

REFERENCE TO THE ADAGE "WHAT IS GOOD FOR THE GOOSE IS ALSO GOOD FOR THE GANDER" IN RELATION TO THE GOLDEN RULE AS BASIS FOR THE UNITY OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study addresses the unhealthy unity in Nigeria, which, since its inception, has been fraught with gross unrest, chasm, and rancour amid the ethnic groups within the system. This anomaly occasioned the regrettable ‘Wild Wide West’ that incidentally ushered in the upheaval that indeed caused the ethnic cleansing and civil war of the 1960s. Kids who were taught of national unity in colleges or read of it in their textbooks while in school tend to get extremely exasperated as they see and experience outright different thing amid the society in their career endeavors within the country. This unprecedented departure from true unity has caused untold insidious fracas in the country recently, and addressing it in the academia is just an urgent necessity. In carrying out this study from a cultural perspective, the Igbo adage analytically explained in the article is used vis-à-vis the popular maxim by Jesus in the Gospels, especially from the Matthean account otherwise christened the “Golden Rule.” The approaches considered effective for elucidation of facts therewith are an exegesis of the selected passage and contextual analysis of the theme. Liberation theology was used to address this issue in the context of the present study. The study concluded that restructuring is non-negotiable if Nigeria must remain a nation, and the same is one of the recommendations of the work.

Introduction

The popular adage in the title is extrapolated from its Igbo version: “emenyere Nwaogwugwu, emenyekwara Nwanosikena da-Nnediyen’nulo.” The English version is stated in the title for universal appeal. However, the

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Igbo version of the adage is explained in the article in tandem with the ethos of the Golden Rule vis-à-vis the Nigerian polity and unity issues.

The unity in Nigeria could be compared with the proverbial many cotyledons palm kernel (among the Igbo), which though should be said to belong to the same shell, but can never see themselves nor relate to one another because they are demarked and barricaded by strong walls which make communications impossible. The opposite is certainly the case with the characteristic kola nut of many cotyledons. Housed in the same shell, unlike the many cotyledons of the palm kernels, the kola nut are not separated by walls of any kind, but well compacted together. Their relationship with each other is quite easy, unrestricted, and harmonious, and consequently ideally produces a single plumule when planted. This often very quickly props up as one tries to work on a subject matter such as the one this study is saddled with, especially where it relates to such a twin theme as resource control and restructuring of the Nigerian state.

Resource control, on its part, could be seen as the running and direction of resources by states or local government areas from which jurisdiction the resources are extracted and in which such are managed under federal guidelines and then remit a prescribed percentage to the federal government (Nwaobasi and Ituma, 2018:54), as demands the constitution. Regarding restructuring, on the other hand, entails the rearrangement or reorganization of the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria with a view to allowing states, local government areas and or communities to exercise certain powers or functions as due them in a true federalism. These twin concerns are the main thrusts of this study. The Igbo adage extrapolated in the title with its English equivalent for global appeal is used to appraise the conscience of the Nigerian polity as the concept of the Golden Rule according to Jesus is considered the requisite tool to address the subject matter.

The salient issue that inadvertently strikes one's mind (as this adage vis-à-vis the focus of this work) is basically with regard to what one experiences around elections in Nigeria. During the electioneering periods in Nigeria, the common saying among politicians, especially, among the partisans, is "do not allow anyone to disenfranchise you." Get registered, or renew your voter's registration card, as applicable. Make sure you vote; and after voting, stay there until the votes are counted. Make sure your vote counts." All these are said to motivate the masses to vote, and after the elections, those who are very visible and close to the electorate suddenly vanish into the thin air until the next four years when other elections come up. At least this has been in vogue for so many years, and there seems to be no indication that there could be changes in the future.

Thus, discussing this adage, a social cum political doctrine, an egalitarian society (though a mere doctrine that will hardly be in practice in Nigeria, as the argument holds), just quickly comes to mind, and such calls for some degree of attention in this work. The term egalitarianism, according to the 2002 edition of *Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary*, could mean the following:

- 1) a belief in human equality with respect to social, political, and economic rights and privileges, or
- 2) A social philosophy advocating the removal of inequalities among people (Webster, 2002:580).

The question then arises, in what way does any definition above operate in Nigerian society? In the context of this work, it is only plausible that the second definition could be tenable to the subject matter of the study. Against this backdrop, the choice of Jesus' modification of the so-called Golden Rule, which stipulates that doing to others as one would expect from them, would be cogent in tackling this all-important theme. All-important because responsible adoption of the suggestions of this work would help a lot to deliver the country from the pit of inequalities it has hitherto pitifully found itself for long in the past as one can remember.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to see to the unity of Nigeria that has been shattered by ethnicity, religious conflicts, and so on. The writers support Abdusalam (2023), who is of the view that ethnicity is the number one factor that

has divided Nigeria. Abdulsalam (2023) stated that the nation has different cultures and traditions, with over 250 ethnic groups and their own languages, customs, and belief systems. Some people are proud of these ample different ethnic endowments, but these have led to tensions and conflicts that have caused distrust and enmity among different ethnic groups. Although other writers have written works on Nigeria's unity, the writers looked into the unity of Nigeria in a different aspect using the adage "emenyere nwogwugwu, emenyekwara nwanosike" (connoting peaceful coexistence) in relation with "the Golden Rule" as an innovative perspective in restoring unity among the different ethnic groups. As Erhire (2024:2) puts it "No one can exist in isolation; they must be cooperative. It's a "who has garri, I have soup" or "who has beans, I have bread" situation. This means that if I have A and you have B, I need B and you need A; we have each other."

Methodology

The methods used in this study were exegetical and contextual approaches. The exegetical style was used to appraise the selected text as it related it to the modern man and the study, while the contextual style invigorated the text as it appropriately related it to the context of the Igbo adage operational in the study. The sequel to these is the use of liberation theology, which naturally addresses itself to the excesses of oppression against the weak in the society. The notion of liberation theology also assisted in accentuating the tenets of egalitarianism and consequently brought alive the identicalness between the Igbo adage, Golden Rule and egalitarianism vis-à-vis their relevance to resource control and restructuring agitations.

Igbo version of the adage

"Emenyere Nwogwugwu, emenyekwara Nwanosikena da-Nnediye n'ulo": An Explanation of the Adage.

This adage is commonly found among the people of Imo and Abia states who are from Igbo extraction in Nigeria, West Africa. It was one fateful day in history when friends went out for a hang-out at a joint. As they were dining and wining, it happened that one or two siblings at the joint was seemingly being denied an equal share of the dole on the ground that he ought not have so much since the elder who was party to the programme would naturally have a large proportion of the shares. An elderly person at the scene could not bear that and then stated, "our people, it ought not to be so, *emenyereNwogwugwu, emenyekwaraNwanosikena da-Nnediye no n'ulo*."

Analysis of Adage

Emenyere, Is an Igbo verb that connotes so many things. It could be translated "if you do for" or "if you pour for," or "if you give."

Nwogwugwu, this is an ancient name among the Igbo of Nigeria. Like many African names, it has a root to *Ogwugwu* deity (Agu, 2024) in Igbo land. In ancient times, men named their children, especially sons, after one deity or another; and when such occurred, the prefix "nwa"- is always an indication that the child in question was dedicated to the deity after whom the child was named. Such was the case with this name. In the circumstance that caused this adage, the *Nwogwugwu* is the elder brother.

Emenyekwara This word and the first word are the same; however, they belong to different parts of speech. The former is a verb, whereas the latter is an Igbo adverb. It is often translated "do also to...."

Nwanosike This was a common name among the ancient Igbo people. As mentioned earlier, this name was often given to a male child who must have been born after several others of his earlier elder siblings who must have died early in life and untimely. At the birth of this child, the traditional Igbo man would call him *Nwanosike*, meaning "this child, stay," literally meaning, "this child, stay strong, do not die like other former earlier siblings of yours" (Agu, 2024). The background of this adage is that *Nwanosike* was much younger than *Nwogwugwu*.
na da-Nnediye n'ulo,

part of the title included *Na* is an Igbo conjunction meaning “and.” *Da-Nnediye*, in the adage is said to be the mother of the siblings, whereas *n’nulo* simply means “who is at home.” *Nwannediye* is a special name given to most virtuous wives in Igboland by the husband or the mother-in-law for relating with her husband, as a sister would do to her brother whom she loves dearly. *Nnediye* is the short form of it, especially when prefixed with “da” by younger ones. The Igbo do not call their elders by their first names. They naturally prefix their elders’ names with “da” for females and “de” for males. Hence, the appellation *da-Nnediye* is given. In reality, it should be called *da-Nwannediye*, but it is often called *da-Nnediye* for short (Maduka, 2024).

An elderly man at the scene thus counselled that not only *Nwogwugwu* deserved being fair to, so to speak, but that his younger brother, *Nwanosike*, also deserved equal or the same treatment. He added that even their mother, *da-Nnediye*, who is at home, should also be remembered (Ukaegbu, 2019). The thesis of this adage is identical to the notion or concept of the English “What is good for the Goose is also good for the Gander” vis-à-vis the Golden Rule in virtually all regards, hence the twin usage of the duo in this work (Adiele, 2024). Both are interchangeably used to address gross inequalities prevalent in the Nigerian polity as national restructuring is advocated very strong terms.

Background and Explanation of Matthew 7:12

Jesus, in Matthew 22:25-40, summarised a total of six hundred and thirteen (613) laws found in the commandments of Moses drawn from the Decalogue in two main phrases, “love for God, and love for man (Zodhiates, 1991:105-106).” The same Decalogue was also summarised by Moses in Leviticus 19:18, where it was stated that “You shall not take vengeance or bear grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbour as yourself: I am the Lord.” Based on this passage (Lev 19:18), as held by Beale and Carson, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* states that the text is translated literally from the Masoretic text in the Septuagint, and that wherever the text is excerpted in the New Testament, it follows the Septuagint verbatim (Beale and Carson, 2007:29). Thus, the *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan* in Leviticus 19:18 is further said to have added “so what is hateful to you, you shall not do to him” (Beale and Carson, 2007), which is a converse or equivalence of Jesus’ Golden Rule. Ideally, the duo reject the claim that the maxim can be traced to the Hebrew Old Testament scriptures. For instance, Tobit’s version is, “Take heed to thyself, my child, in all thy works.” Be discreet in all thy behaviour. And what thou thyself latest, do to no man” (Tob.4:14-15). Jesus would have seen, especially the various versions of the Golden Rule, and eventually stated it the way He did, particularly given that any such entailed retaliation.

Furthermore, Earle categorically states that Jesus never originated the maxim and eventually notes that He was the first to state it positively. Confucius’, which is technically referred to as ‘Silver Rule,’ (Igboin, 2013:53) advocated that one should not do unto others what he would not have another do unto him glaringly suggesting retaliation, a seeming converse to the Zoroastrianism’s view. He (Earle) adds that the Jewish rabbis had a similar saying, which is already reflected in the earlier quotations above, and concludes that His positive attitude was illustrated by the parable of the Good Samaritan. Jesus’ positive stance is strategic and fundamental to His disposition to address issues the way they are other than reversing them. It also speaks to sins of omission and of commission. Given that He had hitherto been speaking on prayer (vv. 7-11), and judgment attested to by integrity (vv. 1-6), it was very necessary He drew His conclusion before any further discourse with a review of the age-long saying, and only Him could make such an appraisal statement.

Exegesis of the Text in Context (Matt 7:12)

As already seen in the immediate paragraph before the analysis segment above, the Golden Rule was not the invention of Jesus. That is, Jesus was not the first to make such a statement, neither did He copy anyone. Like

any renowned teacher of His sort, the use of other people's trendy idea to substantiate His was not eschewed. Rabbi Hillel, in about 22 AD, was challenged by a Gentile to summarize the law, responded, "what is hateful to you, do not to anyone else." This is the whole law; the rest is the commentary. Go and learn it (b. šabb. Thirty one a), according to Carson (2010:223). The Gentile in question here would hardly be alien to the laws of the Bible and would have also heard the rule from people elsewhere, and eventually, decided to know what a teacher of the law of the Jews could say about it.

Thus, Jesus used this maxim to buttress His teaching on prayer, as stated above. Hence, the verse begins with the Greek adverb *oun* because God gives good gifts. The message quite simple. Jesus's disciples must live by the notion that this rule entails. Furthermore, it is also plausible that the rule is stated in reference to vv. 1-6 that rather than judging others, one should treat others as he would expect them to treat him should he be in the situation. Carson, however, argues that the rule most probably refers to the "entire body of the sermon (5:17-7:12), because here, there is a second reference to 'the Law and the Prophets.'" This, to him, "appears to form an envelope with 5:17-20" as in "Therefore, in the light of all I have taught about the true direction in which the Old Testament law points, obey the Golden Rule, for such is (*estin*; NIV, "sums up") the Law and the Prophets (cf. Rom. 13:9)." The grandeur of ethics is encapsulated and epitomized in the *Golden Rule* (Nwanguma, 2015:218) in the sense that it provides a strong, flexible maxim that is capable of enabling one to decide moral issues in several ways without the need for multiplied case rules. In Carson's word, the notion entailed in the saying reads:

The rule is not arbitrary, without rational support, as in radical humanism; in Jesus' mind, its rationale ("for") lies in its connection with the revealed truth recorded in "the Law and the Prophets." The rule embraces quantity ("in everything") and quality (*houtæs kai*, "[do] even so"). And in the context of fulfilling the Scriptures, the rule provides a handy summary of righteousness to be displayed in the kingdom (2010, 224).

All the same, the verse should not be seen as a utilitarian maxim like "Honesty pays." Doing to others what one expects them to do to him should he be in the same situation applies to extreme situations. When issues that require consensus opinion of the people based on the laws of the land are in focus, it is the dictates of the law that should be followed and not necessarily what the sentiment of the victim or that of the judge suggests. With respect to this stance, Tullberg (2012:4) stated the following:

A problem with Golden Rule is the advice of extreme sympathy for the egoist instead of empathy. The agent accepts the undisciplined egoism of the cheater and then allows sympathies for the other person to instruct his own behaviour. The consequence of this behaviour is not only ignoring one's own self-interest but also actively counteracting it. There are no real arguments against the agent's right to coat and cloak, not to mention his right not to be beaten. These rights seem emotionally and ethically justified, and the objections to them are almost non-existent. To be carried away by sympathy for the enemy in these examples seems so deficient in self-esteem that such a person should need psychiatric help, rather than encouragement for self-destructive behaviour. It is also difficult to see the Golden Rule as a reflective position against egoism. In addition to suffering from the egoism of the cheater, one is also encouraging a social behaviour, increasing the risk that other people will suffer from future misleads by the encouraged person.

What should guide and determine one's decision is life's absolutes, the sensibility of the individual, and not sentiments; otherwise, one will be epileptic in his conclusions. The rule is applicable to all; hence, it is stated in virtually all cultures and religions (Nwanguma). It is the spirit and design of the law and the prophets; the sum of all that is laid down in the Sacred Writings, relative to men's conduct toward each other. It is glaring that God had written it upon the hearts of all men, hence sayings of the kind are found among all nations, Jewish, Christian, and Heathen (Clarkes, 2006); thus, the application of it to the Nigerian trend of events is apt. In other

words, the thesis of the verse lies basically on the two doings of it “do for you, do that also to them,” and these two doings are the main focus of the study in relation to resource control and restructuring the Nigerian state.

Conceptualization and Theoretical Exploration

The term “equality,” from which egalitarian is derived, was introduced into English with its present meaning in a poem by Tennyson in 1864 to suggest politically assertive equality of French variety (Woodburn, 1981:431). This date, with its source during West democracy, especially against the backdrop of Western democratic development from Plato’s time, is very significant to this study, and it is resonated subsequently during the work. Literally, egalitarianism in its truest sense carries with it echoes of revolution and enthusiasm for equality in opposition to the elaborate structure of inequality. Against this backdrop, an egalitarian society could be seen as such where concerted efforts are in place that equality of power, wealth, prestige etc. are not merely sought but are just, with certain limited exceptions, truly realized. Equality before the law, therefore, entails that people’s and regions’ contributions to the society’s wellbeing by reason of natural endowment of the region vis-à-vis the individual should be duly rewarded in direct proportion to their contributions.

It also advocates for the elimination of any form of inequality in society and discrimination based on gender, race, and religion, among others. In view of this, it is pertinent to state that in a true egalitarian society, the prerogative or preference of those in power or the so-called privileged few over the rest of the citizenry is just a constitutional specification and not more selfish arrogation as has been the case in Nigeria. The question then arises: How does egalitarianism align itself with the doctrine of resource control and that of restructuring Nigeria? Answers to this question are the main thrust of this work.

The Golden Rule, as already disclosed above, is a precept in Matthew 7:12, which states, “In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.” ..” This rule of conduct is a summary of a Christian’s duty to his neighbour. It states a fundamental ethical principle. In its negative form, “Do not do to others what you would not like done to yourselves,” occurs in the 2nd-century documents *Didachē* and the *Apology of Aristides* and may well have formed part of an early catechism (Editors, 2019). This concept recalls the command to “love the stranger (sojourner)” as found in Deuteronomy. It is not, however, peculiar to Christianity. Its negative form is found in Tobit 4:15, in the writings of the two great Jewish scholars Hillel (1st century BC), and Philo of Alexandria (1st centuries BC and AD), and in the *Analects* of Confucius (6th and 5th centuries BC). It also appears in one form or another in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Isocrates, and Seneca. The concept of the Golden Rule is, in several regards, identical to that of egalitarianism in the sense that it takes the notion inherent in the concept to prove egalitarianism because everyone will always love to be treated well as one who metes out the treatment would expect others to treat him. According to Igboin (Igboin, 2013), Qur’an 2:279 states, “Deal not unjustly, and shall not be deal with unjustly.” This confirms that this rule applies to all religions and cultures found in Nigeria.

The advocates of resource control speak of a ‘true federalism’ as a ‘fiscal federalism’ wherein the federating units own and manage their resources and revenues but make a contribution to the central government to fund federal responsibilities (Ako, 2012). The proponents of fiscal federalism on their parts, however, argue that resource control should rather be an arrangement in which the central government generates most of the revenues and shares such revenues with other strata of government (Oates, 2006). Whichever side one tends to tilt towards the two positions, the principle enshrined in the notion of the Golden Rule must be taken into consideration. This will be given a more elaborate deliberation in the subsequent segments below.

Restructuring, as it was, is the process or instance of changing the way in which something is organized or arranged. In Nigeria, it refers to a state where regions are so organized or arranged and empowered by the

constitution to manage their affairs with due remittance of a sort and due recourse to the central government. As has been stated at several instances in this work, restructuring, in several regards, is identical with resource control. The doctrine strictly adopts the notion of derivation principle which is connected with situation of context amid federating units (Nwanguma, 2015:253). The issue, then, is not who controls resources or who shares the revenue but equity in distribution of resources, and the resolve on the part of those concerned, to stimulate divergent economic growth rather than pursuing welfare policies in revenue allocation. This corroborates the notion described in the abovementioned adage:

The Golden Rule, the Igbo adage, and Egalitarianism: An Explanation in Context

The golden rule “is identical with the Igbo adage as operational in this work as well as egalitarianism in several regards in the sense that the trio refer to justice and sincerity as regards human relationship” (Attah, 2019). This is very interesting. Why would one believe such is interesting? In the first instance, the golden rule was first used by wise men in society, and their aim was to control evil, hence their negative approach in stating it “that what you would not want men to do unto you, do not to others.” Egalitarianism, though much more recent than the golden rule as being introduced into society in the 19th century, is also society’s other way of controlling human-induced inequality (wickedness). The thrust of the adage analysed above quite the same. Obviously, contending earnestly against the greatest disservice any can bring to humanity, Tennyson had to counsel for egalitarianism in his poem of 1864 (Woodburn, 1982). Jesus, on His part however, took the Golden Rule positively other than the traditional way it had been hitherto taken by Hillian scholars and the philosophers that taught before Him. It is suggestive that he had reasons to approach it that way. Other reasons for being apart are that he wants people to be positive in their relationships with fellow human beings. If you would want people to be fair to you in any circumstance, be fair to them also, and He concluded that such was the summary of the commandments as held the Jewish teachers and their non-Jewish contemporaries. The adage on its parts equally entails that what is thought good should be extended to others. Considering the three maxims, placing oneself in the other people’s position is the gist of the trio.

In what way then does egalitarianism or the golden rule become applicable in the discussion on resource control and restructuring in Nigerian society? On the one hand, resource control implies that each federating unit manages the resources nature endows them with. On the other hand, restructuring refers to a state in which respective regions or geo-political zones engage in self-governance with due recourse to the federal government. It is against the backdrop of the happenings in the nation that these two stances become evident in the country. The first, middle, or last name of a Nigerian nation is **injustice** (Anigbogu, 2019). The injustice is glaring in virtually all aspects of Nigerian national life. It has become very obvious that Nigerians’ togetherness is rather injurious to the citizenry other than being blissful. There is no trace of the slightest fear of God that either the Golden Rule or egalitarianism suggests. Those in governance do not seem to adhere to the doctrine of egalitarianism, let alone that of the golden rule, which they adjudge Biblical or Christian contending, perhaps, that nobody must coerce them to adopt Biblical principles because such is not within the tenets of their religions. Nigerian cultures, which are agog with incredible proverbs that are capable of turning societies around for good are not heeded to. Chinue Achebe in his *Things Fall Apart* gives an Igbo hunters’ adage that “when the kite learns the art of flying without perching, the hunter endeavours to improve his art of marksmanship (Achebe, 1958).” As injustice in the land increases by the day, especially on the part of those in power, people are naturally poised to devise ways out of the gross human inhumanity to fellow human beings arising from racism and ethnicism, which they have hitherto suffered. Thus, the only way out as suggest

proponents of resource control and restructuring are just these two agitated social norms to checkmate the unnecessary invasion of the so-called weak by the so-called strong.

The study is associated with the Nigerian situation

Relating this study to the Nigerian situation, it is advisable to read James Woodburn in his *Egalitarian Society*. He writes,

Even today ‘egalitarian’ carries with it echoes of revolution, of fervor for equality in operation to elaborate structures of inequality. However, politically assertive egalitarianism is, of course, not found only in hierarchical systems under challenge and in their successor regimes. It is equally characteristic of many systems without direct experience of elaborate hierarchy (1983, 432).

Egalitarianism as a political or social doctrine is what one will not want to toy with if the leadership of Nigeria is serious with their notion of indivisibility of the country. The suggestion of Woodburn above is such that every right-thinking Nigerian, especially those in and around the corridors of power will adhere to. Why? Given that the urge to restructure Nigeria and that of resource control are getting stronger by the day due largely to the unprecedented injustice in the nation, being nonchalant to equity and fairness in policy making will be an intentional call for anarchy or the like. Be that as it may, the view of Woodburn speaks further of the extent to which egalitarianism can be of interest if put into use in society. Other sectors away from political institutions can also practice egalitarianism. There is a joke that is making rounds now on the social media—the WhatsApp, to be precise. There, Queen Elizabeth in her age as a great grandmother, is walking with a Nigerian governor’s wife. While Queen Elizabeth hangs her bag on her shoulder while holding an umbrella to shed herself from the sun or rain, the Nigerian governor’s wife’s aides were holding the umbrella for her as well as carrying her bag. A commentator on the picture quickly states that such had much to do with Nigerian culture. She connected it to what is obtained in a country where an Assistant Lecturer will not be comfortable walking along with a professor empty handed while the Professor is carrying a bag (Essesobor, 2019). Another story similar to this (but on injustice in Nigeria) is such that talks about two kids who were born at the same time in a place. Jubril was from Kano state in the Northwest, and the other Emeka from Enugu state in the Southeast. Both read the law. Emeka graduated with a second-class upper division, whereas Jubril graduated with only a pass. Immediately after service, Jubril was offered a job in an Abuja court as a magistrate, and two years later, he was promoted as a Judge. Meanwhile, Emeka was yet struggling to carry files and defend junior cases in court, where Jubril was the Judge.... The narrator then asks, “If you love fairness, equity, and justice, will you want Nigeria to continue like this? It is strongly skewed to the advantage of a particular ethnic group in Nigeria” (Amaku, 2019).

This quotation may be fictitious or real, but worse things happen in Nigeria. This author has been told similar things by people from different parts of Nigeria (especially the southern Nigeria viz. Western, Eastern, and the South-Southern Nigeria, including the Middle-Belters) that certain offices are particularly reserved for people from certain parts of northern Nigeria. Maximizing one’s potential in a nation among people from the aforementioned regions is extremely difficult, if not impossible, under such circumstances. Either egalitarianism or the golden rule, or even the notion conveyed in the Igbo adage analysed above, and by extension, the rule of law, can, by all implications, really be operational in Nigeria if our attitudes to life could drastically change.

The Golden Rule is a very old notion and it is seen by Jesus Himself as the summary of any constitution. Strictly keeping to its tenets will certainly help a great deal in keeping people together. In other words, peaceful co-existence will not be attained if its concept is not in practice. The desire for it in the nation is the real cause

of the incessant quagmires that have consistently led to various social maladies in the nation. The obvious one is the crisis that ushered in the pathetic civil war of the 1960s.

Putting into practice, the notions naturally embedded in the Nigerian cultures that the Igbo adage in use in this work literally represents will adequately and outright alleviate the unprecedented inequality and injustice in the country. Why? The basic custom characteristic of the African culture that Nigerians are a part of is *live and let live*, and the same is thrust of the Igbo's *emenyereNwogwugwu*, *emenyekwaraNwanosikena da-Nnediyen'nulo* as analysed above. The obvious odious oppressions found in the polity are grossly alien to us, and as a matter of urgency, they must be addressed in this work.

How then is any of these three ideologies relevant to restructuring Nigeria and resource control? In order to aptly address the question aptly, a related question to it is germane. The question is how did we (as a nation) get to where we are now? In about 20 years ago and beyond, resource control or its attendant term, restructuring, was very alien to the average Nigerian, though, one would argue that agitation for it raised issues between AdakaBoro and the government in the 1960s. In the meantime, it is the so-called average Nigerians, especially from the Niger Delta region, and of course, most, if not all, of those, from the former Eastern region, talk so much about the duo. Why? It is obvious that although people are being told that Nigeria is a place where peace and justice reign, justice, in particular, is denied the region that is vigorously campaigning for peace and justice (Alana, 2018). Imagine the region that produced the likes of JP Clarke, Ken SarroWiwa, Etuk Udo, and Margret Ekpo. Would the Nigerian oligarchies and their cronies be right to accuse such of being bereft of manpower competent enough to be in the scheme of affairs in Nigeria and only just watch things happen whereas the resources wherewith the nation is run is from their place? What about the Igbos? About those people, it is anything that anyone considers all right to talk about them, provided he or she has some accomplices that support him. If they are not called the worst of criminals, virtually all corrupt practices in the nation would be quickly alluded to. Of late, this writer did a work on Nigerians in positions of power from the first republic to date who were of unquestionable character, especially among the Christian faithful. Questionnaires were sent across Nigeria to indigenes of virtually all regions of the nation. To the greatest shock of this writer, there were regions that none could be found, but in the South East (the Igbo), more than enough were given (Nwanguma and Attah, 2018:167-190), yet that is a region that is odiously blackmailed with all sorts of evils. Yes, the Igbo are truly intelligent, smart, and hard-working, and they could also be aggressive with respect to their quest to succeed in their chosen careers or endeavours; and are by no means pose no problems to the nation. All the same, it would be expedient to call the attention of the reader to this statement credited to Aliyu Gwazo, a one-time military officer in Nigeria, during General Abacha's regime, to be precise. The following statement is read in part:

The problem with you Southerners is that you can never understand the North. We Fulani toss a small bone from our table, and you betray and fight each other like dogs for it.... You crawl before us and beg us for crumbs. That is your lot in life.... Just as you serve us, so your children serve us.... We took our power back in 2015. We will not release it into Southerners or unbelievers. Not in the next century.... Now we will conquer and do it in the name of "one Nigeria" we shall remain the master, and you shall remain the slave! None of you are going anywhere. Nigeria will never break through. We will not allow it. (Gwazo, 2019)

To some people, Gwazo should not be taken seriously in view of the fact that some distinguished personalities from the region frown at his stands. However, could such not be a mere guise to quell those aggrieved by the nefarious invective of Gwazo? Worse statements than what is cited above have been made by these people, and more are yet to ooze out from the same source. Yet, such is covertly and overtly. Meanwhile, people who go

about their legitimate means of livelihood are odiously blackmailed. What an injustice! Another allegation against the South East is the inclination to split Nigeria. This allegation does not contain water. It is tenable to state that there are more Southeastern people (the Igbo) in other parts of Nigeria than you have them in the South East regardless the degree of injustices and hostilities they suffer in those places. Such highly buttresses how nationalistic they are. For instance, “There are lopsided appointments in the polity in favor of one religion and toward a section of the country, which is unconstitutional and violates Nigeria’s Federal Character” (Manus and Nwanguma, 2021:2). The same injustices and hostilities against certain regions in the nation have called for this, and as things stand now, the way out is restructuring and resource control. The adoption of resource control should not be delayed until it is obvious that what makes the Niger Delta region strong, for instance, is exhaustively used up. Such is grossly contrary to the notion and teaching of the Golden Rule or egalitarianism. Given the choice and use of egalitarianism in addressing this subject matter, the odious argument encountered during this study was that egalitarianism (egalitarianism) is not tenable and practicable in Africa. If that is really true, the question then is why would the natural tenet of ‘live and let live’, which is a common belief and practice among Africans and characteristic of the notion innate in the Golden Rule that is global, not thrive in the country? Given this tendency, this writer is left with the only option of concluding that the restructuring of the nation in such a manner that the respective regions would be able to conveniently manage themselves and their resources. This, as a matter of fact, this is an obvious solution to the mayhem and quagmire in the country. Hence, it is imperative to state that resource control or restructuring of Nigeria, as things are now, is non-negotiable.

Conclusion and recommendations

The rate of injustice in Nigeria vis-à-vis its attendant illness and inequality was the main thrust of this work. These were seen as playing themselves out through government agencies and their cronies during the work. The study addressed the menace using the popular Biblical concept known as the Golden Rule and two other related notions, namely egalitarianism and an Igbo adage, which though identical in essence, were seen as such which adherence to would adequately resolve the malady that hitherto messed up the Nigerian polity. Following the issue being treated, the phenomenological analogy and liberation theology approaches were used to appraise the menace in the country. It was deduced that the incessant quagmires the nation has hitherto had which might not stop was caused by the few oligarchies who use their privileged advantages to oppress people, especially those of a particular region, namely the South-southerners and the South Easterners hence the restructuring agitation is more in the two regions.

Thus, the first recommendation this study proffers is therefore simple. Let the untold discrimination be checked by adopting the concepts of the Golden Rule and notions found in African cultures, which the Igbo adage used in this study represents and with the notion of egalitarianism. These writers believe that such will help curb the vices in the country. All ethnic groups and geopolitical zones should be treated equally. Besides, the restructuring agenda or agitation presents itself as such that the nation must accede for proper management of the country as well as our common economic goods, and it is hereby recommended. In addition, hatred should be discouraged among Nigerians, who are people of different ethnic groups. Some people hate those who are not of the same tribe and say despicable words about them. In order to stabilise unity in Nigeria, awareness should be created from infancy, that is at early age children from different ethnic groups should be taught not to discriminate among those not from their own ethnic groups. With this, the younger generation will grow up to love others from other ethnic groups other than theirs, which therefore creates everlasting unity in diversity. In other words, restructuring of Nigeria is the only solution to the Nigerian problems.

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