RELIGION AND NATION BUILDING: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS

Ibenwa, C.N. (Ph D)

Department Of Religion and Cultural Studies University Of Nigeria, Nsukka.

ABSTRACT: *From time immemorial the desire to build a just, orderly, peaceful and progressive society has been uppermost in the minds of Nigerian leaders. But due to external influences on them, their mission and vision continue to remain a mirage. These influences coupled with high level of corruption, poverty and selfishness, lack of contentment heightened their problem. This made the Nigerian leaders derail from their avowed vision and mission with the result that at the end of a leader's tenure little or no progress would have been made. Corruption, poverty, selfishness and other social vices would be on the increase. Hence, the goal of nation building is not achieved. This is causing grave concerns to well-meaning members of the society. Religion's stern qualities of sincerity, honesty, selfless service to humanity, contentment among other qualities appears to be a better alternative for building a progressive and a sustainable society. The methodology adopted for the study is the qualitative phenomenological approach whereby data were collected from both primary and secondary sources and treated analytically and descriptively. The findings of the study validate the fact that a progressive society anchored on the afore-mentioned qualities is essential for building a progressive Nigerian society. The study further discovered some vital innate qualities in religion that make for sincerity of purpose, contentment and selfless services irrespective of internal and external factors.*

KEYWORDS: Religion, Nation Building and Nation.

INTRODUCTION

Nation building is a dialectal phenomenon in which the individual and society interact with their physical, biological and inter-human environments, transforming them for their own good and that of humanity at large and being transformed in the process (Kanu, 2004). From pre-independence years the urge and the desire to build a just, egalitarian and progressive society has been the heart beat of Nigerian leaders. But due to some external forces (coming from the colonizer) and internal factors such as poverty, corruption, lack of contentment, selfishness among others have made their mission and vision to continually remain a dream. Indeed, this has become a source of great worry to most Nigerians, hence the emergence of religion as alternative measure for building a progressive society.   The concept of religion is anchored in the idea of belief in and fear of God. Since religion makes for sincerity of purpose, contentment and selfless service, and since every source has failed Nigerian leaders in achieving their avowed purpose and promises to the people, the paper therefore, recommends religion as a possible alternative for nation building. In this study the three main religions in Nigeria namely, African Traditional Religion (native), Christianity and Islam (foreign) will be used as a yardstick to

determine how religion has contributed to the changes that have occurred in Nigeria. The work will also profer possible suggestions that will make for the sustainance of progress made so far.

Conceptual Clarification:

The concept of religion is elusive in nature and this makes it difficult to have one universally accepted definition of religion. The elusive nature explains why tens and hundreds of definitions of religion litter our textbooks today. It is important to state at this point of our deliberation that these definitions are not without fault or flaws. Corraborating this view, Metuh (1987), commented thus:

This is partly because the object of religion is invisible and spiritual beings who are not subject to observation and are conceived in different ways by different peoples. Besides, the study of religion interest people with a widely differing interests as theologians, anthropologists, psychologists and sociologist, each of who see it from different perspectives. It is necessary to have the perception of the basic concept of the word religion before exploring the extensive area of religion and nation building. Religion derives from the Latin words *Ligare* (meaning to bind), *Relegere* (meaning to unite, or to link), and *Religio* (meaning relationship). Thus, 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. Religion is essentially a bipolar phenomenon. On the one end is man (the religious man) while at the other end is the transcendent being, the deity he believes to exist and which he worships (Omeregbe 1993).Bouquet (1941) construes religion to be a fixed relationship between the human self and some non-human entity, the sacred, the supernatural, the self-existent, the absolute or simply, God." Vennon (1962) described religion thus: as that part of culture composed of shared beliefs and practices which not only identify or define the supernatural, the sacred and man's relationship thereto, but which also relate them to the unknown world in such a way that the group is provided with moral definitions as what is good (harmony or not in harmony) with the supernatural. Furthermore, Yinger (1970) defined religion, "as a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggle with the ultimate problems of human life. It expresses their refusal to capitulate to death, to give up in the face of frustration and to allow hostility to tear apart their human association. Similarly,

Durkheim (1948) defined it as
… a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.

Religion is better described as man's awareness of the existence of a Supernatural Being whom he believe to be his creator and controller of the universe and his willingness to worship Him through intermediary, in solitariness and in group.

A REVIEW OF THE THREE MAIN RELIGIONS

Man's search for God has led to many pathways. The result has been the enormous diversity of religious expressions found world-wide today. The three main religions are as follows:

a. Christianity

Christianity is planted in Nigeria not long after the ex-slaves repatriated from Europe and America were resettled in Sierra Leone, Christian missionaries were drafted to the colony to evangelize them(Anyika,2000). The word Christianity was first used in New Testament at Antioch in Syria where the disciples of Jesus were first called Christians, meaning, the followers of Christ (Acts 11:26).Christianity is based on the life, teaching and the death of Jesus Christ, the founder of Christian religion. In line with this, Ituma (2003) argues that Jesus is the foundation of the New Testament and that New Testament itself is the foundation of Christianity. The first contact of Christianity in Nigeria was through the activities of a set of missionaries from Portugal in the fifteenth century (Ryder, 1969). Their initial contact and success were in the coastal areas. They recorded initial success in the kingdom of Warri but this did not endure for a long time because the European visitors to Nigeria such as the Dutch, French and English were not in a position to propagate the religion. In fact, enduring and successful missionary enterprise began in the nineteenth century and this initiative was this time taken by the protestant churches of Europe and America with the Catholics following about 1840s (Onwubiko, 1973).The year 1841 was particularly remarkable in the history of missionary enterprise in what is today called Nigeria. It was the year of the first Niger Expedition which marked the beginning of the missionary movement to be re-established in Nigeria (Ajayi, 1975).

With all the unprintable difficulties encountered by the missionaries, by the beginning of the twentieth century Christianity had been planted in most parts of Southern Nigeria, (Okwueze, 1995). The arrival of Christian religion like the Moslem religion in Africa has a far-reaching effect on the society.. The tenets of Christianity are recorded in the book of books called the Holy Bible. It has different sects such as the Roman Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church, Baptist Church. Cherubim and Seraphim, Aladura, Christ Living Faith (Winners), Zoe Ministry, Christ Embassy, Deeper Life, Church of God Mission, Grace of God, Lord Chosen Charistmatic Revival Movement and many others.

b. Islam

Islam was introduced first into the kingdom of Kanem-Borno about the 10th century AD and to Hausa land about 14th century. Gradually, it began to spread to western Nigeria, especially after the Fulani Jihad of the early 19th century. Islam is both a religion and a culture. It claims total control over all aspects of life of its adherents, both as individuals and as a group (Iremeka,2005). The word 'Islam' means submission to the will of God. Followers of Islam are called Muslims. Prophet Mohammed was the founder of the religion. The five pillars of Islam include profession of faith, ritual prayer, alms -giving, ramandan fast, and pilgrimage. The tenets of Islam are written in a holy book called Quran,.
African Traditional Religion (ATR)

African traditional religion is the belief system that has been handed down from one generation to another. It originated from the soil of Africa. The people were born, nurtured and they grew in it. It is a tolerant, accommodative and peaceful religion that fight those that attack it. The above views were expatiated by Onyeidu (1999) when he observed that the Traditional African Religion is a tolerant and non-missionary religion. Its adherents were not converted (proselytes) but members of the society born into the religion of their ancestors. The traditional religion has no room for religious propaganda, or bigotry. It is moderate religion which only attacks its opponents who provoke it to anger." Anyika (1998) said that it is a religion that is indigenous to African soil, but their origins are lost in antiquity. Ajayi, (1981) describes it as those beliefs and practices that are indigenous to Africans which according to Mbiti (1969), has permeated every facet of the peoples life". It is a religion that has no known founder and scripture unlike Christianity and Islam. The tenets of the religion is written in songs, myths, dances of the people among others. In the same frame of mind Awolalu and Dopamu (1979) said that this is a religion that has no written literature yet it is written everywhere for those who care to see and read. It is largely written in the peoples' myths and folklores, in songs and dances, in their liturgies and in proverbs and pithy saying. A more elaborate definition was given by Ekwunife (1990) as:

Those institutionalized beliefs and practices of indigenous religion of African which are rooted in the past African religious culture, transmitted to the present votaries by successive African forebears mainly through oral traditions (myths and folktales, songs and dances, liturgies, rituals, proverbs, pithy sayings and names), sacred specialists and persons, sacred space and objects and religious work of art, a religion which is slowly but constantly updated by each generation in the light of new experiences through the dialectal process of continuities and discontinuities.

Before the advent of the imported religion of Islam and Christianity into the continent the traditional religion has sustained Africans for generations. More so, the traditional African religion shares many characteristic features with other living religions of the world. Such common features include: belief in God or gods (theism), a system of worship (cult) prayer, sacrifices and the clear-cut distinction between the holy (sacred) and unholy (profane). These were some of the good elements in the primal society which prepared the mind of Africans for the acceptance of Islam and Christianity. Furthermore, in the traditional African society, instruments of social control include: taboos, swearing of oath, making of blood pact, trial by ordeal, oracles, vows, secret societies and the meticulous observation of customs and traditions. .Thus, as in other parts of the world, God did not leave himself without revelation and witness in Africa, (Onyeidu 1999). Parinder in Onyeidu (1999), in his attempt to quantify the strength and membership of this ancient faith said, "that probable over 50,000,000 people in Africa keep to this indigenous religion, and that many more mingle it with the new scriptural religions". With special reference to Igboland, Jordan in Onyeidu (1999). observes that "A whole system of taboos and ritual ordinances controlled native life"

Religion and Nation Building: A Brief Survey.
There are three major religions in Nigeria. This section tries to look at the contributions of African traditional religion, and the two foreign religions to nation building in Nigeria. The two foreign religions are, Christianity and Islam. These two foreign religions as earlier stated have impacted so much on the socio- cultural, economic and on the political life of Africans..

Religious Conflict:

Conflict has been severally defined by different scholars at various times under different historical, cultural and ideological influences. Generally, conflict is defined as disagreement between two individuals, groups or countries especially when they have differing views or interests. A more elaborate definition of this was given by Phil Eze (2009), "as the expression of disagreement over something important to two individuals, groups, states or nations when they have different views, different goals, different needs and different values and they fight over limited resources to address them!" Scharf (1970) argues that, "religion impedes progress. encourages fanaticism and intolerance" Scharf opinion can only be possible when religion is wrongly applied for self interest is in place. It is on record that after Nigeria achieved independence in 1960, some politicians attempted to manipulate religious sentiments in order to gain regional support. Ethnic rivalry and the fear of political domination contributed to the national crises that resulted in the 1967-70 civil war. During the war, religion was used for propagandistic purposes and to create and solidify regional and ethnic identity. The secessionist government of Biafra saw themselves as a Christian country fighting against domination and oppression by an Islamic dominated government of Nigeria. Religion also featured prominently in the press between 1977 and 1979, during a great debate about the inclusion of Sharia (Islamic law) in the country's new constitution. In 1986, it was reported that Nigeria had been secretly admitted into full membership of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), a Saudi Arabia-based organization that promoted cooperation in cultural, economic and social areas among Islamic nations. The Christians did not take it kindly. There was a series of debate and dialogue on the issue, (Iremaka 2005). From this O.I.C. acid test of President Babangida administration we moved into the Maitatsine of December,1980 that claimed a lot of lives and property. Writing on the Kano riot of 1980, Okwueze (1995), states that Maitatsine attack on Kano was grave and savage. 4, 177 people were killed in the carnage and the State Government paid more than ₦8 million as compensation to victims of the disturbance and to the most disturbing one now, the Boko-Haram Islamist sect that is taking lives and property in hundreds almost on daily basis. In fact, towards the end of 2013 and early this year 2014 these casualties were recorded against them as follows: On Monday 2nd December 2013 at 3am men numbering about 300 suspected to be Boko-Haram terrorist group attack military formation in Maiduguri Boron State with 25 Hilux Pick-Up vans loaded with rocket propelled grenade launchers, AK-47 assault rifles and improvised explosives devices (IEDS) (Omonobi, 2013)

AFP (2013) reported on the same attack that some aircrafts were destroyed, building, ships and petrol stations were razed, with 24 militant killed.

Another source reported also that 300 people were confirmed internally displaced and that emergency life materials like beds, blankets and mosquito nets have been given to them, (English. news.cn 2013). On Monday the 13 January, the Daily Sun Newspaper reported that no fewer than eight people were killed in a fresh attack on a village in the southern part of Borno State by suspected Boko –Haram insurgent. The attackers were also said to have burnt about a hundred churches in the area,(Olanrewaju, 2014).This is coupled with other social vices such as armed robbery attack, kidnapping, corruption, drug trafficking, prostitution, election malpractice of all forms, to mention but a few.

The introduction of Christianity and Islam in Africa marked the beginning of religious pluralism on the continent, thus putting to an end the monolatric religious system that operated in the traditional African societies. Corroborating this view Chuta, (1992) said that the introduction of western education in Africa brought in western idea of rationalism and individualism into Africa. Many Africans began to doubt their religious traditions, and subsequently decided to live without it, and that was the inception of secularism in Africa. This created conditions for the rise of new elite with western educational outlook in African societies, who had their own elite. Among these were chiefs, priests and war leaders, many of whom normally owed their elite status to birth, (Afigbo, 1976). There in school, the children acquired a whole body of new teachings, touching on all aspects of human existence (Ezeaku, 1999).

In the light of all these odds one may be tempted to ask where do we go from here? Can Nigeria make any reasonable progress under this condition? Of course, yes. Religion has the answer. In spite of all the problems associated with religion as mentioned above the positive contributions and practical utilities to national building in Nigeria cannot be over-emphasized. Prior to the advent of Christianity, some parts of Africa engaged themselves in such ugly practices as killing of twins and albinos.. Later when Christianity was preached and such injunction given in (Gen. 17:24); "I will make my covenant between me and you and I will multiply you exceedingly" that the practice was put to an end. This quotation certifies God's acknowledgement of giving birth to any number of babies at a time. The act of human sacrifice, caste system (Osu) in Igbo land and the practice of burying chiefs along with slaves who could serve them in the world beyond have been stopped and now waning and sinking gradually into the limbo of the past, (Ugwu, 1999).

Furthermore, Christianity helped in character moulding of our children and made our young ones imbibe such virtues like love for one another, truth, obedience and respect for elders, parents and people in authority . Lending credence to this Kanu (2004) expressed thus: Numerous Nigerian heads of state at one time or the other ordered that there should be ethical re-orientation. The church has also through the Sunday School cared for the youths, adults and elders and not just the erring children. With government takeover of schools, the only ways the church influences the young ones ethically is through Sunday School and moral instruction in schools. Through this way help to develop the young ones who are leaders of tomorrow.

On the issue of spirituality of man, it must be said that religion helped greatly in building up man spiritually. Attesting to this fact, Aristotle (1964) asserted that, :…the end of the state is not mere life. It is rather a good quality of life, similarly, it is not the end of the state to provide an alliance of mutual defense against all injury."In line with Aristotle's view Nnadi (2004) wrote that,
The development of a nation such as we envisage cannot be achieved by the mere accumulation of material things or the procurement of a life of comfort and ease often to a limited few. This alone will not make man really happy for the simple reason that man is not mere matter. He has a spiritual part which matter is too base to satisfy."

For the widowhood. Okoli (2008) said that Christians recognize the low status of widows and their suffering and make provision for them and warn against their maltreatment as evident in

(Deut 14: 29b) " …'the stranger, the fatherless and the widow who are within the gates shall come and shall eat and be satisfied that the Lord thy God may bless you in all the works of your hand which thou doest" Oreh (2014) making a case for the church said that," in her interviews in the course of her research with many Presbyterian ministers in Igbo land appreciably reveal their inspiring efforts at ministering to the needs of widows in their respective congregations. Many pastors spoke of welfare programmes that involve presentation of gifts in cash and in kind during annual thanks giving services, Christmas and new year seasons, scholarship schemes for their children; visitation, counseling and prayers; advocacy; establishment of widows forum and their congregations, among others.:" More so God said in Isaiah 54:5 that he is the husband of the widow. In traditional religious communities the paramount rulers play the dual role of socio-political heads as well as priests of their traditional religious communities . For instance, among the Yoruba, the traditional heads appear to be the custodians of their religious value system. The Oba wielded enormous power within his kingdom, and ensured an enabling environment for stability by checks and balances through which the tendency towards excesses could be adequately curbed(Zaayem, 1999) Jordan(1948) wrote that a whole system of taboos and ritual of ordination has controlled natural life of Africans particularly the Igbos of Eastern Nigeria. On this truth Onyeidu (1999) commented that before the advent of the imported religion of Islam and Christianity into the continent the tradition religional has sustained Africans for generations and that in the traditional African society , instruments of social control include: taboos, swearing of oath, making of blood pact, trial by ordeal, oracles, vows, secret societies and the meticulous observation of customs and traditions. In line with these moral virtues and values (Ugwu &Ugwueye, 2004) observed that religion of the Africans spells out moral rules and values. It has provided the African mind with an umbrella of creative intelligence by asserting that man is the creature of God and that no man exists by himself. All virtuous action of man in the traditional society is derived from religion. Man subdues his lower nature and sets for his noble ideal of righteousness, justice, peace and service for humanity under traditional religious guide Traditional religion also tries to remove social disorder in our nation. It is through the traditional leaders who are the experienced custodians of our religion and culture that this feat is achieved. African traditional religion encourages peace which is necessary for a healthy nation building through covenants and oath-taking. When conflicts, distrusts or suspicions ravage families, a reconciliation process is put into action through traditional religious rituals known as 'Igba ndu' Covenants take the form of swearing to truth and oath that no party among the rivals or conflict groups or individuals would think evil against the other or others,(Ezeaku, 1999).
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In fact, education is one of the major achievements of religion in Nigeria. The early missionaries both of Christianity and Islam established educational institutions. Examples abound in the Christian church, particularly in the former Eastern region. Those early missionaries understood the importance of education in the life of those converts. According to F. Anyika, all the missions demonstrated great concern for the provision of western education for their converts by erecting schools in towns. Some missions placed greater emphasis on education than others. In East of the Niger for instance, the Late Rev. Fr. Joseph Shanahan clung tenaciously to the provision of western education as the surest means of opening the interior to western civilization. The CMS Grammar school in Lagos, Ibadan, Abeokuta among others were established by CMS.

Some of them were established in the late 19th Century. Similarly, the Methodist Church in 1905 established its first teacher training institute at Oron called Oron Boys Institute, followed by the Methodist Boys Institute, Uzuakoli and Lagos in the 19th century. The Presbyterian Church established Hope Waddell Training Institute Calabar. Dennis Memorial Grammar School Onitsha, St. Pauls College Awka, St. Monica's College Ogbunike were established by the Anglican Church. Some were established over 100 years ago. In the same way the Catholics established Christ the King College Onitsha, Queen of the Rosary secondary School Onitsha, St. Charles Teachers Training College Onitsha, College of Immaculate Conception Enugu, Queen of the holy Ghost College, Owerri, Stella Maris, Port Harcourt, among others. The Schools and colleges established by different churches and even Muslim sects were and still are training ground for the manpower needs of the country. The products of the schools and colleges were recruited as teachers and clerks and staff of industries and government departments. The missions also provided scholarships for some of the products to train in the local or oversea universities. There is hardly any area of walk of life in this country where the products of mission institutions or beneficiaries of the missions have not featured prominently. In this way, directly or indirectly religion has contributed immensely to the training of the manpower needs of the country. The contribution of religion to the economic life of the country cannot be over emphasized; we have already referred to the training of manpower needs of the nation. These men and women were and still are involved in generating wealth for the country using the experience and education in this regard. In fact, early enough, some missions established farms. Cottage industries and crafts which helped, particularly the underprivileged to earn a living (Iremaka 2005). In Northern Nigeria, by 1929, the government had 106 schools with a total of 4,578 pupils on roll; the missions ran 152 schools with a total enrolment of 4,446 pupils. HealthCare: the efforts and contributions of the missionaries towards healthcare in Nigeria cannot be overemphasized. The church in time past built hospitals, health centers and maternities to take care of the people's health and to reduce mortality rate among the people. The church missionary society (CMS) built Iyi-Enu Hospital Ogidi, Anambra State, The Roman Catholic Mission (RCM) built Bishop Shannahan Hospital, Nsukka, Enugu State, Borrowmew Hospital, Onitsha, Anambra State. Methodist Church built the Amachara Hospital, Umuahia, Abia State. The Anglican Communion. Enugu Diocese under Bishop Agbo, built the Faith Foundation Hospital Nsukka. Furthermore, by 1910, according to Grooves (1958), "there were sixteen (16) leper settlements under the auspices of the various missions in Nigeria". On the issue of leper, Njoku (2008) added that ,"the efforts of the Church revealed the creation of leper colonies, provision of accommodation, employment, treatments, , acquisition of skill, education, feeding, re-establishing of lepers back into their towns." As a matter of fact, the missionaries established health centers, dispensaries and maternity homes that later grew to become a full fleshed hospitals. And this, afforded the poor , the needy, and the less privileged ones amongst us the access to medical treatment. Ahamba (2006), asserted that "the maternities established by the church in the districts helped to reduce high mortality rate associated with child bearing which was caused by crude method of child delivery among the people." Islam brought with it, Arabic language and culture, Islamic learning, for instance. The numerals we are now using (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) and commerce, Arab banks in the North etc are a legacy of Islamic studies and rich international connections. These were over and above the revelations of Allah and the teachings of Muhammed, (Ozigbo 1988). Christianity in collaboration with Europe brought European

language and culture, western science and technology as supportive gifts to the redemption and salvation mediated by Christ, (Ozigbo, 1988). "There is no doubt that the church has succeeded in putting smiles on faces of the poor who were homeless, financial bankrupt and hopeless. It was the church that rescued the Biafrans from Kwashiorkor, disease and death, through the Caritas International and World Council of Churches (WCC). The Nigerian Government neglected the Biafrans and abandoned them to their fate (Ogbueshi, 2014)

Another area that the Church assisted also is in the area of agriculture. The Church introduced the policy of Bible and Plough which revolutionized agriculture in Nigeria. Ogbuehi (2014) said that, " the introduction of agriculture was informed by the missionary zeal to replace slave trade with legitimate trade" Nwanaju (2005) expressed the view that it was through the efforts of the church that maize and cassava were introduced, and this helped in boosting the economy of Nigeria and brought in luxury goods in their household". Other spheres of the people's life that were positively impacted upon by religion are as shown here under.

Politics: In terms of politics, African traditional political leaders no longer follow religiously the laid down rules and ritual practices that guide their offices because of their contact with the west and this is causing serious problems among the so called His Royal Majesties (HRM), the Igwes and their subjects. According to Ugwu (2002), "the king is brainwashed and indoctrinated into accepting that rulership has no meaning here on earth and that nobody rules except God."Pattern of Dress and Dressing Style: Undoubtedly, pattern of dressing has changed immensely. Children now wear western dresses some of which are better than our local dresses.

The Architectural Design: The architectural design of our residential houses is not left out in this movement. It is only in the most remote parts of Nigeria today that you will see people building houses with sticks and with earth and no longer roofing their houses or hut with elephant grass and palm fronds. Pattern of Greeting: The greeting patterns of Africans have been influenced also. People no longer bow or prostrate as such while greeting their elders, majority of Africans nowadays prefer to wave hands to say "hi"..
Occupation: The occupation of Africans is no longer the usual farming work of cultivation of crops and rearing of animals. People now prefer white-collar jobs in the urban areas.

Suggestions
By way of proffering solution to the endemic socio-economic and political problems associated with leadership in Nigeria, such as poverty, corruption. winner takes it all attitude, selfishness and lack of contentment that make it very difficult for most Nigerian political leaders to achieve their goals of good governance, one is hereby moved to make the following suggestions. The political leaders of the country should put the interest of the country first in whatsoever they are doing rather than self. They should cultivate the spirit of servant hood rather than that of master hood. Government should provide more job opportunities as a means of ameliorating abject poverty that is ravaging the teaming population, and contentment should be encouraged. More so. the government should learn to depend less on foreign rulers and their mentor. In spite of the vital qualities and positive roles that religion plays in the society, it is still used as an instrument

of war, both among various Christian denominations, between Christians and adherents of traditional religion and between Christians and Muslim, but this is a wrong application of religion because religion cannot be used to justify war. Finally, religion should as a matter of urgency be given its place of pride in the scheme of things in this country since it is believed that religion permeates every sphere of human existence.

CONCLUSION

In fact, what emerges from this systematic review of religion and human society are several. Significant among them is that the traditional African society is now an interface of two worlds: The original traditional society which is located in the rural areas and the modern African society consisting of the new elites with western outlook which dominates in urban areas. Granted that there was a violent shake-up of our cultural vestiges by the imported religions of Christianity and Islam and their accompanying baggage (sweet pills) that is western science and technology, school education, commerce and politics, there was a high degree of interaction between the two cultures which has resulted in free flow of ideas (to some extent), a dual carriage way of acculturation and enculturation in the two sides. On the whole, religion is a veritable tool for building a just and peaceful society.

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