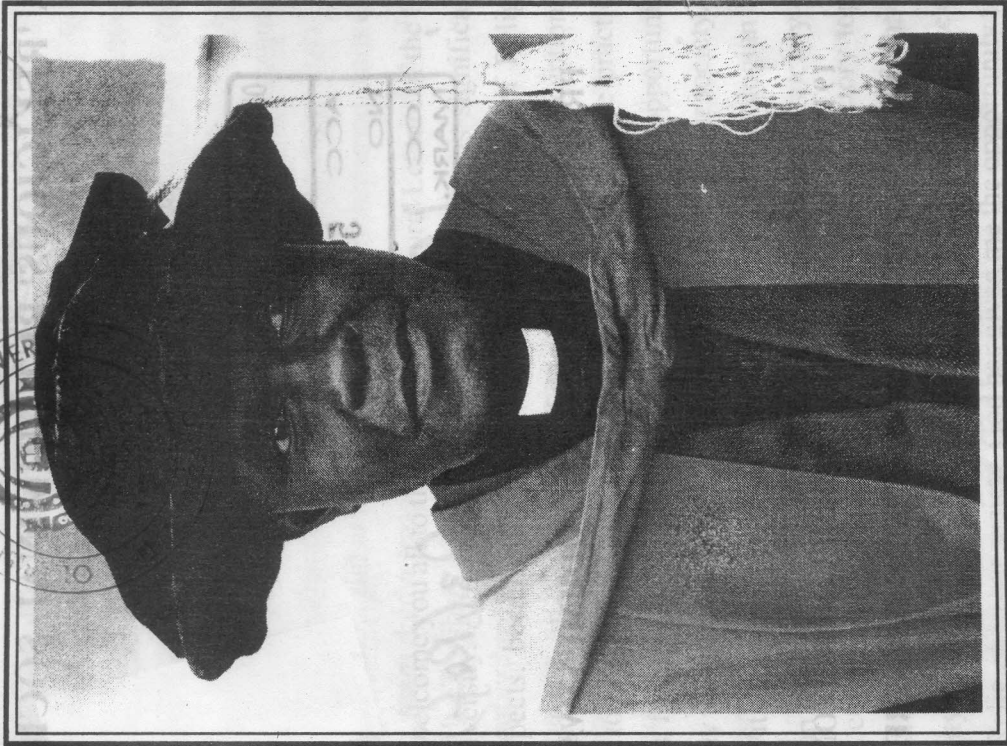


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PROFESSOR (VEN.) E. ADE. ODUMUYIWA

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**A 'RELIGIOUS' BUT CRIMINAL SOCIETY:
ANY REMEDY?**

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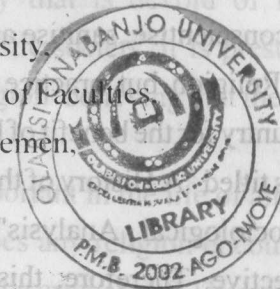
PROFESSOR (VEN.) E. ADE. ODUMUYIWA
(PROFESSOR OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES)
Ogun State University, Ago Iwoye, Nigeria.

**19TH INAUGURAL LECTURE DELIVERED ON
TUESDAY 27TH FEBRUARY, 2001 AT
ADEBOLA ADEGUNWA LECTURE THEATRE,
OGUN STATE UNIVERSITY,
MAIN CAMPUS, AGO-IWOYE.**

A 'RELIGIOUS' BUT CRIMINAL SOCIETY:

- ANY REMEDY?

The Vice Chancellor,
Principal Officers of the University,
Provosts of Colleges and Deans of Faculties,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,
Gentlemen of the Press,
Great Osuites!



PREAMBLE:

I welcome you all to the nineteenth Inaugural Lecture of the Ogun State University, Ago Iwoye. This Inaugural Lecture is significant in many respects, because it is the first in the Department of Religious Studies and in the Faculty of Arts of this University since inception. It is designed to challenge our society and/or nation in the true practice of Religions for a better tomorrow and it affords me the opportunity to present my thoughts on how religion is being practiced in our society.

With my exposure as a Church Minister and Theologian since 1968, I can humbly claim that the practice of religion in our society gives room for concern. It is for this that a seemingly contradictory topic is being addressed today. It has been my hope that one day, I will have an opportunity to present my thoughts on the relevance and importance of the study of Religion to our society. God has given me the opportunity today, hence, I join the Psalmist to say "Bless the Lord O my soul and all that is within me, bless His holy name". (Psa.103:1). In fact, this is the day that

the Lord has made. I will rejoice and be glad in it. Therefore, my choice of the title: "A 'Religious' but Criminal Society: Any remedy?" was prompted by my experience about how religion is practiced in our society. I chose this title to conscientise, sanitise and encourage our society not to pay lip service to Religion but practice the tenets of all the principal Religions in this country for the benefit of humanity and our race. Not only that, my Ph.D thesis titled "A History of the Anglican Church in Ijebuland 1892-1984 a Sociological Analysis" views Christianity from a sociological perspective. Therefore, this, Inaugural lecture will throw some challenges to various organs of our society. It is clear that to substantiate perpetrators of crimes mentioned in this lecture may generate ill feelings but, nevertheless, it is an open secret which many of us have read in our dailies and heard of from electronic media. To this end, no particular religious organisation, government, or individual will be mentioned, but by mentioning crimes committed in our society, the perpetrators of such crimes will have their conscience quickened and possibly make necessary amends to make our 'religious' society crime free.

In addition, I want to emphasize that not every member of our society is criminal but there are some criminally-oriented and religious individuals.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir, I now proceed to deliver my Inaugural Lecture titled: "A 'Religious' but Criminal Society: Any Remedy?"

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INTRODUCTION

There is no society that is devoid of Religion and religious activities. Even in an atheistic society, it is presumed that such society recognises the place of Religion believing that there is no God is a kind of belief.

If Religion is so important in the life of any society, why then are there features of crime? Does any religion encourage any act of crime? How can a religious society be crime free? These questions are addressed in this lecture. However, before the topic is discussed, the three key words in the topic namely:

Religious, Criminal and Society would be defined.

What does it mean to be religious? The word Religious is an adjective from Religion. Religion has not got any all-round or universally accepted definition. But the following working definitions of Religion would serve some purpose. Religion by a dictionary definition means: "a belief in or the worship of a god or gods. A particular system of belief or worship. Therefore, 'religious' can then be defined as following the rules, forms of worship of a Religion. Hence, with the three principal Religions in our society, namely: Islam, Christianity and Traditional Religion, there are rules and regulations to follow, which I believe, adherents of each of the Religions are taught to follow; but in spite of such teaching, crimes persist in our Society. At this juncture, one wonders whether we can describe our Society as truly religious because it is not the proliferation of churches, mosques or shrines found in our society that demonstrates the religious level of any society.

The second word that needs some working definition is 'Criminal'. This word is an adjective of crime. It means anything that is against the law or something that is very wrong or wicked. Why should a religious society be at the same time criminal? This sounds contradictory but it is the reality of our society.

The third key word that needs a working definition is 'Society'. Society, for the purpose of this lecture is defined as mankind considered as a whole. In other words, society is defined as a group of people joined together for a purpose. However, for the purpose of this lecture, the society being referred to is the Nigerian Society.

DEFINITION OF RELIGION

Religious scholars believe that there is no comprehensive definition for Religion. However, for the purpose of this lecture, some working definitions of religion will be examined. Emile Durkheim (1949) saw Religion as "a unified system of beliefs and practices related to sacred things that is to say, things set apart and forbidden- beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a church and all those that adhere to them" (Durkheim). This definition was concerned with religion in so far as it had a social expression rather than a sporadic or private religious experience. He did not wish to distinguish, as many anthropologists had done, between belief in supernatural beings and belief in other non-empirical entities.

Wach's (1994) definition of religion, says "religion is the experience of the Holy". He assumes that men will naturally have

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religious experiences some of which will become socially recognised and connected with the orthodox religious practices of their society. Other scholars like Freud, William James and other psychologists also view religious impulses as springing from non-social roots and then being partially absorbed into conventional religious beliefs and practices.

However, Max Weber avoided the confining of Religion to the condition and effects of a certain type of social behaviour.

With the above working definitions of Religion, and before discussing why our society is religious but at the same time criminal, there is need for us to discuss the truth of Religion.

THE 'TRUTH' OF RELIGION

The above quoted definitions of Religion contain implications as to its truth. For the functionalist, it is as true as its effects. For the Marxist and the Freudian, it is based on a false premise. Marxist explanation of religion ultimately push the explanation back to the level of social and economic factors. Religion is produced by the efforts of men to come to terms with their experience of the social or economic situation.

The above quoted definitions of religion and the truth of Religion are based on intellectualist themes of Religion. However, with the religion being re-defined, the intellectualist theories had been overthrown. The evolutionary theories of religion had been able to cope with the diversity created by the intellectualists' theories and functionalists' theories which made religion to be analysed only in the context in which it was found.

In spite of all the definitions of Religion quoted above, religion can

still be discussed as functional. The influence of Durkheim and Malinowski on the sociological study of Religion had beclouded the immense changes that the functionalist viewpoint implied. Many scholars usually combine the social and structural functionalism of Malinowski, and therefore assume that the primary cause and purpose of Religion is its integrative function for the individual and society.

"Religion makes a unique and indispensable contribution to social integration". It also compensates the individual for inevitable frustration and sorrow by means of the release and solace of ritual, and the promise of future happiness. These functions of religion cannot be replaced by the rational explanations of Science for scientific explanations cannot define ultimate ends. Whatever may be the sociological explanation of religion, it is clear that men have a psychological need for certainty, identity and socially confirmed ideals, and that religion can apparently satisfy these needs for many of them are indisputable.

In the light of the above, Weber's concern with the relationship between beliefs and action which was contained in Weber's study of religious leaders and their social effects cannot be overlooked.

For the purpose of clarification, the positive function of religion in a society like that of Nigeria, and why crimes still exist within the society would be attended to. Some sociologists characterise Religion as a field of behaviour which is still in search of a successful theory and method. Religion was generally identified as a set of beliefs. However, some professional groups viewed Religion as in some sense untrue or irrational. In modern societies at least, this claim is unfortunate because it is impossible for scientists to fully group the functionality of religion

except a religious oriented person. It is observed that such scientists seem relatively unimportant in shaping society, since they are peripheral and subsidiary members of the worlds of work, power, and politics (D.A. Martin, 1969). In addition, religion is revealed by many surveys to be relatively ineffectual in modern societies as a determinant of attitudes, opinions or behaviour concerned with, for example, politics, economic life and morality. This has only recently become apparent for religious membership as a crude index does correlate with other patterns of behaviour. For example, in Nigeria, fewer Christians become politicians because they think it is almost impossible to take Christianity into politics without bringing politics into Christianity. Thus, the study of Religion in formal or exterior terms has little impact on Nigerian politics. In an influential work, Berger and Luckman (1963) contrast the approach of Weber, Durkheim and Paret which studied religious ideas as forces active in every area of life, shaping men's experience and behaviour. Religion occupies a decisive role in constructing and maintaining socially constructed reality.

PROLIFERATION OF RELIGIOUS PLACES

IN OUR SOCIETY

Having discussed the truth of Religion, we may ask, Is our society truly religious? To answer this question, we need to have some statistics for our consideration. In a recently conducted research on proliferation of churches, mosques and shrines in our society, it was discovered that within the 774 Local Governments in our country, there are at least one hundred (100) locations for religious activities in each Local Government

Area. By a conservative estimate, there are 77,400 places of worship for the Christians, Muslims and Traditionalists (i.e. Churches, Mosques and Shrines.) In our estimated figures, averagely every religious location i.e. either Church, mosque or shrine has at least 1,500 people as worshippers in each of the 77,400 religious locations. In an estimated population of this country of about 110 million people, our conservative estimate of religious people in our society/country is about 106.1 million people. With this estimated figure, we can claim that almost every Nigerian is somehow a 'religious' person. How truly religious these people are is another point for discussion because it is not the number of churches including mosques or shrines that determine how truly religious people are. Also, in recently conducted interviews on why crimes are committed by the people that claimed to be religious (and in spite of proliferation of churches, mosques and shrines), ninety percent of people interviewed said that there are crimes in our 'religious' society because:

1. Adherents of all Religions fail to practice the tenets of their religion, and they demonstrate love for materialism at all cost;
2. Bad examples from religious leaders; and
3. Failure on the part of Government to provide basic needs and employment. These will be discussed later in our lecture.

With the above estimated figures of religious people in our society or country, we may claim that our society is a 'religious' society because every citizen of this country claims to be an adherent of either Christianity, Islam or Traditional belief. Some people even combine the three principal religions in our society and term themselves adherents of "Christlaherb".

In short, what we are saying is that our Society (Nigeria) is a multi-religious society which the country's constitution recognises.

Therefore, we can claim that we have a 'religious' society, and at the same time crimes persist in our society. We need to list the various kinds of crimes found in our society (Nigeria). However, it is clear that crime is not peculiar to our society (Nigeria) alone, there are other countries like Britain, America, Saudi Arabia, Greece (to mention a few) that claim to be religious and at the same time are full of crimes.

As earlier discussed in this lecture, for a society to be described as criminal, such a society must have been involved in anti-social behaviour and illegal practices. Therefore, before discussing various types of crimes we have in our society (Nigeria), there is need to define what crime is, and highlight why we have such crimes in our society. From whatever approach we view religion, it is evident that a Religion that worths its salt cannot relegate morality to the background.

In a book titled: Great Traditions in Ethics, Philosophers like Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Epictetus, Saint Augustine, Thomas Hobes, Benedicts de Spinoza, Immanuel Kant, Joseph Butler, John Stuart Mill, John Dewey, A.J. Ayer, G.E Moore, C.L. Stephenson, Simore de Beauvour, Kurt Baier and a host of others based their arguments on ideals approved by any society. However rational and plausible their contributions are to Ethics, they are all based on religious root of world religions. Therefore, in our society, whatever moral philosophy that is advocated cannot be devoid of conscience that is inmate and intuitive in man., which cannot be created by man except by a Creator, that is not seen but is believed to exist. This bothers on Faith in a Supreme Being and that

is the beginning of Religion. *For the fear of God is the beginning of Wisdom.*

It is therefore glaring that our society is 'religious' more so that the three principal religions namely: Christianity, Islam and Traditional Religion continue to wax strong in our society.

Bolaji Idowu (1962) in his book titled: "Olodumare, God in Yoruba Belief" described the Yoruba as "in all things religious". This buttresses the fact that we have a religious society. At the same time, our society is pervaded with all kinds of crimes ranging from fraud to murder; for example, we worship Sango god of Thunder, Ogun god of iron; Soponna god of deadly diseases; yet crimes persist in our society.

The concept of "mysterium Tremendum et fascinease" in Religion has little or no impact in checking crimes in our society today. Why Religion has been rendered so important to have any control over crimes perpetrated by the adherents of Religion, and the kinds of crimes in our society will be the next focus of this lecture. In doing this, mention must be made of a few of the crimes committed in our society. Such crimes can also be categorised under religious and social crimes. Before we categorise such crimes there is need to discuss causes of crimes in our Society.

CAUSES OF CRIMES IN OUR SOCIETY:

Odumuyiwa (1988) in the Journal of Foundation of African Theology in the article titled: "Crimes in Africa-Christian Remedies" identified the following causes of crimes:

- (a) Lack of religious and moral instructions in our schools, colleges and even Universities. Removing religious education from school curricula;
- (b) Bad examples shown by all our past political leaders;
- (c) Unemployment;
- (d) Negligence on the part of parents to train their children in religious norms and social virtues;
- (E) Lack of good conscience and respect for culture;
- (F) Excessive urge for materialism which leads to get-rich-quick mentality syndrome;
- (g) Frustration in life;
- (h) Assistance from men in secret cults for their fellow cultists.

In addition, over militarisation of our society, leading to proliferation of billionaire-Generals. Government shirking in its responsibility to take care of people and their needs.

The above listed causes are found in our society because there are many nominal Christians, Muslims and Traditionalists in our society who know the principles and ideals of these Religions but fail to practice them. Such people do not bring the ideals of the religion into their daily business and so do not make their religion a way of life. In fact, to claim to be religious is to make whatever Religion we believe in, our way of life.

In the Sixteenth Century when the Church reformers realised that the church leaders in the Roman Catholic Church then were not making Christianity their way of life, scholars like Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Huss, and others undertook the sixteenth century Reformation of the Church.

The sixteenth century Reformation was aimed at combatting the ills and crimes perpetrated in the Church. Such criminal acts in the church, then included sale of indulgences, extortion, abuse of power and injustice, to mention a few.

The ninety-five theses of Martin Luther was aimed at fighting such social injustice and bringing sanity into the Church. As a result, the protestant church emerged. Later among the Protestant churches like the Anglican, the Baptist, the Methodist Churches, other independent churches broke out either because of love to be independent or attempt to put right what some people considered wrong in the administration and worship life of the protestant churches. This led to the establishment of the Aladura Churches, and at present, the emergence of the Pentecostal and white-garment churches. In spite of all the proliferation of Churches, crimes still persist in our society.

Islam also had so many sects or movements. For example, the Ansarudeen, Nawairudeen, and the Ahmadiyya Movements to mention a few. In spite of such Islamic movements, criminal acts still persist in our society. As dreadful as some Traditional Religion are, criminal acts persist.

For the kinds of crimes we have in our society, this lecture had identified nineteen types of crimes grouped under six categories:

- Operation 419/Religious Crimes; drug trafficking;
- Murder/Assassination/Time Bomb/Poisoning others;
- Armed robbery/Looting/Fraud;
- Examination Malpractice/Certificate Forgery/Impersonation;
- Cultism among students of institutions of higher

learning/kidnapping/Vandalisation/Rape;

-Election Fraud/Bribery and Corruption/Injustice, etc.

On 419, some places in Lagos are well-known for this kind of crime - depots of certificate forgery, duping and all sorts of illegal transactions. Our society has been so notorious in these criminal acts to the extent that Nigerians are stigmatised "419 people" in many European countries and Nigeria is No.1 nation in all forms of corruption and criminal acts. A testimony was given by a religious leader about a bitter experience he had recently in one of the European airports. He said: "As soon as we arrived at the airport, those of us who are Nigerians were separated from others for screening; one of the airport staff said 'they have arrived'; meaning the 419 people are here. After that, detective dogs were let loose on us to smell out illegal drugs or illicit things that might have been carried by us Nigerians that had just arrived. The religious leader said he was ashamed of himself as a Nigerian on that day.

Our country's image had remained so bad to the extent that other European countries who had their own crimes still consider Nigeria a worse criminal country than theirs. Recently, Nigeria was placed in the first position among the countries in the world in Criminal Acts. What a shame!

As regards crimes committed by Religious leaders apart from cases of embezzlement of church, mosques or shrine money which are common to all religious institutions and denominations, Religious leaders also lobby for high positions in their various establishments through foul means such as application of magical spells on their colleagues, taking such people's lives through poisoning or by maligning others through

character assassination and perpetrating a lot of acts of man's inhumanity to man.

In addition, some religious leaders commit murder, kidnap fellow human beings for religious rituals, some still practice human sacrifice to their gods. Some religious leaders put their female adherents in the family way and in an attempt to cover themselves up commit murder through abortion and wrong advice given to their followers not to go to hospitals for medical care. A recent example is that of a Chancellor of a Diocese for reasons best known to him perverted the cause of justice in his Diocese while such a Chancellor is supposed to dispense justice, what a shame! We are all witnesses to these crimes and many others.

It is crystal clear that no Religion of the world in general preaches crimes. Principles and ideals of all Religions especially Christianity, Islam and Traditional Religion in our society preach anti-crimes, but unfortunately, the principles and ideals of every Religion in our society are not practiced by adherents of such religions. A recent example of the anti-religious and criminal acts is the religious crises experienced in Kaduna, Sagamu, Kano, Owerri-to mention a few where many people lost their lives and properties.

One wonders why a religious society could be involved in such an alarming rate of crime as perceived in our society today. We may ask some pertinent questions here. With the proliferation of churches, mosques and shrines, our society is still very criminal why? Are crimes by-products of Religion? The answer is NO. What impact does religion have to play in sanitising our society from crimes? Or in other words, are there any remedies that can be advanced to at least minimise, if not eradicate crimes

in our society? These and other burning issues are the focus of this lecture.

We will endeavour to do justice to all the questions raised above. To start with, Religion is in-borne. Whatever anybody may say, human beings are incurably religious even the atheist who does not claim to believe in any god is religious because he believes in something, that is, he believes that there is no God-that is a kind of belief. Scientists research into the unknown with the strong belief in their experiments and researches that they will achieve their goal. No one embarks on any project without a belief consciously or unconsciously of succeeding in the project. A philosopher believes in his art of philosophising that his claims or arguments are logical and rational.

All Religions preach 'love for our fellowmen; but hatred, victimisation, wickedness, man's inhumanity to man are now the order of the day in our so-called 'religious' society and even among some religious institutions and dignitaries. Perpetrators of such crimes when investigated are found to be some believers in either Christianity or Islam or Traditional Religion.

The above-listed crimes in our society are all anti-religious. None of the three principal religions in our society condones any of the above listed crimes. It is surprising to note that the above listed crimes or social vices are very common among religious people and even religious leaders. However, we want to emphasize that not everybody in our society is criminally inclined, but there is hardly any fabric of our religious society that is crime free.

Ideals Taught By the Three Principal Religions in our Society:

The principles or ideals of Christianity is summarised as follows: Christianity: "Love God and your Fellowmen". In doing this, all adherents of Christianity are expected to be faithful, kind, trustworthy, truthful, sympathetic, considerate, avoid all acts of inhumanity to Man, and above all, believe Jesus Christ as the Messiah and Saviour of Mankind that came from God Almighty. Christians' ideals in St. Matthew's Gospel. Chapters 5-7 have no element of crime. In addition, the decalogue -i.e. the ten commandments in Exodus 20 stated clearly how to live at peace with God (1-4) and society in (6-10) where Christians are warned not to commit social decadence. For example, Christianity abhors lack of respect for elders, killing, adultery, stealing, bearing false witness which summarised what should be the way of life of Christians.

In like manner, in the cardinal principles of Islam (Doi 1972) embedded in the articles of Faith in Islam include belief in the Unity of God Allah called Tauhid, belief in Angels (Malaak). Belief in Holy Books (i.e. the Quaran, the Hadith and the Sunnah, the Ijma and the Qiyas), belief in Prophets and messengers of God. Belief in the day of Resurrection or (last day). Premeasurement of God with evil and Hereafter or Life after death. All the above listed articles of Faith in Islam have no element of Crime

And in Traditional Religion in our society, emphasis is placed on being right with God and our fellowmen. For example, according to Idowu (1962) "Olodumare God in Yoruba Belief". In summarising the ideals of Traditional Divinities during invocations we

have the following:

Iba irun-male ojukotun

Iba igba-male okukosi

Iba ota-le-ni rinwo irunmale

Ti o ja atari ona orun gbangba

translated as follow:

Worship to the two hundred divinities of the right hand

Worship to the two hundred divinities of the left hand

Worship to the four hundred and sixty divinities

Who actually line up the very road to heaven.

With the above invocation of the Traditional Religion especially the last line Divinities "who actually line up the very road to heaven", we can infer that whatever has anything to do with the road of heaven will not have anything to do with crime. Therefore, we may claim that Traditional Religion does not preach Crime.

If all the three principal Religions practiced in our society do not have anything to do with Crime, we may ask ourselves which way forward in this unfortunate circumstance we find ourselves as a society? This lecture attempts to recommend some remedies that can transform our

'religious' but criminal society into a religious and crime-free society. We hope that if the following remedies are religiously put in place, the new millennium will witness a better society than we had before. We believe there are remedies for the listed shortcomings in our society.

Recommended Remedies:

The following ten remedies are being professed in this lecture to evolve a crime-free and religious society in Nigeria.

1. Religious Institutions and Leaders

Some churches, mosques and shrines and their leaders in our society have to re-examine themselves and remove all elements of crime. Such criminal acts include: commercialisation of Religion, extortion of their adherents, religious intolerance, embezzlement of funds, lobbying for posts more so when people's lives are taken in order to get to the exalted positions in Churches, Mosques and Shrines. Religious Institutions and their leaders should desist from such criminal acts that are anti-religious. There must be a re-orientation for religious leaders and institutions to remove such crimes. Sanctions should be applied to defaulting religious leaders and institutions. In short, what this lecture is recommending as remedy is that Religious leaders and Institutions should live above board and preach sternly against such vices. Religious leaders and religious institutions should look into ways and means of eradicating them. For example, religious leaders should re-examine and cleanse themselves of all irreligious acts. Religious leaders should endeavour to have very sound education of their religious ideals and principles in order not to

misrepresent what their religion stands for. Religious and moral Education, youth camps, Sunday School, Youth Conferences and Seminars should be regularly organised where the young ones would be trained in God's way and by that mould their lives as good citizens in our society. Our religious leaders should live by example according to the principle of their religion, and any erring religious leader should be sanctioned to serve as a deterrent to others. We are recommending here that all religious leaders and their adherents should make their religions their way of life. If it is substantiated that the source of anyone's wealth is ill-gotten, and such person(s) brings huge offering in kind or cash to churches, mosques or shrines, such offerings should be rejected by the religious institutions. It is then our religious society will be crime-free.

2. Governments and their Agencies:

The following remedies if put in place by Governments and their Agencies, our society will be a better place to live in:-

Motto, Pledge and the Anthem of our Society:

This should be the conscience of all kinds of governments and their agencies. The Federal, State and Local Governments together with government parastatals should endeavour to adhere strictly to the ideals of the Motto and Anthem of our society which are religiously based. For example, the Motto of this country is: "Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress". What a beautiful motto, but how much of Unity and Faith, Peace and Progress do we have in our society? It is the duty of Government functionaries composed of religious adherents, to enforce

the Motto and the Anthem in their day-to-day activities.

The Anthem says:

"Arise O' Compatriots

Nigeria's call obey

To serve our Father land

With love and strength and faith;

The labour of our heroes past

Shall never be in vain;

To serve with heart and might

One nation bound in Freedom, Peace and Unity.

O God of Creation,

Direct our noble cause

Guide thou our leaders right

Help our youths the truth to know;

In love and honesty to grow

And living just and true

Great lofty heights attain

To build a nation where peace and justice reign."

Pledge:

I pledge to Nigeria, my country

To be faithful, loyal and honest,

To serve Nigeria with all my strength;

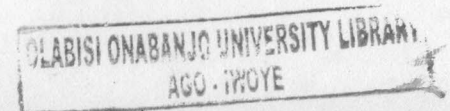
To defend her Unity

And uphold her honour and Glory;

So help me God.

Odumuyiwa. (1986) " Religion and Conscience of a Nation" discussed the content of our National Anthem as well composed and very meaningful; but how much of the beautiful ideas in the Anthem are being made use of by all sectors of governments in this country? Actualisation of the ideals of our Anthem by the powers that be and by everybody in our society will make our religious but criminal society a crime free society.

It is the duty of government and private sectors to create job opportunities in our society. Had this been adequately done, there would not have been "Area Boys and Girls", armed robbery, Operation 419, drug trafficking, murdering people to make money and other social vices would have been considerably reduced if not totally eradicated.



3. Attitude of Civil Servants and Common People to Work Should Change for the Better:

This lecture is calling for a complete re-orientation of attitude to work of all civil and public servants and even common businessmen.

Looking through some key words in the Motto, Anthem and the Pledge, we may claim that our Society (country) is a religiously built society. Unity and Peace and Progress, patriotism, serving with heart and might, love, strength, freedom, God's guidance for our leaders to do the right thing always, God's help for our youth to know the truth, in love and honesty to grow, living just and true, to attain great lofty heights and so build a Nation or Society where peace and justice reign- Are all these lofty ideals present in our society or country today? The answers are self-evident.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, this lecture stands to challenge the generality of our society especially Nigerian Nation to reflect on the beautiful- worded and religiously oriented motto, pledge and anthem of this country and ask ourselves: Do we have a pass mark?

If we also consider the Pledge that we recite every time, we always pledge to be faithful, loyal and honest, serve Nigeria with all our strength, defend her unity, uphold her honour and glory, so help us God. To what extent has anyone of us in this country kept to the dictates of this pledge? I am hereby recommending that we should turn to the ideals of our country's motto, Anthem and Pledge, ensure that everybody in this society

whatever position such a person may hold, practices these noble ideals, and that erring members of our society/country should be severely sanctioned. All these will instill discipline in our society which, in turn, will make our society a religious and crime free one. If these ideals cannot be actualised in our daily endeavour then it is being recommended that we stop deceiving ourselves and the world at large and therefore stop henceforth the reciting of the Pledge, motto and anthem.

This suggested remedy cannot be over-emphasized. The non-challant attitude to work and property of government, stealing of money with pen and biro, absenteeism from work at will and working at one's rate, together with bribery and corruption should be a thing of the past. Our businessmen should stop extorting their customers by introducing arbitrary inflation of contract awards, smuggling goods in, and outside the country, and criminally syphoning the wealth of our society to foreign countries. We may ask ourselves how many foreigners keep accounts in Nigerian banks? We, Nigerians syphon our country's wealth to foreign accounts all these are crimes that should be stopped. This can be reduced, and completely eradicated if everybody has good conscience and develop such conscience in all his undertakings. This lecture is calling for and recommending a change of attitude to work from all our leaders, Senators, Legislators, Governments, Commissioners, Party chieftains, civil and public servants, businessmen, private sectors and even our market women. A monitoring group established by a government of credibility should not hesitate to apply necessary sanctions on such erring citizens in our society.

Barring of Imported Crimes Through Pornographic Films and Other Immoral Programmes Manned by Some of Our Electronic Media

Civilisation of any society should not be based on all sorts of immoral, daring and criminal programmes that are watched on screens and electronic media. Many of our youths have been corrupted by such programmes; some of our youths had become hardened criminals irrespective of any religious body they belong to. This lecture is advocating that government should ban such importation of pornographic films, and necessary sanctions be applied to any electronic or news media in our society that fails to comply.

Screening of Religious Agents by Both Religious Institutions and Government.

Nowadays, there are very many professional rather than vocational priests in Christianity, Islam and even Traditional religion. Proliferation of Churches and Mosques should be properly checked. There are many fake prophets in our society today. We read from newspapers irreligious and criminal acts perpetrated by them, such as putting women that went to them for prayers in family way, and even going to the extent of committing abortion which leads to the death of some of their adherents. All these happen in our society. Some religious priests and agents even feed fat on their adherents by commercialising Religion, that is criminal enough because none of the founders of the principal religions in our Society commercialised the religion they propagated. To check such atrocious practices by religious agents, it is

hereby recommended that all religious organisations and even government should set up a monitoring group for all religious institutions in our society and appropriate sanctions should be applied as and when necessary to erring groups.

Setting up a Religious Affairs Ministry at All Tiers of Government

Although this country is a multi-religious country by the 1979 Constitution of the Republic of Nigeria, nevertheless, this lecture is calling for the establishment of Religious Affairs Ministries in all the tiers of government to be able to take proper care of all Religions practiced in our society. Such advocated ministries should comprise respected religious dignitaries from all the principal religions.

Terms of reference of such Ministry should include among others:

-Checking religious maladministration and arbitrariness.

-Banning commercialisation of religion;

-Encourage Religious Seminars, workshops, conferences, to ensure religious harmony and tolerance in our society.

-Ensure that activities of every religious group are designed to promote sanity, peace, decorum and co-operation in our society.

Religious Youth Associations Should Be Encouraged by All Religious Organisations and the Ministry of Education Youth and Sports.

To breed good citizens in our society and by that minimise crimes both religious bodies and government should join hands in preparing our youths of today to be good and well behaved adults of tomorrow. Some of the present day youths in all our tertiary institutions cannot be described any longer as future leaders by the ways they behave. Some of them are better described as future murderers, vandals and looters. To have a religious and crime-free society in this millennium, there is an urgent need for our society to take the issue of moral and religious education of our youths very seriously. Odumuyiwa (1993) Church, Management of People, History and Impact discussed the issue extensively.

. This lecture is recommending to all schools and tertiary institutions, religious bodies and government to be more interested in the development of our youths in terms of looking after their welfare educationally, morally and religiously. A situation where youths desert their parents under the auspices of the teaching of any religion should be checked; for example, the holier-than-thou attitude. To avert this *holier than thou* syndrome of the so-called born again Christians and the Islamic fundamentals that contradict the principles of any Religion should be put in check. Religious bodies should make provisions for the project that I like to term: "Operation Catch them Young". This is achievable if every religious home gives its wards religious and moral training from childhood. The Religious institutions should also intensify the teaching of principles of their religion and morals. The Government should also make

teaching of all Religious education and morality compulsory in all institutions of learning.

Operation Clean up of Our Law Enforcement Agents and Agencies:

The importance and sincerity of purpose of law enforcement agencies in our society cannot be over-emphasized. The country's custom men, Nigeria Police Force, Operation (anything) (whether Wedge or Sweep) or Rapid Response, Road Safety Corps etc. need to be completely overhauled. Some of their members that are bad eggs should be flushed out. In a situation where a law-enforcement agent takes bribe, aids and abets and promotes crime, proves himself or herself as an embodiment of corruption, is not good for our society. If a clean-up exercise is extended to our law enforcement agencies, it will serve as a very good remedy to our social decadence and make our society crime-free. The country's Judiciary cannot be exempted from the mess we find ourselves in this country. Our country needs a body of Judiciary that has conscience, that is just, that cannot be bought over or bribed, that will dispense justice according to the dictates of our National Anthem, Motto and Pledge and the Constitution. It is an open secret that needs not be substantiated that some members of the Judiciary in this country ought to be relieved of their assignments either as a judge or a lawyer. For example, corrupt judges who are Chancellors of Church Diocese should be relieved of their posts. Such Chancellors are bad examples in our society. It will be an effective remedy if operation clean-up of the Judiciary is embarked upon to bring sanity into our society. Not all judges, policemen, Road Safety Corps and members of Operation (anything) are corrupt but some bad eggs amongst

them must be booted out in order to enhance the integrity of the exalted positions they hold in our society.

Arrest of all Crimes in our Educational Institutions:

This is a task that must be urgently done. In a situation where students not only commit examination malpractices but also justify their unlawful action by carrying guns, acid etc., to examination halls to attack lecturers, supervisors and invigilators is now unbecoming of students of higher institutions in this country, whereas such students are to be certified worthy in character and learning before they graduate. This trend must be jointly and urgently arrested. Cultism is the order of the day in our higher institutions of learning, although we may claim that this is a band wagon effect of what our society is.

However, this lecture is recommending that Cultism should be outlawed in our educational institutions/society and culprits should be seriously dealt with by the law of the land. Lecturers, students and any Chief Executive in any of our higher institutions of learning in this country tried and found guilty of any of the crimes in our institutions should be summarily dismissed and also be made to face the music of the law for his actions. This remedy being suggested needs the co-operation of all and sundry to make our society crime-free.

It is then we can be proud of producing future leaders and not future damagers and hoodlums.

Emphasis Should Be Placed on Self Control and Conscience:

The best remedy to all our criminal acts in this country is having good conscience and self-control as claimed by Odumuyiwa (1986)-Religion and Conscience of a Nation. This lecture recommends that every citizen in our society should endeavour to resuscitate his dead conscience and exercise self-control in whatever he does. In addition, if the conscience of the Nation/Society that is the Motto, Anthem and Pledge are seriously adhered to crimes in our society will soon be a thing of the past more especially in the new millennium. Whatever we do, we should be prepared to defend and justify it.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor Sir and all distinguished listeners, in conclusion, I want to emphasize that it is not impossible for our society to be cleaned of crimes around us if we are all determined to face the challenges staring us in the face. I once again charge members of the Society to make necessary amends in their lifestyles, to abstain from anything criminal so as to ensure a crime-free society in this millennium. Posterity will judge us all as we hand over the affairs of our society and our country to generations coming behind us. What will Society remember you for? And finally, what is everyone of us living for? We should all make it a task that must be done to ensure that we leave our society better than we met it in all its ramifications. It is then posterity will have a living memory of each and everyone of us.

A religious but Criminal Society should be a thing of the past and be replaced with a Religious and crime-free society in this millennium.

Let us ensure that we make our religions our ways of life. Practice what you believe and the ideals of your religion. We appreciate the efforts of President Olusegun Obasanjo so far in fighting against bribery and corruption in our Society especially with the implementation of Anti-corruption Law. We pray that under his leadership, Nigeria will become a truly religious and crime-free society.

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