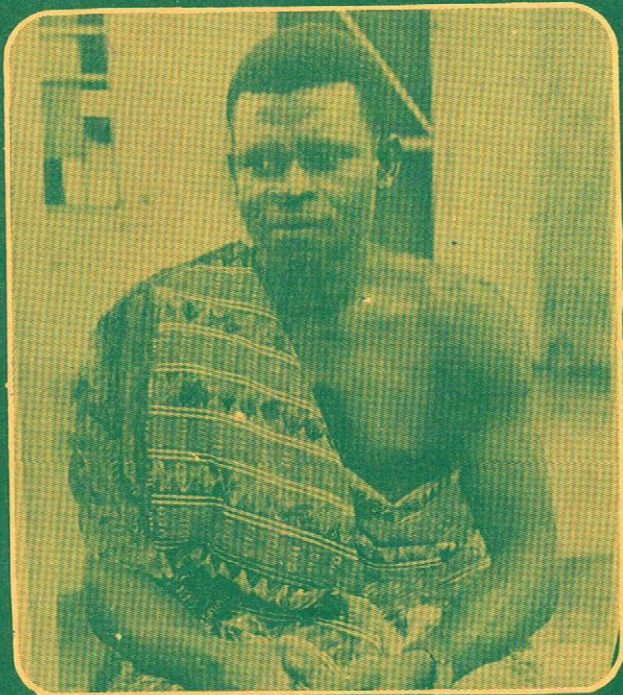


*Paul*

# Biography

*of*



**Late Solomon Gambo Ahima**

by

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Content  
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Mr. Solomon Gambo Ahima to serve as a  
memory of him for good things that he did  
for his people. For some of the things  
which made him well known and popular  
among his people. Acknowledgement  
The Author

## BIOGRAPHY

OF

**LATE SOLOMON GAMBO AHIMA**

**ARISTOTLES AND ZOROASTER OF**

**20TH CENTURY KWARARRAFA**

Dedicated to the family of  
**Late SOLOMON GAMBO AHIMA**

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## PREFACE

*It became a compelling necessity to write a biography of **Late Mr. Solomon Gambo Ahima** to serve as a **Loving Memory** of him for good things that he did when he was on earth before departing from us. For some of deeds done by him which made him great and popular are worth emulating. He had lived peacefully and socially with every body and during his life he was good, tolerant and hard working.*

and asking questions of others. He later went to Ibadan in 1952 and completed his Primary education in 1956 when higher institutions were hard to come by and hence very competitive. He worked as a scribe in the Wukari District, Sub-Local Authority Office in 1961 but was retrenched in September for lack of funds from the victa of charge for his salaries. From September, 1961 to 1962 he was an applicant and a hunter, especially in the dry season. From 1963 to 1964 he attended the S.U.M. Yemstra Pre-Seminary School, Lupwa, where he sat the Entrance Examinations to Gindifi Teachers College in 1964 and passed. He therefore trained as Grade II Teacher from 1965 to 1969. He taught from January, 1970 to September, 1972, in Ebenezer Senior Primary School, Wukari, during which time he became an intimate associate of Mr. Solomon G. Ahima, though there was a big age disparity between them. Mr. Ahima and the author, therefore, were only friends from the ideological point of view but they shared a common ideology in terms of world view and the destiny of their society.

When the author left for the Advanced Teachers' College, Zaria to pursue his 3 years' National Certificate of Education Course, he still kept close contacts with Mr. Ahima, especially during the holidays. The author completed his course in June, 1975 and taught briefly in the then St. Paul's

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

*I wish to acknowledge the contributions made by Professor Jonah F. ELaigwu of the Department of Political Science, University of Jos who, despite the pressure of work of his office, was able to go through the script and offer useful suggestions and comments. I am therefore greatly indebted to him. Suggestions and contributions made by friends and persons who knew **Mr. Solomon G. Ahima** personally are also appreciated.*

## THE AUTHOR

Born in January, 1942, into Angyu-Tsokwa Agabi-Uku's family, the author spent the first decade of his life as an apprentice farmer and hunter, keenly interested in the world around him and had an enorous interest in listening to stories and asking questions of elders. He later went to Infant One in 1952 and completed his Primary education in 1960 when higher insitutions were hard to come by and hence very competitive. He worked as a scribe in the Wukari District/Sub-Local Authority Office in 1961 but was retrenched in September for lack of funds from the vote of charge for his salaries. From September, 1961 to 1962 he was an applicant and a hunter, especially in the dry season. From 1963 to 1964 he attended the S.U.M. Veenstra Pre-Seminary School, Lupwe, where he sat the Entrance Examinations to Gindiri Teachers College in 1964 and passed. He therefore trained as Grade II Teacher from 1965 to 1969. He taught from January, 1970 — September, 1972, in Ebenezer Senior Primary School, Wukari, during which time he became an intimate associate of Mr. Solomon G. Ahima, though there was a big age disparity between them. Mr. Ahima and the author, therefore, were only friends from the ideological point of view i.e. they shared a common ideology in terms of world view and the destiny of their society.

When the author left for the Advance Teachers' College, Zaria to pursue his 3 years' National Certificate of Education Course, he still kept close contacts with Mr. Ahima, especially during the holidays. The author completed his course in June, 1975 and taught briefly in the then St. Paul's Catholic Secondary School - now GSS Wukari. He left for another 3 year B.A. Combined Honours course in History and

1978. All of this period he kept close contacts with Mr. Ahima, especially during the holidays. The Author then went for his NYSC in Ondo State in July, 1978 and later got redeployed to the Benue State in January, 1970 and was posted to the Advance Teachers' College, Katsina-Ala, to teach Government. He continued to maintain close contacts with his ideological friend. After completion of his NYSC, the author like his ideological friend was frustrated and systematically expelled to the Plateau State. He secured a teaching job and was posted to GSS Langtang to teach from September, 1979 - September, 1980, still maintaining close contacts with Mr. Ahima.

In September, 1980 after Alh. Abubakar Barde had been sworn in as Governor of Gongola State, the author was privileged to be one of the invitees for interviews for offer of appointments. He attended this interviews and was offered appointment as an administrative officer in the Gongola State Civil Service. Throughout the period he worked in Yola he continued his intimacy with his ideological friend.

The above brief description is to show that the author is not a stranger to the deceased Philosopher, Patriot and the Aristotle of the 20th Century Kwararafa but an intimate associate who knows very much of the Jukun Philosopher and Nationalist. It was on this ground that the author was mandated by the progressives and the followers of Mr. Ahima on 29th January, 1988, to write a meaningful biography of their beloved leader and the Director of MAMSER of the 20th Century Kwararafa.

It is, therefore, hoped that readers will have enough patience, objectivity and open mindedness to read this biography carefully with a view to understanding and appreciating the noble role played by this great Philosopher and





## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this biography is to document the most salient achievements and the struggles of Mr. Solomon G. Ahima, during his life here in this world, to create an awareness that will make the Jukun man and woman understand the world in which they now live. Armed with this awareness and understanding, Mr. Ahima believed, the Jukun man and woman will be able to adopt to their fast changing environment and hence be able to effectively control their own destiny, effectively take part in the affairs of their own Local and the Nigerian Community at large, as did their fore-fathers during the pre-colonial era of the survival of the fittest, best described as the period of creation of empires. This Philosophy is basic in any effort to understand Mr. Ahima.

It was this Philosophy, coupled with his charismatic nature, that attracted to him a large following: intellectual and non-intellectual alike, small and big, the rich and the poor, Jukun and non-Jukun alike were all attracted to him. They all admired him. This wonderfully charming man who had never gone through the four walls of Primary One was able to evolve a diplomacy unparalleled in his society: of noble simplicity, of an open door policy such as the Babangida Regime operates today, of tolerance, or patience, of courage and, most important of all, of complete disdain for greed -consideration for wealth and positions did not detract him from his noble goal. No wonder, therefore, that his door was always full of people. This explains why he died as a poor man, though rich in ideas and mind.

As a man naturally endowed with deep foresight and ideas he was quick to identify the aspirations of his people and

made himself champion of these aspirations unlike most of his contemporaries who believed only in intrigues and held a monarchial view of politics and all societal affairs i.e. one man knows best and should decide everything for the society, regardless of the aspirations of that society. Mr. Ahima's deep foresight, intelligence and democratic ideas therefore clearly marked him out far above his contemporaries.

Ironically and unfortunately, this source of his popularity was equally a source of hatred by his contemporaries who quickly became jealous of his growing influence and popularity. All the hatred, political blackmail and the conspiracies perpetrated against him are to be traced from here. The typical reactionary African is frightened of an intelligent person. To him an intelligent person is an unbearable and unwanted nuisance that should not be heard, unlike in the developed countries where such intelligence is seen as a valuable treasure to be tapped and preserved for societal use. Thus, we read about Michael Faraday and many other Scientists/inventors whose knowledge and discoveries have carried the world to where it is today. If it were in Africa they would all have been unheard of as they would have been eliminated for fear of their intelligence. Whereas a progressive man believes and is willing to appreciate the good part of even his enemy, the typical reactionary African does not see anything good in an intelligent person and much less in his enemy.

## CHAPTER 2

### HIS EARLY CHILDHOOD

During the last quarter of the 19th and the second (1927) quarter of the 20th Century, two very interesting and fascinating individuals were to be born into the Kwararafa Community. Their births became the more fascinating as they bear a striking resemblance to those of John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus Christ in Palestine, one preparing the ground for the other to consolidate. The only differences are:-

1. John the Baptist and Jesus Christ had a divine mission while these two fascinating Kwararrafans had an earthly one.
2. In the case of the Biblical Individuals, the greater person came after the lower to consolidate the grounds prepared by the latter. Conversely, in the Kwararrafan case the greater person came first and prepared a very solid ground for the lower to consolidate for the advancement of the Kwararrafan people.

His Royal Highness, Aku Uka, Atoshi, Agbumanu IV, the fascinating and charismatic king of the Jukuns was born in the last quarter of the 19th Century full of energy and vigour. Even as a prince he converted his energies, vigour and intelligence to an instrument for the advancement of his people. As Aku Uka he identified the political, economic and social aspirations of his people and made himself champion and vehicle of their expression. He mobilised the Jukuns to send their children to school, encouraged them to take to businesses, to embark on large scale farming and to send youths to learn handicrafts from other cities of the country.

roads by Communal efforts in his domain and modernised Wukari town by giving it modern streets - the type he saw in other cities in Nigeria. He was noted for his diplomacy and a high sense of justice and fair play. It was all of these that the other fascinating Kwararrafan was to consolidate in subsequent years after His Royal Highness's "Vanishment".

A Royal wedlock of a Princess of Wukari and a prince of Keana was to beget to the Jukuns another interesting and fascinating hero and the Social Mobiliser of 20th Century Kwararrafa. Mr. Solomon Gambo Ahima was born in the second (1927) quarter of the 20th Century during the political interregnum between Ashumanu Ali's death and Agbumanu Amadu's ascension to the throne of Wukari. As a child, Mr. Ahima was very enthusiastic about going to school but his father would not allow him to. At times he would steal away to school but he was always followed there by his father who beat him and carried him away in chains to their village. Many of Mr. Ahima's associates believe that he was a brilliant man who was unfortunately denied the opportunity of realising his potential.

However, this does not mean that he had lost all other opportunities to acquire education of any kind. As a child he became a traditional student under the tutelage of his grand father and a historian, Mr. Aqyu-Bwa. As a child Mr. Ahima followed this old man everywhere he went. The latter in turn inbued him with the knowledge of history as they moved together. He also taught Mr. Ahima the Jukun Social, Cultural and Traditional Practices. In this way Mr. Ahima himself gradually became a great historian and a highly cultured Jukun man. His contemporaries testify that as a young man he was strong and forceful. His age mates were unable to throw him down in wrestling contests.

education did not wane. When he became fully matured, he did not hesitate to give fully rein to his desire for Western Education. He came all the way from a place called Mbizhenku about 4 miles away east of Wukari to attend an Adult Education Class near the present Post Office. He always came first in the class and was also the first to have collected an Adult Education Certificate from His Royal Highness, Aku Uka, Atoshi Agbumanu IV.



**Mr. Solomon Gambo Ahima** Lived and died a hero in his struggles for socio-economic political cultural and religious mobilisation of his people. He died but his philosophy and

## CHAPTER 3

### EARLY FARMING AND HUNTING

Mr. Ahima also proved his dynamism and vigour in the field of farming and hunting. As a young farmer he was given the **Barde** title which could be translated as the bull-dozer and the invisible farmer. His dynamism in farming was another source of attraction and admiration. Men discussed him with mixed feelings. Women sang his praises at farming contests and festivals. As already pointed out in the introduction to this biography, these qualities of his also attracted enemies and hatred as is always the case in reactionary societies. Evil forces were always at work in all farming festivals called **Neku**. During the **Neku** they put their evil practices to use. Young Ahima was however not daunted. He continued farming with every vigour. The author was once told by Mr. Ahima himself that at Abon Agyo Boyi's farming festival, as he was hastening to the farmers, he was pierced in the leg high up by a sharp pointed wood to which he was suspended and was spinning like a ceiling fan. His Nephew Mr. Elisha Sabo Ahima also confirmed this after the former's death. Pa Ahima came to his rescue and young Ahima returned to the farming festival there and then the same vigorous man. His dynamism in farming spread his name far and wide. The Chief of the farmers in Azara in what is today Awe Local Government of Plateau State came all the way from there to make a friend of Mr. Solomon G. Ahima whose name rang in all farming communities there.

In the 1950's there was to be an incident/event that was to mark a turning point in his farming life. A fire disaster which destroyed 50 bundles of his guinea corn and 40 bundles of his millet made him think of taking up an alternative profession.

Mr. Ahima did not only distinguish himself as a dynamic

farmer but he also demonstrated a special ability in hunting, which he combined with farming. His contemporaries testified that he was good in hunting with spears and never missed his targets while throwing a spear.

## CHAPTER 4

### CARPENTRY LATER FARMING AND NEW INSIGHT

After the first incident referred to in the preceding Chapter, Mr. Ahima moved to the town Mbizhenku. His uncle, His Royal Highness, Aku Uka, Atoshi, Agbumanu IV, wanted him to join the then N.A. Police Force, but Mr. Ahima turned it down. Atoshi, therefore, sent him to be an apprentice at the Wukari N.A. Carpentry Workshop. Mr. Ahima also demonstrated excellence there and after qualifying from there he put up his own Workshop in front of his house, where he enrolled his own apprentices from the fifties. The best known of the apprentices are as follows:-

1. Bulus Barau Tonku
2. Emmanuel Manomi Asongbadu
3. Joshua Ahmadu Ato
4. Tsokwa Tonku
5. Saidu Wowo
6. Dan'azumi Angyu-Gani
7. Joshua Habila
8. Adamu Kawuwa
9. Agyerani Apake
10. Abiri Utoshi

However, Mr. Ahima did not abandon farming altogether. He combined Carpentry work with some farming. In 1959 he acquired a large acreage and turned it into an Orchard still flourishes despite acts of sabotage by his enemies to destroy the orange plantation. Twice did they set it on fire, but on all these occasions this noble minded man remained unruffled. He displayed maturity unparalleled at his time, containing the situation as best he could. Some dishonestly went as far as instituting a court case against him claiming ownership of the land on which the plantation has stood since 1959. But the



big question most critically-minded judges and sympathisers always ask is: Where were all these suddenly concerned owners in 1959 when Mr. Ahima was clearing the land for an orange plantation? Why did they wait until the 1980's when his oranges and other fruit trees had fully grown before taking him to court? He who knows the turth, the truth shall make him free. Mr. Ahima, the truth oriented citizen, always came out of these malicious court cases victorious. Despite all these evil machinations his social relationship with friends and enemies alike still remained as cordial as ever before. This confused his enemies.

Apart from the plantation he also grew rice, yams and maize. Besides, he was among the first few Jukun men to take part in the purchase of cash crops like beniseed which was very popular in the colonial days and in the early sixties. By taking part in the purchase himself he was able to understand the tricks of his contemporary traders which he found to be contrary to his sense of justice and patriotism. Patriotism therefore boiled in his veins and he demonstrated this by mobilising the farmers to sell their beniseed direct to the Government to avoid cheating by the exploitative traders. This marked the beginning of yet another rôle that was to distinguish him as the social mobiliser of the 20th Century Kwararrafa — a rôle which he was to play in the Jukun Society until his death on 22nd January 1988. Right from this time he realised that unless the Jukun man and woman are mobilised to know their rights, they can never take their rightfull places and participate effectively in the affairs of their locality and the Nation at large. Mr. Ahima therefore deserves our respect and honour for this foresight of which none of his contemporaries can boast. Right from this time he started attracting a large following of the progressive elements in the Jukun Society. They sang his name in all nooks and crannies of Jukun land. Even the smallest child knew the name Solomon Gambo Ahima even if he might not

unanimously elected Chairman of a Farmers' Council in the early sixties as a mark of confidence in his patriotic leadership. Like the Zoroaster of the Persian history he had a strong sense of justice and fair play. He believed in goodness and love.

Further still, during the Nigerian Civil War he converted his energies, foresight and intelligence to action by encouraging the youths to open shops in Wukari town, while others were to become motor touts to protect the integrity of their fatherland and to ensure regular supply of essential commodities. Ironically, he was met with stiff opposition from the traditional exploitative traders. He however countered this opposition by arguing that trading and motor touts were not hereditary affairs like Chieftaincy. Nobody therefore could and can lay any exclusive claim to them. The traditional exploitative traders replied by instituting a campaign of blackmail against the young traders while the young motor touts were molested in Wukari town, Tsokundi and other surrounding villages. Good examples of such people are Mr. Joshua Mato Awudu and Irimiya Tsokojo (deceased) from Wukari, Katon (deceased) and others from Tsokundi in the early 1970's. The author is a living witness to some of these incidents. Despite all these obstacles, Mr. Ahima continued the struggles. As Almighty God would destine it, the author completed his Grade II Teachers' course from Gindiri in December, 1969 and joined forces with the Nationalist in the struggles for social, economic and political mobilisation of their own society. Ironically, it was and still is the members of this very society for which they were and still are fighting that instituted a sinister campaign/propaganda of blackmail against the two patriots and all the progressive forces behind Mr. Ahima. While Mr. Ahima was fighting to protect the collective destiny, his detractors were parochially concerned with fighting to protect the interest of only one individual. To

displease the totality of the Jukun people. The individual interest should over-ride the collective interest.

Mr. Ahima and his supporters on the other hand argued that the collective interest is over and above individual interest. The individual, therefore, should be subsumed in the larger interest. This is the basic difference between him and his detractors in terms of political philosophy. It is also basic in understanding the struggles and the kind of life that he lived until his untimely death in January, 1988. With regard to inter-ethnic relations he endorsed the Biblical Philosophy of ***“Love your neighbour as you love yourself”*** or ***“Do unto others as you would like them to do unto you”*** provided the ***“others”*** would reciprocate, nor is it correct to love one’s neighbour more than one loves oneself as is always impressed by some schools of thought, he contended. Thus, he defined the limit of love for one’s neighbour. This marks yet another area of difference between him and his detractors and distinguished him as a realistic and a down to-earth philosopher. Because of his down-to-earth philosophy and his abundant interest in the promotion of the welfare of the down-trodden farmer, he was on several occasions elected Secretary, Cooperative Society, Wukari branch, while Sule Carpenter was Chairman. He later became Chairman of the Farmers’ Council thrice and remained as such until his death on 22nd January, 1988. This therefore, is a mark of the farmers’ confidence in him as a leader. As Chairman, Farmers’ Council he helped farmers to secure fertilizer and tractors for use on their farms. Besides, he encouraged them not to abandon their farmlands as the World is fast changing. He also combined his carpentry work with petty contracts but when his detractors were sabotaging his chances and successes in this direction he abandoned it.

## CHAPTER 5

### POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Certainly, a person of Mr. Ahima's patriotism, intelligence, foresight and courage could not have escaped infection by the germs of the Political activities and Nationalism of the fifties and sixties. Surely, this Political animal was infected and he pitched his tent with the Northern People's Congress (NPC) which was portrayed as the party that would salvage the North from the Southerners who were poised to dominate it. It was therefore the responsibility of every Northerner to rescue the North from this feared evil and the only way of ensuring this rescue was by either the membership or sympathy of the N.P.C. which was the messiah and the Saviour of the North. Naturally and given the level of awareness in the North at the time, therefore, the Chief, title holders and Regional patriots greeted this appeal with every alacrity.

He did not contest any elective post but he became an active member of the party, encouraging and persuading members of his community to do the same, though he did not derive any material gain from it. He, however, believed as did every Jukun man at the time that to belong with the N.P.C. meant the defence and protection of the Jukun chieftdom. This was first and foremost in their minds. They were not concerned with any material gain nor did they bother to look at the other side of the coin in the propoganda of rescue/protection.

However, events were to take place that would change this belief, create a new awareness that will open people's eyes and minds to perceive and understand their environments more effectively not only in Jukunland but everywhere in Nigeria. The most important and most pervasive of these

events was the Military Administration of General Gowon through to Murtala/Obasanjo which abolished Regionalism by creating 12 and subsequently 19 States in the Federation with interconnection of roads linking the various States and towns in the Federation. Hence development was carried to the grassroot for the first time in our national history. These and many factors in the Military Administration made Mr. Ahima and his like then realise that Regionalism was a hinderance to progress and National Development. They began to question the real motives of the propaganda for the protection of the North. At best it was a calculated design to entrench certain forces in power in order to protect and foster their interests. Mr. Ahima and his supporters therefore took a radical departure. They intensified their efforts in the enlightenment of their people. Those who appreciated the development brought by the Military Administration, those who wanted a new lease of life in the Nigerian Politics and those who were frightened by the way religion is being used in the so-called North joined him. Mr. Ahima therefore grew from strength to strength.

In terms of participatory democract, he was appointed member of the Wukari Local Government Council several times during the Gomwalk Administration in the seventies, while during the Murtala/Obasanjo Administration he was elected member of the same Local Government Council both at the primary and secondary elections in 1977. All of these are a testimony of his popularity as described in the preceeding chapters. Further, when the ban on party politics was lifted in 1979 he became Chairman of the N.P.P. for the Wukari Local Government and remained as such until 1983. On account of this he was persecuted and thugs stoned the roof of his house, while his orange plantation was burnt twice. The court cases instituted by certain individuals claiming ownership of his farm as referred to previously was also not unconnected with his support for the N.P.P. in addition

Further still, during the December, 1982 Local Government elections, during which he supported the candidature of Mr. Samuel T. Ada for the Chairmanship of the Wukari Local Government, he carried all the progressive forces with him and Mr. Ada polled about 17 thousand votes through the former's popularity and sheer reasoning, despite the fact that the former was a poor man with no influential position. Mr. Ahima therefore was, indeed, a Charismatic leader and a hero. Throughout his life time he believed and relied heavily on reasoning, encouraging people not to allow their conscience to be bought with money.

## CHAPTER 6

### RELIGION

Mr Ahima became a Christian in the fifties preaching in the surrounding villages. Because of his dedication and commitment to Christianity he became the first Deacon in the C.R.C.N. Church under Rev. Peter Dekker in 1955. He later rose to the rank of Church elder on several occasions and was instrumental to the construction of the second C.R.C.N. Church (Puje Branch) in Wukari town. Through his personal contacts with the late Aku Uka, Adi-Byewi, Ashumanu V, the latter donated the field on which Puje Branch of the C.R.C.N. Church stands today for a Christian Youth Recreational Centre. Mr. Ahima's leadership ability was recognized not only in Political but also in Religious circles. When there was a proposal to construct a modern church at the Youth Recreational Centre, he was made Chairman of the Construction Committee. However, like in the secular arena Mr. Ahima also had detractors in the Church. When in 1982 he made a copy of a CAN letter of invitation available to the newly established Wukari African Church, his detractors instituted a campaign of blackmail against him. They argued that by making that letter available to the Wukari African Church, he had sinned because that Church does not abhor polygamy. Mr. Ahima countered this by arguing that all Churches in Nigeria come under the umbrella of the CAN and so the African Church cannot be an exception, but like the Jews at the Judgements of Jesus and Paul in Palestine, they decided to find him guilty of that sin. Consequently, he was removed from the Chairmanship of the construction work of the new church, prevented from teaching the baptism class, from preaching and all other activities that would bring him to the fore-front in the Church. He remained unruffled and continued to grow in popularity as was demonstrated by the support he drew during the 1987 Local Government elections.

With regard to freedom of religion and of worship, he argued that since the Nigerian Constitution guarantees freedom of worship and of religion, it will amount to intolerance and a breach of the Constitution for any religion to seek deliberately to deny other religious groups this freedom while jealously guarding its own. He therefore fought against religious intolerance, encouraging Christians to play their rightful roles in the Nigerian affairs as citizens while still remain committed to their faith. In this way he was, like Thomas Aquinas of the Medieval Europe. Mr. Ahima went a step further to denounce the misconception in certain religious quarters that one has to change one's language before one can be a believer of any particular religion, nor does God prescribe any one language of communication between him and his human creatures.

God is omnipotent and omniscient and therefore cannot reduce himself to the incapacitation and parochialism of understanding only one language of the world as is thought in certain religious quarters, he contended. God is the creator of the whole of universe and all that are therein and therefore he is capable of understanding and communicating with his human creatures in all of the languages spoken by them without the slightest incapacitation or favouritism. Those who think God has a particular diamond language for communication between him and men are only ascribing their own human attributes to God. Further and more precisely still, they propagate this belief for their burning desire to expand their linguistic and political influence peoples of separate cultural identities, who otherwise would not accept such linguistic and political suzerainty.

Perhaps, Mr. Ahima was capable of this religious conception because of his traditionist background. In traditionist Jukun religion the various ancestral spirits can speak in any of



This traditional background is further confirmed by the Biblical prediction that all tongues and languages shall praise and worship the Lord Jesus Christ. This background explains why he threw his enormous energy, experience and intelligence behind the translation work going on in the Jukun language which shall form the subject of discussion in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 7

In the area of educational development, he was one of the founding fathers of Ebenezer Senior Primary School, Wukari which was founded in the late fifties. He also encouraged Christian Youths to embrace western education. In this way, he continued the policy of his fore-runner, Aku Uka, Atoshi, Agbumanu IV, of encouraging and promoting education in Jukunland. Infact, it was the latter who laid the foundation stone of this Primary School referred to above. A more interesting aspect of his enormous interest in the development and progress of the Jukun people will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 8

### JUKUN LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Mr. Ahima was prepared to make himself champion in all facets of Jukun Development - whether it be in the political, religious, social or economic field. Thus, when the C.R.C.N. mission introduced a policy of translation in the Jukun Language, he became one of the Principal, if not the only supporter (from among the elders) to the translator, Mr. Evenhouse. He checked the translated works to ensure naturalness of expression. He distinguished between serious and ordinary language, between respectful and disrespectful language etc. In this way he was able to inject the richness of the Jukun language into the translated works. When Rev. Luka Agbu took over this task from Mr. Evenhouse, Mr. Ahima still worked hand in hand with him as a proof reader.

When the idea of launching an appeal fund for the Jukun Language Development Project was hatched, he was unanimously elected Chairman of the Central Committee that would plan towards the launching. He successfully and effectively led a delegation, comprising Rev. Luka Agbu and the then Mr. & Mrs Yamusa, to make personal contacts with peoples of Kwararafa origin, friends and well-wishers in places like Jos, Kaduna, Pindiga, Kyeana, Doma, Wamba, Shendam, Pankshin, Mada, Kyekura, etc. He and his group mobilised the totality of the Jukun to the grassroot - children, men, women, traditional rulers were all mobilised. Never before in the history of this small but interesting group has it been so mobilised. Thus on the launching day, children, young men and women, traditional title holders and traditional rulers from towns and villages in the old Kwararafa culture trooped to the launching field in long queues, dressed in traditional clothes/wrappers of *Adire* and *Kyadzwe* with their hair fashioned into the Kwararafa hair-do. That was the

Certainly, Mr. Ahima therefore deserves to be crowned as the Director of MAMSER, Zoroaster and the Aristotles of the 20th Century Kwararrafa. He deserves our respect fro his enormous contributions, dedication and commitment to Jukun Development.

Unfortunately, after the December, 1987 Local Govern-ment elections referred to in the chapter on Political activities, he died after a brief illness at a time he was most needed and most unfortunately still, when even his detractors had started appreciating his virtues and his political aptitude. His death therefore is a great blow to the entire Jukun people. Alas, it seems that the Jukun man is destined to obstinately refuse to tap his resources and oportunities until all chances of doing so delude him. He lives to regret! Mr. Ahima was an untap-ped asset now lost forever!

## CHAPTER 9

### CONCLUSION

Thus, when he was still alive, Mr. Ahima consolidated and added to the granite works started by his predecessor, His Royal Highness Aku Uka, Atoshi, Agbumanu IV in the fields of social, religious, economic and political development of Jukunland. Therefore, for these, his concern and love for us we do hereby mourn below his untimely death:-

We deeply mourn your untimely departure from this sinful world;  
When on the cool and fateful morning of 22nd January, 1988,  
The wicked claws of death tore out your most valued life from your mortal body;  
At a time we and the entire people of Kwararrafa needed you most.

As you made your triumphal journey that cool morning,  
Led by Angel Gabriel;  
We heard the voice of the Heavenly father saying,  
Amid a tumultuous welcome,  
"Well done my faithful and honest servant,  
Though hast fulfilled the purpose,  
For which I sent thee into the world".  
We heard and saw Kisira embracing and saying to you;  
"Well done my loyal and noble child,  
Thou hast fought for a noble cause in thy life";  
Awudu, Adashu, Agwabi and Atoshi all proudly embracing you saying,  
"Well done our faithful and loyal child,  
Thou hast walked in the noble steps of thy father".  
Thus, we do hereby confirm and testify:  
Thou were the director of MAMSER and Zoroaster of

Thou did give expression and articulation to our aspirations;  
Thou were forerunner of Babangida's much publicised  
MAMSER in Kwararafa;  
Thou did encourage the youths to take to business,  
Traders, Commercial Farming and all that is good in moder-  
nism;  
Thou did encourage and persuade the youths to put up struc-  
tures in their own domain.

A Philosopher and friend of Kwararafa thinkers.

Thou were unto the Jukuns,  
As Aristotle was to the Greeks;  
As a Christian thou walked diligently in line with the tennets  
of the Scriptures, exhorting believers to perform their roles as  
citizens,  
While still remain committed to their faith;  
Thou, therefore, were 20th Century Thomas Aquinas of  
Kwararafa;  
A simple but noble hearted gentility;  
A simple yet of noble birth.

As traditionist thou were the symbol of Kwararafa identity,  
Walking in the steps of our fathers;  
Despite thy detractors' evil machinations,  
Thou remained firm and committed to the path of Social  
And Economic emancipation of our people;  
Bravado, thou noble son of Kisira;  
Bravado, thou noble son of Awudu;  
Bravado, thou noble son of Adashu and Agwabi;  
Bravado, thou loyal and worthy son of Atoshi,  
Therefore, we were not the least surprised,  
When in the cool morning of the 22nd January, 1988,  
Thou were received with a Jubilant welcome by the Angels in  
Heaven.  
Kisira, thy child hast lived a heroic, victorious and exemplary

Lord, Ama, thy servant did not allow considerations for wealth and opportunities to detract him from the noble struggle for the emancipation of what was his own;

Awudu, thy child deservest our respect, because he bore no malice, nor did he work against anybody's success;

Instead, he made himself champion of our endeavours and successes

Adashu, thy child deservest our love because he loved us;

Agwabi, thy child deservest our concern because he was concerned and committed to our noble cause.

Lord God, give us the courage and commitment to emulate and follow in thy noble servant's foot steps;

As we believe that death has no victory over the

Philosophy and ideology Symbolised by thy noble servant;

Ahima dies, yet he lives and multiplies

Death, where, therefore is thy sting?

Daeva, where therefore, are your evil machinations?

Ahima is victorious forever!

Adieu Monsieur Solomon Gambo Ahima;

Adieu thou Director of MAMSER and Zoroaster of Kwararafa;

Adieu thou noble and Patriotic defender and protector of our Dignity;

Mother, Earth, embalm and preserve thy noble child's body, until he awakes on the great Judgement Day,

Father, Ama, accept and keep thy loyal and worthy child's soul,

Until the great Day of thunder and lightning.

Ah! Hark! Daeva! There comes the Christ of God'

Amend your ways as no tricks, No manoeuvres, can save from his long hand of Judgement!

Zoroaster triumphs!

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