



NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

COURSE CODE: CRS102

COURSE TITLE: THE MAJOR RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN NIGERIA

COURSE GUIDE

CRS102

THE MAJOR RELIGIOUS GROUPS IN NIGERIA

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Introduction

CTH102 Major Religious Groups in Nigeria

Major Religious Groups in Nigeria is designed for students to learn about the origin and functions of each group in Nigeria. Besides, it also teaches about the aims and objectives of each movement in the country. Furthermore, this course also examines the roles being played by each movement in Nigeria.

The following are the major religious groups in Nigeria. Christianity, Islam, traditional/Oriental. However, we shall discuss sub-groups that make up the named major religious groups in this course.

Within Christianity, we have the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN), The Bible Society of Nigeria (BSN), Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and Young Women Christian Association (YWCA).

Furthermore, within Islam groups we have following: The Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs, The Muslim Students Society of Nigeria. The Izālah Movement, The Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria and The Ahmadiyya Muslim Jama'at Movement, Nigeria. Within Traditional/Oriental groups we have Orunmila, Secret societies – Egungun, Eckankar, Hare Krishna, Bahai Brotherhood of the Cross and Star.

The course is available to all students who study religions in Nigeria. The course consists of sixteen (16) study units and is structured into three (3) modules of five (5) study units for the first module and the second module consists of six (6) study units. While the third module is made up of five (5) study units respectively. This course guide tells you briefly what the course is about, what you are expected to know in each study unit, what course materials you will be using and how you can work your way through these materials. It also emphasizes the need for tutor-marked assignments. There are periodic tutorial classes, among others, as shown in the table of contents of this document.

Finally, the course will be of great help to both Christian and Muslim students by providing means of religious understanding between the adherents of both faiths in Nigeria.

What You will Learn in this Course

The overall aim of the course: Major Religious Groups in Nigeria, is designed and produces to help students learn about Christianity, Islam, and Traditional/Oriental religious groups in Nigeria.

Also, it aims to indicate the roles played by the religious groups in the lives of humankind in Nigeria.

Accordingly, during the course, you will learn the importance of religion in the lives of Nigerians.

Course Aims

The aim of this course can be summarized as that of leading you to understand the origin of the three (3) major religious groups in Nigeria; why you must identify the contributions of the three (3) major religious groups towards religious harmony in Nigeria; the close link between the teachings of the three (3) religions in the country.

Course Objectives

To achieve the aims set out above, there is a set of objectives, both general and for each course as well as for the modules thereof. It is advisable that you pay attention to these objectives as they should assist you to assess the extent to which the materials at each stage meet the set objectives. The following are the overall objectives of the course, or what you are expected to know and do on the successful completion of the course:

- (a) State the origin of each of the major religious groups in Nigeria.
- (b) List some of the roles being played by each religious movement in the country.
- (c) Explain the aims and objectives of the three major religious groups in Nigeria.
- (d) Identify the achievements of the three (3) major religious groups in Nigeria.
- (e) Analyse the teachings of each religious groups in the country.

Working Through This Course

To successfully complete this course, you are required to read and carefully study all the sixteen (16) course units. Each course unit, as well as parts of thereof, has self-assessment exercise. Also at designated points in the course, you are required to complete, submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of the course, there

will be a final examination. The total marks will be shared between the assignments and the final examination, as explained below.

Course Materials

Course Guide
 Study Units
 References
 Assessment/Assignment Files Presentation Schedule
 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMAs)
 Final Examination and Grading
 Course Marking Scheme
 Course Overview
 How to get the most from this course
 Tutors and Tutorials
 Summary
 References
 Main

Study Units

The following is the outline of the fifteen (15) study units of this course, divided into three (3) modules of five (5) study units each.

Module 1 Major Christian Religious groups in Nigeria

Unit 1 The Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN)
 Unit 2 The Bible Society of Nigeria
 Unit 3 Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)
 Unit 4 Young Men's Christian Association
 Unit 5 Young Women Christian Association

Module 2 Major Religious Groups in Islam

Unit 1 The Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria
 Unit 2 Izālah Movement
 Unit 3 Tijaniyyah Movement
 Unit 4 Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria
 Unit 5 Ahamadiyya Muslim Jama'at Movement Nigeria

Module 3 Traditional/Oriental Religious Groups

Unit 1	Orunmilia
Unit 2	Secret Societies (Egungun Group)
Unit 3	Eckankar Group
Unit 4	The Hare Krishna Movement, and Bahai Movements
Unit 5	Brotherhood of the Cross and Star or Olumba Olumba Obu Movement

Textbooks and References

Azees Olabiyi, The Izālah and its Dawa activities in Nigeria, 1973 –1996 seminar Paper, Ibadan.

Abun-Nasr, J. M. The Tijaniyyah: A Sufi Order in the Modern World< London Oxford University Press, 1965.

Adisa Y. A., Life of Shaylah Ibrahim Niars Long Essay, Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan, 1978.

Ahamadiyya Muslim Jama'at Nigeria, A Brief History of Ahamadiyya Muslim in Nigeria in the Ar-Risallah Islamic communication (Nig) Ltd. Oyo State.

Muslims, merit award, 2005/2006.

“Allah”, Encyclopaedia of Islam Online 4/3/2007.

Awolalu and Dopamu, West African Traditional religion, Onibonoje Press and Book Industries (Nig.) limited, Ibadan Nigeria, 1979.

abcdef Esslemont J. E., Baha'ullah and the New era 5th ed. Wilmette, Illinois USA, Bahai, Publishing Trust 1980.

Christian Responsibility in an Independent Nigeria, Ibadan CCN 1960.

Christian Council of Nigeria Constitution, Article II, New constitution Approved, November, 2004.

Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica

Effendi Shoghi God Passes, Wilmette Illinois USA.

Bahai Publishing Trust, 1944.

Garret, T .S. and R. M. C. Jeffery Unity in Nigeria, London, Edinburgh House Press, 1965.

Oyalana A. S., Christian Witnessing in Nigeria, Common and Divided, Daystar Press, Ibadan, 2005.

Ola-Akande S. T. “The Unity of the Faith in Christian Brotherhood, Lecture at the first Plenary Session of CAN, Ibadan 27th – 29th April, 1983.

Y. A. Quadari, The Tijaniyya in Nigeria, Ph.D. Thesis, Ahmadu Bello, University, Zaria, 1986.

Excerpted from the Internet 4/3 /2007.

“Islam”, Encyclopaedia of Religion Online 4/3/2007.

“Quran”, Encyclopaedia of Islam Online 4/3/2007.

Interview

A.S. Oyalana, aged 70 years, Date: 3-3-2007, Place: Ibadan.

Mrs Hannah Haruna, aged 72 years, Date: 7-5-2004, Place: Okene.

Ahmed A.F. aged 60 years, Date: 8-5-2007, Place: Lagos.

Every unit contains a list of references and further readings. Try to get as many as possible of those textbooks and materials listed. The textbooks and materials are meant to deepen your knowledge of the course.

Assignment File

In this file, you will find all the details of the assignments you must submit to your tutor for marking. The mark you obtain in these assignments will count towards the final mark for this course, in the ratio of 30:70.

Self –Assessment Exercise (SAE)

Your assessment will be based in tutor-marked assignments (TMAs), seminars and written examination. You are expected to supply the information, knowledge, techniques acquired during the course. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor within the period of the deadline. These assignments will count for 30% of your total mark.

At the end of the course you will need to sit for a final written two-hour examination for the remaining 70% mark for the course.

Tutor-Marked-Assignments (TMAs)

Assignment questions for the units are compiled in the Assignment File. You should be able to complete your assignment from the information and material contained in your course study units.

When you have completed each assignment, send it, together with TMA to your tutor. Make sure that each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline given. If however, you cannot possibly complete your assignment on time, contact your tutor before the assignment is due, to discuss the possibility of an extension.

Final Examination and Grading

The two-hour examination will consist of questions which reflect the type of self-testing practice exercise and tutor-marked problems you have come across. All areas of the course will be assessed.

Course Marking Grading

The final course mark will be distributed as follows:

Assessment	Mark
Tutor-Marked Assignments	Four assignments, best three marks of the four counts at 30% of course marks.
Final Examination	70%
Total	100%

Table 1: Course Mark Allocations.

Course Overview

Table 2 brings together the units, the weeks to complete them and the accompanying assignments.

Table 2: Course Organizer

Unit	Title of Work	Weeks Activity	Assessment (End of Unit)
Module 1 Major Christian Religious Groups in Nigeria			
Unit 1	The Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN)	Week 1	Assignment 1

Unit 2	The Bible Society of Nigeria	Week 2	Assignments 2
Unit 3	Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)	Week 3	Assignments 3
Unit 4	Young Men's Christian Association	Week 4	Assignment 4
Unit 5	Young Women Christian Association	Week 5	Assignment 5
Module 2 Major Religious Groups in Islam			
Unit 1	The Muslim Students' Society of Nigeria	Week 7	Assignment 7
Unit 2	Izālah Movement	Week 8	Assignment 8
Unit 3	Tijaniyyah Movement	Week 9	Assignment 9
Unit 4	Ansar-Ud-Deen Society of Nigeria	Week 10	Assignment 10
Unit 5	Ahamadiyya Muslim Jama'at Movement Nigeria	Week 11	Assignment 11
Module 3 Traditional/Oriental Religious Groups			
Unit 1	Orunmila	Week 12	Assignment 12
Unit 2	Secret Societies (Egungun Group)	Week 13	Assignment 13
Unit 3	Eckankar Group	Week 14	Assignment 14
Unit 4	The Hare Krishna Movement, and Bahai Movements	Week 15	Assignment 15
Unit 5	Brotherhood of the Cross and Star or Olumba Olumba Obu Movement	Week 16	Assignment 16
	Examination	Week 17	
Total		17 Weeks	

How to get the most from this Course

In distance learning, the study units replace the University lecturer. This is one of the advantages of distance learning that you can read and work through specifically designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suit you best. You should see them (study unit materials) as reading lectures, instead of listening to them in the classroom. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some reading to do, the study units also tell you when to read your text materials.

You are provided exercise to do at appropriate points just as a lecturer might give you class exercises.

Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other

units and the course as a whole. Next to this is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit.

These learning objectives are meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the stated objectives. If this is made a habit, then you will significantly improve your chance of passing the course. However, when you run into any difficulty, telephone your tutor or visit the Study centre nearest to you for assistance. Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need help, therefore, don't hesitate to call and ask him to provide it.

The following is a practical strategy, for working through the course: Read the course Guide thoroughly, several times to ensure that the message gets really across to you.

- (i) Organize a study schedule. Refer to the 'course overview' for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units and how the assignments relate to the units. Important information, e.g. details of your tutorials and the date of the first day of the semester, is available at the Study Centre.
- (ii) Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason why students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late or help.
- (iii) Assemble the study material. Information about what you need for a unit is given in the overview at the beginning of each unit.
- (iv) Work through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the units you will be instructed as to what to read from them. Keep in touch with the Study centre. Up-to-date course information will be continuously available there.
- (v) Well before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before due dates), check on the assignment at the Study Centre and take note of your next required assignment. Keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignments carefully and as they fall due. Do not allow backlog. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due date.
- (vi) Again, on the exercises/assignments, you will discover that these are placed both within (under each major section) and at the end of the unit. Some of the sectional exercises are also used as TMAs at the end. You are free to

undertake the assignment either section by section or together at the end. The assignments are however graded per unit and not section by section.

- (vii) Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials again and again and/or consult your tutor.
- (viii) When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then go on to the next unit. Proceed, unit by unit, through the course and try to plan your study such that you keep yourself on schedule.
- (ix) When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutor marked assignment from also written on the assignment consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.
- (x) After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this course Guide).

Tutors and Tutorials

There are 8 hours of tutorials provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, times and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group.

Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter and provide assistance to you during the course. You must mail your tutor-marked assignments to your tutor before the due date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your tutor and returned to you as soon as possible. Do not hesitate to contact your tutor by telephone, e-mail or by a visit to the Study Centre, if you need help. The following might be circumstances in which you would find help necessary. Contact your tutor if:

- (i) You do not understand any part of the study units or the assignment(s) readings
- (ii) You have difficulty with any exercise
- (iii) You have a question or problem with an assignment with your tutor's comments, on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to have ace-to-face contact with your tutor and ask questions, which are answered instantly. You can

also raise any problem encountered in the course of your Study at the tutorials. To gain the maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a question list before attending them. You will learn a lot from participating actively in the discussions.

We wish you success in the programme.

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MODULE 1 Major Christian Religious Groups in Nigeria

Unit 1 The Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN)

Unit 2 The Bible Society of Nigeria

Unit 3 Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN)

Unit 4 Young Men's Christian Association

Unit 5 Young Women Christian Association

UNIT 1 THE CHRISTIAN COUNCIL OF NIGERIA (CCN)**CONTENTS**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

 3.1 The origin of CCN Group

 3.2 The Formation of Regional Committees

 3.3 Achievements of the Christian Council of Nigeria

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the origin of the Christian Council of Nigeria. It will further state some of the achievements of the religious group in Nigeria.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After completing this unit, you should be able to:

- State the origin of the Christian Council Group
- Identify the contribution of the group towards the spread of gospel in Nigeria.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.1 The Origin of Christian Council of Nigeria**

In 1929, the Anglican, Methodists, Presbyterian, Baptist and Sudan Interior Missionaries assembled themselves at Oyo town in Oyo (now Oyo State), Nigeria, to consider an Education Law which the government was about to pass into Law. These group was chaired by the right Reverend Melville Jones of the Anglican denomination. He was Bishop of Lagos Anglican Diocese, Nigeria. The proposed law sought to separate religion from formal education in Nigeria. The religious groups that came together to consider the above mentioned issue worshipped together. They had fellowship together without denominational difference. Among these delegates from different denominations that came together under the umbrella of Bishop Jones, suggested that their fellowship must be permanent. Part of the Christian Religious Groups in Nigeria. For these reasons, the first meeting of all attended members of various denominations of the previous meeting in 1929 met and held another meeting in 1930 under the umbrella of Bishop Jones in Lagos.

However, most of the missionaries that attended such meeting were representatives of overseas churches. The meeting that was held in 1930 paved way for the members to discuss spiritual growth of the church in Nigeria. This led to the formation of what is now known and called “The Christian Council of Nigeria”.

3.2 The Formation of Regional Committees

In order for the religious group to keep on monitoring the spiritual growth of the church in Nigeria, the body arrived at forming the policy of dividing the country into regional sectors in 1930. The Church Council of Nigeria set up Regional Committees for Southern Christian group. But the group left the Northern Christian members of the group to form their own committee that will look over the spiritual growth of the church in the northern Nigeria.

The Northern Christians therefore established their own committee, known as the “Northern Christian council”. The Northern Christian Council however included other groups that had joined the Christian Council in the Southern part of Nigeria in their own group. The Southern Regional Committees to pay attention to the immediate issues that might have affect the spiritual growth of the church in their areas.

3.1.2 Achievements of the Christian Council of Nigeria

The achievements of the Christian Council of Nigeria. The achievements of this council include:

- (i) The uniting of Christians as one body in Jesus Christ in Nigeria.
- (ii) The religious group had contributed to the following:

The preparation of Christian literature, Evangelistic campaigns, the training of Youth Work leaders, training chaplains at the hospital at Umuahia, appointment of representatives to federal government of Nigeria on matters that affect religious freedom, education, medical work and stability of Democratic Government in Nigeria.

- (iii) The religious body encouraged the Christian community in the University of Ibadan to build the Chapel of the Resurrection of the University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
- (iv) The group encouraged extensive evangelism of the country.
- (v) Christians were encouraged to embark on effective prayers on March 9th and 16th 1986 to attack the common opponent of Christianity in the country.
- (vi) The Group has established the Christian Council Literature Department in Nigeria. The department is engaged in book and magazine publishing. The department is registered as Daystar Press (Publishers) in 1960.
- (vii) The group educated Christian at the grassroots on the issue of organization of Islamic Countries (OIC).
- (viii) The religious group also established the Institute of church and Society at Ibadan. It serves as the Conference Centre for the Christian Council of Nigeria. The functions of this centre are to stimulate the thoughts of Christian and the citizens of Nigeria to more enlightenment of the Word of God in relation to practical life. This is done through conferences, consultations, workshops, discussion groups, retreats and various projects at the Institute. The Institute has embarked on the Leaf Protein Project and the programme for Christian – Muslim relations in Africa. The programme for Christian – Muslim relations is concerned with the fostering better understanding between Christians and Muslims. This also encourages personal relationships among the participants of the programme that is held in the Institute.

The Christian Council of Churches in Nigeria has encouraged Christians to embark on the Jerusalem Pilgrimage.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt that the Christian Council of Churches Nigeria is a religious group which fosters spiritual well-being of all Christians in Nigeria. The body or group began with the missionary that was mentioned earlier in this unit.

5.0 SUMMARY

You have understood the following from this unit:

- The Christian Council of Churches Nigeria, has brought from all over Nigeria Christians to unite as a body in Jesus Christ.
- The group has trained many youths on evangelistic campaigns leadership and hospital visitations.
- The religious groups have established the Chapel of the Resurrection of the University of Ibadan to promote Christianity in the campus.
- The group has encouraged Christians to embark on Jerusalem Pilgrimage.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

State the origin of Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) group.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss the achievements of the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) group.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Oyalana, A.S. (2005) *Christian Witnessing in Nigeria, Common and Divided*, Daystar Press, Ibadan.

Ola-Akande, S.T. (1983), "The Unity of the Faith in Christian

Brotherhood", Lecture at the First Plenary Session of CAN, Ibadan, 27th – 29th April, 1983.

Garret, T.S. and R.M.C. Jeffrey (1965) *Unity in Nigeria* (London: Edinburgh House Press).

Christian Responsibility in an Independent Nigeria (Ibadan CCN, 1960).

Christian Council of Nigeria constitution Article II, Ibid. Article III New Constitution Approved, November, 2004.

UNIT 2 THE BIBLE SOCIETY OF NIGERIA**CONTENTS**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 A Brief History of the Bible Society of Nigeria

3.2 The aims and objectives of the Bible Society of Nigeria

3.3 Membership of the religious Group

3.4 Achievement of the Religious Group

3.5 Methods used by the Bible Society of Nigeria to achieve her aims and objectives

3.6 The roles of Church Denominations in the Bible Society of Nigeria

3.7 Types and Fees of Membership

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit discusses the inauguration of the Bible society in Nigeria. It also explains the aims of the religious group. Furthermore, the unit enables you know some of the relevant roles that have been played by the Bible Society of Nigeria to bring peace and unity to Nigerians.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- State who the Bible Society of Nigeria are;
- Identify the achievements of the Bible Society of Nigeria.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.1 A Brief History of the Bible Society of Nigeria**

The Bible Society of Nigeria is a member of the 168 bodies of the United Bible Societies worldwide. The Bible Society of Nigeria was formally inaugurated on February 8, 1966 and is the main source of scriptures distribution in Nigeria.

3.2 The Aims and Objectives of the Bible Society of Nigeria

Below are the stated aims and objectives of the Bible Society of Nigeria:

- (1) To promote the widest possible distribution and reading of the Holy Scripture.
- (2) To initiate and promote the translation, publication, distribution and use of the scripture in as many languages and dialects of Nigeria as may be considered necessary, in consultation and cooperation with the churches concerned.
- (3) To encourage and assist the correct and idiomatic translation and revision of the scripture and to ensure the fidelity and clarity of which it is responsible.
- (4) To publish any version of the scripture or any part thereof only after approval has been given by the National Board at Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- (5) To publish the scriptures without doctrinal notes and or comments.
- (6) To be a member of the United Bible Societies.
- (7) To work with the local churches and seek their active participation in all the activities of the society especially in translation, publication, distribution and financial support.
- (8) To provide news/information concerning the scriptures and the works of the United Bible Societies.
- (8) To solicit financial assistance from individuals, churches and other groups and to receive and retain endowment for the work of the society.
- (9) To undertake the production of the Bible as well as other Christian literature to meet local needs.
- (10) To establish a printing press.
- (11) To do all or any of the above as principles, trustees, or agents or otherwise and either alone or in conjunction with any other body or persons and either by or through agents, trustees or otherwise.

3.3 Membership of the Religious Group

Membership of the Bible Society of Nigeria is open to every Christian who confesses Jesus Christ as his/her personal Saviour and accepts the Bible in its entirety as the inspired Word of God in Nigeria. He or she would obtain an application form for membership at the Bible Society of Nigeria office at Apapa, Lagos or through the internet www.biblesocietynigeria.org.

3.4 Achievements of the Religious group in Nigeria

The Bible Society of Nigeria have translated and published numerous Bibles in various Nigerian languages for both the Protestants and Roman Catholics.

3.5 Methods used by the Bible Society of Nigeria to Achieve

Her Aims and Objectives

Bible Society Auxiliaries are created by the group. These auxiliaries are formed by members in group of churches in any given locality uniting to assist the Bible Society work on voluntary basis under the leadership of a Committee elected by them. All members must belong to an auxiliary for proper identification and active involvement in the activities of the society.

The National Board consists of two members from each area. The body is responsible for policy making. The National Board also created areas out of the auxiliaries that are available in a given place. Each area is managed by a committee. Members of a given area are made up of at most four (4) representatives elected from each auxiliary in that area. The group also creates zones. These zones comprise of a number of areas which elect two representatives to the National Executive Committee. The National Executive Committee directs the business activities of the Bible Society of Nigeria. In addition to this, the body makes recommendations of man policy and administrative decisions to the National Board for approval. It also ensures that the management executes all decisions through the assistance of some advisory committees set up by her.

3.6 The Roles of Church Denominations in the Bible Society of Nigeria

The affiliated church denominations to the group in Nigeria do allow their local church members to celebrate the Bible Week in their locations. This enables everybody in such areas to be aware of the existence of the Bible Society in their towns, cities or villages. The annual celebration week is also used to raise funds for the Bible Society's work in Nigeria. By doing so, the affiliated denominations

promote Bible cause in Nigeria. The printed scriptures are distributed to newly converted Christians free of charge.

3.7 Types and Fees of Membership

Life Membership for the Christian couple costs N1,000.00 (one thousand naira) While the Life Membership for a single Christian costs N750.00 (seven hundred and fifty naira). The Associate Membership cost N 250.00 (two hundred and fifty naira). This comprises children whose age is under 18 years in the Christendom.

The annual membership is meant for the adult and it is renewable yearly. It costs N 300.00(three hundred naira) for such a member of the group. Members' Annual Subscription minimum of N100.00 (one hundred naira) is used to support the work of the group annually the adherent of Christian religious group. Special Life Members (single) costs N5,000.00 (five thousand naira) (minimum) while couple costs N5,500.00 (five thousand five hundred naira).

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt about the Bible society of Nigeria. You have also discovered the roles which the group played by making the Bible available for the people to make use of in Nigeria.

MODULE 3 Traditional/Oriental Religious Groups

Unit 1 Orunmilia

Unit 2 Secret Societies i.e. (Egungun Group)

Unit 3 Eckankar Group

Unit 4 The Hare Krishna Movement and Bahai Movements

Unit 5: The Brotherhood of the Cross and Star or Olumba Olumba Obu Movement.

UNIT 1 ORUNMILIA**CONTENTS**

1.0 Introduction

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 3.1 The Meaning of Ifa

 3.2 The Role of Ifa

 3.3 The Creed of Orunmilaism

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the meaning of Ifa. It will discuss the role of Ifa to mankind. This unit is very important because it sets the pace for other subsequent units of this course. Therefore the specific objectives and outline below are what you should expect to learn from this unit.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the origin of Ifa
- Analyse the roles of Ifa to mankind.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Meaning of Ifa

Ifa could be said to be the religion or divinity brought into the Cosmos by Orunmila. Ayo Salami says Ifa is the custodian of the deity, moral, economic, language, origin and metaphysical orders of the Yoruba culture, and of its believers throughout the world. The basics involve the priest or the mediator called Babalawo. Babalawo is the elder in the priesthood order who is consulted by clients for solutions to life's numerous problems. Ekundayo also mentioned that Ifa is an ancient monument where the culture of the Yoruba people is encapsulated enthroned and entombed.

It is much more than Geomancy in that it is not only divinatory. It also embodies the Beliefs, Religion, History, Sociology and Ecology of the people. It therefore diagnoses, treats, adjudicates, arbitrates, guides, advises, instructs, teaches, explains as well attempts to unravel the mystery of existence in this world.

3.2 The Roles of Ifa

Ifa is an instrument of information, attached to that which is asked of him. He is the solicitude of the Creator for his creation. Ifa is the Creator, knowledge and destiny of the laws imposed for the resolution of the divine powers of the tri-monogenic universal law, which are Olorun, Eleda, and Olodumare, the ones who by mutual agreement created in concert its perfect work that is the creation of the universe. Within this vast interstellar space with its perfect work and supreme architecture, is the planet that is called earth. It is a given that the perfect creation does not have errors to measure that they were making the mysterious transformation. This began the birth of IFA. That was his creation, his laws his destiny and finally a conjunction of historical knowledge and a foundation of these deities, which in turn began the scientific work of creating what he call nature, a compendium of all that which breathes, moves, feels, grows, animals and vegetables or minerals. That is Ifa. Ifa is the mysterious work of the deities. Where each time that they "touched" or created something, it was written or recorded in the mysterious diary of the deities.

Albert Surgy says Ifa is the unified assembly of all the dead initiates separated from their descendants by a great number of generations, speaking with one voice. They have acquired the greatest detachment vis-à-vis from this world and consequently the capacity to watch the general interest of their group. (Excerpted from Kekere Awo Ifayemi Internet 13/4/2007).

Ifa is the Divine Message of Olodumare (Almighty) to mankind. Ifa is the word of Olodumare. Ifa transcends all the cultures and traditions of all things – man, animals, plants, rocks, water, wind and fire. Ifa explains the basis for the existence of things past, present and future. Ifa prescribes the spiritual / physical solutions to all problems. Ifa is the first, oldest and truest religion of mankind. Orunmila, harbinger of divine message of Olodumare. (Ifa, is thus the first and truest guardian of Universal secrets of existence. Orunmila, in all things spiritual and esoteric is the deputy of Olodumare.

All Orisa worship and veneration are acceptable, provided they are subservient to the worship of Olodumare as outlined by Ifa religion. No guidelines or signposts to salvation can lead to the path of divine truth except that outlined by Orunmila.

3.3 The Creed of Orunmilaism

Ifayemi says, Orunmilaism believes in God. Orunmilaism believes in the greatness and the Almightyness of God. It believes in the descending of God into the world as Orunmila. Orunmilaism worships Orisa. Orunmila sets down doctrines and precepts for mankind. It believes in the creative force of God in the creation of the world and mankind and in Him as Orunmila witnessing Himself. It believes in Godliness and good deeds. It believes in sacrifice and propitiation. It believes in the eternity of the soul. It believes the soul is accountable to God for its deeds. It believes the flesh will receive blessing or punishments here on earth for all deeds. It believes in honour and due regard and respects and humble submission for parents and elders. It believes in the Catechism of the Creed.

Babalawo is the high priest of Orisa, which the Orunmilarinas worship. He is versed in the rituals, the love and history of the Yoruba Tradition Religion called Ifa. Babalawo is a craftsman who has acquired the fine skills of the preparation of medications (Curative, calming and preventing for mankind). He is a redeemer from the (Ajogun) evil forces of things material and spiritual systems. In many Ifa verses, the client is full of praise for his and her Babalawo after the feat has been performed. The Babalawo in turn then praises Ifa who then in turn sings the praises of Olodumare the Almighty. (Excerpted from Ifayemi Internet 13/4/20070).

4.0 CONCLUSION

Having gone through this unit, you would have noticed that Ifa is a religion that was brought into the world by Orunmila. You might have also observed that Orunmilaism believes in God. It believes in the assumption of Attributes and names of God to fulfil His Will.

5.0 SUMMARY

You are now better informed of the following points from your study of this unit:

Ifa is the Divine message of Olodumare (Almighty) to mankind. Ifa transcends all the cultures and traditions of all things including man, animals, rocks, water, wind and fire. Orunmila in all things spiritual and esoteric is the deputy of Olodumare.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

What are the functions of Orunmila to mankind in the world?

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

State the Creed of Orunmilaism?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Excerpts: Ifayemi 123 p @ net scape. Net . “Kekere” Awo Ifayemi a servant and priest of Ifa Internet 3/4/2007.

Excerpts: Dr. Jose Acosta Santos, Ifaism and Christianity: possible common Origin and their synthesis in Cuba 1996 International

Anthropology Workshop Anthropology Workshop Anthropology

Centre Academy of Sciences of Cuba Oral Presentation, Havana

Internet 13/4/2007.

UNIT 2 SECRET SOCIETIES**CONTENTS**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Secret Societies in Nigeria

3.2 The Egungun Group

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The most prominent groups among the traditional groups are the secret societies.

In this unit, we shall discuss the purpose of having secret societies and their functions in Nigeria. In the unit, we shall consider the Egungun group only hence it has religious background in Nigeria.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- State the importance of the secret societies in Nigeria
- Identify some of the societies
- List category and functions of secret societies in Nigeria.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.1 Secret Societies in Nigeria**

The secret societies were instituted for the purpose of self-preservation and for the preservation of the community which has members. The groups enforced maintained traditions, customs and beliefs of their religion. The movements determined ritual behaviour and regulated social attitudes. In this way, they became the “power” of the community where they functioned.

In addition to these, members of the groups usually claimed to possess esoteric knowledge and mysterious power denied to the other members of the community. For this reason, they considered themselves superior in intelligence and ability to the other members of the community, to the effect that the non-members were impelled to seek admission to the societies so that they might be protected against surroundings dangers.

The secret societies cannot be regarded as evil. But they exist for the well-being of the community as we enumerate below the category and the functions of these societies. However, any secret society can be dangerous if it gets out of hand. Since most of the activities are secret, and since only the initiated know anything about their doings, the societies can engage in nefarious anti-social deeds without the community of men and women knowing it, or having a proof of it, unless such deed become glaring. They can embark on selfish ends. They can commit brutal judicial murders, bully and exploit the uninitiated and the under-privileged. They can even threaten the well-being of the community and the individual which and who, are expected to be protected. Thus they can perform any outrageous deed without people knowing it, since the activities of the societies are not well defined and their doings cannot be verified (Awolalu and Dopamu 1979, pp.220-221).

3.2 The Egungun Group

Egungun is an ancestral cult showing the beliefs of the Yoruba in life after death. An Egungun is believed to be the spirit of a deceased person, who has returned from heaven to earth to visit his people. Hence he is called "The Citizen of Heaven". The Egungun society consists of masked figures who represent the dead. The dress of an Egungun gives people the impression that he is from the spirit world. He is robed from head to foot in a variety of dresses, and he sees only through a net covering the face. The Egungun is accompanied by atokun. On the morning of the festival the people go to the Central Egungun Shrine and from there, the real festival begins. The Egungun goes round the town of the adherents.

The festival is an occasion of joy for the adherents. The adherents use leaves of beans for communal meals during the annual festival. The Egungun also feature prominently at funeral ceremonies of the adherents. They enter the house of the deceased, imitate his voice, receive gifts and bless the members of his family. They represent messengers from the spirit world that came to enquire into the general well-being of the family of the deceased. They then depart, bearing messages from the living members of the family to the deceased.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In Nigeria, secret societies were instituted for the benefits of the adherents and their communities. The group of the movement maintained traditions, customs and beliefs of their religion. Egungun is an ancestral cult, showing the beliefs of the Yoruba in life after death.

5.0 SUMMARY

The most prominent groups among the traditional groups are the secret societies. They are instituted for the purpose of self-preservation and for the preservation of the community which has adherents. The Egungun is an ancestral cult that shows the beliefs of the Yoruba in life after death. It features annually in the community of the adherents. Besides, the Egungun features at funeral ceremony of the adherents in the community that practises it.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Discuss the Egungun festival.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Identify the roles of the secret societies in Nigeria.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Awolalu and Dopamu, West African Traditional Religion Onibonoje

Press and Book Industries (Nig.), Limited, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1979.

King M.Q. Religions of Africa Harper and Row Publishers, New York, 1970.

Parrinder E.G., West African Religion, Epworth Press, London, 1904.

Talbort P.A., The peoples of Southern Nigeria, Vol.II Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., London, 1969.

UNIT 3 ECKANKAR RELIGIOUS GROUP**CONTENTS**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 The Main Aims of the Group

3.2 What is Eckankar?

3.3 Defining Eckankar

3.4 The Doctrines of Eckankar

3.5 Sri Harold Klemp

3.6 The Teachings of Eckankar

3.7 Why Eckankar Religion Remains

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the purpose of Eckankar on this earth. It will discuss the reality of God in your life. The unit also enlighten you about the knowledge of God which you have within you.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the main purpose of Eckankar
- Analyse the teachings of Eckankar religious group
- Describe how to do things out of pure love in order to improve your life and find a measure of happiness which you need to know.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT**3.1 The Main Aims of the Group**

The main aims of the Eckankar religious group are to teach you how to get to heaven. Besides, it aims to give you the tools to explore your dreams. Furthermore, the religion also aims to help you to have more love and understand past and present relationships. And to gain the spiritual insights that improve the equality of your life everyday. The religion is a spiritual adventure of a lifetime. Paul Twitchell introduced it in 1965 to the world.

3.2 (i) What is Eckankar?

Eckankar is a religion for the individual. It is designed to help individuals find their own way back to God through direct personal experiences.

(ii) What are Eckists?

Eckists come from all walks of life. Their common denominator is a love of God and commitment to spiritual enfoldment. They are of every race and religious background. They are responsible members of their community. The adherents of Eckankar religion accepted the religion in order to find answers to questions which the orthodox and traditional teachings could not find solutions to [Excerpted Harold Klemp, Religion of the Light and Sound of God, Eckankar Doctrines Cramer, Todd 11, Munson Doug. 1995]

3.3 Defining Eckankar

The word ECK means The Divine, or Holy, Spirit, The Audible Life Stream; the essence of God which supports and sustains all life; the Life Force. Eckankar is a Religion of the Light and Sound of God. He appears to mankind through the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit can appear to mankind as Light, which is a reflection of the atoms of God moving in space, or as sound, which is the Audible Life Current that carries Soul back home to God.

3.4 The Doctrines of Eckankar

The adherents of Eckankar religion claimed that each person is a soul. Besides, a classic soul travel, experience worries less, knows more love, feels energized and changes bad habits.

(i) Dreams: Another area which the Eckankarists believe is that soul never sleeps. While the Mahanta is the Dream Master. Dreams help us in daily life. Dreams help spiritual unfoldment. Karma can be resolved in the Dream State. In addition to these, Dream symbols are individual. Dream characters represent aspects of the Dreamer. In this universe, there are many levels of Dreaming. Dreams can prophesy. Keep a dream Journal, but the purpose of Dreams is to bring the individual closer to the Light and Sound of God.

(ii) Karma: The law of Karma is scientific and logical. Understanding karma can liberate the adherents of this religion from being a victim. The adherents can be free of karma. Karma metes out perfect justice. The adherents are responsible. Experience

teaches the adherents their religion. The adherents receive spiritual maturity as they realise that they are the creator of their own lives.

(iii) Reincarnation: Near – Death and out of-body-experiences have helped people live life more fully. Heaven exists on other planes. Reincarnation helps to explain aspects of our personalities. Reincarnation is a widely held belief among the adherents of Eckankar Religion. According to them, soul is always moving forward. We have been here before, they claimed; and that there is a reason for the veil separating us (mankind) from the past. We often return to be with Family and Friends from before. Past –Life memory is accessible. The physical plane is a school of life.

(iv) The God Worlds of Eck: In the God worlds of Eckankar, soul travel makes it possible to achieve God – Realization in this Lifetime. In the words, in question, the soul is a plane. Therefore, there is gain in spiritual understanding from the Temples of Golden wisdom. In it, we have the Astral plane too. In God worlds, we have the causal plane. Likewise, there is a mental plane in such worlds. In these worlds, there is the Etheric plane that exists in them.

(v) Love: The divine Love needs no words to communicate. Besides, Love is simple: The adherents must learn that love is simple. They know greater Love through the golden heart.

(vi) The Eck – Vidya: The Eckankar adherents believe that man always wants to know the Future. They also believe that Life is cyclical. Eck – vidya looks into soul records; namely: past, present and future. This is a warring planet, but that is alright. They also believe that one must not use knowledge to manipulate others. Man has a golden tongued wisdom.

(vii) Adherents Solve Problems: The adherents have the knowledge or wisdom of knowing when to give up. They claimed that Hu helps one to do so. They also use the Shariyat Technique for well-being and happiness.

(viii) Initiations: Initiation links soul to the Audible Life stream. Each adherents of Eckankar enters it with a different state of consciousness. However, initiation pace and frequency vary. According to them, initiation corresponds to a different plan of

existence. The adherents believe that consciousness has to be earned moment to moment. They also believe that the rules change from plane to plane. They stressed that the real initiation occurs inside. Initiations are private and sacred. Each invitation is an invitation from the Living Eck master to take the next step on the way home to God.

(ix) The Eck Masters: The Living Eck master belongs to the order of the vairagi; providing guidance home to God. According to Harold Klemp, the adherents can be free from fear. This is because they are never given more than what they can handle. The Living Eck master grants total spiritual freedom to his students. With the Living Eck master, the adherents experience only what is necessary for spiritual growth. The adherents have the Mahanta as the inner form of the Living Eck master. The Living

Eck master is not worshipped. The Living Eck master takes on Karma but doesn't relieve it. It is natural to question. The Eckists's goal is spiritual mastery.

(x) The Play of Soul: Eckankar is a Living religion. The Adherents do prove it themselves. In it, they understood who they are. They become liberated from being the victim. Besides, to them, life becomes miraculous. It is only the inner master that acts as the Light through the darkness for the adherents of the religion. The adherents believe in love and responsibility to all life.

3.5 Sri Harold Klemp

Sri Harold Klemp is the spiritual leader of Eckankar, the Mahanta, and the Living Eck Master. His inspiring and practical approach to spiritually help thousands of people finds greater freedom, wisdom, and love. His teachings uplift and help them recognize their own experiences with the Light and Sound of God.

3.6 The Teachings of Eckankar

The teachings of Eckankar are as follows:

(i) There are many routes we can take to heaven. God has established so many different paths and means for the adherents of the Eckankar religion. It is the spiritual exercises of Eck that do help each of them to find his/her own custom – made approach to the kingdom of God.

(ii) This earth is a big old schoolhouse. In fact, so is this entire material level of existence called the physical plane. For this reason, the adherents learn to find their ways from this universe back to God.

(iii) The teachers of Eckankar religion are as follows: Moses, Jesus Christ, Muhammad, Confucius, Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster, Socrates, Copernicus, and Martin.

- Another teaching of this group is that you need to master your life; you must apply self-discipline and have a true desire to experience God for yourself. Your experience with the spiritual Light and Sound of God will enrich your life and help you put daily problems into loving perspective.

- Humans have been inspired by the Holy Spirit to reach spiritual understanding since the beginning of civilization. The Holy Scriptures of Eckankar is known as the Shariyat – Ki – Sugmad, which means “Way of the Eternal”.

3.7 Why Eckankar Religion Remains

Eckankar religion has the key teacher and mentor. He is the Living Eck Master. Eckankar is never without a living master. This ensures the religion remains pure and appropriate for the consciousness of the day. It avoids the theological disputes and political maneuverings so common in large organizations. And it allows the spiritual student to see and hear a teacher who has travelled the path to self – and – God – Realization [Excerpted; Paul Twitchell, 1965].

4.0 CONCLUSION

You have learnt about the Religion of Eckankar in this unit. Eckankar Religion is an individual one. It teaches you how to go back to god. Harold Klemp is the spiritual head of the religion.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have understood the following facts:

Eckankar religion has the key teacher and mentor. This encourages the religion to exist in the universe. The adherents have the knowledge or wisdom of knowing when to give up.

Initiation links soul to the Audible Life Stream. It occurs in the inner mind of each adherent. The Universe is a big old schoolhouse. Each adherent needs to master his/her own life. He/she must be disciplined and have a true desire to experience God.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Write note on Sri Harold Klemp.

Solution:

Sri Harold Klemp is the spiritual leader of Eckankar, the Mahanta, and the Living Eck Master. His inspiring and practical approach to spirituality helps thousands of people find greater freedom, wisdom, and lo. His teachings uplift and help them recognize their own experiences with the Light and Sound of God.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

List the teachings of Eckankar religion.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Harold Klemp, The Art of Spiritual Dreaming

Harold Klemp, What is Spiritual Freedom?

Harold Klemp, Cloak of Consciousness.

Excerpted from Internet.

UNIT 4 THE HARE KRISHNA MOVEMENT AND BAHAI**CONTENTS**

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

3.1 The meaning of the Movement

3.2 The History of the Movement

3.3 The Style Life of the Adherents of the Movement

3.4 Other Spiritual References of the Movement

3.4.1 The Bahai Faith

3.4.2 Beliefs

3.4.3 Bahai Faith and the Unity of Religion

3.4.4 Bahai Faith and the Unity of Humanity

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the movement of the Hare Krishna, the meaning, the History, the Style, Life of the adherents and other scripture of the religion, and Bahai teachings.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Explain the origin of the Hare Krishna Movement and Bahai;
- Analyse the teachings of the movement and the Bahai;

3.0. MAIN CONTENT**3.1 The Meaning of the Movement**

A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada defined Hare Krishna thus:

“Hara” means “the energy of God”. While “Krishna” and Rama means “God is who All-Attractive” and “He who is the source of All Pleasure”. In addition to these, he says “Rama” can also refer to “Radha-Raman. The word “Rama” is another name of Krishna meaning beloved of Radha or as a shortened form of Balarama, which refers to Krishna’s first expansion.

3.2 The History of the Movement

Bhaktivedanta swami Prabhupada began the public chanting of the Hare Krishna mantra in India around 1921. Upanishad Narada was instructed by Brahma to say out loudly the following words of mantra:

Hare Krishna Hare Krsihna

Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama

Rama Rama Hare Hare.

It is believed that when the adherents recite the above words aloud, or speak, or mediate upon the words, they are expressing the love of God in their hearts. The love of god probably referred to the word “Krishna”, which form part of the name of the Movement. “Hare” can be interpreted as either the vocative of Hari. Hari is another name of Vishnu, which means “golden one”. The adherents of the movement recite the mantra out repeatedly or softly to himself or herself. He or she could also recite the mantra softly to himself or herself in the mind.

According to K.N. Aiyar, “Krishna “consciousness” is not an artificial imposition on the mind of the adherent. But it is original energy of the living entity. Between 1960 and 1970, the devotees of the movement appeared on the street of Western cities, dancing and chanting with drums and cymbals, wearing saffron ahotis or colourful saris selling Bhagavad Gita. The devotees were members of the international society for Krishna consciousness that was founded by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. The International Society for Krishna consciousness (ISKCON) was the first organized Vaishnva group to make a large impression of movement outside India where it started. The Theologians classified Hare Krishna devotees as practitioners of Bhakti Yoga. They also referred to them as Gaudiya Vaishnavas. This is because the devotees follow a line of gurus descending from Chaitanya Mahaprabhu who appeared in Bengal. Vaishnavism is derived from Hindu religion.

3.3 The Style Life of the Adherents of the Movement

Very many adherents of the ‘Hare Krishna’ live according to strict rules of the movement. The initiates take vows to abstain from all forms of recreational drugs and intoxicants from eating meat, fish and eggs. They also abstain from gambling, and from all sexual relations except for purposes of procreation within marriage. On the other hand, the non-initiates of the movement are left to his or her own discretion to follow the regulative principles of the laid down standard principles of the society.

The adherents' elevation and joy are derived from chanting God's holy names that were mentioned in the subheading 3.2 in this unit.

The Hare Krishna mantra is one of the famous songs among the UK singles charts on occasions.

3.4 Other Scriptural References of the Movement

The practice of the chanting the Hare Krishna mantra or songs are found in the Puranic, the Pancaratra and Vaishnava literature. We quote an example of such mantra thus:

- "All the grievous sins are removed for one who worships Lord Sri Hari, the Lord of all lords, and chants the holy name, the maha-mantra padina purana: svarga khanda 50.6.

- "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Hare Hare: Whoever chants this mantra, even neglectfully will attain the supreme goal of life. Of this there is no doubt" – Agni Purana.

- This sixteen-name, thirty-two syllable mantra is the maha-mantra in the Age of Kali by which all living beings can be delivered. One should never abandon chanting this maha-mantra" – Ananta – sambita.

- "About this divinely spiritual Maha-mantra, which delivers one from material existence, the original guru. Lord Brahma has said "The srutis have declared this mantra to be the best means of deliverance in the Age of Kali. Having all heard this form Brahma the sons and disciples of Brahma beginning with Narada, all accepted the Hare Krishna Maha-mantra and having meditated on it, attained perfection" – Ananta – Sambita.

- When the sixteen names an thirty-two syllables of the Hare Krishna mantra are loudly vibrated Krishna dances on one's tongue" – stava – mala – vidyabhusana – bhasya, Baladeva vidyabhusana in Bhaktisiddhanta's Gaudiya Kanthahara 17:30 (English translation of the Kali Santarana Upanishad).

3.4.1 The Bahai Faith

The Bahai faith is a religion founded by Bahauallah in 19th century Persia. The movement is across the global world, Nigeria inclusive. 'Bahai' teachings view religious history as evolving educational process for mankind, through God's messengers. It is termed Manifestations of God. Bahai is a term use for a follower of Bahauallah. Bahauallah is seen as the most recent Pivotal but not final of the individuals. He claimed to be the expected redeemer and teacher prophesised in Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and other religions and that his mission was to establish a firm basis for unity throughout the world, and inaugurate an age of peace and justice, which Bahai's expect will inevitably arise.

3.4.2 Beliefs

The principles of the teachings of Bahai are the unity of God, the unity of religion and the unity of mankind. The movement concept of God, Bahai's believe in a single, imperishable God, the creator of all things, including the creatures and forces in the

universe. The existence of God is eternal. It has no beginning or end. He is a Personal God, unknowable, inaccessible, the source of all Revelation, omniscient, omnipresent and Almighty. The adherents of Bahai believe that God expresses His will in many means, including series of divine messengers refers to as Manifestations of God or divine educators. In expressing God's intent, these manifestations are seen to establish religion in the world. The teachings of Bahai movement state that God is too great for humans to fully comprehend or to create a complete and accurate image. The adherents of the movement refer to God as the All-Powerful, or the All-Loving. They emphasis on monotheism and reject the doctrines of the Trinity (Stockman Robert).

3.4.3 Bahai Faith and the Unity of Religion

The adherents of the Bahai movement believe in the validity of the world's religious, whose founders and central figures are seen as manifestations of God. They interpret religious history as a series of dispensations, where each manifestation brings a somewhat broader and more advanced revelation, suited for the time and place in which it was expressed. Specific religious social teachings, such as, the direction of prayer or dietary restrictions may be revoked by a subsequent manifestation so that a more appropriate requirement for the time and place may be established conversely, certain general principles, such as, neighbourliness or charity) are seen to be universal and consistent. The adherents of the movement do not believe that this process of progressive revelation will end. However, they believe that is cyclical. These believers do not expect a new manifestation of God to appear prior to 1000 years after Bahauallah's revelation.

Their beliefs are combinations of the earlier religions beliefs. The adherents assert that their religion is a distinct tradition with its own scriptures, teachings, lairs and history. It's cultural and religions debt to the shia Islamic matrix in which it was founded is seen as analogous to the Jewish socio-religious context in which Christianity was established. The adherents describe their faith as an independent world religion, differing from the other religion, differing from the other traditions only in its relative newness and in the appropriateness of Bahauallah's teaching to the modern context. Bahauallah is believed to fulfil the messianic expectations of these precursor faiths. (Britannica Book of the Year 1988).

3.4.4 Bahai Faith and the Unity of Humanity

Bahai's believe that human beings have a "rational soul" and that this provides the species with a unique capacity to recognize God's station and humanity's relationship with its creator. Every human being is seen to have a duty to recognize conform to their teachings (MC Mullen Michael 2000). Through recognition and obedience, service to humanity and regular prayer and spiritual practice. The adherents of the movement believe that the soul becomes closer to God. This is the ideal of Bahai belief. When a human being dies, the soul passes into the next world, where its

spiritual development in the physical world becomes a basis for judgement and advancement in the spiritual world (Masumian Farnaz 1995). Heaven and Hell are taught to be spiritual states of nearness or distance from God that describe relationships in this cosmos and the next, and not physical places of reward and punishment achieved after death (Masumian Farnaz).

4.0 CONCLUSION

The Hare Krishna means the energy of God. While Krishna and Ram mean God is who All-Attractive and “He who is the source of All Pleasure”. The Bahai teachings are the unity of God, Unity of religion, unity of mankind, Gender equality, Elimination of all forms of prejudice, world peace, Harmony of religion and science, Independent investigation of truth, universal compulsory education, universal auxiliary language, obedience to government and non-involvement in partisan politics and Elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty.

5.0 SUMMARY

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada was the founder of Hare Krishna in India around 1921. The movement began international one between 1960 and 1970. The Bahai movement believe in the unity of God, Gender Equality, harmony of religion and science, obedience to government and universal compulsory education and elimination of the extremes of wealth and poverty, to mention but a few.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Comment on the Hare Krishna Movement.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

(1) State the beliefs of the Bahai.

(2) “Hare Krishna Hare Krsihna

Krishna Krishna Hare Hare

Hare Rama Hare Rama

Rama Rama Hare Hare”

Discuss the mantra.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

An English translation of the Kali santarana Upanishad. Excerpted from the Internet on 7/6/2007.

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UNIT 5 OLUMBA OLUMBA OBU MOVEMENT OR BROTHERHOOD OF THE CROSS AND STAR**CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
 - 3.1 The Description of the Movement
 - 3.2 The Aims of the Movement
 - 3.3 The Teachings of the Movement
 - 3.4 The Uniform of the Adherents
 - 3.5 Fasting
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit will introduce you to the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star Movement.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- State the founder of the Brotherhood;
- Discuss their Teachings;
- Describe the Movement.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

Brotherhood of the Cross and Star is a Spiritual Movement which believes in and Practices the teachings of Jesus Christ. The movement was established in 1956 by the founder and leader Olumba Olumba Obu at Calabar, in Cross River State of Nigeria. The group obtained her certificate of incorporation on 25th March, 1964. The movement is the proverbial Biblical mustard seed, whose insignificant genesis has

experiences a tremendous evolution into a giant tree under Olumba Olumba Obu. It has spread beyond Nigeria to other parts of the world. The movement is not a church but, “Christ Universal Spiritual school of Practical Christianity”.

The name of the movement “Brotherhood” means Love, Truth, Good manner, Mercy, Patience, Humility, Meekness, Unity and Oneness of God’s creations. The brotherhood kingdom finds fulfilment in the promise of the Lord Jesus Christ. He promised to go and prepare a place then come back and take us into Himself. In other words, the kingdom which Jesus Christ had promised to prepare is the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star. The founder quoted the following Bible passages to support his claim on the promised kingdom of Christ.

Let not your hearts be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my father’s house are mansions: If it were not, so, I would have told you, I go prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you into myself; that where ye may be also (John 14: 1-3). The brotherhood is referred to as the new heaven and new earth; the new kingdom of God on earth wherein dwelleth righteousness, peace and love. It embraces all creation. The kingdom of the movement is universal. It knows no boundary or barrier. Brotherhood means equality. It also means one, Love, and service. The movement is the Christ Universal Spiritual School of Practical Christianity for its adherents.

3.2 The Aims of the Movement

The aims and objectives of the group include the advancement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Lord practical demonstration of healing the sick, helping the poor offering relief to the unfortunately establish non-profit Christian schools, colleges and health centres in accordance with the policies of the government of the day. Moreover, the movement aims at promoting agricultural enterprises, industries and engage in other lawful activities to generate funds for the welfare of people in various parts of the world. As a result of it, enhancing the spiritual emancipation of humanity. The objective of the movement is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ from house to house, city to city throughout the cosmos.

3.3 The Teachings of the Movement

The Brotherhood and Star teach the following to her adherents:

Preaching the Goodnews, carter for sinners, the needs and convert them to the part of righteousness. In addition to these, the movement teach prayers, faith, hope, repentance, peace and love. The adherents address one another sisters and brothers.

3.4 The Uniform of the Adherents for Worship

The official uniform of the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star is white garment with a cape known officially as the ‘Soutane’ in conformity with what is recorded in Revelation of John the Divine in Revelations 7: 13-15, 19: 8. The sisters use white head ties. No makeup, no plaits or jewellery of any kind: rings, chains, beads, wrist-watch (1 Peter 3: 3, 1 Timothy 2: 9-10, Exodus 32: 2-4. All members wear white robes

regardless of their age or position within the kingdom. The kingdom is known as Bethels. White Soutane was worn by Jesus Christ during transfiguration (Matthew 17:2). His white indicates "righteousness" or purity, and peace. Red soutane is worn by the adherents of the movement. It is sewn in the same style like the white soutane. Red means "love" and the word of God. The adherents also turbaned. The Brothers or Bishops use purple turban.

The Evangelist brother/sisters/ Apostles (Brothers) and Deaconesses use red turban. Their pastors use black turban. While the senior prophets/prophetess use yellow turban. Blue, green and brown turbans are used by prophets/prophetess. All ordained brethren sit together in the ordained pew. The doctrine of the movement indicates that the adherents must not wear shoes into the Bethels of worship. God is holy and all worshippers of God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. (Exodus 3:5, Romans 10:15, Lk2:2-35). Bethels are opened 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and each day of every year from January to December. The adherents bow their head three times before God before and after prayers. (Matthew 2:11, 26:39).

3.5 Fasting

Fasting is the act of refraining oneself from food and water. It is a period of purification in which the adherents of the movement devote themselves to prayers, and supplications to God. Fasting brings them closer and in direct communication with their creator as they spread themselves away from the chaos of the world. All types of sicknesses and problems of members are solved through fasting. The adherents fast from 6.00 am to 6.00pm; especially on Thursdays to conform to the time when Jesus Christ was crucified as opposed to Friday, adopted by the other Christian groups.

Before the Pentecostal period 72 hours of dry-fasting with no food or water is undertaken by the adherents of the movement. This is observed in order to purify them for the month of Pentecostal day which is one week after the dry fasting. During Pentecostal, fasting is observed daily from 6.00am to 6.00pm to bring members closer and worthy to receive the Holy Words and blessings of God (Acts 13: 2-3). Full feast is served for the breaking for all members of the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star. Their songs are composed for them by the Holy Spirit. The adherents are law-abiding people whichever country they may find themselves. They use fruits, vegetables, rice and water for feast. It is blessed and served after service or fasting.

The adherents do not believe in medicine of any form, so they do not take medicine. They believe in faith healing. They confess their sins, sing spiritual songs, listen to power of the spoken words, pray and bless water to drink for healing of sicknesses. Every member pays one-tenth of his/her earning as tithe to God. (Malachi 3: 7-12). Disputes are settled among themselves.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Brotherhood of the Cross and Star is a spiritual kingdom, where love, peace, and joy reigns.

5.0 SUMMARY

The Brotherhood of the cross and Star was founded by Olumba Olumba Obu in Calabar. Members belong to the kingdom of bethels all over the world. They do not use drug for healing but prayer and fasting are used to cure sickness. Members pay one tenth of their earning for tithe. They do not go to court to settle disputed. But disputes are settled within their kingdom.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

Faith is Brotherhood of the Cross and star. Do you agree? Discuss.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Comment on the doctrines of the brotherhood of the Cross and Star.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Excerpted from the Internet on 7/5/2007. chick.

The origin of Brotherhood of the Cross and Star from the website.