



Editor-in-Chief: Toju Micheal Ogbe

Website: www.positivenaija.com

Email: positivenaija@yahoo.com

Telephone: (+234) 09064503292

Facebook: @positivenaija1960

Mail Box: P. O. Box 7437, Wuse, Abuja, Nigeria

Twitter: @PositiveNaija_1

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

- John 8:32

The Love Of A Nigerian! by Akunna James-Ibe

Sometimes it gets so dark one can hardly imagine the possibility of stars being suspended in the skies. Still, that doesn't null the fact that somewhere beneath the depressing curtain of darkness, the stars do exist. When I first saw the theme for this contest, I was torn between disbelief and worry. Here was a contest that did not require me to give solutions to the spate of insecurity in the country or wipe out poverty with a flourish of my pen. Here was a contest that needed me instead to put the spotlight on the other Nigerian realities that have been cowering beneath more aggressive realities. It was like I was being asked to harvest apples from a Briar bush. Then I remembered this young barrow pusher I met at Ogbete market in Enugu, who was patient and helpful when I was confused and took the trouble to carry my heavy goods beyond the agreed point to the park, at no extra costs. I also remembered the good lady I met in Aba, who despite my foreignness let me take shelter in her shop and was instrumental in helping me direct my uncle to where he was to pick me. I remembered these people who didn't have much but were willing to give the little they had to a stranger and I realized that though much had been lost in Nigeria, our ability to love as a people still thrived.

There is something about Nigerians that even the massive wave of western civilization has not been able to wipe out completely; our spirit of brotherhood. It marks us like a badge. In Nigeria, every elderly woman is mummy, every elderly man daddy and every young man or woman uncle or aunty respectively to a younger person, and we largely believe that we should be each others keepers. I once read a joke where the writer had become irritated because the woman beside him in a bus kept reminding him not to forget his change with the bus conductor before alighting the vehicle. Although this was just a joke, it was founded on a reality. A typical Nigerian would offer advice, help or sympathy whether or not you asked for it, the same way an immediate relative would. The vestiges of our age long communalism still lingered.

Various Nigerian tribes also have beliefs about how foreigners should be treated; many of these beliefs involve congeniality and Hospitality. One time at school, a lecturer of mine cut short his lectures, not only to identify the non-igbos, but to also remind the Igbos that it was a taboo in the Igbo tradition not to treat these strangers appropriately. In the same way, my younger brother who had travelled to Osun state for the first time to write a screening exam returned to tell us how eager everyone had been to help him when they realized he was new there and how a student he had never met before was willing to accommodate him till the exam was over. I remember my brother's words, "Yoruba people are so nice!" This hospitality does not only apply at a Nigerian to Nigerian level. An average Nigerian is usually receptive to and ecstatic to see a Non-Nigerian. In a survey done by Quora on Non-Nigerians about their perception of Nigeria and Nigerians as a whole, Kris Subban, an Indian, wrote, "...I have met many optimistic youngsters with words like "You're Indian, welcome to Naijja (Nigeria), thank you for coming and don't forget to teach our people what you know." Coming from a country that was openly xenophobic, hearing local people treat me so warmly will always be fondly remembered."

Religion is another factor that makes us what we are at heart. Nigerians are fervently religious. Religion is to Nigeria what "A" is to the alphabets. Our values are largely dictated by the precepts derived from our individual religious affiliations. And there's barely a religion, including African traditional religion, that does not preach the importance of love and tolerance towards humanity. In fact, the summary of Christianity is Love; Love of God and love of neighbour. Thus many Nigerians will "because of God" be pleasant and good to their fellow Nigerians and to their Non-Nigerian counterparts. Although there are downsides to our religiousness; hypocrisy, fanaticism and superstition, we cannot deny that for the most part, our goodness as a people stems largely from the belief that there is a sovereign who sees and will judge all.

Nigeria is generally a happy place too. The world knows this. The world is baffled by this. Pratt Goswami, a Non-Nigerian who resided in Lagos for 8 years wrote this in a survey done by Quora, still about how Non-Nigerians perceive Nigerians, "Well, they have an intrinsic happiness that resides within them, which goes with them through whatever hardship they go through. You can feel the happiness every time they talk, and also through their music. Nigeria on the whole is a happy nation." Also, in an interview carried out by BBC amongst Lagos residents, Okocha Jude a businessman, when asked what he liked best about Nigeria noted, "We are happy people, no matter what we are facing."

[... continue reading on www.positivenaija.com](http://www.positivenaija.com)