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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

Nsukka Journal of Religion and Cultural Studies (NJRCS) is a product with the purpose of promoting scholarship in the context of religious, social and political problems in Nigeria and the world. This edition highlights topical issues facing contemporary Nigerian society which include marital instability, suicide among the youth, peace and conflict, migration debate, among others. It also includes a book review section. The articles were peer reviewed rigorously and published after the authors had made sufficient corrections from the peer reviewers. Intending contributors to subsequent editions of the journal should contact the editor-in-chief or the regular call for papers by the Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

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'āzaḇ 'Leave' and dāḇaq 'Cleave' in Genesis 2:24 and Marital Stability

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Abstract

The concluding section of the second creation account in Genesis 2 records the creation of man and the institution of marriage. After God created man, he observed the need for man to have a companion. Then, God made woman out of a rib from man. Genesis 2:24 lays bare the prerequisites for a stable marital relationship. It *establishes God's perfect design for marriage*. The injunctions expressed in the text are fundamental for a functional husband-wife relationship. The text submits that marriage requires a man's leaving of his parents in order to create a new family. It teaches that marriage is an inseparable union. This paper employs literary exegetical method to interpret the concepts 'leave' and 'cleave' and their socio-theological significance in achieving marital stability. In this paper, the terms 'leave' and 'cleave' are interpreted 'detachment' and 'attachment' respectively. Although the instruction to 'leave' and 'cleave' was given to the man, this article submits that both a man and woman should 'leave' and 'cleave' for a peaceful marital relationship. The act of leaving one's parents prepares a husband and wife for an independent family union. Husbands and wives are to detach themselves from people and influences which challenge peace in the family. They are to demonstrate oneness in all their affairs as this helps to strengthen the bond between them. This article unequivocally submits that marital bliss is attainable when both parties are committed to observing these basic principles.

Keywords: **Genesis 2:24, leave, cleave, stability, marriage.**

Introduction

In the first creation account, the expression *wayar' 'ĕlōhîm kî ṭôḇ* (and God saw that it was good) and other similar expressions were recurrent. It appears in seven (7) verses of Genesis 1 (vv. 4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 25 and 31). The expression establishes the beauty of God's creation. Clarke (1996) explains that the expression is the judgment which God pronounced on his own works. They were beautiful and perfect in their kind. They were in weight and measure perfect and lacking nothing.

However, the second creation account records that God observed a problem with one of his creatures. He expressed his concern for man's loneliness. Among all the creatures, man was incomplete; he needed a suitable helper, a wife, to become that which God intended him to be. Kelly and Clendenen (2003:1084) aver that the creation of the male alone had not yet fulfilled God's purpose for man as the image of God. This expresses no failure on God's part; instead, it instructs us that a male creature alone is not the perfect creation that God had in mind.

In Gen. 2:18, the expression *lō' ṭôḇ hĕyôt hā'ādām l baḏô* (it is not good that the man should be alone) showcases that loneliness does not have any desirable quality. By nature, man is a social being; so, he needed a companion with whom to express his true nature. Man's original nature is rarely expressed in consistent solitude. Clarke (1996) notes that as man was made a social creature, it was not proper that he should be alone; for to be alone, i.e., without a matrimonial companion, was not good.

In the second part of Genesis 2:18, God proposed to make a befitting companion for man; someone to complement or complete him, a being created out of something taken from man and is dependent on him (Martin, 2017). The words *'ēzer k neḡḏô* (a suitable helper) signifies 'a counterpart of himself', 'one formed from him' and 'a perfect resemblance of his person'. God proposed that the woman should be a perfect resemblance of the man, being in all things like and equal to himself (Clarke, 1996). Thus, a special act of creation was necessary; so, God created woman.

In the second creation account, the creation of the first woman is described in details, whereas, the first creation account (Genesis 1:27) simply records that God created both male and female. Genesis 2:21-22 records that God caused the man to fall asleep, then he took one of his ribs and made woman out of the one rib. Hence, at the beginning of their existence, they were one. The narrative about the creation of woman and the pronouncements made by the man in v. 23 (This, at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken) constitute the origin of marriage. Hence, the institution of marriage is an aftermath of God's concern for the loneliness of man. Thomas and McCreesh (2003:12) aver that "God's observation that it is not good for the earth creature to be alone leads to the creating of a helper corresponding to him".

A careful reader of the Bible may observe the change in literary style in Genesis 2:24, the

conclusion of the story which started from Gen 2:18. Similarly, Obiorah (2016:527) submits that "Gen 2:24 concludes as well as explains the divine action narrated in verses 18-24. The passage has been recognized as a narrative on the divine institution of marriage and the beginning of human family". While v. 24 gives basic guidelines on marriage, v. 25 points to the original state of the man and the woman whom God created as an introduction to the narrative in Genesis 3, about the fall of man. Genesis 2:24 explicitly expresses the core demands of a stable marital relationship. It brings to light the divine injunctions for husbands and wives who desire marital bliss. In the study, the concepts 'leave' and 'cleave' are literarily and socio-theologically examined in the context of stable marital unions. The researcher upholds that for a marriage to be blissful, both partners should be committed to these basic guidelines. Marital harmony is not a one-man affair; it takes the dedication of two responsible humans. God desires that the marriage that he instituted between the first man and woman should be peaceful and satisfying. Therefore, the injunctions in Gen 2:24 are paramount for achieving utmost satisfaction in a marriage.

Context of Genesis 2:24

The book of Genesis contains interesting accounts about the creation of the world. The creation narratives display the greatness of God and the beauty of his creation. The declaration _wayar'_ ʾēlōhîm kî ṭôḇ (and God saw that it was good) was God's judgment at the conclusion of any of his creative works. In the first creation account recorded in Genesis 1:1-2:4a, the expression 'and God saw that it was good' was recurrent. In Genesis 2, which records the second account of creation, the expression 'and God saw that it was good' was completely missing. However, in Gen 2:18, the word ṭôḇ (good) was used with a negative particle lō (not). God expressed his concern for the loneliness of man and thereafter, made a woman to be the man's helper. The expression ʿēzer kᵉneḡdô (a suitable helper) does not mean that the woman was to be the man's servant, parent or keeper. Rather, she was to complement him, working alongside him.

Genesis 2:24 substantiates and concludes the narrative on the institution of marriage and origin of family life. The change in literary style observable in Genesis 2:24 is also a delimiting factor. Narration techniques are completely missing in v. 24; such that, it is important to ascertain whether the pronouncement was made by God or man or an editorial addition to Genesis 2. Obiorah (2016) writes that the layout of v.24 shows that even if it were uttered by the man, there is a significant shift in the mood of the two adjacent verses; that is, verses 23 and 24. The adverb ʿal-kēn (therefore) in v.24, signals an explanatory and

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conclusive assertion that is a consequence of the previous statement. Similarly, Von Rad (1996) notes that v. 24 is not a continuation of the first man's speech, but rather a concluding word of the narrator, a short epilogue. The statement _yaʿăzāḇ-ʾîš_ ʾet- ʾāḇîw w ʾet-ʾimmô (A man leaves his father and mother) establishes the primary purpose of the entire narrative. Genesis 2:24 explicitly brings to light the import of the discussions in the preceding verses. The narrative in Gen 2:18-24 is an aetiology, i.e., it was told to answer a definite question. Hence, Gen 2:24 can be rightly termed to be a conclusion of an aetiology. One of the features of aetiological stories is that it usually ends with an explanatory addition which gives more insight into the narrative. This aetiological conclusion submits that marriage should be between one man /one woman and that marriage should be indissoluble.

Undoubtedly, Genesis 2:24 has a pride of place in most discourses which center on marriage; both scholarly and ecclesiastically. In the last verses of Genesis 2, one sees the origin of many of the Bible's key teachings about marriage. Similarly, Soungalo (2006:12) avers that "The foundational text for the entire Christian philosophy of marriage and the family is Genesis 2:24". The text is significant and emphatic in bringing to light the basic conditions for a stable marriage union. A distinguishing feature of this verse is that it shows the basic order in the formation of any marriage union. Against this backdrop, in Genesis 2, only v. 24 is suitable for a study on the fundamentals of a peaceful marriage relationship, because the text lays bare the basic principles which should be inculcated by any man or woman who desires a sustainable marital happiness.

Close reading of Genesis 2:24

The first part of Gen 2:24 raises some concerns to many curious readers of the Old Testament. The Old Testament culture upheld a patrilocal system of marriage, in which a wife goes to live with her husband's family or people after marriage; hence, it is strange that Gen. 2:24 records 'A man leaves his father and mother'; whereas, going by the cultural realities of the Old Testament times, it is the woman who should leave her father and mother. Von Rad (1996:85) supports that "the statement about forsaking father and mother does not quite correspond to the patriarchal family customs of ancient Israel, for after marriage, the wife breaks loose from her family much more than the man does from his". Since it is the wife who leaves home to join her husband, it is preferable to translate _ʾāzaḇ_ as 'forsake' (Wenham, 1987). These concerns further suggest that the expression _yaʿăzāḇ-ʾîš_ ʾet- ʾāḇîw w ʾ et-ʾimmô (A man leaves his father and mother) is beyond literary interpretation. It should not only be understood as making a mere movement from one's parents' abode. Thus, Hughes

one woman formed when the two swear before God an oath of lifelong loyalty and love to one another, the sign and seal of which is sexual intercourse".

The qal perfect action word 'āzaḇ (leave) is literally synonymous with the terms separate, forsake, neglect, abandon and desert. It connotes a state of detaching oneself from someone whom you earlier owed allegiance to. It refers to the end of a relationship which existed between members of a group. The expression 'A man leaves his father and mother' literally means that the act of leaving should be done by the man alone. It is acceptable for a man to live with his parents as long as he is single. But when the time comes, he must separate from them and enter into a new relationship with his wife (Soungalo, 2006). Some of the questions which arise are: Why does the text emphasize so much on the male gender? Does this suggest that a bride should not also leave her parents?

An explanation that could be given for the emphasis on the man's leaving of his parents is that being the head over the woman, the man has the authority to make decisions and influence his household. Thus, if he does not leave his parents, they will ultimately be the persons presiding over his home. According to Omah (2019), fathers are the authority figures of every home. They have the authority to take final decisions. Because a man is the head of his family, God holds him responsible for the activities of his family. Furthermore, Obiorah (2016:529) explains that Man is the only active partner in the narrative. The woman remains passive throughout, even when the man exclaimed as if in ecstasy before her: "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (v.23).

Therefore, the man's leaving of his parents to join his wife sustains and continues the tempo of the narrative. The emphasis is not on who leaves, male or female, but on the act of leaving. Obiorah's position is also understandable when one recalls that, being the first man created, Adam had no father and mother. This also justifies the scholarly claim which upholds that v. 24 is an editorial addition. Thus, both the man and woman should forsake their parents in order to properly form a new family. Hughes (2005:25) notes that "Even if only one partner obeys, there can be a tremendous improvement, but if both partners respond, then marriage can become the nearest thing to heaven on earth".

A new family cannot be well formed in one's parent's house. The influences of one's parents could tamper with the formation of the new home. However, does the act of leaving imply that the two partners should abandon their parents and show no more concern for them? Does

(2005:105) states that "Leaving is not something merely geographical, moving away from the parental home, but something that is psychological- breaking away from the original parental ties".

The import of the expression is that marriage is meant to form a more intimate and stronger relationship between a man and woman, than that which exists between parents and their children. Assohoto and Ngewa (2006:14) explain that "the type of intimacy that God has set up here is so close that it cannot be in competition with the second closest human relationship, that between parent and child". Thus, a marriage involves forsaking one's parents to be attached to one's spouse. Forming a new family requires independence, responsibility and maturity. Furthermore, marriage relationship is meant to be more permanent than parents-children relationship. According to Barnes (1870), the expression is designed to establish the inviolability and permanence of the conjugal relation. A careful study of Genesis 2:24 reveals that the key action words are presented in a significant sequential order. The text creates a beautiful picture of the step-by-step approach to a happy marital union. The first action word 'āzaḇ (leave) is better understood in the light of the succeeding action words. 'āzaḇ is followed by other verbs which explain its purpose in the context of the text. Genesis 2: 24 records that a man leaves his parents in order to cling to his wife, and then, become one flesh with her. When a man becomes one flesh with his wife, they attain a life of innocence and excellence.

From the beginning, God's plan is that marriage relationships should be a life-time affair. In Matthew 19:1-12 and Mark 10:1-12, Jesus refers to Gen 2 in his teaching on divorce. These two New Testament texts strengthen the indissolubility of marriage. More so, God's design for a marriage union is that one man is joined to one woman. The creation narratives report that God removed one rib from the man and made one woman. Assohoto and Ngewa (2006) note that God formed the woman from the man's rib, close to his heart, to establish the intimate link between them in their very creation. By this, the woman considers the man as part of her very being and the man sees the woman as the help he needs, without whom he is incomplete (p. 14).

Therefore, the marriage union ordained by God cannot exist in a polygamous or homosexual relationship. Any marriage union which involves anything other than 'one man and one woman' is outside God's original design and as such, condemned by God. This is captured by Kelly and Clendenen (2003:1082): "Marriage is a sacred, covenantal union of one man and

the command to leave one's parents contradict Exodus 20:12 which admonishes that one should honour one's parents? Moreover, in traditional societies such as Israel, where honouring one's parents is the highest human obligation next to honouring God, this remark about forsaking them is very striking (Wenham, 1987). The significance of 'leaving' in Gen 2:24 is that the two partners cease to be under the authority of their parents to establish for themselves a new authority structure. Hale and Thorson (2007:134) assert that "the man and his wife are to put each other's welfare ahead of anyone else's. One's relationship to one's spouse takes precedence over all other human relationships". In forming their new household, a man and his wife do not withdraw their allegiance and responsibilities towards their parents but preference should be given to the demands of the new relationship than the earlier one. Marriage is meant to bring about a break with the former parental interference and control. The highest loyalty and commitment of the two partners should be to each other.

The verb *dāḇaq* (cleave) expresses the necessity for a man to *'āzaḇ* (leave) his father and mother. Till a man separates from his father and mother and of course, some other relationships, he does not fully possess the potentials needed to (*dāḇaq*) 'cleave' unto his wife and then, start his household. Hale and Thorson (2007:134) assert that in Gen 2:24, "the verb *dāḇaq* establishes the permanence of marriage. Husband and wife are to be united – literarily 'stuck' to each other". It suggests that strong passion should characterise marriage. When a man cleaves to his wife, he establishes that he is incomplete without her and that he desires an intimate and permanent relationship with her. Other meanings of *dāḇaq* are to 'cling', 'follow', 'join', 'hold unto', 'fasten oneself to' and 'stick'. The act of cleaving strengthens one's commitment in sustaining a new relationship. It portrays an intentional and conscientious effort to succeed in a new relationship. Luck (2009) opines that the idea of cleaving is a whole-hearted commitment to another *in an inseparable union*. Parents-children relationship is affected by marriage whereas husband-wife relationship is inseparable; only death detaches a husband and wife from each other.

The concluding part of Genesis 2:24 substantiates the message in the earlier part of the verse. It gives the core reason behind the message in the preceding parts. A man and woman cannot become one flesh if they have not left their parents and stuck unto each other. The expression *wᵉhāyû lᵉbāśār 'eḥād* (and become one flesh) does not only denote the sexual union that follows marriage, or the children conceived in marriage, or even the spiritual and emotional relationship but also affirms that just as blood relations are one's flesh and blood, so marriage creates a similar kinship relation between a man and his wife. They become related to each

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other as a brother and sister are (Wenham, 1987). A marriage relationship is beyond a mere recognition that one's partner is a human being as oneself. 'To become one flesh', according to Madugba (2010:4) means that "Two people, share everything they have, not only their bodies and material possessions, but also their thoughts, feelings, joys, sufferings, hopes, fears, successes and failures". It emphasizes the importance of continuing the original oneness between the man and woman. It further expresses the equality of the man and woman before God. Swaggart (2013:5) opines that "God did not take the woman out of man's feet to be stepped on as an inferior; nor out of his head to be put on a pedestal as a superior; but from his side, close to his heart as an equal".

Unity is fundamental in the union between a man and woman; a state of sharing common faith, passion and value. It is a state of having no separate or independent rights, privileges, cares, concerns; each being equally interested in all things that concern the marriage. Soungalo (2006:12) notes that "the husband and wife are no longer two individuals, existing side by side, but must become one entity, sharing each other's lives". In marriage, oneness implies that the man and the woman recognize themselves as partners, not competitors.

Discourse on Genesis 2:24 and marital stability
Achieving a stable marital relationship is largely dependent on the extent to which the husband and wife are committed to the marriage. Marital stability is hardly attainable when only one partner keeps to the marriage guidelines. Once marriage is undertaken, both partners are expected to accept full responsibilities of the union. For a marriage to be stable, there are basic pre-requisites which must be followed. Even in a marriage relationship where the husband and wife are financially capable, these basic guidelines are still paramount for a healthy and sustainable relationship. These pre-requisites are explicitly expressed in Genesis 2:24. This section attempts to discuss the message of the pericope as fundamentals to marital happiness.

Although Genesis 2:24 is particularly directed to the husband, the researcher submits that both husband and wife should completely desist from being negatively influenced by their parents and unite with each other. Akanni (2015) opines that husbands and wives easily succumb to the pressure mounted up by in-laws, neighbours, and friends, if they were not fully united with each other. According to Wenham (1987:71), "In marriage, a man's priorities change. Beforehand, his first obligations are to his parents: afterwards, they are to his wife". A line must be drawn between the families from which both partners originated

from their parents, they will be able to fully unite with each other. According to Okoli (1998:21) "The ability to leave enhances the chances of cleaving. Moreover, leaving become useless, if cleaving does not follow". 'Cleaving' is an act of giving oneself to a new relationship. It signifies a complete commitment to hold unto one's spouse. Anyanwu (2012) notes that if a husband and wife cleaved unto each other, the result is that they live intimately together as a unit, sharing life's anticipations, disappointments, struggles and joys. It brings about peace and companionship in a marriage union. Kelly and Clendenen (2003) opine that the companionship which is shared between a husband and wife strengthens physical, psychological, mental and emotional health. Oneness within marriage is expressed in genuine acts of love. In every instance of genuine love, there is an element of sacrifice; some extra conscientious efforts are made to please each other. When the two partners sacrifice themselves for each other, it breeds love, understanding, forgiveness, patience, humility, joy, truth, peace and hope.

If a husband and wife cleaved unto each other, it enhances communication and transparency. Bright and Mayor (2001) aver that communication breakdown leads to unstable marriage. Communication breakdown usually leads to separation /divorce and some other marital problems. Similarly, Diara (2019:54) notes that "Christian couples should not live in masks whereby they hide the truth about themselves from each other. Oneness cannot be achieved without effective communication". Talking with point and purpose is an essential ingredient of effective communication (Hughes, 2005). The message which is being communicated should be clear and direct; the tone should also be courteous. It is of utmost importance to ask for clarifications when the message is not clear or well understood by either the husband or wife.

Marital oneness enables the partners to know about each other's thoughts and plans. It makes it possible to reveal how each person feels about a given action or situation. It usually brings about trust and casts out resentment. A husband and wife should make frantic efforts to communicate because healthy communication is a sign of unity, happiness and love. Communication results in growth; it brings relief and healing. Where as, inadequate and ineffective communication creates friction and anxiety in marriage (Heward-Mills, 2012). Therefore, husbands and wives should be willing to discuss issues which concern them, rather than withdrawing into silence. For a marriage to be stable, husbands and wives need to be honest in all things and at all times. They should know about each other's career, business, finance and sexual needs. They should help each other to engage in healthy communication

from and the new family which is being formed. 'Leaving one's parents' does not connote that one should not hearken to pieces of advice from one's parents. It does not also imply that marriage should make one to cease from assisting one's parents. Detaching oneself from one's parents is the ability to overcome undue interferences from them. It signifies the state of being able to take decisions without being influenced by one's parents. Marriage is meant to free one from the control of one's parents. It makes one assume a level of responsibility and independence from one's parents. *Leaving one's parents makes it possible for a husband and wife to transfer their loyalty from their parents to each other. Loving and caring for each other must take priority in their lives over doing the same for their parents. However, there are some situations which might necessitate that a partner pays more attention to one's parents for a period of time, such as, ill health or old age. The emphasis is that husbands and wives should always be devoted to each other, unless there are genuine situations which demand a shift of attention to one's parents.*

There are husbands who, because of inability to find a residence of their own or for some other reasons, continue living with their parents, together with their wives. Such situations rarely allow a husband and wife to be fully in control of their relationship. According to Hughes (2005:110), "Living with in-laws or having them live with you can put undue strain on any family". The two partners might find it difficult to fully express their affection for each other. It is not good for a husband and wife to live with either of their parents, most especially, in the formative years of the marriage. Undoubtedly, if a husband does not physically leave his parent's house, it will be very difficult for him to subdue interferences from them. Extreme cases of interferences from one's parents might lead to either separation or divorce. Similarly, Ezuma (2009:91) notes that "Undue interference by relations may cause harm to the marriage. Every relation, including the mother, father, brothers and sisters are secondary to the marriage". Hence, the two partners should resist any interference from their parents, relatives and other persons. Living together is also very fundamental in the act of 'cleaving', most especially in the formative years of a marriage. It is usually difficult for a husband and wife to completely unite with each other if they reside in different locations. Ugwuoke (2018:13) maintains that "A husband and wife are meant to live together and do things in common. They should try as much as possible to live together because the eye cherishes that which it sees. Living some distance away from each other could create some vacuum in marital relationship". It gives room for suspicion and lack of emotional support.

The terms 'leaving' and 'cleaving' are interwoven. If a husband and wife detach themselves

by asking questions. Sometimes, a husband and wife are prevented from being honest with their partner for fear of hurting their partner's feelings. Communication should always be based on truth, without minding whether someone is hurt or not. Moreover, husbands and wives should cultivate the habit of expressing the truth in love.

Conclusion

In contemporary times, many factors such as, in-laws' interference, character deficiencies and peer /media influence have been attributed to the increase in the rate of dysfunctional marriage relationships. Among other effects, the end results of an unstable marriage relationship are separation/divorce and improper upbringing of children. The effects go beyond the families, to the society at large. The creation account clearly indicates that the family is the central unit of the society and that its character and maintenance is largely determined by marriage. As a basic unit of the society, the family controls other units in the society. Every influence that weakens the family and makes it difficult for it to function effectively will ultimately weaken the society. Any effort to solve the problem facing any nation without dealing with their roots in the family is bound to fail. Healthy marriages give birth to healthy societies. A healthy society is a product of the painstaking commitment of husbands and wives to achieve genuine and sustainable marital bliss. The basic guidelines towards achieving a stable marriage union are in Genesis 2:24. *The text exemplifies and establishes God's perfect design for marriage. The periscope maintains that marriage should be between one man and one woman, marriage should be permanent, and that husbands and wives are to put each other's welfare ahead of anyone else's or anything.* For a marriage to stand the test of time, both a husband and wife are expected to constantly detach themselves from the influences of other relationships and completely unite with each other. True and lasting marital harmony cannot be achieved, if the two partners fail to leave and cleave. If there is no oneness, the marriage is bound to suffer. Each of the partners has to be committed in order to have a sustainable marriage union.

Although some other factors contribute to crises in marriage, this article submits that there is no pleasurable union when these basic pre-requites are not in place. This article is a clarion call for husbands and wives to retrace their steps to the dictates of God on marriage. Therefore, alongside the efforts of various non-governmental establishments to ensure peace between husbands and wives, academic contributions aimed at instructing husbands and wives to inculcate the basic guidelines which are recorded in Gen 2:24 are apt.

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The Judeo-Christian Redemptive History as an Alternative Framework for the Migration Debate

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Abstract

Migration is among the controversial subjects in modern political discourse. Today, all it takes to be politically relevant is to flaunt the dangers that migrants constitute to indigenes. The effect of this is that much of the agenda on contemporary migration debate is set by political and socio-economic calculus. This essay is an attempt to shift the focus of the migration debate to promoting the interest of migrants. Drawing inspiration from the Sacred Scripture of the Judeo-Christian tradition, it highlights the attitude of the Judeo-Christian God to people in search of places of refuge; and how this should affect what the Judeo-Christian religion teaches on how to relate with migrants. The essay reaffirms the values of solidarity and communion in diversity, as well as the need to re-establish the culture of hospitality as the affirmation of the person of the migrant.

Keywords: Migration, Judeo-Christian-Tradition, Hospitality, Culture-of-welcome

Introduction

Migration is one of the greatest global phenomena and among the recognizable signs of the times today (Benedict XV 2006). According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM 2020), the number of international migrants is estimated to be almost 272 million globally. It is therefore not surprising that migration remains a burning issue in contemporary political discourse. All it takes to be politically popular today is to flaunt the immigration issue and extol the dangers that migrants constitute to indigenes. The effect of this on contemporary migration debate is that much of the agenda is set by political and socio-economic calculus.

Can the migration debate be carried on in way that emphasises more on the genuine interest of migrants? This is the question that this essay attempts an answer. Proposing the Judeo-Christian Redemptive History as an alternative framework for the migration debate, it argues

For all the hullabaloo involved in the migration debate, this figure remains a very small percentage of the world's population (at 3.5%), meaning that most people globally (96.5%) are estimated to be residing in the country in which they were born. For the up to date of the statistics of migrations today, see WORLD MIGRATION REPORT 2020 https://publications.iom.int › files › pdf › wmr_2020. Accessed April 19, 2022. See especially Table 1 on Key facts and figures from the World Migration Reports, 2000 and 2020 on page 10.

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Author Biography

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and sometimes tragic reasons, such as conflict, persecution and disaster (IOM 2020: 19).

Irrespective of its root causes, migration "always implies an uprooting from the original environment, often translated into an experience of marked solicitude accompanied by the risk of fading into anonymity" (John Paul 2001: 2). It involves a total sacrifice of all that makes life protected, and a wandering into the insecurity of the uncertain (Bühlmann, 1982).

Migration in the Judeo-Christian Redemptive Framework

From the call of Abraham to the Exodus from Egypt and Israel's wandering in the desert and later experience of exile, migration has been part of the Judeo-Christian salvation history (Groody 2009). Along the same line, the New Israel whose story is recorded in the Christian NT also speaks about the incarnation mystery of God and Christian life from a migration perspective (Campese 2012; Matovina & Tweed 2012). What follows is an examination of the key stadia in the Judeo-Christian redemptive history where the migration theme was pre-eminent.

Abraham's Journey to Canaan (Genesis 12-37)

The Judeo-Christian redemptive history started with the call of Abraham by God to abandon his homeland for a land hitherto unknown (Gen12:1). Abraham's journey to the Promised Land, in religious perspective, was "the start of an epic voyage in search of spiritual truths, a quest that was to constitute the central theme of all biblical history" (Speiser 1964: 87-88). In social-cultural perspective, it entails a total break with his immediate environment and a total sacrifice of everything that makes life secure (Buehlmann 1982). In this, Abraham's experience is like the experience of millions of migrants that we see in the screens of our Television or read about in the pages of our Newspapers.

The uncertain nature of the goal was not the only thing that unites Abraham with today's migrants. By the time Abraham undertook his journey, Canaan already had a settled population; much of which, like Abraham, was Semitic. Although only Sarah and Lot are named as Abraham's companions, he was the head of a sizeable clan (Gen 14:14) with extensive flocks of sheep and goats. Because his flock cannot penetrate far into the desert without water, Abraham's basic need to have a source of daily water for his flock, "kept him wandering in search of new pastures, but restricted him to the belt of moderate rainfall between the desert and the cultivated land" (Jensen 1982: 66). In this too, Abraham became a prototype of all forced to leave their environment in search of greener pastures.

that this is possible through a consideration of the many migration-related motifs that filters through the biblical tradition. Within the broader framework of the Judeo-Christian Bible, the article exposes the theme of Flight from and into Egypt in both the Old and the New Testaments (henceforth OT & NT), what this reveals about the Judeo-Christian God and his attitude to people in search of places of refuge, and how this should affect what the Judeo-Christian religion teaches about how to relate to migrants. The article is a theological reflection and a library research. It consists mainly in a theological analysis cum exposition of secondary sources on the identified themes. After a brief explanation of the key terms – human migration and its dominance in the Judeo-Christian history, it considers the principal stadia in the Judeo-Christian Scriptures where the migration theme features prominently, and extracts therefrom lessons for contemporary migration debate.

Understanding the Migration Concept within the Dynamics of Human Mobility

Migration can be approached with different lenses (UN DESA 1998), in relation either to the migrant's place of birth, citizenship, place of residence or duration of stay in the country of migration (de Beer et al 2010). It denotes any movement by humans from one locality to another, often over long distances or in large groups. It is a sub-category of a more general concept of 'movement', embracing a wide variety of types and forms of human mobility (Salt 2001). By definition, a migrant is a "person on the move, either voluntarily or involuntarily, in the person's own country, internationally, or both. Unlike refugees, migrants are commonly considered free to return home whenever they wish because their lives are not in danger there" (Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States 2003, n. 24).

There are two major types of migration: internal migration, which involves movement to a different part of a country, often from country districts to cities; and international migration, which entails movement across a different country. Migration can also be group into other categories, such as, voluntary and forced migration, legal and illegal migration, etc. In recent times, the realities of foreign students, labour migrants, asylum seekers and refugees have also given different faces to migration.

The reasons for migration are varied. Writing specifically of international migration, the World Migration Report 2020 says:

> The overwhelming majority of people migrate internationally for reasons related to work, family and study – involving migration processes that largely occur without fundamentally challenging either migrants or the countries they enter. In contrast, other people leave their homes and countries for a range of compelling

for the first time in the very first line of Exodus of the biblical account of the migration of "*bene Yisrael*" "the children of Israel" (Hooker 1999).

Israel's Lessons from the Years of Oppression
The reality emerging out of the Exodus event is not just a new religious idea but also the emergence of a new social community that had to devise laws and norms of right and wrong. That resident aliens (*gerîm*) should become subjects of affection in Israel's laws is understandable. As sojourners in Egypt, God showed love to Israel. So, Israel, putting its place in the other's place, is to love sojourners too, remembering that she once was in their position. The commandment to love one's neighbour, initially restricted to indigenes in Lev 19:18, was extended to cover foreign residents in Lev 19:33-34 (Jouette 1982; Bedford-Strohm 2008).

Among the usages of the term "foreigners" (alternately "strangers" or "aliens") in Semitic perspective, include the non-Israelite who came into ordinary contact with the Israelites. As the *Interpreter's Bible (1962: 50) puts it*:

> Anyone not related by blood to a particular tribe or clan, but permanently associated with it and under its protection was a *gêr*. This classification was tribal and social, not primarily religious…. The word points out a resident who is not indigenous to a place and who is ethnically unrelated to its people.

Israel's Law provides that the *gêrim* should always be assured of hospitality (Gen 18:2-9; Judg 19:20; 2 Kings 4:8). Because they are weak, they should be guaranteed maximum protection; because they could not possess land and had no clan ties, all attitudes of economic superiority against them must be avoided; and because they are vulnerable and often poor, they must be shown solidarity through special legislation which does justice to their financial dealings (Exod 21:8; Deut 1:16; 14:21; 15:13). Bedford-Strohm (2008: 41) sees here the foundation for developing what he calls *an ethics of empathy*:

> Firstly, the commandment is emphasized as comprehensible and accessible from Israel's own experience: 'You know how it feels to be foreign and discriminated against. Therefore, treat the foreigner just like you would want to be treated if

Although it is impossible to pinpoint a definite date, many scholars believe that the Exodus took place early in the reign of Rameses II, whose mummy is on display at the Cairo Museum – that is c. 1280 BCE or shortly afterwards (Albright, 1950). This theory gains support from the fact that the cities of Pithom and Rameses, constructed around these times, are specifically mentioned in Exod 1:11, where we are told that Hebrew slaves were employed in their construction. Furthermore, according to Egyptian documents, these pharaohs used 'Apiru' – an old depiction for the Hebrews – in public projects (Anderson, 1986).

Egypt: A Place of Refuge (Genesis 37–50)
The scriptural notion of migration begun in Abraham was intensified when Israel, his descendant nation, migrated to Egypt (Bedford-Strohm 2008), the circumstances of which form the central theme of the Joseph cycle of the Patriarchal History (cf. Genesis 37-50). Although dependent upon oral tradition, the Joseph story reflects the historical conditions of the second millennium, when it was common for a Semite to rise to power in the Egyptian court (Anderson 1986). Read in its present context, the Joseph's cycle serves as a transition from the ancestral period to the Mosaic age, providing an answer to the question: how did Israel come to be in Egypt in the first place? The narrator, in answering this question, emphasizes the divine purpose which brings the chosen people down into Egypt – from famine and destruction to food and prosperity – and which later will bring them out of slavery into freedom (Marks 1983); concerns that are no less similar to those of innumerable numbers of migrants and refugees today.

Egypt: A Land of Bondage (Exodus 1-3)
Among the significant experiences of Israel as alien in Egypt were the promotion of Joseph (Gen 41:37-49), the offering of the best of lands by Pharaoh (Gen 47:1-12), increase in demographical and human resource (Exod 1:9-10), anti-Semitism/xenophobia and hard labour (Exod 1:1-14), heroic sympathy of the two God-fearing Egyptian midwives (Exod 1:15-21), etc. These chains of events reached their climax in the systematic oppression of Israel in Egypt, attributed by the hagiographer to the coming to power of a "new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph" (Exod 1:8). Although the biblical account does not identify the Pharaoh who introduced the policy that resulted in the oppression of the Semites in the Delta region, some critics (cf. Anderson, 1986) associate this with the 19th Dynasty, which began toward the end of the 14th century BCE with the oppressive regimes of Seti 1 (c. 1305 to 1290) and his son Rameses 11 (c. 1290-1224).

Leaving aside speculations as to the cause and manner of the Exodus event (Jensen, 1986), one thing is clear: Israel has always considered the departure from Egypt as a special moment in her history. Of course, the people existed with Abraham, but only in promise. The Exodus is the moment when Israel received its solemn investiture as the People of God (Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People 2004). More than anything else in history, the Exodus gave the Hebrew an identity, a nation, a founder, and a name, used

The Pentateuch is usually divided into Primeval History (Gen 1-11), Patriarchal History (Gen 12-50) and People's History Exodus through Deuteronomy, although some add Joshua and speak of Hexateuch, since it was in Joshua that the promise of possession of Land was realized.

facet of Israel's completely spiritual experience summed up in Jesus by comparing the wailing in Israel after the great massacre on account of Jesus to the wailing of Rachel for her children in Jeremiah 31. Matthew's ingenuity here lies, not so much in connecting the two events, as in relating them to what happened at Bethlehem. In the theology of Israel, the persecution in Egypt and the Exile were the two greatest trials which God's people had been subjected to; and the Exodus and return from Exile were the two greatest manifestations of Yahweh's protective power. By connecting both to Jesus, Matthew presents Jesus as reliving "both great past moments of divine salvation" (Brown 1993: 217).

Christian Tradition and the Flight to Egypt Narrative

Like Israel did with the Abraham story and the Exodus narrative, Christian tradition has tried to derive some lessons on how to relate with strangers from the migratory experience of the Holy Family. Thanks to the Flight to Egypt narrative, Christians see in the foreigner the face of Christ himself who was born in a manger and fled into Egypt as a foreigner (Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants, 2004). The Holy Family has become "a figure with whom Christian migrants and refugees throughout the ages can identify, giving them hope and courage in hard times" (Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States 2003, no. 26); and Mary, the mother of Jesus, has become a living symbol of the woman emigrant, who not only gave birth to her son away from home (Luke 2:1-7), but was also compelled to flee to Egypt (Matt 2:13-14). In this way she stands for all mothers forced to leave the security of their home with their children in search of refuge elsewhere. Popular devotion is right to consider her as "the Madonna of the way" (Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States, 2003, no. 26) since she knows the pains of migration and exile.

Dating the birth of Jesus to the era of Herod the Great is one of the few features that appear in both the Gospel infancy narratives (Matt 2:1; Luke 1:5). On the assumption that the reference is accurate, the anomaly that Jesus was born "before Christ" results from an ancient mistake in calculating the year of his birth. In the 6th century CE, Dionysius Exiguus (Denis the Short) proposed to reckon years no longer from the foundation of Rome (A.U.C.: *ab urbi condita*) but from the birth of the Lord. Dionysius chose 754 A.U.C. as the birth year, a date too late because by the most plausible calculation Herod died in 750 A.U.C. See Brown (1997, esp. 59).

The original context of the Hosean passage is Israel's Exodus from Egypt. It is, therefore, Israel that is referred to here as the Son of God. Commentators have been struck by the peculiar localization of this citation and the fact that it is somewhat foreign to the historical setting of the basic story to which it has been appended. Although it deals with the Exodus or coming "*out of* Egypt", Matthew inserts it as a comment on Joseph's taking the child and his mother *to* Egypt. By so doing, Matthew sees the filial relationship of God's people as now summed up in Jesus who relives in his own life the history of that people. But the fact that the child is saved by flight *to Egypt also implies that* Jesus relives not only the Exodus of Israel from Egypt, but also the departure of the sons of Jacob/Israel from Canaan into Egypt.

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you were in the same situation!' Secondly, the reasoning for the commandment culminates by referring to God Himself: 'I am the Lord your God'. I adopt the cause of all foreigners just like I did you.

This, no doubt, is a panacea for ending the exploitation of migrants; and what a difference it will make if this is factored into contemporary migration debates.

The Flight of the Holy Family to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-23)

As the NT opens, the situation of the Jews into which the Incarnate Word was born was not all that different from that of the countless millions forced to leave their countries in search of refuge elsewhere. Following Pompey's conquest of the Greek forces in 63 BCE, Palestine came under imperial Rome who administered Palestine through local heads in a quasi-indirect rule system. Sometimes these local agents, in the bid to impress the powers that be and to guarantee their privileges, do impose enormous hardship on their own people.

Such was the situation of Palestine by the time of Jesus birth around 4 BCE during the reign of Herod the Great. Although despised by many as a half Jew, Herod was able, through uncanny alliances with different Roman Emperors, to manipulate them into recognizing him as the king of the Province of Judea in 31/30 BCE. His distrust of possible rivals led to the construction of inaccessible fortress palaces and the murder of his own sons. The brutal cruelty and virtual insanity of Herod's last years lie behind Matthew's account of his willingness to slaughter all the male children at Bethlehem up to the age of 2 as part of his desire to kill Jesus. For the second time in the Judeo-Christian redemptive history, Egypt is once more called upon to provide a place of refuge for the One around whom the New Israel will gather, just as centuries before it provided refuge for the progenitors of the Old Israel.

Matthew's unique account of the flight referred to Hos 11:1 "Out of Egypt I called my Son", thus placing the Messiah's itinerary within the framework of God's will (Brown 1993). Such a background for Jesus' divine sonship stresses the continuity between Jesus and Israel (Harrington, 2001), indicating that Jesus represents the beginning of the restoration of all Israel (Brown et al 1990).

Matthew is also unique in connecting the event in Egypt with another major tragedy in Israel's history: the Exile of the tribes to Assyria and Babylon. He sees the episode as another

4 In the OT, foreigners is also used with reference to the enemies who invade or threaten to overthrow the established order of Israel (Prov 5:10; II Sam 22:45-46, etc.), the gods of the foreign nations, which are temptations to Israel (Psa 81: 9; Jer 5:19; Deut 31:10; 32:12) as well as those barred from the cult (either freemen or slaves of Israelites (Gen 17:12, 27).

1.   Confronting the Deteriorating Culture of Welcome

Among the negative effects of the ever-growing anti-immigrant sentiments today is the amputation of the culture of welcome in the human heart. To reverse this trend, we can draw strength and inspiration from testimonies of the Sacred Scripture. According to the US Bishops' Conference (1986, no. 16):

> The biblical injunction to extend hospitality to the stranger overcomes the tendency to see newcomers as a threat to our comfort, institutions, culture, and lifestyles…. It helps the imagination to devise … initiatives and structures which empower immigrants to be themselves and which make it possible for their presence to enrich all with a pluralism of gifts in celebration of diversity.

This culture of migratory hospitality, which re-echoes the universality of God's love, demands the progressive integration of migrants through commitment towards their family unification, education of children, participation in public life, adequate housing, job availability, etc. Real integration requires a firm determination to eradicate hostile attitudes and stereotypes that promote the anti-culture of inhospitality. It requires "the building of a society that can acknowledge differences without absolutizing them and foster a generation of citizens formed in the culture of dialogue" (John Paul II 2001, no.2). Here, the Christian community is equally challenged. As ambassadors of Christ, Christians are called to see in the "foreigner" Christ who "pitches His tent among us" (cf. John 1:14) and who "knocks at our door" (cf. Rev 3:20).

Illegal Immigration and Anti-Immigration Law

Illegal, irregular or undocumented migrants, terms often used to refer to "'clandestine', men and women in illegal situations", remain a frequent occurrence in the field of human mobility (Blume 2001). On this unfortunate "signs of our times", the Church condemns and vigorously combats the criminal activities of those bent on exploiting illegal immigrants. She argues that the most appropriate alternative that can yield long-term results is that of international cooperation aimed at fostering political stability and eliminating underdevelopment (John Paul II 1996). Similarly, while the Church respects civil migration law, so long as this is just; she is wary of anti-immigrants' propaganda that infects the Christian community. She insists that even the so-called "illegal immigrants" need to be provided with the necessary means of sustenance and, when possible, be helped to regularize their status. When no solution is foreseen, they should be helped to move into another country; and should this fail, they should be assisted to return in dignity and safety to their country of origin (John Paul II 1996).

The Contemporary Church and the Migration Debate

The contemporary Church's approach to migration is based on its faith-centred outlook on "those biblical events that mark the phases of humanity's arduous journey towards the birth of a people without discrimination or frontiers, depository of God's gift for all nations and open to man's eternal vocation" (Catholic Bishops of Mexico and the United States 2003, no. 13). For the Church, migration is not just a social phenomenon that must be approached from a sociological understanding of society. It is a phenomenon that touches the religious dimension of human beings and part of "a theological understanding of the Church as the new Pentecost" (DiMarzio 2005: 98).

Again, the Church sees her presence in the migration debate as a continuation of the mission of Jesus the Good Pastor, that of forming the People of God, the Pilgrim Church, moving slowly and painfully, but steadfastly, towards the fullness of the Kingdom (Hamao 2002). This pastoral care is based on the dignity of the human person from which all rights flow, including the right for an individual to remain at home in one's own country and cultural ambience [borrowing the English proverb, the right "to grow where you are planted"] and the right to migrate (cf. CCC, 2241). From these, the Church has developed a body of social doctrine, which proposes principles for reflection and gives guidelines for action (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 2423). Guided by these principles, the Church plays the role of an advocate in the vast field of human migration. She not only insists on the recognition of the right of the individual to be unhampered in immigration or emigration into any country in which the individual hopes to be able to provide more fittingly for him/herself and his/her dependants; she also recognizes the obligation, on the part of the State, to assure to migrant families what it guarantees to its own citizens.

Recommendations

The crisis experienced today on account of migration calls for a meaningful responsive theology to shape the migration debate. In the words of Groody (2009: 641): "The current climate points to the need to move the migration debate to an even broader intellectual terrain, one in which theology not only has something to learn but something to offer". This essay concludes by pointing out three areas where theology can make some contributions.

The citation of Jeremiah is somewhat not in line with the exact story line. Whereas in the OT tradition, Rachel was told to stop weeping because her children are coming back from exile, the quotation is used in the Matthean text in a context of unrelieved suffering.

Worthy of attention here is the fact that among the three new invocations that Pope Francis added to the Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary in June 2020 is "Solace of Migrants" (to come after Refuge of Sinners); the others being "Mother of Mercy" (after Mother of the Church) and "Mother of Hope" (after Mother of Divine Grace).

The Church also encourages the Christian community to give shelter to migrants, even those in irregular situations. This is not advocating "civil disobedience". Rather, by so doing, the Church is being true to her root as the place where these immigrants are accepted as brothers and sisters. It is the task of the various Dioceses to ensure that migrants, who are obliged to live outside the safety net of civil society, may find a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood in the Christian community (John Paul II 1996).

Confronting the Issue of Brain Drain

The "brain drain syndrome" is another crucial issue that can hardly be side-tracked in any migration debate. It arises from the need for high skills in technologically advanced countries to seek satisfaction, often unilaterally, from the human resources nurtured in developing countries, thereby depriving these countries of badly needed human resources for their development. In the words of Blume (2001: 8-9), a former Undersecretary of the Pontifical Council for the Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People:

> The search for foreign talent sometimes even becomes a "hunt for brains", not a brain drain. That raises questions of justice: Does anyone have the right to buy talent from developing countries simply on the basis of having money to do this? Is it right to attract people who have been educated and raised in their homelands at much cost to their own social and educational services to serve the interests of businesses in other countries? This is a serious moral question that also affects the *personal capital* available in many countries.

The endangerment of any nation's valuable human resources is an offence against economic solidarity, which demands the concrete awareness of the reciprocal relationship between migrants' countries of origin and countries of immigration. Rather than multiplying the visa lotteries to fill up the loopholes in their labour markets, developed countries should help in the ongoing formation of consciences, individuals as well as national and international, on the demands of the universal destination of earthly goods, on international solidarity, and on the priority of persons over work and possession.

Tackling this monstrous phenomenon can benefit from some insights from the Judeo-Christian tradition, especially from Israel's experience in the wilderness en-route the Land of Promise. To be sure, Israel experienced grace in the wilderness; but "it was also a time of grumbling, revolutionary discontent and above all, lack of faith" (Anderson, 1986:85). For all that could be said of the oppression that the children of Jacob experienced in Egypt, there is no doubt that in the judgment of many of the pilgrims, freedom in the desert was a poor

substitute for slavery in Egypt, and on many occasions, they nostalgically longed for the "fleshpots of Egypt" (Exod 16:3; Cf. Anderson 1986).

This situation is not all too different from that of countless migrants of our time. That many do prefer enslavement and hard labour in the so-called "Lands of Promise" to having to eke out a living in hardship in their homeland is evident in the countless numbers of well-bred professionals who do not mind abandoning their noble and revered professions in their homelands to become street boys and girls in Paris, Rome, New York, Hamburg etc. The fact that the Lord God did not allow Israel such options but guided and guarded Moses to lead them through the pains of the wilderness also says something to our new generation migrants. They too should be helped to realize that running away from situations of hardship has never been ranked among great Christian virtues or philanthropist nobilities.

If there is anything that we should learn from Israel's intransigent allegiance to the Land of Promise, it is the nostalgic longing and hope of return, motivated by the realization of the intrinsic discomfort of having "to sing the Lord's song in a foreign land" (Psa 137:4). In every respect, Babylonian culture, at the time that devout Israelites were weeping "by the rivers of Babylon" (Psa 137:1) was superior to the modest way of life the Jews had known in the land of Judah. In contrast to the grazing land of Judah, the rich land of Babylonia was a scene of thriving agriculture and teeming industry (Anderson 1986). Yet the Israelites resisted complete absorption into this domineering culture, and always entertained a nostalgic longing for return. This should serve as a lesson for the skilled migrants of our time. Whatever may have caused their having to flee from or voluntarily leave their motherland, they should always strive to maintain ties with their countries of origin to stimulate the reciprocal transfer of technology and capital.

Maybe here lies a message for all involved in the recent *clearance* controversy surrounding the obligation of parishioners who leave outside of home to supporting their home parishes. While this has been an ongoing controversy in Igboland, it was recently brought to limelight in the *call to share stories* extended to many of her social media followers by the prolific writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie following the altercations she had with her home Parish Priest in the events surrounding the burial of her parents. It also made headlines in the preaching of the firebrand Charismatic Preacher Fr. Ejike Mbaka.

[9]https://www.sunnewsonline.com/chimamanda-adichies-ordeal-with-priest-spurs-fans-to-share-personal-stories-of-similar-experiences/. Accessed April 20, 2022.

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I am not making a case for pastors who exploit parishioners in moments of bereavement. And I am totally in solidarity with the two above in decrying the lack of Christian compassion that such extorting tendencies imply. But, in the light of the foregoing reflection on the need for migrants to maintain a nostalgic appreciation of their homeland, one wonders why modern-day migrants to "lands of opportunity" must wait to be compelled by *obnoxious clearance demands* before they should identify with their home parishes.

The governments and peoples of migrants' countries are also not absolved of responsibilities. Oftentimes, one hears stories of genuinely motivated skilled migrants who returned to their homeland with the intention of contributing their quota to her development, only to be frustrated by the suffocating atmosphere of corruption and dictatorial leadership. Especially the ruling class should be encouraged to respond properly to the challenges of human rights' protection, economic security, long-term economic planning, etc. to facilitate frequent homecoming of their citizens in foreign lands.

Conclusion

When all is said and done, our conclusion is simple: Rather than carry on the migration discussion based on the agenda of how best to curb its flow, an effort that will surely prove futile in our era of cultural diversity; efforts should be directed to how the enduring reality of migration could be better harnessed for the benefit of all. From the Judeo-Christian Redemptive history perspective, we are of the conviction that this is best achieved by genuine hospitality, just laws, solidarity and committed ecclesial advocacy; by avoiding seeing migration as a threat to be manipulated for short-time political gain at the expense of the most natural rights of the human person – including the right to life, to walk and to work.

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The Role of Religion in Conflict Resolution

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Abstract

Today, there are many conflicts around the world. More often, the issues in conflicts are traceable to religion by some scholars. And this seems to make religion one of the causes of conflict in the society. Most of the time, religion is viewed as a motive for conflict and has emerged as a key component in many current and past conflicts. However, religion does not always drive violence; it is also an integral factor in the resolution of conflict and reconciliation process. Religion touches upon the deepest levels of identity. It can mobilize people for war, but also for lasting peace. Religion in many parts of the world is contributing to violent conflict, although exaggerated in many cases. But, religion is a source not only of intolerance, human rights violations, and extremist violence, but also of non-violent conflict transformation, the defense of human rights, integrity in government, and reconciliation and stability in divided societies. So, this paper addresses the role of religion in conflict resolution. It looks into what religion can do to help build peace in the society, to reduce violence and save lives. To achieve the aim of this research, qualitative method of research was adopted, which helped the researchers to be descriptive in presenting their findings.

Introduction

The use of religion in conflict has been a factor that has become prominent in a number of conflicts. Whether religion is the main cause in most of these conflicts has been a subject that many conflict scholars have debated on. In most cases, religion has been considered a trigger

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religious based organizations (Svesson 2014). Therefore, this paper focused on the positive role of religion in conflict: which is its resolution.

What is Religion?

There are numerous definitions of religion by different scholars. The most popular of these definitions is that 'religion is the belief in a god or gods' and 'the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a God or gods.' However, scholars from different fields such as sociology, anthropology, philosophy have expanded on the definition of religion.

According to Edward B Tylor in his work *Primitive Culture* "Religion is the belief in Spiritual Beings." Durkheim, a sociologist, in his book *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things". By sacred things he meant things "set apart and forbidden—beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them". Sacred things are not, however, limited to gods or spirits. On the contrary, a sacred thing can be "a rock, a tree, a spring, a pebble, a piece of wood, a house, in a word, anything can be sacred". Religious beliefs, myths, dogmas and legends are the representations that express the nature of these sacred things, and the virtues and powers which are attributed to them (http://religions.pewforum.org/pdf/affiliations-all-traditions.pdf).

In *The Varieties of Religious Experience* William James wrote that "Religion is the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine." For Paul Tillich, "Religion is the state of being grasped by an ultimate concern, a concern which qualifies all other concerns as preliminary, and a concern that in itself provides the answer to the question of the meaning of our existence" (http://www.patheos.com/Library.html).

In essence, a religious tradition has at least three essential elements, each handed down and developed in the multitude of ways traditions transmit. One element is a mythic, philosophical, or theological cosmology defining the fundamental structures and limits of the world and forming the basic ways in which cultures and individuals imagine how things are and what they mean. A second essential element of religion is ritual. Rituals are a finite set of repeatable and symbolizable actions that epitomize things a tradition takes to be crucial to defining the normative human place in the cosmos. Early layers of ritual epitomize the

factor in many of the conflicts throughout the world. Rather than being considered as a main cause, it has been used also as a mobilizing agent in some of the conflicts in Africa. Religion has been used as a means of identity, which is very important to the individual and the society at large. Thus it often happens that a threat to one's religious belief more often than not triggers a violent outburst. Religion has been found to be used both constructively and destructively and as such used as a motivational factor. Due to this, the relationship between religion as a factor or cause of conflict and conflict in itself should be well researched so as to enable a clear understanding of it. Religion touches upon the deepest levels of identity. It can mobilize people for war, but also for lasting peace.

This clearly means that religion in many parts of the world is contributing to violent conflict, although exaggerated in many cases (Smock 2006). But, religion is a source not only of intolerance, human rights violations, and extremist violence, but also of non-violent conflict transformation, the defense of human rights, integrity in government, and reconciliation and stability in divided societies (Rasul 2009). Religion, however is seen not as the cause of conflict but what is used to cause it.

Traditionally, religion in Africa has been an individual and collective source of meaning, hope, comfort and deliverance. However, despite the high social relevance of religion in Africa and the averred intense religiosity of Africans, a number of hypotheses still connect religion to conflict in the continent. Religion appears to be associated with conflict in many parts of the world including Africa although concerns have heightened about the sustained violent conflicts in Africa (Essien 2014).

On the other hand, there are also opportunities to employ the assets of religious leaders and religious institutions to promote peace (Smock 2006). For instance, the role of Christianity for the enforcement of Truth and Reconciliation Council; peace processes in Mozambique, Nigeria, south Sudan, Kenya and others can be good examples to resolve conflicts. Nevertheless, this paper gives emphasis for the case of Kenya election violence and conflict management with the help of religious institutions. The violence that erupted in Kenya in late December 2007 and January 2008 following the disputed 2007 presidential election results was one of the most violent and destructive periods in the country's history. It is estimated that 1,300 lives were lost as a direct result of the violence and conservative figures estimate that 350,000 people were internally displaced (Waruii 2015). To resolve the election violence a number of groups and institutions participated from local to international levels. Among the groups involved in managing conflicts are

hunt, nurturing of agricultural fertility, acknowledgment of political authority (worship of gods as lords), acts of commitment to other individuals, and so forth. The third essential element is that traditions have some conception and practical procedures for fundamental transformation aimed to relate persons harmoniously to the normative cosmological elements, a path of spiritual perfection. In theisms, this usually means salvation, a right relation to God. In Buddhism, it means transformative enlightenment about the truth of change and suchness (Tenam 2019).

Kinds of Religion

Christianity

Christianity is one of the three monotheistic, Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism and Islam). Abrahamic religions trace their origin to Abraham, who is a figure in the Old Testament, New Testament and the Qur'an. Christianity is based on the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth as they appear in the New Testament of the Holy Bible. Christianity emerged during the First Century C.E., initially as a sect that grew out of Judaism. In the centuries that followed, diverse interpretations and practices developed so that, today, there are many different groups that follow the teachings of Jesus and fall under the umbrella of Christianity. Major branches in Christianity are Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodox and Protestantism. For Christians, Jesus is: the Son of God and Messiah as prophesized in the Hebrew Scriptures; the savior of humanity; and is considered both fully human and fully divine. Christianity also teaches that Jesus' death and resurrection paved the way for humans to overcome sin and be reconciled with God. The way Jesus lived his life serves as a model for Christians; together with scripture, especially the New Testament and the Ten Commandments, his life serves as the basis for Christian morality. The cross is a symbol of the death of Jesus, and how he overcame death and sin. Christianity is currently the largest and most practiced religion in the world.

Islam

Islam is one of three monotheistic, Abrahamic religions. Abrahamic religions trace their origin to Abraham, who is a figure in the Old Testament, New Testament and the Qur'an. There is great diversity within Islam. It is the second-largest religion in the world today, and its followers are known as Muslims. The word Muslim means "One who submits to God" and

Islam means "submission," referring to the complete surrender to God, Allah (Arabic). The holy text of Islam is called the Qur'an, which Muslims believe was revealed to Muhammad (who lived in the seventh century) as the direct words of God. Muhammad is considered the Messenger and the final Prophet of God (others include Moses, Elijah and Jesus). The Five Pillars of Islam are its most fundamental beliefs and practices: belief in the Oneness of God and belief that Muhammad is His last messenger; ritual prayer of five times a day; concern for and almsgiving to the needy; self-purification through fasting during the holy month of Ramadan; and making a pilgrimage to Mecca (the Hajj) in one's lifetime by those who are able. Many Muslims keep a halal diet and pray five times a day facing the direction of Mecca. Mecca is in Saudi Arabia, and it is believed that Muhammad designated it as the holy city of Islam.

Hinduism

Hinduism is generally considered the world's oldest organized religion, and is the third largest religion in the world. Many forms of Hinduism recognize a single major deity, Brahman, and see a variety of gods and goddesses as expressions of a Supreme God that can all be worshipped in many different ways. Therefore, Hinduism is considered by some to be monotheistic, and by others to be polytheistic. Unlike many religions, Hinduism does not attribute its foundations to a single individual or text, but rather acknowledges its variety of influences, possibly dating as far back as prehistoric times in the Indian subcontinent. Hinduism also does not have a single theology, or central religious organization or declaration of faith. It teaches that no particular religion has exclusive rights to salvation; rather, it views all genuine religious paths as facets of God. Hinduism is largely driven by a vast and rich scriptural body which has been developed throughout its history. Of these texts, the Vedas, the Upanishads, and the Tantras hold the most authority for most Hindus. Central ideas in Hinduism include Dharma (ethics and duties), Karma (law of cause and effect), Samsara (the ongoing reincarnation cycle of life, death and rebirth) and Moksha (the release from Samsara). In some practices of Hinduism, worship is very important, ranging from daily prayer rituals to ceremonial worship or puja. In addition, many Hindus maintain vegetarian diets, often derived from one of its core principles, ahimsa, the principle of nonviolence.

spread into Asia and Eastern Europe after the passing of the Buddha. There are many branches of Buddhism, including Mahayana Buddhism, Southern or Theravada Buddhism, Eastern or Chinese Buddhism and Northern or Tibetan Buddhism. The main Buddhist texts, interpreted differently by followers of different branches, are: the P li Canon (which includes rules for discipline, discourses and philosophy), Mahayana Sutras (original teachings of the Buddha), and the Dhammapada (Buddha's direct scriptures). Among the doctrines of Buddhism are the Four Noble Truths. These truths are: all living beings (people, animals) suffer; the cause of suffering is selfish desire; one can stop the suffering; and the way to stop the suffering is to follow the Noble Eightfold Path (guidelines stated by the Buddha for leading a righteous life). Another guiding principle in Buddhism is called the Middle Way, which suggests that life is to be lived in moderation without extremes, avoiding harm to others while cultivating good-will toward all. Many Buddhists are vegetarians, and believe in reincarnation.

Chinese Traditional Religions

Chinese Traditional Religions refers to a diverse and complex collection of many religious and philosophical traditions, including Chinese Folk Religion, Taoism, Confucianism and Buddhism, which have been in existence for much of China's history. For many religious Chinese, these traditions combine to form a composite religious culture and worldview.
Chinese Folk Religion refers to the local, tribal religious beliefs and practices that have existed in China for thousands of years. They vary widely among followers and may include beliefs in mythical figures and various gods and goddesses, ancestor veneration and communication with celestial bodies and animals, in addition to a wide range of other beliefs. Taoism took shape as a distinct tradition around 550 B.C.E. It is believed to be founded by Lao Zi, who authored the Tao-te-Ching, a central text for Taoist thought. The "Tao" is generally translated into "the path" or "the way," and refers to a particular rightful way of living one's life. In Taoism, several concepts are often emphasized. These include wu wei ("without action," a term that signifies knowing when to act and when not to act, in accordance with natural forces) and opposition, the idea that everything is composed of opposing forces (hot and cold, high and low, yin and yang), which must be balanced. Through the ages, Taoism has involved god and ancestor worship as well as alchemy and medicine-making. Ultimately, however, the goal of the Taoist believer is to harmonize the self with the Tao, or "path."

Atheism/Agnosticism/Non-Religiousness/Secularism

Each belief system and non-belief system in this category is distinct from each other. Many people cross-identify within these groups, and as such, demographic research does not usually differentiate between these different groups of respondents. Often, agnostics end up being classified in the same category as atheists and/or other non-religious people.
Atheism is the absence of belief in any God, gods or spiritual beings. Atheists don't use God to explain the existence of the universe, and believe that humans can – and do – establish moral codes to live by without the aid of Gods or scriptures. Many atheists are also secularists, and are not supportive of any special treatment given by the state to those adhering to an organized religion. However, it is possible to be both atheist and an adherent of a religious tradition. Many Buddhists identify as such, as do some adherents of other traditions like Humanistic Judaism and Non-Realism or Christian Atheism.
Agnosticism is the view that the existence or non-existence of God or any deity, and other religious and metaphysical claims, are unknown and/or unknowable. Further, agnostics are generally committed to the idea of "not knowing."

Non-Religiousness is the lack of religious principles or practices, and being uninvolved with religious matters. World views and values of the non-religious are generally derived from epistemological systems with no religious affiliation.
Secularism is primarily based in belief in the separation of church and state. Most secularists find religious schools problematic. Secularists support the right of individuals to have a religious faith, and are entirely opposed to discrimination against people because of their religious, or nonreligious, beliefs. While most secularists are atheists, some are believers in a faith. Secularists in the UK stress that privileges should not be afforded to religious individuals and entities, and call for, among other things, the elimination of representation of religion in Parliament (i.e. bishops) and the disestablishment of the Church of England. Additionally, UK secularists believe that laws should not prohibit reasonable but strong criticism of religions or religion in general.

Buddhism

Buddhism is a Dharmic (referring to duty, or the opportunity to act virtuously), non-theistic religion that follows the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha or the "Awakened One." Buddhism originated in the Indian subcontinent about 2600 years ago and

Confucianism was also founded in approximately 550 B.C.E., by Chinese philosopher Kong Qiu (Confucius) but did not become an established tradition until the 2nd and 1st centuries B.C.E. Confucius believed the "ultimate reality" was beyond human comprehension. Therefore, Confucianism has no deities or teachings about the afterlife and instead urges individuals to concentrate on doing the right thing in this life. It emphasizes learning from the past, humanness, filial piety (respect for parents and ancestors), honesty, reciprocity, righteousness and loyalty, among other elements. Confucius believed in the sacredness of daily rituals (the routines of everyday life) as a way to unite people and strengthen the community, and therefore shaping rituals is central to the Confucian system. Buddhism is also practiced widely in China.

Shinto

Shinto is the ancient, native religion of Japan, and often considered a type of animism (the belief that many beings, living or non-living, have souls) or shamanic tradition. Shinto obtained its name from the combination of Chinese words "shin" and "tao" meaning "The Way of the Gods." There are several types of Shinto, including Shrine, Sect, Folk and State Shinto, which focus on different aspects of the tradition. Shinto followers worship the kami, who are localized gods or spiritual beings that reside in particular places, natural processes, or objects such as the sun, lakes, or shrines. Shinto does not have a specific set of prayers, holy buildings or holy people/kami that takes precedence over any other. Many Shinto venerate Ameratsu, the sun kami, and there are certain texts that while not sacred, have a type of "privileged" status. Many Japanese people don't think of Shinto specifically as a religion, but more as an aspect of Japanese life. At the end of World War II, Japanese leaders declared that Shinto was no longer the state religion of Japan, but many people still practice its rites and rituals. Conversely, since Shinto was once the state religion, many Japanese citizens are counted as Shinto though they do not practice. In addition, Shinto is often practiced alongside other religions like Buddhism or Confucianism, making the number of its followers difficult to estimate.

Sikhism

Sikhism originated in Northern India in the 15th century. The teachings of Guru Nanak (the religion's founder) and of nine other gurus (enlightened leaders), as well as its holy text, the Guru Granth Sahib, are central to the tradition. The word "Sikh" originates from a Sanskrit root which translates into "disciple" or "learning." Thus, Sikhs focus on attaining salvation through the continual learning of God by way of personal meditation and rightful living. The

central messages of Sikhism are that there is one God (who is the same for all religions); that life should focus on the dedication and remembrance of God at all times; that Sikhs should be generous to the less fortunate and serve others; that the human race is equal regardless of gender or race; and that truthful living that renounces worldly temptations and sins should be sought. Some Sikhs may choose to make a unique form of commitment called Amrit, which includes observing special rules, such as wearing the five articles of faith, or the five K's. These are: (1) Kesh (hair): Leave hair uncut; (2) Khanga (comb): Keep a comb in the hair, representing cleanliness; (3) Kirpan (sword, and also a combination of the Punjabi words kirpa which means an act of kindness, and aan which means honor): Wear a steel sword, a constant reminder of the duty to seek justice and fight oppression; (4) Kara (iron bracelet): Wear a bracelet that acts like a wedding ring, indicating the bond between God and the wearer; and (5) Kachera (long underpants): Wear a specific undergarment signifying self-discipline. Many Sikh men and women wear a turban to cover their long hair. Sikh temples are called gurdwaras.

Judaism

Judaism is the earliest of the three monotheistic, Abrahamic religions. Abrahamic religions trace their origin to Abraham, who is a figure in the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), New Testament and the Qur'an. Tradition teaches that the origins of Judaism are found in the covenant (divine agreement) between Abraham and God, dated to 2000 B.C.E. There is a wide spectrum of observance among contemporary Jews, generally described as Reform, Conservative, Orthodox and Reconstructionist. The central sources of authority in Judaism are both the writings and traditions. Judaism also has a rich history that is central to its traditions and heritage. One of its prominent beliefs is that there is one omnipotent, omniscient creator God and that, according to tradition, God made a covenant with the Jewish people to whom He gave commandments and laws to follow. These laws are recorded in the Torah (the first five books of the Hebrew Bible), which was given to Moses, who brought the Jews out of slavery from Egypt) and the Talmud. Many Jews place emphasis on the Jewish religion as a way of life and community. Core values include Tikkun Olam (repairing the world), Tzedakah (charity), peace, family, community, justice, and living life in a holy manner. A Jewish temple is called a synagogue. Many Jews also keep a kosher diet. And many others. Religious institutions frequently have a special relationship with the affected populations that can dampen conflict drivers, strengthening conflict mitigation efforts, or both. That means, religious leaders and institutions are often considered

addition, it should be stressed that violent escalation of every conflict evolves from a non-violent phase of the conflict. Nonviolent conflict has been termed by Sandole (1998) as "manifest conflict process (MCP)" and defined as a situation in which at least two parties, or their representatives, try to pursue their perceptions of mutually incompatible goals by undermining, directly or indirectly, each other's goal-seeking capability. A conflict cannot be detected without existence of some visible signs that show certain position difference or interest opposition between two states over certain commodity. Sometimes conditions for conflict exist, but the parties are not pursuing an overt strategy to achieve their goals. However, at least one party has to have positional differences articulated in some form of demands, and the other party shall be aware of such demands.

Violent Conflicts

Conflicts enters a violent phase when parties go beyond seeking to attain their goals peacefully, and try to dominate, damage or destroy the opposing parties' ability to pursue their own interests. For Davies (1973) the existence of frustration of substantive (physical, social-affectional, self-esteem, and self-actualization) or implemental needs (security, knowledge, and power) is the essential condition for one non-violent conflict to escalate into violent: "Violence as a response is produced when certain innate needs or demands are deeply frustrated." In political conflict analysis the use of force, physical damages and human casualties are the characteristics of a violent conflict. Battle-related human casualties thresholds are commonly used to define violent conflict, particularly in respect of war. An "aggressive manifest conflict process (AMPC)" is the term that Sandole (1998) uses to describe violent conflict, which, according to his definition represents: "… a situation in which at least two parties, or their representatives, attempt to pursue their perceptions of mutually incompatible goals by physically damaging or destroying the property and high-value symbols of one another (e.g., religious shrines, national monuments); and/or psychologically or physically injuring, destroying, or otherwise forcibly eliminating one another."

In the recently published *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation,* Smith (2005), analyzing trends and causes of violent conflicts, employs the term "armed conflicts" when speaking about violent disputes, and defines it as: "… open, armed clashes between two or more centrally organised parties, with continuity between the clashes, in disputes about power over government and territory."

trustworthy and credible by the local population due to their established roles in their respective communities. In addition, religious institutions may have a shared and respected set of values with different sides of the conflict. Values, including forgiveness and reconciliation, in religious texts and teachings can inspire communities to change attitudes and actions at a basic level and transform worldviews at a deeper level to understand "others" in the conflict positively (http://www.patheos.com/Library.html).

What is Conflict?

Michael Nicholson (2006) defines conflict as an activity which takes place when individuals or groups wish to carry out mutually inconsistent acts concerning their wants, needs or obligations. It may also be defined as a disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns. Manifestations of conflict behavior start with disagreement, and followed by verbal abuse and interference. Conflicts can occur between individuals, groups and organizations. Examples are quarrels between friends or family members, labour strikes, competitive sports, or war. This is manifested in three forms. First is content conflict. This is where individuals disagree about how to deal with a certain issue or task. Second, Relational conflict is where individuals disagree about one another. It stems out of interpersonal incompatibility. Third, Process conflict refers to disagreement over the groups approach to a particular task

According to scholars, content conflict can be beneficial, increasing motivation and stimulating discussion, whereas relational and process conflict decreases performance, loyalty satisfaction and commitment, and causes individuals to be irritable, negative and suspicious. An occasional conflict within a group such as in a school (ALUTA) may keep its leaders alert and its policies up to date. As Sandole (1998) says, "Conflict is a fundamental human and social trait. A completely conflict free harmonious society is impossible."

Forms of Conflict

Non-violent Conflicts

Absence of violence does not automatically mean an absence of conflict. Conflicting interests can be pursued without violence or coercion. When the conflict already exists this means only an absence of violent methods employed by parties in their struggle to resolve their incompatible differences over issues that are of national relevance for them. Parties do not use force against each other. Yet, the existence of non-violent conflict must be noticed and recognized by the outside world, as well as at least by one of the involved parties. In

to explore the interests underlying their positions. Working with parties both together and separately, mediators seek to help them discover a resolution that is sustainable, voluntary, and nonbinding.

Arbitration. In arbitration, which can resemble a court trial, a neutral third party serves as a judge who makes decisions to end the dispute. The arbitrator listens to the arguments and evidence presented by each side, and renders a binding and often confidential decision. Although disputants typically cannot appeal an arbitrator's decision, they can negotiate most aspects of the arbitration process, including whether lawyers will be present and which standards of evidence will be used.

Litigation. In civil litigation, a defendant and a plaintiff face off before either a judge or a judge and jury, who weigh the evidence and make a ruling. Information presented in hearings and trials usually enters the public record.

In general, it makes sense to start off less-expensive, less-formal conflict resolution procedures, such as negotiation and mediation, before making the larger commitments of money and time that arbitration and litigation often demand. Conflict-resolution training can further enhance your ability to negotiate satisfactory resolutions to your disputes.

The Role of Religion in Conflict Resolution
For years now, it is evident from researches that the church and other religious institutions have been playing formidable roles in resolving conflicts and building peace in the society. There are numerous examples to this. A good example is the Kenya violence cited in the introduction. Some of these roles come in form of dialogue between religions in a particular place. From this, it becomes undeniable that even though religion is seen as a source of conflict, religion is indeed a resource for peace.

Religion plays its role in conflict resolution through the following ways:
Encouragement for Mutual Understanding
Religious leaders are uniquely positioned to use their moral authority and influence to encourage mutual understanding within and between protagonists. Thus, serious consideration should always be given to their inclusion in formal peace processes. Not only does their influence provide the necessary moral authority that is sometimes missing and enhanced capacity for dealing with all kinds of religious issues that may arise in such

What is Conflict Resolution?
Conflict resolution is a process in which two more conflicting parties resolve their conflict two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. It could be defined as the informal or formal process that two or more parties use to find a peaceful solution to their dispute. The conflict resolution approaches point out strategies that could be employed to find an exit from the conflict's destroying dynamic and that aims toward achieving satisfying solution for all parties involved (Burton 1968). A number of common cognitive and emotional traps, many of them unconscious, can exacerbate conflict and contribute to the need for conflict resolution:

Self-serving fairness interpretations. Rather than deciding what's fair from a position of neutrality, we interpret what would be most fair to us, and then justify this preference on the bases of fairness. For example, department heads are likely to each think they deserve the lion's share of the annual budget. Disagreements about what's fairlead to clashes.
Overconfidence. We tend to be overconfident in our judgments, a tendency that leads us to unrealistic expectations. Disputants are likely to be overconfident about their odds of winning a lawsuit, for instance, an error that can lead them to shun a negotiated settlement that would save them time and money.

Conflict avoidance. Because negative emotions cause us discomfort and distress, we may try to tamp them down, hoping that our feelings will dissipate with time. In fact, conflict tends to become more entrenched, and parties have a greater need for conflict resolution when they avoid dealing with their strong emotions. Conflicts can be resolved in a variety of ways, including negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and litigation.
Negotiation. In conflict resolution, you can and should draw on the same principles of collaborative negotiation that you use in deal making. For example, you should aim to explore the interests underlying parties' positions, such as a desire to resolve a dispute without attracting negative publicity or to repair a damaged business relationship. In addition, determine your best alternative to a negotiated agreement—what you will do if you fail to reach an agreement, such as finding a new partner or filing a lawsuit. By brainstorming options and looking for tradeoffs across issues, you may be able to negotiate a satisfactory outcome to your dispute without the aid of outside parties.

Mediation. In mediation, disputants enlist a trained, neutral third party to help them come to a consensus. Rather than imposing a solution, a professional mediator encourages disputants

Organizing Peace-building Seminars and Workshops. Various approaches are employed to prevent conflicts. Commonly, workshop and seminars have been held to galvanize ethics to embrace peace. Workshops on peace building are important tools that help to avoid conflict and to maintain peace because during such workshops, the participants are provided with analytical and conceptual context of reconciliation, peace building, case studies, and exercises that provoke individual's knowledge as well as give them the chance for hands-on application. Similarly, peace building resources and exercises are given the participating individuals to give them the contextual information and building blocks to challenge and provide a creative learning environment for participants. According to Jekobsen (2012) strengthening local capacities for peace building in the society through peace building workshops has attained various real positive accomplishments, mainly in the field of political, cultural, institution building, and inter-ethnic discussion concentrating on gender, cultural and ethnic differences, based on the principle of 'Do no Harm'.

The ability to model good conflict resolution skills is impacted during peace building workshops. Key qualities for effective peace builders impacted in seminars and workshops include adaptability, non-defensiveness, empathy and creativity. Adaptability is the capacity to change directions the dig into concerns which the participants have rather than harshly follow the self-planned workshop schedule. Non-defensive is the ability to listen to the participants important comments without self-defense of your actions when you are faced with criticism (Assefa & Wachira 1996).

Further, peace building workshops are avenues for trust building. Trust-building involves letting the participants lower their inhibitions and getting to know each other. In combination with the allowed rules on hand for negotiation, trust building exercises are important elements if the conflict partakers are From the sides of the conflicting parties.
When the participants fear that they will be punished or disliked for sharing their views, they will fail due to poor communication or insightful communication. Thus, the purpose of peace building workshops is to help participants comprehend the need for reconciliation, to come up with negotiations that can lead to reconciliation but not directly reconciling groups or people. Peace building exercises involves sharing experiences of the problems of resolution, and considerations and reconciliation.

Upholding Social Support and Counseling
This involves acts of helping performed by individuals, with an aim of reconciling, healing,

negotiations, but their often-unrivalled influence at grassroots level can be useful in ensuring that any political settlement which emerges will be lasting. Certainly the irrepressible and influential role played by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in his native South Africa and the many conflicts around the world remains indelible.

The Provision of Social Cohesion
Religious communities can provide social cohesion in the aftermath of violent conflict. They may also provide spiritual support to help people facing agonizing pain and suffering with some prospect for the kind of forgiveness that can break the cycle of revenge. Thus, it can be argued that more victimized societies find solace and comfort in dealing with religious institutions than secular ones. Religious networks generally provide the largest social infrastructure for human care, as depicted by the presence of churches, mosques, temples and other religious structures in virtually every village. Invariably, such communities and networks are committed to collaborative work for justice and peace, and they are generally dedicated structures that allow for such collaboration. It can be summed up that religious actors, communities and their institutions can play a significant role in the resolution of intractable conflicts in the contemporary world.

Encouraging a Community-Based Dialogue
Dialogue is the process that involves sincere interactions through which individuals pay attention deeply to each other in order to change from what they have learnt. Every individual makes a solemn effort to listen to the others' concern into their own picture, whether there is a disagreement or not. The individuals do not conceal their identities, but they distinguish the valid claims of the other humans that they will act differently towards each other. Friendly conversation with the conflicting parties is the main element of dialogue. Enhancing dialogue in the society will make the people aware of the best ways to solve conflicts and respect other individuals in the society despite their reservations.
This method thus calls the society and every individual to make efforts in agreeing with one another on the past violent events, bringing some sense of justice, human rights, and security. Justice and peace can only be achieved through endorsing processes that that enhance interethnic inter-ethnic, intra ethnic and intercommunity dialogues (Hertog 2010). This will in turn build harmony in the clans and ethnic communities that are in conflict. This can only be achieved if efforts are put in place to promote reconciliation and peace so as to avoid Conflict reoccurrence.

Conclusion

Worthy of note is the fact that, it has been argued whether Religion does not aid or constitute conflict. In Nigeria, where more than one religion exists, it is possible for religion to spring up conflict. Countries that have heterogeneous religions is like to have religious conflict or another conflict that will be caused by religious differences. However, it is highlighted in this paper that religion can both encourage conflict and build peace, which reflects the growing evidence of the constructive role of religion in conflict resolution. Scholars like John Paul Lederach has indicated that trying to assume that conflict can be avoided is completely fallacious. Rather, there is need to recognize that conflict is a natural outgrowth of human interaction, and there are relatively effective ways of managing conflict. With respect to our present interest, interfaith dialogue would is important and a proactive way of minimizing conflict and the means to address ignorance and distrust. important, often proactive means of minimizing conflict through addressing ignorance and distrust. At its core, inter-religious dialogue brings together different faiths for conversation. Dialogue can take a range of forms and a variety of goals. Through discussions, groups and individuals may come to a better understanding of other faith traditions and the many points of agreement that likely exist between them.

guiding, nurturing, and sustaining the victims with concerns and troubles that come up out of daily communication and ultimate concerns. Religious leaders and community leaders, and the community at large should show interest in this (Smith 2005). The purpose of the support and counselling involves bringing relief to individuals suffering and to inspire human agency.

According to Olawale & Yemisi (2012), such support and counselling normally focus on five strands namely: healing, sustain, guiding, reconciling and nurturing.
1. Healing: this is a function carried out by religious leaders with the purpose of overcoming impairment by reestablishing the individual to become whole again and leading them to be better compared to their previous situation.
2. Sustaining: assisting hurting individuals to bear and transcend the condition in which renewal to their previous state from their condition is not possible or seems improbable.
3. Guiding: helping the perplexed individuals in making the correct choices amongst different courses of thought and action, where the choices are seen to distress the current and the forthcoming state of individual wholeness.
4. Reconciling: the act of restoring the broken relationships between two conflicting parties or between an individual and God. In the history, reconciliation has been based on two factors; discipline and forgiveness.
5. Nurturing: allowing individuals to grow their potentialities, thorough out their lives regardless of the peaks, plateaus, and valleys. The main pastoral care functions are nurturing and guiding.

Adoption of a Faith-Based Approach

Douglas Johnston, in his article '*Faith-based Organisations: The Religious Dimension to Peacebuilding*', explores what he termed "the potential of the faith-based approaches to conflict prevention and transformation." He posited that faith-based approaches represent a viable and – more often than not – effective alternative, as opposed to traditional approaches. Such approaches may take the form of interventions by outside agencies and organisations rooted in religious traditions, or the local religious bodies themselves, "acting with moral authority they possess to cool tempers and promote reconciliation." This may also take the form of religious leaders bridging the gap between faiths and engaging in dialogue, with the view to developing trust and building strong relationships to enable joint collaboration in addressing common problems in the society .

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imbued in the philosophical compositions of objectivity and subjectivity, individuality and universality, human consciousness and action, body and soul, human history and substance, the phenomenological and metaphysical experiences of the human being within all diametric of ethics and existence (Amaku 2009). Given this backdrop, this work attempts a metaphysical analysis of the phenomenon of conflict and violence in contemporary Africa.

Clarification of Terms

On a general note, every violence starts with a dispute; hence the Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary defines dispute as a disagreement, an argument about something; it is a situation of argument or debate about the meaning of something. A dispute can lead to quarrel or heated debates because positions and issues are contested, and people may have various views about the fact of a situation, and disagreement about the how it can be managed or handled. In dispute, views are challenged, and people make claims and counter-claims about what the issue is all about. Although the ultimate goal of dispute seems to be that people are searching for and arguing about how to convince or win people to their views/sides or negotiate their meaning structures (Njoku 2014), a dispute can degenerate and lead to conflict.

A conflict is a serious disagreement about something. It is also an argument; a struggle; a fight; a clash. The Cambridge Dictionary says it is 'an active disagreement between people with opposition of opinions or principles.' The essence of conflict seems to be **disagreement, contradiction, or incompatibility**; hence conflict refers to any situation in which there are incompatible goals, cognitions, or emotions within or between individuals or groups that lead to opposition or antagonistic interaction. When conflict occurs, violence is likely to occur equally.

Violence, according to the Encyclopedia Britannica, is an act of physical force that causes or is intended to cause harm. The damage inflicted by violence may be physical, emotional/psychological, or both. However, violence may be distinguished from aggression. It is a more general type of hostile behavior that may be physical, verbal, or passive in nature. However, violence is of different kinds: physical, emotional, political, religious, cultural etc but all seem to originate from one source—dispute.

In summary, not all dispute can lead to conflict and not all conflict can lead to violence or war. However, a conflict that leads to violence depends on whether the conflict is a positive or

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An Ontological enquiry into the Anatomy of Dispute, Conflict and Violence in Contemporary Africa

By

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Abstract

This work is a philosophical analysis of the phenomenon of dispute, conflict and violence in contemporary Africa. There is no doubt that our world today is generally afflicted, confronted and challenged by various forms of dispute, conflict, violence and wars—civil or international wars. In this, Africa is not exempted; for there are various forms of dispute, conflicts and violence in many countries of Africa—East, West, North and South. Efforts have been made from diverse quarters to arrive at the possible causative factor(s) of this phenomenon of violence—culturally, socially, psychologically, commercially and even technically. Unfortunately, none has come from the ontological angle. The ontological side is one side of the general philosophical approaches. However, it is the most challenging of all because it involves going into the metaphysics of the problem. Based on this therefore, this paper is an attempt to go beyond the empirical conclusions of experimental sciences on the phenomenon of conflict and violence that based their findings solely on empirical researches. To achieve this, the work adopts the thoughts of some leading philosophers on conflict and violence. The method of the work is analytic. Its conclusion is that although dispute, conflict or violence appears inevitable in human affairs as it seems to be an inherent deficiency in human nature burdened with many needs but with little or slender resources to meet them, certain principles are possible to make humans overcome them.

Key words: Anatomy, Conflict, Dispute, Ontology, Violence

Introduction

There are various ways of looking at the phenomenon of dispute, conflict or violence in contemporary Africa, namely culturally, socially, psychologically, commercially and even technically; but the most challenging of all seems to be the ontological. The ontological way is one side of the general philosophical ways. However, it is the most challenging of all because of the manner it acknowledges and analyzes the problem within the general philosophical discipline. Also, it is the most challenging because it hinges on the issues

Report and broad classifications of conflict under the following headings:

1. Security-related manifestation of conflict (proliferation of arms; corruption of law-enforcement agents like the police and the military that involve themselves in crimes caused 'by low morale and poor condition of services,' vigilante groups, which turn to political thuggery to abuse citizens and destroy property; foreign mercenaries and international tensions that infiltrate Nigeria through her border states; misuse of military responses: 'the deployment of military to suppress conflicts without addressing underlying issues may exacerbate conflict further. The impunity of military personal may cause deeper grievance in the case of Benue.

2. Political manifestation of Conflicts (political conflicts or struggles within the political class, which range from politicians' selfishness to citation of local government headquarters, party issues, tensions between governors and deputies, between state government and federal government, between politicians and their sponsors/godfathers, successions and dethronement conflicts and government involvement and manipulation and territorial disputes, which drag for years.

3. Economic manifestation of conflict (poverty and inequality in Nigeria social life; resources competition—dividing the benefits from oil, hence the allocation of Nigeria's wealth generates conflict because of its uneven allocation; resource competition over land—who has access to the land in dispute (Nigeria or Cameroun? For instance) unequal development, and market competition).

4. Social manifestation of Conflicts (ethnic and communal conflicts, religious conflicts, unemployed youths, women as victims of domestic violence; breakdown of social values because of patterns of change in society and the inability of many families to live up to their responsibilities

5. Psycho-cultural dispositions…etc. (Federal Government of Nigeria 2002).

The Philosopher's Contribution: The Ontological Analysis

The ontological analysis of dispute, conflict and violence, in our context, takes off from Thomas Hobbes' ontological status of dispute, conflict and violence. There is a consensus of opinion that one of the most leading philosophers who have tried to give answer to the problem of dispute, conflict or violence from an ontological perspective, although using a social/structural spectrum, was Thomas Hobbes (1981). Hobbes' exposition was based on what he termed an inherent deficiency in human nature such that for him, conflict or violence is grounded in the human quest for survival and self-preservation. According to him, nature has burdened man with many needs economically but with little or slender resources to meet them; hence people fight over material needs. For a clear understanding of Hobbes, it is important to present Hobbes' descriptive picture of how the quest to satisfy one's passion can

negative conflict. A positive conflict is one in which there is a struggle and sacrifice to get at ends (competition); and a negative conflict is one in which there is an upsetting state of affairs signaling that a dispute has degenerated into conflict. Conflict does not exist because people disagree as to how to negotiate each other's meaning structure or method of claims, but only when it generates mistrust of undefined or undifferentiated ends in an arena where there was previous trust and confidence. In other words, it is a breakdown of trust. Onigu Otite (1999) captures this rightly when he says that conflict arises from the pursuit of divergent interests, goals and aspirations by individuals and, or groups in defined social and physical environment.

State of Africa in Contemporary Time and Government's Effort at Classifying Conflicts

Africa, like most other continents of the world, is contemporaneously ravaged, challenged and afflicted by all manner of dispute, conflict and violence. The most of them all is physical violence which include political violence as well. There is no single region or country of Africa today, whether in the East, West, North or South that is not witnessing one form of physical violence—political, economic, religious or the other. It is no more a debate that there are more of political violence—armed conflicts and crisis in Burkina Faso, Mali, Chad, Niger, Ivory Coast, Cameroun, Egypt, South Africa, Tunisia, Nigeria, South Sudan, North Sudan, Togo, Ghana, Mozambique, Senegal, Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Sierra Leone, and Liberia etc.

In Nigeria, there have been efforts from government to classify and address this phenomenon of conflict and violence. For instance, in October 2002, there was a mandate from the government to the Institute for Peace and Conflict Resolution (IPCR) to make a study about the early warnings of conflicts and develop a preventive systems and good support base for those engaged in mediation and conflict resolution. The agency conducted its study and made recommendations to the Federal government and states and bodies and communities. It produced the *Strategic Conflict Assessment in Nigeria: Consolidated Report*. In its general finding, the Report found four major sources of conflict 'on the interaction between resource competition and the corruption of the political systems; that 30 years of military dictatorship of Nigeria's 42 years existence undermined social and political values; and subsequently, Nigeria's turning to democracy in 1999 has not resolved or dissolved all conflicts already present in her blood streams as a nation. The report further noted that there are many conflicts in Nigeria that spread all over the six geo-political zones. Njoku (2014) articulates the IPCR's

lead to dispute, conflict and violence (war) in human society. Thus a review of Hobbes' state of nature, for example, vividly makes this possible.

According to Hobbes, fundamentally, dispute, conflict and violence exist in human nature as a tendency for self-preservation. Just as he says, the original state of nature in which man originally found himself was a state where the only 'rational' thing to do was to go after one's passion and damn the consequence. It is in the process to achieve this, according to Hobbes that collision of desires and interests exist, which eventually lead to conflict, war, anarchy and violence.

Again, it is important to recall that Hobbes lived at a time when widespread warfare raged throughout Europe. It was the wars of religion in the sixteenth century and the Thirty years' war in the seventeenth that was particularly bloody. Hobbes was also a witness to a great upheaval in English political life, where parliamentary armies rose up against, and overthrew Charles I. Given this background, the idea that life without a strong central authority would result in a 'war of all against all' was not difficult for him to imagine. Hence Hobbes set out to unravel what he termed the fundamental cause of conflict and violence in human society.

Hobbes was both a mechanist and a materialist. By this, he believed that natural phenomena were made up (only) of physical elements that functioned according to deterministic laws of cause and effect. For him, human beings were not exempted from this law. Nor were theirs voluntary actions. Hence he argues that voluntary movement (what he called 'animal motion) was caused by external impact of some force on the senses proceeding to internal motions that are either helped (pleasure) or hindered (pain) issuing eventually (or not) in external movement. Hobbes' insistence that animal motion was caused by external factors led him to the conclusion that humans are fundamentally selfish. He called this principle of action in man (self-interest) the principle of psychological egoism, which is a descriptive claim that, as a matter of psychological fact, the fundamental motive for all human beings is self-interest. Hobbes does not think man can live without going after what pleases him. For him, in the fact that, although people sometimes appear to act to serve the interest of others or take others concern into account, their ultimate aim is to advance their own interest, treating the satisfaction of others' needs as purely instrumental in the final accomplishment of their own goals. Given this inevitable conflicts of desires among individuals, Hobbes believed there would be constant violence and danger, for all would do what they could to accomplish their own goals and naturally encounter others of equal power doing the same, against every man. This situation, according to Hobbes, leads to a state he famously called a 'warre…of every

man, against every man' where life would be solitary, poor, brutish, and short.'

Furthermore, since it is Hobbes' recognition that man is fundamentally acting always for his own self-interest, and only act in other's interest as a result of social convention—laws, social practices, rules of behavior——backed up by formal and informal sanctions, it means therefore that dispute, conflict or violence is a result of breakdown of law and order. That is to say, that without law and order and its resultant sanctions in the face of disobedience, people would have no immediate motive not to willfully pursue their own aims. In other words, they would have enjoyed same level of power to accomplish their aims since no person or group of person would like to allow himself to be dominated by others.

On this backdrop, Hobbes did not hesitate to conclude that dispute, conflict or violence are all evidence of human struggle for survival. They are struggle over values or over what people consider valuable in their lives, cultures and communities; and in going the way of conflict people express their needs, thereby affirming their autonomy. Thus, a particular situation of conflict is designated or defined with reference to the objective or goals that feature in the contestation. The conflict situation can be very precarious and slippery because what each part considers very objective may not be seen in the same light by another, who may see him/her as exaggerating his/her points of view. Given this conviction, Mill (1991) argues that the principles that men profess on any controverted subject are usually a very imperfect exponent of the opinions they really hold.

Beyond Hobbes' Analysis: The Power-Violence Dimension

Following Hobbes' contention is the view that conflict and violence are nothing more than the most flagrant manifestation of power (Wright, 1956). For Wright, the ultimate kind of power is violence and by consequence, power is the source of violence. Max Weber also corroborates this view when he defines the state as the rule of men over men based on the means of legitimate; that is allegedly legitimate, violence. Here what is meant is that all politics is a struggle for power; hence the state is an instrument of suppression in the hands of the ruling class. The state involves the body politics, its laws and institutions. In addition, all these stand as coercive superstructures, secondary manifestations of some underlying forces. Bertrand de Jouvenel (1952) further contends that to him who contemplates the unfolding of the ages, war presents itself as an activity of States, which pertains to their essence. Thus, power is an instrument of rule, where rule owes its existence to the instinct of domination. Jean Paul Sartre also says that it is violence when a man feels himself more of a man when he is imposing himself and making others the instruments of his will, which causes him

military command, power and rule by force are still invading the Nigerian psyche. One may argue that for some time now that the military, apparently, have relinquished power; however, they still manipulate the state because they use their wealth, gotten by force, to perpetuate their own interests in sponsoring their favored candidates or 'boys'.

Ethnic chauvinism is another indication that conflict and violence are outcome of a lacuna and deficiency in human nature and quest for power. Ethnic chauvinism entails people's inability to outgrow ethnic suspicions, which take place when people in government and places of authority scandalously encourage groups and individuals to discriminate against others along ethnic lines through divisive religious attitudes and other social prejudice and biases (Arendt, 1969). There is no doubt however that there have been situations where adherents of particular religious denomination war against each other, and this makes it very difficult for one to live in harmony in a place where one may kill in the name of God/Allah or discriminate against one another on account of some kind of presumed self-justifying sanctity. In his *Tribalism: A Pragmatic Instrument for National Unity,* Azikiwe (1964) seriously talked about how to transform tribal instincts into pragmatic tools for national co-existence of all groups, for the varieties in the tribal groups make for enriching communion. Ethnic chauvinism indicates therefore that the human nature is limited, deficient and the quest and crave for satisfaction leads to dispute, conflict and violence.

Furthermore, ethnic chauvinism could lead to divisive religious attitudes, social prejudice and bias among religious faithful, where one particular religious attitude is forced upon every other persons. Issue of political thuggery in the Nigeria's politics has also been singled out as a big sign of this inherent manifestation of deficiency in human nature causing conflict and violence. For instance, Okigbo (1993) is of the view that political crisis started in Nigeria between 1964 and 1965 with the emergence of violence and thuggery in Nigerian politics. According to him, the second crisis that hit the Nigerian nation, just barely six years after independence, was the civil war that occurred between 1969 and 1970, and this cast slur on our moral values and conviction. Simpson (1987) corroborated the above view by saying that the war has been explained in terms of the dispute over Nigeria's new oil wealth but to explain Biafra's secession and the war to re-incorporate it in terms of conflict over oil is too facile. It was more deeply rooted in political maneuvering within a new country and the manifest unevenness of opportunity amongst her people.

Having said this, it is clear that in Africa today and Nigeria in particular, conflict and violence exist as manifestation of the quest to resolve this lacuna in human nature seen as a deficiency. In the ICPR report shown above, analysis from the report shows that political conflict has

incomparable pleasure. And for Voltaire, power consist in making others act as one chooses. Acting as one chooses amounts to violence because power is present wherever one has the chance to assert his own will against the resistance of others. It is an inborn instinct of domination and an innate aggressiveness in the humans as well as other wild animals. On this backdrop, Clausewitz (1954) concludes that war is an act of violence to compel the opponent to do as one wishes.

How Hobbes' Idea and Power-Violence Relation fit into Contemporary African Experience

Here are how Hobbes' view on inherent deficiency in the human nature and the power-violence relation prove to be a manifestation of dispute, conflict and violence in contemporary Africa. The following are the by-products of this lacuna in the human nature:

First and foremost, the Nigerian nation, as it is today, remains a British manipulated clone. This manipulated amalgamation of various ethnic groups or autonomous nations, with different cultures and aspirations was based on the selfish interest of an occupying power—Britain. Although, this forceful coming together shows that Nigeria ab-initio was destined to sit on crisis because, there was no general agreement by the various groups in question to come together except that they were dragged and fused together by Britain through power-violence. This is the reason why up to day, there have been several attempts, passion and desire by some of these amalgamated groups to separate and live their separate lives but this has not been possible as political power of violence is always unleashed to any group that aims and tries to force itself out from this amalgamation. The Biafra agitation, for example, is a wonderful case study; and that of Oduduwa Republic, Arewa Republic, Niger/Delta Republic etc.

Again, at the economic level, there is a wanton display of deficiency as shown in the allocation of Nigeria's wealth—in its uneven allocation; resource competition over land—who has access to land and what may. Truly, as Hobbes says, nature has burdened man with many needs but with little or slender resources to meet them. Thus, conflict and violence are fights over material needs. There is no doubt about this. Experience of frustration in Nigeria produces a tendency for one to attack others. The imbalance in the lives of some Nigerian persons and groups have been proved to be a source of tension, and ultimately conflict or violence; leading to the emergence of the civil war in some cases.

The military intervention in most African countries is also a proof that most political conflict and violence in most African countries are as a result of the lacuna/deficiency in human nature and the quest for power. In Nigeria, for instance, the crisis brought about by constant

(1964) would say, the principle of solidarity is necessary if society based on the attainment of common good must survive.

By logic of deduction, Finnis (1980) says that the principle of subsidiary is required for the existence of a sustained society poised for the realization of its end—the common good. Thus, by function, the principle of subsidiarity claims that "responsibilities and competencies only fall to the state to the extent that the members of society, on their own resources and on their own responsibilities, are not capable of fulfilling the essential purpose founded in the existential ends. This means that the superior community should recognize, protect, and stimulate the activities of the lesser communities whenever necessary, Njoku (2002). This principle is founded basically on the dignity and autonomy of the human person and the autonomy of the minor society in the context of the major society.

The above three mentioned principles are part of the organizing functions of rationality which Hobbes says transformed the state of nature that was characterized by selfishness, leading to dispute, conflict and violence to a state of civility. Jonathan Barnes (1982) affirms that what is specifically peculiar to men leaving the state of nature to a civilized state is that they alone can perceive the good and the bad, the just and the unjust, and the rest—and it is in partnership with these that makes a household and a state. Njoku (2000) sustains this view with the fact that with 'rationality' and in association with one another, man can discern the good and the bad in social organization, and find better ways of complementing each other in the pursuit of a common well-being. On this backdrop therefore, if human intentions, pursuits and goals are the building blocks of socio-political reality, then it must be admitted that there must be frictions in forms of dispute, conflict and violence any time those principles are neglected.

Conclusion

The theme of this discussion is an enquiry into the anatomy of dispute, conflict and violence in contemporary Africa. This enquiry is not like any other kind of enquiry. Its difference lies in the fact that beyond looking at the issue at hand from the cultural, socio-economic, religious, psychological or technical perspectives, this paper chose to investigate the phenomenon of dispute, conflict and violence from a deeper ontological perspective. The ontological analysis or examination exposes the writer to a more fundamental causes of dispute, conflict and violence in contemporary Africa. It shows that dispute, conflict and violent incidents are often deeply rooted in the ontology of man, which is fundamentally connected with the pursuit of his self-interest. According to Thomas Hobbes, the quest for the

deep relation with government's inefficiency. Amadi (2021) affirms this by saying that a surge of violence last year in both Burkina Faso and Mali underscored the fragility of the governments in both countries. Moreover, Allison (2022) argues that the violence in Guinea Bissau is because the President Alpha Conde appears to be angling to extend his time in office.

Towards a Conflict and Violence-Free Society: The Gains of the Ontological Discussion

If human nature is imperfectly structured in such manner that dispute, conflict and violence are mere manifestations, according to Hobbes, it follows therefore that human nature is predisposed to completion. Hobbes says that at the state of nature, what is 'rational' is what the individual naturally aims at. But since everyone aims at one thing at the same time, dispute, conflict and violence are bound to ensue because there is scare material to satiate everyone's desires. Therefore, since the ultimate desire in the state of nature is self-preservation, it means then that certain rules or order are deemed necessary for the preservation of this life. No doubt, Hobbes calls this introduction of rules in the state of nature the transformation of the state of nature into civil society.

However, for this transformation to be effective, certain principles must be considered necessary; namely, the principle of common good; the principle of solidarity and the principle of subsidiarity. The principle of common good is clearly contained in Aristotelian politics when he says that man is a social and political being. According to him, common good stands as the shared objective for the basis of co-operation among members of the civil society (Njoku 2002). It is equally the end or objective for associating together. In a political community, common good is a set of conditions which enables the members of a community to attain for themselves reasonable objectives, or to realize reasonably for themselves value(s) for the sake of which they have reason to collaborate with each other (positively or negatively) in a community namely justice and peace among others. Common good therefore exists because society exists for human nature with its needs and capacity for completion in the attainment of full humanity.

Following from the principle of common good is the principle of solidarity, which flows from that firm moral and social attitude that preserves a positive determination to commit oneself to the common good. It is sustained on the basis of a growing awareness of individuals and nations that there is a spirit of interdependence that is at the basis of their flourishing as individuals and communities. Aristotle believes that interdependence implies a network of relations involving economic, cultural, political, social and moral categories. And as Austin

satisfaction of self-interest principle is responsible for dispute, conflict and violence in every human society but especially in Africa. There is no doubt that all over Africa and beyond, dispute, conflict and violence have permeated all regions causing one form of disaffection and the other. Although, there have been attempts to attribute the cause(s) of dispute, conflict or violence in human affairs to bad governance, military intervention, ethnic chauvinism etc, it is first and foremost, the resultant effect of the principle of self-interest in man that craves for satisfaction. Human beings crave for self-preservation in the state of nature. By logic of this assertion, some principles are naturally necessary for its realization, and above all, for a dispute, conflict and violent-free society. These are principle of common good, which stands as the shared objective for the basis of co-operation among members of the civil society; solidarity, which flows from that firm moral and social attitude that preserves a positive determination to commit oneself to the common good. It is sustained on the basis of a growing awareness of individuals and nations that there is a spirit of interdependence that is at the basis of their flourishing as individuals and communities and subsidiarity, which is required for the existence of a sustained society poised for the realization of its end—the common good. It is against this backdrop that the conclusion of this paper is that it is only when these principles are obeyed and respected can a dispute, conflict and violent-free society be made possible in human affairs.

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among the youth in Nsukka urban of Nigeria. This paper therefore, examined the causes and effects of suicide among the youth in Nsukka urban, Nigeria with the aim to draw the attention of both Nigeria's government and churches in the campaign against suicide in Nsukka urban.

The research methods adopted in this study are the historical, descriptive and evaluative methods. The historical method was used to survey and interpret information about the events of suicide in Nsukka. The descriptive method was used to describe the occurrence and youths' attitude to suicide as well as its causes and effects in Nsukka Urban, Nigeria. The evaluative method enabled the assessment of the impact of suicide in Nsukka and the response of the Government and the Church. More so, there was personal interview in form of oral communication. For the personal interview method, it gives the researcher the opportunity to interact directly with the respondents (Nwabueze 2013: 66) and this made it possible to comprehend the situation of suicide in Nsukka urban through interactions with its residents. The population interviewed was mixed in terms of gender and age distributions. Twenty respondents ranging from 20 years of age and above and dispersed across different locations within the Nsukka Urban were interviewed which included 10 male and 10 female respondents respectively. Out of the 20 respondents, 8 were youths while 12 were adults. The reason for this age distribution was to elicit shades of opinion and information relating to causes, effects and remedies of suicide in Nsukka from different categories of persons. The data gathered were analysed and interpreted qualitatively and the findings were weaved into the body of this paper.

In order to curb suicidal ideation in Nsukka Urban, the Nigerian government and the church have a major role to play. Therefore, both should play their part effectively in the society.

Reality of suicide among the youth in Nsukka urban area of Nigeria

Nsukka urban is a major town in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State in South-East Nigeria. It shares a common border with communities such as Edem Ani, Alor-Uno, Opi, Orba, Ede-Oballa and Obimo (Ugwu et al 2018: 23). It is also, where the main campus of University of Nigeria is located (see Nzeadibe, 2009: 138). Indeed, the news of suicide in Nsukka urban area of Nigeria is on the increase as residents both indigenes and strangers mostly known to be students of the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) are embracing suicide "supposedly, as a way out of their travails" (Asogwa and Onyezere 2018:78). In March 14 2021, a 300 level Biochemistry undergraduate of the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) identified as Daniel Mba plunged from the third-floor of a storey-building to end his life (E. Okwudili, personal communication, March 3 2020). It was gathered that the suicide

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Abstract
The current rate at which the youth in Nsukka urban commit suicide has become quite worrisome. The inability of some youths to overcome personal problems leading to depression, mental disorder, risk-taking, and poverty leads them into various forms of suicide. The aim of this paper is to explore the roles of the government and the church in addressing the challenge of suicides among the youth in Nsukka urban. The phenomenological method was used in this research to achieve this aim. Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. Data gathered were analyzed using the historical, descriptive and evaluative approaches. The paper recommends that the Nigerian government should create more opportunities for the youths. Also, church leaders in Nsukka urban are encouraged not to relent in enlightening worshippers on the value of life irrespective of difficult times.
Key words: Suicide, Youth, Government, Churches, Nsukka Urban

Introduction
From time immemorial, there have been cases of suicide in every human society. Indeed, it is a global phenomenon (Hajiyousouf 2022; Okafor 2020; Stack and Laubepin 2018; Hogan and Grumet 2016 and Masango and Motojesi 2008) and necessary machineries to prevent it have been put in place by some countries (WHO 2014: 72-73, 95). Yet, there are increasing reports of death by suicide with different methods among the youths in Nsukka urban one of the fastest growing townships in Nigeria. According to Olibamoyo et al (2019:6), hanging was the most common method of suicide amongst men whereas poisoning was the most common method of suicide amongst women in Nigeria. Indeed, these methods are prevalent

Major causes of suicide in Nsukka urban of Nigeria

Mental disorder

According to Bilsen (2018: 2), 90% of people who commit suicide have suffered from at least mental disorder. Such mental disorder may appear to be lifetime ailments and it causes frustration among human beings especially in a country like Nigeria where psychiatrists are not enough to treat and counsel mental disorder victims. Other health issues that Nigeria's youth faces that may encourage suicide are infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDS, gonorrhea and other communicable disease (Muhammad et al 2017). In most cases, a victim of such disease who cannot afford to pay for the prescribed medications feel depressed and unequalled with their peers. A recovery suicide note of Chukwuemeka Akachi (student of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka) who took his life in Nsukka urban in 2019, gives credence to this assertion. According to the suicide note, Akachi was on life support for a long time and that life support was expensive. The victim felt depressed and unequalled among his peers. Eventually, he took his life.

Depression

Globally, depression is another thing leading to death caused by suicide. It is an important risk factor which may lead to suicide attempt or suicide (Oladele and Oladele 2016, Takahashi 2001, Razzak et al 2019, & Wanyoike 2014). Compared to the children, adults are most affected when it comes to depression (Bhowmik et al 2012). In most cases, one feel depressed as a result of unexpected disappointment. No doubt, this is the case with some vibrant Nsukka youth who indulge in suicidal act. Though, there are other symptoms of depression but disappointment appears to be the common cause of depression among the youth in Nsukka urban. According to Miller (2009), disappointment has ruined more lives than the diseases known to human beings. This assertion confirmed the contents of the series of suicide notes or death notes recovered in victim's home after their death. Majority of youth who took their lives intentionally point towards depression as a result of disappointment.

Poverty

According to Okoedion and Okolie (2019:58), poverty is associated with increased risk of suicide and suicide attempt in Nigeria. Poverty is the act of being poor. Despite the fact that Nigeria is a land full of *milk and honey* in terms of agriculture and crude oil, her citizens struggle to survive on daily basis. This economic issue is a significant stressor for the youth especially the students (Wanyoike 2014). While it has deprived many youth right to education, it has led most youth into suicidal ideation especially those youth with mental health issue who cannot financially afford their medication.

victim (Daniel Mba) left the examination hall after he was caught cheating with his phone during one of the ongoing examination in the school thereby prompting a lecturer to tear his script few minutes to the end of the examination. F. Omeje asserts that in August 4 2020, a tax collector identified as Emmanuel Eze took his life in an uncompleted building in Nsukka urban (F. Omeje, personal communication, March 3, 2022). He adds that the suicide victim was having mental challenges and that his wife had been carrying him to places for a solution, only for him to take his life.

According to O. Evans, a young girl identified as Chinwendu Odoh a student of Microbiology Nsukka attempted suicide in September 10, 2019 when she drank Sniper insecticide due to depression (O. Evans, personal communication, March 3 2022). According to the interviewee, the victim was rushed to the hospital immediately by neighbours who noticed she was in pain, and her life was saved. The NAN (June 20 2019) reported that a final year student of Department of Religion and Cultural Studies, University of Nigeria Nsukka, identified as Samuel Elias, committed suicide by drinking Sniper in June 17 2019. The reason (s) behind the victim's action was not known. However, NAN (20 June 2019) reported that the mother of the suicide victim opined that her son could have died of depression, noting that he had been lamenting of his inability to graduate from University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN) because of his final year project which had been holding him. Also, Chukwuma et al (May 1, 2019) gave account of how Chukwuemeka Akachi, a 400 level student of the Department of English and Literary Studies, University of Nigeria Nsukka, took his life. It was gathered that Akachi allegedly slipped into coma after taking two bottles of an insecticide, Sniper. According to O. Innocent, Akachi committed suicide as a result of depression due to mental disorder (O. Innocent, personal communication, March 3 2022). In 27 November 2016, a final year student of Agric Economics of University of Nigeria Nsukka, Tobechukwu Okeke committed suicide. According to F. Chinelo, the victim committed suicide because of financial issues. It was gathered that the victim lost huge sum of money he borrowed from friends to a cyber-business known as MMM and the frustration of his inability to pay back made him commit suicide (F. Chinelo, personal communication, March 3 2020). From the data gathered, it is clear that suicide is increasing in Nsukka urban area of Nigeria. Therefore, the urgent attention of the Nigeria government and the churches in Nsukka is highly needed to curb this preventable menace.

communities, government and churches, suicide ideation or suicide can be prevented successfully in the society. This research therefore looks at the joint efforts of the Nigeria government and churches in order to curb this menace in Nsukka urban. Recently, the Nigeria government has shown concern over the increase rate of suicide in the country. She reduces the availability of suicide methods through her agency (NAFDAC) which banned the sale of the insecticide called sniper and other dichlorvos brands (a common suicide method in Nsukka urban) in open markets and supermarkets nationwide in September 1, 2019 (Akinkuotu 2019). The federal government played an important role in reducing poverty and idleness among the youths which may encourage suicide ideation. An example of this important role is the establishment of Government Enterprise and Empowerment Programme (GEEP) in 2016. Many youths in Nsukka Urban have benefitted from programs under the scheme like N-power. This study did not have access to the official records to establish the exact number of beneficiaries of these schemes, but respondents are in sync in their account that more than 300 persons have benefitted from the various batches of the N-Power scheme alone, including those posted out to neighbouring villages and towns.

The role of the Churches in curbing suicide in Nsukka Urban of Nigeria
In spite of the continuous occurrence of suicide in Nsukka urban, the role of the church as a protective factor against suicide in Nsukka cannot be overlooked since they have moral obligations over the lives of worshippers. Currently, churches in Nsukka urban are working very hard in order to curb suicide ideation or suicide among the youth in the society. For example, the Restoration Outreach Ministry Church, Nsukka, conducts counseling sessions every Tuesday in the church premises. Through such means, potential suicide victims such as emotionally unstable, psychological imbalanced and depressed individuals are engaged and possibly find solutions to their challenges (K. Promise, personal communication June 09, 2022). Other churches in Nsukka like City of Purpose Ministry Int'l have also shown much concern about how to curb the increasing rate of suicide ideation in the society. One way this church has been helping is by organising health services and counseling sessions. The church is always available every day for counseling (E. Okechukwu, personal communication June 08, 2022). According to Diolu of Shekinah Chapel Church, Nsukka, and the CAN Chairman Nsukka Chapter, one way through which the church is fighting against suicide is effective teaching and counseling. He added that Shekinah Chapel Church has a charitable organisation which renders help to people facing difficulties, especially the less privileged ones and also give scholarship to brilliant students who cannot afford to pay their school fees. The church also established skills acquisition programs where youths are not only trained to

Risk-Taking
This is a common phenomenon among business persons or experts. Risk-Taking is good but it exposes one to possible harm when he deviates from an expert's advice (Zinn 2019). In recent time, most Nigerian youths especially those in Nsukka urban who are ignorant of online businesses engage in it to their detriment. The most common of such online businesses in the Nigerian society is the Cyber fraud (Jegede and Olowookere 2014). In most cases, people especially the youth invest all their life savings into these businesses. Some even go to the extent of borrowing from friends or banks, using their properties or their parent's properties as collaterals. When they fail, such people become frustrated and depressed. According to Becky (2015), people tend to find different ways to deal with such pressure; and by ways of alleviating the depression, they may resort to factors such as substance abuse like alcohol which may encourage suicidal ideation (see Takahashi, 2001: 362).

Effects of suicide among youths in Nsukka urban of Nigeira
Just as in other African societies, the effects of suicide in Nsukka urban area has three pervading effects viz., an individual's effect, a family's effect and a communal effect. On the individual's effect, a person who commits suicide in Igbo land is likely to be thrown into the evil forest because "suicide is considered as bad death" (Ugwu and Ugwueye 2003: 59). Another consequence is that such person denies himself/herself the opportunity to have lived a long life not to mention forfeiture to traditional burial rites. (Ugwuoke & Ani 2018:182). Whenever such a person's name is mentioned in the society, people usually feel reluctant to talk about him/her because of his/her bad death.

On the other hand, in Igbo land, suicide affects victim's family. It is likely to occur again in same family if cleansing is not done (see Ugwuoke 2016: p. 6). Suicide affects victim's relatives psychologically, socially and economically. The family of one who committed suicide is often times stigmatised and denied social opportunities like empowerment and leadership role in the community (Lawal 2018, Ohayi cited in Oyetunji et al 2020). Moreover, it is rightly believe that everything will not go well with the community where a suicide occurred and cleansing is not done. Cleansing requires money and victim's relations are required to make all payments irrespective of whether they have money or not. In most cases, it may lead to unwanted borrowing of funds from individuals or organizations attracting huge sum of interest.

The role of the Government in curbing suicide in Nsukka urban of Nigeria
It is worthy to note that by the joint efforts and participations of families, schools,

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specialise in particular skills but are also provided with funds for startup (V. Diolu personal communication June 09, 2022). The church is the house of God, a place where worshippers are taught to behave in a certain way; "Therefore, the extent of the individual's commitment to church creeds can potentially act as a deterrent factor in committing suicide" (Lotfi et al 2012:1050). Similarly, Church doctrines/beliefs and rituals which act as buffers against stress and provide an element of comfort to distressed individuals also provide the love, healing, and hope that suicide victims need to bring worth and love into their lives for themselves (Bhugra 2010; Rudolph, 2021, & Tettey, 2014).

Recommendations

It is certain that the Nigerian government and the church are not unconcerned about the issue of suicide in the society, particularly in Nsukka. However, other things they can equally look into in order to further curb this menace in Nsukka include the following:

i. Nigerian government should build a psychiatry home in Nsukka urban and make it free for all Nsukka residents to access. Also, more psychiatrists should be engaged and deployed to Nsukka urban to effectively deal with those psychiatric conditions that could lead to suicide.

ii. Nigeran government should create more opportunities like job and empowerment for Nigeria youths. This will engage Nsukka youths and prevent such idleness that could encourage suicide ideation.

iii Church leaders should never relent in enlightening Church members on the value of life irrespective of difficult times.

iv. Jingles should be made on radio and television condemning suicide on daily basis.

v. More counselors should be trained by the church and more counseling offices should be created by the churches to cover more areas to handle cases that may degenerate into suicide.

Conclusion

The issue of suicide has been discussed as a great challenge to the country especially in Nsukka urban area of Nigeria. In this paper, it has been observed that there are several factors responsible for the increasing rate of suicide among the youth in Nsukka Urban and the effects were stated. It is believed that both the government and churches in Nsukka urban area of Nigeria have made some contributions in order to curb this menace. However, there is need for more efforts by the government and the church to effectively deal with and possibly curb this catastrophic suicide ideation and the incidence of suicide in Nigeria, especially in Nsukka urban.

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Igbo Pre-colonial Norms and Values as Pillar for The Sustenance of Post-colonial Igbo Society

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Abstract

The thrust of this work is on engineering the pre-colonial norms and values, embedded in *Ala* (earth-goddess deity) to contend the contemporary moral decadency prevalent in Igboland. These norms and values which include, but not limited to; respect, hard work, kindness and hospitality, truthfulness and rectitude will be examined using phenomenological and comparative method of study to accentuate its essence in the 21st century and beyond.

Key Words: Igbo, pre-colonial, post-colonial norms and values

Introduction

African value system, which encompasses the Igbo religio- cultural values, has been eroded. According to Ilogu (1974:201) "decay in the Ibo moral code started when Christianity preached directly against some Ibo beliefs like the spirit-world of the Ibo and the Earth goddess (ala) and her sanctity around which a good deal in that moral code was built". It is clear that the pre-colonial Igbo community was a society hemmed round with rich moral principles. Okorie (1998) affirms that "the morality of the Igbo people is strongly bound together with their religion. But it is unfortunate that these principles never lived to its ripe age when rivalries ensued between traditionalists and Christians within this area. This was why Achebe (1986:220) wrote that "When two brothers fight, a stranger reaps the harvest". Every religion, irrespective of the level of its development passed through stages of primitive to enlightenment. This does not give credence to the popularly held sentiments among the Europeans that the Africa moral values which encompass Igbo religio-cultural norms and values are inferior. It rather confirms the saying that when one wants to hang a dog, one gives it a bad name. The colonial masters intentionally wanted to hang our religio-cultural norms and values by describing the religion in derogatory terms. This made Africans lose confidence in their religio-cultural norms, values and practices.

Norms and values as defined by Hornby (2000) will be explained separately. Norm is "a situation or a pattern of behaviour that is usual or expected" while value means "beliefs about what is right and wrong and what is important in life". Dzurgba further defines norm as "a

pattern or a standard by which to judge other things". The Igbo people of pre-colonial society were ardent to norms, and valued these norms to a point of celebrating the most committed and impeccable observer. It is only in this recent time that the attention given to these norms has reduced. This reduction can be said to be caused by modernity, urbanization, westernization, Europeanization and quest for materialism. According to Kalu (1987:13)

> the small colonialist has been trained to fear nothing. He has been taught to respect big cars and those who own them. Inevitably, the ease with which he intimidates his rural counterpart and, at times, insults his elders to whom village children show habitual obedience, is rather baffling. But his parents call this act wit, they call it intelligence.

This is the height of decay and deplorable condition of the traditional norms and values of the Igbo people. This paper therefore, sets out to highlight the religio-cultural norms and values in the Igbo pre-colonial society, and see how it can serve as pillar for the sustenance of the post-colonial Igbo society characterized in sporadic increase of vices. The phenomenological, analytical and comparative method of study will be adopted. Data will be collected from observations adopted in nature, which will be properly analyzed. Secondary data will be collected from books, articles and electronic devices.

Cultural values in the Igbo Pre-Colonial Society as pillar for the sustenance of Igbo post-colonial society

The traditional Igbo cosmology is a religious one, a cosmology which holds a unified view of reality. On this backdrop, the spheres of Igbo cosmic structure and the inhabitants are in continuous interactions. Invariably, whatever affects one sphere will directly or indirectly affects the others too. Religion permeates every aspect of African life and Igbo people in particular; the socio-political, religio-cultural and economic wellbeing. The continuous intrusion of modern norms orchestrated by westernization, materialism and Europeanization, pose unwavering challenge on the pristine cherished religio-cultural norms and values of the Igbo people. According to Ike (2004:10):

> The traditional cultural values such as family, community, respect for life, hospitality, etc come into strong confrontation and do loose battle with the values communicated through western music, movies, videos, cable and satellite television, advertisements, and idolized figures of entertainment and sports such as individualism, the desire to have more even when one does not become more; a new cult of violence, the unbridle belief that money buys everything and the growing loss

in the sustenance of Igbo post-colonial society. They are as follows;

1.   Respect

In the pre-colonial Igbo society, children at home were taught on the importance of respect to both the immediate family members, elders and constituted authorities. In most cases, during moonlight plays or leisure times, parents narrate folktales, and sing songs that depict the importance of respect to elders and constituted authority. The moral lessons on the tales usually boil down to the implications of deviant attitude in the society, and they were equally guarded through the same medium on how to live within their micro and macro society. This gave them the picture of what the Africa worldview entails, unlike the individualistic and satellite life pattern that is common in this 21ˢᵗ century.

2.   Hard work

It is said that "there is dignity in labour." Hard work is one of the virtue of an Igbo man. According to Olaudah Equiano (1967:7)

> we are all trained to labour from our earlier years. Every one contributed one thing or the other to the common stock and since we are unacquainted with idleness, we have no beggars. The benefit of such a mode of living is clear…

The Igbo people of pre-colonial society understood the place of hard work in societal development. Even though westernization brought with it; inventions, its indices still hinder Africa and the Igbo people's moral principles. The implication of this ugly trend remains endemic. This is one of the reasons why development in Nigeria and Igbo of Eastern Nigeria remains epileptic. Therefore, there is need to always applaud or appreciate virtues so that it will be emulated, while vices especially those ones making wave in the contemporary society should be condemned in order to restore peace and harmony in our society. The quest for materialism, and invariably expecting it to be accomplished without pain has lured youths into crimes. Get rich quick syndrome through BetNaija, Merrybet, Lotto, yahoo, yahoo+, yahoo++ etc usually come into confrontation and do win battle with the core values and principles of wealth acquisition as stated by Templar (2007:120)

> You have to think long term, both in your planning, and in your expectations of a return… if you expect a rapid and sudden catapult in prosperity… gaining wealth is a slow process and rightly so. If you get it all quickly you have no time to acquire experience and sense. Too quickly and it will be all spend, spend, spend.

of meaning of life and in traditional values. This has placed the Igbo people in the state of dilemma, and the society in confusion of morality.

Consequently, every member of any Igbo pre-colonial society behaved according to the laid down rules and regulations of the society which derive its strength from earth goddess. People strived to maintain sacrosanct and sanctimonious relationship with the gods in order to be exempted from the wrath of the gods. In this way, the cosmic order is maintained and the communal living guaranteed. It is unfortunate that the system has been distorted due to influx of different cultures, especially western individualistic life style and quest to having more even one does not become more. In this way, the pristine way is relegated to the background in a bid to amass wealth and affluence. In explaining Igbo moral values, Ike (2004:6) observes that

> … solidarity among peoples and nations, based not on racism or prejudices but on the universal and intrinsic bond of the human community, wherever they may be, a revisit to our indigenous African institution and values which emphasizes the family, the community, hardwork, equity, inclusion, not exclusion, human values and worth, security and cultural sustainability, in spite of modernization, truthfulness, integrity, communal sharing, live and let live, communal ownership, gender distinction but equity, sharing of roles, the place of elders, the respect for the ancestors and our fore fathers and mothers, indigenous technology, self-reliance, dignity and respect for the divine milieu.

A look at Igbo world-view exposes a lot on the above idea. It is obvious that among the Igbo of Nigeria, respect to parents, elders and any properly constituted authority is one of the core values. It is a virtue that is taught from family to community level and so, there is no doubt that returning to our cultural status quo remains the way forward. Every now and again, people chase after the acquisition of artifacts made by the developed country (London, America, Japan et cetera) thinking that the acquisition of those European artifacts will make them developed. This is an erroneous idea; hence man remains the epicenter of development, and must develop himself in all ramifications before a meaningful development can be achieved. This moreover, does not discard the idea of inculturation and absorption hence, change is a constant phenomenon in the nature of man. But the Igbo people of eastern Nigeria must always embrace their culture because of its rich value. Therefore, it is important that we give attention to some of those Igbo religio-cultural norms and values that will help as pillar

tradition. The divinities are irritated by dishonesty. They frown at liars and misers and pick offence at persons who violate taboos. They hate all sorts of impunity, uncleanness and non-conformity. These divinities, therefore, exert moral influence on human behaviour through the protection of their lives and property and resentment not only to damage done to it but to any kind of transgression. This helped to control the socio-political, religio-cultural and economic activities of the Igbo people, prior to colonialism. It is obvious how these people lived hence the divinities shaped and moderated their behavioral patterns.

Ancestors and human spirits

Ancestors are the policemen of their families. The past heros and heroines of African Traditional Religious adherents. According to Ifesieh (1976:129), the ancestors are:

> those highly honoured; great, gentle, wise, faithful, influential parental guardians who were once genuinely respected as Dibuno/Dibiuno. Ndichie and by virtue of their children (begotten) and their activities became fathers of clans, villages and towns but have undergone a physical change (death) in their good matured and ripe ages but then are still "living" and are still members of their respective families.

Since every Igbo person belongs to one family or another, the idea of ancestorship cannot be estranged in any family. As spirits who operate between the two realms of existence, they are bilingual and guide jealously issues of morality of their family through the extended families to the village, town or community level. They abhor and punish severely any offence that borders on adultery, fornication, incest, stealing and such actions considered immoral.

The Earth Goddess   -   Ala

This is the mother of fertility and fecundity. In Igbo traditional religion, the earth goddess is responsible for controlling the earth surface and all created things that dwell on it. She is powerful and people are very careful not to desecrate her to avoid ceaseless calamities befalling them. Though, emphasis on the importance of refrain from abominable acts that can desecrate 'ala' is not profound because Christianity looms large in contemporary Igbo peoples mind, it does not exonerate a perpetrator of evil act from the punishment and rewards Ala-earthgoddess mete out to those who either desecrates her cult or reward which she showers on those who strictly refrain from abominable acts that can stir her wrath, the *ala* deity. Anyanwu (1982:11-12) affirms that:

> *ala* is regarded as the guardian of morality, a power that controls divinities and a force which brings fortune and economic prosperity. The concept of

3. Kindness and hospitality

Though the virtue of kindness and hospitality can be found among adherents of other religions of the world, the lens through which the Igbo people see it is different. According to Ademilokum (1990:79), "there is a reward for kindness and hospitality in life and life after". Thus, they are notoriously religious and will always want to maintain good relationship between the visible and invisible world. It is only in the contemporary society that the ember of this virtue has declined drastically because of the colonial individualistic policy imbibed by the Igbo people, Nigerians and Africa generally.

The Igbo people are known for their receptivity to all and sundry. This virtue was jealously guarded by virtually all the class (higher, lower and average class) in the area. The reason why they were ardent to kindness and hospitality is in line with Mbiti's assertion that "Africans are notoriously religious". There is a belief that one's kindness and hospitality to a stranger attracts good fortune, just like Abraham who was receptive to strangers and was eventually blessed. There is a belief that kindness and hospitality to their fellow man is the surest way of attracting *Chukwu's* (God) favour.

4. Truthfulness and rectitude

Prior to the European activities in Igboland, truthfulness speaks volume of Nigeria and Igbo society but not quite long the Europeans introduced their policy of association and assimilation which were insincere, Nigerians adopted "hook, line and sinker" these policies and their concomitant vices. It is therefore paramount to revisit the position of men and women of repute during the pre-colonial era, whose impeccable character catapulted to a pivotal cadre of the society. In view of this, the younger generations will look up to these people as role models thereby maintaining a truthful and sincere life style that will gain them this enviable position.

Determinants of Igbo Traditional Morality

The awe that surrounds gods and divinities prove how efficacious they are in punishing miscreants and non-conformity. Even till this contemporary era, it is undisputable that they have played latent role because of Christianity. The following are some of the determinants of Igbo traditional morality;

Divinities

Igbo people believe in pantheon of divinities who act as intermediaries between God and man. The influences of these divinities on them cannot be undermined hence they serve as deterrents and tailor the people's behaviour according to the societal norms, customs and

law, morality, man, society, and authority in Igbo culture are codified in the symbol called "*Ala*". *Ala* as the earth goddess, the spirit of fertility and fecundity, is a powerful symbol manifesting the psychic nature of Igbo cultural life…

It is important that this idea should be imprinted into the sub consciousness of Igbo people. Let them be guarded on the impact of their action through the lens of Igbo worldview that subscribes; ***"otu aka ruta mmanu ozue ora onu"*** (when one finger touches oil, it soils others/spreads to others). By implication, their immoralities today can be a hindrance to posterity. With this measure, people might learn to curtail their excesses, in order to maintain a good relationship with the earth goddess who is the ultimate determinant of ones existence.

Drivers of Igbo Moral Values
Education is an all round development. It starts from cradle to grave hence man continues to learn within the society in which he finds himself. From the religious point of view, it is irrefutable that Africans are incurably religious. Mbiti puts it thus "Africans are notoriously religious". This is the reason why every teaching is anchored in the fear of God/gods and the pantheon of divinities that inhabit the sacred, eternal world of reality. The Igbo people are not severed from this stiffness to religion. God and the spiritual agents constitute formidable array of forces in the inculcation of moral values in Igbo pre-colonial society.

Some of the agents that enhanced moral education in the pre-colonial Igbo society are as follows; religious leaders which include; the priest, diviners, prophets, sacred kings, medicine men etc

Priest
A priest/priestess (feminine) from the greek (presbyteros) through latin presbyter "elder", or from old high german (priest prest) from vulgate latin "provost" one put over others, from latin praepositus "person placed in charge", is a person authorized to perform the sacred rituals of a religion, especially as a mediatory agent between humans and one or more deities. They also have the authority or power to administer religious rites; in particular, rites of sacrifice to, and propitiation of a deity or deities.
Okorie (1998:183) further elucidates that;

> The priest must be a man of peace. This must be seen in the way he handles cases both within his family circle and beyond. He must be impartial in

handling cases. He must stand by the truth.

In view of the preceding assertions, the research highlighted other qualities common among priests in the pre-colonial society. These qualities were juxtaposed with the qualities found among the priests in the contemporary Igbo society. This is to establish the reasons of deplorable state of moral norms and values in the 21ˢᵗ Century.

Some of the qualities of pre-colonial Igbo priests, as stated by Okorie (1998:183), are as follows:

> He may not shed human blood. In some places where human sacrifice was practised, the priests used to prepare the victim... In the area of sexuality, the priest must be very careful. This explains why he must be married... There is a special house (obi) where he receives women visitor. Sometimes, he abstains from sex so as to be pure and clean for sacrifice and communion with the deity. …they restrain from those abominable acts that can attract the wrath of the gods hence it is inevitable when the gods have been provoked. The priests are the depositories of (community) customs, knowledge, taboos, theology and oral history of the people mostly conveyed in form of myths.

Arinze (1970:45) observes that "the priest is expected to be a good man. Above all he must not be a thief or criminal *(onye nso ani)*". It is obvious that westernization has brought us good but irrespective of its goodness, it robbed Africa and Igbo people in particular of their rich cultural heritage (moral norms and values). This made everybody tend towards materialism and its concomitant vices. Therefore, it is pertinent that the contemporary priests should develop balanced reportage towards the two worlds (pristine and modern) in order to groom a responsible advanced nation that is culturally driven. This can only be achieved by resuscitating our pristine norms and values that helped in the maintenance of societal order, and revitalizing the negative impressions created by Europeans and some Africans on these cherished norms and values. It is these negative impressions that subjected Igbo religio-cultural norms and values to the state of mockery and sabotage.

Diviner
According to Metuh (1987:227), "the Yoruba of Nigeria have one of the mostly highly developed divination system in West Africa". The Ifa does not pretend to advise a man on how to change his destiny, rather what it does at any given point in time is to utilize the potentials he is endowed with by God.

These personages are selected by the gods to help direct the affairs of the community. Therefore, their power is derived from the gods and they account to the gods through sacrifices and prayers in their activities. It becomes paramount that these agents of morality educate the youths who wallow in ignorance. This will contribute immensely to culture renaissance, whereby the decaying Igbo cultural norms and values will be resuscitated and come to be appreciated with vigor and enthusiasm.

Medicine men

The medicine men in the Igbo pre-colonial era and even in the 21st century still play pivotal role in the inculcation of morals, irrespective of the wild wind of change which Christianity enshrined in the system. According to Metuh (1987:221):

> … a medicine man is first and foremost a herbalist who prepares medicines from herbs for the treatment of ailments. He can also make some other medicines from herbs mixed with some other material objects especially parts of animals which can have miraculous effects on other objects, and consequently can affect man and human conditions. These powers are believed to be inherent in nature, so that anyone who knows the recipe can tap them.

God *Chukwu* remains the ultimate determinant of the efficacy of any medicine prepared by a medicine man. The Igbo adage that says ***"Dibia gworo ozo mana ozo gburu dibia"*** lend credence to the above assertion. The role of the medicine man is that of collection and preparation, while *Chukwu* authenticates the medicine. In some cases where the medicine fails to cure certain ailment, sacrifices are aligned to propitiate malevolent spirits that threaten man, hence Africans believe in "cause and effect". A fanatic Igbo man will out rightly say that "there is no smoke without fire". By implication, somebody or some spiritual agents that yawn for propitiation are responsible for the ineffectiveness of the medicine. Metuh (1987:222) further elucidates on this point by giving a vivid definition of medicine. He said that medicine can be defined as

> A recipe of herbal mixtures and some ritual formulae designed to generate some powers which are built into nature by God, which can be tapped and applied with the help of God and other spiritual beings to meet various human needs

It then becomes obvious that a man's destiny lies in his own hands. This idea should be instilled on the Nigeria citizen, especially those of the eastern part of the Igboland, where some erroneously believe that their destiny can be thwarted through malevolent machination. In most cases, these people fail to utilize the enormous potentials endowed on them by the first cause. When attention on how to utilize ones potential is made, there could be ideological paradigm shift which brings about; self-worth, assertion and accomplishment irrespective of all odds. This gears towards nation building and integration.

Prophets

The prophets are charismatic individuals who speak forth the divine word received in a revelation. His revelations may come to him in flashes during periods of spirit possession. But he is not a bearer or receiver of divine message only while the spirit is still in him. According to Pritchard in Metuh (1987:234) "the prophet is the mouth piece of a spirit, its interpreter; it is he who speaks, but he speaks under its control". The virtue of the priest resides in his office, that of the prophet in himself. Because of this reason, prophets are often instrumental to creative religious change and in some cases leaders of mass religious movements or cultic groups. As a leader and respected oracle of God, their words are assumed to be effective and are implemented to the latter. This shows how instrumental they are towards this onerous task.

Sacred Kings

Kings in the Igbo pre-colonial society are not simply political heads, but sacred personages who possess some spiritual and mystical powers which enable them to confer some benefits on their people. Their subjects regard them as descendants or incarnations of some divine beings, a mythical ancestor or God himself. It is in line with the preceding assertion that Metuh (1987:218) observes that:

> they are believed to have control over some phenomena on which the life and welfare of the people depend, like rain, fertility, pestilence and so forth. Occasionally, they perform certain rituals to revitalize their powers and to bring the natural forces under control. By implication, the king is not only a political leader, but also a ritual functionary. He stands as the head of the family, the clan and the link between the visible and invisible section of the clan. He is the mouthpiece of the ancestors. The living sees him as the representative of the ancestors who were the founders of the society and the custodians of its traditions and customs.

elements of Igbo culture, symbols of religious leaders and images of victims whose deviant attitude in the society rubbed to the mud.

8. It is also recommended that Christians who claim to be possessed by power to destroy talisman and charms should see need to preserving those items in the Museum instead of burning them to ashes.

Conclusion

This research discussed the place of morality prior to colonialism in Igboland. It observed that westernization, materialism, individualism and Europeanization have eaten deep in the fabric of the religio-cultural norms and values of the Igbo people. In order to bridge the gap created by this trend, it recommended that the pristine ways should be the bases for character formation, while the European culture remains supplement for better living and mutual co-existence. It is therefore, the responsibility of Africa theologians, religious leaders both traditional and orthodox etc, to understand the place of their norms and values in the midst of diverse religious organizations found within the Igbo region. This requires sincere approach that is matched with action.

It is obvious that human need is insatiable, and as a result of this quest, there is reoccurrence and frequent patronage to medicine both traditional and orthodox. It is innate in every Africans to unravel the cause of any misfortune. This is the reason why medicine, especially traditional medicine even in the 21st century still controls the mind of Igbo people. Ugwu (2014:10) in accord with the above affirmation says that

> … many ardent Christians on admission have medicine prepared in the traditional manner, stealthily brought to them because they believe it is more efficacious than European medicine which is without the touch of the divine healer.

Therefore, the divine healer is seen possessing some natural powers that enhance the patient's recuperation. Taboos are stipulated by the medicine man. It is in this way that the medicine man directs the moral affairs of the people. The do's and don'ts that are associated with the prepared medicine contributes to the moral life of the Igbo people.

Recommendations

The research has been able to expound on the moral values of the pre-colonial society and has further juxtaposed it with contemporary moral values. We discovered that there is a wide gap between the norms and values of the pre-colonial Igbo society and that of the present. To this, the paper recommends the under listed ideas;

1. Religious adherents which include Christians, Muslims and African Traditional Religion adherents in Igboland should understand the need to enshrine "local content" i.e the use of different fables, myths, pithsayings, proverbs that are of African origin and Igbo in particular to the inculcation of morals.
2. The research advocates for the introduction of refined pre-colonial ideological method of child upbringing alongside the modern way in order to achieve a balanced life.
3. Non-governmental organizations and individuals should support this semitic folk movement of Igbo people to their promise land.
4. Restoration of etiquettes at the family level (charity they say begins at home)
5. Government should encourage the teaching and learning of Igbo culture in primary and secondary schools, through provision of incentives. Provision of teaching and learning materials in order to encourage and boost teachers and students morale
6. Implementation of moral principles through the lens of Igbo world view
7. Government and religious bodies should establish museums that will embody

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Introduction

Onyeidu (2004), avers that religion is primordial as it grew out in the society. It is a concept that is generic in nature in the sense that it can be described as a good or bad servant. Religion is a bad servant in the sense that ninety-five percent of crises, conflicts, terrorism, racial discrimination, division, riots, inter-tribal conflicts, hatred, national and global insecurity, defamation and outright blackmail of one's integrity and the likes. Are the noticeable negativities that are imbedded in contemporary religious bodies. All these vices serves as factors or indicators that weakened the strength of religion in the world today, to the extent that religion is notoriously seen as a masquerading phenomenon that has failed to give hope to humanity. Thus among the adherents of different religious sects we witness some pockets of division in their major religious bodies. To recap, religion can be succinctly described as a replica of Tower of Babel, that tries to destroy the social, economic, political, spiritual and psychological dispositions of those living in our present contemporary society.

The above propositions held by some scholars will not blindfold us in our mission to showcase that religion is a good servant which was synthesized in our topic-religion as a panacea in the pursuit of world peace: Christianity as a case study. We should not forget that most religions in the world evolved from the cultures of the people which sprouted from their natural and social environments. This is a pointer that human beings in which ever place they are situated always desire to worship God. This supports the fact that there is no human society without one form of religion or the other. This in a nutshell describes man as "Homo Religiosus" – Religious Being which depicts man as a being that is tirelessly, systematically and cautiously desiring always to communicate or to commune (i.e. has the ability) with his creator (i.e. God).

Still on this let us not forget that a comparative analysis of the doctrinal positions of most religious sects in the world elevated religion as a panacea, that champions the crusade for the realization of peace in the world today. Thus, every religious sects be it Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Shiatoism, Judaism and the likes, preaches the need for men to embrace peace, that opens the doors for progress, growth and development in the society.

Historically, we should not pretend to have forgotten the beautiful roles that Christian religion aided by its early missionaries played in the early plantation of Christianity in Africa. And it becomes a vehicle for the transplantation of civilization, education, good

Religion as a Panacea in the Pursuits of World Peace: Christianity as a Case Study

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Abstract

Religion and peace are two concepts that are generic in nature. This is obvious, that religion is conspicuously seen or cuts across all the facets of humanity viz: Spiritual, social, economic, psychological and physical. Sequel to this, the primary objective of this paper is to do a critical evaluation or presentation of the significant roles that religion plays in the plantation of peace in the world today. Still on this, we are to limit the scope of our discussions, by using Christianity as a case study in the pursuits of global peace. Religion now serves as a panacea, as a capacity building, as a vehicle, as a place of cross-pollination of ideas, principles, and ideologies that produces peace in the world, that brings respite and repositioning to the shattered and dislocated nature of man and even the society at large. Not only peace, religion especially Christianity is also the vehicle that champions the growth and development of western civilization, education, good governance and the likes; infact, it plays a significant roles in the wholistic development of man. Thus in this paper the writers adopted the following *instrumentum laboris* – working tools that they armed with in the execution of this write-up namely: in the area of methodology, the writers adopted the aspect of descriptive method. Then, to chisel out the beauty of this work, the authors anchors the nature (that is in the length and breadth), of our deliberations on the patronage of descriptive method as a research design that suits this work. And other ancillary tools like secondary sources and did not make use of oral interviews or primary sources.

Key words: Religion, peace, building capacity, religious sects (or bodies), world, Christianity.

I) Religion

In this our work the first scholar that gives us the initial intellectual succor or illumination on whose lime light we depend on the definition of religion is McBrien (1994) which he describes as whole complexus of attitudes, convictions, emotions, gestures, rituals, beliefs, and institutions, by which we come to terms with and express our most fundamental relationship with reality (p.364). Also, Parente cited in Arinze (1970) made an explicit effort in the definition of religion that come in two ways – objectively and subjectively. Subjectively, religion is the consciousness of one's dependence on a transcendent being and the tendency to worship him. Objectively, religion is the body of truths, laws and rites by which man is subordinated to the transcendent Being (p.8).

Then, James (1960), defines religion as the feeling, acts and experiences of individuals in solitude in so far as they apprehend to stand in relation to whatever they consider the divine. Commenting on this Ibenwa et al (2017:42) sees religion as human actions or feeling of relationship in private towards whatever they consider divine or a being superior to humans. This feeling is one of intimate union with the source of one's being or existence, it expresses reliance, trust and dependency. The divine can be Almighty God, spirit being, African ancestors and nature spirits. Sequel to this, Bouquet (1941:41) sees religion as a fixed relationship between the human self and some non-human entity, the sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the absolute or simply God.

Freud cited in Ibenwa et al (2017:44), opines that religion is the continuation into adulthood of a child's attributes towards his father. He asserted that the child realizes his weakness and thus makes him to run to his father for safety and protection. Freud likened this child on his father to what we seek in religion. To him, God is an imaginary father which the childhood mentality leads man to. To support this though not psychologically, rather philosophically, the views of Hegel (1965:103-104) comes to mind immediately that the object of religion as well as of philosophy is eternal truths in its objectivity, God and nothing but God, and the explication of God. Even, sociologists generally see religion as a social phenomenon and as a matter of belief or faith. This prompted, Russsel (1975:27) to affirm that "religion is primarily a social phenomenon." Then, to pull together these our definitions or descriptions of religion from the worldviews of various scholars, a working definition of religion is of a necessity. The concept religion can be briefly describes as a belief or worship of God or gods, or even simply a believe system of faith, tenets, creed, and religious convictions that connect one to the Supreme Being or to the realm of divine realities

health care, morality, and good governance in the whole of African continent. Religion (especially Christianity and Islam) are the only living movements that brought light to the darkened face of the African continent. Not only in Africa alone but in the whole world. All the above propositions posits as a sure bet that religion or the efforts of religious sects to instill or to attract peace in the world in resolving the hydra headed forms of conflicts rearing its ugly head, which failure to do so the whole human ecological habitat-(the cosmos, the earth, the world) will be blacklisted or engulfed in the total infestation of these vices of chaos, anarchy, and lawlessness. Thus, religion is the only living social structure that is pivotal in the pursuance of world peace. Despite that Christianity is also seen, always, or at times seen as an extension of colonial project in Africa. Thus, all these boils down that the research problem that the paper tries to showcase or to solve is to establish that religion (more especially Christianity) plays a significant roles in the pursuits of world peace, inspite, of all its inadequacies.

In spite of, all these praises that the authors harp on the significant roles of religion, Christianity inclusive. Our attention are drawn to the wicked activities that the church of God Christianity involve herself during era of slave trade. How they carted away human beings from Africa like goods in faraway European countries, especially during the discovering of new world by the great explorer- Christopher Columbus. With reckless abandon that is devoid of true Christian conscience. In addition, the abysmal denial of fundamental human rights that featured prominently during the dark ages or medieval ages as was seen in the killing of famous scientists, inventors and explorers, because of ignorant or lack of knowledge that was in vogue at that time. Many of these gifted personalities lost their lives in the hands of the church leaders.

Explication of terms

It is not an easy task to embark on the onerous responsibility of describing the conceptual meaning of the two terms – religion and peace. Because of this, there are series of varied definitions and description of these concepts, generated from the divergent views or world views of some acclaimed scholars. Each defines them from this own worldview, thereby making them difficult to have an agreeable definition (or working definition) of these our operational concepts of religion and peace to be attainable.

chaos, tension in the form of tribal and inter-tribal conflicts in the society.

The Presence of Peace in Most religious sects

It is a well-known fact that the presence of the ideologies and principles of peace as a concept is what is pragmatically been communicated in the basic doctrines of most religious bodies in the world today.

(i)   Hinduism

Hinduism is the most ancient of all living religion of the world. It was not founded by any individual prophet. Though Hinduism preserves an exhaustive list of sacred scriptures; mainly the Vedas, upnishads, Bhugvad-cita and six Darshamas form the fundamental scriptures, they are great as the storehouses of Hindu theological and philosophical thought. Peace is an essential part of Hinduism; as was shown in A vedic prayer: "May there be peace in the heavens, peace in the atmosphere, peace on earth, let there be coolness in water, healing in the herbs, and peace radiating from trees, let there be harmony in the planets, and in the stars, and perfection in eternal knowledge! May everything in the universe be at peace! I let peace pervade everywhere at all times! May I experience that peace within my heart" (Yarjurved, 36:17).

Ahimsa (a very important belief in Hinduism) means trying to fight injustice and evil but without using any physical force. Mahatma Gandhi was a great advocate of Ahimsa who, through his "satyagrapha" based on peaceful non-violent project led India to freedom. He was the first to interpret Ahimsa positively and in the sense of a social obligation. He also believed that non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the inequity of man. Note that the word Hinduism derives from the word Hindu, which means Indian. This it is the religion as well as the philosophy of the Indian people (Omoregbe:141).

Buddhism

Like all major world religions, Buddhism at its core is a religion of peace, Buddhism one of the Aryan religions founded by Gautama Buddha (b.567.B.C) is regarded as a godless religion (agnostic not atheistic) for unlike other religions, it doesn't entertain belief in God as a central concept.

The basis of Buddhism is essentially a moral philosophy or an ethical way of life aimed at personal reform. One of the principles laid down by Buddha makes it abundantly clear. "One must renounce all thought of lust, bitterness and cruelty. One must harm no living creature,

Peace

Khemanando (1995), as cited in the *Dictionary of Word Origins*, said that the word peace is etymologically derived from the original Latin word "Pax, which means a pact, a control or an agreement to end war or any dispute and conflict between two people, two nations or two antagonistic groups of people (p.387). Then Vesilind (2005:43), said that in Albert Einstein's view, peace is not only an absence of war, but it means or includes the presence of justice, law, order or government in the society as he said "peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, or of order …. – in short of government.

Still on this, *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* (2006:1281) defines peace as follows:
1. No war; a situation in which there is no war or fighting.
2. No noise interruptions: a very quiet and pleasant situation in which you are not interrupted.
3. Calm/not worried: a feeling of being calm, happy, and not worried.
     Then, explicating more on this, the *Online Merriam Webster Dictionary* gives us a deeper meaning towards having a clear comprehension of the concept of peace, which it develops as follows:
1. a. a state of tranquility or quiet; as a freedom from civil disturbance
     b. a state of security or order within a community provided for by law or custom.
2.   freedom from disquieting or oppressive thoughts or emotions.
3. harmony in personal relations.
4. a. a state or period of mutual concord between governments.
     b. a pact or agreement to end hostilities between those who have been at war.
     All these collaborates with the thought of His Holiness, the 14th Dalai lama, said "peace in the sense of the absence of war is of little value … peace can only last where human rights are respected, where people are fed, and where individuals and nations are free".

The above statements of His Holiness, the 14th Dalai Lama depicts him as a strong advocate of the observance of the rule of law and that the fundamental human rights, that is the inalienable human rights – right to life, freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom of association, and the likes are to be enshrined in the constitutions of the various countries in the world and to be respected or regarded as sacrosanct in every part of the world.

To sum up, peace is a phenomenon that is conspicuous in the society where there is strong upholding of justice, fairness and equity and when there is a total eradication of war, strife,

proposition, Vernon (1962:77), said that religion does not exist in isolation nor does man's religious behaviour occur in social isolation. In any form of social organization religion is one of the important variables to be considered.

Still on the constancy of religion as a variable, it plays recognizable roles in the process of socialization; in the sense that it builds cohesion, joins, unites, and binds the people in the process of integration and cordial relationships in human communities. Then giving credence to this, McGuire cited in Onyeidu(2004:3) "Religion is one of the most powerful, deeply felt and influential, forces in human society; it has shaped people's relationships with each other, influencing family, community, economic and political life. Religious beliefs and values motivate human action …"

Then, the crux of the matter, the authors are trying to establish here is that religion (inspite of its weaknesses) and the society are two entities that are living in symbiotic relationship. Because, in the words of Onyeidu (2004), a religious society is always the product of religious individuals. This symbiotic romance between religion and society was made explicit in the remarks of Stewart (1941), a society cannot continue to be religious when the individuals that compose it are irreligious. In other words, a community of atheists is bound to give birth to an "immoral society".

The roles of Christianity in the life of society down the ages that enables peace to flourish

Toyin (2019) summarizes the significant roles that Christianity played in the life of man and the unconquerable nature of Christian religion in the following beautiful dramatic descriptions of it. Christianity established as a monotheistic faith, has existed for over two thousand years, out-lasting many civilizations, ideological movements, wars discoveries and the interjections of other faiths within neighbouring areas.

Then, following the same link of thought, Coolman as cited in Toyin (2019) opines that Christianity continues to display its relevance throughout the years, beginning with the concept of time of time itself. The current measures of time using the "B.C./A.D" system, was a remnant function of the Christian influence on the Roman Empire. The B.C. (Before Christ) and A. D (*anno domino*) – present events within time line of reality in subject measures to the existence of Christ, positioning him as a central marker of faith and origin within the context of the world. The markers were implemented by Emperor Charkemaque who used the terms to determine the timeline of government actions.

content/uploads/2015/06/peace-and-Religion-Report.pdf.)

The above reflections about the nature and content of Christianity, a monotheistic religion will not deceive us to tick it as a doyen, a pacesetter in the pursuance of peace, and concord in the world more than other religious bodies. To clarify more on this, the case of Alice Lekwena and her Holy Spirit Movement in Uganda and Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army are all good examples of people who are erroneously fighting in the name of Christianity as a religion. These nefarious fanatical activities as engineered by some Christians were seen in the case of abortion clinic bombings by Eric Rudolf for example that claimed a lot of lives in the US in the 1990s. This shows that some adherents in Christianity can use it as a platform or safe ground to ferment crisis, mayhem, chaos, anarchy and the likes in the world today.

Thus, having seen the place of peace in our different religious bodies occupied by peace in our different religions sects. Then, we are to ask ourselves, why is it that we witness some religious bodies championing or sponsoring the cause of terrorism, banditry, religious politics, racial discrimination, war, division, and hatred? In response to this, we affirm that it is because of the inability of the adherents to imitate the impeccable characters of their founders. In spite of all these anomalies, religion still plays or is a veritable variable in pursuance of world peace which the writers are going to explore as a next topic in our discussion.

Religion a constant variable in pursuance of peace in human society

Nottingham as cited in Onyeidu (2004:3) avers that religion itself "is a product of culture, an outgrowth of man's activity as a culture-bearing creature. Explicating more on this premise, Onyeidu (2004) especially on the powerful influence religion shows in our human societies and cultures that led to the birth of some religions through the culture of the people said that African Traditional Religion is an integral part of African culture. The same is true of Islam (Arab culture), Judaism (Jewish culture) and Shintoism (Japanese culture). In the case of Christianity, the influence of Greek – Roman and European cultural elements are discernable. While some religions are culture bound, others cut across international frontiers. Most of these are monotheistic religions, which make universal appeal to man, such as Christianity and Islam (Onyeidu 2004:2).

Going further, Onyeidu (2004), said that there is no human society without one form of religion or the other. Wherever we go we find him with his religious beliefs and practices. This shows that religion occurs in a social context. Then, establishing more on this

To sum up in the words of Park as cited in Toyin (2019:27), describes the valueability and importance of Christianity in the following words: that Christianity is the dominant religion in the matrix of universal religions. The continuance of this religion has been imperative to its followers and has brought much change to the structure of states as well as individual beliefs. Christianity's dispersion has followed many routes, leading the religion to penetrate varying regions and nations to become the most popular religion in the world. To give a pause, a religion with such a staggering number of adherents and influences supposed to play significant roles in the life of man in the following spheres of life like in education, abolition of slave trade and social nefarious cultural practices in science, in Art and literature and the likes. All these serves as sparks or reflections of the sustainable roles that religion especially Christianity plays in the realization of world peace.

Education

Encyclopedia Britannica as cited in Toyin (2019:100) informs us that the early church supported education efforts and intellectualism. The early church leaders felt that because human beings are endowed with rationality by god, they would naturally feel compelled to explore their faith and the wonders of God's nature through intellectual means. St. Justine Martyr was an early example of Christian intellectualism at work, for he was a Christian apologists and philosopher by trade, contemplated God's revelation to human kind and perceived it to be the utmost "fulfillment" of philosophical discovery that human beings would ever receive. St. Anselm of Canterbury in the eleventh century articulated the ideas behind the Christian pursuit of knowledge guide aptly when he send: *Fides quaerens intellectum* - "faith seeking understanding."

The effects of the adoption of the policy of the pursuits of education as bequeathed by our forebears (i.e. our fathers in faith) to all and sundry went across Europe and the Middle East where Christian monks constructed libraries that held important works in Latin, Arabic, and Greek. Many of these monasteries evolved into universities (Pew-Research Centre, 2016). In support of this Toyin (2019:104) made a concise statement: "without these facilities, much of our knowledge as we have it today would be lost.

The positive consequence of this, according to Shalev's (2002:57-59) One hundred years of Nobel prizes between the years 1901 to 2000, the majority (65.4%) of Nobel Prize laureates were identified as Christians. This means that a total of four hundred and twenty three prizes

Then, one of the indelible effects of this is that the spread of this system not only invokes the influence of Christianity upon the Roman Empire but the exchange of religion and the culture across Europe where the system was further adopted and shared to the rest of the world. Moreover, the continued use of these terms demonstrates the position of Christianity as a dominant presence both in terms of its introduction as well as its continuity (Toyin 2019:43).

This language of Coolman in simplified propositions posits that Jesus Christ is the founder of Christian religion, and this automatically makes it to be the first and the only authentic revealed religion, seconded by Islamic religion. And this coming of Jesus Christ into the world greatly revolutionized the time frame of the historical events that happened in the world in the binary forms of B.C. – Before Christ and A. D-*anno domino* – that is the year of the Lord or (After the death of Christ). Christianity as a religion is a religion that started after the crucifixion of its founder – our Lord Jesus Christ and the great expectation of the Pentecost experience (i.e. the outpouring of the Holy Spirit) started with a poor demographic statistics or a limited number of adherents of one hundred and twenty, three thousand, and two thousand adherents respectively. Thus, Christian religion is a replica of the biblical mustard seeds that stands as the smallest of all the grains that Jesus referred to, that have grown to tall and mighty tree that birds of the air-built nests on its branches and gives shelter to everybody.

The church of Christ stands to be a replica or a resemblance of this analogy of Jesus. Because the sporadic growth of the proportional increase (or growth) in population of the number of adherents makes Christian religion to be a thing of joy to Jesus Christ the planter or the founder of Christianity. This was evidenced as reported in 2016, the few research center estimated that two point two (i.e. 2:2) billion people in the world are Christians making Christianity the largest religious group in the world. The Pew-Research center also found that Christians are much more widespread geographically than those from other religious groups. In total, around the world, Christians make up more than one fourth (28:6%) of the population of about seven point seven (7:7) billion people.

As as cited in Toyin (2019:100), Bada opines that Catholics make up the largest group of Christians (about one point three (1:3) billion people), followed by protestants (about nine hundred and twenty million people) and others (about eighty-five million people). The next most common denominations are Eastern orthodox, oriental orthodox, resforationist, and Nontrinitarian, independent catholic and other minor branches.

almost a universal practice in earlier periods of human history. Still working on the same mode of thought, Kirchshlaeger (2016:66), remarks that institutionalized racism and slavery have, throughout history, been both justified and projected by Christians around the world. Slavery was to widespread in the Gveco-Roman world and the Biblical descriptions of slavery were that of a common component of a household and not generally criticized.

But to maintain a balance, Toyin (2019) still insists that Christianity played a key role in the abolition of slavery centuries later, particularly in Africa. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, debates across the Western world used Biblical passages to support both the institution and the abolition of it (p.90).

He went on (i.e. Toyin 2019:137) to educate us on the powerful roles that Christianity played in the rooting out slavery by informing us that the horrors of slavery were so extreme that even slave traders like John Newton ended up supporting Wilberforce (a Christian) not only to evangelize Africa, but to oppose the slave trade, since slaves were also created in the image of God. The missionaries commitment to root out slavery was one of their positive effects on African societies.

In the same spirit of missionary exploits we should not forget the indelible and zealous roles that the early missionaries played in the rooting out some nefarious and evil social cultural practices of the African natives. Then, giving an instance, Toyin (2019) gave us an instance, that in Malawi, the Christian missionary – Lawrence (a medical doctor) spent more than five decades performing missionary work, leading its society to abolish evil practices such as trial by poisoning (*Ibidi*).

And we should not forget in a hurry, the great strides or fight that the great Presbyterian missionary – Mary slessor and other great missionaries put in to fight the evil of the killing of twins (*ejima*), and human sacrifices in Igboland and other African communities where such negative practices are in vogue.

(ii)   Science

Toyin (2019:91), remarks that religion and science are at odds with each other, historically the quest for scientific discovery in the west had connection to Christian values most notably Protestantism. Then, explicating more on this, Merton et al (2003:13), stated in his thesis that there is a positive correlation between the rise of Protestantism and early experimental science. Focusing on English Puritanism and German Pietism, he argued that these protestant

between these years had been awarded to Christians. Thus, accounting for 49.5% of all Noble Prizes in literature, 54% of all Noble Prizes in Economics, 62% of all Noble Prizes in Medicine, 65.3% of all Nobel Prizes in Physics, 72.5% of all Nobel Prizes in Chemistry, and 77.3% of all Nobel Prizes in Peace during this period. In another version, the researchers find out in one academic source entitled – "The impact of Christianity" cited in Toyin (2019:105) that indeed, many modern scientists were Christians – Pascal, Newton, Pasteur, Boyce, and Keppler. Just to mention a few.

Then, in historical nostalgia, we should not forget in a short while, that the early missionaries that evangelize the darkened territories of the African continent used the weapon, adopted the policy or the instrument of education in the eventual civilization and the subsequent Christianization of the African natives: commenting on this, Alago (1999:84), said that western education had been identified as probably the most important motive for the acceptance of Christian missions. The implication of this is that most African communities accepted Christianity because of the probable gains that they are going to realize due to the fruits of education, of being empowered to speak the Whiteman's language.

The discovery of this secret made western education to serve as the engine that disperse the Christian faiths of Catholics, Anglicans Presbyterians to every nooks and crannies of the host communities, and even beyond the confines or territories of Igboland. Secondly, western education made use of both the churches and schools to spread like wild fire, because whenever there is a church then know it that the same school buildings also serve as a church (i.e. the building serves double purposes in promoting education and as well as propagating religion which is one of the fundamental reason of why they came to Africa).

To collaborate this objective, Uruakpa (1996), is of the opinion it is quite clear that these missionary bodies had common aims and especially shared in the philosophy of using education as a sharpest instrument for effective and result oriented evangelism. Still on this, beware that the efforts of the early missionaries are not in vain because the pioneer nationalists that struggled tirelessly for the political independence of most African countries like Nigeria namely: Nnamdi Azikiwe, Awolowo, Francis Akanu Ibiam, M. I. Okpara Mbonu Ojike and the likes are the shining products of pre and post educational orientations and programmes of the early missionaries.

(i)   Abolition of slave trade and other social cultural evils or ills in Africa

Oguejiofor (2001:26), describes the major variables in this our discussion in the following propositions: "that slavery was a universal institution and consequently slave trade was

One of the notorious evil that have shaken the very foundation of Christendom is the unguarded sexual exploits or escapades of some of our religious leaders that rears its ugly head and tries to tear down the Jericho wall of most Christian bodies. This can be pictured in the Medieval ages, we witness the randy sexual exploits of some of the unholy attitudinal behaviours of some of the revered vicars of Christ – the popes, in their unholy relationship with some of their mistresses or concubines in Rome. As we are coming out of this indelible scandals caused us and the whole Christendom by some of our Roman pontiffs, the Christendom was shaped on her face in the most recent times of the evil of pedophilia that cuts across the ranks of the catholic priesthood that brought shame to the sacredness by celibacy or celibate life that forms the kernel of the catholic priesthood.

Exposing us on these anomalies Sorensen (2010:5) informs us that the church had many several scandals down through the years, from the early Popes to the twentieth-centuries, preacher Jimmy Swaggert. The Catholic Church is struggling with the issue of pedophilia in the ranks of their priests, as the bishops who protected them and moved them from one parish to another. Underlying this scandal are other systemic problems – the high percentage of homosexual priests due to the celibacy and the declining number of applicants to the priesthood.

Then, commenting on these unguarded sexual exploits of some of our revered vicars of Christ, Sorensen (2010:11) went on to inform us, two women, a mother and a daughter combination (Theodora and Marozia) who were mistresses to the popes became very influential in the appointments of the following popes – Sergius III (904 – 911), Anastasias III (911 – 913), Lando I (913 – 914), John X (914 – 928), John XI (931- 936), when Marozia was fifteen years old she became the mistress of Sorgius III , who was forty-five years at the time, and who had murdered the previous Pope Leo V. Their son became pope John XI and Marozia's grandson became Pope John XII. She also had great and great-great grandsons who ascended the papal throne. Anastasus III, Lando 1, and John X were all selected through the influence of Thoedora. John X was the bastard son of Lando I (who was a notorious womanizer) and became Theodoras lover. After Lando's death, Theodora used her influence to have John X become Pope so that they could continue their affair with greater ease. These unnecessary sexual scandals and aberration that brews its unwholesome effects in the catholic finds its way in the hallowed Anglican church, that formed the major cause of division in this church of Christ. This was caused or geared towards the acceptance of the gay marriage proposal (i.e. homosexuals cohabitation as "husbands" and "wife") that automatically shattered the harmonious relationship that formerly exist between the

movements were responsible for the development of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Protestant values encourage scientific discovery and research as it allowed people to study God's impact on earth.

Historically, in the second instance, Encyclopedia Britannica (2018) as cited in Toyin (2019), informs us that the catholic church supported the study of astronomy, particularly regarding the astronomical basis of the calendar and how religious days are determined, such as Easter weekend. In the sixteenth century, Pope Gregory XII introduced the Gregorian Calendar, which is still used today. It replaced the Julian calendar and functioned so that the celebration of Easter was tied to the spring equinox each calendar year. Most of the world continues to use the Gregorian Calendar, including countries considered outside of the Christian world such as China and Japan. The greatest exception are Islamic countries which tend to retain calendars based on Islam (p.91).

(iii)   Arts and Literature

Voss as cited in Toyin (2016:92), informs us that Western literature has also found inspiration from Christianity for hundreds of years, with all sorts of writers, poets, and using all Christian themes and imagery in their various works. From Dante to Shakespeare, to Tolkien, the stories that have shaped western culture over the past one thousand years have often contained direct or indirect references to God, Satan, heaven and hell, Jesus Christ – Holy Spirit and so on.Then, bringing it closer to our own African setting or context, Toyin (2019) and that while some literatures aim to inspire some sort of positive Christian message in their work, others are more critical of the church. For example, Achebe's Things Fall Apart explores the complexities of Christianity and the roles of missionaries in colonized Africa. The white Christian, missionaries convince the women in Okonkwo's community that if they become Christians, that they will not have to sacrifice any twins they have, a normal custom for their people. While the women are happy that they can protect their children, the Christians gain greater control and power over them (Ibidi).

An Expose of the dark patches of the revealed religion – Christianity and Islam: A point of departure

In the previous phase (or page) of our reflections, we were able to sing praises or to showcase the positive natures or sides that are inherent in Christianity as a religion. Now in the present place of our reflections the researchers are going to briefly showcase the dark patches or the negative sides of Christianity from the time of Medieval ages to the present contemporary era.

the Muslims committed against humanity made them to be passionately hated and despised, and the call of Urban II to liberate Jerusalem from the infidel stirred passions (i.e. sympathy) all over Europe. The efforts of the Roman pontiff inspired the churches in Burgundy and Aquitaine to start movements known as the Peace of God and the Truce of God in an attempt to halt and moderate the violence of the aristocracy (Sorensen (201:14-15).

The role Christians play in actualization of world peace

This serves as the climax of our discussion. Because, it is necessary for us to brainstorm in order to find out ways for the eventual actualization of peace in the world and in our respective religious groups.

The steps are as follows:

i)   Adopting the spirit of inter-religious dialogue among different religious bodies
Based on this, explicating on the meaning of dialogue, Anasiudu (2015) describes it as follows: Dialogue is a method in comparative study of religious which requires that the student seeks to increase and deepen his or her knowledge of the religious being studied as they are in themselves and in their contexts. It is an encounter of people of different religious and faiths in an atmosphere of freedom and openness devoid of pre-judgment as to rightness or wrongness of a particular religion. When religions are studied that way a lot of deep, similarities are discovered. Sometimes conflict occasioned by religion come from ignorance, misjudgments, inherited historical prejudices, manipulation of religion to gain political advantage and extremist interpretation of what actually a particular religion teaches or requires of its adherents (p.5).

ii)   Man as a Social Animal Lives in the Human Society, and as a Religious Being should try to eschew all forms of racial discrimination, tribalism, ethnicity, sectionalism and prejudices in the world today.

iii)   The leaders of religious bodies or sects are advised to convince their members on the need to stop these bloody acts of terrorism, wars, kidnapping, killing, maiming and raping of our young girls (or our youths).

iv)   They will inculcate in the mind or in the psychological disposition of their adherents that is only one God that created all of us; and this makes us to be children of one God irrespective of our different religious affiliations.

Conclusion

European Anglican communion and their African counterparts (i.e. African Anglican Communion), commenting on this nasty development, Toyin (2019) remarks, this Afro awareness, confidence of place, and the ability to interpret the Bible on their own are reasons that led the Nigerian communion of the Anglican church along with some other African communions to break communion from the Episcopal church of the United States, the church of England, and the Anglican church of Canada over the positions on gay marriage and gay priests. The Nigerian communion of the Anglican church spoke out against growing literalism within the Anglican communion; holding that it deviates from Biblical principles, they insist that the Anglican communions in the global West has misinterpret biblical views on homosexuality (Toyin 2019: 150).

In another development, the revealed religious – Christianity and Islam, both religious are at each other's neck or they tries to outsmart one another to the extent that the famous wars fought in the distant past was ably champion or engineered by the adherents of both religious sects to the consternation of those who were not staunch believers of the tenets of these religious bodies.

This malady was graphically pictured by Sorensen (2010:3-4) who gave a historical narratives of their nefarious activities on how they planned to outsmart one another in the following melodrama or sequence: the Muslims themselves set the pattern for holy war in the years after the death of Mohammed in 632 A. D. for the next four hundred years they attacked many countries, conquering and then ruling over them. These include Iran (Persia), Iraq, Egypt, Palestine, Syria, all of North Africa, Armenia, the Balkan territories, Spain, Sicily and Southern Italy. Many Christian areas such as Hippo the Home of Augustine in North Africa (in what is now the country of Libya) were wiped out by Islamic forces. The Muslims in Spain attempted an invasion of France in 732 A. D. but were repulsed by Charles Martel at the battle of Tours. They also took Sicily in the 820s and 846 they attacked Rome and desecrated the tombs of St Peter and St. Paul. For the Castilian and Basque peoples of Spain revolted against their Muslim over Lords, and finally were victorious in 1492, the year that Columbus set sail for America.

Now to counteract the domineering tendencies or unruly influences of the Muslims, Sorensen (2010), informs us that the Roman pontiff, Urban II (1088-1099) was the Pope who was instrumental in promoting and organizing the first crusade. Urban travelled across Europe preaching the crusade and drew a tremendous response. Because the atrocities that

To sum up, in a simple language, the authors strongly affirm that the denial of the significant roles of religion or the concept of religion, makes the attainment or the realization of peace in the world impossible. Thus, from the above deliberations, the writers, in this paper have secured a point that religion which serves as the writer's major variable (or a concept) is very vital because it plays significant roles as a vehicle, a panacea and a capacity building in the advancement of peace in the world today. That is despite the "Achilles Heels" (i.e. weaknesses or dark patches) that are inherent in the religious outlook of most religious sects in the world today; depicts" religion as an agent of division, communal hatred, intolerance, and wars and terrorism in the contemporary society that makes people to switch off from any good tidings that religion has to offer to man. As this may be, religion still holds the key that opens the doors for the advancement of peace, love, unity, understanding, oneness, concord, tolerant and accommodation in our human society.

Religion is like a two sides of the same coin, in the sense that it can be seen as an agent or vehicle of peace, understanding, social integration and cohesion, concord, oneness, in our society. This is in the aspect of positive nature of religion. While in the other hand of the negative nature of religion, deduced from above narrative contents of our presentations. The authors can deduced that religion negatively can be used as a veritable tool for the Wanton destruction of properties, championing of terrorism, wars, riots, chaos, anarchy, abysmal denial of one's fundamental human rights, division and hatred in the world today. All these vices that are associated with religion, have contributed greatly to the apathy or indifference that the modern contemporary humanity shows towards religion in general. In spite of all these anomalies that are inherent in religion, religion still holds the key that plays significant roles in the pursuits or realization of the coveted price of world peace.

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Book Review Section
Title: Pauline Spirit World in Eph 3:10
in the Context of Igbo World View,
A Psychological-Hermeneutical Appraisal

With the publication of John Gager's groundbreaking work *Kingdom and Community* in 1978, the stage became set for the use of psychological theories to interpret New Testament texts. John Madubuko's book falls into the attempt to use psychological theories to interpret New Testament texts. This time, instead of engaging in what is generally called *dry exegesis* by New Testament scholars in Africa, Madubuko goes contextual by using the psychological theory of cognitive restructuring in interpreting the text of Ephesians 3:10 in the context of his native, the Igbo people of Nigeria. After a preliminary discussion on Pauline spirit terminologies, Madubuko discusses the worldviews of the Ephesians and that of the Igbo people. One thing that underlines Madubuko's discussion on both worldviews is the belief that these worldviews are deeply immersed with the spirit world. By implication, both world views, are alive with the belief in sprits which impinge on the peoples' religious practices. Madubuko's interpretation of the Eph. 3:10 shows that Paul does not dismiss the reality of the spirit world which he represented in forms of *principalities and powers in heavenly places*. His teaching, rather, is that the mystery of Jesus Christ subjects these spirit beings through 'the agency of the church through which the original purpose of unity in God's creation is restored'.

Since Paul's teaching in this verse is also Christological, Madubuko brings cognitive restructuring into the play. He argues that Pauline Christology in Eph. 3:10 is a "psychological factor" through which the Ephesian Christians could deal with the spirits of their world. With this understanding, Madubuko applies his reading of the text to the Igbo context where there is a profound fear of the spirit world which, in contemporary Christian practice, impinges on an authentic appropriation of the gospel where there is an over emphasis on 'power Christology' without an ethical emphasis. In this sense, Igbo Christians need a cognitive restructuring of their minds to help them practise an authentic faith in Christ for community transformation. Madubuko's argument is persuasive, academically sound,

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and methodologically rigorous. It is an easy read to some extent although mostly written for a certain type of audience with an interest in psychological interpretation of the New Testament. It is on this basis that I wonder, how the Igbo laity, who by the way, are not mostly academically sound, will appropriate the teachings of Madubuko's book knowing that it is among them that the problem identified in the book mostly lie? This notwithstanding, the book is a masterpiece as long as contextual psychological interpretation of the New Testament is concerned. I recommend it for those with an interest in psychological interpretation of the New Testament, biblical scholars, students of religious studies, church leaders in Igbo land and the Igbo laity as well.

Reviewer Biography

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