

**RELIGION AND PEACE WITHIN THE NIGERIA COMMONWEALTH: AN
ETHICAL REFLECTION**

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Abstract

The loss of peace and sense of security within African Commonwealth Countries today is due to the neglect of religious ethical principles, which is however fundamental for other necessary factors to manifest harmonious co-existence and nation-building. This paper, therefore, takes up the task to interrogate the topic: *Religion and Peace within the Nigeria Commonwealth: An Ethical Reflection*, in order to inquire into the dynamism of religion and peace-building with particular reference to Nigeria Commonwealth. In order to be focused emphasis is placed on Christian religion. Relevant textbooks, internet materials and observations are utilized, while socio-ethical and theological approaches are used to analyze the data. Research efforts reveal the place and position of religion in the service of humanity, and on how peace-building and development come into play. Recommendations are proffered with a view to improving human existential values..

Keywords: Religion, Peace-building, Commonwealth, Ethical reflection, Nigeria

Introduction:

The inescapable reality in Nigeria today is the inescapable reality of suffering and poverty¹. The social structure is the type which condemns millions of individuals to abject poverty; while millions are brutally savaged by forces which have always sought to deny them their fundamental rights such as: to their ancestral land, the right to be persons created in God's image, the right to be God's people living in peace and the right to experience true peace in all its fullness². The poor are suffering not only materially but also socially, culturally and politically. Unfortunately, the rising influence and ostentatious living of the few rich next door make the poor masses even more miserable and aggressive. Traditional religious values, as well as, the social and cultural support systems have been eroded thereby making life still more unbearable for the poor. In other words, the poor continue to lose their human dignity and cultural identity. This is because, Nigeria has become the breeding ground for cultural excesses arising from moral bankruptcy, leading to the glorification of various evils and crimes, as well as other anti-social behaviours³. Whereas, the basic materials of nation-building are people, persons created and endowed with inherent freedom, which may

be latent or is being expressed in various ways ; persons with the faculties of intelligent will and purpose which develop and come into some forms of fruition in accordance with opportunities, education, and development.⁴

With a nation, commonwealth member states have reached the stage at which peoples at various levels of cultures and development are brought together, as in the case of Nigeria or other countries of Africa where it was the hand of foreign imperialism that determined which peoples should come together to form a country which they hoped. ⁵ In similar but different dimension, Davis submits four basic areas through which a society can be structured and built. The first three are: character-building, community-building, and the operation of programmes and projects⁶.

These are regarded as the traditional tasks of religions from the time immemorial which will continue to receive the bulk of attention. However, it is quite unfortunate that the fourth area, that is, the theological and ethical reflections on the kind of society one would like to create, has received less attention⁷. This is the area that I propose to discuss in this paper. Interestingly, questions can be asked that: “What are the essential elements of a good society?” and what can the religions do to help bring about a good society?” The assumption is that if adequate essential element is realistic, national goal can be clearly defined and agreed upon, then the technical means can be devised to implement them. But before one can proceed to a discussion of religion and peace in the commonwealth goals, it is important to make three clarifications.

First, since my knowledge of all common wealth member state is rather limited, my remarks will be of a general nature, and I trust that you will overlook those which may apply elsewhere in Tropical Africa or on other continents but not in Nigeria. Second, although problems of nation-building are intimately related to international issues, our time limitations will require us to concentrate on issues at the national level. Third, the goals we will discuss—that is, our vision of a good society are not meant to be complete or definitive. They are offered as merely one contribution to the national debate on essential goals and priorities. They are not exclusively Christian goals, but are meant to appeal to all men and women of good will. Moreover, I would maintain that they are also in harmony with traditional African values which must be preserved and shared with the rest of the world.

Religion

The nature of religion is a vast and complex subject that can be approached from a bewildering variety of viewpoints. The word does not lend itself to any universally accepted definition because of the cultural and historical conceptualizations that underpin its several meanings. Thus, religion is not easy to define or describe because it takes many different forms among the peoples and nations of the world.⁸ However traditionally, religion is defined in sociological literature along two lines: as a human and cultural phenomenon; and as an active instrument used in organizing social relations. In the former definition, religion is viewed in a specific sense to include traditional religious forms such as Christianity, Islam and Judaism otherwise referred to as "the Church" with visible creeds, sets of rituals and priesthood, according to Ernest Troeltsch.⁹

In the latter, religion is viewed in a larger scope to include not just traditional forms of religious beliefs and practices, but also invisible such as secular ideologies, world views and value systems, all viewed as sacred system of symbols of a transcendent order. In this framework, the paper focuses on Christianity, Islam, African Traditional Religion, secular ideologies and other world's views which are persisting in Nigeria. Hence, religion is recognised as a value generator and sustainer. A symbol of cohesion and rallying-parameter for diverse groups of people but this is not to deny that at times religious influence could be negative, undesirable and debilitating. This is more so because of the multiplicity of faiths competing for recognition and adherents within the Nigerian polity, it is in this circumstance that religion is being treated and examined along with peace within the commonwealth Nigeria in this paper.

The Concept of Peace

Peace is a condition desired by everyone. For instance, individuals, and groups who engage in conflict, war, and violence usually do to protest lack of peace, to bring about peace, or protect peace¹⁰. Nevertheless, despite the fact that different conceptual frameworks have been used to define and explain the word peace, however, these frameworks can be broadly divided into two, that is, idealistic framework and process framework.¹¹ According to Ogungbamila, for an ideal state of living, peace is explicated as a condition of social, political, religious, and economic order that guarantee and maintain a balance between the desired and the obtained state of living.

This connotes that any condition or state in which the individual or group observes or imagines that a negative disequilibrium has occurred or will occur between the desired and the obtained condition that leads to an un-peaceful experience. This implies that the obtained condition or state of living is better than what is expected.¹² The inference is that individuals or groups are usually tolerant of a positive disequilibrium than a negative one.

On the other hand, process framework hereby involves activities that are directly or indirectly link to increasing development and as well reducing conflict, both within specific societies or even in a wider level, international community. In other words, it means that individuals and groups are not passive in the attainment of a peaceful state. Every individual must engage in purposeful thoughts and actions that engage peace within the commonwealth.¹³

In his paper, peace is defined as the perceived equilibrium between the desired and the obtained state in the environmental, economic, religious, social, political, or psychological condition of an individual or a group that is brought about by the direct or indirect thoughts and actions of the stakeholders. The state of equilibrium promotes development and reduces conflict. From the above conceptualization, four basic points should be noted which include that: peace can be intrapersonal or interpersonal. Peace is not a-once-and-all issue. This is because, human beings usually aspire to higher levels of peace, development, and less conflict.¹⁴ In other words, peace is relative, dynamic, and results from the social, economic, political and religious conditions prevalent in the society. Also, peace can be studied in terms of cause and effect. Lastly, individuals and groups must engage in peace-enhancing thoughts and activities such as: peacekeeping, peace-building, peace-making, and peace-enforcement within the commonwealth.¹⁵

Africa cum Nigeria

Segun states that broadly speaking to know Africa is to have some knowledge of its geography and interaction with its people and environment. Hence, Ali corroborates the above assertion on the enormous natural wealth with which Africa is endowed. For instance, Africa has ninety six percent of the non-Communist world's diamond, sixty percent of its gold, forty percent of its cobalt, thirty four percent of its bauxite and twenty eight percent of its uranium.. While Africa's iron reserves are probably twice those of the United States, and its reserves of chrome are the most important by far outside the Soviet Union. Also, Segun reinforces Ali that African countries, namely, Nigeria, Angola, Libya, Egypt, Gabon among

others have been producing crude oil for sale to European and American markets in large quantities. With particular reference Nigeria, Nigeria is the most populous nation in Africa with about one hundred and fifty million inhabitants.

Simply put, Nigeria refers to the land area around the Niger river. This name was suggested by Flora Shaw, and later Flora Lugard . The country has an area of nine hundred and twenty three thousand, seven hundred and sixty eight (923,768) square kilometers (Brief facts about Nigeria, AAUA 2015 Diary). Nigeria is surrounded by the Republic of Cameroon to the east, Republics of Chad and Niger to the north, the Republic of Benin to the west and the Atlantic Ocean to the south. Presently, Nigeria is a Federation of thirty-six States and a Federal Capital Territory at Abuja. Nigeria is a country of diverse ethnicity, religion and culture¹⁶. It is the religion, peace, commonwealth and its moral reflections that form the focus of this paper .

Commonwealth

The term Commonwealth of Nations refers to an Inter-Governmental Organization of 53 member states, that is, mostly former territories of British Empire. However, in the context of this work the word commonwealth is used as a political community founded for the common good of humanity such as: ability to lead effectively and as well resolve self-imposed political, economic, social, cultural, religious questions; and still maintain its present geographical boundary with peace, harmony and national development. In other words, it implies public welfare and social security of members of the society. This is the context in which Nigeria commonwealth is used in this paper.¹⁷

Challenges Towards Peace in Nigeria

According to Awopetu, he argues that the greatest evil threatening the existence of Nigeria today is the leadership phenomenon. At all levels and everyday this threat manifests itself. Whether one is talking of public policy, the disposition of those in power to ordinary Nigerians and the public carriage or image of public and political office holders, what comes through is that those in power are people who have no idea of the potency of power for social change and the constraints that power demands¹⁸. Today corruption vis-à-vis organized crime is the biggest business, apparently bigger than the Nigerian government. Organized crime, with its syndicates, underworld racketeering and the mafia, is in control of almost every area of life, thereby corruption is increasing with such rapidity that are close to

open rebellion and anarchy. In most cases corrupt leaders are proclaimed heroes and worshipped. Unfortunately, the biggest corruption emanate from the scared cows¹⁹. The corrupt statistics are astronomically high and no one appears to have the answer and it is gradually becoming another flame out of control.

Corruption, rebellion and lawlessness in the country are presently on large scale such as we never knew before. We live in the midst of crises, danger ,fear, violence, destruction and death .Can there be no exit out of this human dilemma? The corruption includes pen robbery, embezzlement of public funds, bribery and corruption, greed, indolence and negligence, dishonesty and fraud. In consequences of these vices, poverty, hunger, joblessness and other forms of suffering have become common experiences of the majority of the people. Invariably, all these indices are cog in the wheel of development and the nation-building²⁰

One of the most disturbing problems facing Nigeria today is that of religious insurgency, uprising and onslaughts. These have assumed a disturbing dimension. Boko-Haram uprising and onslaughts started since 2009 to-date resulting into deaths of several people .Equally unhealthy is the tension and fear of imminent armed robbers which are very devastating to the peace and stability of Nigeria. This has led to disunity, violence, vandalism, and unpatriotic attitude among people. These have hampered the development of ethical values in the society.

The cost of democracy in Nigeria is too much. Nigerian politicians of the past two Republics left bad records of abuse of office, mismanagement, fraud and chaos. There are series of undue financial management in the country. Aluko reports that between 1999 and 2009 about N4.2 billion was disbursed by INEC to the various political parties. In the 2010 proposed budget before the National Assembly, N630 million is budgeted for disbursement to the political parties to bring their cost to the nation's Federal treasury to about N4.87billion since 1999²¹ . The total grant to INEC since 1999 is about N133.27billion. In spite of the myriad of political parties, only one party, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has dominated the political space, since 1999 till 2015, posing a threat to the democratic posture of the country²².

More importantly, another instance is the cost of the legislatures. Aluko argues further that there are 109 senators, 360 members of the House of Representatives, making a total of 469 members of the National Assembly. There are 990 members of the 36 states Houses of Assembly. The total Legislators in Nigeria today are 1459. He informs that in 2008, actual

recurrent expenditure on the 469 National Assembly members was N51.6 billion or N110million per member. It is estimated that in 2010 it will rise to N118.9 or N253.5million per member. The actual capital expenditure on the National Assembly in 2008 was thus N143.3 million. It is expected to rise to N294.3million in 2010²³.

The rapidly increasing cost of the National Assembly is alarming. There are 990 members in the 36 States Houses of Assembly. The actual recurrent and capital expenditures on them in 2008 was about N76.5billion or about N77.3million per member. It is expected to rise to N87.5billion in 2010 or N88.4million per member. However, the total actual recurrent and capital allocations to the 27 Federal Universities in 2010 is N118.1 billion, compared with N225.5 billion for the 1,459 National and State Legislators. When we compare what a National Assembly member earns, as salary per annum, about N88million, with what a Professor in the university earns per annum, about N3.5 million, one can see the undue financial incentive that Nigeria gives to its legislators²⁴. In the USA, A Senator earns \$169000 per annum, or N25.4 million.

A university Professor earns an average of 116,000 dollars, or N17.4 million. The differences are obvious between the legislator and the professor in America and in Nigeria. In the United States of America, the gross per capita annual income today is 45000 dollars. In Nigeria, it is the equivalent of 650 dollars per capita. The other units of government have been costly also but they all existed before 1999²⁵. Besides, electoral violence and electoral heist had always been the death-knell of Nigerian democracy since 1965. The cost of the devaluation of the naira from N88 to the dollar in1999 to N200 today is equally a challenge²⁶.

It is noteworthy that many Nigerian youth nowadays commonly confess their life ambition to amass wealth if opportune in future to occupy influential official positions in government service. Some other Nigerians may be tempted to resign themselves to pessimistic convictions such as the impossibility of having righteous and faithful rulers in Nigeria henceforth, this attitude is in a way due to low level of efficiency and the increasing corruption among the youth. Oftentimes honesty and hard work are neither rewarded nor appreciated by the government and other constituted authorities²⁷. Better qualified persons may sometimes be unemployed while influential but under serving mediocre may be put in positions of power and leadership.

Towards achieving this ends some people may readily exploit religious and tribal sentiments. The attitude of some Nigerians to work is discouraging. Lateness to work, absenteeism from office ,insult to enquirers and consumers, willful neglect of official duties,

delay of official processes, bribery before service, insubordination ,unwarranted interference in the course of justice ,gross indiscipline and lack of dedication to work have become the bane of Nigerian workers²⁸. These vices undoubtedly hamper efficiency, ethical development and increased productivity especially in the economic sense bearing in mind the present bad state of Nigeria economy.

The economy of the Nigeria at present is unhealthy. Scarcity and inflation have made life more difficult. For the vast majority of Nigerian people; the rate of unemployment is high while the prices of foodstuffs and the cost of rent and accommodation are high²⁹. The rate of armed robbery incident is equally high. There is therefore little impetus for people to perform maximally in their work. Many are under-nourished and live in want, hardship and in fear of possibility of retrenchment by their employers. The poor management of the nation's financial resources by the government sometimes do not challenge the people in general to adopt virtues of patriotism. The danger thus exist thereby with the increasing hardship of Nigerians to live comfortably, the tendency to adopt corrupt ways of acquiring wealth may be adopted such as fraud and bribery³⁰.

Hints On The Factors Militating Against Peaceful Coexistence And Its Attendant Moral Effects In Nigeria Commonwealth.

The causes of lack of peace in Nigeria are varied as its definitions are multi-dimensional. Some see the causes as a response to perceived injustice, others view it as a response to deprivation or frustration.. Apart from the genetic or medical causes, terrorism to some people is rooted in ideological belief system or fanaticism, while to others it is caused by primordial criminal tendencies³¹. The following are the identified causes:

Perceived Injustice: This is derived from a feeling that oppression is no longer regarded as natural. People recognize that the source of oppression is socio-political and therefore arbitrary. This belief ignites a response to what they perceive to be injustice by taking matters into their hands. From individuals, be it small or large groups, steps are being taken to end the state of slavery or rectify injustice by all means.

Deprivation and Frustration: These are explicitly tied to the expression and experience of injustice, and the belief that injustice is not natural or inevitable but remediable. The belief in ability to remedy the situation leads to the fanatical dedication in the justification of destructive acts.

Belief System cum Fanaticism: This in most cases is tied to religious zealotry. The Zealots see themselves as instruments of justice. Today, terrorism has become an act of conscience globally, while belief system equally becomes a resource for recognition and appreciation in it. Belief system is so ingrained in some group of people as noted by Hacker . For him, he submits that: *‘some Terrorists are quite reconciled, though by no means resigned, to the role of Martyrs who unlike heroes, do not succeed but fail honorably, at least they knew that they tried: the unshakable belief that they work, fight and die for purposes transcending their own narrow interest give them that fanatic self righteousness which makes their often self destructive acts so destructive, dangerous and contagious³²’* . Obviously, belief system and fanaticism are largely responsible for some of the causes, effects and nature of terrorism carried out by suicide bombers globally, and especially in Nigeria. This philosophy is seen in the activities of Boko Haram and their sponsors since 2009 till date in Nigeria.

Criminal Tendencies: This is predicated in the use of terror not for political reasons but for private material gains. The high-jacking of postal mails or access to files or bank accounts, internet fraudulent e-mails by Yahoo boys fit into “criminal” terrorism for material gains. Cyber crimes are on the increase in Nigeria. Also, the occupation of oil installations and kidnapping of oil workers for ransom as witnessed in Nigeria are manifestations of criminal tendencies for private material gains. Although, criminal tendencies could be cloaked as political activism, however, the collection of ransom in exchange for hostages distinguishes both.³³

Moral Effects of Conflict, Violence and Terrorism in Nigeria Commonwealth

The consequences of terrorism may vary according to the sources , objectives and amount of forces applied. Generally, however, the following are the consequences of terrorism: physical injury and pain especially from torture; outright death and loss of lives ; mental agony from psychic terror and feeling of helplessness; destruction and damage of properties such as: buildings; infrastructural facilities like rail lines, airports, electricity installations, military installations, police posts and tourism decline; diversion of public funds from socio-economic development to only security purposes ; abuse of human rights; and loss of revenue from extortion³⁴ . Besides, there are many adverse effects of terrorism to any society across the world. Then, Nigerian society is of no exception. In part, some of these effects are broadly stated below:

Social Impact: The acts of terrorism in Nigeria have been very negative. The terrorists are christened militants, kidnap, and abduct young school children. Schools are forced to either shut down or parents withdraw their children from schools for fear of being kidnapped. Where the children are not withdrawn, parents and indeed schools have to make extra security arrangement for their wards³⁵.

Economic Impact: By far, the most pronounced impact is on the economic front. Since the escalation of terrorist activities in the Nigeria, a lot of losses have been suffered by the oil and gas companies in particular and Nigeria in general. Tunke – Aye Bisina of Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria (SPDC) said “it lost USD 10.6 billion (about N1.37 trillion) to the crisis in the Niger Delta which forces it to shut down its western oil production since February 2006³⁶. In addition to this, rehabilitating the facilities, which have been vandalized, destroyed and sabotaged, will cost SPDC nearly half of its annual budget or more. SPDC whose total daily production was 1.1 million barrels is now reduced to only about 400,000 daily. At the Gulf of Guinea Energy Security and Strategy (GGESS) meeting held at the Hague, Netherlands ,early August 2007, the then Secretary to the Government of the Federation (SGF) of Nigeria Alhaji Babangida Kingibe summed up Nigeria’s losses thus: The country has been losing average of USD 40 million daily, due to the reduction of about 500,000 barrels of crude oil per day as a result of the incessant attacks on oil and gas facilities³⁷. Cable News Network (CNN) in the world news broadcast estimated Nigeria’s losses at over USD60 billion of oil revenue due to the Niger Delta Crisis³⁸.

The crisis has also led to escalation in cost of contract jobs and undertakings³⁹. Consequently, the Eleme Petrochemical Industry Limited, shut down operations. The Indorama/Eleme Petrochemicals plant is the only one in West Africa and its closure certainly created serious problems for economic activities in the region. The plans to turn Eleme into a *plastic city*, create employment opportunities for host community, production for local and export markets have all been jeopardized. Similarly, Daewoo, an oil servicing company has shut down operations; WILBROS is looking from a distance, while work on Afam Power Plant has been put on hold because of the activities of the terrorists⁴⁰. There is no region in Nigeria that can be immune to the negative economic impact.

Psychological Impact: The negative effect of terrorism in Nigeria also includes the psychological impact especially on the children who are growing up in the midst of bombings, kidnappings, hostage-taking, sabotage and direct violence. Some may in their

psyche have a registration of fear and up as confident and composed human beings. They may have the belief that government, parents and elders are unable to protect them and so grow up not trusting and having faith in the system. Others may grow up to believe that the right thing is to be violent and so develop criminal tendencies from the beginning of their lives³⁹.

Biochemical Warfare Effects on Human Health:

The adverse effects of biochemical warfare devices such as bombing, laying mines and other explosive devices used by the terrorists and counter terrorists are equally there. These days terrorists are usually ready to kill themselves or be killed for what they believe in and the goal they are pursuing, as obtains by Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria and in the Middle East⁴⁰.

Religion And Peace Within The Nigeria Commonwealth : A Way Forward

Religion as the key to Nigerian survival: At times, confusion comes from faulty and flaggy interpretations given to Scriptural Texts or Religious Traditions. Dukor in his own perspective observes that there could not have been religious disturbances if Islam and Christianity were not imported into Africa.⁴¹ This statement emanates from the unfortunate situation of the place of religion in Nigeria. Whereas, religion is a potent factor for peace and it should be practiced to let the nation grow, overcome differences and survive. We ought to know that religion is a positive resource that must be used to ensure the welfare of all of us. We have hardly tapped the potentialities of religion in this regard⁴². Agreeably, religion has been made by us to become divisible, but religion can as well amend the division. Ayandele argues that that it was religion (Christianity) that paved way for colonialism to gain access to the political control of Nigeria; and that it was also the same religion that began the process that terminated colonialism.⁴³ Therefore, it is equally possible to think that religion which has been for too long wrongly used among other things to chaos the nation, can be the source through which the country can be made to survive as a nation in God's hand. In order to achieve this, Christians and Muslims must remember what they were in the colonial history of Nigeria. Peaceful co-existence notwithstanding, the occasional clashes that were more intra and rarely inter need proper attention. For instance, Oloyede admonishes religious adherents to always be wary in their approaches to religion because reactionary forces tend to militate against peaceful unity in Nigeria; and that religious adherents should

always reappraise all facets of their activities and in-activities with a view to evolving a system that would ensure peace, harmony and steady progress of Nigeria⁴⁴.

Economically, if the fire of religious intolerance is put off today, the nation will achieve economic growth since Nigerians will have full confidence to trade to the north, south, east and west without fear of loosing anything to religious “fanatics”. Contract awards will no longer depend on what religion or where one comes from. Religious harmony will determine not only internal cordial relation but also determine the kind of relationship that Nigeria can foster with the outside world. It will discourage the night cover of registering the nation with a club which would suggest religious preferences. Above all, it will ward-off the seemingly one-sided economic orientation towards one religion. Religious harmony or mutuality will discourage the thought of the adoption of a state religion. To coexist peacefully is another word for religious harmony, tolerance, love, care, live and let live, all of which religious intolerance will consign to a fire that burns and consume a state. I believe too that it is religious harmony that will engender a single if not more political ideologies that will favour every aspect of our lives to survive.

The Mobilizing Power of Religion from the Biblical Perspective :

More importantly, religion is a mobilizing tool for national economic recovery. This is because religion cannot and had never stood aloof of economic interests of the society. In the book of Psalms, chapter 24 verse 1, we are told that *The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein* . We are integrated human beings whose life cannot be divided into compartments, but must be viewed in the totality.⁴⁵ Omoyajowo therefore reinforces the argument that: The dichotomy of the spiritual on the one hand, and the

“material on the other does not exist. The Church’s belief is that God is the creator and sustainer of the world; the King and Ruler of all the world. He is lord of our personal family, church life, of our economic, political and international life⁴⁶”

It connotes that the whole of life is under the judgment, love and grace of God. Then, humanity is responsible to Him for his conduct in political, economic, international, personal, private and social affairs. Religion presupposes faith in God as creator and ruler of all. In political and economic life, we recognise our togetherness in a common humanity. God is the author of the human society and he is interested in the promotion of the rule of law, and the

improvement of our social and economic life. Religion therefore cannot afford to be aloof in economic revival of the society. The church cannot remain neutral⁴⁷. There is a fundamental truth in the saying of Emile Durkheim, that 'religion is a social phenomenon' and that 'religious beliefs carry with them social obligation'. The goal of every religion is harmony and well-being of the individual within the society. It aims at achieving total well-being which includes all facets of life including economic life.⁴⁸

Mobilization is the state of preparing the mob, the populace, for active service. The power in religion to mobilize people for active service is immense. It had been so, both in biblical times and in the early and medieval life of the church⁴⁹. The bible has ample examples of how faith has been used to move people to social action. Moses succeeded in mobilizing the Israelites into rejecting Egyptian enslavement and marching out into freedom under the mobilizing influence of Judaism⁵⁰. Illuminating examples are the emergency leaders in the life of the people of Israelites called Judges. They mobilized their various peoples (tribes) to concerted action to defeat their neighbours in war in the name of Yahweh. Example of such Judges: Samson, Jephther, Gideon, and Deborah. Also, King Saul, the first king of Israel acted in similar manner in 1 Samuel chapter 11, to summon Israel into a concerted action of war against the Amalekites. In addition to the above, when the southern kingdom went into exile, and king Darius I ordered home return of all Exiles, it was the mobilizing power in Exilic Judaism that Nehemiah, Ezra and Prophets like Haggai, Zechariah, etc. used in mobilizing the people into rebuilding the ruins of the Solomonic Temple into Zerubabel's Temple⁵¹.

It is the strong Jewish belief in the coming of a Messiah to free them from the shackles of Roman colonial rule. This enabled many self-acclaimed Messiah to mobilize the Jews, particularly the Galileans, to insurrection against colonial government, during the Inter-Testament period.⁵² Besides, Our Lord Jesus Christ's miraculous feeding of the multitude was the mobilizing factor behind the masses' intention to proclaim his political Messiah. This mobilized action by the people was an understanding of Christ's mission⁵³. It was the religious message of the Early Apostles that mobilized the birth of the Church and the formation of early Christian communism.⁵⁴ All these biblical instances reinforce the positive power in religion to mobilize people to social concerted action. Religion can be used both for positive and negative mass-concerted actions. This is because religion deals with the mental, emotional and social faculty of man and can drive man into any action.⁵⁵

Conclusion:

This paper concludes that social injustice should be addressed frontally. Also, that religion is a potent factor for peace and it should be practiced to let the nation grow, overcome differences and survive. The true practice of the tenets of our religions will make Nigerian to build a nation where peace and justice shall reign. In spite of what religion has been made by us in Nigeria, we should cleave more to God who is able to solve our problems and continue to be an indivisible whole. The power in religion to mobilize people for active service is immense. It had been so, both in biblical times and in the early and medieval life of the church. The Bible has ample examples of how faith has been used to move people to social action through which Nigeria can equally draw inspirations for her survival. Nevertheless, everybody has it as a social responsibility to work for human existential values.

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