

**CRITIQUE OF ABIGAIL'S INTERVENTION: 1 SAMUEL 25:23-35 FOR  
SOCIAL RELIGIOUS DEVELOPMENT IN IDUMUJE -UGBOKO DELTA  
STATE**

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.24949.65764

**Abstract**

*The need for peace intervention in Idumuje Ugboko Delta state, Nigeria as a typical example cannot be over emphasized in the current dispensation. Without peace, community development will be impossible, even individuals, families and entire Delta state will lack development. Women from ages past have been agents of peace intervention by nature and do accomplish great feats through their innate communication skills, conflict resolution and feminist acts as demonstrate in their different endeavours. Abigail the focus of the research was not different. The narrative teaches that women of Idumuje Ugboko can be proactive and turn into peace makers and workers who can bring peace in their society in time of crisis in their homes or organization. Abigail's peace initiative can provide, in concrete ways solutions to the crisis that has for long ravaged Idumuje Ugboko in Aniocha North local government area of Delta State, thereby enhancing social religious development in the area and the entire Delta State. Very many peace moves to reconcile the warring parties have not yielded much success, Biblical solutions especially Abigail passage for the crisis has not been sought, hence the focal point of the research. It is believed that Abigail's theological stand point can be deployed by Delta state Idumuje Ugboko women to achieve peace in the community and the state, more so as they are Christians that believe that the Bible contains prescriptions for practical livings. It is discovered that Abigail communicative expertise, timely intervention, humility, hospitality, fear of God and peace making are appropriate theological tools for Idumuje-Ugboko Christian women for resolving age long crisis in the area. It is discovered that Biblical peace, Christian peace unlike like other types of peace making, touches, provokes and stimulate the heart for tolerance and forgiveness where there is persistent crisis such as area under study.*

**Keywords:** Abigail's Intervention, Social, Religious, Development, Idumuje-Ugboko

## **Introduction**

Women are mostly and often considered docile, inactive and sometimes worth low in most societies of the world and are thus prevented from doing strenuous jobs or involved in wars and warlike situations. This has over the years precipitated women's struggle to assert their spirit of independence and a feeling of self-worth by struggles that stem from the female desire for emancipation in different societies. Feminism emerged as a result of this perceived prejudice against women. Women are often seen as lacking the initiative to achieve their desire therefore it is believed they need to be guided, motivated and monitored in whatever way possible to be themselves. In a typical African society, women are expected to raise children, to provide emotional support for their husbands, be passive, submissive, dependent, nurturing, gentle, idealistic and intuitive (Adebayoo,2001,pp.12-19;Olujinmi,2009,pp.68-92).They are often excluded from sensitive issues, energy-requiring jobs or subjects that require special abilities. These assumptions inform the segregation of women from participating in most socio-economic and political activities in most countries of the world.

The prejudice against women is an age long affair. In most biblical records, where the people of God were counted or national census taken, the recording was limited to the number of males only. Women and children were not reckoned with. To these enumerators women and children were considered immaterial, probably non-human or even worthless. This notion promoted in the Bible has also been responsible for the spiteful look on women and a step to permanently render them unimportant. In a bid to counter this some women early enough took up the gauntlet to make themselves relevant. In this regard Abigail's efforts under focus cannot be overlooked as the paper submits.

Abigail, the focus of this paper was not different. The narrative teaches that women can be proactive and turn into peace makers and workers who can bring peace in their society in times of crisis in their homes or organizations. Abigail's peace initiatives can provide, in concrete ways, solutions to the crisis that has for long ravaged Idumuje Ugboko in Aniocha North Local Government Area of Delta State thereby enhancing social and religious development in the area and the entire Delta state. Very many peace moves to reconcile the warring parties have not yielded much success. It is believed that Abigail's theological

standpoints can be deployed by Delta state (Idumuje Ugboko) women to achieve peace in the state, more so as they are Christians that believe the Bible to contain prescriptions for practical living. How can a critique or appraisal and interpretation of the biblio-theological text be deployed through the intervention of Delta state (Idumuje Ugboko) women to achieve social religious development in the Delta State? The problem this paper is addressing conflict that was created in Idumuje Ugboko. Abigail the wife of Nabal in 1Samuel 25 saved her foolish husband from death at the hand of David and his soldiers. Abigail's timely intervention, good judgment, humility, beauty, effective communication and silent submission are workable feminine virtues that worked wonders in the narrative of the passage. These virtues of Abigail are qualities imbedded in every woman irrespective of class and location. Appraising and interpreting these narrative-virtues and developing them by each woman as an individual and women as a group can tremendously build and nurture peace in every society

One of the reasons why holy books, scriptures or sacred writs are used as standards for behavior is that the people in the religious narratives look like people of today. The prescriptions given to them by God, which guided and directed them, are still very vital for the direction of the modern man. This is true to the extent that people pattern all aspects of their lives and behaviours after their sacred writings. Belonging to associations, selecting what to eat or drink, fighting and ceasing to fight etc are all determined by what the scripture says.

Old Testament part of the Bible remains a vital part of the Christian holy writ that has been used to make peace and save crises situations from worse deterioration in many societies. Many attempts have been made to settle the Idumuje ugboko (Delta state) crisis to no avail. The text of 1Samuel 25:1-35 under discussion has never been criticized, appraised, interpreted, exploited and deployed for the settlement of the age-long Idumuje Ugboko crisis. This alongside the fact that Idumuje Ugboko Christian women have not taken advantage of the behavioural-narrative virtues of Abigail, the dramatis personae of the narrative, to sue for social religious development in Delta state, form the focal problem of this research.

The purpose of this paper generally is to address the issue of Idumuje Ugboko crisis from the perspective of Abigail's intervention to save Nabal, her husband from deathly crisis.

Specifically, the paper aims to

- (a) Criticize the study text through exegesis of the verses.
- (2) Examine the Idumuje Ugboko crisis situation
- (3) Contextualize the text on Idumuje Ugboko for social religious development in Delta state

The scope of this study is on Delta state area with pointed paper concentration on Idumuje-Ugboko in Aniocha North Local Government Area. Specifically the scope zeroes in on the attempt to solve the community crisis that has done much harm to the people. The scope of the text of the narrative is 1Samuel 25:1-35 and the scope of the intention is to criticize and appraise the text for building peace and social religious development in Delta state.

This paper is significant as a work in the Department of Religion and Human Relations for it shall stand to serve as scholarly reference and guide to students. Those interested in National and International peace and security as well as domestic decision-making can appropriate the theological virtues of the result of the criticism of this passage for character and peace building.

Delta state women can play strategic roles in conflict resolutions, conflict prevention, reconciliation, reconstruction, peace promotion and social religious development following the result of the criticism of the ample examples of Abigail in this passage.

The result of the criticism of the text is significant to “August Women Meetings” nationwide, as part of their agenda in their yearly meetings is building peace and creating social religious development of their communities. Saving a whole household as Abigail did is enough peace and social religious development in Delta state of course any other community as such.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Critic, Criticism:** in ordinary usage criticism means expression of unfavorable opinion about something but when applied to literature it means appraisal, analysis and evaluation of a text to find out its meaning. It is in this latter sense that the term is used here to interpret, exegete and appraise the text narrative to understand its merits and short falls.

**Religious:** In its etymology, Haring (1964) traced the term “religion” to three Latin words as its roots, namely: Ligare (meaning to bind), Relegere (meaning to unite, or to link), and Religio (meaning relationship). In his analysis of this

etymology of religion, Omoregbe (1993) holds that the etymology of the world, religion shows that it is essentially a relationship, a link established between two persons, namely, the human person and divine person believed to exist. It is something that links or unites man with a transcendent being, a deity, believed to exist and worshipped by man.

**Intervention:** means to become involved in something in order to have an influence on what happens

**Development:** the act or process of growing or causing something to grow or become larger or more advanced, the act or process of creating something over a period of time and the state of being created or made more advanced from the above meaning, the researcher shall adapt National Development as expansion, growth, progress and profession in the society or the Nation. Development on the other hand has been defined variously in scholars, some view development as a process of industrialization and modernization while some view it as purely an economic phenomenon and as such development is just aggregate economic growth. Modernization theory of development was captured by Nwanegbo and Obi (2006).

**Social:** This is relating to human society, the interaction of the individual and the group, or the welfare of human beings as members of society.

### **Brief History of the Study Area**

The study area is Delta state but the research used the case of crisis in Anioma to point up the essence of peace and social religious development by the text study for the entire Delta state. Anioma means 'good land'. While the word Anioma is an acronym derived from the four original Local Government Areas that is A for Aniocha, N for Ndokwa, I for Ika, O for Oshimili, M and A are common denominators found in the four original Local Government Area. The coinage was made by the founding father, Chief Dennis Osadebay, in 1951 and has since remained the preferred indigenous name by which the people are collectively known (Osogbue, 2011). The people and place so called have existed for centuries. Anioma is a community of people who, for ages, inhabit the area between Ubuluku and Ebu in Aniocha North Local Government Area of the present Delta State. A look at the colonial map of the area (FI) shows Anioma wedged between Ubuluku and Ebu (Kunirum, 2008).

The Modern Anioma commonly called Delta Igbo, for administrative purpose, is referred to as Delta North, thus contrasting the Delta Central and Delta South densely inhabited by the Urhobo, the Ijaw, the Itsekiri, the Isokos and the other ethnic groups inhabiting the state. According to Anioma Voice (2013) the Anioma region has a total population of 1,229,371,00. The population figure quoted here does not include those of the Anioma communities located outside Delta State and the population of non Anioma in Anioma area. These include Ukwuani, Enuani, Ika and Aboh. A small Ika population can be found in neighbouring Edo State specifically Igbanke, Oza and Ekpon.

There are twenty-five local government areas in Delta State and nine of them makeup the Anioma Area. Anioma Local Government of Delta State constitutes 9 out of 25 Local

**Government Areas as represented below.**

S/N	Local Government Area	Head Quarter
1	Aniocha-North	Issele-Uku
2	Aniocha-South	Ogwashi-Uku
3	Ika-South	Agbor
4	Ika North-East	Owa-Oyibu
5	Ndokwa-East	Aboh
6	Oshimili-North	Akukuigbo
7	Oshimili -South	Asaba
8	Ukwuani	Obiaruku
9	Ndokwa - West	Kwale

**Literature Review**

The paper presents the review under the following sub- headings: Conceptual framework, Theoretical framework,

**Conceptual Framework**

**Development**

According to Gboyega (2003) that:

Development as an idea that embodies all attempts to improve the condition of human existence in all ramifications. It implies improvement in material wellbeing of all citizens". Not the most powerful and the rich alone in a sustainable way such that today's consumption does not imperil the future. It also demands that poverty and inequality of access to the good things of life be removed or drastically reduced, it seeks to improve personal physical security and livelihood and expansion of life chances (pp.6-7).

The paper agreed with the above scholar idea of Development in an ideal situation, those points the scholar mentioned were necessary for a development plan for a community or a Nation, but how can Delta people have these kinds of development when there are crises everywhere? Development cannot come to a place when everywhere is in troubled. Even the University in question cannot survive successfully if their present situations are not handled adequately. The building of the University would have brought human capacity development and economic and social life to the Delta, but the opposite is the case, for the Delta people not to miss this National development, the researcher is challenging the Deltan women to swing into action for peaceful resolution of the present crises, so that full development will be realized in Delta.

**Socio-Religion** Frank (2000) cited Emile Durkheim definition of religion as "a system of" sacred beliefs and practices shared by a community of follower such as a church.

## **Theoretical Framework**

Theories relevant to this study are Conflict Resolution theory, Feminist theory and Communication theory.

### **Conflict Resolution Theory**

Conflict resolution is the process by which two or more parties reach a peaceful solution to a dispute. (Harvard 2000). Conflict resolution can be defined as the informal or formal process that two or more parties use to find a peaceful solution to their dispute.

A number of common cognitive and emotional traps, many of them unconscious, can exacerbate conflict and contribute to the need for conflict resolution.

Daniel (2000) conflict resolution, in theoretical terms, is different from the general category of conflict management which includes efforts and interventions to

limit, contain or regulate conflict. Conflict resolution is a sub-field of peace research. Conflict theorist such as John Barton, Edward Azarard others have been influential in the development and conceptualization of conflict resolution. (P.33). Azar (1990) argued that protractor socio-political conflict has resisted the effort of the international community to control them. As such conflict resolution emerges as an alternative means of resolution rather than mercy pacific settlement of dispute.

Barton (1990) said a sub-discipline conflict resolution emerged as a reaction to the limitation imposes by realist approaches to conflict analysis, management and resolution.

He further said that the genetic theory of conflict and its practice led to the development of conflict resolution. It is both an analytical and problem solving approach to conflict and its resolution.

Therefore, it very important that the Idunmuje -Ugboko women deploys both Jesus and scholarly methods to handle the current conflict going on in their community.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

In this research study data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data were generated by conducting interviews and administering copies of research questioner, where respondents were expected to provide answers that suit their opinions on any item on the list of questionnaire. On the other hand, structured intend questions were asked and interviews expressed their views on any question raised on the subject matter. Both questionnaire and interview question enabled the study to answer the paper question; thereby addressing the purpose of the study.

Secondary data from books, articles is journal, book chapters, theses, dissertation internet source and media sources, on the subject matter, were integrated into the body of the research in order to authenticate claims and research findings. Frequency and percentages were used to analyze the information. To answer the research question simple percentage, mean and standard deviation were also used together. The formula is  $\text{Mean } (\bar{x}) = \frac{\sum X}{N}$

N

### **Researcher Questionnaires, Presentation of Data Analysis**

### Views of Respondents on the Passage and Peace Making

	A	SA	D	SD	TOTAL
1. Do you believed that the words of God is contained in the Holy Bible	100 9.9%	904 89.1%	10 1%	0 0%	1014 100%
2. Does your church study the Holy Bible as Divine Instruction from God to the church members	150	800	3	1	1014
3. What does the passage 1Samuel 25:1-35say about	85 8.4%	900 88.7%	20 2.0%	9 0.99%	1014 100%
4. What does it say about peace	15 1.5%	10 1.0%	50 4.9%	939 92.6%	1014 100%
5. Do you believe in Abigail's intelligence	120 11.8%	887 87.55	5 0.5%	2 0.2%	1014 100%
6. Do you like how Abigail intervened	10 12.8%	877 86.5%	5 0.5%	2 0.2%	1014 100%
7. Can you imitate her to solve Idumuje Ugboko	150 14.8%	860 84.8%	3 0.3%	1 0.15	1014 100%
8. How can Abigail's communication power help you to solve the crisis	100 9.9%	907 89.4%	5 0.5%	2 0.2%	1014 100%
9. Can you suggest the benefit of the passage in crisis control to other Christian women.	120 11.8%	890 87.8%	3 0.3%	1 0.1%	1014 100%
10.How can you quickly act like Abigail in crisis control	130 12.8%	869 85.7%	10 1.0%	5 0.5%	1014 100%

### **Critique of Nabal's Behaviour for Social Religious Development In Delta State**

The results data or information from the two questions shows that the people of Idumuje Ugboko are one like Nabal. Nabal from the exegetical study was from the descendant of Caleb, so he is a Calibite, as such he understands the law of Moses which insisted that some of the crop should be set aside for stranger, the poor, and widows (Deut 15:17,11;24: 19-22, Proverb 19:17). At harvest time, any one passing through the land of Israel should be given food. By refusing David's request, Nabal was showing that he did not obey God's laws.

Nabal did not show brotherhood to David as an Israelites. Even when David greeted him as my kinsman Nabal shows that he was just a hearer of the word and not a doer. He failed the hospitality law of Israel. Brotherly love. Therefore, this paper had discovered that the people of Idumuje Ugboko in Delta State are moving towards the same path with Nabal. The rewriter encouraged the people of Idumuje Ugboko to look into the scripture and practice what the Holy

Bible said. Since 99% of them strongly agreed on the Holy Bible for instructions correction and reproof.

A total number of Eighty-Five (85) of the total respondents of the agreed and 8.4%. Nine Hundred (900) of respondents of the strongly agreed with 88.7% representing the respondents. Therefore, the total sum of Nine Hundred and Eight Five (985) respondents with 97.1% of the sum of the strongly agreed respondents answered in affirmative, twenty (20) the total sum of respondent of the disagreed with 2.0% respondent, ninety (90) of strongly disagreed respondents with 0.9% respondents. The total sum of Twenty-Nine (29) respondents of the negative or disagreed people with a 2.9% of respondents. Therefore, the agreed and strongly agreed in the assertion shows that the word of God has power of changing life and behavioural attitude. According to 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature old things are passed away; behold all things are become new". Nabal was a descendant of Caleb, a man who whole heartedly followed the Lord (Deut. 1:36, Joshua 14:12-14). But Nabal was not like his ancestor. He was rich in cattle and goats, but not in grace and faith (1 Samuel 25:2-3). Nabal's self-centeredness was clearly evident in the string of "I"s and "My"s that follows: why should I take my bread, water, and the meat I have slaughter for my shearers (1 Samuel 25). He claimed total ownership of all that God had graciously blessed him with and did not acknowledge that it was a gift from God. He was like the rich fool in Luke 12:16-21. Not surprisingly his own servants regarded Nabal as a wicked

man with whom no one could reason (1 Samuel 25:17). He would not listen to advice or godly counsel, but acted arbitrarily without much thought.

### **Critique of Abigail's Timely Intervention for social Religious Development In Delta State**

Abigail demonstrated the intelligent referred to in 1 Samuel 25:3 in many way, she resembled the woman described in Proverbs 31:10-31. Though married to a fool, she maintained her personal character and remained approachable even by the servant. Despite her wealth, she was humble enough to listen to them. 1 Samuel 25:14. Though beautiful, she was not too proud to kneel down and plead with David 1 Samuel 25:23 she was also a generous woman. Who horrified by her husband's meanness and hastened to make up for it by providing a large quantity of food. She must have been hard working and organized to be able to do all this without the support of her husband.

Abigail evaluated and understood the situation correctly and acted accordingly to save her household from disaster. Abigail thus becomes a commendable sender or encoder. She realized the importance of time and information, a very important factor in communication situation, she acted fast in a reasonable manner too. Had she waited for David's arrival, it would have been too late. Most women/wives in Idumuje Ugboko are often unapproachable and unreasonable in their actions. The waves of crisis which swept across Idumuje Ugboko could have been avoided, if the women/ wives of the people were approachable and reasonable like Abigail. But today is still early for them to act like Abigail.

### **The Need for Idumuje - Ugboko Women to Intervene on the Current Crisis in the Community**

In question number eleven (11) One hundred and fifteen (115) respondents with 11.3 % representing respondents of agreed people. Eight hundred and ninety-six (896) respondents with 88.4% representing respondents of strongly agreed people. A total sum of one Thousand and Eleven (1,011) respondents with 99.7% representing respondents of strongly agreed and agreed people affirmative answered. While two (2) respondents with 0.2% representing respondents of disagreed people, One (1) respondent with 0.1% representing the strongly disagreed people .Therefore this paper view from the table and the percentage

rating that the strongly agreed shows that the community strongly agreed that conflict affects their wives and children badly.

It means that the people of Idumuje Ugboko are aware that “our mothers, sisters, daughter and wives were sexually violated and raped by the security agencies during the period of the ‘crisis in the community’”. Shedrack (2019) says that ‘the most common of violence towards women is mostly sexual assaults. Although women are subjects to this hideous form of violence even in times of peace, it has been shown to greatly increase during situation of violent conflicts.

### **Critique of the Gift Items with Humility and Beauty by Abigail for Social Religious Development in Delta State.**

In question numbers 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of the assertions strongly agreed that women and children were the victim of war and community crisis. Therefore, the women of Idumuje Ugboko should imitate the steps that Abigail took to avert the income war to her family.

Abigail intercepted David as he was coming down from the mountain of holiness into error (1 Samuel 85:20). It was a timely intervention as David himself confessed (1Samuel25:32-34). When Abigail saw David she dismounted from her donkey and bowed before him 1 Samuel 25:23, Despite being a strong and competent woman, she knew how to submit .Humility and submission were the tools that gave her victory, just as they had given David victory over Saul in 1 Samuel 24:8. Yet Abigail submission to David meant that she was not submitting to her unlike husband. Her example shows that women are to submit to their husband to save or build up their families. But when submission will harm the family, a wife may have to take the lead for the sake of everyone else in the family including the unreasonable husband.

Abigail interceded passionately for her husband and her entire household. She needed to do this, for David was engaged and she had to find some way to make him stop and think. She addressed him as my Lord, not simply to flatter him, but also because she recognized the grace of God in his life. Her next words reveal her to be a true intercessor ready to take the punishment of the one whom she intercedes, for she says let the blame be on me alone (1 Samuel 25:24).

In the present paper, Abigail’s gift, humility and beauty serve a vital role in settling the matter. Therefore, the women of Idumuje- Ugboko are to walk as Abigail did. They are to be humble to the opponents, and respect each other. The

women should know the implication or the consequences of conflict and think critically.

## Conclusion

Abigail, as the focal character in 1 Samuel 25:1-35 considered in this paper, demonstrates how Idumuje-Ugboko women can display and demonstrate effectively their God given gift of promoting or intervening for peace. Abigail as a truce beaker exhibits wisdom beauty, intelligence and dexterity and feminine communication skills and prowess to subdue the approaching attack on her family. The paper, is able to bring to the fore that non-violent means of settling dispute should be embraced as a way of life and adapted as an instrument for transforming all unjust crisis, political, social, religious, ethnic, traditional and economic structures. It is certain that supporting Idumuje-Ugboko women to arise and be involved in peace building intervention or initiative and to be at the negotiation tables as critical actors (the men of Idumuje-Ugboko) will in the long term reduce considerably the incidence of violent conflicts in the community.

It should be upheld that without the participation of Idumuje-Ugboko women, there can be no sustainable peace, there can be no reasonable development, contribution of Idumuje-Ugboko women in peace building and reconciliation efforts can become most effective by increasing their participation in decision making organs and in the implementation of policies at the community and institutional levels.

Platforms should be provided that would enable Idumuje-Ugboko women to gain visibility to contribute to community debate and influence policy development and traditional processes. Idumuje-Ugboko women should be mobilized to exchange ideas and opinions on community and traditional issues and overall development of their community. Empowerment through education is also crucial so as to Idumuje-Ugboko women to acquire pertinent skills that would facilitate their competition for decision making posts.

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