

GENUINE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT: THE PLACE OF AFRICAN VALUES AND IDENTITY

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Abstract

Value is an important component of human existence. Every human being has some values and principles which underscore his actions. In the same manner, any group or society without core values is as good as nonexistent. The present work is developed on the premise that Africa needs to re-embrace in practice and sincerity some of her distinguishing core values. The paper argues that it is only by the adoption and practice of these values, that Africa can have a genuine sense of identity and dignity in the international community. Furthermore, he who believes in nothing can also fall for anything. In this vein, Africa can launch itself on the path to authentic development by living within the ambit of these values which could serve as the foundation for its undertakings. Among others, these values include marriage, family/extended family, communalism, religiosity, solidarity, the sacredness of human life and a life of solidarity as opposed to materialism. The paper builds a logical

nexus between value and identity and eventually correlates the duo as a justifiable prelude to authentic development. Finally, the work seeks to establish that the solution to most of the underdevelopment issues in Africa must come from within. It is only when Africans realize that they must take the lead in addressing the socio-economic and political issues confronting them, shall sustainable development comes to be. To achieve this, there is a need for the adoption or re-orientation of core values on the continent.

Keywords: Authentic, development, communalism, family, solidarity, value

Introduction

The present work is an attempt to establish the fact that Africa has some important values that she inherited from her forefathers and those values as represented in the African traditional thought could still give Africans a sense of identity and equally serve as a catalyst to giving them authentic development. The paper is of the position that amid all odds, there are still some vital aspects of African cultural heritage that Africans should uphold dearly, especially in this present Age of individualism and loss of a sense of community. Moreover, the paper maintains that if Africans eventually revive these values

in truth and practice, they will surely lead the continent to authentic development. The values in question include strong regard for marriage and family unity, solidarity as the key to communalism, coupled with authentic religiosity and the sacredness of human life. In this regard, authentic development as intended in the work does not necessarily mean the accumulation of wealth, but a development in conformity with the promotion of human dignity, genuine social stability and equity.

The first part of the work deals with the concept of 'value' and 'cultural identity'. It upholds that human life is based on value since man is different from other lower animals. Man always acts in consideration of how his action reflects his personality and also the impact it has on the people around him and society in general. By so doing, through man's actions he portrays a sense of value and identity which could either make or mar him. The same thing is also applicable to groups and societies. Analogically, Africans are encouraged herewith to revive and guide jealously those aforementioned values because they would not only dignify them but equally because they are just and worthy. More so, such values would give Africa a sense of cultural identity in the comity of nations and eventually help the continent to attain authentic development. In this regard, Africans are discouraged

from subscribing for instance to the ongoing trend of same sex marriage as it is obtainable in the West because it is not part of the African long cherished values and cultural identity. Africans should note for example that: "Homosexuality and Bestiality – these were abominations in Africa in the past but today globalization has imported these abominations in Africa from the West where even same sex marriage are being legalized not to talk of homosexuality or bestiality" (Amaegwu 2013, XII). Furthermore, such a homosexual union is not in harmony with the real idea of authentic human development, since it is antithetical to even the nucleus of human society which is the union of husband and wife anchored in the institution of family.

The second part of the work on the other hand takes into proper account the importance of marriage, family, *omenala* (culture), solidarity, communalism and religiosity as important condiments of African values, which are equally indicators of authentic development. A major emphasis is laid here on the notion of African communalism which is primarily founded on solidarity and sense of responsibility and not necessarily common ownership of property. The key to social conviviality in the typical African traditional context is solidarity which has its practical expression at least in the extended family

system. It is therefore imperative that Africans should revive their original sense of communalist solidarity to enable them to reposition themselves on the lane of authentic development. Africa cannot afford the wrought of individualism which is an unacceptable way of life to the African cultural heritage. In the same manner, Africans have been originally religious people, unfortunately, many Africans in this epoch have diverted from the practical demands of even their new found creeds, by living at variance with authentic religious prescriptions and expectations. Such anti-human and anti-social stability ways of life can never lead to authentic development; in addition, they do not also give Africa a genuine sense of identity. In all, the paper condemns all those acts which are opposed to authentic human development of Africa, and describes such acts as anti-*Omenala*. Suffice it to say therefore that *Omenala* is the equivalent of Igbo language word for culture and tradition.

1:1: The Concept of Value

Human life is a value based enterprise, which is responsible for the necessity of ethics in all human relationships. Axiology is however the branch of philosophy that studies value. It is derived from the Greek

word “axio” which is equivalent to value and “logos” which means discourse. Ethics in this vein is a rational inquiry into how people ought to act in a worthy manner in the society. It is in other words a critical study of the moral actions of man since man is a social animal. Value is fundamental in human life, since human action is quite different from the actions of other lower animals which are geared towards the satisfaction of their immediate biological and physical needs. Hence:

“The human actions are those performed consciously, intentionally, rationally, willingly and freely. They are influenced by the human reason with which one can perceive the intangibles and concepts for the realization of the problems of ethics, the problems associated with the nature of and the end for man in society, the good to be encouraged and practiced” (Eneh 2001, 1).

Value is therefore very essential in human relationships because human action is rational, willed and result oriented. Hence, ethics demands that human action is interpreted within the confines of good or evil, just or unjust. There is the argument that value varies from one group or society to another since different people do cherish different things. Thus:

“Whether you should take your values from one society depends on what the society’s values are. Lots of societies either are or have been racist, sexist, imperialistic, brutal toward the poor and downtrodden, and morally unwholesome in many other ways, and not even communitarians think anyone ought to adopt those values” (Ellin 1995, 220).

In any case, there are some intrinsic values because they are what they stand for, as opposed to extrinsic values which are generally mere means to other goods or ends. An intrinsic value is categorically imperative because it is duty bound and not prone to mere consequences. There is therefore no gainsaying that value could be right or wrong, positive or negative and that is why Africa must be conscious of its value system as a necessary pedestal for its social identity and way of life. In this vein, value constitutes a sense of identity and worth. The type of value which is upheld by any group gives an insight to the preference system and ideals of such a group in question.

Value shapes human beings, institutions and every given society. Value orientations are those views that are cherished and indirectly adopted by society, as a result,

they determine the meaning of human life and define the parameters by which social problems and issues are addressed. It needs to be emphasized that value system shapes institutions and has strong impact on social actions and ethical interpretations. The various Holy Books of different religions are emphatic on the main rocks man should avoid and the channels he ought to follow, but be as it may, man can only be advised but the actions proper are his. The problem is the consequence of human action which could be deemed either positive or negative in every given circumstance.

A good number of the disasters witnessed in the world today are a result of the actions of man or the nature of values cherished by society. In fact: "It is herein that the ultimate cause of disaster lies. Without a critical and realistic analysis of human behaviour at every level of its activity, no sound workable solution can be conceived of problems which confront man today" (Mirza 1998, 621). Many people today have abused the idea of value, just as some societies have bastardized value by claiming that value is all about relativism or subjectivism. The truth of the matter is that there are still some universal values irrespective of how one may look at it. The sacredness of human life for instance is a universal value since every rational man deems his life as being precious, all things

being equal. To live and let live is axiomatic in the domain of moral life because even an evil-minded person must wish to live to execute his evil acts. For value to be positive, man must be committed to it. In short: "In simplest terms, it lies in the rehabilitation of basic human values such as truth, honesty, integrity, justice, fair play, concern for others, sensibility to the sufferings of people even when they are unrelated, and an overall commitment to goodness" (Mirza 1988, 621). From the ongoing, it is evident that the sustainability or otherwise of value depends on man and the society in general. That a society is just is because it has members who uphold justice and such a society could be said to be unjust because its members uphold injustice.

1:2: The Notion of Value and Cultural Identity

Both value and culture are essential in human formation, just as the duo are not only interwoven, but they also pose vital socio-corporate identity and could affect the path of authentic development. The type of culture that is dominant in a society shapes the people's ways of life and cherished values, thereby distinguishing them from other people or groups and equally affects their worldview. Value and culture are then intertwined, since there is no culture without values and no value exists independent of

any particular socio-cultural context. Culture and values also go a long way in determining the development pace of a people. A society for instance which is opposed to or indifferent to the use of modern technology in the present human civilization will definitely find it difficult to live at par with the current global industrialization trend. One can easily imagine the faith of any country today which does not embrace the use of computer or internet in particular irrespective of its disadvantages. Obviously, such a country will find it difficult to meet up with modern socio-political and economic life. Hence, it is not an overstatement to say that shared societal values give group identity and such values can also make or mar development.

A lot of thinkers and scholars have explained culture and value in relationships with different societies or groups. Culture for human beings embraces: “man made environment of beliefs, customs, knowledge, and practices. Culture is the conventionalized behavior of his society, and it influences all of his actions, although it seldom enters his conscious thoughts...Culture changes slowly and in doing so it gives stability and security to society” (Davis 1962, 36). To define culture as a “conventionalized behavior” means that culture is a social phenomenon and if it is a social phenomenon it then

definitely gives a sense of identity to the society in question. Culture is then beyond mere face value practices, as it permeates the people's thoughts and psyche, thereby influencing their belief systems and how they are looked upon by other people. Hence, a people's value system is often reflective of their culture and attitude towards life in general.

Culture is a strong sense of identity because it inculcates values into the people. Children for instance are already part of given cultural orientations and identity before going to school. This is why it is advised that: "Teachers can best decide on what ought to be taught by finding out what children already know" (Athey 1990, 28). This assertion above presupposes that a child already comes from a particular cultural or value-given formation or identity before going to school for the attainment of formal education. In this regard, "Each society possesses a way of life or, in our terminology, a *culture*, that defines appropriate or required modes of thinking, acting, and feeling" (Chinoy 1967, 26) Culture in this regard could be seen as a compendium of complex whole which embraces morals, belief, art, customs, law and other ways of life which shape man as a member of a particular society. Thus:

“Regularities of behavior do not in themselves constitute culture. They occur in large part because men possess culture, because they have common standards of good and bad, right and wrong, appropriate and inappropriate, and possess similar attitudes and share a fund of knowledge about the environment – social, biological, and physical – in which they live” (Chinoy 1967, 27).

It is obvious that value and culture engender social patterns of behaviour and actions. Social patterns in this regard could be overt or covert. In this regard: “Culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (Tylor E. D. as quoted in Bohannan & Glazer 1973, 63). Since culture establishes values in a society, it then moulds cultural units. “A cultural unit usually has many subcultures. Consider that a man’s city is a cultural unit. His company, his office group, his family, and a hundred other groups are subcultures that also affect his behavior. Culture has helped form his attitudes, his work habits and the goals he seeks” (Davis 1967, 37). It is therefore very important

to note here that from a big culture a subculture can as well emerge, thereby giving a sense of identity to its subscribers. As we have said earlier, the important lesson to be drawn here is that culture and values shape each other and eventually give a sense of identity to members of the society or group and the type of values upheld by the society could affect its development as a group or people.

2: 1: (a): Marriage/Family Value and Authentic Development

Marriage is the leading most acceptable way of raising a family in the world today and the institution of family is highly respected in all known contemporary culture. Today, it is obvious that domestic and social vices like discrimination against women, oppression of widows, domestic violence, child abuse and patriarchy are still issues which impede authentic human development in Africa. Consequently, those social conditions which affect the cohesion of family as the primary unit of the human society, especially in Africa cannot be taken for granted. A situation for instance whereby a female is not considered in the father's patrimony or inheritance is an act which is contrary to authentic human development. Thus:

“The family, it is frequently said, is the basic social unit. The immediacy of our involvement in family life, the intensity of the emotions which it generates, the sexual and other satisfactions that it provides, the demands it makes upon our loyalties and efforts, and its functions with regard to childbearing and child care seem to offer ample evidence of its priority as the fundamental social group” (Chinoy 1967, 136).

Family is then an important and fundamental constituent of the society since it is the basic unit of the society itself. Family is wealth in so far as it is the most valued among all the social institutions and last resort of every individual need. It is often heard among different people from diverse culture that their family comes first. It is a reality that most people do have a great sense of responsibility towards their families. A husband has a fundamental responsibility to his wife and vice versa, just as both parents also have responsibility equally towards their children. Children on the other hand do have the responsibility to take care of their parents especially during their old age. Above all, every family has some values it upholds and such values give the family a sense

of dignity and identity in the society. Some families are conscious of their reputation and as a result they transfer core values and orientations from one generation to another.

The institution of marriage is one important aspect of human life which Africans cherish a lot and which if well respected and observed will go a long way in giving Africans not only a good sense of identity but would help the continent to the path of authentic development. It has to be stated clearly that marriage in the pure traditional African contest is the union of a husband and wife or husband and his wives; that is what marriage ought to be for Africans and not same sex marriage. It is on this note that marriage genuinely becomes the fulcrum of family as an institution. Today, when some people are in desperate quest for the possession of material wealth at all cost, coupled with the bastardization of marriage at the expense of core human values like the genuine maintenance of the institution of family, Africa would need to make a rethink, in order not to be cajoled into this destructive stereotype. While it has to be stated clearly that material wealth is important for human survival and that Africa should work hard towards meeting up with her socio-economic challenges, that should not be made at the expense of the sacredness of the family as a cherished

institution in Africa. In fact, it is through marriage and family that kinship is maintained and kinship means: "any relationship....to another through his father and mother. All kinship ties thus derive from the family, that universal and fundamental group which everywhere and in some way or another incorporates the institution of marriage" (Evans-Pritchard 1951, 49).

Marriage is an important institution and Africans of ancient times held it dearly and it gave them a sense of particularity. To express its importance, some modern African nations even tie political institution with family bonds. It is an important value that Africans should maintain especially considering regrettably: "the modern individual's sense of isolation, his so called spiritual homelessness, his bewilderment in the face of the seemingly impersonal forces of which he feels himself a helpless victim, his weakening sense of values" (Lowenthal & Guterman 1949, 15). Unfortunately, man is gradually abandoning the virtues inherent in family life in the face of the ongoing increasing mechanized world. Africans should realize that what matters in life is not the trend of wealth acquisition but authentic development. Such authentic development should aim at the promotion and validation of the institution of marriage and consequently family, rather than its destruction as it is

witnessed in the Western world of today, which is formalizing free sex for all marriage.

The family is a powerful institution that helps people to grow in an environment in which the children derive not only their first education, but are inculcated with a sense of belongingness as society-dependent beings. We have to understand that situations abound whereby some individuals' lives are almost dependent on the family. In fact:

“The family – or some larger kinship group – is typically the most significant social unit to which men belong. The allocation of political power is often linked with family institutions; among the Ashanti of West Africa, for example, the ruler maintained the allegiance of many of his subjects by taking a wife from the each of the numerous clans” (Chinoy, 1967, 136).

A situation whereby some people or cultures undermine the relevance and indisputable value of the family is quite unfortunate. A healthy family is synonymous with authentic development since any arrangement or culture which is opposed to the unity and promotion of this

primary unit of the society called family, does not eventually promote authentic development.

2: 1: (b): Omenala as Key to Authentic Development

The Igbo ethnic group of Nigeria based its socio-cultural, political cum economic life based on the concept of “*omenala*” otherwise called “*omenani*”. In short, *omenala* is the elementary way an Igbo man expresses his philosophy. Hence: “*Omenala*, thus conceived, refers to what accords to the basic beliefs, ideas and mores without which, in fact, as the Igbo expresses it, the community would cease to exist because it must have lost touch with reality and the source of their existence” (Nwala 1985, 27). In this regard, *Omenala* regulates the people’s social practices, while upholding their ideological, religious and economic sense of existence. *Omenala* from this perspective is an act which is in conformity with the values of the land. *Omenala* embraces the totality of Igbo worldview in concordance with reality. Hence:

“*Omenala* includes major beliefs about the origin of the universe and its nature, the place of the spirits, deities, man and other beings in the universe, the nature of character of taboos, regulations, prescriptions and prohibitions as to what is

proper in such a universe – rules of marriage, sexual intercourse, attitudes to strangers – and forms of social relationships...decency and etiquette” (Nwala 1985, 27).

From the present scenario, it is evident that the Igbo as a typical African ethnic nationality lives in accord with laid down values and norms as typified in *Omenala* and anything contrary to that is antithetical to common good and authentic development.

Marriage and family are two sides of the same coin in the African traditional thought pattern as it poses an important value to the society. Hence, in the Igbo traditional setting, it is acceptable that: “The community life begins in the family. The marriage bond ties together the young couple from whom the future members of the family must come. The Igbos maintain a very strong family system. A family is not formed until all the marriage customs are fulfilled” (Edeh 1985, 57). The sacredness of the family is then analogous to authentic development and to destabilize or act in such a manner that denigrates the family institution is basically anti-*Omenala*. In reconciliation with the dictates of *Omenala*, marriage in Igbo African socio-cultural background is a very serious business with a laid down process, rituals

and practices in line with the traditions and customs of the land, and of course goes beyond the intending couples. Not only that both families are completely involved, but above all, it is a pure community affair, as the newly married wife is accepted as a full member of the family and a principal subject in the maintenance and procreation in the community.

Societal authentic development must be the type of development that is at par with the ideals, values and realities surrounding human dignity and social stability. In this Age of the proliferation of divorce and individualism, Africans ought to tenaciously be committed to their age-long cherished marriage value which is synonymous with authentic development, in line with the concept of *Omenala*. This is why among Africans, as typical of the Igbos:

“The process of getting married involves families, relatives, and sometimes even the clans and villages of each party. This undertaking cannot be hurried because the people are aware of the fact that marriage is a lifelong undertaking...The principle that dictates the choice of a marriage partner is

based on the Igbo notion of life and existence” (Edeh 1985, 57).

The underpin of this level of value to marriage is the notion of life and procreation which are attached to marriage. Marriage is therefore an important aspect of African culture and identity and Africans should maximize all efforts towards its sacred maintenance, for the avoidance of family break-up and its attendant consequences. It is then necessary that we should understand that the culture of Africa is typical of African identity. The fact that other parts of the world, especially the West takes marriage for granted, especially with the promotion of gay marriage, should not make Africa to digress from its norms and values especially in relation to marriage and family. Africans ought to understand that there is the need to keep the worthy aspects of African culture and values since:

“Culture refers to the prevailing techniques by which a people maintain themselves within their environment. It is a shortened definition of the ‘knowledge’, beliefs, art, morals, laws, and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of society...Culture is socially learned and shared. It is also handed

down from generation to generation as a tradition" (Ofoegbu, Mazi Ray., "The Contributions of Igbo Culture to Nigeria's political Culture" in *Igbo Language and Culture*. Edited by Ogbalu, F. C. and Emenanjo, E.N. 1987: 212).

The culture of a people therefore plays important role in determining their goals and desires. Africans should always bear in mind that without a strong definition of their values, they cannot be known for anything in the comity of nations. The idea of *Omenala* for instance should not be taken for granted since every group or society must have the basic principles on which its existence lies. Authentic development is not a question of mere technological advancement or the sophisticated arms and ammunition at the disposal of a nation. It is also not even the question of weapons of mass destruction which a country possesses. Authentic development therefore must align with core human values, happiness unity and social stability, starting from the first institution which is family. Africans should see development from this perspective to enable them continue with the values their fore fathers attached to marriage and family as a strong institution, which is the primary source of the society and education. The fact that Africans should adhere to the dictates of their

indigenous values which promote the dignity of man, wellbeing of the family and common good of the society is automatically indicative of the quest for authentic development.

2:2: Solidarity as the Nucleus of African Communalism and Authentic Development

The sense of communality is one of the major cultural patrimonies which ancient Africans bequeathed to the present people of the continent. Though traditional Africa was made up of different ethnic groups, evidence abound that they still shared many values in common, as what united them, outweighed what divided them. For instance: "But even among food-gatherers there are some, such as the Andaman Islanders, among whom the members of a community do not all claim to be related, and people can readily remove from one community to another; and among pastoralists and cultivators, notably in Africa, political aggregates often contain people of many different ethnic stocks" (Schapera 1967, 4) This idea of sharing common political and convivial ideals, without necessarily being of the same kinship underscores the principle of African communalism. In fact: "Even where all members of the community are related, moreover, kinship is not the only basis of solidarity" (Schapera 1967,

4). In this vein, it will therefore be unfair to claim that political union in traditional Africa was exclusively based on kinship. There were rather similarity of values and a deep rooted idea of communalism amongst the traditional Africans.

It is very necessary to understand that the idiosyncrasy of African communalism is the value of solidarity as the foundation of human society. This is actually an intrinsic part of the traditional African worldview as evident in extended family and many social groups like town union, village meetings, age grades, women's associations and youth groups. The solidarity inherent in African communalism is also reflective of many African socio-cultural festivals like the *Iwa Akwa* (wearing cloth) ceremony of the Mbano and Mbaise clans of Imo State Nigeria. The *Iri JiOhuru* (eating of new yam) festival among many Igbo clans of South East Nigeria and also the Masquerade of most African communities are all geared towards solidarity as evidenced in African communalism. These are all socio-cultural events and communal properties that are owned and celebrated by the community, as no individual has the singular right of ownership. Another dimension of African solidarity within the ambit of communalism is practically witnessed during funerals, whereby the bereaved are not only the

members of the family of the dead, but the entirety of the community. Often, not only members of the community are usually close to the bereaved family in particular, but they also contribute to the burial and partake actively in the funeral. This is a clear indication that human beings in this regard are owned by the community, with this level of responsibility demonstrated by all and sundry. In the Igbo context furthermore, the community also has a say in conjunction with the family members on the burial arrangement. Hence, this type of concern is a practical reflection of solidarity as the nucleus of African communalism.

Communalism from the traditional African context goes beyond common ownership of property. It embraces psychological, emotional and conscientious ties among the people. This consists of a deep sense of value and identity for authentic development. Unfortunately, present Africans seem to be losing grips with this hard-earned cultural inheritance from their forefathers. An average African needs to understand that he ought to be his brother's or neighbor's keeper, as this is an intrinsic part of his fundamental cultural identity and sense of common good. With this mindset, Africans should be on the way to authentic development. This assertion is inescapable because after all:

“Culture and tradition glue or bind communities, clans, kindred, families, groups, as well as organizations together. Tradition is passed on, handed down and is identical with culture and human life. As life is passed on, its dimensions on culture, society and politics are determined by transmitted experience, growth and maturation, but also paralysis and death” (Amaegwu 2013, 53).

Exigency demands that Africans should today rekindle the authenticity inherent in their communalism, especially in the present reality of regional conflict, xenophobia, political upheaval and institutional corruption, to mention just but a few. It has been said earlier in this work that authentic development is not the accumulation of material wealth. It is rather a life of happiness and virtue. After all some Africans still believe that in the absence of the modern technology with obviously its inherent advantages and attendant vices notwithstanding: “the first people lived happily, lacking nothing, as God provided them with food, shelter and immortality” (Mgbiti 1970b, 167) The craze for material wealth and unbridled individualism is making unfortunately some Africans to lose their original positive

culture which values solidarity with a communalist spirit geared towards authentic development. Africans should remember that: “culture allows a group to survive and even benefit from the constant winds of change. Positive culture nurtures and values the contributions of members, and is flexible to change and adapts to the needs of its members in a dynamic and constantly changing world” (Amaegwu 2013, 35). When else can Africans revive their sense of communalism founded on solidarity, other than now? For how long will the continent depend on borrowed ideals, alien to the positive values bequeathed to the people by her ancestors?

The need to retrace the point of African departure from her part to authentic development which is rooted on communitarian solidarity is necessary. Some pioneer African political theorists are in line with this idea, as a good number of them anchor their brand of African socialism on the communalist-communitarian foundation. Hence: “Before the declaration of independence by their colonial masters, some politically minded African intellectuals seemed to have had their own ideas about the system of government they considered most suited to the African situation, based on the traditional beliefs of the African people” (Makinde 2007, 185). Indeed, Makinde noted clearly that: “The word

‘Socialism’ is a foreign word, and may therefore have different meanings to different linguistic communities. In the African context, Socialism could mean living in spirit of love and brotherhood” (Makinde, 2007, 186). The undertone of the whole exercise is that different terms, keywords and even jargons could connotatively imply different things in various lingual contexts. The meaning of socialism which is originally a typical Western concept could have a related but distinct meaning in the African context, a fact which corroborates the peculiarity of African communalism as the present paper portends.

Africans believe in human dignity and equality and that is why Africans of the past developed the idea of communalist-solidarity like the Arusha Declaration which was designed as a leadership code to discourage the growth of only a privileged elite: “is based on the assumption of human equality, on the belief that it is wrong for one man to dominate or to exploit another” (Nyerere 1968, 92). It is obvious that Nyerere in this case upholds human equality as the fulcrum of African socialism, an idea which is basically congruous with the African communalist solidarity as the present work portends. African socialism for instance as espoused by Nyerere is founded on the solidarity of living together,

with the spirit of love, “familyhood” or “community spirit” under the umbrella of “*Ujamaa*” (Nyerere 1968, 12). The Tanzanian socialism initiated by Nyerere gives us an insight into the essence of African communalism. Thus: “As the dream and expectations of independence faded, Julius Nyerere’s socialist experiment in Tanzania stood out as a beacon of hope that Africa might yet find a route to the kind of new society that nationalist leaders once imagined” (Meredith 2005, 248). The lesson here is that “African socialism is not a doctrine or an ideological abstraction as such; it is not merely an economic formula or political structure. It has to do with the spirit of solidarity and brotherhood, of cooperation and service, which naturally characterize Africans as a people” (Nwigwe, B. E., “In Quest of an Authentic Theory of Development for Africa” in *UCHE: Journal of the Department of Philosophy, University of Nigeria, Nsukka*. ISSN: 1597-5169. Volume 11, 2005: 45). It is then vital that Africans should redefine their sense of value, identity and social philosophy through the reinvigoration of the communalist solidarity for authentic development. It is since Africans lost the sense of sharing, responsibility and common good that the dividend of the communalist-solidarity started to elude them.

2:3: Religious Values and Authentic Development

Africans are religious people and the sacredness of human life is an integral part of their philosophy of life. Right from ancient times as is evident in the African traditional thought religiosity and sanctity of human life are not in doubt. Thus: "Most African theologians who are involved in the development of African theology find that African traditional religion is one of their chief sources" (Muzorewe 1985, 7). The centrality of this assertion is that religion has been part of Africans from the word go in almost all that Africans do, from their family to political life. As a renowned African scholar posits: "Practically all African people consider God as Creator, making this the commonest attribute of the works or activities of God. The concept is expressed through saying directly that God created all things, through giving the name of Creator and through addressing him in prayer as the Creator or Maker" (Mbiti 1970, 45). From this standpoint, it is clear that an African man believes in the existence of gods or a Being as the author or architect of the universe, who also controls and influences all the activities in the universe. The fact that Africans accept that God is the maker of the universe at least positions them as believers.

It needs to be stated here that there are many African concepts of God, but it is beyond the scope of this work to

investigate them in details. The essential thing is to underscore the fact that evidence abounds from even the African traditional religion that Africans are religious people, as an important characteristic of their being. Thus: "For Mbiti the Africans live in a religious universe, meaning that all the activities of and thoughts of the Africans can be expressed and understood, without remainder, from the point of view of religions. This, of course, includes philosophical and scientific activities" (Makinde 2007, 37). He continues: "But since the belief in God is primary to all African religions, it appears that Africans might have a common philosophical system...a common philosophy founded on the religious traditions of the people of Africa, all of whom shared a common belief in a religious nonscientific universe" (Makinde 2007, 37). The ongoing argument is evidence of even the religious foundation of African philosophy. Religiosity is therefore African value and another important sense of identity.

The truth of the matter is that if religion is practiced in such a manner that it corresponds with good life, one can easily make an inference that it will consequently lead to authentic development. This is one area present Africans generally have created a gap in their religious creed and religious practice. Most contemporary Africans

unfortunately profess their religiosity verbally while in practice they do the opposite of what they profess. In fact, traditional Africans believed in the sacredness of human life and up till now however, most Africans believe in same. This belief is as well traceable to the same religious root of both African philosophy and theology. In this vein: "African culture and tradition view life spiritually and man is considered by virtue of what human life stands for and is always related to the after-life not as a mere matter limited to earthly life...This spiritual concept makes it imperative that Africans from cradle to grave find the idea of God as the first and ultimate cause of all things" (Amaegwu 2013, 54). To this end: "It is generally acknowledged that God is the originator of man, even if the exact methods of creating man may differ according to the myths of different peoples" (Mgbiti 1970, 120). The point is that to be religious involves the ability to live in accordance with the will of the supra-temporal Being. In this vein, African traditional religions and the recent adopted religions of Christianity and Islam etc are all proponents of justice and peace. If Africans as a result practice the authentic prescriptions of any of these religions, it is obvious that they would lead to authentic development.

Africans should stick to their religious life which is one of the important legacies they inherited from their forefathers, to enable them live a God fearing life, respect for life, human dignity and work towards authentic human and material development. Religiosity is part of their identity and to deny this is to see man as God unto himself. Africans should always remember that: "Every people has its own language, its own art, its own language, its own art, its own way of building, planting, celebrating and eating, and its own way of looking at the world and interpreting reality. Every people has its own philosophy of life, its own manner of showing belief in superior powers and respecting them, and its own way of living" (Arinze, F. A. as quoted in Ogbalu & Emenanjo, 1987, 181). The point being pushed across here is that every society must have its cherished values and identity and obviously such values must be authentic development oriented as no worthy society would want to be identified as primarily vicious. Africans should wake up and uphold in practice their religious value as a fundamental component of their identity because: "Every people has its peculiar customs and traditions, its own code of moral laws, and its own view of the universe and man's place in it. In short, every people has its own culture" (Arinze, F. A. as quoted in Ogbalu & Emenanjo,

1987, 181).) It is dismay that in recent times most Africans undermine the practical demands of their religious belief.

During the peak of the African traditional religion, Africans were more law abiding and morally upright because everyone was afraid of the wrought of the gods, should the reverse be the case. Today, Africa parades a plethora of faithful either Christians or Muslims etc who parade themselves with the garment of their various faiths but in practice, the genuine aura of true religion eludes them. Hence, such a camouflage is an act which is at variance with the original religious value of Africa as a major pointer to authentic development. The religious values of Africans, amongst all ought to practically uphold life with the communalist or communitarian spirit as it is obtainable in the African traditional religion. It ought to be a religion which acknowledges man as living in mutual solidarity with his neighbor and fellows at large. Thus: "Africans recognize life as life-in-community. We can truly know ourselves if we remain true to our community, past and present. The concept of individual success or failure is secondary. The ethnic group, the village, the locality, are crucial in one's estimation of oneself. Our nature as beings-in-relation is a two way relation" (Oduyoye Mercy as quoted in Appiah-Kubi & Torres, 1979, 110). Obviously, the two-way relation

referred to here is the relationship of man-with-man and man-with-God, since the sense of community is an essential component of the African values and worldview at large.

Conclusion

From the discourse in this paper, an attempt has been made to establish the fact that value is an important aspect of human life, whether it is for an individual, group or nation. In this regard, Africans are advised to strive for some core values that should give them a sense of identity and eventually lead them to authentic development. It is obvious as the paper proffers that core values like regard for marriage, consolidation of family, the practicality of positive religious values, deep sense of communality embedded in solidarity will lead to authentic development if followed properly. It will do Africa a disservice if it continues to adopt all alien ways of life like same-sex marriage and individualism since they are at disparity with indigenous African values and cultural development. Africans therefore must seek to imbibe and develop their identity in the comity of nations through the display of their worthy values and by so doing they could be in line with authentic development.

Africans should know that the world looks at them based on the values they profess and practice. If Africa refuses to show a strong sense of value-based orientation and belief system, it will be tantamount to not living for anything. Africa cannot afford to undermine family value which is the cornerstone of human society in general. In the Western part of the world, it is obvious that divorce rate is quite high, a situation which is reflective of the loosed consideration they give to marriage as an institution. In the typical traditional African set-up, marriage which is built on the union of man and woman is regarded as a life contract between husband and wife for worthy procreation and the defense of family. Unfortunately, many Africans are now joining the Western fashion of quick divorce, without considering its enormous damage to the family. This awkward trend must be reversed in Africa as has been noted, to usher in authentic human development and social stability. Africa cannot therefore adopt all that goes with globalization. It should seek those things which will add value to its already existing system, in harmony with worthy identity and authentic development.

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