



RELIGIOUS ACTION NETWORK

(for peace with justice in southern Africa)

a project of the American Committee on Africa
17 John Street, 12th Floor, New York NY 10038
Phone: (212) 962-1210
Fax: (212) 964-8570

17 September 1996

Dear Pastor,

This October, Nigeria will be commemorating its 36th year of independence. Unfortunately, this wealthy African country is ruled by a brutal dictatorship, which imposes much suffering and violence upon Nigeria's 100 million people. The United States is deeply involved with this dictatorship. Major oil companies, Shell, Mobil and Chevron, provide the dictatorship with billions of dollars every year from the production and sale of oil. The Nigerian people are struggling to end the dictatorship and establish peace and democracy. **They have asked their brothers and sisters in America for help.**

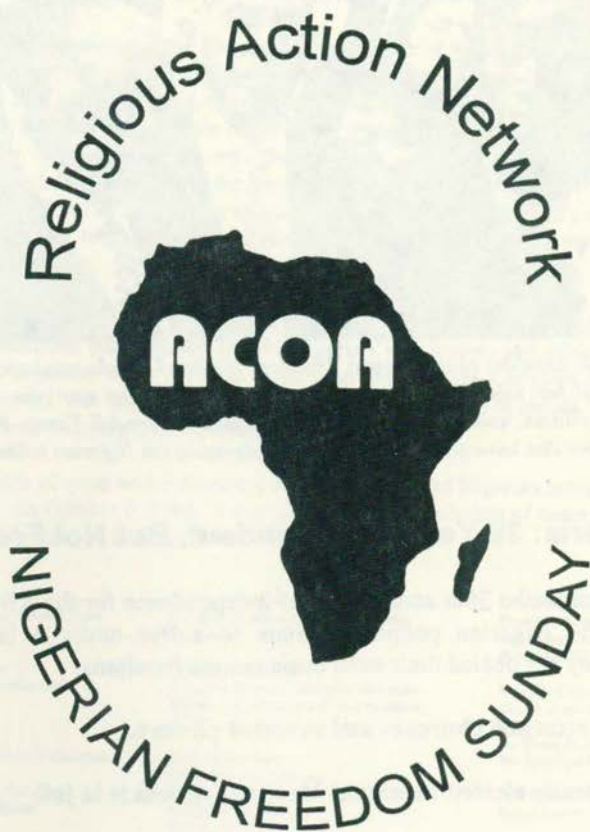
In response, the Religious Action Network adopted a "Declaration of Conscience on Nigeria" at its annual Africa Consultation in May 1996. This declaration calls upon people to mark October 6, 1996 as "Nigerian Freedom Sunday" a day of prayer for the return of basic human rights and democracy in Nigeria. ***I hope your church will be able to join us in prayer for the people of Nigeria on this day.*** Enclosed is a bulletin insert you can copy for your congregation.

Please sign and return the enclosed "Declaration of Conscience on Nigeria" if you have not done so. Contact Reverend Paul Harris at (212) 962-1210 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Wyatt Tee Walker
President
American Committee on Africa

For Peace with Justice in Africa



OCTOBER 6, 1996

"Our hopes for amelioration have been dashed to pieces and the suffering of the people demands nothing short of divine intervention."

Christian Association of Nigeria

Join Hands in Prayer for Freedom and Justice In Nigeria



Miss Hafsat Abiola, daughter of imprisoned President Moshood Abiola, spoke to the press after the assassination of her mother by a government death squad. She was joined by Wyatt Tee Walker, ACOA President, and New York City Councilmember Wendell Foster. New York is one of a number of cities that have passed resolutions condemning the Nigerian military dictatorship.

Nigeria: 36 Years Independent, But Not Free...

October 1996 marks the 36th anniversary of independence for the African nation of Nigeria. But the Nigerian people continue to suffer under a brutal military dictatorship. They are denied their most basic human freedoms.

- The army has attacked churches and arrested pastors.
- The democratically elected President Moshood Abiola is in jail.
- Thousands of journalists, human rights activists and religious leaders have been jailed or driven into exile. Some, like Ken Saro-Wiwa, have been executed for opposing the military regime.
- Meanwhile the United States remains the biggest buyer of Nigerian oil and the military uses the billions of dollars it earns to fund its oppression. Nearly half of Nigerian children suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

In response, the Religious Action Network is calling on churches to mark October 6 as Nigerian Freedom Sunday, a day to pray for the people of Nigeria. The Archbishop of the Church of Nigeria summed up the situation stating, *"The people have been cowed to silence by the insecurity of life and property to the extent that the citizenry live in fear of sudden death..."*

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Declaration of Conscience on Nigeria

The following declaration was adopted by the Religious Action Network at its national conference on May 28, 1996. Religious leaders of all faiths are urged to join this urgent initiative.

We Ministers of Faith gathered at the Canaan Baptist Church of Christ in Harlem, New York, on May 28, 1996 today declare our commitment to the restoration of freedom and democracy in Nigeria. Once a beacon of hope and pride for African peoples throughout the world, this African nation has been brought low by the brutality and injustice of a military dictatorship.

The Nigerian regime has stripped away the peoples' most basic human and civil rights, replacing them with violence, fear and intolerance. Many religious, political, trade union and community leaders have been unjustly imprisoned, forced into exile or murdered. The nation's hospitals and universities, once the pride of Africa, are in ruins.

A democratic election was annulled in 1993 and the winner, Moshood Abiola, has been jailed for nearly two years. Multinational corporations exploit Nigeria's vast human and mineral wealth, extracting billions of dollars in profits while Nigerian children go hungry. The Christian Association of Nigeria lamented last year that, "Our hopes for amelioration have been dashed to pieces," and that the suffering of the people demands "nothing short of divine intervention."

We call on all people of good will to mark the 36th anniversary of Nigerian independence as "Nigerian Freedom Sunday," on October 6, 1996, a day of prayer for the victims of oppression and dictatorship and for the peaceful return of freedom and democracy.

Wyatt Tee Walker
President, ACOA and Senior Pastor, Canaan Baptist Church

Canon Frederick Williams
Rector, Church of the Intercession and Treasurer, ACOA

Rev. Jose Chipenda
Secretary, All Africa Conference of Churches

The Very Rev. Petero A.N. Sabune
Trinity and St. Phillip's Cathedral

Bishop James I. Clark, Jr.
Greater Refuge Temple

The Rev. Dr. Errol Harvey
St. Augustine's Episcopal Church

Rev. Johnnie Johnson, M.D.
Ethiopian Diaspora Orthodox Church

Dr. Calvin B. Marshall, III
Varick Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church

Rev. Monica H. Marshall
Varick Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church

Rev. Joseph R. Jordan
Corinthian Baptist Church

Rev. Edward-Earl Johnson
Mount Moriah Baptist Church

Rev. Abraham Oyedeki
Christ Apostolic Church, Inc.

Barbara Elam
Memorial Presbyterian Church

Jumoke Ogunkeyede
United Committee to Save Nigeria

Rev. Joseph Lowery
President, Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Rev. Michael Battle
Executive Secretary, Hampton University Ministers' Conference and Vice President, ACOA

Rev. Al Sharpton
National Action Network

Benjamin Norris Scott
Ephesus S.D.A.

Rev. George Houser
Director Emeritus, ACOA

Rev. Michael DuPlessis
Rector, Trinity Episcopal Church

Rev. Bruce Southworth
The Community Church of New York

Minister Toon
Liberty Baptist Church

Renato L. McCray
National Action Network

Sister Marsha Allen
Universal Calvary Church

Rev. Dr. Suzan Johnson Cook
Mariner's Temple

Eugene G. Meerdink
Reformed Church in America

Doreen Tilghman
Board of Global Ministries
United Methodist Church

Rev. B.W. Smith, Jr.
President, Progressive National Baptist Convention and Senior Pastor, St. John's Baptist Church

Rev. Dr. Glen C. Missick
Church of the Master

Dr. Diane Porter
The Episcopal Church

Rev. Ioma Mills-Murray
Bethel A.M.E.

Rev. Ronald Sullivan
Abundant Joy Baptist Church

Rev. Father Emeka C. Nwige
All Souls' Episcopal Church

Rev. Dr. Emmanuel Osei-Acheampong and Mrs. Adwoa Osei-Acheampong
Universal Calvary Church

Rose Ella Ferguson
United Church Board for World Ministries-Refugee Branch

Terence W. Miller
Maryknoll Society Justice and Peace Office

The Rev. Dr. J. Carleton Hayden
Episcopal/Anglican Chaplain, Howard University

Rev. Jonathan L. Weaver
Greater Mount Nebo A.M.E. Church

Rev. Clifford M. Lawrence Jr.
Salem United Church of Christ

RELIGIOUS ACTION NETWORK

At the Religious Action Network Africa Consultation on May 28, 1996, church leaders from the U.S. and Africa adopted a "Declaration of Conscience on Nigeria," urging congregations throughout the United States to support the 36th anniversary of Nigeria's independence on "Nigerian Freedom Sunday." Through prayer and action for justice, you can help ensure that the Nigerian people celebrate their next independence day in freedom. *Please show your support with other ministers by signing the "Declaration of Conscience on Nigeria."*

What is the Religious Action Network?

The Religious Action Network (RAN) is a network of over 200 congregations throughout the U.S. It was established by Wyatt Tee Walker and Canon Frederick B. Williams. RAN is a project of the American Committee on Africa, formed in 1953 to support justice and freedom in Africa.

Wyatt Tee Walker
President

Canon Frederick B. Williams
Treasurer

Jennifer Davis
Executive Director

Rev. Paul D. Harris
Coordinator

**Yes, I am willing to support the Religious Action Network.
Please send me more information on how I may join RAN. Contact:**

Rev. Paul D. Harris
17 John Street, 12th Floor
New York, New York 10038
Phone: (212) 962-1210
Fax: (212) 964-8570
E-Mail: acoa@igc.apc.org



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Greater Mount Nebo A.M.E.
Church

Rev. Clifford M. Lawrence Jr.
Salem United Church of Christ

Yes I support the restoration of freedom in Nigeria. Please add my name to the Declaration of Conscience on Nigeria.

NAME

CONGREGATION

ADDRESS

CITY

ZIP

TELEPHONE

FAX

**Return to The Religious Action Network, c/o the American Committee On Africa,
17 John Street, New York, NY 10038.**