

## Religion, Politics and Morality as Means of Development in Nigeria

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### Abstract:

*Religion, Politics and Morality are universal phenomena. This statement lay credence to the fact that, societies all the over the world, developed or not developed have the notion of a transcendental power, leadership and code of conduct which regulates its activities and controls events. The research establishes that Religion, Politics and Morality are inter-woven none can operate effectively without depending on the other especially in a multi-religious and ethnic society. This scenario portrays the fundamental fact that Religion is very important in human societies; as it provides meaning for life and answers vital questions regarding life, death and the hereafter. In Nigeria, there are different Religious traditions being observed by their adherents. The dominant religious traditions are; Christianity, Islam and African Religion. The adherents of these Religious traditions are free to express their religious beliefs and perform their religious obligations privately and publicly unmolested. It discovers that for any meaningful development to be carried out, there ought to be proper religious observance, helpful political ideologies and good conduct. With the above background in mind, the paper examines how Religion, Politics and Morality can really serve as tools for societal development in Nigeria noting the challenges that are inherent in ensuring the efficacy of Religious freedom, and how religion affects morality and politics. The paper submits that all elements in the various religious that tend to undermine the multi-religious and nature of the nation should be turned down or deemphasized. We can develop Nigeria and make it safe for Nigerians only when we unite. A way forward is*

*proffered on how they all can be employed to bring development in the society, we finally drew a conclusion.*

**Key words:** religion, Christianity, Islam, African religion, politics, morality, development.

## **Introduction**

Religion, Politics and Morality are universal phenomena. This statement goes a long way in laying credence to the fact that, societies the world over whether developed or less developed have the notion of a transcendental power, leadership and code of conduct which regulates human activities and controls events in such given societies. While it is an admissible fact that Religion lacks a univocal definition, it denotes man's experience, awareness, attitude, recognition, conception and understanding of the existence of the supernatural or the multiplicity of spiritual beings and his/her relationship or interaction with them (Gbenda 1).

This scenario portrays the fundamental fact that Religion is very important in human societies; as it provides meaning for life and answers vital questions regarding life, death and the hereafter. In Nigeria, there are different Religious traditions being observed by their adherents. The dominant religious traditions are; Christianity, Islam and African Religion. The adherents of these Religious traditions are free to express their religious beliefs and perform their religious obligations privately and publicly unmolested as guaranteed in the constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria Chapter four Section 37(1). With the above background in mind, the paper examines how Religion, Politics and Morality can really serve as tools for societal development in Nigeria noting the challenges inherent in Religious freedom, how religion affects morality and politics. A way forward is

sought on how they all can be employed to bring development in society and a conclusion is drawn.

## **Conceptual Issues**

### **Religion**

The word *religion* is derived from the Latin noun *religio*, which denotes both earnest observance of ritual obligations and an inward spirit of reverence. In modern usage, *religion* covers a wide spectrum of meanings that reflect the enormous variety of ways the term can be interpreted. At one extreme, many committed believers recognize only their own tradition as a religion, understanding expressions such as *worship* and *prayer* to refer exclusively to the practices of their tradition. For instance, African Traditional Religion is the religious belief and practice of the Africans (Awolalu 1). A Religion which resulted from the sustaining faith held by the forebears of the present Africans and is practiced in various form and shades by a large number of Africans including those who are Muslims and Christians. Religion can therefore, be described as a sacred engagement which is believed to be a spiritual reality (Awolalu 1). Shishima describes religious freedom as “the notion which postulates that people of different religious traditions or faiths are free to practice their religion without opposition” this has to do with all aspects of worship including worship without hindrance both in public and in private and acts of religious significance within the realm of government (4). Religion is the worship of transcendent or supernatural beings whose existence is outside or above the realm of the normal, which is mortal and temporal (Agalamany 228).

### **Politics**

The word politics is more of a transliteration than a translation, derived from the Greek word 'Politikos' or 'Politike' which means, having to do with citizens or relating to citizens; for

Aristotle of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century BC, the aim of politics is to discover first in what mode of life man's happiness consist then by what form of government and what social institution can that mode of life be secured. Aristotle holds that, among arts and practical sciences, politics is the most important of them all because it is the science of man's affairs, the science of man's happiness or good (Yamsat 16). Politics is about the study of happiness and about working out how this happiness should be secured for the good of a given society. Therefore, politics is meant for people who are seriously out to work towards securing happiness for the good of people in a given society (Yamsat 18).

According to Nnoli, Politics entails all activities that are directly associated with the emergence, consolidation and use of state power. There are two main things that have been used as the defining characteristics of politics. The first is the making of a common decision for a group of people and that is a uniform decision applying in the same way to all members of the group. The second is the use of power by one person or group of people. Politics no matter the way one may decide it see it involves most factors of human life. Political authority accordingly is the recognition of the right to rule irrespective of the sanctions the ruler may possess. It means the ability to get things done in spite of opposition. Scholars regard politics as the 'authoritative allocation of values for a society' captures properly the importance of authority in Governance (qtd in Agalamany 228).

### **Morality**

Morality is from the Latin 'moralis' which means habits, customs, a way of life and standards of human behavior. The word is similar to the Greek 'ethos' which means character. This refers to good or bad, right or wrong behavior, conduct etc. Both morality and ethic are often used interchangeably (Shishima and Apenda 1). Morality is generally conceived to be the code of conduct in a society or community. It is often seen as the means of producing virtuous life (Bull 89). Morality is

considered to be a way of life, a set of principles, regulating attitudes and behaviors of one towards his fellow men (Adewale 79).

### **Development**

The word 'development' may mean different things to different people. Some people take it to mean change; while others see it as advancement, improvement and progress. Some scholars see the term development as modernization or westernization. For proper understanding of the concept development, it has to be pinned down to specific areas of life such as economic, social, technological, political, educational developments etc. It may also be seen as a continuous process of positive change in the equality and span of life of a person or group of persons (Agalamanyi 229).

### **Religion, Politics and Morality. The Meeting Point**

It is an established fact that, religion and morality are related, they meet at one point and flow together towards the same direction , like rivers that meet at a confluence. Central to discussions on moral and religious matters concern the ideas of good and bad, it becomes difficult to divorce religion from morality. Human societies have always been governed by some set of ideas, based on what is good or bad. In order words, every human society have behaviours that are considered good and bad; such moral values have always been kept in the fore front of human considerations, especially when individual and the cooperate organization that constitute the society have such behavioral patterns and consequences of action which invariably makes for harmonious, stable and peaceful communal life. According to Danoye, moral values a lot of influence on the general conduct of the people of a given society and increase the fact of obedience and sanctions of recognized authorities in the society. In African societies, moral values

cannot be divorced from the cultural orientations and legacies (43). The actual identification and relationship of Religion and Morality has to do with the age long belief, that moral values are ultimately derived from religious grounds. This notion is particularly seen to be so in African Religion where Afrelists unanimously demonstrated the strong conviction that their religious life has been more existential than contemplative. Thus religion has always provided them all thinkable avenues for the affirmations. Consequently, moral values may be said to constitute the very basis of societal existential patterns (Aderibigbe 292).

Religious believers and scholars have always demonstrated considerably interest in morality. They have not only strongly argued that religion and morality are one and the same phenomenon but also that religious believers are indeed the exclusive guardians of morality. However, there has been the counter view of humanist philosophers who are convinced of conceptual and empirical distinction between religion and morality (Aderibigbe 293). The humanist philosophers argue that there is no necessary connection between religion and morality and we do not need one to explain the other, therefore, it is perfectly possible to be moral without being religious. This moral conviction can be correct and proper without depending on any religious conviction or practice; hence arriving at the notion that religion is logically and empirically distinct from morality. This could be viewed in two perspectives: Firstly, the distinction exists because religious assertions do not depend on assents of moral assertions; and Secondary, moral concepts and argument are completely independent of religious concepts and convictions (294). He Maintains, that to hold a contrary view is to posit that religion and morality are not logically distinct. He believes that this would lead to a position where by good and evil become definable in terms of God's will. Consequently, good will be something which God wills and does; and evil could be regarded as what is against God's will (231).

Carl Henry has been a strong antagonist of this type of morality of good and evil that is intrinsically independent of God. In practical form, more religion does not necessarily lead to more morality as less morality does not lead to less religion. The atheist and humanist with no religious convictions whatsoever can perfectly be of high moral standards, while those who profess religious convictions can be morally decadent (34). This accounts for the reason why Abraham observes that, experience and common sense generalization show that, there have been many moral atheists and not a few immoral religious believers (22). This position has also been shared a renowned humanist, Tai Solarin who said that the more we see religious heat being turned on in Nigeria, the more we see of corruption, of nepotism, of man's inhumanity to man, spreading across our horizon and making the firmament thicker still (4). On the whole, what is being said here is that, religious believers have not been able to offer convincing arguments that at both logical and empirical levels, there is the sufficient connection between religion and morality. Abraham share in Tai's view that though morality and religion may be separately accepted, their objectives and spheres of operation make their placement impossible and undesirable. For them, man's moral actions stem on religion and cannot be separated from it. This implies that, the Supreme Being and the divinities have set the standards of morality for man to obey. In attempts to defend this position, Egulu states that:

Since good attitudes or behavior towards fellow men is one of the very necessary conditions for religion, it has to follow naturally and logically too that there cannot be any morally good attitude or act which does not to that extent share in the nature of religion (47).

In collaboration with this claim, Idowu affirms that the inseparable relationship between religion and morality among afrelists is clearly demonstrated in the concept of affiliation to religion. For instance, the Yoruba believe that when a devotee

decides to venerate a divinity, he must necessarily enter into a covenant with the divinity. Such a covenant is usually based on a number of demands and sanctions. These sanctions subject the devotee to a moral process of enjoying the favor of the divinity when he faithfully carried out the wishes of the divinity, similarly, he must be prepared to face the necessary sanctions if he goes against the command of the divinity. This indicates that African Religious adherents always give up from crime in the bid to avoid the wrath of divinities who would not allow the breaking of covenant to go unpunished (101). There is the consciousness that fulfilling the demands of the covenant relationship produce consequences that affect not only the produce consequences that affect not only the individual but the whole community. Thus there is the urge to uphold that the covenant demands guarantee in religion which is enforced to ensure cohesion in the community (102). These actions reject selfishness of the individual instead it brings about harmony and wellbeing of the whole community. There is no doubt that religion provides the source of morality for man, and the ultimate reason why man should be moral. This is because being moral would be the expressed fulfillment of the covenant relationship between man and his creator. On this aspect, Shishima and Apenda submit that:

In African Religion, morality was part and parcel of life. In this religion, there was no distinction between religion and morality. Just as the questions of whether God exist hardly arose among the Jews and Christians. In both case, it is seen that morality and religion formed a unit or as a result, the whole pattern of their life is enveloped in the loving care of all intervening God (61).

This African position brings out St. Augustine's concept of the natural law which believes that the Supreme-Being has put His law in man's heart and endowed him with the sense of right and wrong (Emeka 9). This law is conceited to be impressed on man's mind and written in his heart (Rom. 2:15). That voice of



God is the moral law; and it is from the moral law that our duties come; our duty to act towards others as we would like them to act towards us; and the various duties we have towards particular people whether in the Shrine, in politics or in the civil service.

### **Religion, Politics and Moral Issues in Nigeria**

Religion is said to be of huge ethnical significance. This is because what people ought to do is derived from the existence, nature and will of God. It would be difficult to be seriously religious in any sense without that religion determining some of one's political beliefs. He said that the most natural relation between religion and politics is one in which the most important political questions have religious answers such as the legitimacy or otherwise of regimes, the limits of a particular authority and the rightness or wrongness of legislation. On the objective side, religion involves the recurring performance of certain human activities, while on the subjective side; it is the part of the hidden experience of the psychic life. Religion for us here can be defined as a belief in the existence of a Supreme Being known as God who made heaven and earth and everything there on and upon whom every man looks up to for life, protection and progress (Lain qtd in Agalamanyi 228).

Moral values according to Nwala, refer to those things in human character, conduct and social relations which we judge as good or bad, right or wrong, progress and reaction, noble and ignoble, etc. It follows that in African society there exists little or no demarcation between religious and political authority, the primary concern of a leader is to ensure that the moral values of the people are maintained and upheld by the populace. Indeed, the idea of individual development and progress in life is only recognized and acknowledged when the individual's behaviour and life pattern are seen to be in conformity to the norms and values of the society (qtd in Agalamanyi 225). The

belief in existence of a supreme being conditions the mind of the people towards ensuring that whatever they do must have the sanction of the gods and ancestors. This they do by making sure that the norms, mores and values of the society are not flagrantly violated. Mbiti rightly captured the traditional religious attitude of Africans as notorious, hear him:

Africans are notoriously religious and each people have its own religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all the departments of life fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it. A study of these religious systems is therefore, ultimately a study of the peoples themselves in all complexities of both traditional and modern, life.... religion is the strongest element in traditional background and exerts probably the greatest influence upon the thinking and living of the people concerned (1).

From Mbiti's stand point, it tells that Religion and Morality have to do with the age long belief, thus constitutes the tenets of Political dispositions; that moral values are ultimately derived from religious grounds. This notion portrays that, Africans have demonstrated the strong conviction that their religious life has been more existential than contemplative. Thus, moral values may be said to constitute the very basis of societal existential patterns. This is because when it comes to the game of politics people do not show religiosity, rather, they prefer to use any means to achieve their political aims not minding weather the means are good or bad. Most politicians (Christians or Muslims) put on religious garments, their attitudes in the political arena do not correspond with to the tenets of their religions; their attitudes negate the moral ethos of their religions. Muhib Opeloye shares this idea while lamenting about the attitudes of Nigerians in politics:

It is rather ironical that the people who attach such importance to religion and who would want to use religion to get political offices relegate the religion to the background and would not allow its teaching to guide them in their day to day

administration. This has been responsible for the nation's political problems (59).

Unfortunately, Politics is looked at as a lucrative business venture, a very quick way one can easily amass wealth for one's selfish interest rather than considering politics as an avenue for people to render sacrificial services to God and to their fellow human beings, this accounts for the mentality of an average politician who struggles to assume political power for the purpose of pursuing selfish interests, self enrichment and further perpetuating social injustice. They fail to see and honour the position they hold as stewardship for which they would be held accountable to God and humanity. It would be good for leaders in this country to know that they are God's representatives on earth in the various positions they occupy and should be able to judge between men in truth and justice to keep their hearts away from the temptation of following the lusts of materialism since materialism will only lead them astray from the path of the righteousness of God. This type of attitudes call for teaching by religious leaders of the various religious systems of belief drawn from the Holy Books with emphasis on nationality, purity, morality, love and honesty as the basis for peaceful co-existence to accommodate developmental objectives of Nigeria.

The teachings on maintenance of moral standards need to be carried out with every sense of seriousness as it is capable of directing people towards positive thinking so that instead of developing strategies of prowling wealth to themselves they would cherish fair sharing and work towards meeting up with the challenges posed ahead of them to fulfill the promises they made to the electorates, this will serve our state and nation's nascent democracy better. Worried about the issues of betrayer of trust and the inordinate love for material things, Muhib Olepeye stressed that: The inordinate love for material things by politicians at the expense of the people's welfare is a betrayer of trust reposed on them and it was one of the contributory factors that led to the collapse of the second

republic (60). The same tendencies still persist even in the so called corrective regimes. Except those in the corridors of power whether military or civilians learn to be guided by the tenet of their own religion, Nigeria may never have political stability.

Religious leaders who are considered as God's oracle ought to reflect on and emphasize the teachings of prophets like Amos and Isaiah, which stresses on the necessity for total abstinence from injustices of all forms. For example, during his time, prophet Amos condemned corruption in the public service and admonished that, justice should be allowed to roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever flowing stream (Amos 2:7). Similarly, Prophet Isaiah on his part condemned the moral laxity, the lack of discipline he saw around him especially at the courts of the kings occasioned his declaration which states; "learn to do good, see justice, help the oppressed, defend the orphan and fight for the rights of widow. (Isaiah 1:17). Like prophets Amos and Isaiah of old, religious leaders should equally use their religious positions and institutions to sternly admonish public office holders, civil servants and politicians to stand on the path of virtue, without compromising their positions and moral standards so as to maintain themselves as leaders endowed with good characters we can depend on in the various challenging community structures like ours.

It would be unfortunate, if rather than standing on the path of virtue, our public office holders would compromise positions, standards and descend so much low that some of them will only be parading themselves as leaders in our various communities but would however, be known by the masses to have no character. To that extent, one need not be told that such persons can't be respected in a challenging society structure like ours. The issue of obsession with money has inadvertently or advertently affected visions, plans, decisions and directions in most assemblies today on this too Muhib Opeloye submits that:

Money in truth is one of the most unsatisfying of possessions. It takes away some cares, no doubt, but it brings with it quite as many cares as it takes away. There is the trouble in getting of it; there are temptations in the use of it, there is guilt in the abuse of it. There is sorrow in loosing of it certainly there is perplexity in the disposing of it (61).

It is true that money is important for the effective functioning of the society yet leaders must not be enslaved by its power for the love of money is the root of all evil.

### **Sources and Guardians of Morality in African Religion**

According to Idowu (1962:166), the Supreme-Being is a very important source of moral values in African Religion. The basic of Africa morality is the divine nature and essence of God. The supreme-being made man and implanted in him the sense of right and wrong. For example among the Tiv, *Aondo* (God) is addressed as *Teru wang* (the pure Lord). Similarly, the Yoruba address Him as the *Oba mimo* (the pure king). By giving man *Inja* (Character) God also provides man with the oracle of the heart which is to guide him and determine his moral life. Divinities are next to the supreme-Being as a source of moral values in African religion. This hierarchical structure is also reflected in the custodianship of morality. Generally, afrelians regard divinities as ministers of the supreme-Being in the world as well as intermediaries between man and the supreme-Being. They are also considered to be closer to man than the supreme-Being. They are charged with dual roles: firstly, they serve as intermediaries; and secondly, they serve as monitors of human behaviors on behalf of the supreme-Being. The divinities are responsible for keeping moral order in punishing those who are recalcitrant and rewarding those who are obedient.

Morality is vested in the ancestors. Africans believe that, though ancestors are dead physically, they are spiritually

present to monitor the actions of the members of their families. The ancestors, perhaps because of their nature are regarded in African Religion as custodians of moral values and ethical codes. Since they led exemplary lives on earth and had taken the issue of morality as premium, they are believed to stand at advantage in regulating moral conduct of the people (Aderibigbe 299). Unlike the disgruntled malignant spirits of the departed who have not reached the spirit land, ancestors are good spirits that look after the welfare their kinsmen. They return to their human families from time to time and symbolically share meals with them. They are interested in what is going on in their families. They act as guardians of family affairs, traditions and ethics, a violation of these moral codes is ultimate offence against the ancestors who in their capacity act as invisible police of the families and communities; and they could reward or punish appropriately for moral misdemeanor (Mbiti 85).

Different African communities observe certain customs and traditions, which regulates the people's morality by enforcing compliance to the dos and don'ts. It is believed that once such rules sustaining the customs and traditions are violated, the individual who violates them incurs the wrath of the society, while obedience produces peace, harmony and prosperity. Essentially African moral values cover African political, social, economic and religious life. However, since the totality of the African life is subsumed in religion, the moral values form important and inseparable part of African Religion (Mbiti 175). Though these moral values are varied, they could be classified into two broad categories: the approved behavior and disapproved conduct.

1. Approval behaviors and actions: Explaining the concept of moral values in African Religion, Aderibigbe has considered Truth as approved behavior. According to him, individuals are expected to be truthful and honest in all their dealings. It is believed that by this honorable

conduct one's life could be prolonged and blessed by the supreme-Being and divinities (303). Kindness is another value in African Religion. When one is kind, it is concluded that his interpersonal relationship with others is good and generally considered as approved conduct. The act of hospitality is practically shown especially to strangers. Africans are always prepared to take care of guests as long as they care to stay. It is often implied that Africans are prepared to share with a visitor an on-going meal, no matter how small and inconveniencing it may be. When one is kind and hospitable, Africans believe that he would have blessings both spiritually and materially, hence children are thought to be hospitable to people right from the beginning of parental upbringing. In another development, both men and women are enjoined to live a chaste life. In this regard, men were not expected to seduce other men's wives; similarly women were most expected to uphold chastity. For instance, a faithful young woman who was undefiled before marriage was regarded as a good family ambassador,' and symbolic items representing chastity were sent to her parents. While a woman who was not faithful at marriage becomes a disgrace not only to herself but to her family. In Africa, honor, loyalty and respect are given to elders generally. The children must respect and obey parents. The father must play his role to cater for the well being of the family and also be, prepared to protect them at all times. In other word, the mother's duty is to look after the family, respect and obey her husband, and remain faithful to him. The norms in this regard generally deal with inter-personal relationships that are expected from members of the family; from one individual in the society to the other; and the community as a cooperate body, towards all members who constitute it. Besides,

Africans consider humility as essentially the first virtue presupposing the possession of other virtues. It is held that a child who wishes to grow and progress must inculcate a sense of humor and not pride so that he might not be cut down for youthful exuberance. It is also viewed that in humility, both the young and old would always encounter favorable dispositions from divinities and the human communities.

2. Unapproved behavior and conduct: stealing is generally forbidden in African communities. This unapproved conduct is considered as one of the most sacrilegious offences that cannot go unpunished. When someone is caught stealing it evokes severe ridicule and attracts instant punishment. Another vital area of concern of African Religion is the cultural restrictions on certain social activities considered inimical to convention or tradition. Taboos have to do with conduct which works against the good and wellbeing of the community, individuals and the gods. What is a taboo (sin) in one African community may be permitted in another one. Taboos are important to Africans because they inculcate spiritual and moral values, which are the hallmark of African Religion (Idowu 210). Taboos seek to promote the needed sense of mutual responsibility and communality on which the African culture and religion are solidly built.

## **Religion and Development in Nigeria**

Development is the maximization of the potentialities of the total environment of Nigeria-economics, physical, political and human for the improvement of the lives of majority of Nigerian people. It must aim at creating the appropriate environment for the individual to live a happy, contented, spiritually satisfying and culturally meaningful life (Edidem 3). In African society we



have problems of underdevelopment. Most young people who are in cities come from the rural areas because of lack of essential social amenities such as water, electricity, motor able roads, health centers and good educational institutions. Under the aegis of the religious political and traditional rulers, the people are mobilized to build roads, schools, hospitals, markets, rural water and electricity projects. Individuals pursue various trades like trading, blacksmithing e.t.c. The basic occupation that sustains the people is farming. Other occupation include fishing for people in the riverine areas, hunting, and crafts. In African traditional community, Religion, politics and development were understood and seen as one, but with the advent of alien religions; Islamic and Christianity, there brought a demarcation between religion and politics (Imo 219). In this way, even among the Christians, we have what is called Aladura churches with extreme exhibition of the character of Pentecostalism. Adherents of African Religion are regarded as people who do not know God, disregarding their elders as not spiritual heads of their villages. The Herbalists or medicine men, soothsayers are now seen as agents of the dark forces, knowledge of herbs and roots are not useful any longer because they do not subject their drugs to our modern day scientific process. Patronage to shrines, deities and oracles and their priests are seen as agents of darkness. These differences cannot bring development, religious conflicts cannot bring development.

It's crystal clear that, there can be no meaningful development in a society where peaceful coexistence is lacking and for us to achieve meaningful development, in a society like Nigeria, it is important that, the state should be able to mobilize every religious group into searching for national unity and peace to avoid conflicts among ourselves, and at the same time, people should be operating according to the tenet of their religions, so long as such tenets do not militate against peace. It is only this way that we can talk of unity in diversity and

development. Religious and political leaders should employ high moral standards and dialogue, a forum where they can meet from time to time to look into conflicts of different kinds wherever and whenever they meet. Such leaders should not be financial of Religious conflicts so that room can be created to accommodate one another's beliefs. To enlighten the public on similarities in religious traditions, Government should make funds available to sponsor dialogue forum on the media; radio, television etc. Let all of us join hands with all who are equally God's children to take care for the earth which is entrusted in the hands of we men to build. Nigerian citizens should be law abiding by obeying constituted authority since all authorities are instituted by God. It was in this light that Jesus Christ paid tax to Caesar for himself and his disciple. The school system should be used to promote religious harmony by evolving a kind of religious education curriculum which would expose students to in depth knowledge of other religious tradition which have common teachings this will assist them learn to appreciate one another's religious beliefs. This track can effectively be mobilized for selfless nation building.

## **Conclusion**

There was no separation of religious and political leadership in a typical traditional society and this was as a result of the belief in the existence of a supreme being who makes all things happen the way they do. The people observed the societal norms, moral values and traditions. People naturally observed the societal values as any deviation could incur the anger of the gods and the ancestors. This has been an important control mechanism in the traditional societies as nobody would like to incur the displeasure of the gods. Some of the changes made by the advent of British colonialists like in the aspect of socio-economic spheres have brought about tremendous progress and development in our societies. However, the separation of

religion from the political authority has not helped matters. It has created opportunity for people of unguarded and questionable character to occupy high positions in the land. Religion is only relevant in the land of the living; Christians and Muslims alike should employ dialogue and avoid rioting where lives and properties are destroyed. Let's unite and build a strong and united Nigeria nation. It is the living that practice religion and politics. The dead do not. If there are no Nigerians, there can't be any Christianity and Islam in Nigeria. All elements in the various religious that tend to undermine the multi-religious and nature of the nation should be turned down or deemphasized. We can develop Nigeria and make it safe for Nigerians only when we unite.

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