
RELIGION TURNED OBSOLESCE IN NIGERIA: REVERT TO *I-SUUM-NGI* INDIGENOUS RESOURCE FOR LIFE-AFFIRMING SOCIETY

By Benjamin J. Pokol

Email: benjaminpokol@rocketmail.com

Cell phone: +23480868980

(*Benjamin J. Pokol is currently Dean of Academics, Gindiri Theological Seminary, affiliate of University of Jos, Nigeria)

ABSTRACT

Traditionally, religion used to be a sign of hope to society; however, given the prevailing rate of insecurity and its attending societal challenges in Nigeria, one cannot deny that religion has expired and stopped playing its traditional role in the country. Instead of engendering life, religion has become a cause of death and sorrow in Nigeria. Thus, this paper focused on the need to revert to African indigenous resources as alternative for peaceful co-existence. The problem that motivated this paper is about how religion, which preaches peace and harmony in the society and promises blissful life in the hereafter, could turn violent and deadly to life in Nigeria. What has gone wrong with the tenets and adherents of religions in Nigeria? Addressing the above problem, the paper seeks to respond to the undergirding question: Are there African indigenous resources that could better serve as alternative to religion in order to engender peaceful co-existence in Nigeria? This paper contests and calls into question the functionalist conception of religion as an integrative force in society. Through systematic review of related literature, the researcher has found that constructive African indigenous resources abound, which have life-giving potential to replace obsolescent religion in Nigeria. Being aware of the prolific work already done by scholars on the destructive role of religion in Nigeria; this paper departs by postulating an alternative African indigenous resource for achieving peaceful Nigerian society. This postulation of an alternative resources is justified by the fact that Africans find more life in their worldviews than in any foreign ideology or religion.

Key words: Religion, obsolescent, *I-suum-ngi*, Nigerian society, African indigenous resource, peaceful co-existence.

Introduction

Religion used to promote life, unite people, engender peace and heal broken relationships; but all these appear to have vanished. It used to be said that a society without religion suffers from immorality and all kinds of deadly experiences. However, the prevailing cases of insecurity and their concomitant challenges facing Nigerians call this traditional role of religion into question because underlying the challenges are religious sentiments and extremism. With the current bloodshed in different forms in the country, one cannot afford to continue holding to the nurturing function of religion in the same way as the functionalists do. The different dimensions of violence ranging from lopsided political appointments, kidnappings, armed banditry and herdsmen's attacks in the country have roots in religious supremacy and bigotry. From all these life-denying role of religion, one does not need to be told that religion has failed. This paper, therefore, calls for revert to indigenous resources in African worldviews for more peaceful co-existence among the different religious enclaves in Nigeria. If Christianity and Islam have divided us, African worldviews have not because all of us share them. The paper does not assume that all African indigenous resources are life-giving;

but many of them are life-denying. It is to those indigenous resources that support and engender peaceful society that Nigerians need to revert to.

Seeing how religion is spewing death on Nigerians in this century, there is every need to look back at what African societies used to enable them co-exist peacefully before the arrival of the two imported religions (Islam and Christianity). This call finds justification in the fact that most African indigenous resources have potential for engendering life-giving society. At the root of human relationships in Africa were recognition of *common humanity* and acknowledgment of inherent *sanctity of life* (Columbus 209). If Africa has contributed much to the shaping of the Christian mind, it entails that even if Christianity fails, indigenous African resources can be resorted to (Agang 7-8). What Africans need is not just Christian theology but a Christian theology that is concerned with how all aspects of human knowledge, understanding and faith in God that can translate into deep moral commitment to building a better society so that what Sunday B. Agang calls “African's darkest demons”: Bad governance, corruption, socio-economic injustice, religious competition, tribal and ethnic conflicts and political domination will be a thing of the past (8).

However, from the prevailing security challenges facing Nigerians, *common humanity* and inherent *respect for sanctity of life* have become casualties because most of the current societal challenges bedeviling the Nigerian society are rooted in religious sentiments and extremism. One could, therefore, raise series of questions as to why religion has changed its motive and mission among Nigerians; what has happened to the traditional integrative role of religion? Do Nigerians still need religion? Should Nigerians keep religion or turn to indigenous resources that engender life-affirming society? The argument to replace religion with African indigenous resources is guarded from falling by the fact that we were *human* before we chose what religion to practice. Our common *humanity* should bind us together in peaceful co-existence rather than social constructs like religion or partisanship that have become deadly. The paper calls for revert to African indigenous resources as harbingers of life-affirming stories for peaceful co-existence. The paper seeks to respond to the question: What Nigerian indigenous resources abound that could replace religion for peaceful co-existence? For clarity of pushing this argument, some key words used in the paper need to be clarified. Obviously, it is not feasible to treat many African indigenous resources in a paper of this length; in view of this, this paper limits itself to *Suum-ngi* indigenous resource, a myth of creation among the *Kadung* minority ethnic group in Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria.

CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION

Religion: Sociologists have defined religion in various ways and their varieties are endless because supernatural beliefs are present in every known society (Haralambos 453). First, one of such definitions states that “Religion is the belief in the supernatural” (Haralambos 453). Roland Robertson criticized the above definition because, to him, any definition of religion should incorporate the idea that the supernatural forces have some effect upon the world. Second, Robertson sees religion as “based on the existence of supernatural beings which have a governing effect on life”, as well as bringing harm to bear (cited in Haralambos 453). Melford .E. Spiro adopts a similar definition of religion as “Religion is based on beliefs in superhuman beings and in their power to assist or aid man [and woman]”. Third, another definition comes from John and Ken which says that “Religion is a matter of faith and beliefs

anchored in conviction rather than scientific evidence (610). Fourth, since religion focuses on absolutes, Jeff Haynes (197) rightly notes that “It can also generate potent danger”. Karl Marx, being critical of what religion does to society, offers the well-known definition of religion “An illusion which eases the pain produced by exploitation and oppression... a sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world and the soul of soulless conditions... an opiate to dull the pain produced by oppression” (cited in Haralambos 460).

Obsolescent: This word is used in this paper to refer to something that is gradually losing its effectiveness and purpose of existence (Joanna Turnbull 1014). It means anything that is on its way to becoming obsolete. It is used in this paper to explain how positive role of religion is gradually becoming obsolete in Nigeria.

African indigenous resources: These refer to African indigenous and cultural values and norms embedded in worldviews that have potential to support peaceful co-existence in society. How people view the world determines how they relate to it and to each other. A worldview tries to answer questions about the *origin* and *nature of humanity* and its place in, and relationship with, the universe (Pokol 432, Metuh 45-50). Uchendu (cited in Balcomb 598) defines worldview as “the templates that govern the social construction of a symbolic universe or paradigms in which a certain kind of knowledge is allowed.” Uchendu goes on to note that “the worldviews of a culture often constitute the essential identity of that culture and provides the people with values that promote life.” A worldview can also be understood as the expression of an ethnic group's understanding of itself in relation to its Creator, how it facilitates its corporate and harmonious existence with others in society, and how to keep it alive from generation to generation (Balcomb 602). African worldviews, whichever one is talking about, are rooted in *community* well-being resulting into determining the quality of human life and relationship (Mbiti 165). It is from the above understanding that indigenous resources serve as alternative to religion in this paper.

Nigerian society: Nigerian society is used in this paper to refer to the different networks of relationships that bind Nigerian citizens together in time and space. This time and space include pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial existence in socio-economic, political and cultural relationships that either promote life or destroy it.

1. TRADITIONAL ROLE OF RELIGION IN THE SOCIETY

Traditionally, religion is meant to yield positive result in the society through its nurturing promises and values; so that what is expected of religion is fostering of and achievement of a peaceful, calm and equitable society as envisaged by a Latin American Archbishop:

“A world which reflects the reign of God where justice, peace, truth, freedom and solidarity prevail. A world where the dignity of the human person, made in the image of God, is paramount. A world that does not know what exclusion, discrimination, violence, intolerance or dehumanizing poverty are, but rather a place where the goods of the earth are shared by all and creation is cherished for future generations. It is a place where people, especially the poorest, marginalized, and the oppressed, find hope and are empowered to come to the fullness of their humanity as part of the global community” (Romero cited in Neufeldt *et al* 4).

It is obvious from the existing literature and lived experience that religion used to do very well in promoting cohesion and peaceful co-existence in the society. For instance, Christianity, Islam and African Traditional religions are the common religions in Nigeria

(Salau 345, Turaki 121-122, Ambe-Uva 42-43 and Imo 245), which have contributed immensely in social transformation through the provision of social services. In view of the above, one may concede that religion used to bless Nigerians in many ways ranging in the past from provision of social order and solidarity in the past. Cyril O. Imo has also outlined some blessings of religion in curbing the menace of drug abuse in the society:

“The sharing of existential questions as a common source by religion and drug abuse makes it possible for religion to contribute positively towards checking drug abuse. A firm commitment to religion helps an individual to focus on ultimate values rather than pursue mundane values. Religion provides adequate socialized individuals in the society through its teaching and [preaching]. Religion helps to scale values and reshape the minds of social deviants, thereby preventing people from involving in drug abuse. Religion checks drug abuse by providing motivation, meaning to life and peaceful escape from existential crisis” (116).

Imo's submission above is valid, at least in the past, for a context like Nigeria, where population explosion has pushed many young people into drug abuse and other social vices. Imo goes further to recommend the use of religion in curbing drug abuse instead of spending money on drug law enforcement agents (130). He argues that religion is also effective in treating and rehabilitating victims of drug abuse during and after serving their jail terms. Religion, according to him, also treats the spiritual factors leading to drug abuse. He further offers a constructive advice to the church religious to guard against decline of genuine commitment to religion (131). Imo appears to be the only sociologist I have come across whose sociological arguments are rooted deeply into religion instead of bastardizing religion like the Marxists would do.

However, all these constructive roles of religion outlined above have become past glory compared to what is obtainable in the 21st C Nigeria. The tables seem to have turned and all that religion produces for Nigerians are: terrorism, banditry, kidnapping and all that deny the experience of fullness of life in the country. In view of this, author strongly calls for replacement of religion with indigenous African resources for improved peaceful living in Nigeria. The next section deals with the obsolescence of religion within the Nigeria context.

2. OBSOLESCENCE OF RELIGION IN THE NIGERIA

Having discussed the functional role of religion in society above, this section deals with rationale why religion has become obsolescent in the Nigerian society in the 21st century. This section focuses on the curse of religion in Nigeria. One could argue here that religion itself may be innocent but the religious are guilty of making religion spew out death on the citizens. Seeing the manner in which Nigerians are being destroyed in the name of religion, Rose Uzoma argued that, “Despite its concern with the spiritual, religion negatively affects us socially and so religious rights thus remain an important topic in contemporary society (651). Haralambos also laments that, “Religion and the existence of multiple, doctrinally diverse religions within a single society can negatively affect social stability (476-78). Uzoma further reveals that religion threatens Nigeria's social stability and its hard-won democracy by pitting different religious and cultural beliefs, particularly of new radical Christian evangelical and fundamentalist Muslim sects against one another (652, Pokol 452).

From the foregoing, one can argue that religion in Nigeria constitutes a curse to national

integration and the common good of the citizens. It militates against national integration and cohesion by creating potent sources of danger to human life and property (Uzoma 652). As argued above, indigenous African societies, according to Uzoma (653), hardly experienced potent danger from religion, but the advent of Islam and Christianity brought competing sentiments and social upheaval to Nigeria by introducing different cultures and ideas which do not promote social cohesion (Kukah 213). Nigerians quickly abandoned their indigenous resources in what the author refers to as pouring out the bath-water with the baby inside. Under the influence of colonialism, Nigerians forgot that before the foreign religions arrived, they had resources that held them together in the divine garment of destiny (Chunakara 67).

3. BRIEF HISTORY OF RELIGIOUS HAVOC IN NIGERIA

The history of ethno-religious violence that have taken place in Nigeria confirms the submission of the scholars quoted above, which justifies the call for its replacement. Some of these violent conflicts resulting from religious pluralism in the country include Maitasine in Kano in 1980, the Kafanchan-Kaduna crises of 1987 and 1999, the Zangon Kataf riots of 1992, 2001, Tafawa Balewa clashes in 1991, 1995, and 2000, the Kaduna sharia riots of 2000 and the Jos riots of 2001 (Ambe-Uva 47). Since then Nigerians have never experienced peaceful co-existence again because the above mentioned religious violence have snowballed into series of religious radicalism confronting the nation (Lesmore 400). It is very unfortunate that religion is doing what it should not be doing to Nigerians, so it should go! Gone are the days when religion served as sign of hope (Ele 89). Rama Mani (150) argues that, religion was less violent at the beginning of its evolution until it began to take institutional shape:

“As walls rose to enshrine the deity, differences grew between diverse manifestations, first unwittingly and then deliberately. Demarcation replaced co-existence. Walls not only bonded those within, but also segregated those within from those without. Soon, the material wealth and temporal power encompassed within became worth defending at any price against outsiders: infidels, heathens, enemies. Competing claims arose to being “the chosen people”. Thus the lethal rivalry between and within religions sharpened and spewed blood through subsequent centuries” (150).

Mani further argues that “Today, religion seems at once irrelevant and obsolete because of its negative and destructive role, particularly, in Nigeria” (151). He opines that “religion has become a growth industry with more than 9,000 different religions in the world, existing in just over 200 recognized nation-states, so conflict is inevitable” (151). The former Secretary General of the World Council of Churches, Konrad Raiser, blames the global socio-political and religious unrest on religions by arguing that:

“Religions are responsible for endangering social peace because of their competition on who has the power to shape the social order... religions encourage domination of human beings by human beings... Where the symbolically based power of religions is transformed into antagonistic political power, it loses its authority rooted in transcendence and becomes the ideological legitimization of sectional interests. It thus becomes subordinate to the friend-enemy opposition and violates the basic precept of the golden rule. All religions face the temptation of using their symbolic power as an instrument to exercise political domination up to and including legitimizing violence” (138-141).

If religion has turned obsolescent and destructive to life, why not return to indigenous resources for engendering a life-giving society? The irony is that while the country ranks very high in religious language, personnel, music and centers, yet, it also ranks very low in practical equity, love, justice, mercy, unity and tolerance (Pokol612). In view of this, religion has become a highly problematic factor in the Nigerian society and needs to be neutralized as far as possible and kept out of society (Pokol 615). Roderick Hewitt has unraveled and located the root cause of social tension and unrest in religious competition and sentiments:

“Two deceptive, deadly, infectious and attractive viruses offered by all extremist religious groups; these are unquestioned certainty and superiority once infected, one becomes addicted and dangerous to oneself and to others. Ideologies and theologies that foster certainty and superiority are dangerous because their ultimate goal is to seek political and economic benefits and powers. These become instruments of greed that are used to oppress others”(69-70, Pokol 616).

In Nigeria, it has been argued by scholars that since before the country became independent in 1960, religions had been pitted against each other by the colonial powers who preferred one religion to another as means of scoring political points (Barnes 16), but it is not enough to critique the status quo; alternative options ought to be given. In his support for Hewitt's argument, Schwab reveals that:

“Nigeria was undone by societal ethnic and religious conflict that played havoc with politics, culture, and people's lives. Still the contemporary profile of the country was actually drawn at the time of British colonial rule when the separate domains of the territory, parts of which once incorporated expansive kingdoms with complex systems of government, were abruptly thrown together as an artificial creation, where union was so sudden, that the British, who created it have often doubted whether it could survive as a political entity” (43, Pokol 456).

Immediately after independence (1964), Fee (cited in Diamond 76) expressed a religio-political fear that he saw as a religious time bomb on which the young country was sitting:

“As things are, it appears Nigeria will be governed all her life by Northerners who were once the most backward people in civilization. If we allow Northerners to govern us, then in about ten years from now Nigeria will only be regarded as Northern land—and thus, all our birth rights sold to the most backward set of people...I fear our being controlled by a dictatorial type of government such as can be seen in all the Muslim countries today. We shall all be subject to control by feudal lords who rule by Muslim decree...This means we shall be ruled by whatever the Koran says...My fear about Nigeria is very great now. I don't know what will be the end of the crisis. There is no peace all over the country. This is the result of the selfishness of some of our political leaders. My greatest fear for the unity of the country is disunity among tribes as a result of clamour for power by greedy politicians”.

No wonder, Lenshie and Abel have also decried the havoc done lives by religion in Nigeria in the following manner:

“Religion [in Nigeria] today instead of serving as a source of healing sickness, hunger, and poverty, and stimulating tranquility and peaceful co-existence among human beings, is used to cause sadness. It is bringing pain instead of relief, hatred instead of love, division instead of unity, sadness instead of joy, discrimination and destruction instead of accommodation and development. This is especially true between some adherents of Islam and Christianity. Nigeria has its own share of these negative phenomena. Ethno-religious conflict has become a matter so serious and devastating that it can be seen as a harbinger of the danger of a crisis such as those that have engulfed the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda and Liberia”.

From the above experiences of religious obsolescence as described by the scholars, it is only appropriate to argue that religion is done with its usefulness, and needs to be replaced with African indigenous resources, which are rooted deeper in Africans than Christianity and Islam. All that Nigerians need to do for this replacement to work is to decolonize their minds from all strings of colonialism that have kept them perpetually at the doors of the Church and the Mosque to the detriment of their indigenous resources. Religion may still be, but not as the sole guarantor of life-giving societal values!

4. I-SUUM-NGI CREATION WORLDVIEW AS AN INDIGENOUS RESOURCE

The concept of *I-Suum-ngi* comes from the *Kadung* minority ethnic group in Plateau State, Nigeria (Lusa 4). Documented history in this historical account is rare just as Umar Danfulani and La'azarus Maigoro have revealed that *Kadung* has suffered the severest neglect in terms of the reconstruction of its history and culture (15). The etymology of the word *Kadung* is “better place of settlement”, which implies that they have come from elsewhere in search of a better place to settle (Danfulani and Maigoro 15). As a roadmap to the location of *Kadung* ethnic group, they are found north east and west of Pankshin Local Government Area of Plateau State, Nigeria.

5. NATURE OF I-SUUM-NGI

I-Suum-ngi is a complex word – *Suum* means physical *human being*, and when the prefix *I* and the suffix *ngi* are added, it becomes *I-suum-ngi*, which is essential *humanity* or the *essence* of being *human*. It is this being *human* that serves as inherent network of relationship that prompts them not only to live in community, but also to live responsibly in peace with each other. This paper calls for revert to something like “*I-Suum-ngi*”, which serve as common denominator for all people. *I-suum-ngi* indigenous resource among the *Kadung* people departs from the common African philosophy propounded by John Mbiti's idea of community-based-*humanity*. For the *Kadung* ethnic group, *humanity* is inherent in every human being before they begin to live in community. Unlike another African philosophy, *Ubuntu*, which claims that we find *humanity* in community living (cited in Mbigi 6-14). This paper argues that *I-suum-ngi* is what is essentially ordained for everyone by the creator; hence, the need to see this as the connecting rod wiring everyone irrespective of what social construct like religion one has chosen for oneself. When social construct like religion divides us and becomes deadly to us, it is because we have forgotten our common denominator, which is *I-suum-ngi*! What makes religion to turn obsolescent is its gross neglect and disrespect for *I-suum-ngi*. No one who values the sanctity of human life will take arms and kidnap innocent people.

6. ROOT OF *I-SUUM-NGI*

For the *Kadung* people, *I-Suum-ngi* worldview claims that all human beings originated from a big wild yams tuber in the rocks (Lusa 30, Adu 12). Growing up on a very fertile ground in the rocks, the wild yam tuber grew so large that it could not all be contained in the soil (Lusa 31). Part of the tuber got exposed to the sun and all the harsh weather (Lusa 32). After a long time, the exposed part eventually changed its original colour from sweet taste to bitter taste (Kaunda & Pokol 17). The same tuber eventually metamorphosed into human beings: The exposed part produced a male, and this is why most males seem to be tougher than females; while the covered part produced a female and because the part was always inside the soil, this is why females are always limited to internal functions (Lusa 35). Regardless of the different functions allocated to male and female, the fact that both of them originated from the *same tuber* of wild yams, they have inherent ability to promote respect for sanctity of life, equity, fairness and peaceful living with each other (Adu 34).

7. LESSONS FROM *I-SUUM-NGI* FOR ENGENDERED PEACEFUL SOCIETY

If there is anything that the two imported religions have relegated to the background in Nigeria, it is consciousness of common origin of humanity as the natural binding force that should engender respect for the sanctity of human life. Christianity and Islam locate humanity in divine creation, but not much is emphasized about the fact that *common humanity* is the reason for life-giving and peaceful society. Our common humanity and origin implies that whatever one has is also found in the other; and whatever one wants to have is the same with the other. It means that one cannot injure the other without injuring oneself as argued by Martin Luther King 111:

“[Forgetting our common origin], we have glorified competition to the point where it is counter-productive... but we urgently need more cooperation, more recognition of our mutuality and interdependence... Through our scientific and technological genius, we have made of this world a neighbourhood and yet we have not had the ethical commitment to make of it a brotherhood [or sisterhood]. But somehow, and in some way, we have got to do this. We must all learn to live together as brothers [and sisters] or we will all perish as fools. We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly. For some strange reason I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be. And you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be. This the way God's universe is made; this is the way it is structured (66-67).

If only we remain conscious of our common origin and purpose in the plans of the creator, we will promote the welfare and not the death of the other. *I-suum-ngi's* common origin (tuber of yams) places every human being at the same level of dignity sharing common *origin*, common *essence*, and moving back to common *destination* (Lusa 12). It does not allow any room for competition like religions because it provides a level-play-ground for all. This indigenous resource is also similar to Rastafarians' idea of Ethiopia as the source of all Africans, where all those in the Bahamas will one day return to as home (Hewitt 76). Many decades ago, Mother Theresa made it clear that, “If we have no peace with each other, it means that we have forgotten that we belong to each other” (Wallis 129).

Concerning the existence of the other creatures, *suum-ngi* attributes their origin to the vine and leaves of the same yams plant (Lusa 17). Therefore, Lusa (17) reveals that the relationship between human beings and the rest of creation is a symbiotic one because they originated from the same source. The one-ness of creation is affirmed by Mahatma Gandhi: "All creatures are of the same substance as all drops of water in the ocean are the same in substance. I believe that all of us, individual souls, living in this ocean of spirit are the same with one another with the closest bond among ourselves. A drop that separates soon dries up and any soul that believes itself separate from others is likely destroyed... in all situations of conflict, there is something in the opponent that can be appealed to... not only common humanity but... that of God... no one is without divine spark within them" (cited in Galtung 123). There is, therefore, no hierarchy or precedence and hierarchy among human beings and other creatures because, like a chicken and an egg, it is difficult to tell which one comes first, and which one is better. As the tuber depends on the leaves and the vine for its growth, so the vine and the leaves also depend on the tuber for survival. For peaceful living, this mutuality is expected to be celebrated (King in Chunakara 67). This also extends to human relations with the environment, which is what the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew (cited in Chunakara 84) argues for:

"...to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin. For humans to cause species to become extinct and to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation; for humans to degrade the integrity of the Earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the Earth of its natural forests, or destroying its wetlands; for humans to injure other humans with disease; for humans to contaminate the Earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life with poisonous substances: these are sins".

Therefore, the physical environment is bound up with human existence and survival because they complement each other, and whatever happens to the environment affects human life. *Suum-ngi* notion of peace, therefore, sees peace as a situation where there is proper and life-giving relationship between human beings and the physical environment. The fact that they originated from a common tuber calls for caring relationship. Taken as an analogy for peaceful human relations in the society, it promotes the equality of people, and upholds the equality of human beings and respect for sanctity of life.

As to whether this indigenous resource is fair to the female gender is a subject of another paper. Yet care must be taken in the process of retrieving this notion in order not to be seen as justifying patriarchy and male domination that is prevalent in some African societies. Therefore, while *I-suum-ngi* offers an important analogy for African theology of peace, one ought to be careful about its implications on gender issues, otherwise, it becomes counter-productive (Kaunda & Pokol 17-18).

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this paper has argued for revert to African indigenous resources because imported religions have failed and become obsolescent. Instead of perpetuating religion, the paper has postulated *I-suum-ngi* creation worldview of the *Kadung* ethnic group as alternative for engendered peaceful society in Nigeria. While religions divide us and competes for supremacy, *I-suum-ngi* accords everyone *common humanity, common identity, common dignity and equity* based on *humanity* or *human-ness*, which Martin Luther King Jr. calls "*single garment of destiny*" (67). This indigenous resource of peace speaks volumes

against social constructs that divide us. African indigenous resources abound for Nigerians to imbibe instead of depending on obsolescent religion.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

First, Nigerian perpetual reliance on imported values of Christianity and Islam is no longer yielding the desired results. It is very obvious that when challenges seem to overwhelm Christians and Muslims, they revert to African indigenous resources, which means that not everything is impotent in our worldviews.

Second, one desperately wishes to see a situation where our institutions of higher learning mainstream into their training curricula African indigenous philosophiesthe affirm life and begin to give emphasis on such indigenous resources as part of the socializing process of the younger generations. This step will call for more focus on indigenous learning resources rather than the excessive reliance on foreign learning materials. A situation where African indigenous values and norms have been relegated to the background at our own disadvantage should be stopped. Why is it that Christians and Muslims who belong to the same clans and families keep celebrating marriages, funerals and other feasts together but once it relates to religion, they take arms against each other? It means that religion is the divisive factor. It is divisive because it is not essentially rooted in their persons like their worldviews. Indigenous resources are potent means of encouraging the younger generation to value indigenous knowledge that promote life.

Third, Christians and Muslims should revisit constructive African indigenous values found in our worldviews so that whatever we are passing on to the next generation is what is inherently imbued in us to promote respect for sanctity of life. Indigenous resources like *I-suum-ngi* teaches that whatever is in a Muslim is in a Christian; whatever is not in a Muslim is not in a Christian! Hence, the need to treat each other with respect because we share the same origin, essence, dignity, and humanity.

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