



**A PROCESS RESPONSE TO AKINSOLA  
AKIWOWO'S *AJOBI* AND *AJOGBE*:  
VARIATIONS ON THE  
THEME OF SOCIATION**

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**Introduction**

Akiwowo's inaugural address, presented to the University of Ife, Nigeria, on the occasion of his appointment as the chair of Sociology and Anthropology, challenged the writer to analyze this African sociologist's economic, social, and political intent from an Afrocentric point of view, particularly his concept of *Ifogbontaiyese* (African pragmatic view of intellectual knowledge). Principles of Process Theology and philosophy frame the issues identified by Akiwowo.

First, indigenization and Orunmilaist Philosophy are referenced. Secondly, the concepts of *ajobe* and *ajogbe* are explored as primal forms along with consanguinity. Also, in this discussion, a response from Process Theology regarding intrinsic values is included. Thirdly, Creative Transformation and the Faith-based Response, where the majority of process response is housed, is pursued. All of the discussion is cast within the context of Akiwowo's hidden agenda: the development of socio-economic policy for contemporary Nigeria.

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### **Indigenization and the Orunmilaist Philosophy**

The Center for Family Farm Development (CFFD), through its Genesis Fresh Xpress International (GFXI), has an important socio-economic mission in relation to its international trade profit-making incentives. Its mission is to foster economic development, training, and education to rural farm villages in Africa and to coordinate the restoration of formerly destroyed farm lands by foreign corporations.

According to Onykuba Edinoyi-Ojo, a primary partner within CFFD, the once rich and powerful villages are today pathetic figures scraping out their existence. Poverty walks on human legs, sees with human eyes, and grips with human hands. Some of the reasons cited as the cause of this dire poverty in West Africa's rural areas are:

- Politics and its easy money;
- Ajaokutta Steel Company that sapped many farms of their strong hands;
- Lack of agriculture incentives for rural farmers;
- Increasing pauperization of the tiller of the land in the early 1980s; and
- Lack of proper education and training.

The reality of the countryside in Nigeria is one of negligence. Edinoyi-Ojo insists that the tragic story is true for not only his small village in Kwara state, but that it is the story of most rural areas in Nigeria. He laments that the state and federal governments vote millions on paper to transform the rural areas! Life deteriorates; this annual hope fizzles into nothingness. This official with CFFD is aware that the situation requires "divine intervention"—the correc-



tion of inhumane living conditions.

Fulfilling this hope embraces the larger picture: CFFD has devised African-American urban and rural development objectives for a marketing-business vehicle to generate revenues. Specifically, this system will occur in the Metro Atlanta Empowerment Zone where African-American consumers have buying power of more than \$14B annually. Georgia black small-family farmers will be able to sell fresh vegetables and cut flowers at retail prices, instead of wholesale, which will triple their before-tax income. It is this model that Akiwowo is hopeful of duplicating for West African farm villages. It will require movement through the steps, slowly or quickly, for the initial process must begin here in the United States. The first two years of GFXI's existence are critical. When the prototype can be duplicated and franchised throughout other states, and then other nations, it will have transforming significance.

Economic development of depressed communities is a most needed blessing. Even here we also entertain the importance of "nontangible rewards." "Real hope" becomes volatile in hopeless situations. The healthy pride of self-help and self-determination replaces the degenerate sense of nonbeing.

This dire situation needs to be examined from the vantage point of Akiwowo's *ajobi* and *ajogbe*. It refers to his concept of *Ifogbontaiyeses*—using wisdom to remake the world—that applies sociological insights to concerns of social welfare and social development. From the Orunmilaist (Nigerian humanist philosophy) perspective, human beings possess equipment that makes it possible for them to form purposeful bonds to live together as one entity. The Orunmilaist sees persons primarily as metaphysical beings with corpo-

real manifestation. Consequently, humans possess two major elements: intangible (spiritual), and tangible (physical). Both sets of attributes interact to influence a human to act as a conscious being.

Among the intangibles attributed to humans are:

- Thought
- Knowledge
- Useful insights gained from experience
- Wishes
- Spoken word<sup>1</sup>

These mental instruments, for Akiwowo, constitute brain power. The behavioral expression of human consciousness are:

- Doings, efforts or activities
- Pattern of doing
- Hunch
- Behavioral pattern<sup>2</sup>

The action of the individual is directed toward others who act under a given rule or set of standards. The result among human beings is a complex network of the "pattern-of-doing-bond" that unites every man, woman, or child to another. For Akiwowo, this network called *asuwada*<sup>3</sup> is the purposeful knitting together of conscious beings for the attainment of a goal.

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<sup>1</sup> Akinsola Akiwowo, *Ajobi and Ajogbe: Variations on the Theme of Socation*, Inaugural Lecture Series 46 (Ile-Ife, Nigeria: University of Ife Press, 1983), 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



For conscious human beings, the purpose of such bonding is social. Human society provides five categories of inalienable social values for each member that constitute the purpose and goal of human collectivities:

- Value of good health until old age
- Financial security
- Value of intimate companionship and love
- Value of parenthood
- Value of assured self-actualization<sup>4</sup>

A human society has meaning for its members if these values are consciously sought as common goals. These are internalized and belong to all members—social values common to all.

Akiwowo contends that this Orunmilaist perspective is what Abraham Maslow describes as the humanist view of society.<sup>5</sup> The five categories are also the empirical reference of Ojetunji Aboyade's "a people's innermost values."<sup>6</sup> Aboyade recommended that for the Nigerian society, the planning approach resulting in a sound system of national management, must be based upon not only skillful policy manipulation and a free consensus of national opinion, not just on technical efficiency, but it must also derive its underlying inspiration from an acute sense of humanism. And, in particular, from an acute sense of African Humanism:

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 13-14.

<sup>5</sup>Abraham Maslow, *The Psychology of Science: A Reconnaissance* (New York and London: Harper and Row Publishers, 1966), 9.

<sup>6</sup>See Ojetunji Aboyade, *Issues in the Development of Tropical Africa* (Ibadarn: Ibadarn University Press, 1976).

Probably the most important obstacle to decolonization is that of a mental attitude that has lost touch with its cultural inspiration. The Western mind is alienated from important dimensions of life by over compartmentalizing knowledge; and development planning is reduced in this context to pure economics and a function of economics and a function of technology. . . . [T]he African has not gone too far in the process of self-alienation. . . . [but] is still sustained by a human idealism, an idealism not based on more abstractions but on the totality of [a person's] existence in a real-world society that seeks to blend stability and change through a careful equilibrium in social relations.<sup>7</sup>

He suggests that social planners and social scientists, particularly, blend the realism of African Humanism with an analytical objectivity of their disciplines.

By contrast, humanistic worldview suggests that persons are "synergetic with cognition"<sup>8</sup> and that "the empirical attitude"<sup>9</sup> is a matter of degree rather than an all or non-skill acquired at once in a single moment. In the same spirit as Aboyade, Maslow calls for an alteration in attitude towards science by rehumanizing science and knowledge as a part of a larger social and intellectual development.<sup>10</sup> In line with preceding discussions, then, human society is also physical expression of a nonphysical design intended to bring goodness to all humankind.

The Orunmilaist philosopher, recognizing unity as the

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>8</sup> Maslow, *Psychology of Science*, 112.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 3.



co-existence but noncooperation of evil among goodness, notes that at no given time are discord and opposition in full control of a social situation, nor concord and consensus and unity always pervasive. One can speak of a "fraction of sociation," with concord and consensus as numerator, and discord and disharmony as denominator, to describe the sociological nature of the relationship between two interacting individuals at a given moment or over time. Whatever the "fraction of sociation" between interacting individuals, it is correct to say that there exists some "reciprocity" of "driving impulses and purpose" between them. In summary, we may say that "[s]ociation is the form in which individuals grow together into a unity and within which their interests are realized. And it is on the casts of their interests—sensuous or ideal, momentary or lasting, conscious, casual or too logical—that individuals form such unities."<sup>11</sup>

The writer has interest in all five of the Orunmilaist values referenced earlier. They define a concept of "good human society." In Process Thought, these are referred to as intrinsic values that lead to human fulfillment. For David Griffin, an intrinsic value is experienced as enjoyable and fulfilling. He discusses three basic types: receptive, achievement, and contributory.<sup>12</sup> Receptive values are those in which the value experienced comes mainly from the environment, e.g., experiencing a healthy body. Achievement values, require active exertion to be enjoyed, involving mental activity alone or both mental and bodily activity,

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<sup>11</sup>Kurt H. Wolff, *The Sociology of George Simmel* (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, [1950]), 315.

<sup>12</sup>See David Ray Griffin, *God, Power and Evil: A Process Theodicy* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1991), for an in-depth discussion of intrinsic values.

e.g., singing or public speaking. These values are self-actualizing. Contributory values from the anticipation that present activity will contribute value to other experiences, e.g., to support a family.

These basic intrinsic values require a certain degree of freedom, activity, and creativity. They also involve the actualization of the self's or group's capacities. They are essential to human fulfillment. Thus, the whole purpose of economic, social, and political liberation is to allow formerly oppressed people to enjoy these types of values.

### ***Ajobi* and *Ajogbe* as Primal Forms and Consanguinity**

The primordial forms of human society are *ajobi* and *ajogbe* whose English equivalents are "consanguinity" and "co-residentship." Anthropologists, speaking generally, define consanguinity as lineal and collateral relationships based upon blood and birth. Co-residentship, for Akiwowo, is sharing the same shelter whether or not the sharers are related by blood.

By these definitions, it follows that *ajobi* refers to members of a family, or a group of related families or several groups of related families, in a house, in a compound of dwellers, units in a village, town and so on. *Ajobi* also refers to members united by birth and blood who live in distant villages, towns, or regions of the world, or a people in diaspora. According to the Orunmilaist perspective of humankind, all human beings, regardless of race, color, and religion share the *ajobi* bond.

Despite this assertion, this perspective accepts the fact that an individual, persons, groups, in fact a whole nation, by thoughts, words, and behavior negate the bonds of *ajobi*



relationships between them and others. When such a negative situation arises, some members of an *ajobi* group must try to restore and rebuild the ties of consanguinity. Each society provides processes of restoration. Among some, it may be the mere calling of one by the other as "soul sister" or "soul brother."

Regardless of such appeals, *ajobi* bonds get attenuated to the point of seeming nonexistent. The history of African peoples contains the conditions causing bonds to be irreparably damaged. Among these are the linkage of local economies to the metropolitan markets of Europe during the eighteenth century, leading for the first time to the acquisition of easily portable forms of money, sudden social upheavals that led to the physical separation of blood relations, and forcing one to depend on total strangers for help and sustenance. Through commerce and paper currency and light-weight metal coins, it became easily possible to acquire wealth through one's own "individual" initiative and with little dependence upon one's blood relations. The successful ones among blood relations acquired more money, bought new things, and could afford to marry the most attractive or influential young women. Less successful ones were gingered into competition, or envy.

Slavery (the seizure and forcible sale of a relative, fellow villager or townsperson) became the culminating point of unchecked sibling rivalry among members of an *ajobi* group. Unbridled lust for money led to indiscriminate kidnapping of children who were sold into slavery. According to Akiwowo, this practice of abduction and selling of children—others or one's own—continues today in contemporary Nigeria.

As soon as the social processes of "competition,"

“envy,” and “conflict”—visible means to success—were universally established, a new form of social bond (friendship) emerged. It was not based on blood relationships nor marriage but on similarity—the individual’s modes of expressing being. Friends could live in one or another’s home and take part in the life of the household except for household rites.

The physical structure of the household changed to accommodate the increased population by adding dwelling units as a new optimum was reached. A household became, therefore, a fold of such added units. Thus, it is clear that not everyone lived in the same household that constituted an *ajobi* since the folks in a household may include lineal and collateral relations, alien residents, friends, migrant workers, etc. Together, these social elements form the *ajobe* (the co-residents) with a distinctive set of taboos, forms of interaction, persistence, and discontinuities.

*Ajobi* and *ajobe* are distinctive social relationships and processes with established observable patterns. For Akiwowo, it is the broad defining characteristics that German sociologist Leopold Von Weise, who lived at the turn of the nineteenth-century into the first decades of the twentieth-century, has called “sociation.”<sup>13</sup> The quality of sociation is that of approach and withdrawal in all social behaviors. Von Weise held the view that sociology is the study of the direction and repetitive patterns of approach and avoidance in human interrelationships. In short, sociology is the systemic study of three processes; namely, association, dissociation, and mixed processes.

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<sup>13</sup>For a discussion of Leopold Von Weise’s views, See Harry Elmer Barnes, *An Introduction to the History of Sociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948).



Association and dissociation are, for Von Weise, the main processes, and association subsumes a number of sub-processes:

- advance—in which there always remains some feeling of hesitation
- adjustment—modification of differences
- accordance—mutual participation in emotions, memories and habitual attitudes
- amalgamation—complete coalescence not achieved

Akiwowo thus returns to his theme by saying, in the first place, both *ajobi* and *ajogbe* possess different fractions of sociation. In *ajobi* the magnitude of concord and consensus is high because each member is able to link identity to a common source, i.e., same mother or same father. In this form of sociation, it is probable for the individuals who compose it to grow up together and realize their common interests within it.

However, discord may emerge to separate them as a result of sibling rivalry. There are some children of the same mother or father who will not share their possessions with their co-siblings who are in need, or suffer from poverty, but may prefer to share with a stranger. During the era of slave trade in Africa, an oral history relates that relatives sold or bought one another as slaves. Yet, despite these separative factors, the “spirit” and “memory” of that common origin (*alajobe*) always remained deeply embedded emotionally, ready to surface to provide the driving impulses of purpose.

Akiwowo’s point, dialectical in nature (Hegelian), is that out of the disharmony in relationship and separations of the members of an *ajobe*, comes new forms of sociation:

- friendship
- neighbors
- settlements

When natural bonds are weakened or severed, new ones of a social character are created, e.g., cooperatives, drinkers' clubs, diners' clubs, etc. Akiwowo calls these social forms of sociation, differentiating affiliations. That is, they are different groups of individuals who are in contact and united for common purposes and adopt to receive new persons as members. These social forms may emerge in response to constraining pressures by the *ajobi* on its members to remain within the fold, as it were, or a breakdown in the *ajobi* social graces of greetings and responses may occur. Those forms of sociation may also emerge in responses to the dictates of religious rites or rituals. Demographic forces such as emigration, political processes, wars, as well as peace, may force persons to create new social bonds.

At this point, Akiwowo declares in what sense the country of Nigeria is an *ajogbe*. This vast territory, constituting the legal and physical homeland for a large collectivity of some 200 or more language communities, is a unity of innumerable sets of *ajobe* who are consciously becoming self-conscious *ajogbe*. What constitutes the "warp and woof" of the unity is their primary will to sociate: the several attractive culture configurations of their people (diversity of experience) and the unestimated resources available on and below the earth's surface. This will to sociate is expressed in Nigeria's constitution.

Nigeria is truly an affiliation of an African perspective of human society. Inevitably as a growing *ajogbe*, persons are trying to discover how best to fashion new social ties as new



perceptions of the world are developed, providing newer definitions to what-is-mine and what-is-yours. Unfortunately, Nigerians think that the constitution— an objectified will-to-sociate us all—that lives in a written form is sufficient to sustain the people. Yet, social life is a moment-to-moment process of sociation of human beings. It is largely subjective. What is needed, then, to sustain the will-to-sociate, in addition to the constitution, includes internalized appreciation of the worth of human life individualized in our fellow people and appreciation of the worth of other ethnic groups. This diversified situation brings us to Akiwowo's economic, socio-political agenda, the role of the African sociologist.

Regarding the social role that the Nigerian sociologist plays, Akiwowo says because of the loss of the sense of good comportment in his society, he would like for these intellectual workers to be the *atokun* of the society. This role in the *egungun* cult has seven duties:

- pilots the way to the deity;
- interprets to the people, the onlookers, what the deity says;
- ascertains that there are no trip-ups over the potholes in the way to the deity;
- proceeds along this side of the road;
- collects into a bag, the gifts, in cash and kind, gives to the deity;
- orchestrates all arrangements for the festival; and
- mediates between the deity and the ones who worship it.

In other words, the sociologist/theologian who pursues the Orunmilaist tradition sees and studies the bare structure of the national society and determines how the parts are articulated and harmonized to work together. The sociolo-

gist/theologian must work to possess a thorough knowledge of the "anatomy of society": peoples, cultures, languages, norms, religions, and general worldviews. African sociologists must lead themselves to recognize these elements of sociality as an integrated whole and be able to identify with the welfare of each social category.

This objectively derived knowledge of the entire form of the society must be sound, unprejudiced, and unequalled by knowledge of another society in a distant nation. Such knowledge will enable sound advice given for social planning, to coordinate projects, help establish priorities, and be ready to apply, so to speak, the whip to anyone who stands in the way of societal progress. Through undaunted research, the forces of social change are monitored. These processes, however, are creating tenuous relationships between Nigerians and their environment in which they function; the African is slowly alienated from the traditional sources of inspiration.

In concluding his inaugural address, Akiwowo says, that if we adhere to this perspective, frustrating conflicts within the professional group can be resolved. Theorists of the sociating nature of conflict have devoted a "deserved place" to social conflicts by determining how and why they work in creating a negative sociation. As *atokun* of society, Nigerian sociologists are in the best position to enable the government in finding lasting solutions—derived from the souls of the Nigerian people—to grievous social problems this nation now faces.

### **Creative Transformation and the Faith-based Response**

It would not do honor to Akiwowo's work unless we



mention the economic activity in which the writer is involved through The Center for Family Farm Development (CFFD), Genesis Fresh Express International (GFXI), and Black Farmers and Agricultural Association (BFFA). This brief discussion affords the opportunity to draw direct relationships to his concepts of *ajobe* and *ajogbe*, especially as they are actualized in practice. We currently are in the process of reorganizing African-American agricultural development, both here and abroad, according to sound and fundamental theological principles and methods of economic development.

The formal mission of the BFFA is to be the catalyst for black farmers to achieve the goals of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. In this role, BFFA seeks:

- to promote collective action to achieve financial viability;
- to acquire and retain land, and to seek justice in the courts;
- to remove legal impediments to progress;
- to oversee administration of government programs as they effect farmers;
- to promote legislation to ensure that black farmers and black landowners receive a fair share of the tax money allocated for economic development;
- to research and to participate in profitable enterprises;
- to establish their own financial support system;
- to develop cooperatives; and
- to educate both the urban and rural communities to the benefits of supporting black farmers and black agribusiness development.

Furthermore, BFFA will investigate any threats to the survival of black farmers from government and then educate, galvanize, and organize them with strategies to remove

such dangers. Here, we make direct contact with Akiwowo's intent regarding the themes on sociation, in general, and his concepts of differentiating affiliations and amalgamation in particular. As we recall, one of his primary concerns is the ontological characteristic of African spirit to form intentional relationships and coalitions to overcoming evil and human obstacles—either on the continent of Africa or among African Americans in diaspora.

In so doing, black farmers have participated in demonstrations against USDA and the World Bank-IMF. They claim that the tactics utilized by the USDA loan programs to eliminate black small family farmers are the same pressures now used by the World Bank-IMF to destroy “family farmers” all over the world. These tactics include:

- loaning money to one sector at the expense of another, causing unbalanced development and strife between sectors and peoples;
- funding programs that would make the farmers more dependent on outside inputs for production and outside markets for sales;
- eliminating small-scale operations of small farmers that they utilized to develop cash flow, forcing dependency on “borrowed capital” to operate;
- requiring “additional indebtedness,” placing once-free land under debt, and thereby vulnerable to market changes beyond control of the individual farmer;
- utilizing the few groups that are funded with money to keep others in line, making them the buffer between the large corporations and people



who are being exploited;

- forcing farmers and the agricultural sector to over utilize resources causing long-term environmental destruction;
- prompting people to be greedy for material things and dependent on the “master of capital”;
- reducing farmers’ bio-diversity, rendering the germplasm of the world into the hands of a few transitional agribusiness firms who, by using genetic engineering, can manipulate the food supply of the world—at will; and
- pulling the rug from beneath the artificial system upon which people have been dependent on and blaming victims for their own demise.

In ending our discussion of BFFA, the writer mentions an additional set of significant plans made in another planning meeting with the Executive Council of the Georgia State Chapter of BFFA. Guidelines were made to establish “The Rural Development Corporation.” In brief, black farmers have agreed to supply an initial investment of one million dollars. Each farmer will give \$5,000 of settlement money to sponsor the cooperative effort. Four minority-owned financial institutions have agreed to supply an additional 2 million dollars. Thus, the initial funding will be 3 million dollars. The point is that this program is being set up for the Farm Credit Association System (The Farm Credit Bank) to leverage the beginning 3 million dollar investment up to ten times that supplies operating capital in the amount of 30 million dollars! This decision would no doubt lead to a historical development for the black community in the rural South. This can occur because 1,700 to

2,000 black farmers have developed the capacity to work cooperatively in a collective effort by investing \$5,000 each. The writer was impressed by this move since his area of specialization within economic development is "asset creation" and "debt reduction."

This cooperative spirit has already formulated the "creation" of other cooperatives. Several farmers working together and pooling their resources can accomplish what one farmer cannot. Joint ventures create prosperity, stability, and job opportunities for family members. Working together makes the impossible possible: "How good and how pleasing it is when brothers and sisters dwell in unity."

In reference to Process Theology and philosophy, the basic concepts employed here are doctrines of "relatedness," "interdependence/interpenetration," and "Creative Transformation." In that light, we will continue to move towards creating and actualizing viable solutions to problems. We will continue to encounter racism and vested-interest groups—the reality of social conflict—as we aspire to create intentional social change. Yet, outlook remains positive as the creation of jobs and the creative transformation of economically-depressed communities through economic-development activity occur. One of the most interesting prospects here is providing the oppressed poor with the opportunity to begin business for themselves. However, the availability of opportunity means little in the absence of effective community organizing and community service at the grassroots level. The effect of real hope is often the result of effective action.

Let us close by returning to GFXI and CFFD. As has been mentioned, the GFXI partnership has developed international attention, particularly in African and Caribbean



countries. The GFXI Market Research proposal has been submitted to the Secretariat of the Economic Community of West African State, a nineteen-nation-development-planning-compact. Akiwowo will work with us and is slated to play a major role. In addition, we are in the process of connecting with various funding sources to spearhead efforts to restore strategic farm lands severely hampered by industrialized exploitation.

In 1997 and 1998, respectively, CFFD sponsored trade missions to the Republic of Congo and South Africa. On Tuesday, August 12, 1998, CFFD received a donation of 7.2 hectares of land at Koundzoulou, Republic of Congo just beside the Congo River. This allocation was in response to a CFFD proposal to develop a "food park" to centralize processing and direct marketing technologies for transfer. Small-farm organizations in Jamaica, Trinidad/Tobago, Grenada, and in Mexico have also been screened by GFXI managers to develop limited partnership terms. International interests have reinforced GFXI development methods for increasing small farm fresh market shares.

In addition, GFXI already has the potential to become a diversified operation. It has already received a serious inquiry about providing hogs, through the Black Farm Movement network, for a black-owned sausage processing plant. Even more significantly, it has recently received an order (letter of intent) for 200,000 metric tons of Soft White Wheat No. 2, per month for one year. CFFD would provide 25,000 metric tons per month at the best target price available to seller. The port of destination would be Karachi. The commodities are to be shipped on ships acceptable to Pakistan. This venture, of course, will require needed capital. However, the ability to respond to such an order has the

capacity to re-capitalize the black farm in rural Georgia!

Another, yet similar, and recent development is the arrangement made with black farmers in Kansas to purchase the wheat that they sell to USDA, which is usually dumped on the international market as surplus. The plan is to set up a manufacturing concern in Africa that will produce African bread. Distribution will occur in partnership with the African Kiambanquist Christian Church with 6 million members in six West African countries.

In fact, this becomes the history-making component. What CFFD proposes to do through GFXI is unprecedented. This small-family farm system, which has already gained world parity, will compete in the international market with countries such as Poland. This has never been done before through a small-family farm system, either black or white!

How fitting that those who have been historically oppressed, and systematically denied, would be the ones who have maneuvered themselves into the position to make "first entry." It means that a positive future can indeed be the case when we free ourselves from a negative past. One of our major theological themes has been, "the first shall be last, and the last shall be first!"

It is also important to note that CFFD does not discriminate, nor restrict its potential horizons. CFFD, in consultation with the Fort Valley State College Extension Service, also organized a small farm trade mission to Japan in 1992, to investigate soy food markets. The trip resulted in a private offer from a Japanese buyer to experimentally purchase 1,000 metro tons of *natto* grade soybeans. The slogan which derived from this transaction is "sowing seeds of friendship."



### Conclusion

These are the kinds of concepts for which Akiwowo was looking and the kind of things he was waiting to say from the standpoint of Western thought, because he is sure of it from the vantage point of African experience. For under the concept of *Ifongbontayese*, we must place the necessary stress on God's ability and following God's guidance, prehension—the writer's theory Relationship of Primary Dependence on God, an original theory in process thought. Howard Thurman, who was immersed in process thought, exemplifies this principle in his meditation, #46, "The Wisdom of God" in which his theme is "The Wisdom of God is My Abiding Strength."

On this important issue, Thurman says that:

Knowledge abounds on every hand by which my steps may be guided. Facts, facts, facts . . . they are everywhere about me. I know with my mind the meaning of many choices that I make. Besides there are many sources upon which I may draw for information that will be the raw material of my decisions. But facts are not the heart of my need.

I need wisdom. The quality that will make clear to me the significance, the relatedness of things that are a part of my daily experience—this I lack again and again. I need wisdom to cast a slow and steady radiance over all my landscape in order that things, choices, deeds may be seen in their true light—the light of the eternal and the timeless.

The wisdom of God—how can I abide without it? . . . The

wisdom of God can flood even the error of my ways and transform my error into a path of light. . . . This I know. Therefore: The Wisdom of God is My Abiding Strength.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Howard Thurman, *Meditations of the Heart* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1953), 207.