

**MAKING IKUN EKITI BETTER THAN WE MET IT FOR THE COMING GENERATION. A SPEECH DELIVERED AT THE 2017 FIDUO CONVENTION IN LAUREL, MARYLAND, USA, ON JULY 29, 2017**

**By Pastor Olawale Adeleye**

---

Distinguished audience, sons and daughters of Ikun Ekiti, our paramount ruler – Oba - Olusola Olatunde----; k’ade o pe l’ori, ki bata pe lese, ki irikere pe l’owo ki ase si ni enu yin. Long may you reign our dear Kabiyesi in wisdom grace and prosperity in Jesus name.

I consider it a great privilege to be asked to address you all in this capacity; and I want to specially thank the FIDUO President and all the team members who have assiduously worked together to make this event a success. Thank you for affording me this golden opportunity to address this audience. My prayer to God is that our Union will go from grace to grace and from glory to glory.

Having thought on what to anchor my speech on, I have scanned my head on several topics that could fit into the spirit of this occasion and I finally settled on what I will discuss presently. Of course, being a Pastor, I was immediately prodded to preach a sermon. But I do understand the diversity of faith represented here and the purpose of this gathering. If you will want to listen to this preacher from Ikun-Ekiti, then come to our church service on Sunday.....But joke apart, I began to have a reminiscence of my youthful years back home and how living at Ikun has shaped the person I have become today after being away from that social space for decades of years. I thought about our communal life and the genuine interest that people in our world had for one another. I began to see beyond the size of our community into the strength of our culture. I thought about our agrarian economy and the virtues that were ingrained into our human spirits because of that trade. I don’t know about you, but I believe that we learnt hard-work, diligence, resilience, hopefulness, respect for others, companionship and tolerance from our agrarian background. We have learnt that you need to invest before you harvest, you need to sow before you reap, you need to toil before you triumph and more importantly, our background has taught us that it takes a seed to perpetuate a future; in other words, what we do today creates the tomorrow. It is on that note that I look at Ikun Ekiti as a mighty productive and ever regenerating seed that has produced and keeps producing the harvest of greatness that we have seen today and will continue to see even on a greater note in the future.

With that being said, the main thrust of my discourse is to interrogate how this ever-producing Ikun Ekiti tree can be enhanced for greater productivity. We are all products of a system – in this case – Ikun Ekiti (particularly for those of us who are descendants of that great town in Ekiti, south West Nigeria). Ikun as a sociocultural and biological ethnic construct has produced doctors, lawyers, engineers, politicians, academics, and of course pastors who are excelling in their fields of calling and positively impacting the global world. A lot of these high profile intellectuals and professionals are part of what constitutes the diasporic community of the black atlantics. Well, they don’t just belong to

Ikun; they now belong to the world. In a sense, that is true but that shouldn't always be the case. We still belong to Ikun Ekiti! It is time for the diaspora Ikun to give back to the home community. That is the way to nourish our ever-producing Ikun tree.

What exactly do I mean when I say the diaspora gives back to the home? I am talking about a deliberate volunteerism and community service, in this case to Ikun and its citizenry. I am talking about giving our skills, resources, energy and training to enhance our enclave at Ikun Ekiti. For us in this audience, it will mean building long-term relationships and programs to strengthen and nurture families and children that need it most in our community back home. According to Jenny Harrow, giving back is the act of doing something for the good of a society, a community or subset thereof with no expectation of reimbursement for time, energy or actions. The most common type of giving back is volunteer work or community service conducted through an existing organization, such as FIDUO, whose mission is to provide goods or services needed by a specific population or community. Generally speaking, a giving back type of activity will aim to enhance the quality of life of concerned subjects through philanthropic giving. This is exactly what FIDUO has been doing since its inception in 1987 – all to the glory of God.

As I bring my speech into conclusion, I will like to suggest to my noble listeners areas in which I believe we can make a difference back home.

1. Education: Can we create an educational trust fund to help both indigent students with abilities and those who are academically promising? How about buying JAMB, NECO, GCE and WASCE forms for about 200 SS3 students from Ikun?
2. Health Care: What can we do to help improve the quality of health care delivery? Can we give money and resources to organizations that hold annual health fair, such as Grace Project International, where doctors, nurses and health practitioners currently participating now could be encouraged and be willing to attend anytime they are called upon? Complicated cases will be given referrals for further attention.
3. Agricultural Support: Granted that our community is an agrarian economy, can we provide fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides etc to enhance crop production? Or can we jointly donate a tractor?

Like I said, these are just suggestions, there are many more things we can think about, but these are the few that immediately comes to mind.

I will close with the story of the Good Samaritan of the scriptures and how that is applied to our modern realities. One day, a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. The robbers attacked him, stripped him and beat him up, leaving him half dead (Jerusalem is 830 meters above the sea level while Jericho is 276 meters below sea level so a man leaving Jerusalem for Jericho must go down). A priest and a Levite were going down that road, but when they saw the man, they walked on by, on the other side. In spite of their religious mission, they did not help the man. But the Samaritan cared for the wounded man although the Jews and the Samaritans were enemies. The Lord Jesus Christ charged

the man who asked him who is neighbor was to follow the example of the Good Samaritan. Whereas, the Priest and the Levites are comparable to institutions that primarily exist to cater for the needy – governmental and religious institutions – but sad to say, most of these institutions have failed in their primary objectives, hence the need for social and humanistic structures like ours.

If we look into our lives very well, you and I will agree with the fact that we have all been helped by some systems without which our journey would have been impossible. Progress stops where help stops and there is no such thing as a “self-made man”, any man that is made at all is the product of another man’s sacrifice. We have been the extension of the investment of so many people – parents, family members, neighbors, religious groups, schools, etc. At this point in our lives, what we can only do is to give back. Life is not measured by what we consume but by what we contribute. Let us remember the wisdom of the Ancient – Go and do likewise.

Thank you.