

*A Textbook on*

# **Religion, Morality, Ethics and Etiquette**

**Edited by**

**J.K. Ayantayo**

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## FOREWORD

It is a privilege to write the foreword for *Religion, Morality, Ethics, and Etiquette*, a work that engages with some of the most profound themes shaping human behaviour and social structures. This textbook, which serves as an instructional guide for GST 209, one of the courses in the General Studies Unit at Chrisland University, Abeokuta, Ogun State, explores the foundational aspects of religion, ethics, and etiquette. It offers readers a pathway to a better understanding and harmony in both personal and social spheres.

Within these pages, students are introduced to the multifaceted nature of religion, which for centuries has provided individuals and societies with a moral compass and a sense of purpose. The chapters explore various religious traditions, theories of religion, and ethical frameworks, thereby allowing readers to appreciate the diverse perspectives that enrich our global society. In addition, the textbook examines the intricate relationship between religion and morality from a Christian perspective by focusing on how these domains shape ethical standards and influence personal behaviour and social interactions.

The sections on ethics and etiquette further emphasise the importance of understanding proper conduct, both as an individual and within the community. By examining core ethical principles, this book provides readers with tools to navigate moral challenges in a complex world. The chapters dedicated to contemporary ethical issues bring an added layer of relevance, engaging with real-world moral dilemmas and providing insights that are essential for personal growth and responsible citizenship.

A unique aspect of this textbook is its focus on practical application as it ensures that the study of these themes goes beyond theoretical understanding. The final chapters, which explore methods for integrating morality, ethics, and etiquette into daily life, equip students with the skills necessary to embody these values in their interactions with others. The contributors have addressed these various topics with great depth and clarity, and I believe that *Religion, Morality, Ethics, and Etiquette* is an invaluable resource for students, educators, and anyone interested in the principles that guide human interaction and behaviour.

**Professor Olutoyin Jegede**  
**Director, General Studies Unit,**  
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10th October, 2024

## PREFACE

In a world of unending technical developments and cultural shifts, the fundamental pillars of religion, morality, ethics, and etiquette continue to be vital, directing human behaviour and social relationships. This book, "Religion, Morality, Ethics, and Etiquette," seeks to investigate these timeless principles, analysing their intersections and individual contributions to moulding communities and human behaviour.

The impetus for this work emerges from an awareness of the necessity for a thorough investigation of these four interrelated realms. Religion has always had a significant impact on moral and ethical frameworks, providing profound insights into the nature of good and evil, right and wrong. Religion, across traditions and beliefs, offers the spiritual and philosophical foundations that shape human values and societal norms.

*Religion, Morality, Ethics, and Etiquette* is structured to provide a holistic understanding of concepts and perspectives of religion, an overview of the world's religion, theories of religion, the definition of ethics and ethical reasoning. It also discusses the concept of etiquette and its features, the relationship between religion and morality: the Christian perspective, moral values and ethical standards and the influence of religion on human behaviour. As a course that deals with contemporary issues, the book brings to the fore, contemporary ethical matters in general and specifically on myriad cases of misconduct in society with attention paid to moral principles and conflicts. The discussions end with methods of inculcating morality, ethics and etiquette in practical life and the challenges associated with those efforts.

To give a balanced and thorough picture, we compiled well-researched topics from colleagues drawn from a rich tapestry of philosophical, theological, and cultural perspectives, as well as information from religious scriptures and modern research.

I am sure that this book will be useful to students, educators, professionals, and any other persons who want to learn more about the complex relationships between religion, morality, ethics, and etiquette.

**Prof Jacob Kehinde Ayantayo**

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# CHAPTER 1

## RELIGION, MORALITY, ETHICS AND ETIQUETTE

*J.K. Ayantayo*

### **Introduction**

It is a sociological truism that the end of the twentieth century brought about an extraordinary and mostly unanticipated transformation in the global outlook under the banner of globalisation, which can be defined as the construction of the world's oneness. This represents a shift towards globalisation in all facets of human existence, including socio-economic and political aspects. Regarding religion, it represents a shift from religiosity to humanism, atheism, individualism, and secularism. Despite this, religion has a strong hold on Africa, influencing morality and etiquette as a tool of societal control. This is practicable because Africa and Nigeria have not advanced technologically enough to build scientific and technological devices similar to those found in Europe, America, and Asia as a form of social control over their citizens, which is required in any human society.

This chapter exposes students to a thorough understanding of the four interrelated means of social control: religion, morality, ethics, and etiquette, their relevance and importance in our day-to-day relationships with our schoolmates, friends, colleagues, and enemies locally, nationally, and globally. These variables are the foundation of the Nigerian social framework, moulding our interactions, directing our decisions, and defining our identities. As we start reading this book, it is imperative to shed a little light on the four variables even though each of them forms a topic of discussion in this book. But as a piece of background information, we need to know what each of them represents, their meeting point and relevance to you as an individual and Nigerian society as an example.

### **What is Religion?**

Religion, being the oldest of the four variables, can be described as a term, ideology or practice that is devoid of satisfactory definitions. This is so because religion in terms of meaning, essence and function means different things to different people. Because it is practised or understood by man, the term has been defined from the sociological, anthropological, psychological, comparative and philosophical perspectives. Since this book focuses on the place of religion in society, we shall discuss it from theological and moral points of view. According to Kenny, an Islamic theological religion can be defined as “anything that relates man to the ultimate values

and such a thing embodies creed, code, cult and communion”. We need to expand this further by looking at each of these four variables underlying religion. Creed is used in the context of any system of principles or beliefs. Code refers to systems, principles or rules regulating man-to-man or God-and-man behaviour. Cult refers to a religious group, which points to the fact that religion is a group thing. It is practised not by an individual alone but by a group of individuals. Communion, which is the last of the elements, is used in the context of worship, prayers sacraments and all activities of communication between God and man, man and man in a religious setting. Johnstone concurs with Kenny by specifying that religion is a group phenomenon that is connected with the sacred and supernatural. He notes that religion involves a body of beliefs, entails a set of practices, and involves moral prescriptions.

Given the pluralistic nature of religion in Nigeria and bearing in mind that many religious practitioners have been brainwashed to believe that their religion is the only religion, we believe it is important to go beyond the abstraction of the above variables by explaining the practical manifestations of the four characteristics in the three major religions in Nigeria. These are arranged alphabetically: African Traditional Religion (ATR), Christianity and Islam. Beliefs in God, divinities, ancestors, spirits, magic and medicines constitute the creed of African Traditional Religion (ATR). The Christian creed is exemplified in the concept of trinity – God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit –which goes with belief in one baptism, resurrection and divine judgment. Beliefs in Allah, angels, the Holy Book, prophets, resurrection, judgment and predestination comprise the Islamic creed. Proverbs, taboos, fables, wise sayings and the *Ifa* corpus, among others, constitute the code of conduct in ATR.

The codes of conduct in Islam are found in the Quran and Hadith, particularly concerning the Sharia law. The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mountain are good examples of codes in Christianity. Traditional religious adherents in most cases meet in their cultic shrines. The congregations or parishioners or, better put, the Christians stand for the cult in Christianity; the group usually meets mostly in churches, camps, mountains, plains and temples. The *Ulama* or *Jammah* represents the cult or religious group in Islam, whose popular places of meeting are the mosque and of recent, camps, concerning some new Islamic religious movements in Nigeria. In ATR, communion is manifested in what is called *Iwure* (prayer) and *Sinsin* (worship). Christians also commune with God through prayers, worship, sacraments and many liturgical activities. Muslims do the same principally with the five-time daily prayers, among others.

From a moral point of view, religion can be defined as a system of beliefs, practices, and values that provides individuals and communities with a framework for understanding the nature of reality, defining right and wrong, and guiding ethical conduct. This is demonstrated by the fact that religion frequently incorporates moral teachings and ethical principles derived from sacred texts, traditions, and teachings, which serve as a foundation for moral behaviour and spiritual growth. From this vantage point, religion provides moral guidance by outlining the virtues, obligations, and ethical responsibilities that dictate how people should behave towards each other, the divine, and themselves. As shall be seen later in one of the topics, religion emphasizes principles such as compassion, justice, honesty, humility, forgiveness, and integrity, encouraging adherents to cultivate moral virtues and strive for moral excellence in their personal and social lives.

### **Morality**

Morality refers to the principles, beliefs, and values that guide individuals or communities. It is the thing that distinguishes right from wrong, good from bad, and virtues from bad behaviours. Most time, morality and its sources differ from one location to another. However, religion is one of the common sources of morality, as demonstrated by religious texts, teachings, and spiritual convictions. Also, cultural customs and conventions, legal frameworks that incorporate moral values into legislation, act as a foundation for upholding moral norms and settling conflicts. Howbeit, individual's conscience and intuition, as well as human reason and rationality, are among the many ways that education and upbringing are acquired and internalised.

### **Ethics**

Ethics is the methodical study of human actions and intentions to ascertain their morality, decency, correctness, and incorrectness. However, special attention is paid to how such actions are assessed about the individual who carried out the actions or the intentions in question. Besides, the effect of the action on the recipient and on the environment where the action is carried out or the intention is prevented are examined. Three important issues with the definition should be noted, especially in light of what ethics is meant to address. The first concerns ethical studies and what we mean when we talk about behaviours and intentions. The second is what makes an activity good or bad and who gets to decide what makes an action right or wrong. That is, what or who establishes the criteria that informed whether a particular behaviour is right or



wrong? And what result from this kind of behavioural analysis? Lastly, why should anyone care about the kind of deed or intent someone has occasionally committed or repressed? Each of this, is significant and will be handled individually.

## **Etiquette**

Etiquette, the last variable can be defined as the conventional code of courteous behaviour in a given group or society, which includes a broad range of social norms, such as decency, decorum, and suitable behaviour in different contexts. People's interactions with one another, their verbal and nonverbal communication, and their behaviour in both social and professional settings are frequently governed by etiquette. It includes but is not limited to the guidelines for polite conversation, greetings, table etiquette, clothing norms, and personal space respect.

## **The interface between Religion, Ethics, Morality and Etiquette**

There exist numerous perspectives and interpretations of the intricate and multifaceted relationship between religion and morality, contingent upon cultural, theological, and philosophical circumstances. For our study, we shall limit our discussion to the religious foundation of ethics and morality. The foundation of African morals and ethics is the conviction that religion is the only reliable source. This is because everything in Africa has a religious tint to it. So, to cite John Mbiti's, famous quote which assert that Africans are overtly religious. He reinstates further that:

Africans are notoriously religious, and each person has a religious system with a set of beliefs and practices. Religion permeates into all departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possible always to isolate it.

Domesticating the view of Mbiti, particularly as it relates to the Yoruba people of Southwestern Nigeria, Bolaji Idowu says that religion permeates all aspects of the life of the Yoruba so much that:

It expresses itself in multifarious ways: it forms the theme of the song, makes topics for ministering, finds vehicles in myths, folktales, proverbs and sayings and it is the basis of philosophy.

Sentiment apart, the religious beliefs of the African people and its accompanied rituals frequently play a significant role in their daily lives, from birth to death. Theologically speaking, everything is always coloured in some way by religion. Even in the West, with all of its advancements in

science and technology, the story remains the same. The foundation of the American constitution, "In God we trust," has not been altered as of yet, and the medical community has not altered the tenet of medical practice, "We care but God cure." This illustrates how deeply ingrained religion is in the global social and political fabric, even in countries where religious secularism is declared in national constitutions.

Hence, morality and ethics are viewed as being founded on God in Africa. This implies that the origin of Christian ethics is God. This is embodied in the conviction that God created the earth and everything on it, including morality and humanity. When God created man, he also gave him a feeling of good and wrong. This allows him to discriminate between right and wrong. Karl Barth (1939) states that one cannot acquire moral truth on his own when discussing Christian ethics.

Morality is regarded as an integral component of religion in Islam, just like it is in every other sphere of human existence, including social interactions, commerce, politics, education, science, and technology. The two are hence intertwined. The aforementioned implies that religious morality is dictated by divine will or commands. To put it another way, it is what God requires or wills to be done and the reason behind what he prohibits that man should refrain from. Religious ethics are both instrumental and authoritative because they are based on God. In other words, it stems from what God commands or approves.

This nature of religious ethics manifests in various instructional and authoritative injunctions in the oral traditions, the Bible and the Qur'an. For instance, "thou shall" and "thou shall not" are common in Christianity. A religious man must abide by particular instructions and authoritative moral injunctions, such as the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount, among other Biblical passages. Examples of such injunctions are thou shalt not kill, tell lies, steal, and covet your neighbour's property (Ex. 20:1-17). Words like "show kindness unto parents, near kindred, orphans, and the needy" are also found in the Qur'an. Q4: thirty-six. Both the Bible and the Qur'an contain authoritative and instructive statements in almost every chapter. The Ifa corpus, a primary source of traditional religious ethics among the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, contains similar elements to what we have here. For instance, in Odu Ejiogbe, Ifa rewards his followers for telling the truth by promising to support them if they do so.

Essentially, etiquette has its roots in religion, just as ethics and morals do. By establishing norms and expectations for social conduct, rituals, and interactions both within and outside of religious communities, religion also has a big influence on how people behave. Respecting religious convictions and cultural customs is demonstrated by abiding by religious etiquette, which also fosters harmony and understanding among various people and groups.

The link between the four variables is obvious because Religion often serves as a powerful motivator for moral behaviour by providing believers with a sense of moral obligation and accountability to a higher power. The belief in divine reward and punishment can influence individuals' moral decision-making and behaviour, as they seek to adhere to religious teachings and please their deity or deities. In conclusion, religious beliefs and practices frequently influence social norms, customs, and behaviours, which are embedded in etiquette. They all help individually and jointly in shaping how people interact with others and demonstrate respect for religious values and traditions.

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## CHAPTER 2

### CONCEPT AND PERSPECTIVES OF RELIGION

*S.O. Okanlawon*

#### **Concept of Religion**

Paul Griffiths suggests that conceptualising religion is a difficult task that exposes the inadequacies of people's knowledge. Because there are many different ideas regarding the conversations about religion, he asserts that these apparent difficulties in the conversations about religion show the incoherent nature of the concept of religion. Religion, as a concept, did not originally refer to a social genus or cultural type. The term "religion" comes from both Old French and Anglo-Norman (1200s CE) and means respect for sense of right, moral obligation, sanctity, what is sacred, reverence for the gods. It was adapted from the Latin term *religio*, a term roughly equivalent to "scrupulousness" which translates to conscientiousness, devotedness or felt obligation. In this sense, *religio* was an effect of taboos, promises, curses, or transgressions, even when these were unrelated to the gods. Religion had a range of senses since the earliest period when the term religion is mentioned or used. In the earliest period, religion was considered the worship of different gods.

Religion was ultimately derived from the Latin word *religiō* (respect for what is sacred) and *religare* (to bind, in the sense of an obligation). The term "religion" describes various systems of belief and practice concerning what people determine to be sacred or spiritual. In the ancient and medieval world, the etymological Latin root *religiō* was understood as an individual virtue of worship in mundane contexts, never as doctrine, practice, or actual source of knowledge.

In general, *religiō* referred to broad social obligations towards anything including family, neighbours, rulers, and even towards God. *Religiō* was most often used by the ancient Romans not in the context of a relation towards gods, but as a range of general emotions which arose from heightened attention in any mundane context such as hesitation, caution, anxiety, or fear, as well as feelings of being bound, restricted, or inhibited.

When *religiō* came into English around the 1200s as religion, it took the meaning of "life bound by monastic vows" or monastic orders. The compartmentalised concept of religion, where religious and worldly things were separated, was not used before the 1500s. The concept of religion was used in the 1500s to distinguish the domain of the church and the domain of civil

authorities. In Ancient Greece, the Greek term *threskeia* (θρησκεία), translated as “religion”, was used in mundane contexts and could mean multiple things from respectful fear to excessive or harmfully distracting practices of others, to cultic practices. It was often contrasted with the Greek word *deisidaimonia*, which meant “too much fear”.

In the Middle Ages, as Christians developed monastic orders in which one took vows to live under a specific rule, they called such an order *religio* (and *religiones* for the plural), though the term continued to be used, as it had been in antiquity, in adjective form, to describe those who were devout and in the noun form to refer to “worship”. Thus, from this period and up till the post-Reformation era, an idealised Protestant monotheism became the model of religion. But after this era, the concept of religion became understood as a social genus that was increasingly put to use by European Christians as they took steps to categorise the variety of cultures they encountered in the different continents of the world such as the Americas, South Asia, East Asia, Africa, and Oceania. This generic concept of religion was expanded as a result of the reports given by missionaries and colonial administrators who encountered the different groups in these continents. The major characteristic identity of all religions became the belief in spiritual beings.

Pasquier (2023) opines that religion is a modern concept that originated in the West. The concept was found in texts from the 17th century in the English language due to events such as the splitting of Christianity during the Protestant Reformation and globalisation in the Age of Exploration, which involved contact with numerous foreign cultures with non-European languages. Religion is not a static matter. It has passed through a perplexing changes and evolutions in the history of mankind. Religion is a growing and dynamic phenomenon.

Also, in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a new and third spurt of the concept of religion emerged. Here the concept of religion was enlarged to include both the practices that connect people to “powers” or “forces” that lack minds, wills and personalities, and the practices that connect people to one or more spirits. So, the practices that are distinctly religious are those tied to a culture’s worldview - their conception of “the overall shape of reality”. In summary, one can think of the growth of the social genus version of the concept religion as analogous to three concentric circles — from a theistic to a polytheistic and then to a cosmic. At this time, the Asian religions such as Buddhism, Neo-Confucianism and Hinduism, the philosophical treatises were already having the same growth and popularity as the monotheistic religions of the world.

But when religion is conceptualised as a social genus, the intention is to treat it as something universal or as something that appears in every human culture. On the other hand, some scholars have treated religion as being pan-human. As Zeigler (2020) asserts, religions have sacred histories, narratives, and mythologies, preserved in oral traditions, sacred texts, symbols, and holy places, that may attempt to explain the origin of life, the universe, and other phenomena.

Religion has two broad conceptualisations: monotheistic (belief in a single god) and polytheistic (belief in multiple gods). The different identified religions have been categorised in some other ways:

1. **Abrahamic religions:** group of monotheistic religions that strictly endorse worship of the God of Abraham and consider Abraham as their progenitor; and they have many shared beliefs, customs, and traditions, which include the importance of prayer, celebrations, charity and cleanliness, and pilgrimage. These are: Christianity, Islam, and Judaism.
2. **World religions:** religions that are deemed to have been especially large, internationally widespread, or influential in the development of Western society. Initially the identified world religions consist of the “Big Five” religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism but the category has also become extended to include other major religious groups, namely the Bahá’í Faith, Sikhism, and/or Zoroastrianism.
3. **Asian religions:** religions that may be considered geographically as Asian in terms of both their places of origin and their distribution in relation to the continent of Asia. Examples are Buddhism (India), Confucianism (China) Hinduism (India), Jainism (India), Shintoism (Japan), Sikhism (India), Taoism (China), Zoroastrianism (India/Iran), Baha’i Faith (Persia-Iran), and Muism/Sinism (Korea). Christianity, Islam and Judaism are also technically Asian religions because they originated from Asia.
4. **Folk religions:** These religions are also called “popular religion”, “traditional religion”, “unofficial religion” or “vernacular religion”. These are religions that comprise various forms and expressions of religion that are distinct from the official doctrines and practices of organised religion. It consists of ethnic or regional religious customs under the umbrella of a religion, but outside official doctrine and practices. These religions are closely associated with a particular group of people, ethnicity or tribe. They often have no formal creeds or sacred texts. Examples of folk religions include, but not limited to, African traditional

religions, Chinese folk religions, Native American religions and Australian aboriginal religions.

5. **Indigenous religions:** These are the different belief systems across the Americas, Australasia, Asia, Africa, and Northern Europe, particularly to those practiced by communities living under the impact of colonialism. These religions have a deep connection to the land and its people, as well as an emphasis on oral tradition, storytelling, and the importance of respecting nature. Some of the key features of indigenous religions are spirit communication through rituals and offerings, spirit possession by a deity for healing people, ancestor veneration, divination practices for communicating with ancestors and seeking guidance, physical sacred sites/sacred space, geographic location, the use of ritual and artifacts, community participation, a fluid structure, and belief in a supreme God or other divinities (gods). Some examples of indigenous religions are ancestor worship (Māori of New Zealand), aboriginal spirituality (Aborigines of Australia), animism and shamanism (Native American tribes of North America), Ifa (Yoruba people of Nigeria), Aztec & Candomblé (South America), Vodou (Haiti), Santeria (Cuba), Bon (Tibet), and many others.
6. **Eastern religions:** These are religions, also called Dharmic religions, which originated in East, South and Southeast Asia and thus have dissimilarities with Western, African and Iranian religions. Examples of the Eastern religions are Confucianism, Taoism, Chinese folk religion, Shinto, Korean Shamanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, Vietnamese folk religion.
7. **New religious movements (NRMs):** is a religious or spiritual group that has modern origins and is peripheral to its society's dominant religious culture. They are distinct from the pre-existing religious denominations. Examples of the NRMs are Cao Dai (Vietnam), Eckankar, Soka Gakkai (Japan), Tenrikyo (Japan), Swaminarayan Faith (India), Neo-Druidism, Unitarian Universalism.

### **Perspectives of Religion**

There are different perceptions about the concept of religion. There is a dual consideration of the perspective of religion. This considers religion through the lens of two general approaches to defining religion: **functional approaches**, which tend to have broad, more inclusive definitions of religion and **substantive approaches**, which tend to have narrower, more exclusive definitions of religion.

Functional definitions define religion in terms of the functions it performs for individuals and/ or society. For example, Yinger (1995) defines religion as “a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with the ultimate problems of human life”. But Thompson asserts that there are problems with functional definitions of religion. This is because they are based on subjective opinions and assumptions about what the role of religion is, and that they are too inclusive such that almost any movement with a belief system of any kind and a committed group of followers would classify as a religion – for example, communism, nationalism, and even atheism.

The substantive definitions of religion define religion in terms of its content rather than its function. This is exemplified by Emile Durkheim’s approach to defining religion – Durkheim argued that religion was the collective marking off the sacred from the profane. A common approach to defining religion substantively is to define religion in terms of a belief in a higher power such a god or other supernatural forces. But as Thompson points out, the substantive definitions of religion can be too exclusive. For example, definitions which are based on a belief in God would exclude Buddhism. Also, substantive definitions might still be too inclusive. For example, people who believe in fate, magic, or UFOs might be included as religious according to the above definition.

On the other hand, according to Beyers, over the centuries there have been attempts to define the phenomenon of religion. These attempts have come from various perspectives, ranging from the psychological, sociological and anthropological to the philosophical, theological and biological. These various perspectives of religion including the theoretical perspectives of religion form the crux of our attention in the succeeding paragraphs.

### **1. Philosophical Perspective of Religion**

Sigmund Freud, the famed psychoanalyst of the early 20th century, critiqued religion for being unwelcoming, harsh, and unloving toward those who are not members of a specific religious group. From Freud's psychoanalytic perspective, religion is the unconscious mind's need for wish fulfilment. Freud believed that people choose to believe in God, who represents a powerful father figure, because they need to feel secure and absolve themselves of guilt. He concluded that religion gives people assurance in the face of insecurity because humans can never master the universal privations intrinsic to mortality. This agrees with a common explanation for religion is



that it helps humans deal with stress, anxiety and uncertainty. Thus, philosophers characterized religious beliefs as pathological, seeing religion as a malignant social force that encourages irrational thoughts and ritualistic behaviours.

## **2. Psychological Perspective of Religion**

Psychologists have proposed that the way the human brain works often predisposes people to believe in different religious tenets. The human mind looks for patterns, purpose, and meaning, which may influence why people turn to religion to guide their belief systems. The varieties of cognitions provide the impetus for religious beliefs and in this way, psychologists affirm that those cognitions lead humans to see the world as a place with an intentional design, created by someone or something. This tendency also set people up to believe in an omnipresent God-like concept. And these cognitive tendencies could allow the human mind to create religions built on the idea of supernatural beings that watch over our lives.

Another argument is that if religion helps people cope psychologically with dangerous or unpredictable situations, then, religious disbelief in God should increase with greater existential security. However, modern psychologists recognise that religion can play an important role in an individual's life and experiences and can even improve overall health and well-being.

## **3. Sociological Perspective of Religion**

The sociological perspective of religion hints that religion promotes inequality and other problems. It can reinforce, and perpetuate the role it plays in our daily lives. Social scientists recognise that religion exists as an organised and integrated set of beliefs, behaviours, and norms centred on basic social needs and values. Pioneer French sociologist, Émile Durkheim (1858-1917), described religion with the ethereal statement that it consists of “things that surpass the limits of our knowledge.” Basically, sociologists stress the functions that religion serves for society regardless of how it is practiced or of what specific religious beliefs a society favours.

There are five (5) functions of religion that sociologists have identified:

- i.** Religion gives meaning and purpose to life; thus, religious faith and belief help many people make sense of the things science cannot tell us.
- ii.** Religion reinforces social unity and stability; thus, it serves as an agent of socialization through the common set of beliefs and facilitates communication and strengthens social

bonds through the communal practice of religion which takes place in houses of worship that brings people together physically.

- iii. Religion, as an agent of social control and social order, teaches people moral behaviour and thus helps them learn how to be good members of their societies. An example is the *Ten Commandments* in the Judeo-Christian tradition, which are perhaps the most famous set of rules for moral behaviour.
- iv. Religion achieves greater psychological and physical well-being by being a source of comfort to people in times of distress and by enhancing their social interaction with others in places of worship.
- v. Religion motivates people to work for positive social change. This is seen in the activities of Martin Luther King Jr. and other civil rights activists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

For sociologists, religion is about community, which binds people together (social cohesion), promotes behavioural consistency (social control), and offers strength for people during life's transitions and tragedies (meaning and purpose). Religion, then, provides differing degrees of "social cement" that hold societies and cultures together unlike science that provides mundane and partial explanations of existence. The German sociologist and political economist Max Weber (1864–1920) believed it was a precipitator of social change. This is because Protestant values influenced the rise of capitalism and helped create the modern world order.

#### **4. Anthropological Perspective of Religion**

Anthropological perspective of religion focuses on how religious ideas express a people's cosmology, that is, the notion of how the universe is organised and the role of humans within the universe. Anthropologists of religion are not concerned with discovering the truthfulness or falsehood of religion. Thus, they study rituals that incorporate symbols and highlight how these religious symbols often help to bring communities together in times of crisis or at special moments in the calendar year. So, they examine the actions of religious specialists such as priests, shamans, sorcerers, spirit mediums or prophets and how they meet human needs. These religious functionaries play significant roles in the socio-economic, political and religious lives of the people.

Notably, anthropologists study religion from the perspective of cultural relativism and push to understand religious beliefs from an insider's perspective. For them, there will be

misunderstandings when definitions or assumptions are imposed from one culture on another. For instance, Marvin Harris studied the Hindu prohibition against killing of cows. He found out that in Hinduism, the cow is honoured and treated with respect because of its fertility, gentle nature, and association with some Hindu deities. These religious ideas about the cow were based on an economic reality. Cows, in India, were more valuable alive as source of milk or for doing work in the field than they are dead as meat. Thus, the cows were given sacred status to preserve them for human use.

### **5. Theological Perspective of Religion**

Theological perspective of religion seeks to interpret the universal religious experience of humankind and theologically reflects on the meaning and value of religions. Also, this perspective examines the relations between one religion and the other within the ambit of their expressed phenomena. This is not so much about the encounter of religions but rather about people – religious people. Religion is no longer regarded as a monolithic body of beliefs and practices since it is too fluid to be delineated precisely.

In Christianity, for instance, the most common model of the views that Christians take of other religions is a simple three-point model first articulated by Alan Race: pluralism, inclusivism, and exclusivism. Other religions, especially the world religions, model religion as being interactional with a divine being or divine presence but with relational consequences for human and non-human relationships. The key theological themes that are subjected to theological analysis among religious practitioners bother around the themes of God, humanity, the world, salvation, and eschatology (the study of last things).

### **6. Biological Perspective of Religion**

The biological perspective seeks to purge religion of its superstitions, which includes belief (or practices that rely on belief) in the supernatural and the fear or appeal to supernatural spirits. Words like soul, spirit, or ghost are expected to be used metaphorically rather than as a reality. The crux of the thought behind this perspective is that everyone has one religion or the other since it is hardly impossible to function without one and on the premise that religion serves various cognitive and social functions. Hence, religion does not need gods or supernatural entities of any kind. Consequently, scientific innovations have been used to critique traditional

religious beliefs. For instance, the theory of evolution has been used to counter the creation accounts of the Abrahamic religions.

Basically, the biological perspective to religion suggests an explanation of religion from an evolutionary biological perspective, which promises to shake off apologetic and culturalist presumptions that humans represent a single, unnatural exception in the natural world.

## 7. Theoretical Perspectives of Religion

Modern-day sociologists often apply one of the following major theoretical perspectives as paradigms to understand religion. These are: functionalism, conflict theory, and symbolic interactionism. They apply these as different lenses to understand society.

- a. **Functionalism:** Functionalists contend that religion serves several functions in society. For them, religion depends on society for its existence, value, and significance, and vice versa. From this perspective, religion serves several purposes, like providing answers to spiritual mysteries, offering emotional comfort, and creating a place for social interaction and social control. In this way, religion defines the spiritual world and spiritual forces, including divine beings. As such, for example, religion helps answer questions like, “How was the world created?” “Why do we suffer?” “Is there a plan for our lives?” and “Is there an afterlife?”
- b. **Conflict theory:** Conflict theorists view religion as an institution that helps maintain patterns of social inequality and reinforce and promote social conflict. According to this perspective, religion has been used to support the “divine right” of oppressive hereditary monarchies and to justify unequal social structures. An example of this is India’s hierarchical caste system and the Vatican’s tremendous amount of wealth in the face of the low income of most Roman Catholic parishioners. Conflict theorists are critical of the way many religions enhance the notion that religious practitioners should be satisfied with existing circumstances because it is divinely ordained. Conflict theorists are averse to how religious power brokers or religious leaders dictate or practices rituals, and beliefs through their personalised interpretation of religious texts or through proclaimed direct communication of revelation or divination. Thus, they control the lives of believers. One example of a conflict theorist was the revolutionary Karl Marx (1818-1883), who said that religion was the “opiate of the masses” and believed that religion reflects the social stratification of society and maintains inequality and

perpetuates the status quo. Hence, Marx viewed religion as a tool of social control used by the bourgeoisie to keep the proletariat content with an unequal status quo. Also, conflict theorists affirm that religion has led to persecution, torture, and wanton bloodshed.

- c. **Symbolic Interactionism:** Symbolic interactionists study the symbols and interactions of everyday life. To them beliefs and experiences are not sacred unless individuals in a society regard them as sacred. For example, the cross, Star of David, and the crescent and star are symbols of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, respectively. The symbolic interactionist perspective emphasises the ways in which individuals interpret their religious experiences and religious symbols. Interactionists are interested in the negotiated meanings that different societies and groups attribute to these symbols. Thus, the focus of symbolic interactionists in relation to religion is the interaction between religious leaders and practitioners, the role of religion in the ordinary components of everyday life, and the ways people express religious values in social interactions

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## CHAPTER 3

### AN OVERVIEW OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS

*S. I. Awoniyi*

#### **Introduction**

Religion is a broad and complex topic that encompasses a wide range of beliefs, practices, and traditions. Across the world, there are numerous religions with varying interpretations and customs. Some of the major world religions include Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism among others<sup>1</sup>. Each of these religions has its own unique history, teachings, and cultural significance. Religion plays a major role in shaping the values, rituals, and worldview of individuals and societies. It is also a source of comfort, guidance, and shared socio-cultural community for millions of people around the globe<sup>2</sup>. The concept, religion is a relative word or personal experiential phenomenon that deals with the issue of Ultimate Reality which is beyond complete human understanding. In view of this, scholars have found it difficult to agree on one unanimous definition of religion. However, some common features of religion can still be identified which include subject of worship, object of worship, idea of salvation, sacredness, supernatural beliefs, a supernatural life, secular ideologies, worldviews, the destiny of man, the meaning of history, worship, and ethics.<sup>3</sup> In support of this observation, Boyle and Sheen have this to say:

Atheism and free thought were first taught publicly in the late 19th century by Herbert Jumbo in Bonny. Educator Tai Solarin, who died in 1994 was publicly declared, confirmed non-theist in the twentieth century. He separated religion from education and occupied himself solely with secular goals<sup>4</sup>.

The above submission connotes that everybody has a worldview guiding the life he is living. All the same, this type of worldview or secular ideology in relation to the above claim is in turn a religion to the person who embraces such a worldview. In consonance with this, Odumuyiwa (2001) equally affirms that:

There is no society that is devoid of religion and religious activities. Even in an atheistic society, it is presumed that such society recognizes the place of religion believing that there is no God is a kind of belief.<sup>5</sup>



It implies that religion is an inescapable phenomenon in human society. On the other hand, it is pertinent to stress that sociologists have agreed that the concept, society must take account of people, relationships and institutions. More so, it also takes account of the importance of political organizations which distribute and exercise power within a recognized geographical entity. Hence, religion and society are related, this is because religion exists and it is practiced in society, and every society has a religion as a moral sustainer with a view to building a well-ordered society. Scarf (1970) establishes that religion has a pervading, continuing and universal power in all societies<sup>6</sup>. It is in this sense that Emile Durkheim once said that *Vox Populi Vox Dei* meaning that the voice of man is the voice of God<sup>7</sup>.

For instance, Nigeria is a religiously pluralistic society, the fact holds that diverse religious adherents do apply their religions to their social, emotional, economic, intellectual and spiritual life. They also hold the strong conviction that religion is relevant in every unit of their life. However, the challenge is how to persuade religious adherents to eschew religious rivalry, intolerance and bloodshed, in order to foster peaceful co-existence and unity to build a virile and worthwhile society for the present and generations to come in the world and Nigeria in particular. It is obvious that religion is so important in the life of every man and society, why then are there elements of socio-ethical ills and moral decadence in the world? Does any of these religions encourage misdemeanour in the world? Then, how can the world build peaceful and harmonious societies? These questions among other vital issues are part of the tasks ahead. This chapter is divided into seven units:

- Introduction;
- Religion in Human Affairs;
- Classifications and General Understanding of the World's Religions;
- Religion and National Issues: The Nigerian Milieu;
- Why Most Religious Countries are not Most Prosperous?
- Ethics in the World's Religions (the Seven Dimensions of Religion Postulated by Ninian Smart);
- Way Forward in the Context of Nigerian Society.

## **Religion in Human Affairs**

Religion is a universal phenomenon. It has been accepted as a legitimate and necessary activity of the human race from the very beginning of time<sup>8</sup>. Nabofa corroborates the assertion that, human beings are inevitably involved in religion because deep down in the human nature there is an inherent urge in him which makes religion a matter of ultimate concern. Religion concerns itself with the most sublime of human aspirations. It is regarded as the source of morality and public order and the inner peace of individual persons<sup>9</sup>. In a similar but different perspective, Boyle and Sheen affirm that religion is a universal part of human life<sup>10</sup>. It connotes that there is surely an innate *religiousness* in every person, and this grants him the intuitive idea that he has every right to the subject, religion. Most of those who reject religion make this claim realize faintly that they have religion inherent in themselves. The fact that man repudiates God does not always mean that God gives man up completely, even though it always means that man is denying himself of the full benefit of his enabling grace. Irreligion may exult in some form of material success, but what about the cost of it that should be incurred in the restricted area of man's private life, where discomfort and venomous living combine in the work of the person's annihilation. It also happens in the wider area of national life. S.B. Thielm equally affirms that almost every one when age, disease, or sorrows strike him; inclines to think there is a God, or something very like Him<sup>11</sup>. Then, if man cannot see any value in religion, what real value is there in irreligion?

### **Reflections on the Values of Religion can be summarised as follows:**

Religion provides mankind with moral values by which to live.

Religion gives food to meet spiritual hunger

Religion answers some questions which nothing else can answer

Religion provides people with a view of the World

Religion inspires people to produce the best, the greatest, and the noblest that is in them.

Religion pays attention to key moments in the life of the individual

Religion celebrates life or regenerates the cosmos

Religion shows people their limitations.

Religion helps people to communicate in two directions. First, through social communication where people meet together for a common purpose otherwise refer to as horizontal direction of religious communication. Second, there is vertical communication between man and God, as well as between man and the spirits beings<sup>12</sup>.

Religion provides prophetic function in society by contributing for its own share to safeguard the use of power and economic resources. It calls for justice, fairness, respect and human dignity. It cries against corruption, indiscipline and crime.

Religion provides norms, rules and prohibitions which are in accordance with the society's moral expectations<sup>13</sup>. It has been established that religion, with its attendant values, is a widespread tradition which Nigerian society shares with the rest of human race. However, the numerous religious beliefs and diverse ethnic groups have been the peculiar nature that characterise major setbacks in Nigeria, be it religious, social, political or economic.

### **Classifications of the World's Religions**

There are different religious beliefs and religious systems across the world, and each religion forms its own beliefs. A common and relatively simple type of classification is based upon the geographical distribution of religious communities. Those religions found in a region of the earth are grouped together, such classifications are found in many textbooks on comparative religion, and they offer a convenient framework for presenting religious history. The extent and complexity of a geographical classification is limited only by classifiers' knowledge of geography and their desires to seek detail and comprehensiveness in their classification scheme. It is important to note that not all religions fit neatly into one of the categories, however, the world's religions can be classified into three broad categories thus:

- i. Asian Traditions/Eastern Religions/or Oriental Belief Systems. These comprising religious communities of China, Japan, Korea, Confucianism, Daoism, Jainism, Sikhism Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shinto
- ii. Western Traditions/Occidental Religions. These including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sunny in Iran and Iraq.
- iii. Primal Religion/African Traditional Religion. These including Indigenous American religions, Aboriginal spirituality in Australia, African traditional religions. Examples are: Yoruba, Akan, Santeria indigenous religions, Shamanistic practices of Siberian tribes,

Indigenous beliefs in the Pacific Islands such as Hawaiian, Māori, Voodoo in Haiti among others<sup>14</sup>.

### **General Understanding of the World's Religions**

**(a) Christianity:** Christianity is the largest religion in the World. Christianity is based on the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is divided into three main branches: Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism. Christian adherents believe in the Holy Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) and the Bible as their sacred text. Christianity is a monotheistic religion with over two billion followers. Here are some key aspects of Christianity:

1. **Jesus Christ:** Christians believe that Jesus is the son of God and the saviour of humanity. They believe he was born of the Virgin Mary, performed miracles, preached about the kingdom of God, and was crucified and resurrected.

2. **Bible:** The Bible is the sacred text of Christianity and is divided into two main parts, the Old Testament (Hebrew scriptures) and the New Testament (which includes the life and teachings of Jesus and the early Christian church).

3. **Beliefs:** Christians emphasize faith in Jesus Christ as the means of salvation. They believe in the Holy Trinity, consisting of God the Father, Jesus Christ the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They also believe in the resurrection of the dead and the eternal life of the soul.

4. **Worship:** Christians gather for worship and prayer in churches. The central act of Christian worship is the Eucharist, also known as Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper, during which bread and wine symbolise the body and blood of Christ.

5. **Denominations:** Christianity has a diverse range of denominations, including Catholicism, Protestantism, and Eastern Orthodoxy. These denominations vary in their beliefs and practices while sharing the core tenets of Christianity<sup>15</sup>.

**(b) Islam:** The second-largest religion globally is Islam. Islam is a monotheistic religion founded in the 7th century CE by the prophet Muhammad in the Arabian Peninsula. It is one of the world's major religions, with over a billion followers worldwide, known as Muslims. Here are some key aspects of Islamic religion:

1. **Beliefs:** Muslims believe in the oneness of God, known as Allah, and the finality of the prophet hood of Muhammad. They follow the teachings of the Quran, which they believe is the word of God as revealed to Muhammad. Muslims also believe in angels, divine predestination, and the Day of Judgment.

2. **Five Pillars of Islam:** These are the five central acts of worship that Muslims are required to fulfil:

a. **Shahada:** The declaration of faith, stating that there is no god, but Allah and Muhammad is his messenger.

b. **Salat:** The ritual prayer performed five times a day facing the Kaaba in Mecca.

c. **Zakat:** The obligatory charity where Muslims give a certain portion of their wealth to help the poor and needy.

d. **Sawm:** Fasting from dawn to sunset during the holy month of Ramadan.

e. **Hajj:** The pilgrimage to Mecca that each Muslim is expected to undertake at least once in their lifetime if physically and financially able.

3. **Hadith:** Besides the Quran, Muslims also follow the teachings and sayings of Muhammad as recorded in the Hadith, which provide guidance on various aspects of life.

4. **Mosques:** Muslims gather for communal prayers in mosques, which also serve as community centres for education, social gatherings, and religious instruction.

5. **Islamic Law:** Islamic law, known as Sharia, governs various aspects of Muslim life, including family law, commerce, and criminal justice. It is derived from the Quran, Hadith, and scholarly interpretations<sup>16</sup>.

(c) **Confucianism:** Confucianism is both a religious and philosophical system. It emphasises moral values, proper behaviour, respect for elders, and social harmony. Confucianism does not involve worship of deities but focuses on ethical living and improving society. Confucianism emerged in ancient China and was developed by Confucius (also known as Kongzi). It is more of a philosophy than a religion, focused on moral and ethical teachings for creating a harmonious society. Confucianism places great importance on cultivating personal virtues, social order, and filial piety. Key principles of Confucianism include Ren (benevolence and humaneness), Li

(proper behaviour or ritual propriety), and Xiao (filial piety). The teachings of Confucius emphasised the importance of education, respect for elders, and the maintenance of social hierarchy<sup>17</sup>.

(d) **Buddhism:** Founded by Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) around the 5th century BCE, Buddhism emphasises the importance of enlightenment and the end of suffering through the practice of meditation and ethical living. Buddhists seek to follow the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Buddhism originated in ancient India and was founded by Siddhartha Gautama, who later became known as Buddha or the enlightened one. Buddhism teaches that suffering is an inherent part of human existence but can be overcome through the pursuit of enlightenment. The central teachings of Buddhism are the Four Noble Truths: the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering (desire and attachment), the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path to the cessation of suffering (the Eightfold Path). The Eightfold path consists of moral principles, such as right speech, right action, and right livelihood, as well as mental disciplines, such as right mindfulness and right concentration.

Buddhists do not believe in a personal deity but instead focus on individual spiritual development and enlightenment. The ultimate goal of Buddhism is to achieve nirvana, a state of liberation from suffering and the cycle of rebirth<sup>18</sup>.

(e) **Hinduism:** Hinduism is one of the oldest religions in the world, with its roots in the Indus Valley Civilization. It is a complex and diverse religious tradition, characterised by a wide range of beliefs, rituals, and practices. Hinduism does not have a single founder or central authority and is more accurately described as a family of religions. Key beliefs in Hinduism include the belief in karma, the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth (samsara), and the concept of dharma, the moral and ethical duties that individuals must follow according to their social status, age, and gender. Hindus also believe in the doctrine of moksha, liberation from the cycle of rebirth, which can be achieved through various paths, such as devotion (bhakti), knowledge (jnana), or selfless action (karma). Hindu deities are numerous, and worshippers may have a personal connection to a chosen deity. Hindu rituals and ceremonies vary widely and can range from simple offerings at home to elaborate rituals in temples. The holy scriptures of Hinduism include the Vedas, Upanishads, Mahabharata, and Bhagavad Gita, among others<sup>19</sup>.

**(f) Sikhism:** Sikhism is a monotheistic religion founded in the Punjab region of South Asia in the 15th century by Guru Nanak Devji. It is centred around the teachings of the ten Sikh Gurus, with Guru Granth Sahib (the Sikh holy scripture) considered the living Guru. Sikhism emphasises the belief in one God and the importance of living a truthful, honest, and righteous life. Its followers are expected to engage in selfless service (seva), meditate on God's name (NaamJapna), and earn an honest living (Kirat Karo). Sikhs also have a distinct appearance, characterised by the Five Ks, including Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (a wooden comb), Kara (a steel bracelet), Kachera (cotton undergarments), and Kirpan (a ceremonial sword). Sikhism combines elements of Islam and Hinduism. Sikhs believe in the teachings of their ten gurus and adhere to the principles of equality, honest work, and selfless service. The Guru Granth Sahib is their holy scripture<sup>20</sup>.

**(g) Daoism (Taoism):** Another ancient Chinese philosophy, Daoism centres around living in harmony with the Dao (the Way), which is the natural and cosmic order. It promotes meditation, simplicity, balance, and the pursuit of immortality. Daoism, also known as Taoism, is an ancient Chinese philosophy and religion that believes in living in harmony with the Dao, which can be understood as the "way" or "path." Daoists seek to live in accordance with the natural flow of /things, embracing simplicity, spontaneity, and non-action (wu-wei). Daoism emphasises the pursuit of balance and harmony, both within oneself and with the natural world. It promotes practices such as meditation, tai chi, and qigong for cultivating physical and spiritual well-being. The Daoist text, Tao TeChing, written by Laozi, is a central scripture that provides guidance on the Daoist way of life<sup>21</sup>.

**(h) Judaism:** One of the oldest monotheistic religions, Judaism traces its roots back to the biblical patriarch Abraham. It is centred around the Torah, which contains the laws and teachings of God as revealed to Moses. Jewish worship includes prayers, rituals, and observance of religious holidays. Overview of Judaism Religion: Judaism is an ancient monotheistic religion originating in the Middle East around 2000 BCE. It is one of the oldest religious traditions in the world, with approximately 14 million followers. Here are some key aspects of Judaism:

1. **Beliefs:** Judaism believes in one God who is the creator of the universe. Jews follow the teachings and laws found in the Hebrew Bible, known as the Tanakh. They believe in ethical monotheism and the covenant between God and the Jewish people.

2. **Torah:** The Torah consists of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). It contains Jewish laws, historical narratives, and moral teachings, and is considered the most sacred text in Judaism.
3. **Synagogue:** Jews gather for communal worship, prayer, and study in synagogues. The synagogue serves as the centre of Jewish community life and can function as a place of worship, education, and social gathering.
4. **Covenant:** Jews believe in their special relationship with God established through the covenant, which includes following the commandments and living in accordance with Jewish law (Halakha).
5. **Festivals and Rituals:** Judaism has a rich calendar of religious holidays and observances, including Passover, Hanukkah, Yom Kippur, and Shabbat (the weekly day of rest).
6. **Rabbis:** Rabbis are Jewish religious leaders and scholars who provide guidance on religious matters, interpret Jewish texts, and lead religious services. It is important to note that each of these religions encompasses a wide range of beliefs and practices, and there can be variations among different subgroups and sects within each tradition<sup>22</sup>.

**(i) Primal Religion/Indigenous or Traditional Religion:**

Primal religion encompasses the beliefs, rituals, and practices of various indigenous cultures and communities around the world. Primal religion, also referred to as indigenous or traditional religion, encompasses the beliefs, rituals, and practices of various indigenous cultures and communities around the world. Primal religions are typically rooted in the connection between people and the natural world, with a strong emphasis on the spiritual significance of nature, ancestors, and spirits. Key Characteristics of Primal Religion:

1. **Animism:** Primal religions often embrace animistic beliefs, perceiving that everything in the natural world has a spiritual essence or soul. This includes plants, animals, rivers, mountains, and even natural phenomena like lightning or storms.
2. **Ancestor Worship:** Many primal religions venerate their ancestors, believing in their continued presence and influence in the lives of the living. Ancestors are usually honoured through rituals, offerings, and prayers, and they are considered a source of wisdom, guidance, and protection.



3. **Sacred Places:** Primal religions often have sacred sites or landscapes that hold significance for their spiritual practices. These locations can include mountains, caves, rivers, or specific trees or rocks believed to be inhabited by spirits or deities. Pilgrimages and rituals are often conducted at these sites.

4. **Shamanism:** Shamanism is a common practice within primal religions. Shamans, who act as intermediaries between the human and spirit worlds, are believed to have the ability to communicate with spirits, heal the sick, divine the future, and perform rituals and ceremonies for the community.

5. **Oral Tradition:** Primal religions usually have an oral tradition, with knowledge and spiritual teachings passed down through generations, through stories, songs, and rituals. This oral transmission helps maintain cultural identity, values, and spiritual practices, connect with the spiritual realm. These rituals can include offerings, dances, chants, and other practices aimed at seeking blessings, protection, healing, or guidance from the divine. These are the examples of primal religions across the world: Native American or Indigenous American religions, Aboriginal spirituality in Australia, African traditional religions (e.g., Yoruba, Akan, Santeria), Shamanistic practices of Siberian tribes, Indigenous beliefs in the Pacific Islands (e.g., Hawaiian, Māori), and Voodoo in Haiti. It is important to note that the term, primal religion is often used in academic contexts and do not necessarily reflect how indigenous communities may self-identify or categorise their beliefs and practices.

Additionally, within each indigenous culture, there can be significant variations in beliefs and practices, as each community has its unique traditions and spiritual outlook. These are just some of the major religions globally, and there are numerous other smaller religions and indigenous belief systems practiced by various communities around the world. The diversity of religions reflects the complexity of human spiritual beliefs and traditions. There are several major religions practiced throughout the world, each with its own unique beliefs, practices, and traditions<sup>23</sup>.

**(j) Civil Religion:** Civil religion refers to the implicit religious values of a nation which are expressed through public rituals, symbols, and ceremonies. It is a concept that explores the intersection of religion and public life within a specific society. Civil religion often incorporates

elements of patriotism, national identity, and unity, and can be observed in various forms across different cultures and nations<sup>24</sup>.

**(k) Secular Ideologies:** Secular ideologies are belief systems that are not based on religious principles or doctrines. These ideologies are typically grounded in secularism, humanism, rationalism, and other non-religious perspectives. Examples of secular ideologies include liberalism, socialism, capitalism, and various forms of political and economic philosophies that prioritise secular values and principles<sup>25</sup>.

**(l) Worldview Analysis:** Worldview analysis involves examining the fundamental beliefs, values, and assumptions that underpin an individual's or a group's perception of the world. It seeks to understand how different worldviews shape perspectives on morality, ethics, spirituality, and various aspects of human existence. Worldview analysis can be applied in fields such as anthropology, sociology, philosophy, and religious studies to gain insights into diverse cultural and ideological perspectives<sup>26</sup>.

### **Religion and the National Issues: The Nigerian Milieu**

Nigeria with rough estimate of about 200 million people and over 250 ethnic groups accommodates numerous beliefs. Broadly, there are three main religious traditions in Nigeria, that is, Nigerian African Traditional religion, Christianity and Islam, although there are other secular ideologies, Worldviews analyst and Asian oriental beliefs systems. One of the most remarkable achievements of the 19th century reformation and, in particular, the second Vatican council was its declaration on religious freedom (*Digitatis Humande*) which emphasized the rights of man and of communities to social and civil freedom in religious matters.<sup>27</sup>

In the Nigerian context, the setting up of the Constitution Drafting Committee [CDC] in 1976 was part of the efforts of the Murtala regime to pursue the programme of the return to civil rule by the military administration. A draft constitution was ready on the 20th August, 1976 and the government threw it for debates and comments around the country. Then, at this juncture, the Sharia debate at the Constituent Assembly [CA] in 1977/78 marked an important landmark in ushering religion into Nigerian politics till today.<sup>28</sup> It was evident that the debate on Sharia continued to dominate the political landscape beyond the political programme of 1979.

In consonance with the second Vatican council Declaration on religious freedom, the Nigeria's 1979 and the suspended 1989 constitutions enshrined the protection of freedom of thought, conscience and religion thus:

- a. Prohibition of a state religion, that is, a particular religion should not be taken as an official religion in the country.
- b. Everyone has the freedom to practice their religion according to their conviction.
- c. While teaching of religion is allowed in schools, there should be no compulsion in matters of religious education.<sup>29</sup>

However, the secular formulation of the religion vis-à-vis state relationship has been the subject of controversy particularly between Christians and Muslims. While Christians interpret the constitution to mean that Nigeria is a secular state and consider this appropriate given the country's heterogeneity, Muslims see church/state separation as Judaeo-Christian Western doctrine. The Grand Khadi of Abuja declared in 1994 that church/state separation is not acceptable in Islam, and that one provision of the constitution does not make Nigeria a secular state. The Muslims often refer to the preamble to the constitution which invokes the guiding image of a harmonious state "under God." Also, the Muslims regard common law as laden with Christian ideals and doctrines. They further argue that Sunday is a work-free day of rest in contrast to Muslim Friday prayer day. Again, they submit that the cross is used as a symbol of medical and health services; why not the Islamic crescent?<sup>30</sup>

On the other hand, the Christians accuse the government of supporting the political and economic power of the Muslims. The former president Ibrahim Babangida, in 1986 dragged Nigeria into the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC). This eventually led to tension between Christian and Muslims.<sup>31</sup> The report has it that even Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) budgeted a whopping sum of money to aid any Muslim candidate aspiring for the post of presidency to win election in the year 2003.<sup>32</sup> Against this background, Oshiomhole submits that clamouring for religious and ethnic president and other political leaders in the country is dangerous and a threat to the socio-economic and political survival of Nigeria. Instead, he posits that the challenges should be how to make every Nigerian benefit from the presidency.<sup>33</sup> The major reason for this narrative is that the Government usually involves itself unduly in religious issues.

In any pluralistic society as ours, government should steer clear of any policy that gives semblance of support for any religion. In Nigeria today, Islam and Christianity not only play prominent roles in the nation's political, social, cultural and economic life but they also received recognition and assistance from the state to the exclusion of the Nigerian traditional religion. In Abuja the Federal Capital Territory only Christians and Muslims were allocated land and funds to build a national Mosque and national Cathedral. Besides, government plays an important role in organising pilgrims welfare boards. The state governments grant pilgrims concessional fares and favourable foreign exchange rates when they travel to Jerusalem and Mecca. This chapter reveals that the variety of diverse religious traditions and organisations in the country, and it implies that the government should be neutral in this circumstance to enable peace, harmony, stability and progress.

### **The Seven Dimensions of Religion Postulated by Ninian Smart**

Every religion has a set of social or ethical norms which portray the key values espoused by believers in that religion. These specify the behaviour expected of individual and communities<sup>34</sup>. According to Smart in his book titled, *Dimensions of the Sacred –An Anatomy of World's Religions*, he postulated seven dimensions of religion as an entity; and if one is removed the remaining segments will not be in a tidy whole<sup>35</sup> These include: practical and ritual dimension; experiential and emotional dimension; narrative or mythical dimension; doctrinal and philosophical dimension; ethical and legal dimension; social and institutional dimension; and material dimension.<sup>36</sup>Time and space will not allow us to discuss everything in details.

However, this chapter briefly refers to the value and key position of socio-ethical and legal dimensions in world's religions. Normally, the most religious on earth should be the most prosperous! However, it is quite appalling that it is not so. According to the Pew Research Center, a non-partisan American think-tank based in Washington D.C., established the fact that most religious countries are not most prosperous in the world. Why? This is because of lack of adherence to socio-ethical values, principles and rules made by the religious adherents themselves. The Result of the Pew Survey published in Vanguard Editorial affirmed this assertion. The survey vis-à-vis data released recently reveals that the following countries are on top of the list as the most religious, however, it is quite disheartening, they are not most prosperous as shown on Table1 below:

**Table 1:** Showing Survey of the Most Religious cum Prayerful Countries, but Less Prosperous because of Lack of Strict Adherence to Ethical Principles in Their Governance.

Name of Countries	Percentage (%)of Level of Religious Commitment
Afghanistan	96%
Nigeria	95%
Algeria	88%
Senegal	88%
Djibouti	87%
Iran	87%
Indonesia	84%

**Source: Vanguard-Editorial December 23,2023<sup>37</sup>**

**Table 2:** Showing Survey of the Less Religious cum Prayerful Countries, but Most Prosperous because of Adequate Adherence to Ethical Principles in Their Governance

Name of Countries	Percentage (%) of Level of Religious Commitment
China	1%
UK	6%
Switzerland	8%
Austria	8%
Czechoslovakia	9%
Germany	9%
Estonia	9%
France	10%
Denmark	10%

**Source: Vanguard –Editorial December 23, 2023<sup>38</sup>**

Unfortunately, many of the most religious countries in the Pew Survey had hit the lowest positions on rule of law in the 2023 World Justice Project Rule of Law Index that ranked 142 Countries on their adherence to the Rule of Law<sup>39</sup>. For example, Afghanistan with (96%) and Nigeria with (95%)that came tops on religious commitment, they are at the lowest ebb on obedience to the rules that govern their countries; rules which they made for themselves but hardly obey. Saint Paul confirms the above insinuations in the Book of 2 Timothy Chapter 3

verses 4- 5 that: *Traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away.* Besides, it is equally observed that these most religious countries are among the poverty capitals of the world. These countries are reeling under the dead weight of all manners of unethical activities such as: armed conflicts and insecurity of lives and property, corruption, raid the treasury, kidnapping, murder the countrymen and women. Whereas, religion ought to steer adherents away from: stealing, murder, wickedness, treachery, deceit, lies, laziness, irresponsibility among other social vices.

A nation that has strong work ethics that abhor the above socio-ethical vices; and effectively sanction them through laws, will definitely prosper. It is not religion in itself that brings economic prosperity. However, in any case, countries where people subscribe to misguided notions of religion like religious intolerance, fanaticism and bigotry have nothing else to look forward to other than violent conflicts, poverty, diseases and all manners of backwardness. Therefore, Nigerian people need re-orientation of attitude on what religion means to humanity; and how it can be used to advance individuals and the society.

This is reflected in the hierarchical ethical principles formulated by Ninian Smart including: Dilemma, Values, Rights, Compliance, Morals, Wrong, Benefit, and Choice. Illuminating examples are the ten commandments of Judaism of a system of religious laws, precepts and ideas that shape the religious adherents:

- |      |                      |                                |
|------|----------------------|--------------------------------|
| i.   | No killing           | - Respect for life             |
| ii.  | No stealing          | - Respect for others' property |
| iii. | No sexual misconduct | - Respect for our pure nature  |
| iv.  | No lying             | - Respect for honesty          |
| v.   | No intoxicants       | - Respect for a clear mind     |

All these positive ethical principles, values, laws and precepts are in the core of world's religions to guide, regulate and manifest good living<sup>40</sup>. However, we cannot jettison socio-ethical dimension and its practical adherence and value in the World's religions; if really, a country desires genuine socio-political, economic and technological development and advancement through their religious milieu.

## **The Way Forward: Context of the Nigerian Society**

In the Holy Bible, the Lord appeared and declared to Solomon on the people of Israel that:

If my people (the Israelites), which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways: then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.<sup>41</sup>

In view of this development, pragmatic adherence to ethical principles, rules and virtues; as well as running away from wicked ways are in the core towards being living well and prosperous as a nation. It is important to note that God has good plans for all nations as it is manifested in the Scripture thus:

According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.<sup>42</sup>

Nigeria must be ready to change her narratives and graduate her minds. The fact remains that until a country is willing to change her approach in governance, the country cannot improve on her results, that is, towards development, advancement and prosperity. Nigeria is great in terms of human capacities and equally blessed in natural resources. However, it is equally pertinent to note that faith is putting God's word to work; but not waiting for God to work for the country. Nobody can undermine the efficacy and relevance of religion cum prayer, however, the plan of God for any nation would not be delivered on its own; there is a part to play by leaders and the led. This is evident on tables 1 and 2 on why the most prayerful countries are not the most prosperous countries in the world. Therefore, attitudinal changes are required from the country as a whole.

The national ethics-related concerns are addressed in the Constitution, particularly in Chapter 2, Section 23, which discusses religious tolerance as a component of national ethics.<sup>43</sup> These include: self-reliance, discipline, integrity, respect for human dignity, social fairness, dignity of labour and religious tolerance. Oyeyemi affirms that there will be no lasting peace on earth unless we learn not merely to tolerate, but even to respect the other faiths as our own.<sup>44</sup> Akinseye (1999) also indicates that government, religious leaders, and society at large should be alive to their responsibilities. He further adds that they should strive to open up channel for religious

understanding within Nigerian society the more.<sup>45</sup> Most importantly, there should be adequate recognition of fundamental human rights as enshrined in Chapter IV of The Federal Republic of Nigeria's 1999 Constitution as amended. These include: Right to Life; Right to Human Dignity; Right to Personal Liberty; Rights to Fair Hearing; Rights to Privacy and Family Life; Rights to Freedom of Thought and Conscience ;Rights to Freedom of Expression and Press; Rights to Peaceful Assembly and Association , Rights to Freedom of Movement; Rights to Freedom from Discrimination.<sup>46</sup> Ayantayo (2023) also affirms that religion and fundamental human rights are related, and that human rights cannot be justified based on natural law alone, but rather must be rooted in God among other reasons.<sup>47</sup>

There is no doubt that a combination of efforts is needed in reversing current situation in Nigeria, that is, human rights abuse, corruption and development malaise. The challenges confronting the Nigerian polity are much more fundamental because the ingredients for human rights and ethical developments are lacking, or where present they are weak or in distorted forms. A failed, corrupt and inept leadership, coupled with inclement domestic socio-political environment have plunged development performance in Nigeria into abyss<sup>48</sup>. Human rights, development and corruption in the Nigerian context require ethical reorientation and internalisation of moral virtues in every department of life. In this respect, Asaju opines that religion is an agent of development in every facet of human life, if properly utilised.<sup>49</sup> Besides, human values are core in all the world's religions. In corollary to this, the Holy Bible submits that: *Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.* It connotes that religion serves as a springboard for the inculcation and improvement of ethical values, which are fundamental to achieving correct human behaviours, particularly as it relates to human well-being, dignity and nation-building.



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**CHAPTER 4**  
**THEORIES OF RELIGION**  
*G.O. Gbenle*

**Introduction**

Religion is found everywhere in the culture of a people, so it is difficult to isolate and define. It influences the people who hold the religious beliefs. The people in turn modify their religious belief. Turning to intellectual and scholastic efforts on the origin of religion, some anthropologists, psychologists, theologians and sociologists have come up with speculations on the subject matter. They contend that the early or primitive man had religion and that religion started thousands of years ago. In the nineteenth century, the sociology of religion was concerned with two main questions: how did religion begin? And how did religion evolve? This revolutionary approach was influenced by Charles Darwin's work titled *On the Origin of Species* published in 1859. Just as Darwin was attempting to explain the origin and evolution of species, so also sociologists tried to explain the origin of institutions and society.

**Theories of Religion**

**1. Sir Edward Taylor's Animism Theory of Religion**

An Englishman and an anthropologist of religion felt that the origin of religion could be traced back to primitive man. According to him, religion was born out of the fact that people tried to understand the conditions and events they could not explain by reference to daily experience. Taylor believed that our ancestors and contemporary non-industrial people were particularly intrigued with death, dreaming and trance. He argued that animism derived from man's attempt to answer two questions: what is it that makes the difference between a living body and a dead one? And what are those human shapes which appear in dreams and visions?? In dreams and trances, people see images they may remember when they wake up or come out of the trance state.

Taylor concluded that an attempt to explain dreams and trance led early humans to believe that two entities inhabit the body, one active during the day and the other a double or soul-active during sleep and trance states. Although they never meet, they are vital to each other. When the double permanently leaves the body, the person dies. Death is the departure of the soul. From the *Latin word for soul anima*, Taylor named this belief *animism*. The soul was one sort of spiritual

entity; people remember various images from their dreams and trances- (other spirits). For Taylor, animism, the earliest form of religion was a belief in spiritual beings. Taylor proposed that religion evolved through stages, beginning with animism. Monotheism (the belief in a single, all-powerful deity) developed later. Because religion originated to explain things people didn't understand, Taylor thought it would decline as people advanced with science and technology. To an extent, he was right. We now have scientific explanations for many things that religion once elucidated.

In other words, Taylor's thesis is that man in the early stage assumed the presence of a soul in all things and began to venerate certain spirits or souls as persons. This eventually led to the worship of ancestors. This view is supported by Emile Durkheim (1982). According to him, belief in gods or spirits, which usually provides the focus of religious ceremonies originated from belief in the ancestral spirits of dead relatives. Taylor argued that the primitive man first acquired the idea of spirit from his experience of sleep, dreams, shadows and death. Having believed that the spirit was an invisible and non-physical entity. The man believed that every entity, thing or phenomenon (both living and non-living) has a spirit. All living things breathe and die, some living things sleep and dream. Therefore, all those things that seemed to have been alive and appeared to be powerful such as the sun, the moon, the wind, and the streams and rivers etc. were all conceived to have a spirit each. So, everything was a deity, the universe in general and the earth in particular was full of deities or gods which contemporary scholars prefer to call divinities. Recognition of a spiritual world becomes religion when man realises that there is a greater superiority to his human nature and powers.

## **2. R.F. Mareth's Animistic Theory of Religion**

He modified Taylor's theory of animism and called his animatism. Animatism in effect is the belief in non-material supernatural essences of powers which inhabit objects. The objects include the following: running waters, blowing winds, striking lightning, thundering clouds, scorching sun, the brightening moon, burning fire, shivering cold, and chilly weather. Mareth sees the world as being filled with impersonal forces, which threaten the survival of the lives and properties of the primitive people. For him, the origin of religion could be found in the powerful and pervasive impersonal natural forces.

### **3. The Magic Theory of Religion**

Magic refers to supernatural techniques intended to accomplish specific aims. These techniques include spells, formulas and incantations used with deities or with impersonal forces. Magicians use imitative magic to produce a desired effect or kill someone. If magicians wish to kill someone, they may imitate that effect on an image of the victim. Sticking pins in “voodoo dolls” is an example. With contagious magic whatever is done to an object is believed to affect a person who once had contact with it. Sometimes, practitioners of contagious magic use body products from prospective victims e.g., their fingernails, hair, pictures, and clothes. The spell performed on the body product is believed to reach the person eventually and work the desired result.

James Frazer believed that the origin of religion was influenced by the annual cycle of corn’s life. He illustrated this belief in this manner. The corn was planted, germinated, grew to maturity bore grains, the grains got ripped and harvested, some grains were eaten while others were stored for planting during the next farming season. From this annual cycle of farming, James Frazer says that the grain planted during the rainy season died in the ground as seeds but rose again to new plants and bore new grains to the joy of the farmers. Summarily, there were birth, growth, death and resurrection of the soul.

Research works show that a German Philosopher- Frederick Hegel who believed that the age of magic preceded the age of religion influenced James Frazer. First, the man introduced magic with which he tried to coerce the environmental natural forces to his advantage. Second, man introduced religion with which he sought to win the favour of the natural powers using prayers and sacrifice.

### **4. Projection Theory of Religion**

Sigmund Freud and Ludwig Feubach propounded this theory. To them, religion was man’s projection of his own personal thoughts, behaviour and relationships. Ludwig argued that religion arose from the projection of man’s highest aspirations. Unto the cosmos that is the universe, which they considered as being a well-ordered system as contrasted with chance. Hence, man’s superlative qualities of power, knowledge, creation, invention, production, distribution, healing, renovation etc. have been emptied into the divine being. In doing this, man had alienated himself from his power, capacities intelligence etc. he had accepted that he (man)

is ignorant, powerless and helpless and unless the Supreme Being comes to his aid, he could do nothing.

Thus, for Feuerbach, what the Christians call God is nothing more and nothing less than the human qualities (attributes) and aspirations projected outward. In other words, man sets God over and against himself as an opposed being. Thus, man's immaturity and incapacity to apply effectively his powers, talents and qualities led him to a religion which is a projection of himself, this accounts for various attributes man alludes to God.

### **5. Deification Theory of Religion**

This theory explains that religion originated from deification, that is, elevating human beings to the level of gods, divine beings or spirits. This theory was strongly propounded by Euhemerus. A Greek man, Euhemerus writing about 280BC attributed the origin of religion to the deification of heroes and ancestors. He arrived at this theory from an imaginary voyage. According to him, while he was on that imaginary journey, he discovered a certain happy island and, on that island, he discovered a temple with a pillar of gold. On that pillar of gold, Zeus has recorded in sacred script, his deeds and those of Uranus and Kronus. That is, he is saying that it was Zeus who wrote the theogony of these Greek gods. And this imaginary voyage became the basis of his theogony. According to Zeus, Uranus and Kronus were originally ordinary human beings. He said that Zeus was a man who had given a powerful change or positive revolution to some civilization. That is, these three gods were once human beings who had contributed much to the good and development of their respective societies. Those who benefited from their good works deified them to honour them for their benevolent contributions to the good of their society. From this, Euhemerus went on to assert that these original human beings were deified and that such deification has been going on in the history of religion.

It should be noted that Euhemerus was not the first person to propound this theory. Rather, it was originally brought out by an Egyptian named Hecataeus. It was Hecataeus who argued that the gods of Egypt were but former human beings who were deified and that the gods of Greece were of Egyptian origin and the same age and were apparently of the same stock. When Hecataeus brought out this theory, it was vehemently criticised and rejected by many Greek Scholars. Euhemerus was perhaps influenced by Greek and Roman traditions where the deification of ancestors constitutes one of the important aspects of their religions. The deification of heroes and

ancestors is also a feature of African Religion. For example, Sango is a deified hero among the Yoruba. Herbert Spencer shares the same reverence with Eucheumus. For him, religion arose out of sheer reverence for the departed ancestors. Some people call this the ghost theory of religion. Karin Barber succumbed to this thesis in his work: *How Yoruba made god*.

## **6. Totemistic Theory of Religion**

Totemism has been important in the religion of the world. Totems can be animals, plants or geographical features. In each tribe, a group of people have particular totems. Members of each totemic group believe themselves to be descendants of their totem. Traditionally, they customarily neither killed nor ate a totemic animal but this taboo was lifted once in a year, when people assembled for ceremonies dedicated to the totem. These annual rites were believed to be necessary for the totem's survival and reproduction.

Totemism uses nature as a model for the society. The totems are usually animals and plants which are part of nature. People related to nature through their totemic association with natural species. Because each group has a different totem, social differences mirror natural contrast. However, totemic plants and animals occupy different niches in nature. Symbolic association with the limitation of the natural order enhances the unity of the human social order. Their totemic cravings, which commemorate and tell visual stories about ancestors, animals and spirits, are also associated with ceremonies. In totemic rites, people gather together to honour their totem. In so doing, they use rituals to maintain the social oneness that the totem symbolises. Totemism takes its name from totem meaning an object towards which members of a kinship must have a special mythical relationship and with which the unit's name is associated. The object may be an animal or plant. W. Robertson propounded the theory of totemism as the origin of religion. Totemism is the belief that there is a mythical connection between a tribe and a particular animal regarded as the totem of the clan. Some animals are held in reverence and can only be killed on ceremonial occasions when the tribe assimilates the sacred qualities of the totem.

## **Summary**

Etymologically, the English word Religion originated from the Latin word religio. This word refers to the transcendental reality of faith; the inner reality of faith which also embraces the rituals and ceremonies which are the means of communion and communication with the deity.



Religion means so many things to many people of different races, ethnic groups, and cultural backgrounds. Hence, it is not easy to come across a universally accepted definition of religion because many scholars see religion from their different disciplines. Therefore, there is no one acceptable definition given to religion based on the various theories of religion.

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## CHAPTER 5

### ETHICS AND ETHICAL REASONING

*E. O. Gbadegesin*

#### **Introduction**

What is ethics? Ethics can be defined as the analysis of human actions from the perspective of “good” and “evil,” or of “morally correct” and “morally wrong.” It can also mean the study of the standards of right and wrong that inform us as to how we ought to behave. These standards relate to unwritten rules that are necessary for humans to live amongst each other, such as “don’t hurt others.” We function better as a society when we treat each other well. Etymologically, the word ethics goes back to the ancient Greek “ethos”. This originally referred to a place of dwelling, and location, but also habit, custom, and convention. The last three words namely habit, custom and convention will be our major concern in this chapter.

Before we proceed further, we need to acquaint ourselves with the types of ethics that exist.

#### **Types of Ethics**

Ethics is traditionally subdivided into normative ethics, metaethics, and applied ethics. Normative ethics seeks to establish norms or standards of conduct; a crucial question in this field is whether actions are to be judged right or wrong based on their consequences or based on their conformity to some moral rule, such as “Do not tell a lie.” Theories that adopt the former basis of judgment are called consequentialist (*see* consequentialism); those that adopt the latter are known as deontological (*see* deontological ethics).

Metaethics is concerned with the nature of ethical judgments and theories. Since the beginning of the 20th century, much work in metaethics has focused on the logical and semantic aspects of moral language. Some major metaethical theories are naturalism (*see* naturalistic fallacy), intuitionism, emotivism, and prescriptivism.

Applied ethics, as the name implies, consists of the application of normative ethical theories to practical moral problems (e.g., abortion). Among the major fields of applied ethics are bioethics, business ethics, legal ethics, and medical ethics. The terms “ethics” and “morality” are often taken as synonyms. Sometimes they are distinguished, however, in the sense that morality refers

to a complex set of rules, values and norms that determine or are supposed to determine people's actions, whereas ethics refers to the theory of morality.

There are also prescriptive ethics and descriptive ethics.

Prescriptive ethics, argues what moral beliefs people ought to have, or it attempts to say what is in fact right and wrong. For example, someone might make the argument that abortion, adultery, and eating farm animals are morally wrong. Whereas descriptive ethics just explains how things are; what the moral beliefs of people are.

Before we proceed further, there is need for us to differentiate between ethics and morality because most often people confuse one for the other. For example, morality could be defined as the belief that some behaviour is right and acceptable, and that other behaviour is wrong. It could also be defined as the rightness or wrongness of an action. In another way, however, it could be defined as a system of principles and values concerning people's behaviour, which is generally accepted by a society or by a particular group of people.

In a simple way, we can say that Morality is often based on religion and or culture, while ethics are based on logic and reason. This means that you can have different ethical systems even if you share the same morals. Morals usually deal with personal conduct, while ethics deal with professional conduct. For example, it is immoral or not moral to steal as far as religious morality is concerned. All religious traditions preach or teach against stealing, adultery, lying and so on. Or in another sense, it is religiously wrong to commit adultery or fornication. Yet, people still engage in all these vices.

### **Ethics vs. Morals**

1. Morals are what you believe, while ethics are what you do. You can have conflicting morals and ethics, like believing stealing is wrong but doing it anyway.
2. Morals are often based on religion or culture, while ethics are based on logic and reason. This means that you can have different ethical systems even if you share the same morals.
3. Morals usually deal with personal conduct, while ethics deal with professional conduct. For example, a doctor may consider euthanasia to be morally acceptable but ethically unacceptable because of their position as a doctor.

4. It is possible for someone to live by their moral standards without ever having any conflicts with their ethics because morality deals more with how we should behave in our day-to-day lives, while ethics looks at all actions in general – both good and bad.

### **Difference between Ethics and Morality**

1. Ethics are a formal system of beliefs that guide our behaviour, while morality is more personal and can vary from individual to individual.
2. Ethics are usually based on logical reasoning and a shared set of values, while morality is often based on gut instinct or religious beliefs.
3. Ethics tend to be more objective, while morality is often subjective.
4. Ethics are universal, while morality is often culture-specific.
5. Ethics are transcendent; they govern all aspects of life. Morality deals with specific issues such as politics, economics, religion and family matters. When someone does something immoral, it usually relates to one of these specific areas. In contrast, ethics applies universally to every aspect of life and when someone does something unethical, it has more implications than just in one area.
6. Ethics applies to groups and organisations, while morality applies to individuals. As a result, ethical practices don't always mesh well with organisational cultures and vice versa.
7. Ethics asks people to think about what they do before they act; morality asks people to examine their actions after the fact. For example, someone might have had an opportunity for an extramarital affair but resisted because it would have been unethical rather than because it would have been wrong. Or perhaps somebody might give money to charity because they believe it is the right thing to do, not because they fear eternal damnation.
8. In terms of thinking through what we should do in certain situations, ethics tells us how we should behave while morality only tells us if we did the right thing once we've behaved in some way.
9. Ethics will help you determine whether your behaviour was good or bad, while morality may help you decide whether your intentions were good or bad.
10. Both ethics and morality play important roles in shaping human civilisation.

With this understanding, we can now proceed to look at how to reason ethically

First, what is ethical reasoning? Ethical reasoning is “The ability to reflect on moral issues in the abstract and in historical narratives within particular traditions. Ethical reasoning is the ability to identify, assess, and develop ethical arguments from a variety of ethical positions.” Ethical reasoning concerns judgments of right and wrong, good and bad, as well as matters of justice, fairness, virtue, and social responsibility.

**Ethical reasoning** helps determine and differentiate between right thinking, decisions, and actions and those that are wrong, hurtful and/or harmful— to others and to ourselves. Ethics is based on and motivated by facts, values, emotions, beliefs, and feelings. Ethical actions are based on conscientious reasoning of facts based on moral principles and standards.

### **Three Criteria in Ethical Reasoning**

The following criteria can be used in ethical reasoning according to Weiss:

1. Moral reasoning must be logical. Assumptions and premises, both factual and inferred used to make judgments should be known and made explicit.
2. Factual evidence cited to support a person’s judgment should be accurate, relevant, and complete.
3. Ethical standards used in reasoning should be consistent. When inconsistencies are discovered in a person’s ethical standards in a decision, one or more of the standards must be modified (Weiss, 2014).

### **Some of these issues can be cited as examples of ethical reasoning**

Some of these issues include:

- Should states allow physician-assisted suicide?
- Is the death penalty an ethically acceptable type of punishment?
- Should animals have rights?
- Is society ever justified in regulating so-called victimless crimes like drug use, not wearing a helmet or a seatbelt, etc.?
- What are our responsibilities to future generations?

- Are affluent individuals and countries obligated to try to prevent starvation, malnutrition, and poverty wherever we find them in the world?
- Is there such a thing as a just war?
- How does business ethics relate to corporate responsibility?

Let us take some of them and see how we could deal with these kinds of ethical issues by applying ethical reasoning.

1. Should states allow physician-assisted suicide? First, we need to know what suicide mean before we could draw our conclusion on whether or not we will say that states should allow physician-assisted suicide. What is suicide? *Suicide is death caused by injuring oneself with the intent to die.* A suicide attempt is when someone harms themselves with any intent to end their life. We must take a step further to ask why people would want to commit suicide.

People commit suicide for various reasons namely:

- a. To avoid punishment if caught with criminal behaviours such as murder, armed robbery; Arsons, coup detat (attempt), especially if it fails to materialise.
- b. Some commit suicide for religious reason, for example, the Al Qaida, that is Muslims fundamentalists who always fight on the basis of religions or to defend what they consider fundamental truth of religion. Hence, anybody who does not adhere or align with their own form of belief might be murdered and to avoid being punished could also kill themselves in the process.
- c. People who are being discriminated against could commit suicide to avoid unnecessary embarrassment.
- d. People who engage in drug abuse can be tempted to commit suicide.
- e. Some commit suicide if their business failed or experience failures in one area of their lives or the other. We have heard of many western businessmen who committed suicide when their business failed or lost money. For example, a man named Chinedu Ogwa was said to have committed suicide as a result of a perceived business failure. His death notes say that he's frustrated by failure to succeed in business.
- f. Some have committed suicide as a result of depression.

Looking at these various suicidal actions and more, which one can one ask the physician to assist to commit suicide? Ethically speaking, there is none. The only condition that may warrant one to

speak in favour of physician-assisted suicide is when the action is weighed to be more beneficial to the patient than detrimental. For example, when a patient is undergoing undue and unnecessary pain or suffering, the family members may be called to take a decision on such an ethical issue as this.

2. Is the death penalty an ethically acceptable type of punishment? Death penalty could be classified as capital punishment. Death penalty is prescribed in case of stealing or murder but in most cases, it is usually applicable to murder cases. In making ethical decision or reasoning, one must be ready to weigh the consequences of either to give death penalty or not to give it. For example, the ethicists have come up with three types of theory of punishment, namely:
  - a. Retributive (Desert) theory of punishment, which says that punishment, should be given only when it is deserved and only to the extent that it is deserved. It should have no other goal than punishing people who deserve the punishment because of some immoral act that they have committed, and the punishment should fit the crime.
  - b. Utilitarian (Results) theory of punishment always should have at its aim the good of the society. If the punishment will bring good consequences for people, then it should be given; if it would not, then it should not be given. It always should be given in order that some good can be done. For example, to deter future crime, to protect society, or to rehabilitate a criminal.
  - c. Restitution (Compensation) theory of punishment means that justice is served only if the victims of a crime or offense are provided with restitution or compensation for the harm done to them.

Here we see that a person who is to make ethical judgment may need to weigh these different options before he or she could make a final decision on which course of action he or she is to take. This is a good example of ethical reasoning.

Let us consider one more example, which is: Should animals have rights?

Thiroux shows in his book, that “some might argue that as long as something has life or is alive, then it deserves moral consideration, and people have a moral obligation to protect and preserve life whenever it is found. Does this imply that since animals have life and are alive they deserve moral consideration? The answer is yes. However, the next question to ask is whether or not

animals have equal rights that human beings have. But before that, we need to know what animal rights mean.

So, Animal rights means that animals deserve certain kinds of consideration—consideration of what is in their best interests, regardless of whether they are “cute,” useful to humans, or an endangered species and regardless of whether any human cares about them at all. It means recognising that animals are not ours to use—for food, clothing, entertainment, or experimentation. Tom Reagan argues that both humans and animals have equal rights what John Locke calls inalienable rights. Reagan is of the opinion that natural rights should not be restricted to human beings alone but must be extended to animals as well.

If this thinking is prevalent in the western world, how for example might we respond to the case of animal rights in Africa? Do African people indiscriminately kill animals? Do they also live with animals that are being domesticated? All these questions and many more must be put into consideration when making ethical judgment or engaging in ethical reasoning.

The following issues might be considered when making ethical reasoning. They are:

- What principles do I apply to the way I treat other people?
- What guides my own choices and my own goals in life?
- Should I have the same expectations of others in terms of their behavior and choices as I have of myself?
- Is living ethically compatible or incompatible with what we call living well or happily?

### **Exercises for Review**

1. What does it mean for something to be ethical?
2. How does ethical reasoning work?
3. What are your general views on suicide and why?
4. Do animal have rights?
5. What do you think are the dangers or disadvantages of capital punishment?
6. List criteria for ethical reasoning.



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## **CHAPTER 6**

### **CONCEPT OF ETIQUETTE AND ITS FEATURES**

*J.K. Ayantayo*

#### **Introduction**

Given the incessant dismal news of insecurity, poverty, and inequality that pervade our country these days, one could argue that Nigeria is at a moral crossroad. This chapter intends to alert Nigerians' moral consciousness to some of the abandoned etiquette and, as a result, equip all Nigerians with new knowledge on how to act well in their personal and public realms. It is about promoting attitudinal change among Nigerians to create a new Nigeria marked by respect for human dignity, selflessness, communal feeling, tolerance, cooperation, justice, maintenance culture and care for public property. Also, it is to foster mutual respect for individuals and groups of individuals, a positive national image, ethnic, religious, and gender harmony, peace and tranquillity in both the private and public spheres.

#### **What is Etiquette?**

Etiquette can be defined as the norms that govern the right and polite way to live in society. They are ways of living in a society under accepted norms. With this interpretation, etiquette could be used interchangeably with protocol, courteous behaviour, excellent manners, acceptable behaviour, accepted behaviour, right behaviour, code of conduct/behaviour, and decorum. Other terms include courtesy, politeness, civility, propriety, formalities, niceties, punctilios, usual behaviour, convention, conformance, and conventionality.

#### **Features of Etiquette**

Etiquette has various distinguishing characteristics that set it apart from other codes of conduct, which are a set of regulations describing the norms, rules, and obligations or right practices of an individual party or organisation. Given this, we'd like to identify some Etiquette aspects briefly

##### **1. Etiquette is societally conditioned:**

It means that society determines it. This is based on two major yet interconnected sociological facts. To begin, man lives in interdependence because people in any particular community interact and relate with one another. It is no surprise that no one can live their entire lives on an island. According to Aristotle, anyone who professes to be able to live independently of the rest of society is either a god or a beast. Secondly, every human action has a direct or an indirect

impact on the person who acts, the person to whom the action is directed, and the society in which the action is performed. Keeping this in mind, society creates rules and norms to guide man's actions, one of which is aimed at. On that note, etiquette provides a variety of functions, most notably encouraging people and groups of individuals to behave properly and responsibly. Anyone who abides by social etiquette is regarded, honoured, applauded, and accepted by society, whilst those who reject or act in deviation from social etiquette are criticised and disliked.

## **2. It is not legalistic:**

It is not a law that can be defined as a set of rules that a specific family, local government, state, country, or community recognises as governing the activities of its members. Thus, it cannot be enforced by the imposition of sanctions. As a result, Etiquette has no legal basis upon which a person who violates it could be tried in a court of law and, if proven guilty, punished. However, whether or not someone follows social etiquette speaks volumes about their personality and background. It also leaves a long-lasting influence on society or individuals inside it. For example, how we interact with our superiors, parents, co-workers, and friends reveals a lot about our personalities. In Nigeria, for example, no one wants to talk to someone who doesn't know how to express courtesy while speaking or behave properly in the society. On this basis, etiquette allows people to get respect and recognition in society.

## **3. Unwritten:**

Etiquette is unwritten: Unlike a country's constitution or religious laws, which are binding on Christians and Muslims, etiquette is not codified for use or study.

## **4. Informal:**

It is not written, printed, inscribed, on paper. Etiquette is not unceremonious or informal. It follows socially established frameworks or rituals.

## **5. Pervasive:**

It affects many aspects of life, not just social or political. Rather, it permeates all aspects of existence, including social, political, religious, economic, technological, and scientific. In other words, just as ethics evaluates all human actions, any action or activity conducted by a man in a certain geographical area, among others, has its etiquette. Etiquette covers a wide range of topics, including communication, dress code, table manners, punctuality, and respect for others' personal space and values.

Fundamentally, it is about treating others with decency and respect in a variety of social contexts. The main goal of etiquette is to encourage politeness and decency in interpersonal relationships, while precise norms may differ depending on culture and context. For example, we have workplace etiquette, communication types, communication times, communication volume, and so on. We will present an example in the following section of this paper. In essence, etiquette encompasses a vast range of acts, including sleeping, sitting, eating, toileting, meeting, phoning, working, dressing, hunting, driving, walking, and speaking, to name a few. In this book, it is sub-divided into two categories: home-based etiquette and public-based etiquette. Home-based etiquette refers to the etiquettes that are required at a private level, notably at home, whereas public etiquette as the name implies, refers to the standards that govern individual behaviour in public areas such as bus stops, post offices, banking halls, and workplaces. These two types of etiquette overlap and are mutually exclusive.

#### **6. Universal:**

Etiquette applies globally. Etiquette exists in both industrialised, undeveloped, and developing countries around the world. Etiquette is always a concern wherever a man lives and interacts with others in all societies.

#### **7. Conventional:**

Etiquette is not a law, but a convention. A convention is a style of doing something that has become accepted throughout time. It is considered as a legitimate method of functioning in certain situations. For example, it is customary for two persons who meet at a specific location to greet those around them unless something goes wrong. In this context, sensible etiquette is defined as an established knowledge, standard practice, rule, or expectation generally accepted by members of a society or subculture: it is frequently implicit and as such be taking for granted, since it is perceived as natural.

#### **8. Customary:**

By its nature, etiquette is customary, it is a usual routine that is considered as a normal way of acting and it is expected of individuals at one time or the other.

#### **9. Etiquette is relative:**

Etiquette for certain lifestyles varies globally. Its substance and context differ from place to place, even though it is universal. For example, practically every civilisation considers greetings to be etiquette. However, the manners of greeting are not the same. Some people, particularly the

Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria, welcome elders by kneeling or prostrating. Others greet by hugging, handshakes, bending down, saluting, and clenching their fists. Some greeting methods are defined by one's professional group. For example, soldiers welcome/greet with a salute.

### **Types of Etiquette**

There are many types of etiquette because it is distinct as said earlier. Also, because it is universal, the type can vary depending on cultural, regional, and situational circumstances. A few of them are mentioned here for emphasis.

**Dining Etiquette:** This encompasses table etiquette, such as how to use utensils, suitable seating arrangements, and polite behaviour at meals.

**Business etiquette:** This refers to the behaviours and conventions expected in professional contexts, such as proper communication, dress code, and engagement with co-workers and clients.

**Social Etiquette:** pertains to the norms and expectations that govern interactions in social settings such as parties, gatherings, and events. This includes being polite, respecting personal space, and discussing suitable issues.

**Telephone Etiquette:** This deals with how to behave politely during phone discussions, such as answering calls promptly, speaking clearly, and using appropriate vocabulary. We believe that mobile phone users should refrain from discussing private concerns in public venues like post offices, supermarket stores, bank halls, and markets. They should also refrain from hitting the phone receiver or abruptly disconnecting during a chat.

**Email Etiquette:** It is concerned with guidelines for sending professional and courteous emails, including formatting, tone, and response times.

**Travel Etiquette:** It is concerned with appropriate behaviour while travelling, such as respecting local customs and cultures, being punctual, and being thoughtful of other travellers.

**Wedding Etiquette:** This relates essentially to the customs and traditions involved with weddings, such as timely RSVPs, gift-giving etiquette, and proper clothes.

**Cultural Etiquette:** It is about appropriate behaviour and customs while interacting with people from other cultures, such as greetings, gestures, and taboos to avoid being embarrassed. This varies from one culture to the other.

**Netiquette:** This revolves around guidelines for proper online communication, such as social media, forums, and emails.

**Dating etiquette:** It is all about courteous behaviour and practices expected from the two parties when dating, such as communication rules, paying for dates, and respecting limits.

**Funeral etiquette:** This emphasises the customs and traditions associated with funerals and grieving, such as suitable clothes, gestures of compassion, and behaviour at memorial ceremonies.

**Gender-specific etiquette:** It is about traditional gender-based rules of behaviour, such as opening doors for others, providing seats, and addressing people professionally.

**Hosting Etiquette:** It revolves around tips for being a courteous host, such as greeting guests, providing hospitality, and ensuring their comfort.

**Guest Etiquette:** This refers to the expected behaviours of guests including RSVPing, arriving on time, providing a gift when suitable, and expressing gratitude to the host. For example, among the Igbo of Southeastern Nigeria, it is etiquette for each person who was served food to say thank you to the family that gave him the food after he had eaten it.

**Workplace Etiquette:** It pertains to specific rules and expectations in the workplace, such as respecting authority, remaining professional, and following business policies. The etiquette comprises but is not limited to workers' punctuality, adherence to the dress code, and use of courteous language and tone in all conversations, whether in person, over the phone, or by email. It is expected that when others are speaking, there is a need to listen actively and avoid interrupting them to minimise misunderstanding, communicate concisely and clearly. Electronic devices, such as phones and laptops, are to be used for work-related tasks during working hours. Workers must also minimise excessive personal use of devices or social media, which can distract them from their jobs. Others include respecting personal space, avoiding side talks and distractions during meetings, resolving problems professionally and immediately, focusing on the issues rather than personal assaults.

**Residential Etiquette:** Residential etiquette refers to the rules that people who live in the same neighbourhoods are required to follow. They could be tenants or landlords. In this regard, every resident is expected not to walk loudly in the compound at 5 a.m. Some individuals may still be in their beds at this time. Walking around at this hour could disrupt their sleep. If you're in a house with someone who's attempting to sleep, you have a social obligation to walk quietly. Also, he/she is not expected to use loudspeakers for radio, TV, and cell phones. The use of electronic devices with loud voices should be limited because they can impose harm on other members of the household/public.

**Bathroom Etiquette:** The bathroom is a delicate area in any home because it is used by every person daily. It is one of the most sensitive areas of the home, and everyone uses it daily, including the landlord, tenants, and visitors. To determine if a toilet is in use, users should moderately knock on the door not indefinitely as they pause and listen for an answer.

**Toilet Etiquette:** The toilet, like the bathroom, is a very sensitive place in the home. It is a location where Dick and Harry, elderly and young, male and female, can respond to the call of nature in any dwelling, private or public. It is delicate because it requires physical contact with toilet facilities such as the toilet seat, cover, flushing handle, toilet wall, toilet floor, soap dish, hand towel ring, soap basket, toilet brush and holder, and toilet paper holder. All facilities may become contagious if infected with microorganisms often linked to toilets. As an example, Toilet users are expected to ensure there is no one else in the toilet before entering to use the toilet. They must also ensure they use the facility responsibly, urinating primarily in the urinal to prevent dribbling on the floor, closet, seat or wall.

**Pedestrian Etiquette:** Pedestrians are individuals whose actions on the road have the potential to affect other pedestrians, vehicles, and cyclists. Because pedestrians' lives and well-being are at stake, providing etiquette becomes increasingly important. Pedestrians are to walk on the available pavement and stay on the left side of the road to view oncoming traffic, especially in areas with no pavement. It is risky to walk on the right side of the road because people will back up vehicles.

**Meeting Etiquette:** A meeting is a forum in which individuals and groups of individuals congregate, get together, re-join, and convene to discuss, talk, brainstorm, analyse, deliberate, and make choices on issues that concern them now or in the future. Based on the arguments

above, we believe that all meeting attendees should arrive on time because coming late to a meeting may suggest disdain for other people's time. They should also obtain written or spoken authorisation to be absent or late for meetings.

**Conversation Etiquette:** It refers to conventions that can help two or more people have a smooth conversation. Because it takes two persons to tangle, how, when, where, and what a person converses must follow certain patterns for the benefit of the two or more people in conversation. When interacting with people, we should avoid putting our mouths close to theirs to avoid splitting saliva but speak politely in all conversations. The culture of civility should be extended to everyone we come into contact with at home, work, and general public spaces.

**Sitting Etiquette for Ladies:** Long-term personal experience and knowledge demonstrate that each sex (gender) has unique characteristics that are based on the sociocultural and religious beliefs of the society in which they live. Every woman possesses specific biological characteristics that the culture and religious beliefs suggest should not be exposed indiscriminately in public. For example, women are expected to sit in the centre of the seat, back not leaning on the chair. When seated, she should cross both legs to avoid exposing her pants to the public. The advantage is that the public may not be able to see the lady's underwear, regardless of how short the skirt she is wearing. It is also beneficial for a woman to place her right knee directly on top of her left knee to make a diagonal position.

**Public Etiquette:** It refers to the behaviour expected of people in public venues such as parking lots, public restrooms, post offices, banks, hostels, and libraries. Adhering to etiquette benefits those who use public spaces regularly. So, a smoker, for example, should avoid smoking in public areas such as motor parks, public restrooms, post offices, banks, hostels, and libraries to protect the public. Individuals should also cover their mouths when coughing in public. There are various germs in the airwave that makes it easy for you to infect others in the public if proper care is not taken.

**Dressing Etiquette:** Typically, dressing is considered extremely personal. As a result, it could be argued that how a person dresses is irrelevant to others. But society has a say. As a result, among other things, an individual is expected to dress modestly and with decency by covering one's nudity.



## Conclusion

In general, etiquette is important because it establishes a set of social standards and expectations that allow people to communicate in a respectful, considerate, and proper manner. Etiquette establishes a framework for courteous and respectful behaviour, which can help to avoid misunderstandings, disagreements, and social awkwardness. It also instils a sense of dignity and professionalism in social and professional contexts. Good manners demonstrate respect for others' cultures, attitudes, and beliefs. We may foster more pleasant and harmonious relationships by paying attention to the feelings, beliefs, and expectations of others. It is important to conclude that etiquette plays an important role in society because it encourages people to treat others with respect and consideration, provides a framework for social interactions, helps to reduce misunderstandings and conflicts, fosters positive relationships by creating an atmosphere of courtesy and goodwill, which contributes to the creation of a positive and harmonious social environment. Etiquette is fundamental to developing and maintaining good relationships, fostering understanding, and cooperation, which helps in creating a civil and inclusive society.

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**CHAPTER 7**  
**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND MORALITY: THE CHRISTIAN**  
**PERSPECTIVE**

*L. C. Onyazonwu*

**Introduction**

The relationship between religion and morality is one of the oldest philosophical and theological topics known to humanity. Many inquisitive minds have pondered on how important religion is to morality since ancient times, and discussion on the subject matter continues to date (Ivy Panda, 2022). There has been a mutual relationship between religion and morality as the duo seems to be dependent on each other for meaning and functionality. Although, most scholars are of the idea that morality is dependent on or influenced by religion, there have been campaigns recently by secularistic and atheistic scholars positing that morality can be independent of religion. Such scholars believe that a person can live a moral life without necessarily having to be religious (Sitoki & Ekwenye, 2021). The argument is that if religion has a great influence on morality, there would not be moral decadence beclouding our present-day society (Iwuagwu, 2018).

Given the above, the question that should be asked is: if morality is independent of religion or a moral lawgiver (God), what then is the origin of morality and why are we supposed to lead a moral life in the first place? In response to the above questions, Christianity teaches that any kind of moral living that is outside of the belief in Christ is vague. In Christian morality, one cannot be approved of God by merely adhering to legalistic principles. Hence, this chapter aims to succinctly elucidate the Christian perspective on the relationship between religion and morality as it concerns the conduct of humans concerning God's commands. Here, it will be proven that the Christian conception of morality is objective as opposed to the secular conception of it, which is subjective.

**Meaning of Religion**

Religion is one of the difficult disciplines to define. This is possibly due to its elusive, ambivalent, and vague nature. It means different things to different people. It means one thing to a philosopher, another to a sociologist, another to an anthropologist, another to a politician, another to a psychologist, another to a theologian, and another to an ethicist. Since religion is

polysemous in meaning, that is, having multiple meanings, it is difficult to arrive at an all-embracing or all-acceptable definition.

For Omoregbe (1993), the argument that religion has no universally accepted definition is a well-known fact since it has been defined differently by many people. For instance, Professor Leuba has identified forty-eight definitions of religion to which he added two of his own which make them fifty. However, Omoregbe provides a working definition of religion thus: religion is etymologically derived from three Latin words namely: *ligare* which means to bind, *relegare* which means to unite or link together, and *religion* which means a relationship. Religion essentially denotes a relationship or link established between two persons – the human person and the divine person believed to exist. It is an encounter between man and a transcendent deity conceived as a personal being capable of communication with man.

### **Concept of Morality**

Morality is derived from the Latin word “*moralis*” which denotes customs or manners; it is the area of ethics that focuses on an existing set of values adopted by a society or culture and evaluates whether an action aligns with those values or violates them in some way. It is the human attempt to define right and wrong in thoughts and actions, as well as in what is good and bad about our personalities as humans (Bailey, Jones & Clayton, 2023). It is concerned with the principles of good and bad or right and wrong, as well as a preference for the good and right, and a rejection for the bad and the wrong (Francis, 2020).

Morality involves "the group or network of beliefs, values, norms, orders, prohibitions, and designs which are involved in the life of a person, a group, social class, nation, or cultural environment in a certain historical period, and which guide their actions" (Özlem, 2004:7). It is the distinction between right and wrong intents, decisions and actions. It is a set of norms or principles drawn from a code of behaviour from a specific philosophy, religion, or culture. It is often used interchangeably with terms like “goodness” and “rightness” (Chukwuemeka, 2022).

### **Divine Command Theory: A Theoretical Articulation of Religion as The Bedrock of Morality**

Divine command theory (DCT) is a theory that best explains the relationship between religion and morality. Termed also as theological voluntarism, DCT is a position that claims that God's command is the ultimate source of moral obligation or that God's will is the basis of moral laws.

That is, an action is said to be good if it conforms to divine commands or is bad because it breaches God's commands. This position was held by medieval theologians and philosophers like St. Anselm, and William of Ockham, among others. It was endorsed and elaborated upon by modern philosophers like John Locke, George Berkeley, Søren Kierkegaard, and Karl Barth. The theory is supported in all the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), especially in Christianity (Abubakar, 2021).

DCT is an alternative ethical framework based on the conception that the morality of actions stems directly from God's commands. That is, an action is morally acceptable if God commands it (Ciocchetti, 2007). The theory posits that humans depend on God to fulfil the requirements of morality and that humans cannot achieve morality outside of God. Therefore, actions are right if God decrees them, and for human actions to be morally right, they must follow God's commandments (Baird & Serva, 2023). The theory postulates that someone's actions are morally acceptable if they originate from God and are determined by divine command (Sitoki and Ekwenye (2021). Divine commands are necessary because, without God, there simply cannot be a set of moral ideals. Thus, God's perspective is necessary and sufficient for maximal obligation (Boone, 2013).

DCT solves the old problem of the objectivity of morality. In this sense, morality is not merely a matter of personal feeling or social custom; an action simply is right if God commands it and wrong if God forbids it (Rachels & Rachels, 2011). The theory is reflected in certain passages in the Reformation writings of Luther and Calvin. For them, what God wills, is not a right because He will fulfil his mandates, but actions must be right because God wills it (Idziak, 1979). For Luther, if it is God's command that determines morality, there cannot be a conflict between His command and morality because His morality cannot possibly be evil (Sagi and Statman, 1995).

### **Relationship between Religion and Morality**

Before the contemporary era, it was widely accepted that religion is the undeniable foundation of morality, which implies that there can be no morality without religion. The belief that religion is a precondition for morality continues to be promoted today by scholars, who claim that morality is impossible without belief in God and that declining moral standards are partly attributable to the rise of secularism and the decline of organised religion (Chukwuemeka, 2023). From the beginning of Western thought, religion and morality have been closely intertwined and some

apologists of religion have posited that morality is one of the factors for keeping religion. For those apologists, man is a religious being and any attempt at obliterating this religious genetic make-up will spell moral doom for the society (Ani & Obielosi, 2015). For Okere (2006), the mother of morality is religion, and for the vast majority of human beings, morality is religion-based; they learn morality from their religion, frame it in religious terms and ultimately justify it by appeals to religion. Affirmatively, Iwuagwu notes that:

Morality until recently has been seen as a brainchild of religion and thus an essential part of religion from which it is inseparable. This assumption has even led some scholars to hold that there can be no morality without religion since morality is intrinsically a part of religion. It is therefore assumed that a religious person is essentially a moral person and that a moral life may not be possible without religion (Iwuagwu. 2018:42)

In describing the nexus between religion and morality, Sitoki and Ekwenye (2021) assert that most theists or religionists believe that morality cannot be independent of religion because the very meaning of 'good' is nothing other than 'what God approves'. In corroboration, Ani and Obielosi (2015) explain that morality is concerned with human acts in their relation to the ultimate end of man and since this end of man can be no other than God, if God is left out of morality, human acts no longer have any moral significance. Hence, without religion, morality is impossible. Without morality, religion is set aside. Morality without religion is morality without God, and morality without God is called lay morality or independent morality.

In his *Man and Morals*, Bittle captures the interconnectedness between religion and morality as follows:

Man, considered adequately in the totality of his being, is an individual, a social being and a creature of God. Because of these essential states of his being, he has definite rights and definite duties. The rights and duties which flow from these states constitute the entire field of morality. Hence, the duties of man towards God as the Supreme Being and creator of Man are an integral part of morality. These duties, however, constitute a part of Religion. Consequently, Religion is an integral part of morality. (1953:330)

Furthermore, people of monotheistic religions tend to argue that without religion, morality cannot exist. The core of this argument is that without religious belief, individuals have no

consequences for their actions; as a result, they can do whatever they want, as the moral implications of their actions are irrelevant to them (Ani & Obielosi, 2015). In America, Christian clergy are often treated as moral experts: hospitals ask them to sit on ethics committees; reporters interview them on the moral dimensions of a story; and churchgoers look to them for guidance. The reason they are thought to have special moral insight is because morality and religion are thought to be inseparable in popular thinking. People commonly believe that morality can be understood only in the context of religion. Hence, religious leaders are assumed to be authorities on morality (Rachels & Rachels, 2011).

### **Christian Perspective on Morality**

Christian morality is derived from the teachings in the Bible on how to conduct oneself, what God condemns as sinful, and how to treat your fellow man (Rollo, Quist & Clayton, 2023). Christian perspective on morality evaluates how a person's faith in Jesus Christ influences the way he/she lives. Christian morality is unique because it is founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ. Christianity teaches that one of the missions of Jesus Christ in the world was to teach people how to live a moral life (Zalot & Guevin, 2008). So, Christian morality emphasizes the rightness of human conduct and is interested in what ought to be done in a given situation as exemplified by Jesus Christ (Francis, 2020). Interestingly, the Christian conception of right and wrong is unique being that God Himself is at the epicentre of morality; thus, an individual's morality is dependent on God (Sitoki & Ekwenye, 2021). For Christians, true morality is grounded in knowing God and loving Him. Without God and the Bible, there is no way to ground morality in any objective way. Hence, Christian morality is not formulated by humans; it is something God calls each of us to do (Settecase, 2016).

In Christian morality, violation of God's moral law offends God, damages a person's relationship with Him, and causes other kinds of spiritual harm (Swan, 2007). Christian morality is about the application of God's laws both in a person's private and public life. In a quest to live a moral life, a Christian tries to obey the rules that have been decreed by God and recorded in the Bible (Sherbondy, 2006). In Christian morality, the conception of good, truth, beauty, justice and holiness are not simple ideas or impersonal values as in moral philosophy, but values embodied in God (Florea, 2016). In other words, morality does not make much sense outside of God and His Word. Morality from a biblical standpoint is not adhering to a list of sinful actions to avoid; it is a condition of the heart obtainable only through the presence of the indwelling Christ

(Brown, 2015). Mere conformity to moral codes of conduct is not enough in Christian morality. It goes beyond the outward behaviour of the individual. It requires moral perfection in word, thought, and deed, achieved ultimately through the power of God's grace at work in the individual (Swan, 2007).

In other words, Christian morality is not merely accomplishing some duties that have no bearing on man's life on earth, despite assuring him a futuristic reward in the afterlife. It entails an explanation or description of the Christian's life in Christ in the context of the Church (Florea, 2016). It has far deeper applications. For instance, Jesus pointed out that God's Commandments apply even to the thoughts and motives of the heart, not just the outward actions (Brown, 2015).

### **Source of Christian Morality**

The sources of Christian morality are God's laws (commands) which are found in the Bible. For instance, the Ten Commandments highlight acts toward God and man that are morally right or wrong (Brown, 2015). Christian moral codes are based on the biblical teachings of Jesus Christ, the Old Testament prophets, and the New Testament Apostles (Rollo, Quist & Clayton, 2023). Regardless of denomination, Christians look to the Bible as the primary source of authority on matters of right or wrong. Christian morality has its basis in the Divine Revelation, comprised of the Holy Scripture and the Holy Tradition (Florea, 2016).

Christian morality can be categorised into Old Testament morality and New Testament morality. The most popular moral teaching of the Old Testament is the Ten Commandments which is the foundation of other moral teachings in the Bible. The Ten Commandments are the only standards of morality that can provide universal guidance for all humanity (Zalot & Guevin, 2008; Brown, 2015). They constitute the core of Christian morality and define proper behaviour in two major areas: one's relation to God and one's interactions with other people (IvyPanda, 2022). For some Christian scholars, the Ten Commandments are a moral guidance structure that typically exemplifies what morality should be to Christians (Sitoki & Ekwenye, 2021).

The New Testament (NT) delves deeper into giving guidance on various aspects of morality emphasising moral values like kindness, charity, respect for elders, obedience to parents, forgiveness, justice, saying the truth, and controlling one's anger, among others (Sitoki & Ekwenye, 2021). The most outstanding teaching of Jesus Christ which forms the bedrock of Christian morality in the NT is the Sermon on the Mount (Rollo, Quist & Clayton, 2023). The

Sermon on the Mount contains several ethical teachings from Jesus, and its central premise is known as the Golden Rule (IvyPanda, 2022). Beyond the Ten Commandments, Christian morality has far deeper applications; Jesus pointed out that the Commandments apply even to the thoughts and motives of the heart, not just outward actions (Brown, 2015).

### **Love: The Sequitur of Christian Morality**

In Christian morality, virtues culminate in love, and the highest ethical duty of a Christian is to love God and his neighbour as he loves himself (Florea, 2016; West, 2024). In other words, the Ten Commandments are summarised in two injunctions: love for God and love for fellow humans. In Christian morality, love (agape) and morality cannot exist independently. In the absence of morality, God's love will be absent. Love is the choice to follow God and obey His Word, even when one does not feel like it (Brown, 2015).

Contrary to society's conception of Christian morality as a series of don'ts (as in: don't kill, don't steal, etc.), Christian morality is a positive affirmation of love (the roadmap that guides Christians to the goal which is to know God, love Him, and serve Him in this life and in the life to come). Ultimately, all moral actions are about love, which fulfils all the commandments. This is because, if a person's actions arise from love and reflect love, such a person will not just be morally justified; he or she will have achieved personal fulfilment and happiness at the same time (Waiss, 2020). Hence, Christian morality prescribes loving God and one's neighbour in every moral or ethical sense. That is, Christians' highest moral duty is to love God with all of their heart, mind, soul, and strength. The second highest moral duty is to love their neighbour as themselves. Fulfilling these moral obligations takes place in obedience and submission to the teachings of God's Word (West, 2024).

### **Conclusion**

Christianity is one of the religious traditions that have practically shown the connectivity or nexus between religion and morality. From the above, it is seen that Christianity has a great deal of influence on morality. More so, in Christian morality, morality is objective rather than subjective. That is, individual Christians do not formulate their morality as it pleases them, but they depend on prescribed uniform moral codes of conduct which are derived from the Bible. Christian morality supports the premise that religion is the bedrock of morality, and that morality cannot have its complete meaning and perfection without divine approval. In Christianity's



perspective on morality, one's good works do not hold value if God is not in the equation. That is to say actions are irrelevant if they are not in line with God's will or commands. Christian morality emphasises the acceptance of the person and teachings of Jesus Christ wholly for one to be able to lead a morally acceptable life before God.

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## CHAPTER 8

### MORAL VALUES AND ETHICAL STANDARDS

*G. N. Ayantayo*

#### **Introduction**

In this section, we will concentrate on several terms that highlight this topic. This is crucial for us to gain a thorough comprehension of the subject. The main terms are morality, value, and standard. Morality comes from the Latin term "moralitas," which means conventions, manners, or character. The emphasis on conventions, etiquette, or character refers to how members of society should interact with one another. This is based on the fact that man is interdependent in society. As a result, they interact with each other. The interaction may damage someone's feelings, but it could also be fascinating. Given this circumstance, morality has grown over time to include the principles, values, and beliefs that govern ethical behaviour and decision-making. Thus, it becomes a criterion for distinguishing between right and wrong, good and bad, correct or incorrect, and virtuous or immoral action. This corresponds to the norms of behaviour that are deemed acceptable within a specific setting, culture, or belief system.

It is essential to recognise that morality is a complicated and nuanced concept that can be influenced by a variety of variables, including cultural standards, religious teachings, philosophical perspectives, and personal experiences. Different cultures and societies may have varied moral frameworks, resulting in varying interpretations of morality across settings. Morality has a significant impact on human behaviour, social connections, and the functioning of society. This is because it gives a framework for ethical decision-making, guides people in their interactions with others, and helps to build norms and regulations within communities. Adherence to societal morality promotes collaboration, fairness, and the overall well-being of individuals and society.

Values are connected to morals and can be defined as the guiding principles and ideas that influence human behaviour. In the long run, it governs the decisions they make on an issue at some point in time, as well as how they interact with their neighbours. Values are positive from a moral point of view because they tend to make people in society interact well with one another, resulting in a peaceful society. Values include honesty, integrity, respect, empathy, justice, compassion, responsibility, and perseverance.

In general, a standard is a set of criteria, standards, or principles that serve as a foundation for measuring, comparing, and evaluating something. Against this backdrop, the quality, performance, or attributes of something can be evaluated. In this case, it refers to a system of criteria, norms, or principles established by society for measuring and evaluating the manners or character of an individual, group of individuals, or society as a whole.

### **Moral Values**

Using the three variables previously described, we may define moral values as principles and standards of behaviour that are deemed right or bad in a specific society or culture. These ideals assist people in distinguishing between what is morally acceptable and inappropriate. Moral principles are universal. They apply to every member of society since they are very beneficial to everyone, and people's commitment to them makes members of society live in harmony. They are based on every culture's custom and religion. For this reason, we will discuss the manifestation of moral values in Nigeria's three major religions: African Traditional Religion, Christianity, and Islam, as well as their oral traditions and texts. We shall discuss only four of these values here because our space is limited.

**Love:** Love is synonymous with a variety of behaviours, including feelings, profound affection, compassion, and attachment to oneself and others. Some people perceive it as a favourable feeling of care. From a moral standpoint, love can exist between family members, such as parents and children, siblings, or extended relatives. It is distinguished by feelings of loyalty, support, and unwavering acceptance. It could demonstrate altruistic love, which is defined as unselfish acts of kindness, compassion, and charity towards others, generally without expectation of reciprocation. It may involve acts of generosity, empathy, and assistance to those in need.

In traditional religious settings, the African concept of brotherhood expresses affection for one's fellow man. Brotherhood implies being one's brother's keeper, which also entails assisting the needy, wayfarers, and destitute. It is also obvious in kinship communication and hospitality, where it mostly has to do with the recognition and appreciation of each individual.

In Islam, love entails spending one's wealth on one's kin, orphans, destitute, and beggars (Qur'an 2:177). It is viewed as an action that comes before religious belief. Love is also viewed as the foundation and tool for improving, appreciating, and interpreting the Islamic notion of brotherhood. For example, the Qur'an teaches that Muslims are brothers (Qur'an 49:10). In fact,

Abu Harairah once cited Prophet Mohammed as saying, "A Muslim is the brother of another Muslim." He should not deceive him, tell him lies, or humiliate him."

In Christianity, I Corinthians 3:4-8 summarises love: Love is patient and gentle. It is not envious or boastful. It is not proud or self-seeking. It is not readily irritated, and it maintains no record of wrongdoing. Love does not take pleasure in wickedness but rejoices in the truth. It always hopes and preserves. It never fails.

**Honesty:** Honesty is defined as the act of being genuine to oneself and others in the course of one or more forms of contact at any given time. In daily social interaction, society considers anything substantial - or categorically true - to be honest; that is, a reality that is true to the letter and true to life. Honesty, thus, is associated with truthfulness, uprightness, sincerity, and straightforwardness.

This fact is emphasised in Ifa Corpus, specifically in Eji Ogbe, as follows: *Sotito sododo, Sotito o si tun sododo, Eni sotito ni imole gbe, Sotito, sododo*. That is, be truthful and just. The truth is what the divinities support. In numerous passages, the Quran emphasises the importance of honesty and truthfulness, such as Surah Al-Baqarah (2:42): "And do not mix the truth with falsehood or conceal the truth while you know [it]." Surah Al-Baqarah (2:283): "And if you are on a journey and cannot find a scribe, then a security deposit [should be] taken. And if one of you entrusts another, let him carry out his trust [faithfully] and fear Allah, his Lord. Also, do not conceal testimony, since whoever conceals it has a sinful heart, and Allah knows everything you do." The Bible offers various passages emphasising the value of honesty and sincerity. Some examples include Proverbs 12:22: "The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in trustworthy people," and Ephesians 4:25: "So stop telling lies." Let us tell our neighbours the truth, for we are all members of the same body." (Colossians 3:9-10) "Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have left off the old self with its practices and put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.

**Justice:** It is defined as the concept of fairness and equity in the treatment of individuals, as well as the allocation of resources and opportunities within society. It entails ensuring that all individuals are treated fairly and that their rights are recognised and protected. It is analogous to giving each person what he or she deserves. It represents liberty, freedom, equality, and fair play.

Justice indicates that we must strive to safeguard innocence and promote justice and truth among humanity.

In the traditional religious locale, justice is advised as a course of action, as reflected in proverbs such as *Aparo kan koga ju okan lo*. It means that all birds of a given species are the same height; none can appear taller than the others. Another one says, "*Ba wo ni inaki s'ori ti Obo ko se.*"

Islam also advocates the application of justice in man-to-man relationships. Allah commands justice and fairness (Surah 10:90). According to Surah 57:25, "We surely sent our messages with clear proofs and revealed with them books and the standard, so that people may deal with justice." It is important to avoid doing wrong due to animosity toward others. According to Surah 5:8, justice comes second to piety.

Christianity regards justice as the foundation for amicable social connections in business, economics, politics, and religion. God's impartiality demonstrates justice, as evidenced by Job 34:18-19; Matt. 5:45; Acts 10:34-35; and Romans 10:12. For this reason, fairness is urged for Christians, as demonstrated in Deut. 16:20; Ps. 82:3; Prov. 21:3; Is. 56; I Rom. 13:7; and Col. 4:5. This explains why the Bible condemns any act that undermines justice, such as mistreatment of the poor or trampling on the rights of the poor and underprivileged. Therefore, it advocates justice because God loves it (Psalm 33:5).

**Tolerance:** Tolerance is the ability to tolerate and appreciate differences, whether they be based on views, attitudes, cultures, or lifestyles, without necessarily agreeing or condoning them. It simply means to accommodate different points of view, opinions, and people. It suggests that people do not share the same characteristics, beliefs, attitudes, and thoughts. This is one of the wonders of nature.

Tolerance is advocated in traditional religious settings because of its capacity to foster friendly interactions. This is obvious in proverbs and wise sayings that teach about and emphasise the importance of tolerance in markets, streets, and all public places. For example, one of the proverbs states: "*Oju orun to eye fo lai fi ara kan ara,*" which means that the sky is large enough to accommodate birds without colliding with one another.

Tolerance is promoted in Christianity as a means of improving cordial, personal, and social relationships. It is based on the principle of "live and let live," which states that both the rich and the destitute have the right to coexist. Religious tolerance is tacitly encouraged in Luke 9:49-50

and Mark 9:38-39. However, Christians are taught not to tolerate wrong, which could be interpreted as compromise.

Muslims are obligated to tolerate one another, including non-Muslims and their religions (Surah 41:34–35). Tolerance is demonstrated by contrasting a bad act with a good one. In a religious setting, Islam speaks of religious tolerance, which implies tolerance for various faiths. This is stated as follows: "Let there be no compulsion in religion (Surah 2:256).

## **Ethical Standards**

Ethical standards are rules or norms that govern moral behaviour and decision-making among individuals in society. Ethical standards are the appropriate behaviour that society expects its members to exhibit in their interactions with others. As a result, they provide a framework for deciding what is good or wrong, fair or unfair, and just or unjust in a variety of circumstances, including professional, personal, and social ones.

## **Who Sets the Ethical Standards?**

Different entities can establish ethical norms depending on the circumstances and scope. In the context of our discussion, from a religious standpoint, God and Man establish ethical norms. God created man as a moral person and instilled in him what is known as conscience, an inner feeling of good and evil that directs our thoughts, acts, and decisions. It is commonly referred to as a moral compass, impacting our behaviour by instilling feelings of regret or remorse when we behave against our ethical ideals or values. According to religious beliefs, conscience conveys to mankind what comprises desirable and unacceptable actions. In Yoruba tradition, the conscience is known as *Ifa Aya* or the oracle of the heart. Man is a conscientious being; his conscience tells him what decision to make or what course of action to pursue. Conscience is also known as the "fitrah" in Islam, which is the intrinsic inclination to recognise truth and moral excellence. The notion of fitrah implies that every human being is born with an inherent sense of right and wrong, which serves as a guide for moral behaviour. In Christianity, conscience is considered a moral compass that reflects God's moral order and directs believers' lives under His will and purposes. It is essential for forming individual character, promoting moral growth, and deepening one's relationship with God.

Furthermore, God endowed man with reason, allowing him to discriminate between good and wrong, proper and incorrect. The term faculty relates to human beings' cognitive aptitude or



capacity to think, analyse, and make reasonable decisions. It involves a variety of mental processes, including logical reasoning, critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making. The purpose of faculty is to help people understand their surroundings, assess information, and reach judgements based on evidence and reasoning. This is why we remark that someone's actions are unreasonable or do not appeal to reason. Man sets standards for society, observing that, in my experience, the average man is egocentric, either by nature or choice, and always considers himself significant and others unimportant. Man is so self-centred that he always wants to satisfy himself, get his wishes fulfilled, and get his purpose and ambition realised, even if it impacts the people around him badly.

In light of this, society sets standards for its members at various levels of life. This includes social, economic, religious, political, family, professional, and legislative standards. As a result, a variety of regulatory bodies, professional organisations, legal systems, and cultural elements work together to promote ethical behaviour and protect the well-being and integrity of individuals and society.

### **Scope of the Standard**

The standard encompasses or concentrates on all of the previously listed human behaviours. As a result, every action, regardless of level or domain, becomes subject to moral scrutiny. For example, there are guidelines for eating, drinking, sleeping, dancing, chatting, walking and working. In other words, there is a standard for accomplishing everything. For example, a guy is free to speak, but he is not expected to speak loosely, unreasonably, or loudly. Furthermore, while man is free to eat, he is not expected to overfeed. Thus, many of man's behaviours generate ethical concerns, including whether they are right or wrong, correct or erroneous, good or terrible. Fundamentally, every activity becomes moral when it has impact on others in the society. As previously stated, every action has a direct or indirect effect. A moral problem arises whenever an activity has an immediate negative impact on a person or people.

Moral issues occur when people make wrong decisions in terms of what they do, consume, and wear. Among other things, it affects the well-being of others by either increasing or lowering it, bringing either harm or advantages. For example, in religious organisations' the use of drum-size loudspeakers will have a negative impact on the well-being of those living in that vicinity where the religious centre is located, since the noise generated by the loudspeaker has the potential to

impede or disrupt their rest. Based on this premise one can conclude that all man's actions are susceptible to ethical examination. As a result, the following concepts have emerged within the framework of ethics: professional ethics, political ethics, technological ethics, business ethics, bioethics, scientific ethics, business ethics, animal ethics, gender ethics, economic ethics, war ethics, peace ethics, medical ethics, sex ethics, personal ethics, interpersonal ethics, environmental ethics, and religious ethics.

### **Guidelines for Assessing Human Action within the Framework of Ethical Standards**

Setting moral norms is one thing; understanding or measuring whether individuals follow them is another. This leads to a moral appraisal of human conduct. Moral evaluation refers to the assessment or judgement of people's conformity or non-conformity with moral rules or standards. Moral assessment of human conduct requires consideration of the following essential questions: What activity is in question? Who was the actor? Why was the action performed? When was the activity performed? How was the action carried out? How did it influence the person who acted? How did it affect the person(s) to whom the activity was directed? How did such an action affect the society in which it occurred?

### **Conclusion**

Moral values and ethical standards are essential components of a healthy and functional society. They provide a moral framework for guiding human action, encouraging social cohesiveness, preserving justice and fairness, cultivating personal integrity, establishing trust and reputation, and developing cultural identity. While they are distinct notions, their interdependence is critical for building a just, caring, and ethical society.

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## CHAPTER 9

### INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON HUMAN BEHAVIOUR

*E. O. Joseph*

#### **Introduction**

Religion is probably the strongest belief system that has existed for thousands of years. In many ways, it is a code of conduct, a rule book that allows believers to function in a non-primitive or cultured manner. The earliest forms of religion were established to facilitate social bonding. It is also believed that religious practices are adaptive and have emerged to sustain survival and reproductive advantages through gene selection or gene-culture coevolution dynamics. Religion impacts human behaviour in every aspect of our lives by having to live by those codes, morals and rules. It is implanted in our brain that religion is how we think, how we act, how we choose. People usually tend to seek guidance from God if troubles exceed their capability. Religion influences humans by attempting to influence their lives to believe they hold no significant individual power. It is no surprise then, that this system is crucial to thinking patterns and plays a vital role in the formation of self-identity and a collective identity of a community, which then shapes attitudes, cultural norms and influences individual and group behaviour. Children are particularly perceptive to religious beliefs and the concepts of Gods and other supernatural agents. This leads to a teleological bias of accepting explanations of phenomenon, based on the purpose they serve rather than their postulated causes, which persist into adulthood. These attitudes are contingent upon factors such as beliefs about God's existence, immortality and omnipresence; attributions about psychological characteristics such as fairness, compassion and harshness; and attributions about God's causal involvement and motives in one's life events.

Religion has a significant influence on human behaviour, affecting various aspects of life. The influence of religion on human behaviour is contained in the beliefs that can shape attitudes, cultural norms, and individual and group behaviour. Studies have also indicated that religion can impact behaviours such as generosity, honesty, prejudice, and conflict. Religion, religiosity, and spirituality play a vital role in influencing human thinking and behaviour by offering answers on the meaning of human existence. Furthermore, different kinds of religious beliefs have been shown to influence human behaviour towards others in various ways, impacting empathy and self-regulation. Religion is considered a powerful instrument that can influence human behaviour, shaping individuals' actions and interactions with others. Religions can impact

people's behaviour in variety of ways as it often provides a moral framework and ethical guidelines that influence how individuals interact with others and make decisions. Religious beliefs can also shape attitudes towards issues such as charity, forgiveness and social justice. Most, if not all religions, have some thematic principles that make them similar to one another, namely concepts of God and love, honesty, altruism, miracle workings and peacekeeping. However, every religion has elements and ideologies that set them apart from the other. This chapter surveys the influence of religion on moral, cultural, economic, social and political behaviour of humans.

### **Religion Influences Moral Behaviour**

Religious believers tend to endorse a meta-ethics rooted in deontic rules and views of objective moral truths, which can impact their moral decision-making and behaviour. However, studies have shown mixed and sometimes contradictory results regarding the relationship between religious faith and moral behaviour. Most religions enforce moral behaviour through positive and negative reinforcement by infusing 'god-fearing' elements in scriptures, such as the concept of karma and reincarnation in Hinduism, heaven-hell and salvation in Christianity, paradise and hell in Islam, peaceful afterlife and reincarnation in indigenous Chinese folk religions, and release from the cycle of reincarnations and reaching enlightenment in Buddhism. This was further reiterated through Shariff and Norenzayan's study where they found that individuals are more likely to behave in a moral or honest manner when they believe in fearsome and punishing supernatural agents. In their subsequent studies, they concluded that the concept of hell exists to make people act in a moral and ethical manner, whereas the concept of heaven (or its equivalent in other religions) exists to make people feel good and has a direct and positive relation with happiness. Hence, the religious scriptures or rituals act as a moral reminder, through priming, and impel us to act in a moral and honest manner.

Religion is part of the cultural system, as such, religious beliefs provide guideline for human actions and standards against which people's conduct can be evaluated. In a Christian society, the Ten Commandments operates in this way. They demonstrate how the norms of the social society can be integrated by religious beliefs. For example, the commandment "Thou shall not kill" directs areas of behaviour that prohibit manslaughter, murder, or euthanasia. Talcott Parsons opined that human actions are directed and controlled by norms provided by social system. The cultural system provides mere general guidelines for action in the form of beliefs, values and

systems of meaning. The norm which direct actions are not isolated standard of behaviour: they are integrated and patterned by the values and beliefs provided by the cultural systems. For example, many norms in African society are expressions of the values of religious beliefs. Religious values can diverge from commonly held contemporary moral positions, while others have a link between self-reported religiosity. The influence of religion on moral behaviour can involve positive and negative reinforcement through religious teachings and concepts. It is important to note here that although, religious beliefs may play a causal role in some of the actions, it is not the only factor that influences behaviour. Rather, it's an important factor in a pool of other factors like genetics, environment, parenting, drives, and needs that determine our behaviour.

### **The Influence of Religion on Economic Behaviour**

Max Weber's thesis "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism" 1958, indicates that Christian philosophies such as Protestantism encourage hard work, the accumulation of wealth and profitable investments in enterprise. It can be presumed that religious influence in an economic institution can help create a good structure and serve as a motivational force for members of the society. Religion affects economic decision-making by establishing social standards and shaping individual personalities. And as such, religious identities affect individual's economic outcomes.

Religion can influence economic behaviour in various ways. It affects economic decision-making by establishing social standards and shaping individual personalities. Firms in communities with higher religiosity tend to adhere to ethical norms, which can contribute to a stable economy. Religious beliefs and participation can impact a country's rate of economic progress. For example, increases in some religious beliefs, such as heaven, hell, and an afterlife, tend to increase or decrease economic growth. However, the influence of religion on economic behaviour can vary by specific religious identities and practices. Mersland et al indicated that, "religion may influence the perceptions and behaviours of several parties in the development process." They further observed that many aid and developmental organizations are based on religious principles and are managed by people who are inspired by religious beliefs.

## **The Influence of Religion on Social Behaviour**

Religion influences social behaviour in various ways, shaping individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and actions. Some of the key ways religion affects social behaviour include:

1. **Social control and moral behaviour:** Religion teaches people moral behaviour and helps them learn how to be good members of society. For example, in the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Ten Commandments are a famous set of rules for moral behaviour. The Hadith also provides rules for Islamic living.
2. **Social unity and stability:** Religion reinforces social unity and stability by giving people a common set of beliefs and bringing them together physically, facilitating communication, and strengthening social bonds.
3. **Influence on daily life:** Religion affects the daily lives of individuals by offering answers on the meaning of human existence and influencing their thinking and behaviours. Personal beliefs and religious practices can have both positive and negative influences on mental health, depending on the specific aspects of religion and spirituality.
4. **Impact on generosity, honesty, prejudice, and conflict:** Religion can influence various aspects of social behaviour, such as generosity, honesty, prejudice, and conflict. For example, a study found that criminal activity is lower in countries with a strong religious presence.
5. **Influence on community involvement:** Highly religious individuals are more likely to volunteer and be involved in their communities, as well as being happier with their lives.
6. **Influence on personal beliefs and mental health:** Religion can have both positive and negative effects on mental health, depending on the specific aspects of religious coping strategies and personal beliefs.

Religion can have both positive and negative effects on various aspects of social behaviour, such as moral behaviour, social unity, daily life, generosity, honesty, prejudice, conflict, community involvement, and mental health. In the negative regard, social theorist like Karl Marx and August Comte called for the eradication of religion in the society because it is destructive. Marx says that religion hinders the growth of creative powers which were capable of scientific exploration and innovations. To him, religion is an illusion and a body of myths which kills the pains of exploitation and endorsed the subordination of the exploited class to the capitalist exploiters. For

Marx, religion creates conflicts in the society by making obvious the social classes of people and can also be an instrument or a tool of manipulation for the upper class over the lower class. The upper class in contemporary society represents politicians and religious leaders who manipulate religion to suit their purpose while perpetually keeping their followers glued to them. Religious leaders can manipulate their followers by interpreting religious texts in a manner that accrue wealth and privileges to them rather than their providing the needs of their helpless followers. The followers on the hand are contented with their status because religion promises better life in the future so their gratification can be delayed. They believe that the most important thing is the salvation of their souls even when faced with impoverishment.

Nevertheless, the society has so many difficult situations which are problem to man. For example, social amenities like water supply, medical facilities, food supplies, well equipped schools, electrification, access to good roads etc. religion provides hope and encouragement in the midst of all these conditions. Religion is able to alleviate suffering, painful experiences, anguish and agonies in all spheres of life. Karl Marx stated publicly that religion was able to solve the problems of life and make life more bearable. Religious practices significantly influence social behaviour. For example, regular attendance at religious services is linked to healthy, stable family life, strong marriages, and well-behaved children. It also leads to a reduction in the incidence of domestic abuse, crime, substance abuse, and addiction. Additionally, religious practice is associated with greater generosity in charitable giving and volunteering, and it can help individuals escape the poverty of inner-city life. However, it's important to note that religion can also have negative influences, such as promoting traditional views about gender roles and engendering intolerance toward people with different religious beliefs. Religious practices play a multifaceted role in shaping social behavior, impacting everything from family life to community involvement and social stability.

### **The Influence of Religion on Political Behaviour**

Religion has a significant influence on political behaviour, with religious beliefs often playing a crucial role in shaping people's political choices and actions. Different types of religious beliefs influence political participation and promote political voting behaviour. The positive influence of religion on political behaviour enhances national development. In this sense one expects religious ethical values to manifest at every point of influence. This means that religious people have a duty to abide by the ethical teachings, inherent in their religions and such, will provide



good leadership and obedient followership. According to Nnadi, "... religion is often used to subvert political needs and aspirations of the ruling class.... Religion if positively used promotes the political life of any society." Every religion, whether Christianity, Islam, or African Traditional Religion, has moral values which regulate and harmonize human life.

Nigerians are one of the most religious people in this world and as such, one expects a credible electoral process in a religious community, like Nigeria, if the rules are obeyed. Religion, being an agent of social control, helps to keep with the norm, of the society, which is the real basis of politics. As affirmed by Adeye, cited by Umenolue:

Religion breeds an ideal heart in man to be conscious of the need to have a clean heart. By this, he will grow to have a philanthropic or patriotic thought before venturing to lead or represent his people in government of the state. In another word, religion will prepare the mind of man to be a good politician who will constantly fall back upon his religion to guide him. The teaching or threats of religion are expected to guide him to be able to lead his people aright as a politician with fear of God in him. He will never consider himself first, rather he knows that he is the servant of the electorates.

On the negative influence of religion on political behaviour, at various times, threatened the corporate existence of Nigeria. For example, the issue of the Sharia Court of Appeal almost brought the Constituent Assembly to an abrupt end in 1978, given the walk out that was staged by some Muslim members and the antagonism of non-Muslims. This wouldn't have arisen if the secular/pluralistic nature of the country had been respected. Religious crises have further worsened interethnic animosity. The Kaduna and Jos ethno-religious crises displaced many people who had settled in the northern part of the country for many years as it became necessary for them to relocate due to insecurity. Also, the adoption of Sharia law by some state governors almost terminated the National Youths Service Corps scheme, which, for many years, has been a major integrating and unifying factor. The reason was that many southerners did not want their children or relations to be posted where they would be forced to obey Islamic law. The tension was doused when the general public was assured of their safety. No society can grow in the atmosphere of religious violence which, more often than not, has political undertone. It should be mentioned that the 2008 and 2010 Jos crises started as a political war, and it later took ethno-religious dimension in which several lives were lost.

Without mincing words, a hitch free election will produce legitimate leaders who will govern with the fear of God, and obedient followers. Achieving this will solve problems, such as political instability, violence and insecurity, maladministration, retarded development, international stigmatization and apathy politics, which apparently are by products of electoral malpractices. Johnstone corroborates this view that: “What one believes, with respect to that which is good, true, and desirable as well as what God intends for people and society, could be expected to influence the choice one makes in the political arena. That is, religion should affect people’s voting pattern.”

Some key points to consider on the influence of religion on political behaviour include:

1. Influence on voting decisions: Religious beliefs are considered to have a lot of influence on political choices. In Nigeria, religion plays a huge role in voting decisions. An instance is the 2023 general elections where majority of people who voted, did out of religious sentiments.
2. Impact on political behaviour: The impact of religious beliefs and affiliations on political behaviour is greater for those individuals for whom religion is more salient or who are more religiously committed.
3. Sermons and political behaviour: Sermons can be a significant source of influence on political behaviour, as they often address social and political issues and can shape people's views and actions.
4. Religion and politics: Religions often make strong claims on people's allegiance, and universal religions make these claims on all people. Historically and in contemporary societies, religion has played a central role in political life, sometimes for the worse, such as the wars of religion in Europe.
5. Religious beliefs and political participation: The relationship between religion and political participation is evident because religious beliefs allow for greater political participation than some religion. For instance, in Islamic religion, politics aligns with the religion and as such, many Muslims are politically involved than their counterparts from other religion. Religious beliefs can potentially support or hinder political participation, depending on the specific beliefs and context.

## Conclusion

Religion impacts human behaviour in every aspect of our lives by having to live by those codes, morals and rules. It is implanted in our mind and brain such that it guides how we think, behave and relate with the Supernatural Being and our fellow humans. Thus, religious beliefs organise an individual's perceptions of the world and serve as a guide for behaviour. It is a universal human pursuit, affecting many different cultural parameters, moral concepts, and ideals, and influencing human thinking and behaviour by offering answers on the meaning of human existence. Religion provides a comprehensive insight on the human orientation in the world and is an important element of human culture.

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## CHAPTER 10

### CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL ISSUES I: CONDUCTS AND MISCONDUCTS

*E. C. Opara*

#### **Introduction**

Ethics and ethical principles had existed alongside human society and development. This chapter examines how ethics and ethical principles or values shaped human society and survived past generations with their technological advancements, and how its application would do same in the contemporary society with the hydra headed and sophisticated digital advancement.

**Ethics:** Ethics is a guard and guide against misconduct. It is the set of rules that guides human behaviour. It is a regulatory mechanism or moral machinery, or platform put in place to ensure good conduct in every society or human organisation. It is as old or ancient as human society. However, the focus here is on contemporary ethical issues with a view of looking at conducts and misconducts. The human society is dynamic with dynamic and static ethical values. Ethics is dynamic and static.

Rules may change, with new set of rules put in place to moderate human conducts and meet the need of new and growing aspects of the human society or the global community. Yet these set of rules revolves around the core constant ethical values and static principles which must not change with the changing world. For instance, Love remains love and must not be replaced or changed to hatred. Same applies to other core ethical principles of truth, peace, fairness, kindness, goodness, equity, care, obedience, and respect, to mention just a few. The core ethical values must remain constant in a dynamic human society. This has given birth to ethics in every human endeavour or profession and in every society. All professional and international or local regulatory bodies must adhere to this ethical policy to meet up with the rising need of contemporary ethical issues across the globe. Ethics must translate to action, conduct or behaviour, where it fails or people fail to abide by the ethical guide, it becomes an ethical or moral issue that must be addressed. The core ethical values remain the guide and focus.

#### **Social Ethics in the Modern and Post-Modern World:**

It considers the important place of ethics or ethical values and moral conduct in the modern and post-modern world with the ongoing war between values and vices, good and bad, justice and injustice, truth and falsehood, and so on.

## **Contemporary Ethical Issues at a Glance**

Contemporary ethical issues explore series of compelling moral problems from the ethical perspective influenced by the moral philosophy and values which emphasise the primacy of persons as rational agents with self-realisation achieved only in community or society, where justice and human or individual rights are respected. This contemporary ethical philosophy includes modern and post-modern views on varying issues like family, ecology, war and war theories, to mention just a few.

Contemporary ethical issues also evaluate current ethical concerns raised by economic inequality and growing inequality in wealth and income, money in politics and political extremism as threat to democracy, women's right, distributive justice and injustice.

This course emphasises the development of skills in critical moral thinking through assessment and analysis of contemporary ethical issues. It involves the discussions of moral problems of contemporary society such as:

### **Family Life and Society**

Social values are first taught at home, where they fail to be taught and imbibed, social vices take over the society. It is important to note here that home or family is the unit of the society. The home is the foundation of the society and the primary ethical formation base of the child who later grows into an adult member of the society or global community. The family plays a major role, because the training a child fails to get at his early stage at home will affect his conduct outside the home.

For instance, a child who did not learn how to tell the truth at home can end up as an unrepentant liar. Incidentally, a liar is a potential thief, and a thief is an accomplished liar, therefore, liars are thieves. A child who did not learn obedience at home will be a deviant in the wider society. A child who could not learn the way of respect at home will be disrespectful at school and in the larger society. A child who does not understand the language of love at home because he did not grow in an environment of love will of course live in hatred and bitterness which will also show in violent and riotous life. It can only take grace and extra effort to change such deviant character

or behaviour formed at the early stage of the child as parenting and family upbringing remain veritable ethical tools in the early ethical and moral formation of the child or every individual.

**Other ethical matters that emanate from home and family life include:**

**Parenting or parenthood:** Is there a right to parenthood? Who is a parent in the light of the prevailing issues with baby boomers, baby mama, sorogacy, adoption and parenting, paternity proves and irresponsible fathers?

**Family love and care:** Welfare and charity or care within the home can breed love in the community as against hatred. This can as well result in issues of “Suicide and Addictive” substances like alcohol, drugs and tobacco and how should family and the community or society relate to the victims in solving the problems? Abortion is another serious issue that has direct impact on the family and the society. Should abortion be allowed?

**Same sex marriage with ethical concerns on childbearing and child rearing or upbringing:** Attention needs to be given to the moral and medical implications on the reproductive health of partners in same sex marriage. What are the ethical and moral issues arising from raising children in same sex marriage?

**Environmental Ethics and Climate Change: Ecology and Climate**

Ethical considerations here include:

Human wants with ecological and climate change impacts.

Animal and species rights – What rights should animals, vegetation and water bodies have? What right should non-human members of the society have?

There are numerous environmental and moral impacts on Ethics and Society with the frequent ecotourism in the modern and post-modern world.

**Digital Ethics: Technology and Digital Advancement with Internet Conducts and Crimes**

Science and Technology

Technology transfer

Biotechnology

Ethics and Social Media

Artificial Intelligence and enhancement

### **Business Ethics in the Era of Internet and Online Business**

Digital economy and online market

Digital capital

Poverty – global and regional poverty

### **Medical Ethics and Bio-Medics: The New Normal in the World of Pandemics**

Modern medical practice and Bio-medics

Global Pandemics and the new normal

Aging, Age management and medicals

Mental health

Sexual revolution

Euthanasia

Abortion

**Suicide:** While this does not ignore the traditional arguments on euthanasia and abortion, the increasing rate of suicide and frustrations in the modern world draws attention of contemporary ethics to these varying challenges. Contemporary Ethics considers the most persuasive arguments on how best to approach the debate and the issues at stake. Ethics principally answers to the ethical questions of What? Who? Where? How? Why?

### **Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) in View of Medical Issues and Nutrition**

#### **Food and Nutrition**

Extremism: fake fruits and food with very viable economic benefits but bereft of nutritional value and endangering human life, and health are prevalent everywhere. GMOs are in no doubt motivated and driven strongly by economic gains than meeting human nutritional needs. Synthetic fruits and foods are fast displacing and negating the health and medical benefits of natural fruits and food with the overriding force of science and technology.



## **Professional Ethics and Robotics**

Professional ethics

Unemployment and global job crisis

Disability and Robo-ethics

### **Other Issues:**

In recent years explosion of new moral problems have become replete. The contemporary ethics engage with moral problems in relation to varying modern issues which include but not limited to the following ethical perspectives on democracy and political clashes, sexuality and gender, status of refugees, immigrants and borders, safe spaces, race, war, terrorism, international relations, rights and moral status, violence and civil disobedience.

The list of contemporary ethical issues is endless and cannot be exhausted here in this study. A few is outlined and highlighted or briefly discussed as guides to help students or learners discover more on a day-to-day life experience.

### **A. Social Ethical Issues: Social Values and Social Vices**

Social ethical issues include the ethical conducts and misconducts that border around the society and bother the ethical minds of every society. Such ethical issues are grouped under social values and social vices. Social values are reflected in ethical conducts while social vices are seen in moral misconducts or unethical behaviours.

### **Ethical Conduct and Misconduct**

Any action or behaviour which contravenes or does not reflect any of the ethical values are adjudged misconduct while actions in consonance with the ethical values are deemed good conducts. This can now be applied in any segment or sector of the society: at home, school, church or mosque, offices or place of work, marketplace and in relation to the individual's attitude towards the environment, food, health matters, education and the likes. For example, if someone fights at home or in school, it contravenes the ethical principles of love, forgiveness, patience and peace and so adjudged misconduct.

Apart from being a code of conduct which moderates and modulates human actions, Ethics deals with human actions or conducts or behaviours to determine whether they be right or wrong. It

assesses as well human intentions and choices for such actions if they are good or bad or worthwhile. It evaluates and judges human activities using the universal ethical value scale. It distinguishes between good and bad, better and best, worse and worst.

All ethical conducts and misconducts are exhibited within a given society and therefore, primarily known as social ethical conducts or misconducts. However, further classification for clarification could be made with particular attention to the immediate environment or place where the action took place for detailed reference.

This brings to light the segment or unit of the society where the conduct or misconduct was displayed for proper assessment, and so gets its name tag from there. In this regard, once an action takes place, the first set of ethical question that must be asked are: What was the action? Who performed the action? Where? When? Why?

Hence, if it is fight or violence that took place at home, it becomes domestic violence and if it took place in political arena, it becomes political violence. If a malpractice was discovered in the place of examination in school, it turns out to be examination malpractice and when it occurs in professional or electoral matters, it becomes professional or electoral malpractice or misconduct in relation to that profession and its ethical practice or code of conduct or the electoral act or guidelines. To this effect, conducts and misconducts can be classified to reflect the person or personality, place and field of practice public or private, professional or otherwise.

Hence, there could be professional conducts and misconducts, school or institutional conducts and misconducts, religious conducts and misconducts, political conducts and misconducts, medical and health conducts and misconducts, environmental conducts and misconducts, domestic or family conducts and misconducts, industrial conducts and misconducts, business conducts and misconducts, internet conducts and misconducts, diplomatic or international conducts and misconducts, and so on.

One must learn to keep to the ethical conduct of his or her profession or group in addition to the acquisition of the professional knowledge and skills. Such professional code of conduct must align with the universal ethical values, social and religious norms and cultural etiquette. Take respect for an instance: Respect, especially for seniority is one of the ethical values and social norms held so high among various professions, yet this must not be done at the detriment of the cultural etiquette of respect for elders within and without the profession. Collegiality is enjoyed

as support or solidarity among colleagues in a given profession but must not be taken too far against the ethical values of fairness and equity when it has to do with or concerns non-professional members of the society and their professional colleagues. If not, it will lead to favouritism or discrimination or partiality.

### **Examples of Ethical Conducts and Etiquette**

We give only a few examples and allow the students to discover and make more list from their day-to-day observation and experience of such conducts and etiquette in view of ethical values. Such good conducts can be displayed at home, school, place of work, market or business arena, or any part or unit of the society. They include such etiquette as:

1. Greeting or Salutation: Greeting of parents and elders. Exchange of greetings and pleasantries among colleagues irrespective of age at place of work or school.
2. Attitude of Gratitude: To say thank you for every favour or gift received.
3. Apology: Say sorry and apologise for every mistake made or offense committed.
4. Courtesy: Always say please, to seek for permission or for every request or favour sought for.
5. Personal and Environmental Hygiene: Keep the house or environment clean with good personal health care.
6. Speak the truth always
7. Always obey parents, elders, teachers and constituted authorities.
8. Do not be noisy and quarrelsome.
9. Learn to forgive and forbear one another.
10. Be generous and kind.
11. Be helpful and always ready to assist elders and others.
12. Do not sit while an elder is standing.
13. Do not talk while an elder is talking, allow the elder to speak first, then respond respectfully.
14. Do not make mockery of an elder or any person with physical, mental or spiritual challenge.
15. Do not mislead anyone seeking for direction to anywhere.
16. Do not dupe or defraud anyone using digital or analogue skills.
17. Do not be materialistic. Money is good but good name or good character is better than riches and more expensive than gold.
18. Be regular and always be punctual

19. Present and dutiful or studious, diligent, attentive and observant
20. Smart and hardworking.
21. Reliable
22. Patient and enduring
23. Tolerant
24. Peaceful
25. Selfless
26. Orderly and calm
27. Refined and respectful.
28. Humble and gentle.
29. Loyal

### **Examples of Ethical Misconduct**

Ethical misconduct is a product of poor value orientation. A relevant example is the challenge of misplaced priority. Misplaced priority is a product of misplaced value or value misplacement. This can lead to a barrage of ethical misconduct. Misplaced value can bring about doing the right thing at the wrong time or using scarce resources in a wrong manner. An example of this, is the act of spending on a project with less importance at the expense of a more important one. It can result in robbing Peter to pay Paul. This is the primary cause of misappropriation of fund or mismanagement of public funds. It is a wrong action that ultimately leads to a wrong choice. Wrong choice or poor decision making is a major ethical issue in both public and private management. What would you think, when you see a child who is supposed to be in school playing aimlessly on the field? How would you describe an undergraduate who decides to spend money meant for his school fees on clubbing, parties and gambling?

### **Other forms of ethical misconduct include but are not limited to the following:**

- 1) Fighting, occurrences of violence and war
- 2) Malpractice, cheating and rigging
- 3) Bribery, corruption and nepotism
- 4) Stealing, pilfering, tapping, robbery (armed or pen robbery), duping, defrauding, internet or digital fraud like yahoo-yahoo, gambling.
- 5) Killing, ritual killing, murder, manslaughter, attempted murder.

- 6) Suicide, attempted suicide.
- 7) Irresponsibility, blame game.
- 8) Indecent dressing.
- 9) Use of hard drugs or strong and dangerous substances.
- 10) Self-medication without proper medical laboratory test and medical prescription.
- 11) Poor eating habit, poor table manners, poor nutrition, poor lifestyle, sin against self otherwise facial or body defacing or deformation.
- 12) Organ marketing or sale of human parts.
- 13) Discrimination, ethnicity, racism and nepotism.
- 14) Intolerance and fanaticism.
- 15) Environmental pollution, poor domestic and industrial waste disposal or management, deforestation, indiscriminate bush burning, unregulated use of explosives and weapons of mass destruction.
- 16) The use of corrupt or foul languages: The use of abusive words or verbal assault is a gross misconduct that cuts across every segment of the society and civil culture.
- 17) Irregular and habitual lateness
- 18) Truancy and abscondment
- 19) Dull and lazy
- 20) Not reliable
- 21) Impatience and easily give up
- 22) Intolerant and bigot
- 23) Selfish
- 24) Disorderly and restless
- 25) Crude and rude
- 26) Proud and arrogant
- 27) Disloyal

**Some universal etiquette that must not be taken with disdain in the modern or contemporary world:**

1. Respect for elders
2. Regards for women
3. Careful use of words or choice of words at anytime, in anywhere

4. Truthfulness, do not tell lies
5. Do not be at the forefront of any protest.
6. No violence.
7. Be peaceful
8. Do not fight, always make room for reconciliation
9. Always greet
10. Be thankful, gratitude should be the attitude; be grateful for every favour or kindness received.
11. Have a controlled appetite
12. Have a religious connection to God in constant prayer and pious heart for humanity
13. Be a servant-leader
14. Be an early comer and not late comer
15. Do not take to alcoholism
16. No hard drugs
17. Keep clean, personal hygiene
18. Learn to cook and do house chores, keep the environment clean
19. Wash your face, brush your teeth and greet neighbours as your first morning duties
20. Learn and teach values or morals
21. Treat every religious leader or minister with respect
22. Life does not end here, constantly have eternity in view.

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## CHAPTER 11

### CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL ISSUES II – MORAL PRINCIPLES AND CONFLICTS

*O. Oke*

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter, contemporary ethical issues will be discussed. Such ethical issues that will be highlighted are divorce, polygamy, violence, abortion, corruption, poverty as well as wealth creation. But, before we go into this, it is very important to have knowledge of ethics for a better understanding of the subject matter under discussion.

In order to have a good understanding of the subject matter under discussion, it is important that we provide background information about what is meant by ethics itself before we go into our discussion on the contemporary ethical issues. Basically, ethics is concerned with the question of right and wrong in human behaviour, and why it is wrong to behave in certain ways and right to behave in certain other ways. Therefore, ethics can be said to mean a proper scrutiny of human actions to determine why such action is good or bad. It is the study of human actions to know if such action performed by an individual conforms to the acceptable norm of the society or not. It is an evaluation of action performed by an individual and how such action affects the people around him either negatively or positively. There are many issues in the contemporary society today that ethics plays an important role in determining whether those actions are in line with the expectations of the society or not. These contemporary ethical issues will be discussed in this chapter.

#### **Marriage**

Marriage as an institution has divine approval. The family which is the basic unit of the society is equally in God's scheme of things especially with His decision to create mankind (Male and Female). Marriage constitutes an essential step towards family formation. Under normal circumstances, person cannot have kinsmen unless in the context of family membership or descent from a common ancestors or ancestress. In many cultures of the world, celibacy was not allowed because such is conceived as a way of ending the clan or lineage of the affected person. For example, among the Yoruba people of Southwestern part of Nigeria, there can never be a successful and productive life until an individual marries and have children. Therefore, to many cultures, marriage is very important regardless of varying sociocultural practices associated with

it in various places. Even the coming together of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden as husband and wife as recorded in the Bible was not accidental. They were specifically instructed to be fruitful and multiply, till the earth, subdue the earth and have dominion. Before these instructions can be obeyed by 'man' marriage must have taken place. Christian marriage largely differs in nature from that of traditional system which are binding on those who enter the covenant. Marriage is believed to be instituted for the following reasons: companionship, guarding against lust and procreation. 'To accomplish these, husbands and wives have some responsibilities to discharge to ensure and sustain the sanctity of marriage: Forsaking all others for the sake of one's spouse, being faithful to each other, mutual sexual satisfaction, submission to each other. While the husband must express the following character towards his wife: love, patience, understanding, honour, support, lead and serve. Wives should also perform the following responsibilities to their husbands: should always express desire for her husband, living peacefully with him, allowing him to enjoy conjugal benefits, and submit to him.

Just like in traditional marriage, Christian marriage also gives room for courtship, of course, Mary was in courtship with Joseph before the miraculous birth of Jesus (Mt. 1:18-25). However, this period calls for self-discipline in order to avoid falling into the sin of fornication as the marriage bed is expected to be kept undefiled. Parental consent is equally important while payment of dowry, which is evidence of their support must be made. A major serious issue in Christian marriage is polygamy, which like some other ethical issues is a subject of controversy. While some Christian denominations allow it, others believe it is not Christianity. There are set out norms guiding the activities of all stakeholders in marriage institution. The setting up of these norms is expedient because anti-social behaviours have a universal human experience. The setting up of these norms therefore is to adjust claims, right the wrongs and prevent good relationship from being broken. As good as these marital norms are, some people have suffered serious setback due to various factors relating to this discussion. Institution of marriage that were held in high esteem in the past has been bedevilled with anti-social behaviours like adultery, online marriage, marriage by proxy, gay marriage and lesbianism. Even young men engage in contract marriage whereby the two partners reach an agreement that after certain years of marriage, each partner will go his or her separate way. Examples abound of men who claimed to be married to one wife and only to discover that they were polygamists after their deaths. This is one of the dangers inherent in placing much emphasis on monogamy. Apart from religious



factors in marriage, in this age of civilisation, one man versus one wife is common because of social problems that have always arisen from polygamy. It was a good alternative in the past because of the economic advantage it has then, the more children a man had, the better for him. Since the main occupation then was farming, a man benefited a lot from having a large family. Nevertheless, any discourse on polygamy will always be shrouded in controversy because of divergent views of people.

## **Divorce**

Divorce is the legal termination of marriage. It brings a marriage to an end thereby signifying that those who were previously husband and wife are no longer so. In most countries national and customary laws make provision for divorce. Marriage is a covenant –bond. A divine institution entered by means of a vow from two willing individuals. The sanctity of marriage is usually addressed at any marriage ceremony where the minister who is to join the couple together read out certain words to this effect: “Since marriage is a divine institution and we are asking God to join you as husband and wife, it is fitting and right that each of you should faithfully promise, before God to accept the sacred marriage covenant, according to the divinely ordained conditions imposed by Almighty God”. He continues, “Do you then (his name) faithfully promise and covenant with God in the presence of these witnesses to take (her name) to be your lawfully wife, to cleave to her until death, to love, to cherish her, to honour her and provide for her? (He answers)”. He asks further, “Do you (her name) faithfully promise and covenant with God, in the presence of these witnesses to take (his name) to be your lawful wedded husband for the remainder of your natural life, and as God has ordained, to submit yourself unto him as unto God”. With this pronouncement made by the two parties in marriage, divorce should not be the solution when one is faced with problem.

Since marriage is bound by a vow or covenant, God requires that will keep our vows. One who takes his marriage vow lightly either does not grasp or does not really mean what he says. It is quite unfortunate today, that divorce has taken the centre stage of marriage institution. This will take us to various factors that are responsible for divorce. They are: Economic hardship on the bread winner, misunderstanding, incompatibility, extra marital affairs and interference from third parties. Leadership tussle, secret sin that was covered and is now exposed, absence of love, or childlessness. Today, divorce rate is high and this makes it difficult to maintain only a

perspective in scholarship because as we had noted earlier, people have different views about the matter. Divorce whether justifiable or not has negative implications on the individuals concerned and the society at large. Some of the consequences of divorce are broken homes, psychological trauma, and loss of integrity, poor children upbringing / parental care, which often leads to many social evils.

In conclusion, the fact cannot be denied that in all religions of the world divorce is not encouraged as it is contrary to God's plan and that it cannot in any way bring good result. Therefore, reconciliation as well as forgiveness is the best alternative to a ruptured relationship. Meanwhile, those who have the gift of celibacy are encouraged to remain unmarried to avoid the unavoidable challenges they will encounter in marriage. Also, it is important for marriage partners to be conscious of the factors that impel divorce and strive to prevent them as humanly possible in their families while church leaders are encouraged to show more commitment in ensuring that Christian homes are ideal homes.

## **Violence**

This shall be discussed in relation to war. There have always been cases of war in different parts of the world and where there seems to be peace, war is somehow anticipated. This is the reason why governments of different nations always earmark a large proportion of their yearly budget for defence. Also, there are cases of inter and intra ethnic clash, there is much hostility among friends, political thuggery is almost institutionalised in Nigeria. In fact, the expected peace in society has not been attained. It is applicable to know what the attitude of different religious adherents towards war and violence. Jesus died on the cross unresisting and unprotest even when he could do so. In spite of this obvious example, which encourages us to choose peace instead of war, it cannot be concluded that involvement in war or violence is wholly evil as there are some passages and instances that support such. There are some responses to war: Thorough going militarism-willingness to fight anywhere, at any time and for any cause, selective militarism willingness to fight only when one is convinced that the cause is just, thorough going pacifism unwillingness to fight anywhere, at any time and for any cause, selective pacifism-unwillingness to fight when one is convinced that the cause is not just.

## **The Just War**

It is believed that some wars and violent acts are inevitable because of man's nature. However, such wars are expected to be just and for any war to be just it must meet the following conditions:

1. It must be waged in defence of vital goods of a state that have been violated by another state.
2. The means employed must be lawful
3. Means employed must not cause more evil than is necessitated by this purpose
4. The intention of the defender must not go beyond the defence and restoration of violated right.
5. The war must be last resort after all legitimate options have been exhausted and the injustice is intolerable.
6. It must be fought under a legitimate authority.

## **Pacifism**

As earlier mentioned, pacifism denotes rejection of war. There are many pacifist positions as the term covers all those who for various reasons believe that one must not take part in war for whatever reason. Participating in war by killing the opponents or enabling them to be killed is a crime against human existence. Some of the positions are as follows:

1. Some religious adherents hold that despite all social problems, the teachings of religious leaders must be literally obeyed in the world and that this is an essential element. Therefore, the command to love enemies and not to retaliate when attacked must be followed.
2. Another group on their part do not recognize civil authority as they liken it to evil. Thus, they advocate pacifism because they are opposed to the right of the state to order them to engage in war. It is for this reason that they are not in the armed forces and neither do they sing the National Anthem.
3. Another group holds that non-violence is the most effective strategy for achieving human rights and resolution of conflicts.
4. There are Christians who utterly detest war since they believe that it brings them terrible revulsion and repent them to think any goodwill towards man after such volatile experience of horror. For this reason, they repudiate war in its entirety.

5. As can be deduced from the foregoing, whether or not Christians should be involved in war and violence is a subject of debate. In some cases, the prevailing circumstances will determine which step is appropriate to take.

## **Abortion**

Abortion is the deliberate causing of the death of a foetus either by directly killing it or by causing its expulsion from the womb before it is viable i.e. before it is capable of surviving outside its mother's womb. Abortion can equally occur spontaneously in form of miscarriage. This could be brought about by several factors such as disease, emotional trauma, genetic or biological incompatibility of mother and foetus.

Occasionally, a foetus dies in the uterus, and it is expelled. But abortion which is directly carried out is referred to as induced abortion, which can be performed for a number of reasons: to prevent pregnancy that has resulted from rape or incest from manifesting or the woman in question may be suffering from a disease that endangers her life or the baby's. It can also be lack of financial strength to care for a baby, social or population control measures.

The abortion debate is philosophical, social, religious and theological. A major question that is yet to be convincingly answered in respect to this issue and which has generated much controversy is 'when does life begin'? According to some people life does not begin until the embryo has developed to the stage of foetus i.e. When it has developed into having features like a person, which is usually after the third month. Others hold that when the embryo has been conceived, it immediately becomes a living human being hence any attempt to wilfully terminates its life is tantamount to mother. There are other people who hold that the foetus is not a person until it has drawn its first breath of life which is at birth.

## **Consequences of Abortion**

Abortion can seriously damage a mother's womb. She can be rendered incapable of having children or become liable to future miscarriages. On the part of fathers, they are to be overwhelmed by grief and guilt in relation to their action and to pay respect for the life that was abruptly taken. Doctors who are involved in abortion become executioners rather than physicians. If abortion is permitted in a country, it could become a precedent for the elimination of other persons or groups that are regarded as a burden on the society.

While many conservatives feel that abortion must for no reason be justified, other liberals think it can sometimes, be justified as it is the option with the minimal consequence. For example, when a mother's life is seriously at risk, some feels the safest option is to abort the baby in order to save the mother's life. Some others further argue that in the occurrence of an unpleasant situation like rape or incest resorting to abortion is justifiable. However, it needs to be recommended that adherents of religion must oppose abortion for trivial reasons. For instance, a baby's life must not be eliminated because it sex does not align with the parent preference or the baseless excuse that the baby will interfere with the parent's career if birthed at an inconvenient time.

## **Corruption**

Corruption is defined as wrongdoing by those in a special position of trust. This term is commonly applied to self-benefiting conduct by public officials and others dedicated to public service. It can also be understood as immorality manifesting in thoughts, behaviours, actions, practices and relationships. Corruption includes also abuse of office, derivation of undue gains and benefits, false declaration, evasion, underpayment, aiding and abetting of any kind to the detriment of another person.

A major form of corruption in Nigeria and other parts of the world is bribery. That is why the two terms 'bribery and corruption' are often discussed together. A bribe is money, property or privilege offered in order to entice another party into providing something that the giver wants. People in positions of authority habitually demand bribe before they render services to applicants or customers. Even, those who receive salaries for the work they are employed to do, may refuse to perform their duties until they are offered bribe by those they are paid to serve. In the society, bribery is so prevalent that it is almost impossible for people to go about their businesses or get what they need without resorting to it. There is often the threat of intimidation or punishment for those who refuse to compromise. Bribery operates at two levels: When a person is forced to give a bribe in order to gain something, which he or she is entitled to and when an individual voluntarily gives a bribe to obtain something to which he has no legal entitlement.

Corruption manifests in politics in form of electoral malpractices, which is characterized by vices Such as rigging, intimidation of voters, destruction of lives and property, collusion between Politicians and security agents, buying of votes with money as well as\_ assassination of opponents Corruption is equally prevalent in economic sector, and this has adversely affected the

economy of Nigeria. The existence of EFCC and ICPC is an indication to the fact that there is much corruption in the country. In the academic circle, there are always cases of leakage of examination questions, plagiarism, extortion, sexual harassment, inflation or deflation of marks for personal gains and admission fraud. The activities of security agents and other law enforcement agents are discussing in respect of corruption.

Religious corruption in Nigeria is very shocking. Nigerians are outwardly very religious as religion dominates every aspect of the society. Places of worship are springing up every day, but all these have not in any way exterminated the vices of corruption because many religious leaders are corrupt. Religion has become an avenue to make money. Though salvation is free, miracle seems too expensive. Consequently, things are sold to unsuspecting members who desperately desire miracle. What about the creation of fake of miracles by ‘ministers of God’? The examples of these fraudulent practices and crimes committed by religious people-leaders and followers abound. Preaching a sermon to please some people or group of individuals is nothing but a manifestation of corruption. The list of forms of corruption is long, however, our concern in this section is to understand it from a Christian standpoint. Evil is an essential element in all forms of corruption. Corrupt people are dominated by selfishness rather than God. In other words, the act is ungodly and those who engage in it are locked into injustice and their eyes have become shrewd to wisdom and justice. Consequently, their personalities are degraded because they are not able to resist the temptation. Moreover, such people cannot expect to be in God’s favour as corruption is a sin that separates a man or a woman from God. Therefore, they must vow to themselves never to engage in corruption. To resort to it is to place one among the ungodly and to damage or even destroy one’s relationship with God.

## **Wealth**

In the modern world, people live in money-based economies, and they need money in order to Purchase the essentials of life. Money or wealth can be acquired in number of ways acceptable Such as Stealing, receiving bribes and gambling as well as unacceptable methods namely, reward for work done, gift or inheritance and borrowing/ lending with interest. In the two popular religious books, honest work is a primary way of acquiring money needed to support oneself and one’s family. From the foregoing, one can see that money or wealth is important in human endeavour. However, the attitude of individuals to it must be godly. The Scriptures teach that

money or possession should not be allowed to dominate their lives, and that wealth should be secondary to the love for God and neighbours.

None of the known religious leaders condemned money. They only warned against wrong use of it, excessive love for it and making it one's master. For example, the Bible and the Quran are replete with passages that say whatever a man has does not belong to him in an absolute sense but as a trust from God. The two scriptures, therefore, require followers to spend their money in the following ways.

**Support for the work of God.** This should be marked by generosity and cheerfulness. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or by compulsion.

**Upkeep of the family.** Paul taught that a man who does not provide for his family denies the faith and is worse than an infidel (1 Tim. 5:8) This suggests personal, and family expenditure must be carefully budgeted and managed.

**Maintenance of central and local governments.** They have a duty to contribute to the punning government in terms of paying all legitimate levies. Jesus and Peter demonstrated this in Matt. 17: 24-27; and when he (Jesus) was asked whether it was lawful to pay taxes to Ceaser or not, he affirmed that it was a duty to do so. Paul's teachings about obedience to constituted authority include payment of taxes (Rom. 13:1-7).

**Help those in need.** They are expected to give alms, but this must be done secretly. This is mandatory as there will always be poor people in the world. Jesus said that on the day of judgement, those who in this life had given themselves to and their resources to help the poor would enjoy eternal life while those had not done so would have a different experience. Generosity on the part of different religious adherents should be extended to people of other cultures and religions

## **Poverty**

Poverty is a social condition in which material resources are lacking. It is a state in which an individual or social group lacks material resources that are necessary for subsistence. Absolute poverty is measured in terms of the basic needs of people and the resources that are available to satisfy those needs. Measures of absolute poverty deal with the amount and quality of food,

water, clothing, shelter, health, security among others. All these are seen as necessities that make a meaningful life. These basic needs differ from one society to another and from one person to the other.

Relative poverty is measured by comparing the material resources of one person or one group with those of another person or group. It is the evaluation of the difference in levels of material resources between two persons or groups. A major problem with this concept is that there are no acceptable standards of life. Subjective poverty is a situation in which individuals or groups feel that they are poor, when they measure themselves against the standards of the day. In this case, they may see themselves as poor people, but their standards of living may not be far better than those who are actually. Also, individuals or groups may be adjudged to be poor according to the standard of the majority.

Factors such as low salaries, wages and allowances, unemployment, single parenthood, war, bad economic policy among others are responsible for poverty. Poverty is a serious religious issue and there are divergent opinions about what poverty is or not is not. While some see as lacking material possessions, others feel poverty could be physical or spiritual .as noted in the discussion of wealth. There will always be poor people and it is expected of those who have to take care of those who do not have. However, a major problem is that God's plans to believers is to have them free from sickness and material poverty. However, for God's promise in Genesis chapter three to be made manifest in the lives of the believers, they are often admonished to operate and live within some principles. It further required of them to think and confess wealth in order to bring operation forces or angel of wealth.

To some religious adherents, poverty is a virtue because they believe that wealth is capable of separating believers from God. This notion is referred to as theodicy of disprivilege or theodicy of escape which is a rationalisation or a justification for the disprivilege economic and social status, viewing it as an advantage for the preservation of salvation. The parables of the rich man and Lazarus, rich fool and rich young ruler are often misinterpreted to justify poverty and something desirable. To be objective, the bible does not in any way condemn wealth adherents are only warned against excessive love for money so that they would not lose their salvation.

Still on the spiritual perspective of poverty, being poor or wealthy is understood as a spiritual matter. Thus, one who is rich in spiritual things may be poor in physical sense vice versa .The



problem that is associated with this is how spiritual poverty or wealth can be measured in the real sense? It is possible for one to materially and spiritually blessed and on the other hand it is possible to be poor at both ends, it is a difficult dilemma to resolve. Although, some worshippers have twisted the part of the bible which pronounces blessedness on the poor in spirit to buttress their poverty, other bible scholars have repeatedly explained that the poverty referred to in the above scripture refers to humility and not to physical lack. This verse like many others in the bible are often misinterpreted by religious fanatics to exploit unsuspecting worshippers, who give unreservedly and thus, continue to wallow deep in penury.

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**CHAPTER 12**  
**METHODS AND CHALLENGES OF INCULCATING MORALITY, ETHICS AND**  
**ETIQUETTE IN PRACTICAL LIFE**

*J. K. Ayantayo*

**Introduction**

For emphasis, we have established the fact that Morality, Ethics and Etiquette serve the same purpose. We should bear in mind that they directly or indirectly have religious roots, especially in Africa where everything is expressed religiously as earlier mentioned in our previous discussion. That is, they offer frameworks for directing conduct, encouraging moral growth, and advancing the general welfare in a variety of institutional, social, and cultural situations. Regarding their nature, it is important to note that ethics and morality are normative while etiquette is not normative but is socially conditioned because it provides a variety of functions. Most notable among these function, is it capacity to encourage people and groups of individuals to behave properly and responsively. In order words, the three are like a football field with many players each targeting to score a goal through a goal post at one time or the other. For this reason, three is a significant numeric method for the inculcating these lessons.

**Agents of Inculcating Morality, Ethics and Etiquette**

By agents, we mean those under their position in society are intrinsically responsible for inculcating religious ethical values. The fact is that man unaided by one way or the other or for one reason or the other may not adhere to the ethics of religion. Experiences have shown that every man has the tendency to be selfish in deeds and, unless such egocentric sense is curbed by a means of social control, there would be conflicts of interest among members of society. At times, when one intends to do good or knows that it is good to do good, one may still go ahead to do bad. Doing one's wish in most cases is egocentric and tends to ignore or render insignificant the interest of others.

**Religious Agents**

Religious agents refer to religious leaders who are the custodians of the nitty gritty of religious beliefs being the ones their followers look unto while engaging in religious activities. They cut across the three major religions in Nigeria. From the angle of traditional religion, they include magic and medicine men and women, priests and priestesses, diviners, and seers. From the

Christian perspective, they include clergy, pastors or reverend (male and female), prophets and prophetesses, evangelists, deacons and deaconesses, elders, Sunday school teachers, juvenile class teachers, Churchwardens, Bible class teachers, leaders of Christian societies, unions and church associations. Other agents include Christian education centres, such as seminaries, theological institutions, mission schools, monasteries, and convents. For Islam, we have Islamic jurists, Imam, Alfa, Islamic leaders and chieftains, the Mosque, Islamic education centres, and Islamic social organizations. In Nigeria, with the adoption of the Sharia legal system, especially in the northern part of the country, Islamic jurists and judges are legal agents of articulating Islamic ethics.

## **Methods**

### **1. Education and Sermons**

Teaching religious moral precepts is one of the roles of religious leaders at all levels. They accomplish this through lectures, debates, scriptural studies, sermons, and preaching. The sole purpose of churches and mosques is to impart moral values that are ingrained in all major religions and have an impact on all facets of human existence. In other words, the purpose of all religious practices, including praise and worship, giving thanks, and general liturgical activities, is to emphasise the significance of all ethical ideals, which, as was previously noted, include do's acts.

In this vein, Amba Oduyoye argues that Christian liturgy is a catalyst for a revolution in interpersonal relationships. For instance, she thinks that in Nigeria, morally significant positive social relationships can be fostered through the creation of a particular kind of Christian liturgy that takes the form of powerful prayers. She creates the morally charged prayers listed below:

May every citizen of Nigeria have equality of rights, obligations and opportunities before the law! Amen. May human dignity be maintained and enhanced. Amen. May all human exploitation be prevented? (Amen)! May the courts be independent. Amen. May the courts be impartial. Amen. May the integrity and accessibility of the courts of law be secured and maintained. Amen. May the God whose hands can reach the depths of all our misery pull this country up. Amen.

Similar to this, Mala contends that *Tawba*, an Islamic liturgy meaning repentance, is a valuable instrument for a moral reawakening in Nigeria. He says this while appropriating the part that the Muslim community and mosque should play in advancing the ethical revolution that Shagari's reign started. He emphasises how important it is for Muslims in Nigeria to recognise their moral failings or gaps in their moral development and to repent of them.

Because of the aforementioned, religious institutions are excellent in imparting moral values. Religious principles were traditionally imparted through songs, myths, tales, and—above all—night-time stories. In Africa, proverbs are a significant teaching tool for traditional religious values. They are said casually in daily linguistic interactions. They come from human interactions, natural phenomena, and observation.

Olatunji notes that Yoruba proverbs function as a social character, praising what the society views as virtues and denouncing bad practices, hence appropriating the significance of proverbs in teaching morals. Proverbs serve as examples of several characteristics, including diligence, tact, and respect for commitments made.

Male and female elders enjoyed gathering small children in front of their huts to tell stories that imparted moral values to them in traditional African civilisations. These songs, which touch on every facet of human activity, are intended to impart traditional morals. Olatunji goes on to remark on the social customs of Yoruba society as well as their moral and theological ramifications, adding that the stories are entertaining. Arriving as they do after the workday; they offer a chance for corporate life.

## **2. Persuasion**

All things considered, teaching religious ethics entails persuasion, illustration, and referencing numerous instances of both historical and contemporary religious customs, precepts, and practices. It is related to talking some people out of doing things they shouldn't be doing. At times, the education is done with an emphasis on repercussions and possible consequences, both negative and positive, for good and poor actions. Concerning eschatological topics like salvation, forgiveness, repentance, the afterlife, death, judgement, and resurrection, persuasion is always done. Put another way, the instruction serves as both a prerequisite for reaching a good goal and an encouragement for good deeds that will benefit one here on earth. These kinds of instances give the idea that actions have consequences, both now and in the future. Essentially, the goal of

all moral instruction within religious communities is to force followers of the faith to uphold the moral standards that are ingrained in their respective faiths.

### **3. Religious Schools and Institutions**

A major component of the curriculum at many religiously affiliated schools and other educational establishments is moral and ethical education. In addition to offering academic instruction, these schools incorporate religious teachings that emphasise the value of moral behaviour, integrity, respect, and accountability.

### **4. Praise and Disgrace**

Praise is one strategy used to promote good deeds in both religious and nonreligious contexts, according to one's experience from Nigeria. First and foremost, praise is given to someone for doing what is expected of them—that is, for following the do's course of action. This is done to acknowledge their accomplishment and express gratitude for their good deeds. The compliments could be expressed aloud and conveyed using phrases like “Thank you”, “Good of you”, and “You have done well”. The individual is highly esteemed, revered, respected, and appreciated. Such a deserving person might be assigned to a prominent religious role in religious circles, which entails greater accountability and expectations. Religious tradition preserves and honours the names of those who have done good. Their nice deeds continue to bring them memories even now.

There are numerous prophets in Islam, including Muhammad, Adam, Idris, Noah, and 'Isa, to name a few. In a similar line, several Christians received recognition for their exceptional actions that were cloaked in religious virtue. Among these, David, Moses, Peter, and Paul are known to us. These people are recognised as having followed God's instruction. Also, according to the Bible, "Whoever fears the Lord is to be exalted" (Prov. 31: 30). In summary, man's labours are praiseworthy; Proverbs 31: 31. In this context, work refers to good deeds.

In a traditional religious setting, a man is commended through Oriki, a Yoruba praise poem that illustrates his or her good acts, if it is determined that he is of excellent character or has behaved well by upholding ethical values. The Oriki is a tool designed to examine moral attributes such as integrity, tact, bravery, perseverance, and responsibility that are innate in each human. On the other hand, anyone discovered to be involved in unethical behaviour would face shame. Depending on how serious the act was, the shame may be in plain sight or behind closed doors.

The kind of disgrace meted out to such a person may also depend on the disposition and peculiarities of those tasked with rendering judgment on the behaviour so reproached.

Religious authorities who are deemed morally deficient, such as an imam or a pastor, may be demoted or degraded. They might also ask them to come before a disciplinary committee, which would put them in the public eye or the corner. They might occasionally be moved to a distant location or retire early. Members of a religious organisation who are determined to have acted immorally may get the same punishment or one very comparable to it.

The essence of this ridicule is to discourage others from committing the same error that the one who is being reproached committed. Despite being a disciplinary approach, it tends to indirectly discourage others from acting unethically. It serves as a technique for instilling moral principles in people. In many religious circles, the strategy has yielded the desired results to some extent.

## **5. Reward and Punishment**

A reward is something that is presented in appreciation for a good deed. Religious morality is always taught with a focus on reward and punishment. Rewarding adherence to religious ethical principles and penalising transgressions exist. Every religion that is being examined emphasises rewards and punishments for moral issues.

The Yoruba believe that whatever you sow, you will reap. This idea of reward and retribution is embodied in what is known as the law of cause and effect, or law of karma. For instance, the Yoruba say *Oore ni oore n woo to*, which means that goodness travels along the path of goodness or that goodness accompanies goodness. *Ohun a se la a gba* says another; *Anika ko ni gbe'pa, ko wu efo*, which means that we will be compensated according to our measure; nobody plants groundnuts and harvests vegetables in its stead. These adages are meant to demonstrate that every human activity has an inherent nature that dictates its outcome.

In Islam, the Qur'an spells out rewards awaiting every moral act in this manner: And of a surety to all will your Lord pays back recompense of his deeds (11: 110), He rewards those who avoid great and small sins 5: 31 – 32, Paradise is for those who believe and do good works 2: 82, A male or a female doer of good shall enter paradise 4: 124, Best reward for doers of good 12: 57, Full reward is for the righteous (Surah78: 31 – 37), In the long run, evil will be the end of those who do evil 30: 10, Wrong is for he who does wrong 4: 123, But those who have earned evil will have a reward of like evil 10: 27.

Christianity also emphasises the importance of rewards for good deeds and penalties for negative deeds. The phrase "Behold, I am coming soon, my rewards are with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done" (Revelation 22:12) appears to sum up reward best in the book of Romans. According to the verse above, every virtuous deed yields some benefit, albeit a variable amount of benefit. It is crucial to remember that one's labour dictates the kind of recompense one receives (Prov. 12: 14).

Here, the phrase "work of one's hand" alludes to human activities (Jer. 7: 10). Another crucial Christian lesson regarding reward is that it is unavoidable as God undoubtedly rewards everyone. Psalm 62:12 states that the benefits may be ethereal or substantial. According to Scripture, prosperity is the lot of the obedient and good Christians (Prov. 13: 21). This is further supported by the sermon on the mountain, which enumerates the following benefits for being meek, merciful, having a pure heart, and making peace.

## **6. Community Programs and Outreach**

Religious organisations frequently organise lectures, workshops, and community programmes that encourage moral behaviour and address ethical concerns. These programmes can promote a feeling of moral responsibility among the congregation, married couples, and youths, among other groups.

## **7. Counselling and Support Services**

Religious institutions provide counselling services to assist people in resolving moral and personal conflicts. These services frequently involve advice on moral decision-making, promotion of integrity, and adherence to moral principles.

## **8. Role Models and Leadership**

Leaders in the religious community and well-known individuals within the community frequently act as role models, demonstrating moral and ethical behaviour. Their behaviour reinforces the organisation's ideas and ideals by setting a concrete example that others can follow.

## **9. Cultural and Social Norms**

Religious institutions have a big impact on social and cultural standards in Nigeria. They uphold moral and ethical norms by fostering a feeling of community and shared ideals through rituals, ceremonies, and regular religious practices.

## **10. Advocacy and Social Justice**

Numerous religious institutions advocate for social justice and encourage moral behaviour in politics and public life. They urge their followers to act justly and ethically in both their personal and professional lives by speaking out against corruption, injustice, and other societal evils.

### **Secular Agents**

These agents are described as secular because they are non-spiritual, but they play crucial roles in inculcating morality, ethics, and etiquette. They operate across different sectors of society, contributing to the formation of moral values and ethical behaviours among individuals. They include:

**Family:** Socialisation is facilitated by the family. Through direct instruction and behaviour modelling, they are the ones who teach youngsters about appropriate behaviours, values, and standards of honesty, respect, responsibility, and social etiquette.

**Educational Institutions:** The moral and ethical frameworks of youth are greatly influenced by schools and colleges. Educational establishments offer structured guidance on morals and ethics through courses including social studies, civic education, and religious studies.

**Religious Organisations:** Religious organisation has a significant impact on ethics and morality. Based on their respective religious ideologies, churches, mosques, and other places of worship impart moral principles and ethical behaviour. Religious leaders, sermons, scriptures, and group activities all help followers of a religion to be more morally and ethically upright.

**Community Leaders and Elders:** Elders, community heads, and traditional leaders are highly esteemed in many Nigerian communities and have the power to set moral and ethical standards for behaviour. Applying long-standing traditions and conventions helps them in decision-making, conflict resolution, and the upkeep of social norms.



**Media:** The public's opinions of morality and ethics are greatly influenced by the media, which includes radio, newspapers, social media, and television. The media disseminates ideas and information that influence cultural norms and values through conversations, entertainment shows, documentaries, and news.

**Government and Legal System:** Through the creation and implementation of laws and regulations, the government and its institutions support moral behaviour. Policies, anti-corruption initiatives, and civic education initiatives support moral behaviour and responsibility. By resolving infractions and guaranteeing justice, the judicial system preserves these ideals.

**Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs):** Numerous non-governmental organisations and civil society groups fervently foster moral principles and ethical conduct via community initiatives, education, and advocacy. These groups frequently concentrate on social justice, environmental conservation, gender equality, and human rights.

**Peers:** Peer groups are essential in forming moral and ethical norms, especially for teenagers and young adults. Colleagues and friends have an impact on one another's views, values, and actions, which frequently reinforces societal norms and expectations.

### **Challenges of Inculcating Morality, Ethics, and Etiquette in Nigeria**

To be candid, inculcating morality, ethics, and etiquette in Nigeria is not easy because some significant challenges make the task difficult. A few of them are listed below:

#### **1. Cultural Diversity and Ethnic Differences**

Considering that morality, ethics, and manners are inherently cultural and relative. Having the best possible outcomes concerning the system for instilling morality, ethics, and manners is challenging. Given that Nigeria is a cosmopolitan country with over 250 ethnic groups, each with its customs, values, and standards, this is obvious. As a result of this variability, it might be difficult to develop a single set of moral and ethical principles that apply to all cultural situations. Divergent views about what ethical behaviour is might result from differences in traditional beliefs and practices.

#### **2. Economic Inequality and Poverty**

Nigeria is deeply entangled in both economic injustice and widespread poverty, both of which obstruct attempts to advance morals and ethics. This is because a hungry guy will do anything to

survive, including stealing and possibly engaging in armed robberies, which violates morality, ethics, and etiquette in society. Naturally, people may turn to unethical actions like stealing, fraud, or corruption as a means of surviving when their basic requirements are not supplied. Aside from weakening social cohesiveness and trust, which are critical for promoting moral societies, economic challenges also tend to diminish these qualities.

### **3. Corruption**

Despite the efforts of several commissions, including the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), the Money Laundering Act of 1995, the Money Laundering (Prohibition) Act of 2004, the Advance Fee Fraud and Other Fraud Related Offences Act of 1995, the Failed Banks (Recovery of Debts) and Financial Malpractices in Banks Act of 1994, the Banks and Other Financial Institutions Act of 1991, and the Miscellaneous Offences Act, corruption remains a major problem in Nigeria. The nation's fabric is being severely weakened by corruption, which has an impact on all spheres of society including politics, business, and even religious institutions. It is almost impossible to instil values of integrity, honesty, and accountability in a setting where unethical activity is normalised and accepted due to the prevalence of corruption.

### **4. Weak Educational Systems**

Even though schools are essential for teaching morality and ethics, many Nigerian schools struggle with issues like low financing, outdated facilities, and underqualified teachers. These problems directly and indirectly weaken schools' capacity to act as positive role models for children and impede the effective teaching of ethics and values.

### **5. Influence of Media and Technology**

The spread of social media in Nigeria has had a detrimental impact on the teaching of morality, ethics, and manners in the absence of sufficient control measures. This can be proved with the legalisation of “Yahooism” among Nigerian youth. Social media platforms are often meant to be platforms for the exchange of positive ideas, but in many situations, they have exposed users to harmful effects including false information, cyberbullying, and violent content. The unregulated nature of some media content may make it harder to try to preserve ethical norms.

## **6. Erosion of Traditional Values**

In many parts of Nigeria, the rapid modernisation and urbanisation of the country have resulted in the decline of traditional values and community lifestyles. This change may lessen the power of established authority and social standards, which have traditionally served to uphold moral conduct.

## **7. Political Instability and Violence**

In many parts of Nigeria, the rapid modernisation and urbanisation of the country have resulted in the decline of traditional values and community lifestyles. This change may lessen the power of established authority and social standards, which have traditionally served to uphold moral conduct.

## **8. Youth Unemployment and Idleness**

The rates of underemployment and unemployment are high for both adults and young people. An irrational electricity supply has caused numerous industries to collapse, which has resulted in job losses. Given this circumstance, it is simple to conclude that high rates of youth underemployment and unemployment might cause young people to become frustrated and disillusioned. Some young people may turn to unethical behaviours like internet fraud (often referred to as "Yahoo Yahoo") and other criminal behaviours if they don't receive positive involvement and opportunity.

## **9. Inconsistent Role Models**

The actions of famous personalities that disregard morality, manners, and societal ethics, such as politicians, celebrities, and even religious leaders have further resulted in the abasement of ethical standards. Normally, though, the public figures would have served as role models for children and adults to follow. However, the opposite is true. It conveys a message that unethical activity is acceptable when these figures act unethically without suffering the repercussions. This makes attempts to inculcate moral and ethical ideals much more difficult.

## **10. Lack of Effective Legal Enforcement**

As noted, earlier Nigeria has laws and rules designed to encourage moral behaviour, but they are frequently poorly or inconsistently enforced. A culture of impunity may result from this

ineffective legal enforcement, undermining attempts to maintain moral principles and responsibility.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the aforementioned, it can be inferred that instilling morality, ethics, and manners necessitates a multifaceted strategy including several agents and techniques. The underlying structures of the family and the educational system are supported by the community, the media, and the workplace. To be effective, methods need to be varied and should include critical discussion, experience learning, direct instruction, and modelling. The procedure must overcome several obstacles, such as cultural disparities, the effects of technology, and the complexity of contemporary ethical dilemmas. To overcome these obstacles, one must be persistent, flexible, and dedicated to creating cultures that respect and uphold moral behaviour and social customs.

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