

Socialisation of Religion for Advancement of Culture of Peace in Nigeria

Isanbor, P. O.

*Department of Philosophy, Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti.
E-mail: osarobuisanbor@yahoo.com*

Ekiugbo, U. E.

Department of General Studies, College of Education, Ikere-Ekiti.

ABSTRACT

Man is naturally religious in general, and for the Africans in particular they are traditionally religious. Religion is in the hands of man, not otherwise. This paper explicates the needs for proper socialisation process of the personhood to the attainment of the culture of peace as he engages in any religious practices. It is about the establishment of healthy religious environment where the essence of the human person will be utilised and his rights and dignity will be adequately respected.

Keywords: *Socialisation, Peace, Humanity, Religion. God*

INTRODUCTION

The tenet of every religion is peace. There is no religion that does not advocate for peace and peaceful living. The three major religions in Nigeria for example, Christianity, Islam and Traditional Religion, have peace in their agenda toward or for the salvation of humanity. Whether this advocacy for peace or the preaching about peace is in principle or otherwise, the fact remains that religion is supposed to seek for the liberation of man from the shackles of sin and evil, which is peace. Socialisation of the human persons is essential for the development of the society and the individuals. It is important for holistic development because man does not live in isolation, but in the community of people (Meyer, 1994 and Ezewu, 1983). And socialisation is about communal living, interactions and attraction of interests it promoted the willingness of happy and better living, by helping the individuals to put into fusion their interests. Socialisation is about the balancing the whole personality of man. Man desires the Divine always to have complete socialisation process, even when he feels that he does not needs such relationship. Without man's relationship with God, man is spiritually empty and physically animalistic (John Paul II, 1981). It develops human spirituality and propels adherents to express the virtues of right living in accordance with their faith and belief. It acts as an agent of socialization and integration, and also develops the moral prowess according

to the teaching of their beliefs (Owoseni, 2011). This is because, it enables people to come together and discuss the issues that concern them (Fishbane in Rouner, 1988). In it, man feels warmth of nature, because, there the spiritual nature greatly interplays with the physicality of man. Religion is one of the socialisation tools or avenues for the proper development of man, and it should be properly evaluated and validated in the consideration of human activities, so that, they will not be further detrimental to his living.

The Meaning of Religion

Man is used to the wording and working of religion due to his composite nature. As man understands himself he does to religion. According to Horner and Westacott (2000), coming up with a good definition of religion is thus not easy, and the reasons for this are fairly obvious. They are as follows: that there is the great diversity of actual religions that are or have practiced by different people, and the concept of religion is very broad in terms of metaphysical beliefs, moral teachings, psychological attitude, legends, traditions, written scriptures, habitual practices, ceremonies, poetry, song, music, art, dance and theatre which the elements of a religion. The conceptual knowledge on the meaning of it is possible from the common fixture of most religions which have stereological interest (about the salvation of souls and the reward in the afterlife) (Turaki, 2004).

Though, there is universally agreeable definition of religion, but there is of course, relative understanding of what it is, due to its peculiarity in the life of man. The word “religion” derives from three Latin words as its root, namely “*ligare*” (meaning to bind), “*relegare*” (meaning to unite, to link together) and “*religio*” (which means relationship) (Omogbe, 1999). Then, the derivation of word ‘religion’ etymologically comes to mean a relationship, a link established between two persons, namely, a human person and a divine person believed to exist. According to Thomas Aquinas (Summa 81, art 1) whatever may be true of the origin of the word, religion means an ordering, a standing, a relationship between man and God. Then, one will understand that this relationship is not empty and not without reverence.

As Omogbe (1999) will say that religion is not a relationship between equals. The human person (the religious man) always feels that the divine person (the deity) with whom he is engaged in this relationship is superior to him, and sees himself as depending on him. Man who is the religious being believes that this conceived Superior Being or Deity exists, so he shows and expresses acts of worship and reverence in keeping a relationship between them. This is religion and remains very functional as far as man remains religious in thinking and consideration. Hence, Eriwo (1987) has a supporting view about the origin

of religion, that the exercise of the search for the origin of religion may well be an exercise in futility. One basic fact is clear: man as he is at present constituted, is a *homo religiosus*. Just as man is a social being, so is he a religious being. Religion is therefore tied up with the origin of man, and the source of his being; man can therefore do nothing about a law of his psychological constitution, but obey it, seeing that his religious is datum (Adelowo, 1995).

The Sociological Nature of Religion

There are many outlooks or views about the origin, nature and purpose of religion. From numerous obvious indications, it seems that religion is of the essence of man; in another light it equally seems that religion has its origin in man's limited nature. Generally, religion is defined as 'belief' in the existence of a supernatural ruling power, the creator and the controller of the universe, who has given to man a spiritual nature, which continues to exist after the death of the body. In order to unravel this enigma, concerned thinkers with the aid of rationality have been proposing the reason for the *whys* and the *why-nots*. In this vein, religion should be considered functionally or/ and realistically.

The existence of man cannot but be religious, according to Fredrick Hegel who sees the limitedness of man's nature in the aspects of development and moral growth, recognizes the existence and supremacy of the Absolute spirit. This, he developed from the concept of Supreme Being by Churchmen in the mediaeval era, and they refer to him as God. The functional understanding of this development is the relational understanding of the stewardship of man on the affairs of the earth as the *imago Dei*. Man can understand himself properly only in reference to this relationship established between them at the time of his creation (Kusumalayam 2008). With this background, we look at some theories on the nature of religion.

The sociological nature is about the association of the working of religion with societal growth and development. Cultural sociologists like Emile Durkheim and Carl Jung believe that religion is an instrument of social control, and the society personifies its forces as elements of worship towards a projected divine deity. The idea of God is thus nothing other than the personified force of the society. According to Karl Marx, religion originated as a result of the exploitation of the capitalists. The condition of the people is a social issue, so, man hopes in the Supreme Being to liberate him since he is limited and helpless. Hence religion becomes the opium of the people and the sigh of the oppressed creature. Man seeks, according to him, to dull the pains and anguish that result from the exploitation and the inhuman face of the capitalists in religion. Religion has made man lose his consciousness, and relies solely on God. Hence, to meet these psycho-spiritual needs of the people, the religious leaders in turn promise

its adherence a pie in heaven. They would encourage them never to fight; but rather they should persist in their sufferings that their reward is in heaven. By doing this, religion forestalls social disturbance and revolution by the oppressed and impoverished people (S. Freud in Angeles 1997 and Nolan, 2007). Against this backdrop, religion becomes the control agent of the people's interest and emotion. From the anthropological block therefore, it could be argued that religion works in dual capacities; because it encourages capitalism and discourages revolution.

The Meaning of 'Culture of Peace'

Peace is desire of everybody. Everyone seeks it, even though it appears to be very illusive, but also very much possible. The demand for peace and justice is very much evident in the life of every individual. The existence presupposes the reign of peace, that is, the culture of peace. Douglas Roche (2006) recognizes 'Culture of Peace' which is contrary to that of war and exploitation of humanity. Peace is the absence of conflicts and the stability of the state of affairs of any individual, community or nation. Peace is part of the natural existence and order. It is guaranteed by the recognition of its importance by man in his affairs, as he jells towards maintaining the natural orders. 'Culture of Peace' as advocated by many organizations on earth, laid more emphasis on the cause of peaceful co-existence among humans and nations through the recognition of the rights, respect for the rule of law, the establishment of virile social systems, and the respect of the dignity of the human person. This is because,

Peace cannot be obtained on earth unless the welfare of man is safeguarded and people freely and trustingly share with one another the riches of their minds and their talents. A firm determination to respect the dignity of other men and other peoples along with the deliberate practice of fraternal love and absolutely necessary for the achievement of peace (Gaudium et spes, No. 78).

The Culture of Peace is on the re-establishment of moral foundation where the value of human life is upheld. This is through sustainable economic and social development, provision of qualitative educational programmes, equality between woman and men, free flow of information and knowledge, democratic participation, military disarmament, social tolerance and solidarity, and respect for all human rights (Roche, 2006). The achievement of these factors above is based on the ethical and aesthetic values, habit and customs, attitude towards human beings. Roche (2006) states that a culture of peace is an approach to life that seeks to transform the cultural tendencies toward war and violence into a culture where dialogue, respect, and fairness govern social relation. In

this way, violence can be prevented through a more tolerant common global ethics. The culture of peace uses education as an essential tool in fostering attitudes supportive for non-violence, co-operation, and social justice. It promotes sustainable development for all, free human rights, and equality between men and women. It requires genuine democracy and the free flow of information. It leads to disarmament.

The achievement of these purposes of man's existence is determined on the level of his morality, valuation of his life and management of his freedom. "Thus, morality, mores, and law, reinforcing each other: give threefold protection to the life of the society and the lives of the individuals who compose it" (Morgenthau, 1973). Roche sees the importance of morality and the rule of law in the establishment of the conditions that will define his true essence of man as rational animal with purposeful end in history. With morality and respect for law and order the life of man is guaranteed without any thought of violation of his dignity and rights, and they bring the rational nature of man as cooperate being and as an agent against the forces which are negative to the natural order. More so, the administration of the programmes which will bring the actualization of the culture of peace is the responsibility of every existing individual and co-operate organization, as the U.N. resolution reveals that, a key role in the promotion of a culture of peace belongs to parents, teachers, politicians, journalists, religious bodies and groups, intellectuals, those engaged in scientific, philosophical and creative and artistic activities, health and humanitarian workers, social workers, managers at various levels as well as to non-government organizations (UN Resolution on the Promotion of Peace as in Roche, 2006). In a nutshell, the realization for this culture of peace which Roche enjoined others in the course of global peace and religiosity of human cooperate existence through the respect of universal ethical principle is for the recognition of the dignity of human life. And these will bring the 'civilization of love' that will change the tendencies of violence and moral abuses to healthy humanism.

Socialisation of Religion for Peaceful Coexistence

According to *Catechism of the Catholic Church* No. 1880, a society is a group of persons bound together organically by a principle of unity that goes beyond each one of them. As an assembly that is at once visible and spiritual, a society ensures through time: it gathers up the past and prepares for the future. By means of society, each man is established as an "heir" and receives certain "talents" that enrich his identity and whose fruits he must develop. In politically constituted community, the human family is an indispensable bedrock to its development and structuring the community is not defined without a duly

reference to the human family before the considerations of other factors of socialisation, such as schools, religious community, civil society, peer group and the likes. The tenet of every religion is peace. There is no religion which does not advocate for peace and peaceful living. The three major religions in African in particular which are; Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion, have peace in their agenda toward or for the salvation of humanity. Whether this advocacy of peace or preaching peace in principle or otherwise, the fact remains that religion seeks the liberation of man from the shackle of sins and evil, should be of peace. This is because; in the reign of peace man reasons well and works towards his development and salvation.

In understanding socialisation of religion which is about the internalisation of the tenets of religion in order to live in harmony with others, even with those in the other religions. Then there are a lot of misplacement of values and misunderstanding of the principles by beclouded desires that have been rendering this socialisation process inadequate or falsely. The reign or culture of religious violence in the name of Islamic insurgence in Mali, Boko Haram in the north of Nigeria and general religious intolerance and deceptions that is experience almost everywhere in the world. There have been interplays of politics with religion, and sitting down the umbrella of religion to upset the political arrangements of the state. This is a wrong consideration of the working of religion and the misguided religious socialisation. Socialisation defines man as he relates with others in the society; of course in a healthy manner, irrespective of religious sects of any individual. Anything outside proper social cohesion and understanding is a social mutilation or aberration. This faulty nature of socialisation is what religion is offering humanity, and it will be leading him to self-hatred and self-extinction, if the process is not correctly. Peace is part of humanity and he must work for it, even in all acts of his socialisation.

CONCLUSION

The whole process of human socialisation must be properly internalised and ordered. Religious tenets must be fully internalised to avoid religious, social and environmental frictions. Religion has been the product of man's existence, and it has been one of his major tools of social and spiritual integrations. The central message of any religion is on peace, love and the avoidance of conflicts among humans which the founder of any religion had taught his/ her followers for the attainment for happy end. The ultimate goal of humanistic living is naturally ordered. This central message is on the moral principle on which the value of the life of man is weighted, through the culture which makes him to enjoy the natural rights. Though, in the cause of history it has been also tool of conflicts and destructions, just as a result of improper management of the spirit of

misplaced priorities and embellishment of politics with religious principles. This is because; religion can be made to serve the interests of a personal or collective ego. When it does so, it can develop into some form of fanaticism or fundamentalism (Menanparampil, 2010). Even with these negations; at the level of human development, mankind cannot do without religion, just because of its influences and the mentality of the attainment of happy end of life which it has put into them. As Umoh (2008) would say that religion is perhaps the only phenomenon which captures man in his entity, giving meaning to his existence, the most fundamental grounds of one's being. True religious commitment costs not less than everything. Man's socialisation must be healthy for his essence to be meaningful.

REFERENCES

- Adelowo, E.** (1995). *Homo-Religious: A man who hold his own in all circumstances*, Inaugural lecture, University of Ado-Ekiti.
- Angeles, P.** (ed) (1997). *Critiques of God*. New York: Prometheus Books
- Cooper, T. D.** and **Epperson, C. K.** (2010). *Evil: Satan, Sin & Psychology*. Mumbai: St Pauls
- Echekwube, A.** (2002). *A Metaphysical Analysis of the Concepts of Reincarnation: Towards Global Harmony and Peace*. Inaugural Lecture at Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma
- Eriwo, S.** (1987). *The Hound of Heaven and The Children of Men*. Inaugural Lecture at Bendle State University, Ekpoma.
- Ezewu, E.** (1983). *Sociology of Education*. London: Longman Publisher.
- Horner, C.** and **Westacotts, E.** (2000). *Thinking through Philosophy*. United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press
- John Paul II** (1981). *Familiaris Consortio*. Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana.
- Kizhakkeyel, S.** and **Ammanathukunel, K.** (2008). *A Guide to Biblical Studies*. Mumbai: St Pauls
- Kusumalayam, J.** (2008). *Human Rights*. Mumbai: St Pauls.
- Menanparampil, T.** (2010). Mission Areopaguses in Asia. *Omnis Terra*, PMU, June 2010
- Meyer, F. B.** (1994). *Reality and Illusion in New Testament Scholarship*, Minnesota: Liturgical Press
- Morgenthau, H.** (1973). *Politics among Nations: The Struggle For Power and Peace*. (5th Ed). New York: Alfred Knopf.
- Nolan, A.** (2007). *Jesus before Christianity*, Mumbai: St Paul Press
- Oredipe, P.** (2008). The Church Diakonia of the Truth. *WAJOPS* 11, 1.
- Omogbe, J.** (1999). *Comparative Religion*. Lagos: JERP
- Owoseni, A.** (2011). *Sociology of Education*. Ado-Ekiti: Apex Publisher
- Roche, D.** (2006). *Human Right To Peace*. Mumbai: Better Yourself Books.
- Rouner, L.** (ed.) (1988). *Human Rights and The World's Religion*. Indiana: University of Notre Dame
- Turaki, Y.** (1997). *Tribal Gods of Africa*. Nairobi: P.J.C.E.A.
- Umoh, D.** (2008). Philosophical Truth versus Religious Faith: A Phenomenological Critique. *WAJOPS* 11.1