

UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN



**THE ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTY-SEVENTH (167TH)
INAUGURAL LECTURE**

**“CHRISTIAN PROPHETS AND OTHER
PROPHETS IN NIGERIA”**

By

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THURSDAY, 13TH APRIL, 2017

**This 167th Inaugural Lecture was delivered under the
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13th April, 2017

ISBN: 978-978-53222-4-8

**Published by
The Library and Publications Committee
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.**

**Printed by
Unilorin Press, Ilorin, Nigeria.**



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My Dear Wife and other Members of my Family,
Great Students of Unilorin,
Gentle Men of the Press,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Preamble

My gratitude to God Almighty knows no bound. He is the Owner and Shepherd of my life. I give Him all the glory for whatever I have achieved and will ever achieve in life. God Almighty makes today possible, and therefore we

are here. May He never cease to bless all and sundry. I cannot forget my background in African Traditional Religion, for I became a convert into Christianity in primary school. The Yoruba have a saying to the effect that:

*Ají ginni. Arìn ginni. Èwù ginniginni lawòwojà.
Akìṣágìnnilógbé. Akìdibàràlókùn. Enìkan
kììgbówòjì gẹgẹ sáláḡẹmọ. Ojọ t'áláḡẹmọ bá
já 'ko, èèrùnjà. Aṣẹ Olódùmarè ni.*

Chorus: *Ati taabọ èṣù dáanù, kámiajólọ, kòséwu mọ rará.
Labé àbò laawà kámiajólọ, kòséwu mọ rará (2ce).*

(That is an incantation – a prayer- and a chorus for warding off evil).

I regard it a great honour to stand before this august gathering to deliver the 167th inaugural lecture of this great University, which is the 8th from the current Department of Religions. The “old” Department of Religions included Arabic unit that is now a full-fledged Department. Professor R.W. Omotoye delivered the first inaugural lecture presented by a professor of Christian Studies from the Department, on Thursday, 25th June, 2015. He is a Church Historian. I am delivering the second one from the Christian Studies unit of the Department, as the first Christian theologian to do so. This is the 37th Inaugural Lecture from Faculty of Arts, and it is entitled “Christian Prophets and Other Prophets in Nigeria”.

Christian Theology

Christian theology was not on my list of preference as an applicant for postgraduate degree; rather it was Canon

Law, Church history or Philosophy. But, I am in Christian theology by divine ordinance, and thank God I find fulfillment in it. I always advise students to make a success of whatever discipline they are offered in the university system.

The term theology derives from two Greek words: *Theos*, which means God, and can start with capital “T” or small “t” if meant for small god, and *logos*, which can mean word; study; or discourse. As such, theology means study or discourse about God and or god in the diminutive, depending. Hence Placher (1983: 12) defines theology as a “systematic reflection on one’s faith”, explaining that, “Whenever Christians think about what they believe, they are, in a way, doing theology.” But, theology is not a monopoly of Christians. It pertains to every people and persons and their religious/spiritual beliefs; hence a “systematic reflection on one’s faith”, as Placher puts it, it means theologising either by Christians or people of other faiths. Thus we have also African traditional theology, Buddhist theology, Hindu theology, Islamic theology, etc. Idowu (1978: 10) refers to “the age-old erroneous notion that only one religion, namely Christianity, has theology”, insisting that such an assumption “makes nonsense of the linguistic and connotational significance of the word” (theology). The linguistic and connotational significance, of course, refers to the fact that theology means God-related discourse.

Although theology is rightly defined simply as talk about God and or divinities, one cannot talk about God in the abstract without relating it to creatures, such as human beings, their lives and societies, as God is invisible, and only through creatures do we come to know about His

existence and activities. As Lane (1981: 13 and 14) puts it: “One of the most common misunderstandings is the suggestion that some kind of direct and immediate contact with the sacred is possible in religious experience.” As he further notes, Jewish and Christian traditions attest to the fact that “no one has seen God and lived” (Ex. 33:20; Jn. 1:18; 6:46). In summary, human beings “do not experience God *in se* apart from one’s neighbour and the world”, as well as what God does in human lives as a people or individuals. Creatures and experiences mediate God as a transcendent being to human beings.

Moreover, there is a classical definition of theology by the father of Scholasticism, Anselm of Canterbury, who defines theology as *Fides quaerens intellectum* – Faith seeking understanding. That distinguishes theology from catechism which is teaching and learning of doctrines formulated by religious bodies, such as Christian and Islamic institutions, and no critical question is entertained. A person is expected to believe such doctrines without questioning them or seeking alternative doctrinal formulations. But, where “faith is seeking understanding”, such as in a university system, questions are raised towards attaining deeper, clearer, and better knowledge of earthly and spiritual realities. That distinguishes academic systematic theology from dogmatic systematic theology that is apologetic or catechetical in nature. The word “apologetic”, as used here, refers to defense of dogmatic doctrinal formulations of a religious body, such as obtains in Christianity and Islam with rigid/dogmatic beliefs. Mueller (1994:863) notes that “Fundamental theology interacts with and uses the advancements of scientific, philosophical, linguistic, historical, and cultural data in its

exploration and explanations.” Indeed, academic Christian theologians use other sources as well, including books by various scholars, interviews, and, where applicable, participant observation, and not just the Bible and ecclesiastical teachings alone. Hence Mueller writes further that:

Because fundamental theology is always historically and culturally conditioned, no one explanation (biblical or ecclesiastical – emphasis mine) will be sufficient and final but always developing and searching for more complete and adequate understandings. Thus theology always pulsates with the best of human knowledge.

That is as far as *Fides quaerens intellectum* (Faith seeking understanding) goes. It is what is done in reputable academic institutions.

A Brief Introduction

The principal argument of this lecture is that Nigeria, like most human societies, needs prophets, including Christian prophets. But, who is a prophet in the understanding of this lecturer? That is one of the pertinent questions to be addressed. Another pertinent question is: To what extent are there Christian prophets in Nigeria, and how do they affect Nigeria’s socio-political and economic life, vis-à-vis equity and justice? Is there any difference between prophecy and divination? Those are some of the issues over which I have made some contributions from African and Christian perspectives, and much more locally from Yoruba worldview. I will not be surprised if some Christian

theologians read one or the other of my works to be discussed in this lecture and conclude that Abioje has demythologised the meanings of divination and prophecy. I believe I have done so in the name of objectivity and after review of relevant literature.

Scope of this Lecture

Although the title of this lecture indicates that Nigeria is the focus, it does not mean that no other part of the world is covered. I made use of relevant literature, internationally. In some instances, I interviewed African traditional experts in Yoruba context. Unarguably, the prevalent image of Christian prophet in Africa and many parts of the world nowadays is that of a miracle worker and fortune/future teller. In some instances, immorality, such as sexual promiscuity, and crimes, such as ritual murder and fraud are alleged, rightly or wrongly, against one prophet or another. The diverse atrocious stories are there in the mass media, including on the internet, and in Odumuyiwa (2001:18), Ojo (2008:131), Abioje (2011: 63-67), etc. But, this study goes beyond all of that and delves into some fundamental issues of what prophecy is all about, who a prophet is supposed to be, and the values of prophecy.

The Confluence of Prophecy and Divination¹

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir , some Christian pastors are used to saying that what is done in the Bible and in Christian tradition is prophecy, while what is done in African Traditional Religion (ATR) is divination. But, can there be prophecy without divination? I dare say that prophecy without divination is possible only where the spirit of God decides to descend on a person with the

purpose of making that person to prophesy, spontaneously. What then is divination? In “Beyond Biblical Objection: What else is Wrong with Divination?” (Abioje, 2014:167), I quoted Fuller (2001:81) who defines divination as “the art of finding out hidden, spiritual or future knowledge by some signs.” My reaction in the article under consideration is that the “observation seems to be very apt”, adding how “I discovered through interaction with some diviners that a diviner’s experience in reading and understanding the signs is crucial to divinatory expertise and precision.” For the purpose of this lecture, I Googled the meaning of divination, and the webpage states that divination is “the practice of seeking knowledge of the future or the unknown by supernatural means”, and the synonyms of divination are: “fortune telling, divining, prophecy, prediction, soothsaying, augury, clairvoyance, and second sight” (Google webpage, December 10, 2016). That settles the matter that the kinship between prophecy and divination cannot be wished away.

Nevertheless, one must highlight and discuss what seems to be the general impression by many Christians that the Bible condemns divination. The assumption is rife that the Bible forbids divination, but the matter does not seem to be as simple as it appears. Reality and appearance are not always the same. More often than not, painstaking inquiry exposes the difference between reality and appearance. There are two Christian theological schools of thought; pros and cons on divination. Among those who hold that divination, magic, etc. must never be practised is Thomas Aquinas, who is famed as the Angelic Doctor of the universal Church. Aquinas teaches in his *Summa Theologica* (Glenn, 1978:249) that “it is both futile and

sinful to dabble in black magic and to use charms, formulae of speech, or other devices, to obtain occult knowledge or to control events by evoking occult powers.” According to Aquinas, such a thing “debases the mind, dishonours God, and opens the door to diabolical intervention.” His position tends to express deep faith in God, and it is in conformity with some Biblical texts, even though he makes no direct reference to the Bible in that argument. One’s reservation is that Aquinas does not consider the *hic et nunc* of human condition, and some other Biblical passages, as we shall soon explain. He (Aquinas) believes that divination and other occult practices “dishonour God”, while traditional Africans see such mystical practices as part of divine providence. It is beyond the scope of this lecture to judge who is right or wrong, but some exploration can help to put issues in proper perspectives.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, like Aquinas, Peschke (1981: 99), a Dutch Catholic priest and moral theologian, notes that:

Scriptures severely condemn the grave forms of superstition, such as divination, augury, necromancy, use of charms, magic, sorcery (Deut 18:9-14; Is 2:6; 8:19; Jer. 27:9; Acts 19:19) and even decree death penalty for sorcerers, mediums and wizards (Ex 22:18; Lev. 20:27). Inasmuch as superstition results from lack of faith, it is indeed a serious sin of irreligion. Because instead of placing his faith and trust in God, man places it in imaginary powers.

The difference with Aquinas is that although Peschke holds that the Bible condemns divination and other occult practices, he does not believe that such practices are necessarily and always sinful. In his own words (same page), “mystical and occultistic phenomena are realities with which men have to reckon, and their use cannot simply and universally be qualified as sinful”.² It is interesting to note that Peschke is not an African, and the word “Africa” or “African” does not even feature in his book. That tends to confirm, beyond reasonable doubts that occult practice is a universal reality; whether it is good or bad is another debate. Suffice it to say generally speaking that many things in life have their negative and positive aspects.

Another Christian theologian who, like Aquinas, believes that Christians must never dabble in divination is Fuller (2001: 92-105). His own position is that “The Bible condemns and forbids the use of mystical powers, ‘good’ or ‘bad’,” because, as he sees it from biblical perspectives, “they operate on two principles: demonic power and deception.” Thus, Fuller and Aquinas represent Christian theologians who oppose divination and other mystical practices as demonic tricks, while Peschke holds a position akin to that of many traditional Africans who regard mystical powers as part of the world created good by God, which includes doves and snakes, day and night, light and darkness; etc.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, there is no doubt that some biblical verses specifically forbid divination and prescribe death penalty for whoever practises it. Such biblical verses include:

Leviticus 19:26: ‘You shall not practice augury or witchcraft.’; 20:27: ‘A man or a woman who is a medium or a wizard shall be put to death; they shall be stoned with stones, their blood shall be upon them.’; and Deuteronomy 18:10-12: ‘There shall not be found among you any one who burns his son or his daughter as an offering, anyone who practices divination, a soothsayer, or an augur, or a sorcerer, or a charmer, or a medium, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For whoever does these things is an abomination to the LORD; and because of these abominable practices the LORD your God is driving them out before you.’ (All quotations are taken from the RSV).

I have deliberately and carefully assembled these passages for the purpose of critical discourse. One must note that the Bible is a compendium comprising many books by many authors compiled over several centuries. One must note how the Bible itself uses the two words, “prophet” and “diviner” in the same sentence, synonymously. Let us read, for instance, Jeremiah 27:9-10. It states that:

So do not listen to your prophets, your diviners, your dreamers, your soothsayers, or your sorcerers, who are saying to you, 'You shall not serve the king of Babylon.' For it is a lie which they are prophesying to you, with the result that you will be removed far from your land, and I will drive you out, and you will perish.

How, for instance, does one distinguish “prophets” from “diviners” and the rest of them in that quotation, since God also seems to condemn “prophets”? One thing is clear, that God says all those He condemns at that instance, all of them foretold falsehood, but the fact that they are all lumped together for condemnation is significant. Isaiah 28:7 similarly holds that: “the priest and the prophet reel with strong drink, they are confused with wine, they stagger with strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in giving judgment.” God is thus concerned that the priest and the prophet were irresponsible at that point. But the question remains: What is the difference between a prophet and a diviner? That provides us another opportunity to further clarify our terms. According to the online *Smith’s Bible Dictionary*, “The ordinary Hebrew word for prophet is *nabi*, and its essential meaning is ‘an interpreter’.” But the dictionary also notes that “The use of the word in its modern sense as ‘one who predicts’ is post-classical.” I am at a loss to know what the *Commentary* means by “post-classical”, since the biblical prophets are known for predictions, as well as teaching people the Covenant. Jesus himself is quoted as foretelling that “False Christs and false prophets will arise and show signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. But take heed; I have told you all things beforehand” (Mark 13:22-23 -RSV). Moreover, if a prophet is “one who speaks for a god, and so interprets his will to man”, then, a prophet cannot be said to be different from a diviner. Awolalu (1979: 121) notes that the Yoruba practise divination “because they are anxious to know the behest of Deity”. No wonder prophets and diviners are lumped together, as in Jer. 27:9-10. Beyond that, Mic. 3:11 reads, for instance, that: “Its heads give judgment for a

bribe, its priests teach for hire, its prophets divine for money” (RSV). This verse reveals very clearly that what prophets do when they consult the Lord is “divination”.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, divination within and outside the Bible is understood as reserved for a state of total confusion and perplexity, when a people or an individual is bereft of clues. Saul told Samuel why he sought divination from the witch at Endor, saying, "I am in great distress; for the Philistines are warring against me, and God has turned away from me and answers me no more, either by prophets or by dreams; therefore I have summoned you to tell me what I shall do" (1 Sam 28: 15, RSV). A Catholic theologian, Hillman (1993:63) is thus apt that:

In the face of the vast unknown enveloping so much of human experience, past, present, and future, every sociocultural community finds ways to explain and to cope with the mystery of evil and the ominous signs encountered in the course of life. Even the perplexities and anxieties arising from the ordinary suffering, pains and ambiguities met at every stage of the human sojourn need plausible explanations and remedies that are at least hopeful, if not always effective.

Mr. Vice-Chancellor sir, when a person or people face perplexity, the Yoruba expect some efforts (*aájò*), as normal. Such efforts may include divinatory consultation, in the manner of nothing ventured, nothing gained. No wonder the Jews themselves cried out when God sent them no prophet, as recorded in Psalm 74: 9, “We see no signs; there

is no longer any prophet, and there is none among us who knows how long it will last” (RSV). Given that lamentation, and similar passages such as Mic. 3:11 read above, it is obvious that prophets do divination, to know what God wants and guide the people in their moments of confusion and perplexity.

It is also important to note how the Apostles themselves cast lots to determine who should succeed Judas Iscariot. Acts 1:26 reads: “And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias; and he was enrolled with the eleven apostles.” According to *Adam Clarke’s* online (Biblical) *Commentary*, “In what manner this or any other question was decided by lot, we cannot precisely say”, adding however it involved “prayer, sacrifice, etc.” In the perception of the online *Teacher’s* (Biblical) *Commentary*, however, lots-casting is a “revival of an old custom”, but the commentary adds a caveat, stating that “The descent of the Holy Spirit as Guide and Comforter forever ended this use of the lot among true Christian believers.” If lots-casting is a “revival of an old custom”, the question can be asked whether it is a sinful custom, since that step was also taken by the Apostles themselves (Acts 1:26), without any indication that they incurred God’s wrath.

Prophecy and Revelation in the Bible and in African Oral Tradition

The focal question here is whether God guided African peoples through prophets. Nihinlola, a Baptist theologian (2013:31), writing on African Christian Theology states, for instance, that “There is no doubt that proverbs, myths, stories and such other literary devices are authentic sources of African philosophy, but they do not

stand on the same level with revelation of God as recorded in the Bible.” The conviction of St. Paul is different. He writes in Romans 1:20 that “Ever since God created the world, his everlasting power and deity -however invisible- have been there for the mind to see in the things he has made.” Beyond that, hardly can any Biblical theologian of note deny that the Bible incorporates many pre-existent, non-Jewish proverbs, myths, stories, songs and psalms, and so, not everything in the Bible fell from heaven into the brains of the hagiographers who wrote the books that were compiled into the compendium called the Bible.

Thus, the Bible is not as much an island as some Christians seem to believe. Let us examine a Yoruba proverb, for instance, to see whether it falls short of the Biblical standard. The traditional Yoruba say *Mààlúù tí ò ní rù, Olórun ní baa lé eṣinṣin* –God drives away flies for a tail-less cow. Obviously, cows use their tails to drive away flies. The proverb is used to say that God is the help of a helpless person. How can that be less divine than a Biblical proverb? The Yoruba also say *Ìwà lẹwà omọ ènìyàn* – good conduct is the beauty of a human being. How is that of less quality than love of God and neighbour preached by Jesus Christ? But the basic issue here is that prophecy or speaking for God under inspiration by God should not be wrongly perceived as limited to the Bible. Prophecy, as noted in Abioje (2003:140), indicates any divine utterance made by anybody, generally speaking, since all human beings are God’s creation and He could decide to speak through anybody. That is, of course, different from being a prophet by vocation and profession. Nevertheless, prophecy should be demythologised, somehow, so that it can be recognised for what it is originally meant to be: speaking for God or

speaking on behalf of God. In Yorubaland, Ifá Ọ̀rúnmilà is the principal prophetic institution established by God, even though Ifá Ọ̀rúnmilà is not the only means through which mysteries and perplexities are unravelled in the name of God. Other means include dreams and vision, but they are not as readily available (nor always as reliable) as Ifá Ọ̀rúnmilà divination.³

The Relevance of Prophets in Society

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, in “Critical Prophecy and Political Leadership in Biblical, African and Islamic Worldviews” (Abioje, 2010), from whence I culled the content of this subheading, my concern is that Africa is “plagued with corrupt and selfish leaders who, generally speaking, promote widespread poverty, in spite of abundant human and material resources in many African countries.” I quoted Turaki (1997:1f) who notes that “The lack of moral will and ethical strength by leadership in Africa has been identified as the most serious issue and problem facing Africa today.” There is no ulterior motive saying that Africa should have no excuse not to have developed highly after several decades of achieving political independence from foreign colonialists, but for the selfish mien of those who assume her leadership positions.

I state the objective of that article as the intention to examine the socio-political influence of prophecy in the contexts of traditional Africa, the Bible and Islam, towards challenging contemporary African men and women to serve as conscience of society. I posit that African leaders are knowledgeable, and they possess epistemological resources, but not many of them have

the patriotic/prophetic zeal to use their positions to move the continent forward. The research was animated by liberation theology, which was born in Latin America in the second half of the 1960s. Conn (1998:389) notes that "Samuel Escobar (b. 1934), an evangelical critic based in Peru, distinguishes three types of liberation theology - the pastoral one of Gutierrez; the academic emphases of Hugo Assran and Segundo; and a populist style which uses the language of liberation theology but remains old-style Catholicism." My article tends toward the first two types. I concur with theologians, such as Sweetland (1994:505) in the understanding that "liberation theology seeks to recover the Christian commitment to transforming the world, being part of, and making a contribution to the kingdom of God, and social justice." The ecclesiastical resistance to liberation theology is noted by many scholars, such as Conn (1998:388f). I am persuaded that liberation theology can promote the salvific mission of Jesus, which is both earthly and heavenly-bound. I propose critical prophecy as an appropriate tool for those who seek political and economic justice, equity, and charity in African societies.

Critical Prophecy versus Divinatory/Esoteric Prophecy⁴

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, I distinguish between a simple conception of the figure of a prophet as a soothsayer or fortune-teller and seeing the prophet as someone who speaks divine words, and engages in divine actions (such as protests and boycotts) that can save or liberate people from oppressive and exploitative situations. It is reminiscent of what Jesus did when he told his Jewish audience that the Sabbath was made for human beings, and not vice versa (Mark 2:27). Thus, critical prophecy, as opposed to the

divinatory/esoteric fortune-and-future telling type, makes a religion to contribute meaningfully to social justice, and that can engender progress, socio-politically and economically, when prophets are vigilant and critical of inhuman conducts. Critical prophecy follows the principle of: see, judge, and act. In other words, it is praxis oriented and can help to ensure that the fruits of science and technology are equitably distributed. As Olukoshi and Nyamnjoh (2007:2) quote Joseph Ki-Zerbo as saying, African intellectuals should not be neutral in their submissions when human lives are degraded, trivialised, impoverished, and wasted, as experienced in many parts of Africa.

Prophecy in the Old Testament and in Other Cultures⁵

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, this subheading about prophecy in the Old Testament and in other cultures may agitate some minds in which the assumption lurks that the prophetic phenomenon is limited to the Jewish tradition, with particular reference to the Old Testament (henceforth OT). That presumption has, however, been disproved by many scholars who have long discovered that prophecy had existed in the ancient Near Eastern nations before Israel came into existence as a society. On a general observation, Ellis (1963:28) notes that:

An extensive list could be drawn up of the adaptations made by Moses. A few examples, however, will have to suffice. In the field of law it is more than obvious, from a study of the common law of the ancient Near East, that Moses sanctioned many existing laws, giving them

a new bent by making them the stipulations of Yahweh, Israel's God-king. In the field of cult it is reasonably certain that the Ark of the Covenant is adapted from Egyptian cult arks. Israel's feasts are for the most part either pre-mosaic feasts or baptized Canaanite feasts, but they are all given a new orientation. When the temple is built it is built by Phoenician architects: and in its appurtenances it will be for the most part similar to those of Canaanite temples.

Apart from the general knowledge it provides, the quotation is pertinent also because Moses, upon which it focuses, is acknowledged to be "the first of the great prophets" (Ellis, 1963:265). With specific reference to the existence of prophets in many other pre-Judaic religions, Blenkinsopp (1996:41) notes that:

The Hebrew Bible itself attests that prophecy was not confined to Israel. In the early years of the reign of Zedekiah, last king of independent Judah, Jeremiah is reported to have urged rulers from the neighbouring lands of Edom, Moab, Ammon, and the Phoenician cities, meeting in Jerusalem, not to heed their prophets, diviners and other intermediaries who were backing the planned rebellion against Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 27:1-3).

In the same vein, Boadt (1984:304) notes that "prophecy used to be considered a unique characteristic of Israel not found elsewhere in the ancient world". But, as he further

notes, "that view prevailed when the Bible was our only source of knowledge of the ancient world", while "since the last century, new information about prophecy in other nations has come to light." That certainly smothers a parochial view of prophecy.

Prophecy in African Traditional Religion⁶

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, if prophecy is the divine art and act of informing people, including warnings and promises from God, through intermediaries, as noted by Preus (2001:86), for instance, then, it should not be supposed that prophecy is not applicable to African Traditional Religion (henceforth ATR), or that it is found only in Judaism and the associated religions of Christianity and Islam. There seems to be no doubt that many traditional Africans seek to know the will of God through divination, which many scholars and dictionaries regard as synonymous with prophecy. In the words of Boadt (1984:305), for instance:

In the Bible itself, the earliest mention of prophetic roles comes in the form of divination to discover the divine will. The story of Gideon in Judges 6 tells how Gideon requested a sign from God by letting his fleece remain dry overnight while the ground nearby was covered with dew.

With specific regard to ATR, Parrinder (1975:119) notes that "divination or augury, foretelling the future by magical acts, is very popular in Africa," and that "geomancy, divining by figures on the earth, is found

throughout the continent." Parrinder observes further that one writer has traced divination "from Senegal to Malagasy." It has similarly been noted that traditional African theology perceives reality holistically, with the belief that nothing whatsoever is possible unless as ordained or permitted one way or another by God. Awolalu and Dopamu (2005: 16) note also that Africans believe that the Supreme Being is living, omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient. That means not only that God is the source of every form of life, organic and inorganic alike, He is actively in control of all of life, ultimately speaking. Thus, in African worldview even divination through the magical act is considered to be part of the resources with which humanity is endowed by God.

Critical Prophecy in the Old Testament and African Traditional Religion⁷

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, both in ATR and OT, prophecy is not concerned merely with enthroning political leaders. It also monitors the spiritual and moral rectitude of those enthroned as well as the conduct of the entire populace. In the OT, the intervention of Prophet Samuel is outstanding, with particular reference to the institution of the Jewish monarchy, the enthronement of Saul, as well as his rebuke, dethronement, and eventual replacement with David (1Sam, 9-15). Likewise, the sin of King David, and his reprimand by Prophet Nathan (2Sam. 11-12) which elicited David's repentance, signified an extremely clear example, regarding the chastising role of prophets in relation to political leadership and public morality,

which is rarely the case in Nigeria. Häring (1979:353) notes that:

The prophets most violently protested against the great evils of injustice, war, hatred, mercilessness and so on. The moral evils can cause a breakdown of faith in the God which a specific religion teaches if the representatives of that religion make no realistic protest against sins.

Along that line and on a fundamental note, Shields (2004:65) explains that the ethical concern of the prophets derived from the fact that God is holy and righteous, and demands same from His people. As Shields concludes, "righteousness and right behaviour clearly expressed the fact that a person knew and served God." That may not be better said, and the situation is much similar to what obtains in traditional African culture, as observed by many scholars, including Awolalu and Dopamu (2005:241) who note that traditional Africans put a lot of emphasis on ethics, in respect of public, social and private conduct. Political leaders and the general populace are cautioned, reprimanded or lampooned, warned or sanctioned, as the case may require by the ministers of God, i.e. the divinities and their agents. Indeed, the agents of God in ATR can be as confrontational as the OT ones. In Yorubaland, with which this lecturer is familiar, for instance, some masquerades (including *Gèlèdè* and *Eégún Aláré*) are known for their annual and occasional prophetic pronouncements, which rebuke evil perpetrators in a community.

Critical prophecy in the New Testament⁸

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, there seems to be hardly any link between prophecy in its divinatory and socio-critical features when the New Testament (NT) is compared with what obtains in the OT and ATR. Obviously, the NT recognises the role of prophets. Ephesians 4: 11 reads, for instance, that "And to some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers." Ramsay (1986:2) notes that though "Jesus was more than a prophet, but he was a prophet", and "the New Testament tells us that there continued to be prophets in the early church", such as "the prophets Agabus, Simon called Niger, Manaen, and others whose names we will never know spoke for God to the first Christians." Moreover, as Ramsay further argues, beyond the fact that "the author of Revelation was a prophet", it is certain that "Paul was familiar with prophecy as one of the gifts of the Spirit." Nevertheless, as Ramsay rightly concludes:

We do not have much clear information about prophets in the New Testament church, but we know quite well the work of the Old Testament prophets. They give us models of prophecy. When someone today speaks forth for God in the Spirit which animated the work of Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah, we do well to listen. Their message of justice, wisely applied in that same Spirit, may indeed be thought of as God's prophetic word for our time.

It can thus be said, with particular reference to political leadership, that prophecy in the NT and early church was not as extensive as in the OT and ATR. That is probably because Christianity, unlike the OT and ATR, did not evolve with a political society *ab initio* or from time immemorial. Indeed, many theologians have distinguished between the religion to which Jesus belonged (Judaism) and the religion founded in the name of Jesus (Christianity). Carrol (1991:15) notes about the Jews and Christians, for instance, that "Their ways of life and worship have little in common except the most superficial of resemblances." In comparative terms, Carrol states that "a glance at a page of Talmud in comparison to a page from a Christian biblical commentary of the same period will speak volumes of difference between the two." Of course, no knowledgeable person will deny that Jesus was a Judaiser, while Christianity as a religion emerged in his name, after he died.

The prophetic role of Jesus⁹

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, we have to distinguish between Jesus and the New Testament, because Jesus did not come to abolish the Law and the Prophets but to fulfill them (Matt. 5: 17). The term "New Testament" (NT) is given by the Church Fathers to the Christian scripture that emerged after the death of Jesus. Unarguably, the NT is based on Christian interpretation of Jesus' life and teaching, but it cannot be said that the perception always represents what Jesus actually stood for. Carroll (1991; 7) rightly notes that the Bible depends "on the reader's perspective". Comparatively speaking, the approach of Jesus to prophetic role is

somewhat different from the confrontational and politically involved models that characterise the OT and ATR. Ramsay (1986:4f) notes about the OT "stories" that:

They told of Moses defying Pharaoh and crying in the name of the Lord, 'Let my people go'. They told of the prophet Nathan seeing an injustice and pointing at King David to announce, 'Thou art the man!' They told of the prophet Elijah who denounced King Ahab to his face when that tyrant had stolen a vineyard and condoned an illegal execution. They told the story of the prophet Elisha instigating a bloody political revolt against Queen Jezebel and her evil grandson on the throne.

Likewise in the African traditional setting, prophets (mouth pieces of God and the divinities) go after evil doers, including kings and others in leadership positions. Bernheim and Bernheim (1968:13) aptly note about Africa that:

In the old days, the king was held to be sacred, and his face was often concealed from the sight of commoners. But even the king could not get away with injustice; in the Yoruba tribe he could be deposed, and when elders presented him with a bowl of parrot eggs, it was a discreet hint for him to disappear-or be killed.

Thus, the difference between the African and the Jewish approaches to critical prophecy can only be a question of method, while the goal is identical, which is, among

other things, promotion of good political leadership with social justice. On the whole, it would seem that confrontation is inevitable in a world that is full of human wolves. Yet confrontation is only an aspect of the prophetic role, and it can take different forms, such as direct and indirect confrontations. With particular reference to Jesus, it seems incontrovertible that he was a classical prophet in the Judaic tradition in which prophets enjoin obedience to the will of God and the exercise of love, mercy, compassion, sisterly and brotherly relationships.

The Islamic Connection

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, my article, “Critical Prophecy and Political Leadership in Biblical, African and Islamic Worldviews” (Abioje, 2010) did not include Islamic worldview, initially. But, I came to realise that one has to include Islam which, together with Christianity, dominates, to a large extent, socio-political and economic leadership in Africa. The library research was, therefore, extended to address the issue of the Islamic view of prophecy. Salisu (1986:206) states from the Islamic point of view, that “prophets were sent to different nations of the world” until “the Holy Prophet Muhammad was sent as the last of all prophets”, in what Islamic teaching refers-to as *Finality of Prophethood*, with the belief that it was with Prophet Muhammad that religion became perfected (Qur’an 5:3). Salisu (p.207) notes further that “the need for prophets to come after Muhammad is non-existent” (Qur’an 33:40), even though “the gift of Divine revelation to the righteous servants of Allah is still granted as need be”¹⁰.

Comparatively speaking, many Christians believe that revelation by God closed after all the Apostles had died. But, as Lane (1981:35) rightly notes, that assumption about cessation of revelation “seems to imply that the communication of God to people has stopped and that God has thus withdrawn from the world, leaving the human race bereft.” The conclusion of Lane is also apt that “Such a view of revelation seems to contradict the important doctrine of the gracious omnipresence of God to the world and the indwelling of the Spirit among people.”¹¹ God’s omnipresence in the world would thus seem to negate any suggestion that God leaves His people untended by prophetic guidance at any time, past and present.

Prophets in Christian Historical Trajectory ¹²

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, in contrast with the popular prophetic Jewish tradition, many scholars have noted how prophecy has suffered a substantial set-back in the history of the Church, generally speaking. Blenkinsopp (1996:16f) observes, for instance, that:

One of the most significant achievements of biblical scholarship in the nineteenth century was the rediscovery of prophecy as a distinctive religious category. The traditional Christian view, represented at that time by conservative and apologetic theologians like E. W. Hengstenberg and J.C.K. Horman, saw the prophets as forerunners and foretellers of Christ. Wellhausen, on the other hand, argued that Christ, who inherited the religion

and ethic of the prophets, was betrayed by the institutional church in much the same way as the prophets had been betrayed by the ritualistic-legalistic system of early Judaism.

Any wonder, then, that while the titles of priest, pastor, bishop, overseer, superintendent, evangelist, and so on, are rampant, that of prophet is farfetched, and where prophets are said to exist in any explicit nomenclature, they are rarely comparable to the genuine ancient prophets. In Nigeria, I have heard some people describing prophets as “profits”. An American, Ramsay (1986:1) similarly comments on a book: *Prophecy and the Twentieth Century*, which was advertised. He expresses disappointment that the material was one more book of fantastic speculations about ‘the rapture’, ‘Armageddon’, ‘the millennium,’ and how humanity was to prepare for ‘a last great battle’, and so on. That seems to be the prevalent situation in worldwide Christendom.

Why is it that none of the mainline historical Churches (Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, etc.) has the title of “prophet” within their clergies? Yet, Jesus Christ is said to have functioned as a prophet, priest, and king. In the words of *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994:127), "Jesus fulfilled the Messianic hope of Israel in his threefold office of: priest, prophet and king" and that "God forms his people through the prophets" (*The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994:46). That unarguably conforms to the Jewish tradition, and if so, why will God stop reforming His

people through prophets? Why will He stop raising prophets for new generations of people, in the circumstances of new developments in a world that is in a constant state of flux? The Yoruba have a saying to the effect that *Ajá iwòyí ló mọ ehoro iwòyí lé* (literally, only today's dog knows how to pursue today's rabbit), and *aṣọ ìgbà làádá fún ìgbà* (appropriate dress is sewn for appropriate age). In other words, today's prophets will be in a vantage position to guide today's people of God.

Paucity of Titular Christian Prophets

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, the traditional Pentecostal churches, such as the Cherubim and Seraphim Church, the Apostolic Church, and the Christ Apostolic Church, have prophets among their officials. The traditional mainline Churches (Catholic, Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, etc.) abandoned the prophetic title because of the belief that revelation in the biblical sense ended with the death of the last of the Twelve Apostles chosen by Jesus during his earthly ministry, and the assumption that what has been revealed up to that point is all that God wanted human beings to know, and all that God wanted human beings to know has been stored in the Bible. Writing in line with that belief, an evangelical theologian, Laso (2013:45) avers that “No doubt the Holy Bible is the complete, authoritative and final word of God, for the redemption of entire mankind.” Yet, as Scanlon (1994:747-749) rightly notes, the idea that revelation has ended “rendered revelation something static, past, and closed.” It would mean that when new situations arise, as often happens, God will not instruct, warn, and chastise His peoples through some prophets as He did in the past. And if that were the case, can God be said to be

consistent in His ways and approaches to guiding His peoples?

Critical Prophecy and Divergence between Jesus and Traditional Christianity

Historically, as already noted by some scholars, such as Blenkinsopp (1996:16f), the traditional Church had, to a large extent, abandoned its prophetic role over a period of many centuries. I trace the reason to the church's embrace of the imperialistic and autocratic life style of the Roman Empire, occasioned in the first instance by the conversion of Emperor Constantine. Gradually but surely, the Church allied itself with, and started imitating the Roman imperial authorities, and by the time church-state separation became inevitable, it was difficult to distinguish between ecclesiastical and societal governments. Dulles (1978:39) states that on the very eve of the Second Vatican Council, which was held 1962-1965, Abbot B. C. Butler wrote a book emphasising that "according to Roman Catholics the Church is essentially a single concrete historical society, having a constitution, a set of rules, a governing body, and a set of actual members who accept this constitution and these rules as binding on them." Of course, most churches are organised and structured as institutions that discipline and sanction disobedient, wayward or "heretical" members. Yet, abuses of such powers to discipline and sanction are inevitable, insofar as human beings are imperfect, and *ipso facto*, fallible. History books are replete with such abuses, including sale of indulgences and persecution of so-called heretics. By implication, critical prophecy cannot be

accommodated or tolerated in any institution that has become legalistic and autocratic.

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, in my article on critical prophecy (Abioje, 2010: 807), I note that:

The first challenge to a Christian prophet, therefore, may be the readiness to face the possible wrath of the Church, in certain circumstances. The second challenge may be the political powers that be. Ramsay (1986:82) quotes Walter Rauschenbusch as stating that the crucifixion of Jesus was ‘a political assassination on the cross of collective apostasy by the political and religious institutions that claim authority over our lives.’ That seems to be what happened to the assassinated Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador, when, as Brockman (1994:754-756) notes, he lost favour with the government, majority of his fellow bishops, the papal nuncio, and apparently also with ‘the Pope and his Curia’, for his passionate opposition to the oppression and exploitation of ordinary compatriots. Apparently, then, there is church-state collusion against common people.

Can it be said that the situation is different in comparison with mosque-state equation, when one considers the situation of commoners in northern Nigeria where Islam is dominant? Balogun (1989:67) notes that “some Muslim groups and non-Muslims in Northern Nigeria are striving

to change the *status quo* which they consider unfair”, and that “it is within this framework that we can find explanation for the increasingly militant posture of Islam in the South and the militant protests of the youths and others in the North, who consider themselves deprived”. Obviously, anybody trying to change such *status quo* will more often than not encounter stiff opposition, and the cumulative implication of the foregoing discussion is that neither Christianity nor Islam is totally impervious to hostility to critical prophecy. And so, whoever will engage in critical prophecy must be ready to pay the bitter, if not ultimate price.

Christian Prophets in Nigeria

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, history of the Christian prophetic movement in Africa is characterised by burning of magical objects and claims of casting out evil spirits, rather than engagement in issues of social justice. A German Catholic historian, Beyer (1998:20) observes that many Pentecostal churches in Africa avoid “reference to newspaper publications, or any matter of political nature, or one that affects government”. That seems to be the prevalent Christian attitude apparently worldwide. Ayegboyin and Ishola (1999:15-16) express the view that many African Indigenous Churches, including the Cherubim and Seraphim, are founded upon “the charismatic personality of a prophet”, and “they emphasize and depend very much on visions and prophecies”.¹³ Such visions and prophecies are usually about fortune-telling, and not usually about social sanitisation.

Why do many titular Christian prophets avoid social and ethical issues and focus basically on divinatory/esoteric

aspects of prophecy? Could that be because the church leaders crave patronage of political office-holders and so would not want to criticise those in political authorities? All of that are merely speculative. What is incontrovertible, however, is that divinatory/esoteric prophecy has potentiality for economic benefit than critical prophecy which may import persecution and death, such as happened to Jesus himself. It is another question whether many Christian prophets are ready and striving to emulate Jesus, but that is beyond the scope of this lecture. Suffice it to say that many of today's prophets advertise themselves as miracle-workers, and some of them are accused of immorality, fraud, and even ritual murder, as earlier noted.

Non-Conventional Christian Prophets¹⁴

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, some non-conventional Christian prophets (that means Christians whose life and activities portray them as messengers of God), such as William Wilberforce and David Livingstone, are known to have adopted the peaceful but critical approach of Jesus, and achieved some great goals. Wilberforce (1754-1833) is, for instance, remembered as having spent his life working against slavery (Fajana, 1976:67), and he is, for that reason, called "the liberator of the Negroes" (Ayandele, 1991: 180). Similarly, Hildebrandt (1996:115f) states that Livingstone was the first person to draw attention to the inhuman condition of slaves, and the devastating effects of slave-raids on "tribes in eastern Africa". Coutts (1990:65) also refers to the fact that the Christian faith had led some Christians to work for the upgrade of the condition of 'untouchables' (that means they uplifted the outcast into the status of the free born).

Latourette and Winter (1975:1019) acknowledge the efforts of many Christian individuals and associations "to relieve suffering and to remedy collective evils." Writing further, Latourette and Winter (1975: 1336) note the fact that the "Red Cross" (an institution that relentlessly works for the alleviation of suffering) "came into being through the efforts of a protestant layman of Geneva, Henri Dunant." Ordinarily, these individuals are not called prophets, yet a critical view of their lives justifies them as messengers of God, which is the crux of a prophet's vocation.

African Non-Conventional Prophets¹⁵

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, there seems to be no doubt that every people and country has a number of critical prophets who, with or without a prophetic title, struggle for charity and social justice. Ramsay (1986:91f) notes, for instance, that "in apartheid-ridden South Africa so many church leaders have spoken out on behalf of the oppressed and the white government arrested and imprisoned many." In specific terms, he states that "the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984 went to an Anglican Bishop for his heroic stand for justice in that troubled country". That, indubitably, is the story of Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa. And that ascertains that there are some African Christians who play the role of critical prophets without necessarily bearing the title.

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, given this lecture's understanding of who a critical prophet is, I see some critical prophets even amongst Muslims even when such Muslims, based on the teaching of their religion, do not recognise themselves as prophets. For instance, the late

Chief Abdul-Ganiyu (popularly called “Gani”) Fawehinmi, a Senior Advocate of Nigeria, who died on September 5, 2009, was a modern prophet. He was an outspoken social critic and conscience of society, and was seriously victimised and persecuted for that, as happens to many, if not all genuine prophets. I am not thereby equating anybody with Prophet Jesus or Prophet Muhammad, but whoever is an outspoken social critic and conscience of the society, condemning inhumanity of human beings to human beings, and trying to avoid inhumanity himself or herself, is a critical prophet in the understanding of this lecture, particularly if such a person exemplifies what he or she is advocating. Some of such persons cut across religion, race, and ethnic affiliation. Along that line, Ramsay (1986:1) identifies "four modern Christian prophets", namely, Walter Rauschenbusch, Martin Luther King, Jr., Gustavo Gutierrez, and Rosemary Radford Reuther, all of whom, as Ramsay states "proclaimed God's demand for justice for four different groups of people." That way, the four of them constituted, as Ramsay further stresses, Christian prophets who (among some others) stood up to rebuke and conscientise (in their various ways and contexts) the political leaders of their peoples.

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, permit me to believe that there are some anonymous prophets even in this auditorium, and they may be Christians, Muslims, ATR adherents, or even people without any religious affiliation. With or without title, God knows who His prophets are, whether people recognise them as such or not.

Prophecy and Choice of Political Leaders in Nigeria¹⁶

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, historical observations reveal that divination as a form of prophecy was applied to choice of political leaders, whether as judges or as kings in ancient Israel as well as in Africa. Although some Christian prophets engage in divination in one form or another, it has not been applied to political leadership in Africa by Christians, at least not at any official level that is generally known. There are many (though not all) Christian theologians who do not recognise divination as a prophetic method, even though it is an art and act of deciphering the will of God and divinities. Such theologians limit prophecy to only the critical aspect. Preus (2001:86), for instance, holds that:

Generally speaking, prophecy interprets the spiritual meaning of present events, condemns wickedness, both open and hidden, and makes warnings or promises about what God is going to do within history. The prophets warn that the wrath of God is coming upon his own unfaithful, greedy, adulterous, and murderous people.

Political leadership in Africa needs no more than prophets that conform to this definition by Preus. After all, religious plurality may not permit any particular religion the privilege of divination on who becomes a political leader. But, to what extent are such prophets as described in Preus' definition found in Christianity in Africa, and with what effects, spiritually and morally speaking? With particular reference to Nigeria, such prophets cannot be said to be

many, given the level of complacency, gross violation of human rights, and impunity that are prevalent, as indicated, for instance, by Odumuyiwa (2001) who describes Nigeria as a religious but criminal society. What seems to be many are prophets who promise breakthrough in all areas of human need, such as job-seeking, desire for fruit of the womb, desire for health, opportunity to go abroad, etc. Sometimes, the same “prophets” who criticise those in power still go after the same people in power for favour to meet their personal needs.

Recommendations

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, I have drawn ten crucial recommendations from the cumulative outcome of this lecture on critical prophecy. They are:

1. Nigerians should strive to become critical prophets; to speak against evil on behalf of God and try to live holy lives. In ancient times, as noted in this lecture, critical prophets were vociferous opponents of social evils, such as injustice, marginalization, oppression, and exploitation.
2. Religious people, including adherents of ATR, Christianity, and Islam should prioritise the role of prophets as agents of God (Qur’an 2: 285), rather than being agents of their own religions as such, because religion can be divisive. Apparently, many Nigerians are indoctrinated to feel that they belong to one religion or the other, rather than to God *per se*. Genuine prophets speak for God and not religion as such.
3. Academic programmes, generally, should include introduction to critical prophecy, which makes a

person to be committed to advocacy in Godly words and action, even as medical doctors, engineers, architects, lawyers, and so on, and not only as clergy men and women. Virtue, for which critical prophets strive, is unarguably the key to individual and social progress, even when truth can be very bitter.

4. Nigerians should learn to see critical prophets as friends of society, and pardon them whenever they happen to err, since no human being is infallible.
5. People in positions of authority should learn to see critical prophets as partners in progress towards human edification; not as adversaries.
6. Divinatory/esoteric prophets should avoid fraudulence. They should see their divinatory knowledge as divine endowment to be used altruistically and not for exploitation.
7. People who consult esoteric prophets should be discerning, and not gullible. They should avoid frequent recourse to divinatory prophecy to avoid mediumistic psychosis.
8. Critical prophets should anticipate opposition and conspiracy from unexpected quarters. The conspiracy that killed Jesus came from the milieu of the chief priest and the political elite. Regrettably, the interpretation by many Christians is that God wanted Jesus to die so as to save the world. Yet, the world continues to persecute innocent critical prophets. Why cannot Christians emphasise that Jesus was killed by haters of truth, the religious-political powers that be, particularly since the world is still seeking redemption?

9. University communities should do more in cherishing and protecting the critical scrutiny embedded in the “ivory tower” mantra.
10. Administrators should not criminalise nor persecute but appreciate and protect, to the best of their abilities, critical individuals who mean well, even when, like all human beings, they are not infallible; anybody can err.

Conclusion

There seems to be no better conclusion to this inaugural lecture than the argument that is amply demonstrated in the body of this lecture, that a person is a prophet whenever he or she speaks for God and acts as an agent of God. It is also apt to state that critical prophets, as well as esoteric or divinatory prophets, are indispensable to social sanity, justice and peace. Critical prophets help to rebuke social injustice, while divinatory/esoteric prophets help to resolve perplexities that confound human beings. The fundamental conviction that has guided my researches, summarised in this lecture, is that the provident God endows humanity with both divinatory/esoteric and critical prophetic potentialities. But, Nigeria is yet to experience adequate positive effects of such virtues; she needs many more critical prophets. Why can't it be me and you?

Acknowledgements

Mr Vice-Chancellor sir, the totality of my gratitude goes to the *Alpha* and *Omega* who is the Shepherd of my life and the Shepherd of the totality of my being. Yet, God the Creator has made many human beings to be blessings to me. Principal amongst them were my parents, Mr Oyinlola

Àlàbí Abíójè, and his wife, my mother, Mrs Babáyemí Òkúgbésàbí Abíójè. They are both of blessed memory. May God Almighty grant them eternal bliss. Moreover:

1. I was too young to know my Dad when he died. I am eternally grateful to God for his life which made his siblings to love and cater for me. They were his elder brother, Daddy Òjéníké; his elder sister, *Maami Eégúnyóyin*; and his younger brother who became my principal custodian, Daddy Ọláyíwọlá, and many members of the extended family, and my father's numerous friends, including some Fulani in our Iwere-ile village, now capital of Ìwájòwà local government, Oyo state, Nigeria. Many of them have died. May God Almighty grant them eternal bliss.
2. I thank the Vice-Chancellor, Prof AbdulGaniyu Ambali, OON, and the distinguished members of the Department of Religions for my promotion to the rank of Professor of Christian Studies in 2015. I am grateful to the entire University Administration, under Prof Ambali, for granting me the privilege to deliver this lecture.
3. I am grateful to my primary school teachers, amongst them my relative, Mr. M.B. Taiwo (of blessed memory), who forced me to repeat primary six. I wept bitterly, but today it has contributed to my becoming Professor. Mr. Akíntékùn (of blessed memory) from Ìdíkó Àgọ, and Mr. Mojinyinlára from Işeyin, amongst unforgettable teachers in St. Bernard's Catholic Primary School, Iwere-ile, in the 1960s. After primary school, a German Catholic priest, Rev. Fr. Oscar Genetowski, sponsored me for one year in the then St. John's Catholic Modern

School, Isalu, Iseyin. One British Catholic Rev. Brother Dominic paid my secondary school fees at the defunct St. Kizito Catholic Minor Seminary, Ede, Osun state. Rev. Fr. Sean O'Connell, SMA Irish Catholic priest, that time in SMA House, Orita Challenge, Ibadan, used to give me holiday work by which I got pocket money to survive in Ede.

4. I appreciate the retired Catholic Bishop, formerly of Osogbo, then of Oyo diocese, Most Rev. Dr. Julius Babatunde Adedokun, who sponsored my training in SS. Peter and Paul Catholic Major Seminary, Bodija, Ibadan, and recommended me to go and complete my studies for Bachelor of Theology in Urban University, Rome, 1981-1984. I am grateful to the Very Rev. Fr. Dr. Benedict Etafo, an Afemai, who was a big brother when I was a student in Rome, and then my unforgettable Rector when I became a teacher in my *Alma Mater* in Bodija. I appreciate my Bodija colleagues; in particular the late Rev Fr. Dr. Engelbert Beyer, a German, who supported me with books and, occasionally, money.
5. I thank my M.A. and PhD teachers in the Catholic Institute of West Africa (CIWA), Port Harcourt, in affiliation with University of Calabar. Amongst them, my M.A. Supervisor, Rev Fr. Dr. Anacletus Nnamdi Odoemene, who gave me a good grounding in the art of crafting academic research work. I also appreciate the assistant Supervisor, Rev Fr. Dr. Augustine Udejaja Nebechukwu (of blessed memory). Rev Fr. Dr. Luke Nnamdi Mbefo, my PhD Supervisor, was appreciated both by me and by the external examiners for allowing me to do a

critical research in a dogmatic Roman Catholic environment.

6. In Unilorin, I cannot know everybody to whom I am indebted. Permit me to mention few. I am grateful to the Dean of Arts, Prof. Ahmad Shehu Abdussalam, and the HOD, Religions, Prof R.W. Omotoye. Providentially, Prof R.D. Abubakre was the Dean when I joined the services of Unilorin in 2001. Prof. R.A. Raji was the Head of the old Department of Religions. Providentially, Prof I.O. Oloyede, OFR, was the DVC (Academics) to Prof S. O. Amali (the VC) when my appointment was regularised in 2003. In the then and new Department of Religions, may God Almighty also bless the late Prof. P. A. Dopamu, Prof. Y.A. Quadri, who read through this lecture; raised some critical questions, and gave me some good suggestions. I appreciate Prof R.A. Akanmidu (of blessed memory), Prof Z.I. Oseni, Prof M. A. Ajetunmobi (of blessed memory), Prof Y.O. Imam, Prof Oyeronke Olademo, Prof B.O. Yusuf, Dr. H.A. AbdulSalam, Dr. R.I. Adebayo, Dr. A.G. Alamu, Dr. I.A. Ali-Agan. Outside Department of Religions, also a few. Amongst them, Prof A.B.O. Omotoso, Prof Tunde Ajiboye, Prof Bade Ajayi, Prof B.L. Adeleke, Prof R.A. Olaoye, Prof W. Egbewole, Prof Isaiah Bariki, Prof A.A. Adeoye, Prof Lere Adeyemi, , Dr. I.O. Sanusi, Dr. P.F. Adebayo, Dr. M.A. Adedimeji, Dr. I.A. Jawondo, *ad infinitum*.
7. I am grateful to my colleagues in University of Cape Coast, Ghana, where I spent my Sabbatical Leave, 2013/2014. Amongst them: Prof Eric B. Anum, Dr.

Yaw S. Agyemang, and Prof Samuel Awuah-Nyamekye.

8. May God bless my parents-in-law, Mr. Peter Adélówò and Mama Monílólá Adélówò, and all the extended family members who deserve being mentioned. I appreciate the family of Dr. and Mrs. De Bei Ugo in Italy. Rosemary Caruso in USA is inestimable, together with many benefactors and benefactresses.
9. I thank God for my nucleus family. The mother of the family is my wife, who happens to be Ogbomoso's most beautiful daughter, Mrs. Florence Ọlátéjú Abíọjẹ, and our children: Folashade, Oluwaseun, OlaOluwa, AdeOluwa, and our granddaughter, Oluwamayowa.
10. Last but not the least, I am grateful to everybody here present. *Béyàn ò fẹni kii wòran ẹni* – somebody who doesn't like you can never watch your display.

Agílintí lóní ẹ má tí. Ọkàbàbà lóní ẹ má bàjẹ. Dúdú wùwá. Pupa wùwá. Ojúméjì ní tòwerenjéje. Eşinşin ò mọni tíífi fowó lénila.

Chorus: *Báwabá légbèrún ahọn, àní òmàtó yin'lorun àwa báabá légbèrún ahọn (2ce).*

(That is an incantation, that you will never experience shame or disgrace; and a chorus acknowledging that if we have a thousand tongues, they are not sufficient to praise God adequately).

Notes

- ¹I culled much of the material under this subheading from “Beyond Biblical Objection: What Else is Wrong with Divination?” (Abioje, 2014:173-177).
- ²Peschke’s point is much discussed in *African Ancestral Heritage in Christian Interpretations* (Abioje, 2014: 28).
- ³Dream and vision are more elaborately discussed in “The State of Christian Prophecy in Yorubaland Today” (Abioje, 2003: 138-140).
- ⁴The content of this subheading is culled from “Critical Prophecy and Political Leadership in Biblical, African and Islamic worldviews” (Abioje, 2010:790-791).
- ⁵This title and content derive from “Critical Prophecy....” (Abioje, 2010:791-792).
- ⁶Title and content of subheading culled from “Critical Prophecy....” (Abioje, 2010:792-793).
- ⁷The content of this subheading is mainly from “Critical Prophecy....” (Abioje, 2010:794-795).
- ⁸This title and content derive mainly from “Critical Prophecy....” (Abioje, 2010:797).
- ⁹This title and content derive mainly from “Critical Prophecy....” (Abioje, 2010:798-799).
- ¹⁰I can only hope that many Muslim scholars share Salisu’s position; not quoted in the original article, “Critical Prophecy....” (Abioje, 2010).
- ¹¹The quotations from Lane are postscript to my earlier researches on prophecy.
- ¹²The content of this subheading resonates “Critical Prophecy....” (Abioje, 2010:799-801).

- ¹³The quotations from Ayegboyin and Ishola are postscript to my earlier researches on prophecy.
- ¹⁴Subheading and content with little addition from “Critical Prophecy....” (Abioje, 2010: 800).
- ¹⁵Culled with little modification from “Critical Prophecy....” (Abioje, 2010: 802).
- ¹⁶Culled with little modification from “Critical Prophecy....” (Abioje, 2010: 801-802).

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