Religion to ethnic religions is an affront on the deity and an assertion that African Traditional Religion is a construction of man.

May I emphasize here that any pluralism of religion along ethnicity in a pluralistic society like Nigeria where multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic groupings are negatively emphasized by politicians, ethnic fundamentalists and religious bigots will be tantamount to escalation of the spate of conflicts and insecurities that the nation is grappling with in the 21st century. It will not only increase the menace of proliferation of religious groups in the form of denominationalism in Christianity and sectarianism in Islam in the country but will also cause the worst scene where every ethnic and tribal groups, people's language, dialect, idiolect will own their religions. With such a conflictive and insecure trend in development in the country, religious leaders cannot come together to develop the latency of religion and harness their contributions towards alleviating or ameliorating violent conflict and insecurity.

Vice-Chancellor, Sir, religious antidotes are latent functions of religion that are being neglected and ignored in societal development. Religion has produced men and women with good consciences and God -fearing characters who have transformed and developed societies the world over. The two religious traditions, Christianity and African Traditional Religion, I have used as examples of other world religions, teach people virtues such as diligence, fidelity, honesty, integrity, industry, godliness, contentment, good neighbourliness, peace, security and so on.

These religious virtues are cherished societal ethical and moral values. These virtues are indeed constituents of a healthy human personality and values. It is religion that produces Vice-Chancellor of any university in the world where development is judged ethically and morally right and good. Again, it is religion that produces good leaders of Nation-States where justice, peace and security reign.

The good bridges, buildings, roads and many ethically and morally approved engineering and architectural works around the globe are done by men and women whose consciences are developed by religion. Married couples, family members, associates in politics, businesses and cultural groups are being held together by religion. It is religion that transforms the human heart that is the domain of

conflict and insecurity and produce the ethics and morality that cement society. All genuine conflict resolution and peacemaking efforts in human society should be championed by genuine peacemakers produced by religion. All meaningful societal development should begin with the development of a healthy human personality and values in order to achieve positive physical and material development that will alleviate conflict and insecurity in society.

Vice-Chancellor Sir, and my distinguished audience, if I have provoked issues and research questions for further studies in the areas of conflict and insecurity in society, then the objective of this lecture would have been achieved.

Thank you for listening.

Appreciation

Vice Chancellor Sir, I crave your indulgence to express my gratitude to the Almighty God and many deserving persons for their support and encouragement in my life.

Indeed, I am grateful to the Almighty God who is the strength of my life whose mercy has kept me alive. I still remember how my mother told me that I stayed eleven (11) months in her womb instead of the normal nine (9) months that babies stay in their mothers' womb. I was named Lazarus by my grandfather because I was considered dead but was born alive. The biblical meaning of my name 'Lazarus' is God is my helper. It is by God's grace that I am a professor, standing before this great audience to deliver an inaugural lecture today. From the beginning my life was full of delay in fulfillment of my desires. Again, I remember how I was described a failure by one of my primary school teachers in primary one who incidentally had conflicting issues with my parents. He transferred his aggression to me by insulting and humiliating me before my classmates, a negative development that affected me psychologically at that level of education.

At my final year in secondary school in 1981, the West African Examination Council ceased the results of my school center and I had to re-register for WASCE, GCE and JAMB

the following years to enable me gain admission into the university. After my graduation with B.A (Hons) in 1989, I remained unemployed for a period of thirteen (13) years during which I enrolled for a M.A programme and graduated in 2002. I am a product of God's grace.

I thank the management of Niger Delta University for employing me as an academic staff after many years of been unemployment. It was in this employment that I enrolled for a Ph.D programme and obtained the degree. I am grateful to the following Vice Chancellors of this impeccable university: Prof. J. C. Buseri, Prof. Chris Ikporukpo, Prof. Humphrey A. Ogoni and Prof. Samuel. G Edoumiekumo under whose leadership the university management appointed and has promoted me severally in recognition of my hard work and contributions to knowledge. Again thank you for supporting and encouraging me to fulfill my desires in life.

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that faithful Wednesday in Port Harcourt. Thank you for God used you to save me and mankind from deprivation.

My unalloyed indebtedness goes to my parent for their unflinching love for me that sustained my vision in the face of the hostilities of life. Like the Psalmist, I would say “but as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps have well-nigh slipped” (Psalms 73:2). I remember the advice of my late father Joseph. M Saale that I should endeavour to train myself, my brothers and sisters with his resources to attain higher education. My father demonstrated his love and vision for education by training two of his brothers to attain doctorate degrees.

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Harcourt, an Acting Chief Security Officer of the Rivers State Polytechnic, Bori and her last child holds a Ph.D degree now.

Sincerely, I appreciate the contributions of my in-law Mr. Kue L.C. Ikoro; former Chief of Protocol, Rivers State Government House and his wife, Mrs. Hope Kue-Ikoro; Former Registrar Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Port Harcourt, their son; Isaac and his wife, their daughter Queennette and her husband with their children. My sister Patience B. Saale; former Acting CSO Rivers State Polytechnic, Bori, my brother Dr. Richard G. Saale and their children, Precious, Joseph and Rejoice.

To my lovely wife, Josephine. N Saale (Jose for short) and our daughter Nenubari Grace Saale, I honestly appreciate and recognize your contributions in a special way. Both my wife and daughter are exceptional gifts from God to me. My wife and our daughter have provided the comfort and support I need for successful pastoral ministry and academic performance, resulting in my becoming a professor standing today to deliver an inaugural lecture. I thank members of my immediate family for their fervent love, patience and prayers during these years of hardship, suffering and pains owing to the delay in fulfillment of my desires. I recognize and sincerely appreciate you. The feat today is like the

proverbial: hope deferred makes the heart sick: but when the desire comes, it is a tree of life (Proverbs 13:12).

My gratitude goes to all my teachers and lecturers at the various levels of my education, particularly, my primary school teachers; Mr. K. Ndaka, Mr. S. Deekor and Mr. L. Nwibiabu who are unfortunately now late; for their love and care that rescued me from the hostilities of my primary one teacher mentioned earlier. I remember my lecturers: Prof. D. I. Ilega (late), Prof. E. S. Akama (late), Prof. Horton, Prof. W. O. Weneka, Prof. M. I. Okwueze who supervised my Ph.D and Rev. Fr. Kabaari, their contributions towards restoring the dignity and integrity of mankind paid dividend in me. Thank you for teaching me what to teach others in society.

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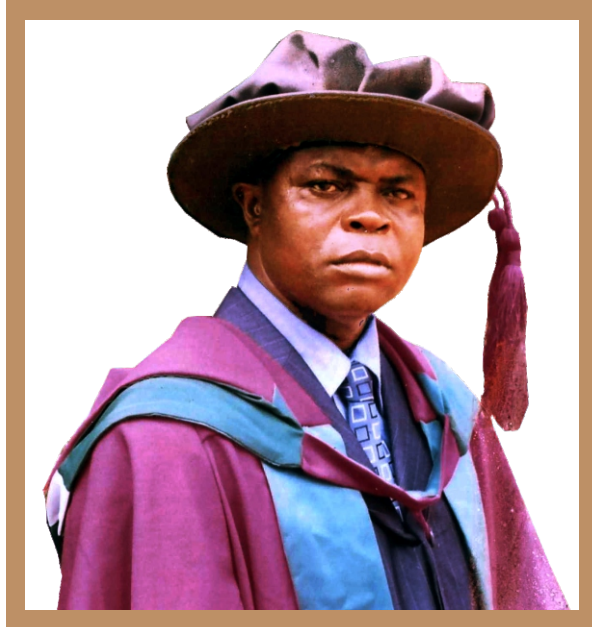
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NDU 51ST INAUGURAL LECTURER



Lazarus Baribiae Saale

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Professor of Sociology of Religion and Ethics

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A PROFILE OF THE INAUGURAL LECTURER

Prof. Lazarus Baribiae Saale was born on November 30th 1964 to the family of Chief and Mrs. Joseph Meeting and Grace Kpagine Saale from Okwale in Khan Local Government Area of Rivers State. He attended State School 1, Okwale in Khana Local Government from 1970-1976 and St. Pius Xth College, Bodo in Rivers State from 1976-1981.

From 1985-1989, Lazarus studied in University of Port Harcourt and obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree (B.A) in Religious Studies and a Master of Arts Degree (M.A) in Religious Studies in 2002 from the same university. He enrolled for a Ph.D programme in Religion and Society in 2004 and obtained the Ph.D degree from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka in 2008.

Lazarus was employed as an Assistant Lecturer in Niger Delta University in 2003 and rose to the rank of a professor of Sociology of Religion and Ethics within fifteen years in the university. He has served in various capacities as an academic staff. Some of which includes: Acting Head of Department, Philosophy and Religious Studies, Niger Delta University, Chairman Appointment and Promotion Committee (A&PC) in the Department of Philosophy and

Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts Representative to Niger Delta University Senate, Examination Officer of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Chairman, Curricula Committees of both under graduate and post-graduate programmes of the Department of Religious Studies, Chairman, First National Conference Organizing Committee of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, Niger Delta University, Chairman and Editor-in-Chief of Keli-Keli Journal of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies, and Chairman, Department Library Development Committee of Philosophy and Religious Studies. He is a visiting scholar to the Department of Religious and Cultural Studies for the Post Graduate Programme of Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, PortHarcourt. He has supervised several Masters and Ph.D students in Religion both of Niger Delta University and Ignatius Ajuru University of Education. Lazarus served as an external Assessor to universities and consultant to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Nigeria Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) on Strategic Conflict Assessment in Nigeria.

Lazarus has attended many national and international conferences. He has to his credit many publications and he is a member of learned and professional societies, some of

which are; Nigerian Association for the Study of Religion (NASR), Nigerian Association of Biblical Studies (NABIS), Nigeria Society for Research and Academic Excellence, University of Nigeria, Nsukka and African Association for Study of Religions (AASR). Professor Lazarus Baribiae Saale is happily married with a daughter.

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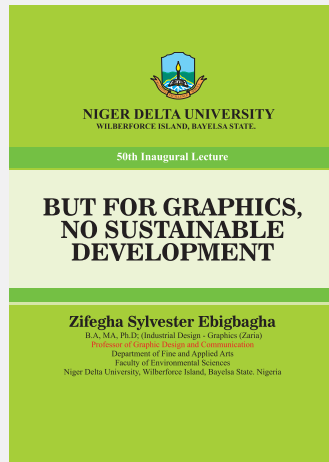
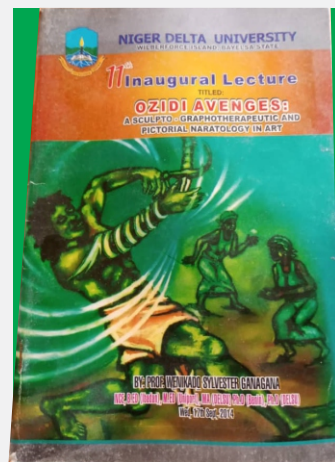
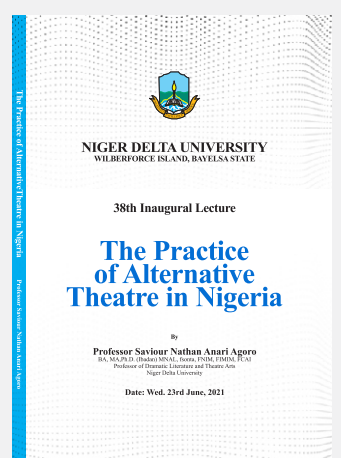
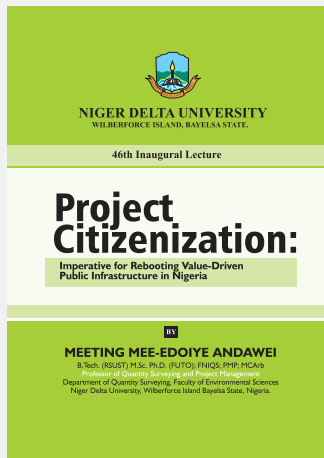
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