

Traditional Institutions, Public Relations and Good Governance in Contemporary Nigeria.

‘Evil triumphs when good people remain silent in the midst of moral crisis.’

- Edmund Burke (1729 - 1797)

A Paper Presented

By

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Preamble

‘**Evil triumphs when good people remain silent in the midst of moral crisis.**’ With the words of Edmund Burke, an Irish Statesman, economist and philosopher, I greet all of you, eminent people, who have come from far and near to participate at this Presentation. To God be **ALL** the glory for our gathering here today, 5 October, 2023, at the Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, formerly Anambra State University, Igbariam Campus, in honour of our cherished and revered current Obi of Onitsha. I wish to register my deep appreciation for the invitation extended to me by the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations (NIPR) in collaboration with the same University as Guest Lecturer to give the maiden edition of Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe’s Lecture Series. I consider this a great honour, not because the invitation found me after crossing the many rivers of Eastern States and manoeuvring the hills of Ekitiland to the city of Ado-Ekiti, the Ekiti State capital, where I reside as Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Ekiti, or that after some sifting processes adopted by the organizers, I was found worthy.

If you will kindly excuse my modesty, I am sure there are individuals that are more versed, more cognitively astute in matters such as we are about to explore, not to mention the sizable number of worthy eminent sons and daughters of the land, within and outside Anambra State, who stand so very tall and ready. Really, I am very humbled to stand before all of you here today to share my thoughts, my ideas, with you. My Presentation here is to challenge all of us and to move us to positive and concrete action. Let us hope that our discussion and sharing here today will help us to go above what we were when we came here for this Presentation and when we are returning to our respective destinations. In this light, my aim is for us to become better and stronger, to be optimistic, and to resolve to be **Positive Change Team** (PST). Yes, the **Beyond Ideas Group** (BIG). Please, I would like to be using the terms, Lecture and Presentation, interchangeably.

Significance of the Lecture

The significance of the Lecture, as we underscore equivocally its relevance in the dignitary in whose royal honour we gather, derives essentially from the singular history that births the collaborative initiative of the organizers; the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations and

Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus. Actually, it is a joint effort which by default draws its strength and uniqueness from a glorious past, the home-grown personnel that characterize that past and till date continues to inform it with a sustainable meaningful cord of common brotherhood. In a season where unity of purpose and collective pursuit of peace are the national cry. This singular act is just apt, too apt indeed, for the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations that it should serve as her mandate. As for the university, she has with her name chosen a definitive ethos for herself which should not only define her leaning in learning but set her apart in character.

The topic I have been asked to speak on is: **Traditional Institutions, Public Relations and Good Governance in contemporary Nigeria**. Quite mouthful if you ask me since when broken down, each of the highlighted concerns will make a full Lecture on its own. To be asked to sum them together as a single Lecture some could at first assume that the task could therefore be tedious but a careful look reveals a single thread running through the broken segments as listed, that thread is **people**; human beings with interests and specific desires. Whatever traditional institution we seek to profile, it only exists by right as a service organ for the people. Also, the primary objective and strategy direction of every public relation intervention is how best to serve and guide the people to achieve a desired nationalist orientation, be it information sharing, mobilization, purpose definition or redefinition, political agenda servicing while promoting goodwill and peaceful coexistence that seek to make the world a better place.

Some public relations which go by way of propaganda, sometimes mob or crowd rallies whose objective is war, strikes and riots also obtain their legitimacy and significance because there are people to focus on for good or for ill. The high point of populism in governance if we call to mind the 6 January, 2021, storming of the Capitol in the United States of America, USA, by zealot crowd supporters of the then President of that country, Mr Doland Trump, and which has now led him to face ‘**91** charges across four criminal charges’ in court (as at 15 August, 2023) along with his friends with all its rhetoric and theatrics thrives on the people. Instances of polarization and fierce partisanship in politics are still because there are peoples who are convinced that the position they have taken is the right one and the political party they are ready to give their heart and soul, and if necessary their lives, to is the right one.

Government exists legitimately or otherwise because there are people to govern or experiment with, regardless of whether such persons in government have good intentions for the electorate or if by virtue of their adopted ideologies and policy implementation, they won the hearts of their followers. The government of late Chief Obafemi Awolowo in the then Western Region of Nigeria and Nazi Germany under Hitler are good examples.

It is people that give legitimacy to any government because of an unwritten, hence, unsigned Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between those seeking positions of power as leaders and those that they intend to lead. Essentially, that those seeking power can have the votes of the people and their loyalty if the former do as they have promised.

What the people want always from government is truthfulness, sincerity of purpose, laced with a good dosage of transparent accountability translating to good governance and better life which in turn consists of the provision of basic necessities of life, food, shelter, good roads, literacy

programmes, peace, safety of life and property and job opportunities. By whatever way the adopted ideologies are called, democracy, totalitarianism, fascism, theocracy, welfarism, socialism or communism, it is still all about how best to serve the people. Without the people, there is no government. Never mind the irony of the fact that it is this same legitimate instrument of any and all governments who ought to be the beautiful bride that is exploited, neglected and denied all benefits.

The definition provided by Late President Abraham Lincoln of the United States of America for democracy sets this fact in bold colours when he succinctly defines **democracy as a government of the people, by the people, for the people**. The people, meeting their needs and desires (what they want not what the rulers want), managing and distributing their resources judiciously using processes and policies that promote equity, equality before the law, fairness and justice. Most times, these will form the barometer for measuring government performance and ultimately determine if there has in fact been good governance or not and whether we can meaningfully talk about progress, development, growth and prosperity.

The concept of contemporary Nigeria, in other words, modern Nigeria, is not an abstraction, but rather, it marks a geographical space that as we speak is populated by human beings who voluntarily have agreed to live as one under one Constitution, one Law, Flag and one National anthem even when they differ in language, culture, religion, art, music, character and other stereotypes. The contemporary label only allows us to easily separate the old from the new in terms of structures, systems and personnel; the past from the present, the traditional from the now state of affairs politically, religiously, socially, economically and culturally.

Kindly permit me to now bind the segments that I have briefly analyzed together setting out in a tidy form the topic for the lecture as initially served namely Traditional Institutions, Public Relations and Good Governance in Contemporary Nigeria.

My discussion here today is not a presentation of an academic paper for publication in some offshore index journal rigorous in planning, procedure and language. Rather, it is a dialogue, a serious discourse and interaction of minds reflectively led by my humble submissions for more reflections fanning the flames of understanding, critical appraisal. The aim, in the end, is to lay a concrete realistic foundation as well as pathway for possible positive and concrete action as the title of my book, **Beyond Ideas**, encourages.

Institutions become institutions only with the presupposition that there are peoples, human beings from which they derive their legitimacy, sensibilities, influence and authority. Their codification as institutions derives from the culture of the people, the sum of their lives, how they live daily, their language, religion, economics, day-to-day activities, songs, music, dance and so on. These cultures, if and when they persist growing in age like old wine, and if in their acceptance, they are seen to be existentially profitable, beneficial, pragmatic, promoting peace, tranquility, prosperity and wellbeing, they become fossilized and they cease to be mere cultures they become traditions sitting fittingly with the mantra, **‘as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end’**.

These cultures are set in stone such that breaking them becomes a taboo. They now bear and enjoy universal endorsement and consensual acceptability. They even have enforcement officers and priests who serve as their custodians. It is not that they are never broken they do often by new preferred cultures or ways of life, new dispositions which if they too exist over time and get endorsed they become traditions. What is referred to here as traditional institutions can be found among the people. These are the building blocks that name them as a people one and indivisible characterized by their culture broken into phases.

What then are those traditional institutions that can be found in this day contemporary Nigeria being serviced by government such that when the pragmatic tools and instruments of public relations are applied in policy support will spell and appropriately pass off as good governance. As our initial exegesis goes, the ball, as we say in the game of Tennis, is in the court of political leaders, men and women who sit in power having been freely elected through the ballot to govern and steer the people who have voted for them for the attainment of peace and prosperity.

In a democracy, the three Arms of Government; the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary are institutions in their own rights as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be world without end. To challenge this arrangement is to enact a coup, it is to rebel. Thankfully in Nigeria, practically, none of that exists as we speak. Ideally, through the devolution of power, the Executive is to function in terms of administration, issuing people-oriented policies, with real human face, to promote better lives for all Nigerians as a people under one Flag governed by one Constitution.

In any government, noticeably, there is the use of tools and instruments of public relations in terms of appeals, lobbying, meetings with different groups, including traditional rulers, for wider consultations, especially, when a government wishes to 'sell' its policies, programmes, to the people.

There is the Legislative institution which so far, again, with deftness to public relations tactics continues to assist and cooperate with the Executive arm in the job of stabilizing the ship in core areas of security, food security and peace. So too the Judiciary as it continues to plough through many court cases that seek redress asking for justice and fair play, whether real or imaginary. In all these three Arms of Government, the use of public relations is ubiquitously present, even in the form of propaganda.

Traditional Institutions

Marriage

Of course, Marriage is a solid traditional institution, although this tradition and the cultures that formed its building blocks and made it formidable in centuries gone by are today being seriously challenged. The culture of same sex marriages, gender distortions and the fuzzy boundaries that separate one gender from the other are issues in contemporary Nigeria. Gay clubs now exist. The frivolity attached to oath-making in marriage, the prevalence of divorce, domestic violence and brazen tarnishing of all morals regarding the conjugation rites of marriage, reckless cases of cohabitation, wives methodically killing their husbands and vice versa suggest that the old institutional order is perhaps slipping away fast, yielding place to a new that is characterised by a

strange malady thriving on borrowed cultures from the West where liberalism is the order of the day. This is one of the factors militating good governance in contemporary Nigeria.

Family

The family which traditionally is the cradle of civilization, communal wellbeing, harmony, bliss and life abundance is equally being eaten up at the edges. Things are falling apart and it seems the centre can no longer hold (courtesy of Late Prof. Chinua Achebe) with many, if not most, fathers and mothers exchanging domestic roles or having none at all as they pursue their individual careers, and as a result of which children suffer total neglect left at the mercy of gangs, drugs, 24/7 Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram.

Both for marriage and family in their waywardness, all that can be asked of the public relations institution is multifaceted campaigns to drive yet again the old moral values and call attention to their fine existential ethical soundness. This of course must be well financed and strategically sustained using the modern tools of media communications regardless that these themselves are two edged swords if not sensibly deployed. I believe all of us in this hall are no strangers to what children neglect will cause if left unchecked. The family is correctly the birth place of the society, it is the birthplace of the nation and its morals serve as blueprint of the society and the nation. It is obvious then why some nations have become derelict and totally bankrupt having nothing to show but incessant strife, restlessness of the youths and general moral decadence. If the family is in decay so would the society, so would the nation.

Education

What about education, another of the traditional noble institutions. The holy book, the Bible, makes it plain that people perish because of lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6). Ignorance is a cancer while education is supposed to banish ignorance, liberating the minds of the youth. Education guarantees and opens all doors but there is presently a quick call for a rethink, the mobilization for a change of mindset which I shall live at the door step of our public relations gurus, experts. Which education are we talking about, if one must ask?

I am always quick to separate literacy from education because the two are different. The former enables you to read and write the alphabets, do multiplication tables, pass the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and have your degrees, yet you may be very far from being educated. Literacy is essentially of the head, the brain, but never of the mind which I refer to as holistic purposeful education. This form of education beyond literacy is about character, morals, critical thinking, wisdom, nobility and good judgement.

The word, education, derives from the Latin word, ‘**educare**’, which means to deliver of, to draw out of the individual who sits at the feet of the one that knows. Socrates, the father of philosophy and great teacher, as he moved round the city of Athens, Greece, would ask his pupils interrogative questions: what is truth, what is justice, what is beauty, what is good, therefore, forcing them to think, civil servants drawing answers from their young minds challenging their responses.

Socrates’ teaching method was called the ‘midwifery method’. Just as the midwife delivers babies off their mothers so did Socrates knowledge and wisdom off his pupils. He had no school

fenced with walls, there were no certification, yet, it was his ideas and those of his pupils, Plato, Aristotle, Thales, Heraclitus and philosophers, old and new, that gave birth to ideas that down the centuries, men and women have used to build governments, modern states and societies.

In the Socratic school, there were no dropouts, no loss of self-worth because no one failed WAEC or JAMB or came out of the university with an ordinary pass degree. True education was total wholeness that is purposeful because it feasts on the talents that are hidden deep in the individual. This was the mission of Plato's Academy, of the Stoics, the Epicureans, to encourage individuals be who each naturally wants to be.

There was a time in some cultures where the rich did not send their children to school as we know them today, rather, they engaged home tutors to teach their wards variety of subjects from early age, including medicine, mathematics, oratory, music and the art of war. What Nigeria inherited from her colonizers was literacy proficiency that guaranteed the emergence of court clerks, civil servants and catechists. The birth of schools as schools for holistic development was inherited as a legacy from missionaries where, truth be told, with their mission schools, the head and mind were religiously attended to. There was moral and character formation.

Unfortunately, no sooner the Nigeria's Military Government, perhaps out of misplaced envy of yesteryears, or even ignorance, began the infamous takeover of mission schools and administrative rearrangement such as sending Muslim teachers to teach and be principals in Christian mission schools as if indeed you can overnight give what you do not have. The result of the iconoclastic disruption is steady decline in the quality of learning and ultimately decay in character. Contemporary Nigeria today finally after a huge fight from religious organizations, including court cases, is talking about giving back the mission schools to those who actually know what the business of education is all about. Lagos, Anambra and Ekiti States are forerunners in this aspect.

Universities equally are marked by the same scramble and mediocrity, most of the state-owned are suffering mostly from lack of funds, while many privately owned and faith-based universities profiteer with reckless abandon. The truth be told, not all of us need university education and even if we do, it is not a race. Not all need secondary education to be successful and prosperous. Their absences do not translate to ignorance or loss of purpose and an enriched life and self-fulfillment if the alternative system is run with good intentions, good policies and good conscience. All that is required are government policies that lay emphasis on those things that are important and necessary. Of what use is a PhD holder in electrical engineering who cannot wire up his own house, but rather seeks the services of an electrician who finished from a Trade Centre? This is food for thought.

Religion

Religion equally makes the list of traditional institutions in both the old and contemporary Nigeria. Definitely, all religions, including traditional religion, are expected to teach and exhibit all that have to do with strict morality, purity, justice, decency, discipline of both the mind and the body. Generally, this is not happening. Even as it is observed, except in orthodox religions and the catholic religion to which I graciously and gratefully belong some ground shifting in both teaching (kerygma) and practice (liturgy) are fast showing up. Materialism, dilution of

doctrine, syncretism, use of strange methods to entice followership and keep them in bondage, particularly women, all in the name of Jesus. Undoubtedly, discipline is needed here to bring back some level of sanity. I opine that indiscipline is the number one problem in Nigeria, while corruption is the first born of indiscipline.

The Traditional (Kingship) Institution

Notably, if any of the long list institutions will qualify to be labeled traditional, it is the Kingship Institution which embodies what in contemporary Nigeria we have broken into the three arms of governance. In the Kingship lie the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary in name and duties, practiced both in nature and character. It is a simple case of absolute power, which, in this area, does not necessarily corrupt absolutely. Most Kings/Obis love and keep developing their domains. They love their people, their subjects. They see them as their children. Thus, they love, defend, provide and care for their people. They make laws, adjudicate and speak truth to governments at all levels. Generally, they promote equity, fairness and justice.

Today, through careful policies, there is power sharing between the old and the new, with the latter respecting the strength of the former particularly in the area of mobilization, peace and security. Some have argued that there has been some form of power erosion that perhaps the Kings ought not to have been moved to succumb to the porridge served them by the modern architecture of collaborative governance. I will rather insist it is all a matter of time before an informed cerebral, professional world citizen King/Obi, like our Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe, is called to the table of governance for constructive advice. This, in fact, is already going on. Thankfully, the merit of this mutual symbiosis has not been in doubt. Long live our Obis, long live our Kings. Whether the creation of local government has helped or not is another question particularly in provision of funds to cater for the Obis and Kings and their domains.

Every Obi/King needs to respect his Seat, the Throne, the Traditional Stool. It is unspeakable for a King, Obi or Oba to be ‘prostrating’ here and there in government offices looking for contracts, thereby heaping insults on himself, especially when he does not carry out the contracts according to specifications, or when he does not do it at all.

Let me quickly make a submission here as well. Every King, except for emergency or very cogent reasons, should reside in his domain. He should not be a landlord elsewhere, in another town, and be a tenant, or a visiting monarch, in his own town where he is the King. Another point worth pointing out here is that, if at all it exists, any law that states that a King should take permission from the Local Government Chairman/Chairperson in his jurisdiction before travelling from his domain must be abolished. It is disrespectful. It is an absurdity. It is an anomaly.

I would also like to echo here a very important and necessary message of the First Wife of a former President of Nigeria to Traditional Rulers:

‘Brilliance should not be the only criterion for considering people for management. Character matters more than papers. I understood some groveling associates blamed me for Obasanjo’s loss (Obasanjo’s bid for the United Nations Secretary General). I appeal

to traditional rulers to be forthright in all their dealings. Abetting their “children” causes them to lose the respect of people. Silence should be golden if it becomes impossible to check misbehavior. Some of our traditional fathers had waywardly abetted the wrongs of some of their subjects because they had not lived by examples.’ (Bitter-Sweet. My Life With Obasanjo, by Oluremi Obasanjo: Page 107, 2nd edition published in March 2009 in Nigeria by Diamond Publications Ltd, 9, James Robertson Street, Surulere, Lagos)

Politics

Politics is a system of governance – how a country is governed. Politics is not meant to flex muscles unnecessarily. Politics is for service. It is where ideas and issues are discussed, policies formulated for the good and benefit of all, irrespective of their ethnicities, religious and political affiliations. In the game of politics, there is review. Structures are put in place to guide the players in following the rules and maintaining the standards. Strong structures are greater and stronger than strong people. Strong people, like diamonds, are not forever. They will definitely phase out. Unfortunately, most of Nigeria’s politicians and leaders tend not to realize that nothing lasts forever and no condition is permanent.

The embrace of politics of money wins all, the use of all methods of tampering with the citizens’ votes, free use of deadly weapons, fake news and hate speech, arson and murder in the name of serving the people, god-fatherism, god-motherism too, and the culture of tribunals where election results are contested almost daily, rightly or wrongly, in pursuit of perceived justice would seem an unhealthy culture which is gradually becoming a tradition in most if not every African country, including Nigeria.

After considering the current social, economic and political situation in our country’s history, with its attendant atmosphere (including kidnapping, banditry, armed robbery, ritual killings, unemployment, poverty), I tend to agree with the world-renowned writer, Prof. Chinua Achebe, that Nigeria’s problem is that of true leadership.

In his book, *The Trouble With Nigeria*, Prof. Achebe emphasizes:

The trouble with Nigeria is simply and squarely a failure of leadership. There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land, or climate or water or air or anything else. The Nigerian problem is the unwillingness or inability of its leaders to rise to the responsibility, to the challenge of personal example which are the hallmarks of true leadership. (Achebe, 1984: 15)

Sadly, our country’s history is marked by a disturbing mediocrity, loss of zeal to serve and be honest, loss of accountability and the fine details of egalitarian ethos. Yet, as stated clearly at the beginning of this discussion, all and every institution derive their power, legitimacy, influence and authority from the traditions of the people, traditions which first started out as cultures, the sum of the daily carry-ons of the people. Accountability is key in governance, not recklessness,

even where there is the tendency to feel that as a leader one can get away with murder. I believe that a person who is not accountable is not a trustworthy person. In fact, do not expect loyalty from someone who is dishonest.

By the way, people's needs are minimal when listed. Once again, they are food, good road, primary healthcare delivery system, education, security of life and property, shelter, electricity and good transportation system. What is expected for good governance are policies that are crafted with good intention and focus. Where these are absent, it is very difficult to talk about good governance. When square pegs are put in round holes, the result is the same.

There may be very little that the best of public relations strategy can do to reverse the bad situation when the decline begins threatening anarchy, loss of faith in the system, desperation, despondency and depression. Tales are told about unnecessary deaths in form of suicides when families lack money for basic necessities like food, children school fees and medications. These are bold signs of policy failures, poor or outright bad governance and often it is too late to sit the leaders down to begin the hard task of teaching them honesty of purpose, disdain for greed, love and service of the people who put them in office.

I have been emphasizing on people as the fulcrum, support, on which democracy rests and swings, but this concept is equally deficient and jaundiced. Exciting tales are told of the Arab spring revolutions where people showed up as people who had the power of legitimacy to name their leaders and keep them in power. The power of the people, we often say, is greater than the power of people in government. This is a truism in a democratic setting only where the people are conscious of their status as people with power and who know what it means and how to use it. Certainly, not by vandalism, but rather, through constructive dialogue and exchange.

When this fails, the next cause of action should become obvious. In our situation in Nigeria, more work still needs to be done in conscientising the people that power belongs to them. It is the same conscientisation that will make the people reject all forms of inducement as replacement for quality and purposeful leadership and good governance. This should be the sacred task of civil right movements and unions of labour. It is a task that belongs on the pulpit and in the mosques. It is a task for teachers in primary schools, secondary schools, polytechnics and universities. It is also a task for parents and guardians.

When we talk of good governance, we **MUST** address the outrageous salaries and allowances of Nigeria's political office holders and elected officers. These people who regard themselves as 'special', keep increasing their salaries and allowances indiscriminately and they seem not to be bothered about the plight of the people they 'claim' to be serving. The people, on their part, are very angry that their so-called leaders are not addressing the issues affecting their growth and development, and once they gather themselves and decide to take a step in their struggle for good governance, then, there may be serious repercussions in Nigeria. Therefore, those concerned need to face the realities in order to avoid chaos and anarchy in our society.

Unfortunately too, the National Assembly members, representatives of the people, tend not to be doing much on issues affecting the people, but regularly, they are quick to decide on their salaries and allowances for themselves. I sense that if the situation continues like this, there may

be people's revolution like the one that happened in Thailand in 2008, where the people took over the major airports in Bangkok to demand for the resignation of the country's Prime Minister. For days, the people sacrificed a lot in their peaceful, but powerful and coordinated protest. With the pressure from the people, the Prime Minister had to resign. This is the result of the positive use of the people's power. 'The power of the people is greater than the people in power.' These are the words of Wael Ghonim in his book, 'Revolution 2.0'.

Recommendations

Government Policies, the People and Good Governance

In a true democracy, a legitimate government is the one that gets the confidence of the electorate through their votes. Such government is then accepted as their own and the people expect their government to outline and implement policies and programmes that will have positive and meaningful impact on their lives, both individually and collectively. In this light, a sincere government, having been mandated by the people to serve them, has to engage in designed policies that will appeal to the needs, hopes and aspirations of the people. Really, this is what good governance entails.

Good governance is the real panacea, 'cure-all, medication which can heal any problem', for meaningful life, security of life and property, quality and purposeful education system, infrastructural development, equity and justice. Efforts **MUST** be made to maintain that the rule of law is constantly upheld. Good governance demands total, complete purging of the leaders and the followers from their negative ways of doing things to positive ways of doing things. We need to learn to do things right for things to be right with us. To achieve positive and concrete results, we cannot continue to do the same things the same ways, but in different ways, new ways, for better and lasting results. It ought not to be business as usual, but business unusual.

Good governance is service of a high quality or standard. It means improving the living standard of the citizenry. Good governance is being able to do something well with the possession of necessary qualities. It involves service in honest and morally correct way, thereby making people healthy, happy and productive. I state here that it is more appropriate and meaningful to emphasize *good governance* rather than talking mostly on *dividends of democracy*.

Notably, dividend tends to be a business term. It means 'a share of the profits of a company, paid once or twice a year to the people who own the company's shares'. A company is exclusive as profit sharing concerns only the shareholders. Government is not a company, but a group of people 'controlling a country, region, (state) or town and making decisions about its laws and taxes'. Government does not just focus on only the people who have voted for the party in power. Its primary concern is for **ALL**. It is inclusive and its programmes are for all and sundry. Let us chose to be stakeholders in the Nigeria Project, rather than be shareholders.

Stakeholders are very much concerned about Nigeria and they will try all within their power to make Nigeria. It is **ALWAYS** the best to do things the **BEST** ways. On their part, shareholders are always looking forward to sharing everything, including the crumbs that fall from the so-called masters' tables. They only think of sharing and themselves, and not the good and the benefit of **ALL**.

In democracy, a government has the people's mandate to act and actualise its goals. Here, mandate means 'the authority of an elected government or official to do the things they promised to do before election'. This signifies that there should be constant review by the government such as the one we gather together to do today. There is the need for regular meetings between the government and the electorate, who, indeed, are stakeholders.

Uphold good governance where you are. Good governance is the real panacea for meaningful life, security of life and property, purposeful education system, infrastructural development, equity and justice. Obviously, politics with principle and service will replace money politics. Politics will no longer be a 'do-or-die' affair, where political opponents are seeing as enemies who must be eliminated for others to attain their goal. I always say that those who threaten others are deficient. They only think of today. They are not concerned about yesterday and tomorrow, forgetting that 'no event, no history'. Also, today is the anniversary of yesterday, while tomorrow is the celebration of today.

Let me point out here that democracy is not a **100 meters dash**. It is a long distance race with different hurdles. This race demands stamina, sacrifice, skills and determination. Therefore, we are to be positively patient, but be truthful and firm, in our struggle for good governance.

We are to make sure that our democracy is well-guided so that it will not be controlled by individuals and groups who are bent on promoting their own selfish ideas and agenda. Generally, human beings can do anything to get whatever they want. They do not mind embarking on people's destruction programme to achieve their aim. Realizing this fact, Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, former Military Head of State and former President, writes in his book, *This Animal Called Man*:

Man is an insatiable animal as far as quest for position, power, possession, plaudit (sic), popularity and pleasures are concerned. And all these are often sought for the purpose of unlimited pride, greed and insecurity. (Quoted in Ajakaye, 2016: 266)

The same man who takes delight in operating policies to feed the nation at one period can also change and be operating policies of fooling the nation at another time to suit his purpose. Man is really unpredictable.

Man tends to be an opportunist. He takes advantage of any given opportunity. For example, in a society where there are no genuine democratic structures, man likes to rule through his whims and caprices, and he would like to be the central point of attention. He promotes himself through bill-boards and other means. He dictates the tunes and abhors criticism and opposition. He hounds his perceived enemies through the different means at his disposal. He then becomes the dictator who regards himself as the *alpha* and the *omega*.

'What good people will suffer by not participating in politics is for fools to govern them.' (Edmund Burke) In the same line, Mahatma Gandhi states: **'When an idiot is in power, it means those who elected him are well represented'**. This is why well-meaning Nigerians should not be tired of seeking good governance. Always remember that the people get the type of

government they deserve. Note that it is *garbage in, garbage out*. For me, politics is not a dirty game as many people claim it to be, but a clean game. Although, I am aware that as there are clean people in the clean game, there are dirty people too.

We are not to be intimidated by dirty people in politics. To keep hope alive is to be resolute in our struggle for a better society. God of hope will definitely see us through our trying times, (cf. Ps 118). Never lose hope and never look down on anybody in your path of ambition. Always be prayerful and walk along the path of honour and integrity. Finally, *never join the crowd*. To me, those who join the crowd lose their personality, their identity. Strive to maintain your true patriotic heritage and hold on firmly to your dignity as God's children. Note too that patriotism does not mean stupidity.

Leadership

'A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they necessarily do not to go, but ought to be.' (Rosalyn Carter) Leadership is 'the ability to guide, direct or influence people'. In leadership, it is not the years of age that are very essential, but the quality age of the ideas. Leadership, whatever level, be it family, religion, education social, business, politics, is very crucial in people's daily living. Leadership is a call to greater service to the people. It demands humility, sacrifice, courage, commitment, focus, team spirit. A leader is 'somebody whom people follow'. A leader is not just *anybody*. He is somebody with identity. He identifies with his/her people and he pays special attention to their needs, their plights. However, 'he who thinks is leading and has no one following him is only taking a walk'. (An African Proverb)

Here in Nigeria, we do not need just leaders, but we need more of quality leaders, great leaders, with quality and great ideas, who will create quality time to study his people, project ideas for action with his people and engage in developmental plans, policies and activities. By doing this, he is making his environment homely for the people. The environment will then become an enticing place for the people, ever looking forward to returning home, no matter where they go. At this trying time of our country, we are in need of sincere and purposeful leaders who will lead the country out of the present doldrums. We need more of great leaders than rulers.

For good governance in Nigeria and in all the spheres of our life, individually and collectively, we need strategic planning in our policy. Strategy is the 'planning and directing of the whole operation of a campaign or war; a plan, a policy'. Plan is 'a method thought out in advance'. While policy is 'a general plan of action'. Bearing this in mind, in their lifestyles I would like to suggest that individuals and groups are to consider the term, **PACE** (noun – a single step in walking or running; a rate of progress, verb – walk steadily or to and fro; measure by pacing; set the pace for). I developed this myself.

P - PLANNING

A – ACTION

C – CREATIVITY

E – EVALUATION.

Education and Morality

‘Power without control is nothing’ (Pirelli Tyre Advertisement). In this light, I also state that education without morality is meaningless. In the true sense of it, education makes one to be civil, urbane. Quality education is all-embracing and it helps one to work for the common goal, instead of one being selfish and dictatorial. Hence, education is sharing, that is, knowledge-sharing. It is never a one-way traffic affair. It is both horizontal and vertical. It is a wonderful relationship between the teacher and the student. Thus, education is described as ‘imparting and acquiring of knowledge through teaching and learning, especially at a school or similar institution’.

Education involves humility, discipline and sacrifice. With humility and openness, both teacher and student are to learn from each other. The student has to trust the teacher in his/her role and be prepared to have a new experience. ‘After all, what is education but a process by which a person begins to learn how to learn’ (Peter Ustinov, 1977). It is instructive to note that a proud person tends not to give room for learning and improvement. He believes he knows everything.

Education helps to broaden one’s horizon. An all-embracing education is one of real keys to good governance, to concrete and meaningful development. It assists one to be God-fearing, self-determined and fulfilled. Education guides the society in its planning, attitude and orientation. It helps the society to be focused. Unfortunately, we are not experiencing this in our Nigerian society, because education, particularly university education, has been destroyed and decimated, while ignorance and mediocrity are now being promoted. This is why we have a chaotic, corrupt and ‘secrecy oath-taking’ Nigerian society where money settlement and fire brigade approach to issues and policies are dictating the pace. Really, when a society is being ruled by those who are not imaginative and are morally bankrupt, then, the people become perpetual moaners, perpetual complainers.

No wonder in 2006, retired Brigadier-General David Mark stated: ‘a Staff Sergeant in the army is better than a university graduate in this country’. The same man later became Nigeria’s Senate President, the number three man in the country. Indeed, this is unfortunate. Actually, if the media in the country were to be engaged in follow-up stories, I believe our society will be better governed and appreciated today since we will be having more refined and respectable people in government who will uphold the standard of education in Nigeria in relation to morality.

‘No one is rich enough to buy yesterday, but if you hustle hard, tomorrow could be yours.’ (Prof. Wole Soyinka) All is not lost. There are still certain individuals, groups and institutions who emphasize education with morality as the key to meaningful growth and development. It is my conviction that an all-embracing education that transforms people, to bring our dear country, Nigeria, back to the right path where education will be given a place of pride and honour, where an all-embracing education will help individuals, groups and families to be upright in their dealings, where, with such system of education, Nigerian government at all levels will implement people-oriented policies correctly and the effects concretely felt in our society. Therefore, let us work earnestly today for our tomorrow to be better and meaningful.

New Orientation

From observation, generally, it is only when Nigeria is engaged in football matches that Nigerians come together as a people, united in one language and one voice. In unity then, not minding our ethnic origins, religious beliefs and political affiliations, we sing the same songs such as *He is a miracle working God; Baba ti ba wa se; Nzobu, Nzobu; Nagode Allah;* etc. In our beloved country, Nigeria, Football now tends to be our number one rallying factor. Even where a football-loving landlord has threatened his tenant with a quit notice, if there is an important football match televised live and there is power outage, the same landlord will suspend his grievances against his tenant if the tenant has a power generating set and if he, the landlord, has none. He will not mind going to his tenant's apartment to watch the match. Not only that, if their common team scores, one should not be surprised to see both the landlord and the tenant embracing to celebrate the goal. This is how football has become an important aspect in the lives of many Nigerians.

In spite of this, Nigeria is well known for not doing things right at the right time because of the general attitude of *anything goes* and our *fire brigade approach* to life. This is noticeable in nearly all the spheres of our life. This is aptly summarised by Carlos Alberto, one of the Brazilian legends and a colleague of the great Pele (whose real name is Edson Arantes de Nascimento). After the 1994 World Cup in the United States of America where Nigeria appeared for the first time and dazzled the world with its performance, Alberto accepted to coach the Nigerian national side in 1995.

The Brazilian only stayed for few months due to the usual *laissez-faire* approach of the country's so-called sports administrators. He has this to say of his brief experience in Nigeria: 'They (Nigeria) play good football, happy football. But their organization is very poor. In fact, they have no organization.' This is quoted from page 71 of a book, *The Beautiful Team*, written by Garry Jenkins, on Pele and the 1970 Brazilians who won the 1970 World Cup for keeps. To date, Alberto's observation 29 years ago is still haunting us in the country.

'A pessimist sees difficulty in every opportunity. An optimist sees opportunity in every difficulty.' (Winston Churchill) Now, we need to have a new orientation and I suggest here in this Presentation again, there is the urgent need to sanitize our style of politics and join countries in the world practicing real democracy in playing true politics of service and love. Realistically, in Nigeria, the grandeur of political offices and the costs of governance are unthinkable. Politics in our country is not service and people oriented, but self-centred. It exhibits too much power, wealth and prestige. This lures people to want to get to government at all cost, even when they know within themselves that they are not competent.

I strongly state here that any elective post in Nigeria has to be made less-attractive in terms of power and money. If this happens, politics of rascality, incompetence, bitterness, disunity, nepotism, will then pave way for politics of renewal, competence, love, service, unity. Not only that, good governance will emerge and Nigeria will be better, stronger and peaceful to behold.

All Nigeria's politicians **MUST** learn from Late Prof. (Senator) Afolabi Olabimtan, a native of Ilaro, Ogun State, who represented Ogun State at the Senate in 1999, having won an election as a

candidate of the Alliance for Democracy, AD. He served just for one term and in 2003, he decided to 'stand down for a younger person'. He was **71** then. The same year, 2003, the gentleman Senator died in a motor accident. His death preceded the release of his Autobiography, 'The Graces, the Grass and the Gains'. May the Senator continue to rest in peace and may God keep blessing, sustaining and strengthening his beloved family.

Today, even in death, Prof. (Senator) Afolabi Olabimtan remains a great hero and a person worthy of emulation. This is a real lesson for those 'analogue' Nigeria's politicians who are still battling and struggling to be relevant in this digital age. Enough of the unnecessary recycled leadership in Nigeria. Enough of the blame-game leadership in Nigeria.

I assert that when we promote productivity and emphasize on the type of people to lead in governments at all levels in Nigeria – real God-fearing and humane people with honour, integrity, dignity, good and responsible family background, we will have genuine politicians, unlike what is operating today where most people go into politics without any focus which is very dangerous. In the words of Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi, Nigeria's former Minister of Foreign Affairs: **'A nation where everyone wants to be a politician is a nation in great danger. What we need are more statesmen and less politicians'**. (The Guardian Newspaper, August 23, 2006, page 73)

Family

The Catholic Church considers the family as the domestic church and the first school. This means that good governance is to begin and be upheld at home, the family. A person's behaviour and deeds tend to be the reflections of his background. For any society to march forward, each family needs to uphold the family values such as moral teachings and upbringing of the children, fear of God, truthfulness, responsible and exemplary living of the parents, mutual respect, ensuring conducive environment and good neighbourliness.

To fail to prepare is to prepare to fail. In order to put an end to the ugly trend of dragging Nigeria into the mud, each family has to look inwards. It has to start having special interest in the activities of its members wherever they are, and it should never allow any of its members to be used as a political thug. In fact, such person will be used as a ladder to get to the top by the political merchants, though at the end dumped. Sadly, the aftermath of this dirty action is that the person will now find it difficult to remove his toga of thuggery and he then becomes a perpetual nuisance to the society.

With this, therefore, to achieve good governance in Nigeria and for the country to continue to move forward in the right direction, we definitely need genuine, patriotic and righteous people in all the strata of government, right from the grassroots. Mandate should be given to godly and refined persons who will serve the people faithfully, not to those who deceive and barge into offices. For a better tomorrow as well, parents and guardians should strive to visit their children and wards in their various schools. Such visits will help our youth to be on their guard and be focused in their preparation for leadership role.

Once again, families must strive to monitor their children and wards and warn them of the danger of being used as thugs to carry out the bidding of dirty people. Our youth must learn from

the past and decide to earnestly yearn for good and credible people. Well-meaning Nigerians must co-ordinate their efforts at all levels - grassroots, state, national and international and form a solid coalition against these dirty people in a clean game of politics. We must restore our humanity, integrity and spirit of true service.

Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine. Should you pass through the waters, they will not swallow you up. Should you walk through fire, you will not suffer, and the flame will not burn you. For I am Yahweh, your God. (Isaiah 43:1-2)

The Elite and the Religious Leaders

For any nation to forge ahead, its elite have to identify with their society and be ready to play prominent roles. Constantly, they need to remind themselves that they cannot live in isolation. I enjoin them to be visiting their villages, towns or cities, to share their thoughts and ideas on good governance to their kinsmen and kinswomen. They are to strive to be actively involved in the happenings in the grassroots. They should not be mere media critics in the goings-on in Nigeria. They are to be active participants.

Religious leaders also have an important role in the attainment of good governance and the struggle for a united Nigeria, instead of a number of them to be colluding with those in government and powerful individuals to exploit the people or remaining silent in fear. They need to come together and take necessary steps that will assist the nation to regain her lost glory and prowess.

I suggest that, along with prayers, religious bodies and social organizations need to inculcate the idea of serving humanity with humility and integrity into their members. This has to be followed with action by organizing retreats and even political fora for their members. Not only that, they should not just be receiving mouth-watering financial and material gifts from their members in the name of thanksgiving without asking them questions. By doing this, they will be helping in fighting corruption, and building a virile, disciplined and strong Nigeria.

Religious leaders are to learn from one Pastor Nimbohlor during the military dictatorship in Ghana, who before his death recorded in a confession as follows:

First they came for the Jews, but because I was not a Jew, I did not speak out. Then they came for the gypsies, but because I was not a gypsy, I did not speak out. Then they came for the trade unionist, but because I was not a trade unionist, I did not speak out. And then they came for me. But by then, there was no one left to speak for me (the original version is attributed to Martin Niemoeller regarding the holocaust during the Nazi Germany dictatorship). (Quoted in Ayittey, 1993: 363)

This is a real warning or all and sundry. A ‘sidon look’ attitude or selfish association with an unpopular and discredited regime could lead to disaster. All this tends to have negative effect on people’s beliefs who could regard the religious leaders’ actions as hope betrayed.

**His Majesty, Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Ugochukwu Achebe: A Sound, Revered, Disciplined,
Loving And Lovable Obi Of Onitsha**

‘If you want to be a leader who attracts quality people, the key is to become a person of quality yourself.’ (Jim Rohn) Here, with humility and respect, I pay special homage to our revered, highly intelligent and educated, urbane, widely travelled, serene, respected, respectable, loving and lovable Agbogidi as we gather to honour him with this maiden edition of Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe’s Lecture Series as part of the celebration of the Ofala Festival, the annual celebration of the Kingship of the Obi himself and the people of Onitsha. It is the special home-coming of the people of Onitsha abroad (outside of Onitsha, not based in Onitsha). Together with the people of Onitsha at home, they celebrate their cherished Obi and they fashion out together ways to improve themselves and their precious city, Onitsha.

Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe, the first child of his parents, was born on 14 May, 1941, and became the 21st Obi of Onitsha in 2002, with his well articulated philosophy of ‘peace and reconciliation based on truth and transparency as a foundation for sustainable development’.

In the words of Nkiru Uwechia Nzegwu, a Professor of Africana Studies at Binghamton University, New York, USA, the Editor of the 388 book, ‘HIS MAJESTY NNAEMEKA ALFRED ACHEBE A TEN-YEAR MILESTONE’:

On 14 May, 2002, His Majesty (H. M.) Nnaemeka transformed into a spiritual being and became the twenty-first Obi of Onitsha as the cohesive glue of Onitsha community. This transfiguration occurred after selection from a list of twenty-one candidates, five short weeks after the departure of the previous Obi of Onitsha, Ofala Alphonsus Okechukwu Okagbue (CFR, LLO). He ascended the five-hundred-and fifty-year old Ukpo (throne) of Umu Eze Chima at age 61. On becoming the Obi, he also became the repository of the collective memory, history and aspirations of Onitsha Ado N’Idu, founded in the mid-sixteenth century after Chima led a migration eastwards following some misunderstandings in the Benin royal court.

(Nzegwu, 2013: 7)

The present Obi of Onitsha had a very sound and strong family and educational backgrounds with lots of quality experiences in his professional and corporate career. As our revered Agbogidi is a man of quality, he is *never* tired of attracting people of quality to himself and to his domain, Onitsha. This is why Onitsha has not been bereft of the much desired good governance. I humbly urge other Obis and Kings to take a cue from this.

For all of us, let us avoid a dirty life, dirty dealings and activities which have kept making us backward in Nigeria to date. Here, let me illustrate these dirty dealings and activities with a story, titled, **WAHALA DEY O!** This was sent to me by a friend.

Three University students dodged exam because they did not study. They came up with a plan, got themselves dirty, using grease, then, they went to see the lecturer. ‘Sir, we are sorry we couldn’t make it to the exam. We attended a wedding and on our way back, the car broke down, thus, we became so dirty as you can see.’ The lecturer understood and gave them three days to prepare. After three days, they went to the lecturer very ready for the exam because they had studied.

On the day of the exam as fixed by the lecturer for the three students, he put them in three separate classes with only four questions in the exam paper.

- 1) **Who and who got married?** (25 Marks)
- 2) **Where was the reception?** (25 Marks)
- 3) **Where exactly did the car break down?** (25 Marks)
- 4) **What type of car broke down?** (25 Marks)

*Marking Scheme: Your answers must be the same.

My Brothers, Sisters and Friends, this is a parable for **ALL** of us. Once again, as earlier stated, we **MUST** learn to do things right for things to be right with us individually and collectively. Ours should not be **5** steps forward, **95** steps backward. May God create new hearts in **ALL** of us. Amen.

I encourage all of us to always bear in mind Mahatma Gandhi’s **Seven Deadly Sins**: *‘Wealth without work, Pleasure without conscience, Knowledge without character, Business without morality, Science without humanity, Worship without sacrifice and Politics without principle’*. The eight has now been added: *Rights without Responsibility*.

Conclusion

‘If you cannot be a river, be a stream, but be the best of whatever you are.’ (The Right Honourable Chief Dr Nnamdi Azikiwe) In conclusion, let me end at the point where I started by thanking the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations in collaboration with Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus, Anambra State, for inviting me to give the maiden edition of Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe Lecture Series which I hope has served as a modest effort at providing a wider canvas for future guest lecturers to paint beautifully on.

Earlier within this discussion, I spoke of the history of the moment underscored by the collaborative efforts of the organizers which at once celebrates a glorious past as it defines a hallowed present and anticipates a future which is yet to be lived and experienced. The collaborative initiative of the Nigerian Institute of Public Relations with Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, formerly Anambra State University, Igbariam Campus, is uniquely interesting.

Today, history is made drawing emphasis from the past. The Nigerian Institute of Public Relations in identifying with the university celebrates the memory of that icon in whose name the university was named underscoring his place in the history of Nigeria and his relevance to all interventions on good governance. His name and his contributions will forever remain evergreen. For the university this is a testimony that she truly understands the weight of the heritage she bears and knows how best to live up to it in character and learning.

As we all look to the future, we pray that the memory of the times and initiatives of the personality that made it all possible Igwe Alfred Nnaemeka Achebe will equally forever remain evergreen. I thank immensely His Majesty, Obi of Onitsha, for his love and friendship.

Finally, in all of these, the prospect of good governance has continued to elude us as a country for want of purposeful God-fearing and informed leadership. The art of voting is a thirst and a search for leadership specifically leadership that is honest, courageous and forthright. This, to my mind, is what Nigerians are crying for.

Politics is for good governance. Our electoral process needs to be sanitised, every well-meaning Nigerian must come together and save our country. As an ardent, stubborn promoter of **UBUNTU Philosophy**, community living, please, permit me to conclude this Presentation on this note.

‘An anthropologist (an expert in the study of humankind) proposed a game to children of an African Tribe. He put a basket of fruits near a tree and told the kids that the first one to reach the fruits would win them all. When he told them to run, they all took each other’s hands and ran together, then sat together enjoying the fruits. When asked why they ran like that, as one could have taken the fruits for oneself, they said, ‘Ubuntu, how can one of us be happy if all the others are sad?’ ‘UBUNTU’ is a philosophy of African tribes that can be summed up as, ‘I am because we are.’

May the efforts of our present and past heroes and heroines never be in vain. Also, may God, ‘our strength in adversity, our health in weakness and our comfort in sorrow’ **ALWAYS** lead us in the path of justice, sincerity, honour and integrity. Amen. To **ALL** of you present here, I thank you for your kind listening attention.

Most Rev. Felix Femi Ajakaye
Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Ekiti.

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