

## **Religion and Development**

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### **Introduction:**

Religion is one of the cardinal elements of culture; though not usually talked about or emphasized but it is a pillar for sustaining humankind and society, aiding culture which entails activities of mankind to survive in any environment. Religion according to Karl Marx is the opium of the people. But, is it really so? Religion can play the dual role of integrating elements in any society and dividing elements in any society. The later role is negative, so it spins negative energies which consumes the fabric of the society as it spits out violence and lots of intolerance.

Religion is paradoxical, for it has double edge when it becomes an ideological weapon, but a good tool, when it assumes its rightful place. It is only when religion remains within its sphere that one can meaningfully talk of religion as a medium for development. According to Aguwa, “...in the hands of the ‘saint’ religion is a veritable means

of humanization. The villain on the other hand employs religion to render selfish service to the ego: individual group”<sup>1</sup>

In a nation where religion has been given irrational latitude for one reason or the other, how can it birth development? Being that religion has been politicized, and noted as the bane of nation building. This has made many see self determination and nation- hood as a farce, as a play. Aguwa holds

The history of religious dichotomy in Nigeria traces back to the advent of Islam and Christianity. The development of the two religions along with the politics based on the principle of regionalism and ethnicism secured the dichotomy on very firm grounds.

The disintegrative force of religion coupled with its destructive angle have contradicted and ridiculed the politics and philosophy of common identity though all of us are units of creation in a consistent form.

Due to the fact that Christianization is not the same as Islamization, here is need for usual boldness, courage and objectivity in looking at religion in order to allow it aid development in Nigeria. Christianization has to do with persuasion but islamization has to do with the use of force.

he former denotes conversion of willing persons while the latter compulsion of unwilling persons entailing abrogation of their dignity and liberty.

Religion, if it must aid in the development Nigeria, must be a variable instrument of humanization; and should not be blended with any other social institutions in order to uphold the secularity of Nigeria.

The government should ensure that it is neutral when religious matters are issues of discourse. Little wonder,

Ekwunife asserts;

In Nigeria, the government and her citizens are yet to accept fully both in theory and practice the stark realities of pluralism of religious belief and practices.<sup>3</sup>

Religion and politics blend well in man for he is both religious and political being. But in groups, they don't blend, the sources of the conflicts and problems lie strictly in the use of religion, especially Islam, which is not proselyte, but uses force to get adherents.

Religion is inclined to dialogic relation with other socio-cultural institutions, that it why is can be affected by politics, for when it provides the base for politicking in a multi-tribal society, allegiance must in most cases split along religious lines.

Religion is a complex phenomenon; little surprising it covers these realities, God, man and the world. It is not amazing that it means different things to different people. There is need to stress that it is not superstition though superstition appears to be religion. Religion, no doubt is enshrined in mystery, entails study of the *mysterium tremendum*, the ideas of the Holy.<sup>4</sup>

What religion will do to development, or any relation is must have with development is heavily dependent, on what it is, the nature of religion, and the uses we put it to. As an enigmatic and complex concept, there is need for care in its application.

Ogugua P.I. et al states: religion is a slippery concept very difficult to define. Different scholars have expressed it in a multi-farious way. This is due to the fact that it has to do with three great realities in life: God, man and the world. It has to do with a dialectical relationship of the mind with reality.

“African Religion: Its relevance in the development of a Democratic culture (A philosophical Insight) in international journal of humanities, social sciences and Education IJHSSE vol 2 Issue 9 September, 2015 p. 93 (93-104)

Ogugua P.I et al state that Religion is a reality ... it is enigmatic and an elusive subject, hence it defies a universally acceptable definition. Religion springs problems even at the level of conceptualization. As such it occasioned the use of family resemblance definition

which accommodates in very strict sense what ought not ordinary be seen as religion.

Ogugua P .I et .al: Religion and politics in Nigerian society problems and prospects (A philosophic probe) in Open journal of philosophy 2015, 5 193-209@ 193-204

Ogugua P.I. et al opine that since the study of religion interests people with different orientations and interests, it is perceived conceived and defined differently.... It is a belief and an attitude, and equally an activity distinguishable from other activities expressing a sort of relationship between God and man.

They continued etymologically, religion is derived from three latin words ‘religare’ – to bind, relegate’ – to unite, or to link and ‘religio’ –relationship. It is an experience that unites man with God.

“Religion and African identity.A reflection on Nigeria situation” in Open Journal of philosophy 2013, vol No. 1.A (248-254) @ 249

For Okere,

... by and large religion is the business between God and man. It demands therefore both a theology or a theory of God and anthropology or a theory of man and also a theory of the

relations between God and  
man.

Religion entails dealing with the transcendent being, supernatural beings, the world and man; with even positions on eschatology. Why? It is simply because each religion has its own self understanding, concepts, positions and its own expression of reality peculiar to it.

Most religions are dualistic i.e. Christianity, and Islam dealing with God and the devil, good and evil, etc but African traditional Religion is syncretistic little wonder, it is not seen as spiritualistic, at most it is spiritist; as it recognizes spirits and does not separate spirit and matter as such for it lays values on both the spiritual and the worldly or ephemeral.

Religion is a matrice within the matrix of culture, for it cuts across relationships, regional ethnic and even national. In Africa for instance, it is known to have fueled conflicts of different magnitude and has created and sustained violence, fanaticism, intolerance, priest-craft, deception and even some obnoxious and harmful cultural practices. It is manipulated by some for personnel selfish reasons and even nurtured inquisition.

We do know that religion cannot aid development in chaotic atmosphere, so it has to do it by combating these evils via dialogue, care, enlightenment and religious education. Radical Christians are of the opinions that dialogue must not always aid development in every instance i.e. Boko haram, jihad moves etc. Nmah Patrick

is of the opinion that until Jesus returns there are some people so deeply committed to doing evil that they cannot be restrained not by dialogue, argument, reason and persuasion, but only by superior force.

Despite the fact that thinkers like Marx, Nietzsche, Engels, Prodhon, Lenin etc have seen religion as problem of men's infant clinging to forces, exhibition of psychological dementia, we still hold that religion which they see as relevant due to hardship and ignorance of man still have role to play in ensuring there is development in our society.

In Nigeria, one cannot rightly talk of political development without mention of religion. Could it be right to hold that religion when not properly harnessed will retard development? Again that when there is extreme religiosity without attendant spirituality, there must be retardation of development. Africa is as religious as it is underdeveloped, does religiosity have something in common with underdevelopment which is tied to ignorance, laziness and even consumerism? Sarah C questions, "Are Africans more religious because as a way to cope with the hardship associated with underdevelopment or is Africa more underdeveloped because of religions?"

Both concepts have to do with beliefs and attitudes out development are equally a process of transformation. Both concepts have to do with man and reality; but extremism in any of them may spell doom for the other. Aristotle did say that "virtu in medio stat".

## **Towards Understanding of the Concepts of Religion and Development**

Many have split much energy and burnt some oil over these concepts, and have essayed their best to explain them. Both of them are indeed fundamental to life, of needs adequate attention, more so because happenings around the globe do show that there is need to look at them critically to see what they are.

Having seen what religion is as shown in the work previously, we can only conclude that man requires religion for any meaningful and sustainable development in the world, and as such must work hard enough to ensure that the dysfunctional aspect of religion is contained. Development can rarely come to people who turn their back to religion, for that society will struggle with values to live by. For Africans, Mbiti holds that they are notoriously religious and Ogugua adds that they are religiously religious. Does it mean they are spiritual? By no means so. Sarah .C posits:

... Africans are as religious  
as is the continent  
underdeveloped..., but I  
question the relationship  
between religion and  
development in Africa. It's  
more like a chicken and egg  
question. Are Africans  
more religious because as a  
way to cope with the



hardship associated with  
underdevelopment or is  
Africa more  
underdeveloped because of  
religions?

The question that needs be asked is, does extremism in one affect the other? Some may think so, especially those who erroneously hold and think that we can outgrow religion with advancement in science and technology. People among this group are those who propagated cult of death philosophies or ideologies. Some of them hold that this negative view of religion is implicit in their teachings and thought. Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Ayn Rand, Darwin, Ernst Haeckel Francis Galton, Marx, Comte, Judith Jarvis Thomson Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, etc Even Prodhon is included for he opined that if God really existed, he should be too old to die. Negation of God or value (real values) leads to negation of man and religion is about the relationship between God and man not necessarily between man and spirits as we see when many mistake the supernatural for supranatural. Religion entails worship of the Supreme Being, and only God is the being involved. Omoregbe holds:

... the etymology of the  
word 'religion shows that it  
is essentially a relationship,  
a link established between  
two persons, namely, the  
human person and the  
divine person believed to

exist. It is something that  
links or unites man with  
transcendent being; a deity  
believed to exist and  
worshipped by man.

Omoregbe pitched his tent with family resemblance definition likewise Feuerbach who sees religion as the worship of man, for him religion in its essence believes in nothing else than the truth and divinity of human nature. But for Bouquet religion is “a fixed relationship between the human self and some non-human entity, the sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the absolute or simply God.

Nietzsche as an apostle of doom used a mad man to proclaim the death of God and religion of humanity, when he proposed the metamorphosis of spirit into a camel, then a lion, and finally into a child. Arua examined Nietzsche thought and conclusion and states “Nietzsche is inconsistent when he proclaims the death of the soul which is the seat of the spirit of man and at the same time holds the permanence of the spirit in conquering its own world”.

Freud should fall into the same group with Nietzsche for he thinks that God is a creation of man. He states the religious ideas are “illusions fulfillments of the oldest, strongest and most urgent wishes of mankind.” He adds, “Religions would thus be the universal obsession neurosis of humanity like the obsession neurosis of children, it arose out of Oedipus complex, out of relation to the father.

Probably, in the bid to be protected and pulled out of helplessness and hopelessness. But the truth is that religion has a object of worship the supreme God so it is not superstition

There is no extension or expansion of logic that would make religion an illusion for in the process of dialectical growth, it enhances the growth and wellbeing of man and his society; in short, it is indeed a tonic to human life. For Freud, man in his infantile stage was ignorant so to say, and he anthropomorphized and apotheosized himself in his obsession to get out of helplessness. He did think that religion is not only illusive but an illusion. There is no gainsaying the fact that scientific culture cum secularism has helped in attenuation of religious beliefs and feeling and is foundational to rejection of the idea of the sacred and the holy.

Now we turn our dragnet to development. Development has been explained variously by various scholars. Notwithstanding how people describe it, it is mostly seen as a process. For some it is a process of modernization and industrialization, some equally see it as an economic phenomenon. But is it wholly an economic phenomenon? For Torado and Smith, traditionally, development meant the capacity of national economy, whose initial economic condition has been more or less static for a long time, to generate and sustain an annual increase in its gross national product (GNP) at rates perhaps 5% to 7% or more. Development is in layers, quantitative and qualitative. It could be at the individual (personal), national and international level. According to Rodney "...

development implies activity, increased skill and capacity self -discipline greater freedom, responsibility and material well-being”.

In the words of Alao, development is

A multi-objective process designed to achieve among others, the eradication of poverty and disease the liberation of individual increased productivity within a balanced ecosystem, justice and equality individual freedom and social security, cultural buoyancy and the stable society.

UCF Himmerstrand explains

A property or attribute which in my view is a basic prerequisite and criterion of development is the capability of a given society, increasingly to use its own resources of land, minerals and man-power to feed its own people even in a situation of population growth.

For Nze, development implies dual factors thought and might; and Ogugua emphasized that development is a troika of forces: It is very significant to note that development is not growth. Little wonder, Pius Okigbo writes: economic growth relates mostly to things where as development relates to man. But there is a common bond between them, you will need to multiply the things, in sufficient number (growth) for man to be himself at his best (development)” he adds “All the things required for his being, its many dimensions, have to be available for him to fulfill himself as a member of society, as homo economics, as a politician, as a religious man at work and at play etc. It is these dimensions that give the ‘thing: additional meaning and make development possible” Okere writes: “It is an organic development of what there already exists in some bibulous, embryonic form it is not a bursting out of the boundaries of a given species rather a growth, a stepping from what I am to what I can be, all that I can be within the limits of the possibilities of my species”.

### **Religion in Our Society: Development as Focus**

Religion just like science, technology etc are matrices within the matrix of culture. Reality is not captured by any of these matrices. Man has both material and non-material constituents; he is in-short spirit in flesh. All these matrices should gear toward development of man in society.

Today, attention seems to have been focused on science as if it is the only thing necessary. However, rationality is more than science. Arua attests that ‘reality is not totally

encompassed by what is scientifically scientific and technological verifiable and attainable.

Man is not a problem or a metaproblematic being as Arua posits but rather a mystery, having an orientation and tilt towards the Divine (transcendent being). Man is the focus of every developmental stride. Arua remarks, “Scientific culture is good and necessary for meaningful development of man in sociopolitical arrangement of man provided that it does not develop into scientism and lead to the weakening of religions consciousness and beliefs, as if it restricts the domain of the real to what is empirically verifiable”.

Reality, just like facts is stubborn; it is readily too open and rigid cum rugged, refuses to be covered or even side lined or side tracked. It wants to show and pronounce its presence. We have observed that religion tends to polarize the nation at times and in a very dangerous way. Ignorance based on perception and interpretation of religious beliefs or issues is deadly. Extreme adherence to some religious beliefs, at the expense of contribution to upholding of human existence is the bane of development in Nigeria and Africa as a whole.

Many a time, many Africans tend to embrace ignorance and laziness and in the height of their idleness they became fatalist, by developing such collective cum religious group mentality, they see hardship as religious but not spiritual any way. Instead of applying themselves and resources at their beck and call, they cease to take action to seize opportunities and solve problems

threatening their well being. An author omments “... they would give homage to the Gods but the key point is the they would act first”. This buttresses the wisdom in the title of a book by Lao Russell God will work with you and not for you.

It does seem that most Africans have not allowed the head, hand and heart values to be developed and work in harmony. They have not allowed a bled and bond to be created among the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. It is not surprising therefore for Africans to nurse so much beliefs and dilly dally when it comes to acting out these beliefs.

Mbiti says Africans are notoriously religious and Ogugua comments that they are religiously religious. Prayers are good; praying is wonderful but there is need to pray and work. We should take some pragmatic steps to ensure we meet our developmental goals, prayer will not do it all, it has its own role to play. We need to come out of our cocoon to be able to become what we ought to be through intelligent and active involvement cum participation.

Religion can aid development if the adherents of all religions should shun bigotry not necessarily fanaticism but deep rooted fanaticism, for one still requires an iota of fanaticism to succeed in life, as it is the oil that lubricates the wheel of our existential being, without its possession it will be difficult for any reasonable impact to be made. We must eschew extremism in religious matters and strike to work out our potentialities in solving our existential problems for not all problems is spiritual, some require

our hands being on deck in order to remain alive and active.

Religion qua religion can aid in the regulation and harmonization of human life; it is not surprising then for Benjamin Franklin to assert that “religion will be a powerful regulator of our actions, gives us peace and tranquility within our minds and render us benevolent, useful and beneficial to other. It is presumed that all religions hich worth the name should preach love, and work towards honesty, and ensuing harmony via the institution of justice, and as such embody the necessary tools for development of society. Little wonder, Ellis and Haar comment:

“Development practitioners therefore need to pay attention to religion ... Religion whatever form it takes constitutes a social and political reality.”

It stands to reason that multiple considerations need to be made in order to birth development and religious considerations are part of these considerations for there is a religious or more aptly put a spiritual dimension to development. We really need avenues or paths or even modalities for creating the platform for the categories which are essential for harnessing of the vital conditions for development potentials, more so in Africa with a lot of paradoxes and contradictions which need to be brought together and harmonized.

Religion as one of the matrices within the matrix of culture need to adjust at some point in time to



accommodate what some term cultural change, which no doubt will ever remain a constant challenges to man in the very bid to maintain his balance and redefine his identity, and this entails maintenance of the logics of rationalization and socialization in order to know and embrace continuity. This is due to the simple fact that: “As society develops and history progresses, people interact and modify existing traditions to suit new situations “as opined by Obiora Ike here is real need to search for innovative potentials in religions, which will help to sustain the life of love, tolerance and even ecumenism, that would aid in the modernization process anchorable on the rationalization platform.

Religion qua religion doesn't impede the process of integral development but religion as practiced today in our society can impede such. Obiora Ike asserts, “Our continent has found neither the pluck nor the wits to free itself from the strange-hold of various exploitative tendencies.”<sup>P37</sup> It becomes very worrisome when our people suffer not from the hands of the colonizers but religious people or on account of religion that ought to develop and build. Many of our religious leaders are not qualified to lead, and they have proved themselves incompetent this is replicated in how they have mismanaged both the resources (material) and the people (flock) handed over to them and the gross and high level of corruption in different religions sects and bodies from the look of things one may say that the essence of religion especially Islam in Africa is the exploitation of peaceful atmosphere for the benefit of the Arab world, in

furtherance of their Islamic agenda, which has put Africa in severe and serious socio-political and economic rises.

Although religion is very cardinal and fundamental to humankind and critical to our having sustainable development, it has a dysfunctional character, that is why it should be handled maturely. Why? It is in order to ensure that religion is used to meet the present needs of people and equally the freedom of the future generations, for the earth is made to provide for us and those not yet-born, the future citizens of the world and even of heaven. For religion to be able to do this, here is need for a correlation of science, technology and the social network of relations, for united, these forces can chart the course of development. Religion as an aspect of culture belongs to the social matrix that is social relations.

In order to really know development, we in Nigeria should take the issue of religion serious and not allow it to be at the periphery. Nigeria is a secular state and should remain so, we must not allow religion to be manipulated by cultural, political and ethnic affiliations, even if we give as we have tacitly agreed to accept systems (sets) that are not religion to be so called by using family resemblance definition to widen the tentacles of religion.

We must be able to reduce or eliminate bias in our study of religion and not be too particularistic religions bias and extreme fanaticism can birth bigotry which must introduce conflict which springs from religions cum cosmological exclusivism. Every religion is sustained by a world view and religion gives meaning and value to

worldviews via sanctions; and it stands to reason that any world view that is anti-human, should not ground religion and cannot birth the Holy, and God is the Holy of Hollies. The only thing that should be done for peace and stability is to discard such worldviews. When religion is manipulated by people to hang on to power, we don't think it has anything to do with worldview; rather it has something to do with greed and improper perception and interpretation of reality. We Kukah argues that 'struggle for control... is the root cause of the conflict and crises in the nation's political and religious life as cited by Udoidem.

Most crises in Nigeria both religious and political have been engineered by the elites more especially the politicians and they all have implication for the development and or stability of Nigeria. It is not uncommon to see the government of the day engineering such as Babaginda did in his days when he attempted or indeed enrolled Nigeria as a member of O.I.C organization of Islamic countries. This action fuelled the national jury as agitations mounted. When the governors muzzle the religious leaders, we are done for, for politics is not hitched on ideological factors in Nigeria but on religious indications and calculations.

Religion is a great force, so should not be toyed with; it shapes our thought processes and informs our artistic expressions and our whole life. Little wonder Geoffery Parrinder comments, "All the arts have been brought in the service of religion: architecture and sculpture painting and writing, music and costume

In order to apply something to get any meaningful result, you must know what you are applying and understand it. For religion to really aid development there is need to study it very well and see the assistance it can rightly render. We need to study religion not as in-group –out group issues as it would generate rivalry but study it interdisciplinary, but bearing in mind that religion has to do with man in the world relating with God Almighty, not forces in nature. John Fenton suggests we use the emic–etic method to study religion. He writes “... the emic (inside) meaning of a religious tradition is a description of that religions tradition by its adherents using their own language and their own categories and system of organization. But the truth is that religion is a complex phenomenon and as such could mean more than what people in a religion tradition take it to be; asking yourself is African traditional religion really a religion? What of Islam is it a religion? What of Buddhism? Do they really worship God Almighty?

It does seem we can get closer at the truth about religion by avoiding particularistic theologies of what we now qualify as religion and study religion more objectively; this is using the emic method. We are quite aware that in the course of interpretation there could be misinterpretation and misapplication, and to get at the truth we must avoid reducing religion and its element to the categories of other disciplines.

We need to tell ourselves the truth and see religion as a serious issue of great national interest. We need not

abandon our religions save where it is clear that after critical studies, we are not really worshipping God as we weigh our beliefs and practices with other religions; this is important if we should co-exist for a better future and sustainable development.

Every religion that worth's its salt should partner with education which is a lifelong process for the good of human life as it is equally geared towards the protection of human life and enhancement of human flourishing and not be against life and education. Sustainable development is interested in sustaining human life, ensuring that human dignity is protected and man is empowered.

Religious conflicts have created so many problems for us, as such we need to engage in dialogue in order to generate peace or at least calmness and not fuel the national psyche. Obiefuna and Uzoigwe stated: sticking to "absolutes" is clear indication of intellectual limitation that would make dialogue problematic. An objective study of religion is a combination off emic and etic methods. When we really study religion phenomenologically and get at the truth our horizon would be widened, and we will be properly positioned to live life more meaningfully.

Religion could ignite the spirit of dialogue, from auto-dialogue to intra and inter dialogue across religions and communities, which would bring about communication. Obiefuna and Uzoigwe point out clearly thus: "intrapersonal communication is necessary if one is to be patient enough to understand and acknowledge the

reasonableness in the seemingly senselessness of religious beliefs and practices of other people.

Aristotle said that truth is like the proverbial door which nobody misses whole and entire, and we add but in order not to miss it one must be positioned properly and aim at its direction and then shoot and not in the opposite direction as it would amount to self deception to so do. Religion as religion is one, but system vary and every system must ensure it is guided by the central themes, tenets and principles in order to really bear the name religion. S.G. Mc keever reiterates that paths are many but we need know too that any system that worships an ancestor, a human personality that has not proved to be God via overcoming death or a demon is not really qualified to be called religion.

Religion as a complex phenomenon is indeed an enigma, but it has something to do with development, which must not be dependent on the history of such religious systems as knowledge can birth insight, which can bring about change. Be it and end it, religion requires a theory and understanding of God and man in order to thrive, as such will bring about a theory of relations and even morality. It is here that worldview aids extensively as most religions are based on dualistic understanding of reality, profane and the sacred etc. African traditional religion for example is syncretistic; it is not influenced like Christianity by the soul and body dualism. In order to save the soul, we are advised to flee from the world. Little wonder, cenobites who lived in the caves, monks who go to the desert to live

and in seclusion etc. but we do know that one can live holy life even in the community one belongs.

For example, the cardinal teaching of religious systems aid in knowing whether any system is a kin to development or not; Okere asserts, the great virtue of the Old Testament can be said to be justice and that of the New Testament love. Between these virtues we define the Christian social reality dealing justly and loving God and neighbour”.

Religion is a great force and needs to be harassed properly. In Christianity while used to conservatism, it created problems in ATR as a conservative force it stuck to evil rites and practices i.e killing of twins, using human beings for sacrifices etc. Religion can equally become a source of change, when and where it serves as a social catalyst i.e. In Christianity papal statements in documents of the Catholic Church shows the new direction, pointedly emphasizing that Christianity is nothing outside spirituality.

Man is a tripartite being, so any real and authentic religious system must be able to address the spirit, mind and body of man, and only in these lines will it say it can enhance development. Okere remarks, “The wars and greed and oppression that have pocked and seared the worlds landscape for ages have essentially to do with this lopsided understanding of development... but societies that have had this one sided material and often materialist development have shown in many ways that all is not well with them and for all their wealth, they have only

impoverished the world... because development must be integral in order to do justice to the many sided aspects and needs of human person and human society, it is not only the materials but also the intellectual, moral, psychological and aesthetic sides off man that must be developed”

There is great need to restore balance in our understanding of these concepts, the spirit is man as such is very important, the soul too is very important, and the body is not of less important for the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. Every spirit needs a body to operate on this physical plane. Any ideology that belittles any of these components is faulty. The soul may seem to be distinct from the body, but the truth is that they are inseparable, man is a unit. “We take note of matter and spirit but we see matter as suffused in spirit and spirit as embodied in matter”

Religion, no doubt can engineer development. In the words of Okere, “perhaps religion has less to fear from its enemies pponents than its own ambiguities and capability of abuses, abuses that can turn if from an agency of development to that of backwardness obscurancy nay evil with good intentions.

### **Conclusion**

Religion is a great force and can generate change and development but not without conditions. Religion in order to do this, must of necessity preserve human values not just cultural values. Religion is a communal or community affair or activity and should aid people to changing the world; as it is to the world as ought to be



with the aid of philosophy and science cum technology and even social relations.

Religion should be able to teach us what we ought to do, that entails the proper use of freedom to get our obligations and duties carried out cushioned on personal and societal schemes and plat- forms. Bronowski states, “The concepts of value are profound and difficult exactly because they do two things at once. They join men into societies, and yet they preserve for them a freedom which makes them single men”. Authentic religion should be interested in realizing true humanity, which entails human understanding of man, nature and God, for there is no human worth and warmth without wisdom and goodness.

It is not in doubt we are living in an information age, suggestive of cultural reformation. “The fabric of western culture, it tangled skein of social habits artifacts, and values, is being pulled apart and made over – by us”. so said Bronowski. We may ask ourselves to what direction is this pull? What future does such pull have for man? Are we orchestrating a future culture? If so, what role would religion play to ensure the good of man?

Morality is not religion. Morality makes a man. Spirituality makes an ideal or what we may call a real man. Religion and morality seem to be interwoven in Africa. Little wonder Okere (2006) comments, “Indeed for the vast majority of human beings and certainty of Africans and Nigerians, morality is religion based. They learn morality form their religion, frame it in religious

terms and ultimately justify if by appeals to religion and God”.

Complementing the statement above is the assertion of Hardon “consequently, the central place occupied by the religious factors cannot be over looked if we would arrive at a real understanding of the values of all peoples. Religions, it has been said is the key of history. He adds, it is also the key to appreciating whatever a nation produces from the ancient monuments of the Pharaohs and inscription of the early Chinese kings, to the current art work as Japan or the latest novel in the United States”

Religion cannot bring about development without real dialogue: dialogues of life, action discourse and of religions experience so emphasized Arinze. Dialogue presupposes an encounter, not necessarily a confrontation for it will definitely bring about communication. Ogugua P.I. points out obstacles to dialogue in his article *Dialogue and Nation building (A philosophical Approach)*. He equally X-rayed the principles of dialogue: openness, truth seeking, personal contact, cooperation, frankness of position. He did not stress sincerity but truth not truthfulness. Ogugua did point out conditions for dialogues.

Despite the subtle war between scholars who emphasized the ought and those who emphasize the is one thing is certain, the verification or verifiability principle which science anchors on cannot stand without the truth being told, whether it is truth as truth or scientific truth, there must be a nexus of social relations to bring it about. We

have the responsibility to tell the truth, and to work out this truth or work for it.

In order to really work out the truth, there is need for freedom in dependence and consistent persistency Bronowski emphasizes, the mark of independence is originality and one of its expressions is dissent. Dissent in turn is the mark of freedom. That is, originality and independence are private needs of the truthful man, and dissent and freedom are public means to protect them. This is why society ought to offer the safeguard of free thought; free speech, free inquiry, and tolerance for these are needs which follow logically when men are committed to explore the truth”.

We can ensure development by ensuring that freedom and tolerance are based on respect for the other, his view and not on indifference and as such sustain human values and dignity.

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