

A Comparative Perspective Between Religion And Morality In Nigeria

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Abstract

Prevailing negative ethical trends of decadence in the world are alarming. These trends exact pressure and pose great challenges to religious code of conduct. This paper intends to examine the relationship between religion and morality in Nigeria in comparative and thematic perspectives by exploring the moral standards of the three dominant religions in Nigeria namely African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity. The paper further explicates the deep moral values of the three religions by creating a sense of value and worth, making the obvious necessity to infuse the rich ethical norms they teach into forming an integral part of the societal code of conduct, solidifying the nexus between religion and morality. A cursory survey of the religious practices of youths and adults in Nigeria society reveals that it is nothing but copious lifestyles foreign to the local culture that castigates abhorrent behavior. The contends that three predominant religions ought to pave ways for the citizenry to imbibe the life styles, beliefs and practices they propagate. citizens. The paper recommends the compulsory study of religion and morality as part of the General Studies programmes in Nigerian universities as well as the need for parents to be alive to the parental obligations as constituted authorities in homes and communities.

Keywords: Religion, African Religion, Islam, Christianity, Moral Values

Introduction

The inception of human existence and its encounter with the Transcendent Being propelled the prevailing actions of setting moral code to evaluate the activities of humans with the Transcended God in the socio-cultural environment. The purpose lies on the maintenance of adequate sanity, purity and wholesome undiluted reverence in the midst of the two unequal parties: God and humans. Emile Durkheim saw religion as man's dependence on the society; the rules and values of the society are very powerful⁷⁰ as regards

their aim of promoting desirable behaviour among the populace. It is pertinent to acknowledge the indelible impact of moral values of the three dominant religions: the African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam. They have created in the serious minded and faithful adherents the quest for religious and moral values. The ethical sets on moral conduct apprehend any disloyal, obstinate member who derails from the set of standard code. Such was the typical natural habitat for Africans prior to the advent of modernization and global movement.

⁷⁰ Christian Religious Studies NCE/DL course Book One, Published by National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna, 13

The advancement of global civilization and integration coupled with the scientific and technological manipulations have crept in with certain foreign lifestyles that are abhorrent and contrary to the set of moral code of conduct of indigenous communities and peoples. Ayantayo asserts that, "many people nowadays attach no importance to religion, including its ethics so much that they find it difficult to believe that there is anything to be called religious ethics not to talk of seeing it manifesting consciously and unconsciously in day-to-day social activities"⁷¹.

It is therefore important trace the nexus between religion and morality, as channels to provide desirable behaviour in the society. Morality is thought to pertain to the conduct of human affairs and relations between persons, while religion primarily involves the relationship between human beings and a transcendent reality⁷². In fact, this distinction between religion and morality is a relatively modern one.

For many religious people, morality and religion are the same or inseparable; for them either morality is part of religion or their religion is their morality. For others, especially for nonreligious people, morality and religion are distinct and separable; religion may be immoral or not moral, and morality may or should be nonreligious. Even for some religious people the two are different and separable; they may hold that religion should be

moral and morality should be, but they agree that they may not be⁷³.

Religion and morality employ similar framework of differentiating between 'right' and 'wrong'. Thus inculcating desirable behaviour and shaping the lifestyles of adherents to conform to the expected standard of the society lies in the domain of religion and morality. This paper intends to examine the relationship between religion and morality in Nigeria by explicating their deep moral values and creating a sense of value and worth in adherents.

Concept of Religion

The ontological experience of the human person with the Transcendent Being cannot be overemphasized. Religion involves the action of putting the religious ideas, doctrines, beliefs and value judgment one experienced in his or her encounter with the Supreme Being who became the object of worship and reverence. To solidify a concrete relationship with the Transcendent God, certain agreement needs to be propounded in terms of religious values and Divine laws. Charles Kegley⁷⁴ points out that religion is known very well as an important source of moral values such as love, mercy, kindness, patience, tolerance, respect, loyalty, honesty and truthfulness. Goody views religion as that which is made up of beliefs in supernatural beings and acts of winning their favour instead of provoking their anger with acts which include propitiation, purification, expiation, appeasement and adoration. Karl Marx stressed that 'man makes religion,

⁷¹ Ayantayo, J.K. *Fundamentals of Religious ethics*, a Senior Lecturer in Religious Ethics and Sociology of Religion, Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts (Ibadan, University of Ibadan, 2009), 10,15

⁷² Thomson Gale, 2005. *Morality and Religion*, Encyclopedia of Religion, <http://www.encyclopedia.com/>

⁷³ Childress, (ed) James F.; Manquarrie, (ed) John (1986). *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Ethics*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 400.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Morality_and_religion

⁷⁴ Christian Religious Studies cycle 1 NCC/DLS Course Book One, National Teachers' Institute, Kaduna 4, 5

religion does not make man⁷⁵. Human persons tend to be submissive and loyal to the Almighty being through worshipping, adoration, and reverence.

The origin of the word Religion is probably the Latin *religare*, to bind back. Not all uses of the term require reference to a divinity or divinities. But this entry will use the term so that there is such a reference, and a religion is a system of belief and practices that accepting a 'binding' relation to such a being or beings. This does not, however, give us a single essence of religion, since the conceptions of divinity are so various, and human relations with divinity are conceived so variously that no such essence is apparent even within Western thought. The ancient Greeks, for example, had many intermediate categories between full gods or goddesses and human beings⁷⁶.

Religion is also accepted as one of the strongest sources and means of social control. It is considered as one of the earliest institutions of mankind and is found in all the societies of the past and present⁷⁷. Religion is for many people so much an affair of the heart, so often inexplicable even to themselves, so coloured by their own special feelings for the particular belief and ceremonies that have become sacred to them through long

association. Religion is a promoter of sanity, unity and peace.

Thus, human beings instituted a unified relationship with the Supreme Being, ascertained an appropriate technique of paying homage to Him. Joseph Kenny defines religion as any system which relate man to the ultimate values, whether God or something else, and which embodies a creed, a code, a cult and a communion⁷⁸. This religion avails the adherents the opportunities to communicate to the God, depend on Him for life to be meaningful and harmonious.

Concept of Morality

Morality is the generally accepted standard of conduct as proper or the right things to do in a given society. Morality is concerned with, what is right and wrong⁷⁹. It entails judgments of actions of rightness and wrongness of persons by the generally accepted code of standard of a community or an institution. The term comes from the Latin word '*moralis*'⁸⁰ referring to the custom or way of life. It deals with human beings and their conducts. More conception of sophisticated idea of morality associates the term with compliances of code of conduct covering a broader field than sex. To be moral, one must not be dishonest, must not steal and must not hurt other people. By other code, individual must not gamble nor drink neither intoxicating wine nor smoke and commit murder. A moral person is one who does what is right, according to the approved standard. It

⁷⁵ Karl Marx, Quotable Quotes, <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/55036-the-foundation-of-irreligious-criticism-is-man-makes-religion-religion>. Accessed June 12th, 2021.

⁷⁶ John Hare Religion and Morality, 2014, *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

⁷⁷ The Study of Religion: Definition, http://shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in/bitstream/10603/5515/4/04_chapter%201.pdf

⁷⁸ Ayantayo Jacob Kehinde, 2011. Revisiting Ethical Issues in Academic Bias in the Study of African Indigenous Religions, *Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies* XLIII/1 Ibadan, Published by The Department of Religious Studies University of Ibadan, Nigeria, 29.

⁷⁹ Etefe Chukwemeka A., 2005. *Moral Philosophy Made Easy for Tertiary Institutions*, Zaria, Micsons Press, 6.

⁸⁰ Ilori, J. A. 1994. *Moral Philosophy In African Context for Universities and College of Education* 2nd Edition, Zaria, Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd. 4

is pertinent to note that, there are moral controversies. That is, moral conducts that a society may not clearly adjudge as morally right or wrong, good or bad such as. Euthanasia (mercy killing), organ transplant, surrogacy and their like. Some of these issues are accepted as wrong or right in some societies.

Morality has been regarded as universal in the sense that its rules and protection extend to all who are human. Precisely because it is a reasoned method of settling social disputes and, hence, superior to force or coercion, moral discourse remains the preferred method of relating to all who are capable of this method of social adjudication⁸¹.

Morality is all encompassing affecting every aspect of life. However, morality contradicts itself. A particular society may accept one issue as morally accepted, while another society rejects it as immoral. What is moral in one's religion or society may be termed immoral to another religion or society. To stand at equilibrium, similar moral standard needs to be converged to sum up a united code of moral standard to judge the rightness and wrongness of the individual in the society. Moral matter refers to what act or behaviour is acceptable as normal or usual. What is normal suggests what is conventional, customary, established, habitual, routine, natural, orthodox, predictable, and expected⁸². It is pertinent to note that moral issues occur when people make choices in terms of what they do such as eating, drinking, wearing dresses and

uttering words which may affect the wellbeing of others, thereby causing benefit or harm in the premises. This implies that every action of an individual needs to be put into consideration to enhance peace, unity and sanity. Moral Philosophy is concerned with providing and justifying principles of right conduct and action. Its main concern is to examine what makes an action right or wrong⁸³.

Moral values are not invented by human beings, but are the offspring of religion as many scholars of religion view it, because the Supreme Being had engraved into human person his law to form the conscience⁸⁴. This conscience propels his behaviour to be morally good and to shun evil to avoid the wrath of God. The Supreme Being is the embodiment of good character, consequently, he expects human beings to have good character⁸⁵. It is a grievous offence for one to deviate from the path of good character, and the offender deserves punishment which can be atoned with sacrifice.

Moral Values from the Perspective of African Traditional Religion

The scientific study of African Traditional Religion has illuminated the minds of scholars on issues pertaining to the understanding of traditional beliefs, values and practices. The truism of the belief in traditional religion is that, there is a Supreme Being who transcends all that exists in the universe, who alone is holy and almighty. He needs to be approached with due reverence.

⁸¹ G. J. Warnock, G.J., 1971. *The Object of Morality*. London, in William K. Frankena's *Ethics*, 2d ed. (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973)

⁸² Prof. Jacob Kehinde Ayantayo, 2009. *Fundamentals of Religious ethics*, a Senior Lecturer in Religious Ethics and Sociology of Religion, Department of Religious Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, 10, 15.

⁸³ Owan, Enoch A., 1995. *Invitation to Philosophy of Education*, Jos, Midland press Limited, 16.

⁸⁴ Quarcoome, T.N.O. 1987. *West African Traditional Religion*, Ibadan, African University Press, 163, 164.

⁸⁵ Labedan Adekunbi Helen, 2006. *Ori and Ewa as Embodiment of Yoruba Moral Values*, edited by Dzuruga A. "et al", Orita, Ibadan Journal of Religious Studies XXXVIII 1&2, published the Department of Religious Studies, University of Ibadan, Nigeria. 135.

Moral Values from the Perspective of Christianity

Christianity concerns itself with the ministry of Jesus and his Twelve Apostles coupled with The great Commission, to the adherents to go and make disciples of all nations...(Matthew 28:9-20). The mandate of propagating the good news of Jesus Christ to the whole world gingered up the early Christians to embark on zealous evangelism. Christianity is one of the Abrahamic religions and a vast majority of Christians believe in a triune God consisting of three unified and distinct persons: God the Father, God the Son and the Holy Spirit. There have been significant theological differences among Christians regarding the divine and human nature of Jesus and the triune nature of God⁸⁸. "The Church" is understood theologically as the institution founded by Jesus for the salvation of humankind. The 'Church' is the people that God gathers in the whole world⁸⁹. The Catholic Church in particular, derives her moral doctrines from the Holy Bible and traditions of the early church. The Holy Bible unveils the moral teachings of the patriarchs in the Old Testament, the prophets and messengers of God. It culminates in the Decalogue, God handed over to Moses at Mount Sinai, (Exodus 20:1-17) which comprises the dos and don'ts of the Transcendent God to establish good relationship between God and human persons and between human persons to each other. The New Testament of the Holy Bible contains the life and moral teachings of Jesus Christ in the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, instructions and counseling from the immediate disciples of Jesus and the church authority. The

teachings of Jesus on the success of life and blessedness summed up on his Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5:3—12, depicts the constitution of the Kingdom. It is pertinent to recognize that the Christians derived their moral code from these commandments of God and set up the required moral standard.

Commandments of God in the Book of Exodus Chapter 19 verses 1—20 The commandments of God portrays God's intimate relationship with human beings. He establishes these moral code to enable human beings worship him and revere him. They are as follows:

I am the Lord your God, which have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not make any graven image before you.

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Honour your father and your mother.

You shall not kill.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

You shall not covet (neighbour's house)

You shall not covet (neighbour's wife)

You shall not covet (neighbour's servants, animals, or anything else)⁹⁰

In the New Testament of the Holy Bible, Jesus recommended the eight Beatitudes as a set of moral standard to attain the Kingdom of God as follows as recorded in Matthew 5:3—12 during the Sermon on the Mount.

⁸⁸ Grudem, W. 1999. Bible Doctrine: Essential Teachings of the Christian Faith, Grand Rapids, Zondervan.

⁸⁹ Geoffrey Chapman, 1995. Catechism of the Catholic Church, Pocket Edition, London, British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication, 173.

⁹⁰ https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ten_Commandments

The Yoruba traditional concept of good character for instance can be applicable to either the Igbo or Hausa traditional religions as well as the traditional religious practices in other parts of the country. Some of these morals in traditional African religion are highlighted below.

Chastity before Marriage: This is a sacred duty of a woman⁸⁶. And it is forbidden for a man to seduce another man's wife. The penalty is the payment of the adultery fine. In Igbo traditional religion, particularly in Akabo, Imo State, for instance, the offender will be forced to perform rites of cleansing the land.

Hospitality: This is a great value to uphold. It entails being hospitable to strangers, showing love, care and welcoming visitors with open mind. Everybody is regarded as brothers and sisters. In African Traditional Religion, the spirit of giving is appreciated and practiced by the community to foster peace, unity and progress. Everyone gives without counting the cost in terms of food, clothes and accommodation. Generosity is highly appreciated and more regard is given to the less privileged.

Justice and fair play: These are emphasized, while wickedness and social injustice are vehemently condemned in the society. Disputes are settled collectively in the community central squares. In African setting, conflicts are presented to the constituted authority where resolution is efficiently taken to bring normalcy.

Integrity: Africans cherish integrity as a sign of maintaining good relationship with the deities. Stealing is forbidden and property is acquired legitimately. Thieves were pilloried⁸⁷ and killed. These are promulgated to promote sanity through observances of certain taboos in the community.

Covenant- Breaking and falsehood: These are condemned very strongly. Women as the weaker sex and the poor are given due protection. It is mean and immoral to outrage defenseless woman. The vulnerability of women charges them to seek protection from the Earth goddess. African women are safeguarded also by the menfolk. Falsehood and all its manifestations are believed to be heavily punished by God.

Hypocrisy: This is regarded as unmanly and is considered evil. *Olodumare* forbids such character. Honour and respect to elders is the duty to every person especially the young ones. Elders are greeted in respectable manner such as: kneeling, prostrating, genuflecting and bowing down in obeisance according to the culture of a particular community. Truth and moral rectitude are placed among the essential virtues.

Corporate Responsibility: Team work is appreciated and age grade is respected. Individualistic life is not welcomed, rather every one teams up to train and correct every child. In African Tradition Religion, morality is a fruit of religion. Thus, in traditional religion, there is no distinction between morality and religion because there is close relationship between religion and moral life.

⁸⁶ Oparanire Ugochi, *Ira Ofé A Challenge to Morality in the Contemporary Society* (Owerri, Austus Printers and Publishers, 20114), 13.

⁸⁷ Idowu Bolaji E., *Olodumare God in Yoruba Belief, Revised and Enlarged* (Nigeria, Longman Publishers Nigeria Plc, 1996), 168, 169.

Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn: for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek: for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness: for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful: for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they will be called children of God

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. :5:11-12⁹¹

Human person's actions are morally good if they agree with God's will, and they are bad if they disagree with it⁹². But God's will is not primarily expressed in a set of codified rules and laws, rather conviction to the inner calling and plan of God. If human person's response to God's calling to be good and faithful, the actions and ways of life are morally good.

Moral Values from the Perspective of Islam
Prophet Mohammed, PBUH (Peace Be Upon Him) was commissioned with the Divine

mission to preach the true faith of Islam among the Makkans, who were indulging in idol worship. The pre-Islamic period was the darkest age in human history. It was a time of ignorance and anarchy in the religious and social life in the world⁹³. Morality fell at its lowest ebb evident in corruption, ignorance, vices, superstition, unrestrained freedom, unrestricted enjoyment, persecution and wrangling of creed and sects prevailed in the Arab society. Muhammad was to preach to the people that God is one. He is the Maker and Creator; He is the Giver of life and the Bringer of death. There is none like Him. He is Supreme. People should give up bowing and bending before stones. They should quit idol worship. The Prophet was to repeat: "There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is His Prophet and Messenger"⁹⁴. The new mission of the Prophet is called Islam. Islam is a religion of Peace and brotherhood. It is a belief in Divine Monotheism. Islam enjoins its followers to lead a pure, simple and decent life. Promotion of rule of law is a basis for Sharia.

Sharia is the base of moral law in Islam.

Teaching of moral values are scattered all over the Qur'an. The following are the major moral values mentioned in the Qur'an and Hadith honesty, sincerity, humility, chastity, meekness, charity, love, politeness, forgiveness, goodness, courage, justice, obedience and faithfulness. This is to mention but a few. The morality implies the relationship between God and man, between human beings, between man and the creation and towards oneself. The

⁹¹ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatitudes>

⁹² Karl, H. Peschke, 2001. Christian Ethics Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II, Volume 1: General Moral Theology Newly revised edition, Bangalore, India, Theological Publications. 13

⁹³ Rahims, A., 2001. Islamic History, Lagos, Islamic Publications, Bureau, 4, 5, 6, 18.

⁹⁴ Opaya E., 2017. Insecurity of Women and Its Religious Implications on National Development, Abuja, *Paxem, Journal of Peace and Development*, Abuja: Published by Centre for Peace and development Veritas University, Abuja, Maiden Edition, Edited by Prof John Samber et al, Volume 1, NO. June, 2018, 12.

behaviour of a Muslim is summarized in Surah 4:36, "Serve God and join not any partners with him; and do good to parents, kinsfolk, orphans, those in need, neighbours who are near, neighbours who are strangers, the companion by your side, the way-farer (you meet), etc. The Qur'an gives a special teaching for specific moral values. The Qur'an in Surah 23:5-6; 24:30-31, speaks about modesty in behaviour and dressing: "And who guard their modesty – save from their wives or slaves they rightly possess, for them they are not blameworthy." Tell the believing men to be lower and be modest⁹⁵.

Honesty is another moral value that the Qur'an teaches strongly. 'Give just measure and be not of those who diminish; and weigh things with an exact and right balance', (Qur'an 26:181-182). All forms of corruption like fraud, injustice, wrongful mischief and gambling are forbidden. In Islam, honesty is a virtue that is highly cherished. It makes one to have a sense of dignity.

Islam means a religion of peace. No one should inflict injury on another individual. "The believers are but a single brotherhood, so make peace and reconciliation between your two brothers". "you who believe avoid suspicion as much as possible; for suspicious in some cases is a sin, and spy not on each other, nor speak ill of each other behind their backs" (Qur'an 49: 12). Suspicion, spying, backbiting, defaming are poisonous vices.

Sharia law (Qur'an 2:219; 5: 93-94) prohibits eating the meat of swine; wild animals with claws, all carnivorous birds, and meat which

has not been slaughtered ritually. Alcoholic drinks such as beer, wine, etc. are considered unclean and are forbidden. Also, Islamic code of ethics is the base of the good behaviour of Muslims who observe them in praise of Allah.

Negative Moral Trends in the Nigerian Society

There is a negative trend in the observance of societal values in Nigeria. This trend cuts across every nook and cranny of the country and this calls for concern. A cursory view of the prevalent moral decadence in the conventional society is an indication that, the country is deteriorating morally. This calls for urgent attention and needs prompt evaluation of every conduct the populace exhibit in various sphere of life. Such immoral trends include:

- **Immodesty:** The negative trend of fashion in the conventional society is quite alarming. Fashion is part of cultural display when it is in congruent with the acceptable pattern of life of the indigenes, religious or pious organization. Immodest dressing and dancing borrowed from foreigners have turned to be the prevalent styles in most parts of the country. Anyone who does not 'belong' is tagged, 'Old School' or laughed at. To this end, many girls in the country move about in 'improper' and outrageous dresses all in the name modernism and civilization.
- **Dishonesty:** Truth is far from people, while telling lies is the order of the day. One tells lies and goes free; the other tells truth and is punished severely. Why? Lying is sinful because it leads one's neighbour into error and undermines mutual confidence. It destroys most important foundation of individual

⁹⁵ Toni La Salandra, 2003. *About Islam*, Nairobi, Pauline Publications Africa, 32, 33.

security and fruitful work⁹⁶. Dishonesty is rampant in all spheres of life. Lots of people are live fraudulent lives. Many young people on account of unemployment have resorted to what is "yahoo yahoo" which is a euphemism for defrauding people online or through scams. These are simply fraudsters⁹⁷.

- **Sexual Abuse:** There are lots of sexual abuses, fathers raping their daughters and housegirls and sister in-laws. Mothers are luring young men into sexual affairs. Prostitution is becoming rampant in the society. Sexual harassment has prevailed in the society. Fornication and adultery are normal pastime. Casual sexual intercourse⁹⁸ has turned into recreational ground even in open field, regardless of public viewers.
- **Covetousness:** People are not satisfied with they have rather greedy and avarice fill their hearts. Coveting the inheritance of others by force has become a prevalent issue in most communities. Covetousness breeds⁹⁹ heinous actions and hinders human development.
- **Stealing:** This has become the order of the day in our society, starting from picking pockets to armed robbery. Most prominent men and women falsify

signatures to dupe others and embezzle huge amount of money for selfish ends. Gambling has become a quick way of acquiring funds.

- **Murder:** Inability of people to control and manage their anger has led to many murder cases in the society. Violent crime is everyone. People commit murder on daily basis by using lethal weapons indiscriminately to eliminate God's creature at the slightest provocation. Ritual murder and kidnapping for ransom sometimes ending people's lives in the process has become a commercial venture in contemporary Nigeria.
- **Indolence:** Laziness is a disease. It prevents hardwork and breeds suspicion, gossip, idle talk, hooliganism, cultic practices and irresponsibility. A cursory look around and one will find able, energetic young men and women parading aimlessly in the environment, enjoying being idle.
- **Hatred:** Genuine love is not easily found. There are lots of hate speeches, abuses, backbiting, betrayal, blackmailing, fighting, bullying, and quarrelling, child and woman trafficking. People seem to derive pleasure in inflicting injuries on their fellow human beings. Hatred is found in the families, communities and societies at large.
- **Indiscipline:** Current experiences have made us understand that even parents of this 21st century find it difficult to control their wards. It is also observed that, the present global children prefer worldly activities such as indecent dressing and dancing, vulgar talks, disrespectful actions, littering, loitering, drunkenness, drug addiction and abuse, arrogance, unfaithfulness, injustice, disobedience,

⁹⁶ Peschke, K.H. 2001. Christian Ethics moral Theology in the Light of Vatican ii, Volume II: Special Moral Theology Revised Edition, Bangalore, The publications in India, 366.

⁹⁷ Ndaka Orjimo, BBC News, Lagos: Internet fraud: Nigerian scammer 'pulls off \$1m heist' from prison Published, 19 November 2019. Accessed June, 2021.

⁹⁸ Obisesan, K.A. A. A. Adeyemo, R. A. Onifade. *Childhood Sexuality and Child Sexual Abuse in South West Nigeria*, 2009. Pg 624-626 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/014436199638977tab-permissions&scroll=top>

⁹⁹ Kabiru, Salisu Ahmed. "Causes of Corruption in Nigeria: Implication for National Development," in *Journal of Management and Economic Studies*, 2019. <https://www.jomaes.org> Accessed 16th, June 2021.

impurity, impatience, assorted crimes, bribery and corruption and examination malpractices among others to things that would benefit their soul. Indiscipline entails lack of self-control and self-restraint.

- **Corruption:** In Nigeria, corruption has become like a polluted river where everyone fetches water to drink and use for other domestic activities. Lots of things have gone wrong even children¹⁰⁰ are not exempted except the unborn.

Towards a Unified Moral Value for Moral Development

Given the plethora of moral abuses highlighted above, it is imperative to fashion out a unified moral values drawn from the three religions discussed in this paper as a recipe for moral development for societal sustenance. Those values are outlined below.

- i. Detachment:** This is a value that makes us to love everything and everyone in the world only in relation to the absolute love for God. It implies total freedom, openness and purity of love. It involves overcoming the desires which are the root cause of all evil. This moral value enables one to have all he or she needs in life but possess none.
- ii. Faithfulness:** This enables one to put trust in God at all times. It is a total surrender to God with full belief without any need for logical proof or material evidence. It enables one to encounter God directly and depends on Him solely. Faithfulness entails raising minds to God and turning away

from self, and continuously persisting in prayers. It is pertinent to recognize that faithfulness to God often leads to faithfulness to one another.

- iii. Loyalty:** It entails owing total allegiance to God, being sensitive and faithful to the dictates of one's conscience. It assists one to refrain from gossips and idle talks and hate speeches, thus working for the prosperity and welfare of the nation. This moral value enables one to be respectful, trustworthy, obedient and hardworking, and being committed to duty.

- iv. Prayerfulness:** It is free approach of human beings to God, to seek for Divine benevolence, and benefits for both temporary and spiritual needs. It involves request, loving attention to the presence of God and self-offering. Prayer demands self-control of body and spirit. Prayer can be cultivated by talking with God, being with him and listening to him, detaching from worldly attractions.

- v. Purity:** This is a condition of being chaste and undefiled. It entails total devotion and quality of heart, an attitude of love. It helps one to overcome the lures of worldly desires, aspirations, ambitions and pleasures. It controls carnal and lustful appetite; makes one to have right thinking and intentions, prudence and carefulness.

- vi. Truthfulness:** This refers to complete sincerity and honesty. It prompts a person to be faithful in intents, words and deeds. It shuns all lies and duplicity; makes one to grow in fidelity to one's commitment. It shuns prejudice, search for the truth, live by the truth and encourages others to speak

¹⁰⁰ https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Osita-Agbu/publication/240626318_Re-visiting_Corruption_and_Human_Trafficking_in_Nigeria_Any_Progress/links/0deec5319877bad666000000/Re-visiting-Corruption-and-Human-Trafficking-in-Nigeria-Any-Progress.pdf

only the truth¹⁰¹. This moral value imparts honesty, accountability and transparency.

vii. Modesty: The dominant religions teach and uphold modesty in dressing and dancing. Enjoin their adherents to be moderate in eating and drinking for excess leads to gluttony and lack of self-control.

viii. Tolerance: This greases human relationship in the society. It is the ability to accept the views of another person besides your own views, suggestions or opinions. No one has it all. In a society, human beings need each other to live with and to survive in the environment. Basically, every religion preaches and promotes tolerance within its religion and the other religions. Tolerance enables the adherents of different religions to understand each other's beliefs and practices. It fosters peace, unity and progress within the community. Tolerance promotes mutual understanding; eschew hatred, conflict, rancor and unprogressive spirit.

ix. Togetherness and Oneness: This is critical for national development. Development involves Team spirit¹⁰², which is essential to the growth of any society. Corporate Responsibility entails putting human and natural resources together to build up a community. All hands must be on deck to harness human resources, talents, knowledge and experiences for the development, upliftment and actualization of a progressive society.

x. Charity: Charity is an expression of love especially to the poor in the society. Almsgiving is mandatory to Muslims. The Christians give alms to the less privilege. Traditional religion adherents offer assistance to the needy. They show goodness and favour in magnanimous disposition to assist the down trodden in the society.

xi. Humility: Humility makes one to be balanced in all ramifications. It promotes integrity and dedication towards one's duty in the community. Humility is the key to other virtues. It makes one to be seasoned, cautious and acceptable. Humility breeds commitment, simplicity, approachability, reliability and trust.

Recommendations

Adherents of the major religions need a retreat to reflect on what has gone wrong and redirect themselves to the core beliefs, tenets, practices, moral values of their religions. All hands must be on deck to curb the ugly moral abuse in the society.

Parents and constituted authorities of both civil and religious, should not relent in their efforts to eradicate the influence of foreign lifestyles on Nigerians while institutions of higher learning should be in the vanguard to propagate the importance of morality and its values to the young generation. In fact, it recommended that religion and morality should be incorporated as part of in the General Studies programme in higher institutions in Nigeria just as we recommend that the boarding school system should be made compulsory for all school children where good moral and ethical standards should be taught to the young generation.

¹⁰¹ Ignacimuthu, S. 2004. *Values for life*, Mumbai, Published by Better Yourself Books, 95-111.

¹⁰² Dr. S. Ignacimuthu, SJ. *Values for Life* (Bombay: Better Yourself Books, 2004), 91

Conclusion

In this paper, the relationship between morality and religion have been established. Many religions have value frameworks regarding personal behaviour meant to guide adherents in determining between right and wrong. While morality does not necessarily depend upon religion since religion is faith, based in the supernatural, moral values regulate right and wrong conduct. Due to human weaknesses, sometimes humans bend to negative moral

inclination. At such moments faith in religion and the values taught by religion serve as a restraint. The need to integrate our moral values with faith in religion which is spiritual is necessary to arrest the prevailing moral decadence in Nigeria and restore sanity for the moral, social and total development of the individual and the society.

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