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6 **Abstract**
7 Religion is as old as man itself; it entrenches the totality of man to keep the tenets and
8 teaches men to live at peace with one another and disassociate with corruption and greed.
9 This research work argues that religion can be used for peace and also be used for selfish
10 interest. The paper revealed that, the prominence of religious education will instill values and
11 high morals on the citizenry to bring about expected sustainable development. The principal
12 religions recognised in Nigeria are Islam, Christianity, and African Traditional Religion. Each
13 of these has deep roles to play in enhancing peace, and sustainable development. It concludes
14 that, the role of religious education to peace, security and sustainable development in Nigeria
15 cannot be over emphasized. The Federal Government of Nigeria, down to the local government
16 owes it a duty to re-introduce the teaching and learning of religious education in Nigerian
17 schools and make it compulsory for all students. However, religious sentiments should be
18 stamped out and proper tenets of religions should be taught and practiced. The paper
19 therefore recommends that, religion as a subject should be made compulsory for students at
20 all levels of the educational system right from the primary up to the tertiary level. Cleric,
21 Imam, and traditionalist should uphold the tenet and teach moral values in their respective
22 places of worship, the non-Governmental organizations should organised symposium,
23 workshop and create awareness in upholding religious morals in the society among others.

25 ***Index terms***— peace, nigeria, religious, education.

1 Introduction

igeria is one of the most populous nation in the whole world, is situated on the west coast of sub-Saharan Africa, with the largest population of any African nation with total population of about 188,462,640 million people. Composed of multiple ethnic groups, cultures and languages which result to intermixing of religious groups. The Hausa-Fulani and Kanuri ethnic groups dominate the predominantly Muslim northern states. Significantly numbers of Christians also reside in the north, and Christians and Muslim reside in about equal numbers in the Middle Belt, the Federal Capital Territory, and the southwestern states, were Yoruba ethnic group predominates. While most Yoruba's are either Christians or Muslim, some primarily adhere to traditional beliefs. The land is naturally blessed with good weather, comfortable land couple with mineral resources. This made Nigeria to be one of the major oil producing nations of the world-whose quality of oil is rate among the best. (Esan, 2013), rightly claim that the belief of system of a people influences the way they think, feel and perceive things in relation to people of other religions and culture. Violence in different form such as ethnic, religion, cultural and socio-political issues had repeatedly weighed-down the harmonious relationship and as negatively affect the country with unpalatable situation manifest in poverty, joblessness, low productivity, low income and poor infrastructural facilities. In 1979, the Federal Government in an attempt to resolve, promote unity among the various religious ethnic groups in Nigeria, established the National Youth Services Corps (N.Y.S.C.) and some Federal Institutions to ensure cohesion among its religious ethnic groups. Despite these various attempts by the government, not

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43 much has been achieved. In view of this, this paper examines the role of religious education as a tools in solving
44 religious crisis.

45 2 II.

46 3 Conceptual Clarification

47 For the purpose of clarification and better understanding, it is expedient to define and explain basic issues
48 underlying this work. In the first place, the operative words namely-religions education and peaceful co-existence
49 needs clarification. Also, it is apposite to state that the locus of our discussion would be based on the world-view
50 of the Nigerian peoples as an exemplification of religions as a tool for harmonious relationship. Having made
51 these prefatory remarks, it is essential to clarify these terms in order to understand their meanings.

52 4 a) Religions

53 It is generally accepted that Religion has no universal definition. However, the writer would consider some
54 definitions of religion. It is important to note that the word religion is derived, etymologically, from the Latin
55 noun, religio. The common verbs are religere to turn to constant or to observe conscientiously?, religere to
56 bind oneself back) and religere. It could be safely claimed that most common definitions of religion appear to be
57 etymological derivatives of the above verbs. On the strength of this, Obilor (2002:63) defined religion as the whole
58 complexes of attitudes, conviction and institutions through which we express our deep fundamental relationship
59 with Reality and not excluding the created order?. On his part, ??ilbert (1980:5) stated that religion describes
60 any system of values, norms and related symbols and rituals, arising from attempt by individuals and social
61 groups to affect certain ends, whether in this world or any future world by means wholly or partly supernatural.
62 The transcendental perspective of religion is aptly captured in the definition of Odumuyiwa (2006:2). He defined
63 religion as "man's effective desire to be in right relationship with a sacred transcendental order, controlling human
64 destiny and events, either a prescribed system of rituals and of belief". Omoregbe (1993:3) defined religion as
65 essentially a relation he stated that religion is the recognition of all our duties as divine ship, a link established
66 by the human person and the divine person believed to exist. It can be deduced from the definitions above that
67 religion conveys the following information, first, features of a Supernatural Being, secondly the belief in that Being
68 and lastly a feeling of awe and mystery in response to the command of that supernatural being. The writer,
69 therefore, defined religion as our "absolute acknowledgement of dependence on the supernatural Being who sets
70 and controls the entire affairs of life and the universe, hence attracting our reverence and obedience". This
71 dimension may have been responsible for the emotional power that religion sometimes have on the adherents.

72 5 b) Religious Violence

73 "Religious violence is a term that describes a phenomenon where religion is either the subject or object of violent
74 behavior. Religious violence is, specifically, violence that is motivated by or in reaction to religious precepts,
75 texts, or doctrines". It involves all forms of violence against religious institutions, persons, objects, or when the
76 violence is motivated to some degree by some religious aspect of the target or precepts of the attacker. This
77 phenomenon does not only refer to violent acts committed by religious groups, but it also includes acts committed
78 by secular group against groups. Thus, it is pluralistic in its incidence.

79 6 c) Religion Education

80 Religion is the experience and expression of faith. Learning about religion and learning from religion are important
81 for all pupils, as religious education helps pupils develop an understanding of themselves and others. (Iheoma,
82 2006). It's also promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of individuals and of groups and
83 communities. In particular, religion education offers pupils with learning difficulties opportunities to develop their
84 self-confidence and awareness understand the world they live in as individuals and as members of groups bring
85 their own experiences and understanding of life into the classroom develop positive attitudes towards others,
86 respecting their beliefs and experience reflect on and consider their own values and those of others deal with
87 issues that form the basis for personal choices and behavior.

88 7 d) Peace

89 Peace is the concept of harmony and the absence of hostility. In a behavioral sense, peace is a lack of conflict
90 and freedom from fear of violence between individuals and heterogeneous social groups.

91 8 III.

92 9 Theoretical Framework

93 The center for world religions, diplomacy and conflict resolution offers a new approach to reducing global violence
94 and terrorism by incorporating the best moral practices of religious communities into policy and democratization.
95 Providing policymakers and activist with strategies to elicit moderate moral religious expression in conflict regions

96 can strengthen civil society and democracy. Yeasin ??rafat (2018: 34) The goal is to create political, religious
97 and social openings that allow international political compromises and vital peace processes to flourish action.
98 These comprises of three things as follows: (a) to promote and empowerment of a network religious peace makers
99 around the world last minute back-channel interventions in religious conflict. (b) organizing dialogues between
100 and among members of religious tradition. (c) conferences and retreats where policymakers can learn from an
101 interact with religious leaders. The research work will be working towards this direction in other to proffer
102 notable solution to this burning issue militating against the peace we ought to enjoy in our society.

103 **10 Table 1**

104 IV.

105 **11 Overview of Religious Crisis in Nigeria a) Causes of Religious Crisis**

107 Several causes of religion violence could be identifying from socio-economic, and political influences, it cut across
108 every sectors of our society. Notable factors from these amoral behaviors could be visible in that bad governances
109 have poison the mind of adherent of religion to one another because government oppress, neglect, dominate,
110 marginalized, discriminate and exploit are some of the factors. For further understanding the work as critically
111 and systematically mention some of these causes below.

112 **12 b) Ignorance of Religious Education**

113 Some of the soul aims of religious education is that it enables adherent to consider and respond to a range
114 important questions related to their own spiritual, moral, psychological and societal values and development
115 related to fundamental questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. Religious education is an essential
116 component of a broad and balanced education. It should also be noted here that those adherent behind the
117 killings of innocent citizen are ignorance of what their religion entails in term of moral, and spiritual stories
118 about sanctity of lives that each religion teachings, permit me to say this without any reservation that no religion
119 preaches violence of human lives nor killing of innocent soul.

120 **13 c) Extremism and Intolerance**

121 Extremism from the two sides is another important reason behind religious crisis in Nigeria. In most cases this
122 extremism is based on poor knowledge of the teaching of the religion being defended by the group in both sides.
123 Religious intolerance means hostility towards other religions, as well as the inability of religious adherent to
124 harmonized between the theories and the practical aspect of religion. Intolerance devotion to one's opinions and
125 prejudices, especially the expression of intolerance and animosity toward persons of differing beliefs.

126 **14 d) Depletion of cultural values**

127 This is seen in the fact that man no longer attaches the expected value to the sanctity of life. The African virtue
128 of being your brother's keeper has been eroded.

129 **15 e) Insecurity**

130 Insecurity possess threat to the mind of citizen, it is very rear that people cannot sleep with their two eyes closed,
131 the government at the other hand are heartless in every regard in that they have much time to squander our
132 money, and spent much money in securing their personal live at the detriment of the citizen.

133 **16 f) Poverty**

134 Poverty is a worst and unpalatable situation which can make man to think of getting rich without thinking of the
135 consequences. Also some of our political leaders are using the opportunity to use some of our youth to unleashes
136 terror, and threat to live.

137 **17 g) Negative roles played by some religious leaders**

138 Obioha (2008) submitted that, the occurrence of these conflicts cannot be divorced from the activities of religious
139 leaders, both of Christian religion and Islam According to him, some of them present their religion as the best,
140 while others are no religion, or worse still, false religions.

141 **18 V. Effects of Religious crisis in Nigeria**

142 Critically speaking one do not need a prophet before one would understand the fact that religious crisis as negative
143 effects on the socio-moral and economic growth of the society, Religious and ethnicity crisis will definitely affect
144 the foreign direct investment (FDI) flow into Nigeria. FDI has positive relationship with economic growth as the
145 more FDI flows into the country the more jobs are created, the per capital income and the higher the standard of

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146 living. This was buttressed by Onwumah (2014) when he posited that in economic terms, religious and ethnicity
147 crisis damages resources and facilities which took time to be acquired. No foreign investor will like to invest
148 funds in country that is divided by communal, religious and ethnic crises (Ayinla, 2003). The basic aim of
149 foreign investment is to make profit which is not possible in an environment of crises. The resources invested
150 already will definitely go down the drains. Meanwhile, the source of Muslims and Christians crises in Nigeria
151 has been religious ethnicity, social and political. The dramas of intolerance by the two religions led to successive
152 misunderstanding between them, sometimes degenerating into violent open war or skirmishes. This drama was
153 marked by the 1980 religious crises that started in Zaria involving members of two religions, resulting to the
154 Wanton destruction of live and properties.

155 Also, religious violence breed suspicion among the various adherent involved. It can be rightly said according
156 to (Theophilus Alabi & Fola Lateju, 2014). That just as Christians are suspicious of Muslims, so also Muslims
157 mistrust Christians. For clarification, M.O Adeniyi, for example, blames Christianity for the violent religious
158 climate in Nigeria. He explained that Islam and African religion co-existed peacefully. Until Christianity came in
159 ten centuries later, with its evangelistic determination to wipe out Islam and African religions. John Enyinnaya's
160 reactions to Adeniyi's views, said he (Adeniyi) criticized colonial leaders as being both political leaders and
161 religious evangelists. He further said Adeniyi wrote off the western education introduced by missionaries, as
162 being primarily aimed at converting people. Adeniyi was of the opinion that the mode of preaching, used by
163 Christian evangelists, as well as the offensive use of the mass media are responsible for discord among the
164 adherent of religious in Nigeria. Furthermore, religious violence does result to loss of lives, properties worth
165 million, and farmland, some people whose medium of livelihood has been destroyed might involve themselves on
166 illicit businesses such as armed robbery, hooliganism, prostitution and unethical behavior.

167 The value and virtues of religion is peace; every religion advocates understand that peaceful coexistence in non-
168 negotiable. In Christianity Jesus Christ is known and referred to as the prince of peace. He taught, commanded
169 and demonstrated the significance of peace and "his is name will be called wonderful, counselor, mighty God,
170 everlasting father, prince of

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172 Towards Peaceful Co-Existence in Nigeria: Religious Education as a Tool peace." Throughout Jesus' earthly
173 ministry, he demonstrated his to love and maintained peace with all men. Despite stiff opposition from the
174 Pharisees and religious leaders, he never said any rude or insulting word to them.

175 20 VI. Religion Education a Tools Toward Peaceful Co- 176 Existence

177 Islam also calls for the quest for peace, tolerance and kindness which is a state of physical, mental, spiritual
178 and social harmony. Other virtues of Islam are that Muslims were urged to imbibe the spirit of kindness and
179 forgiveness. (Q3:124) and further enjoined to live in harmony and peace with fellow human beings, repel evil with
180 that which is better and show perseverance with patience (Q 3: 200). Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) can be seen
181 vividly when there was famine in Mecca and he helped them despite the fact that they had driven him out of his
182 home. Similarly, after the conquest of Mecca, the people of Mecca expected Prophet Muhammad (SAW) either
183 executes to them in retaliation, take them as slaves or at least confiscate their properties and belongings. They
184 were extremely worried and wondered what declaration he was going to make at his historic occasion. However,
185 he began his address by saying to the pagans of Mecca, "Today there will be no blame on you for anything and
186 no one will harm you in anyway" Such example of rear nobility and humanness is rear in human history. These
187 are the type of behavior expected from Muslims, as exemplified by the Prophet of Islam. In fact, there are several
188 examples of this nature in the life of the Holy prophet. If this is what the Bible and the Quran teaches then the
189 adherent needs to be educated, every human should understand the dignity and sanctity of lives.

190 21 VII.

191 22 Conclusion

192 The role Religious Education as a Tool Towards Peaceful Co-Existence in Nigeria cannot be over emphasized,
193 however much needs to be done in that the society is eager in looking for a peaceful society we all are clamoring
194 for, religion is like a knife, it can be useful in the kitchen and also harmful so we need proper and structured
195 religious education in other to enjoyed the peace and harmonious relationship which will champion our society
196 for the better tomorrow. VIII.

197 23 Recommendation

198 1. Religion as a subject should be made compulsory for students at alllevels of the educational system right
199 from the primary up to the tertiary level. Cleric, Imam, and traditionalist should uphold the tenet and teach
200 moral values in their respective places of worship. 2. The non-Governmental organizations should organised
201 symposium, workshop and create awareness in upholding religious morals in the society.

202 **24 The teachers of religious education at all levels of**

203 Nigerian educational system should be consistent in promoting morality and ethical values while imparting
204 religious knowledge on students. 4. The students should be encouraged to demonstrate such moral values in
205 their day to day dealings or affairs with other fellow men.

206 5. Religious leaders, in and outside government circles, should serve as good ambassadors of Religions by
207 demonstrating ethical values of kindness, tolerance, forgiveness, and consideration for others in all circumstances.

208 6. It is pertinent now for a conscious attempt to re-read re-examine and re-interprets the Holy Scriptures, and
209 religions doctrines to make them more meaningful toward establishing an egalitarian society, where all people
210 will be at peace with each other. 7. The Religious Teachers should preach and teach the word of God in its
211 true meaning to the students. 8. Religious students themselves should not use their own cultural and historical
212 background to condemn and seek to destroy other religions arising from a different cultural and historical setting.
213 9. And on a final note All obstacles that may hinder practical implementation of the moral values taught through
214 religious Education should be removed.

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