NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS STUDIES

COURSE CODE: CRS864

COURSE TITLE: SOCIAL THEORIES OF RELIGION

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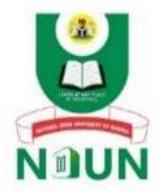**CREDIT UNIT: 3**

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COURSE GUIDE

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Introduction

CRS864 Social Theories of Religion is a one semester, 3 credits unit course. It is available to all students as a course in master degree programme in Christian Theology. The course is also suitable for anybody who is in the theological study of Christian faith and African Traditional religion. The course consists of 21 units, which include Definition of Religion, the Elements of Religion, History of World Religions, New Religious Movements in Nigeria; Methodology for the Study of Religion, the nature of Religious Beliefs, Religion in the Society. Others include Meaning of Sociology of Religion, the Concept of Society, the Relationship between Religion and Society, Socialization and Religious Indoctrination, Religion and Secularization, the Family Pattern, Functions of Religion in the Society, Durkheim Theory of Religion, Marxist Theory of Religion, Weberian Theory of Religion, Auguste Comte Theory of Religion, Sigmund Freud Theory of Religion, the Functionalist Theory of Religion and Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Religion.

The material has been specially developed for students in African context with particular focus on African culture. There are no compulsory pre-requisites for the course. The Course Guide tells you briefly, what the course is about and what you are expected to know in each unit, what course materials you will be using, and how you can work your way through these materials. It also emphasizes the need for tutor-marked assignments. There are periodic tutorial classes that are linked to the course.

What You will Learn in this Course

The overall aim of **CRS864 Social Theories of Religion** is to introduce you to the basic issues in Sociology of Religion like Definition of Religion, the elements of religion, History of world religions, New Religious Movements in Nigeria, the nature of Religious Beliefs, Religion in the Society, Meaning of Sociology of Religion, the Concept of Society, the Relationship between Religion and Society, Socialization and Religious Indoctrination, Religion and Secularization, the Family Pattern, Functions of Religion in the Society and social Theories of Religion, among

others. Your understanding in this course will prepare you as a student to understand the nature of religion and social theories of religious beliefs for good and profitable interaction. Further, the course will broaden the understanding of the students about Sociology of Religion within the context of Nigeria.

Course Aims

The aim of the course can be summarised as follow: The course aims at helping the students to understand Sociology of Religion. It also examines the Social Theories of religion, and scholar's views.

Course Objectives

To achieve the aims set above, there are set overall objectives. In addition, each module and unit has specific objectives. The modules and units objectives are always included at the beginning of every module and the unit; you should read them before you start working through the unit. You may want to refer to them during your study of the module and unit to check on your progress. You should always look at the module and unit objectives after completing each section. In this way, you can be sure that you have done what was required of you by the module and unit. Stated below are the wider objectives of this course as a whole.

By meeting these objectives, you should therefore, know that you have achieved the aims of the course as a whole. On your successful completion of the course, you should be able to explain the following: know the definition of Sociology of Religion, Society, Secularization, New Religious Movements, Family Pattern, Functions of Religion in the Society, Socialization and Religious Indoctrination, Emile Durkheim Theory of Religion, Karl Marx Theory Religion, Max Weber Theory of Religion, Auguste Comte Theory of Religion, Sigmund Freud Theory of Religion, Functionalist Theory of Religion and Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Religion, among others. On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

- Explain the concept of Religion

- Discuss the Elements of Religion

- State the Functions of Religion in the Society

- Show the Relationship between Religion and Society

- Examine Socialization and Religious Indoctrination in Africa

- Explain New Religious Movements in Africa

- Discuss Religion and Secularization

- Examine the concept of society

- Discuss the Family and Pattern in the Society

- Highlight the Role of Religion in the Society

- Discuss the Nature of Religious Beliefs in the Society

- Explain Durkheim Theory of Religion

- Examine Marxist Theory of Religion

- Discuss the Weberian Theory of Religion

- Narrate Auguste Comte Theory of Religion

- Analyze Sigmund Freud Theory of Religion

- Explain the Functionalist Theory of Religion

- Discuss Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Religion

Working through the Course

To complete the course, you are required read the study units, read recommended books and other materials. Each unit contains self-assessment exercises, and at some points in the course, you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of this course is a final examination. Below you will find listed all the components of the course and what you have to do.

Course Materials

Major components of the course are:

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment File
5. Presentation Schedule

In addition, you must obtain the materials. Obtain your copy. You may contact your tutor if you have problems obtaining the text materials.

Study Units

There are twenty-one study units in this course broken into 3 modules of 7 units. They are as follows:

Module 1

Unit 1: Definition of Religion
Unit 2: The elements of religion
Unity 3: History of world religions
Unit 4: New Religious Movements in Nigeria
Unit 5: Methodology for the Study of Religion
Unit 6: The nature of Religious Beliefs
Unity 7: Religion in the Society

Module 2

Unit 1: Meaning of Sociology of Religion
Unit 2: The Concept of Society
Unit 3: The Relationship between Religion and Society
Unit 4: Socialization and Religious Indoctrination

Unit 5: Religion and Secularization

Unit 6: The Family Pattern

Unit 7: Functions of Religion in the Society

Module 3

Unit 1: Durkheim Theory of Religion

Unit 2: Marxist Theory of Religion

Unit 3: Weberian Theory of Religion

Unit 4: Auguste Comte Theory of Religion

Unit 5: Sigmund Freud Theory of Religion

Unit 6: The Functionalist Theory of Religion

Unit 7: Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Religion

Each unit contains a number of self-assessment in general terms. These tutor-marked assignment questions on the materials you have just covered are to be of help to you in your relationship to the traditionalists and it is meant to help you to evaluate your progress and to reinforce your understanding of the materials and assist you in achieving stated learning objectives of the individual units and of the course.

Textbooks

Barber, N. (2013). *The Security Blanket Concept of Religion.* Retrieved on 15th December, 2013 from http://www. Psychologytoday.com/blog/the-humanbeast/201207/thesecurity-blanket-concept-religion.

Barth, K. (1972). The Humanity of God. Richmond: John Knox Publishers.

Durkheim, E. (1915). The Elementary Forms of Religious Life. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Mascionis, J. J. (1999). Sociology. 7th edition New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Maimela, S. S. (1990). Modern trends in Theology. Cape Town: Skotaville Publishers.

Mamella, S. S. (2003). "Salvation in African Traditional Religions", Missionalia, Vol. 13. No.21, p. 18.

Omoregbe, J. I. (1993). A Philosophical Look at Religion. Lagos: J.E.R.P

Reddy, V.M. (2013). A Philosophical Approach to Religion. Retrieved on 15th January, 2014 from http://www.sikhreview. Org/pdf/may2007/pdf-files/Philosophy1.pdf.

Warneck, M. (1960). Ethics since 1900. London: Oxford University Press.

Wilson, B. (1982). Religion in Sociological Perspective. New York: Oxford University Press.

Assignment File

In this file, you will find the details of the work you must submit to your tutor for marking. The marks you obtain from these assignments will count towards the final mark you obtain for this course. Further information on assignments will be found in the Assignment File itself and later in this Course Guide in the section on assessment.

Presentation Schedule

The Presentation Schedule included in your course materials gives you the important dates for the completion of tutor-marked assignments and attending tutorials. Remember, you are required to submit all your assignments by the due date. You should guard against falling behind in your work.

Assessment

There are two aspects to the assessment of the course. First are the tutor-marked assignments; second, there is a written examination. In tackling the assignments, you are expected to apply information and knowledge acquired during this course. The assignments must be submitted to your tutor for formal assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the Assignment File. The work you submit to your tutor for assessment will count for 30% of your total course mark. At the end of the course, you will need to sit for a final three-hour examination. This will also count for 70% of your total course mark.

Tutor-Marked Assignments

There are twenty-one tutor-marked assignments in this course. You need to submit all the assignments. The best four (i.e. the highest four of the fifteen marks) will be counted. The total marks for the best four (4) assignments will be 30% of your total course mark. Assignments questions for the unit in this course are contained in the Assignment File. You should be able to complete your assignments from the information and materials contained in your set textbooks, reading, and study units. However, you are advised to use other references to broaden your viewpoint and provide a deeper understanding of the subject. When you have completed each assignment, send it, together with the TMA (tutor-marked assignment) form to your tutor. Make sure that each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline given to the Assignment File. If, however, you cannot complete your work on time, contact your tutor before the assignment is done to discuss the possibility of an extension.

Final Examination and Grading

The final examination on CRS864 will be three hours' duration and have a value of 70% of the total course grade. The examination will consist of questions, which reflect the type of self-testing, practice exercises, and tutor-marked problems you have come across. All areas of the course will be assessed. You are advised to revise the entire course after studying the last unit before you sit for the examination. You will find it useful to review your tutor-marked assignments and the comments of your tutor on them before the final examination.

Assessment	
Assessments 1-4	Four assignments, best three marks of the four counts at 30% of course marks.
Final Examination	70% of overall course marks
Total	100% of course marks

Course Overview

This table brings together the units, the number of weeks you should take to complete them, and the assignments that follow them

Table1: Course Overview

Module 1	Title of Work	Week's Activity	Assessment (end of Unit)
Unit			
1	Definition of Religion	1	Assignment 1
2	The Elements of Religion	2	Assignment 2

3	History of World Religions	3	Assignment 3
4	New Religious Movements in Nigeria	4	Assignment 4
5	Methodology for the Study of Religion	5	Assignment 5
6	The nature of Religious Beliefs	6	Assignment 6
7	Religion in the Society	7	Assignment 7
Module 2 Unit			
1	Meaning of Sociology of Religion	8	Assignment 8
2	The Concept of Society	9	Assignment 9
3	The Relationship between Religion and Society	10	Assignment 10
4	Socialization and Religious Indoctrination	11	Assignment 11
5	Religion and Secularization	12	Assignment 12
6	The Family Pattern	13	Assignment 13
7	Functions of Religion in the Society	14	Assignment 14
Module 3 Unit			
1	Durkheim Theory of Religion	15	Assignment 15
2	Marxist Theory of Religion	16	Assignment 16
3	Weberian Theory of Religion	17	Assignment 17

4	Auguste Comte Theory of Religion	18	Assignment 18
5	Sigmund Freud Theory of Religion	19	Assignment 19
6	The Functionalist Theory of Religion	20	Assignment 20
7	Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Religion	21	Assignment 21

How to Get the Most from this Course

In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecture. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through especially designed study materials at your own place, and at a time and place, that suit you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to a lecturer. In the same way that a lecturer might set you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read your set books or other material. Just as a lecturer might give you an in-class exercise, your study units provide exercises for you to do at appropriate points.

Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next is a set of learning objectives. These objectives let you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. You should use these objectives to guide your study. When you have finished the units, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If you make a habit of doing this, you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course.

Reading Section

Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need help, do not hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

1. Read this Course Guide thoroughly

2. Organize a study schedule. Refer to the 'Course Overview' for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments relate to the units. Whatever method you chose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates for working on each unit.

3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before it is too late for help.

4. Turn to Unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.

5. Assemble the study materials, information about what you need for a unit is given in the 'Overview' at the beginning of each unit. You will usually need both the study unit you are working on and one of your set books on your desk at the same time.

6. Work through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit, you will be instructed to read sections from your set books or other articles. Use the unit to guide your reading.

7. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study material or consult you tutor.

8. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.

9. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutor-marked assignment form and on what is written on the assignment. Consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.

10. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this Course Guide).

Facilitators/Tutor and Tutorial

There are 8 hours of tutorial provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, time, and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group. Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter and assist you during the course. You must mail your tutor-marked assignments to your tutor well before the due date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your tutor and returned to you as soon as possible. Do not hesitate to contact your tutor by telephone, e-mail, or discussion board if you need help. The following might be circumstances in which you would find help necessary. Contact your tutor if:

- You do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings,
- You have difficulty with the self-tests or exercises,
- You have a question or problem with an assignment, with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment.

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to have face-to-face contact with your tutorial and to ask questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any
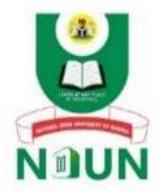
problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a question list before attending them. You will learn a lot from participating in discussions actively.

Summary

CRS864 intends to introduce you to basics of the Social Theories of Religion. Upon completing this course, you will be able to answer questions such as:

- Explain the concept of Religion
- Discuss the Elements of Religion
- State the Functions of Religion in the Society
- Show the Relationship between Religion and Society
- Examine Socialization and Religious Indoctrination in Africa
- Explain New Religious Movements in Africa
- Discuss Religion and Secularization
- Examine the concept of society
- Discuss the Family and Pattern in the Society
- Highlight the Role of Religion in the Society
- Discuss the Nature of Religious Beliefs in the Society
- Explain Durkheim Theory of Religion
- Examine Marxist Theory of Religion
- Discuss the Weberian Theory of Religion
- Narrate Auguste Comte Theory of Religion
- Analyze Sigmund Freud Theory of Religion
- Explain the Functionalist Theory of Religion
- Discuss Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Religion

Of course, the questions you will be able to answer are not limit to the above list. African Traditional Religion is an exciting study. We wish you success with the course and hope that you will find it both interesting and useful.

MAIN COURSE

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Unit 6: The Nature of Religious Beliefs

Unit 7: Religion in the Society

UNIT 1: DEIFINITION OF RELIGION

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The need to understand religion of the world cannot be under-stressed. Man from its origin is born to worship God in the way his conscience and ability directs him to do. The study of world religion is aimed at understanding the similarities and differences in religion, the truth in religions and their relevance to the human society. Therefore, an understanding of world religions will create room for a clear understanding of the people contextually within the framework of their belief system.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define religion from different perspectives
- Give the characteristic features in the definition of religion
- Explain the different types of world religions
- Discuss the purpose for the study of religion
- Give the functions of religion in Nigerian society
- Highlight the importance of religion in Nigerian society
- State the roles of religion in Nigerian society

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 What is Religion?

There is no universally accepted definition of religion. This is simply because religion means different things to different people. It may mean a thing to a philosopher and another to a theologian and another to a sociologist. Religion is diverse in historical development, so either culturally varied that definitions developed from our African or western experience often fail to

encompass it adequately. A.C. Bouquet argued in his book, Comparative Religion that the word 'religion' is of European origin and that it acquired many meanings in Europe. He however observed that scholars in the ancient world did not agree on the etymological connotation of the word. Some scholars connected *religio* with other Latin terms relegere which means to re- read; *relinquere* which is to relinquish; or *religare* which means to relegate, to unite, to bind together. Bouquet examined the two of the various views: The Roman Cicero and Roman writer Servius Cicero took the word from *relegere*, to gather things together, or to pass over the same ground repeatedly.

Another possible meaning, according to Cicero, was 'to count or observe.' Cicero focused on the term 'observe' to be appropriate in understanding the term 'religion'. Using the word 'observe' would have religion interpreted as "to observe the signs of divine communication." For Servius and most others, religion was to be associated with the Latin *religare,* to bind things together. The possibility of accepting this root origin is obvious in that this notion expresses the most important feature of religion. That is, "religion binds people together in common practices and beliefs, drawing them together in a common enterprise of life". This notion shows religion as pointing to relationship. Bouquet strongly felt that both roots could be combined to give the sense of the meaning of religion: "a communion between the human and the superhuman.

Thus, he interpreted religion to mean "a fixed relationship between the human self and some non-human entity, the Sacred, the Supernatural, the Self- existent, the Absolute, or simply 'God'. Religion therefore implies a relationship between human beings and some spiritual beings. As we shall see in our study of religion, religion involves relationships both in essence and functions. John Ferguson listed seventeen definitions of religion, which can be organized into the following categories; theological, moral, philosophical, psychological and sociological.

Theological Definition of Religion

The theological definition of religion include religion is the believing in God, religion is belief in spiritual beings, religion is life of God in the soul of man, and religion is a mystery, at once awesome and attractive. The above are the theological definitions of religion because they centred on the ideas that religion has to do with God or super natural spiritual powers. E.B.

Taylor asserts that religion being a belief in God and spiritual being involved a belief in a hierarchy of spirits from the lower to the most powerful beings. It is said to be the life of God in the soul of man; an idea which comes from Newton Clarke, who stressed the two realities of God and the soul as necessary for religion to exist. Further still, the definition that related religion to something mysterious is that, religion is a mystery: awesome and attractive. Rudolf Otto, who found the essence of religion in the idea of the holy, which he claimed, attracts people, owning to its mystery and its power, created this ideology.

Moral Definition of Religion

The moral definition of religion are: religion is leading a good life, religion is morality tinged with emotion, religion is the recognition of all our duties and demand commands and religion is sum of scruples which impede the free use of our faculties. Morality deals with the provision of rules, norms, and directives of how people should live their lives in an acceptable manner. According to moral theory, religion is defined as lading a good life. Mathew Arnold expanded the moral definition of religion by insisting that human emotions or feelings must be added to morality before religion can become real. It is said to be the recognition of all our duties as divine commands, a theory of Immanuel Kant's categorical imperative. Thus, the moral definition of religion makes the central criterion of religion a code of correct behaviour affirmed by believers as having its source in an unquestioned and unquestionable authority.

Philosophical Definition of Religion

The philosophical definition of religion view religion in terms of an abstract or impersonal concept. Religion is what a man does with his solitariness. Alfred North Whitehead described it as the relation of man to his own being, but as a being outside himself. It is a relationship, which according to Paul; people hold with that which concerns them ultimately. Psychological definition of religion stressed that religion has to do with the emotions, feelings, or psychological states of the human in relation to the religious object. Ferguson defines religion as the result of seeking comfort in the world, which, dispassionately considered, is a terrifying wilderness.

Bertrand Russell stresses that because of the misfortunes and sufferings people experience in the world, they seek comfort or consolation in religion. Friedrich Schleiermarcher further described religion as "a feeling of absolute dependence". These definitions of religion, which fall within the viewpoint of psychoanalyptic school of Sigmund Freud defined religion as "a universal obsessive neurosis" and "psychological disturbance" which must be overcome if humanity is to attain psychological health.

Psychological Definition of Religion

The psychological definition of religion makes the central criterion of religion feelings or emotions within people, which cause them to appeal to force greater than themselves to satisfy those feelings. The sociological definition of religion emphasizes on religion as a group consciousness embodying cultural norms or as a product of society in general. Ferguson listed the following definitions, which falls within this category. Religion is the "opium of the people". Karl Marx posits that religion results from the oppression of the masses by those in positions of social or economic power who use the message of religion to keep the oppressed content with their lot in this life in the hope of a just order in the next one. Religion thus, plans a sociological function for both the oppressor and the oppressed.

Herald Hoffding defined religion as the conservation of values. Though this definition reflects a widely had view of traditional sociologists such as Emile Durkhein or Bronislaw Malinoski, Hoffding maintained that religion is a conservation force within society which defines the fundamental values of the group and then enforces those values by an appeal to supernatural powers. It is co-operative quest after a completely satisfying life". The emphasis of this definition seems to group it within the psychological; however, it falls within the cooperative quest in sociological category. Martin Frozesky who laces this definition in contemporary scholarship said that religion is "a quest for ultimate well-being". William Lessa and Evon Vogth described religion as a system of beliefs and practices directed toward the "ultimate concern" of a society.

Sociological Definition of Religion

The sociological definition makes the central criterion of religion the existence of a community of people, which is identified, bound together, and maintained by its beliefs in power or forces greater than the community itself maintain.

3.2 Characteristic Features in the Definition of Religion

It is important to mention that each person who defines religion focuses on some particular aspects of human life and experience, or on what religion does, positive or negative. We shall now examine the characteristic emphases in their various definitions. Radoslav A. Tsanoff, in his Religious Crossroads, classifies the definitions of religion into the following ways: (1) theistic and other beliefs, (2) practices, (3) mystical feelings, (4) worship of the holy, and (5) conviction of the conservation of values. For our own, we shall identify the definitions of religion and consider them under the following categories.

Feeling

Friedrich Schleiermacher, an important 19th century German theologian and philosopher, has defined religion as "the feeling of absolute dependence, of pure and entire passiveness" and that "true religion is sense and taste for the Infinite." He asserts that religion should include emotions. Schleiermacher bases his definition on human's feeling and intuition. It anchors on dependence on one Infinite, or the Eternal, which in some religions may be termed God. The definition does not reflect human participation in religious scheme as in knowing or doing something in the name of religion.

Ritual Activity

This definition emphasises the performance of specific acts that are established by the religious community. Anthony Wallace, an anthropologist defines religion as "a set of rituals,

rationalized by myth, which mobilizes supernatural powers for the purpose of achieving or preventing transformations of state in humans or nature." The definition holds that religion is only situated within the realm of humanity and society. There is no reference to the divine as some religion may hold.

Belief

It is very common to both young and old when asked about the definition of religion to define it as belief in God or the supernatural. Most theo-centric religions like Christianity and Islam will define religion in terms of 'belief', particularly belief in a supernatural power or entity.

Monotheism

Monotheistic religions like Judaism, Christianity and Islam emphasizes that religion is a relationship with one omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient divine being who manifests in and superintends on the affairs of humanity and the whole universe. The essential relationship is differently captured in definite terms in different religions. An example in Judaism is the Shema in Judaism as contained in the Old Testament (Deut. 6:4-6); in Christianity as revealed in the belief in Jesus Christ who is regarded as the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:6); and in Islam as contained in the Shahadah, the Testimony to the oneness of Allah (Qur'an 112).

The Solitary Individual

Alfred North Whitehead, a prominent English-American philosopher, defines religion as "what the individual does with his own solitariness; and if you were never solitary, you were never religious." This emphasises the involvement of the individual in an intimate personal dialogue with himself or herself. It does not refer to either the supernatural or a group or the society in which a person lives.

Social Valuation

William Lessa and Evon Vogt, (two anthropologists) define religion as "a system of beliefs and practices directed toward the 'ultimate concern' of a society." To them, religion is human-centred. Here, society provides the centre for religious valuation. Religious beliefs, practices, and attitudes are directed toward the expression of what a society of people holds to be of central importance.

Illusion

Karl Marx, a 19th century social philosopher, and the father of communism, defines religion this way: "Religion is the heart of the heartless, sigh of the oppressed creature … It is the opium of the people." Religion is only the illusory sun, which revolves around humans as long as he does not revolve around himself. Marx sees religion as something that misinterprets reality. This portrays human being's response to the universe as essentially immature and distorted.

Ultimate Reality and Value

John B. Magee says, "Religion is the realm of the ultimately real and ultimately valuable." Religion is seen as the true and ultimate measure of people's existence, the final test of life is meaning.

3.3 Why Study Religion?

The study of religion is not new. Many centuries ago, western scholars have conducted studies on religion. What there is was being expressed orally in myths, legends, proverbs, wise sayings and in practical ways like rituals, dances, art, and symbols. The systematic and critical studies of the religious beliefs of the peoples did not begin until recent years, precisely between and after the two world wars. The growth of the science of anthropology and the comparative

study of religion aroused the interest of scholars in religion. Despite the pioneering role of Europeans involved in this study, the outcome of their production was still clouded with racial prejudices.

Thus, one of the aims of the study of religion is to make a comparative survey and to indicate an approach to the understanding of the religion. It is now evident that God is one, the God of the whole universe that has revealed Him to various people in various ways throughout the ages. It is the aim of the study to show the world that religion is part of culture and of all history of humankind. A study of religion allow us to understand the differences and to see the similarities between nations and culture; psychologically, philosophically, theologically, sociologically and morally. It will also help us to appreciate our own beliefs by seeing them alongside those of others. Furthermore, it will help us to work for ecumenism via a meaningful exchange of ideas between religious group in dialogue, seminar and open discussions.

Another aim for the study of African Religion is to discover what the adherents actually know, believe, and think about the God and the super sensible world. In the study of religion, we are not out to seek legitimate ways of discovering what the people actually know about their beliefs system and heritage. Religion allows the adherents to how the beliefs of people have influenced their worldviews and moulded their scholars who had studied religion. There is no doubt that a great diversity of religion exist in the world and common political system. As such, to a distant observer, the homogeneity of other religions is much less real than apparent in the world. Our aim, therefore, is to prove to the world that the spiritual world is so real and near that its forces do inspire their visible world.

The study of religion is also to show the relationship of religions in the world with one another. The real cohesive factor of religion in the world is the living supernatural being or God. The study of religion is to better the ways of evangelizing and acculturating peoples. Evangelization and acculturation of the world would help in cultural evolution and refinement of people's culture, especially those practices that are pagan oriented into Christian ones.

3.4 Types of Religious Beliefs

There are different types of religious beliefs they include; atheism-those who deny the existence of God or gods, but who still hold to a personal ideology that provide a guideline to their lives.

Deism - is a system of thought advocating natural religion based on human reason rather than revelation.

Humanism - is the assertion of the dignity and worth of man and his capacity for self-realization through reason. The humanist usually rejects supernaturalism.

Monism - recognizes only one kind of ultimate substance.

Theism - is the belief in God or gods.

Pantheism - is the recognition of God in everything. It equates God with the forces and laws of the universe.

Polytheism - is the belief in many gods.

Henotheism - is the worship of one supreme god in a pantheon of gods.

Monotheism - is the belief in one God.

The three monotheistic religions are Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The living world religions falls within one or more of the different types of religious belief mentioned above and they include Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, African Traditional Religion, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. However, the concern in this paper is to major on African Traditional Religion (ATR) in detail for a thorough understanding and comprehension.

3.5 The Functions of Religion

Anything can easily be discarded once it is discovered to be of no value. Often, the value of something will also depend on its importance and usefulness. Hence, one may ask, that, bearing in mind the above objections to religion, can it be waved aside as an insignificant aspect of human existence? Why is the religious dimension of human life so important? Emile Durkheim pointed out three major functions of religion

Social Cohesion Functions of Religion

The shared symbols, value and norms of religion unite people. Religious doctrine and ritual establish rules of "fair play" that makes organized social life possible. Religion also involves love and commitment, which underscore both our moral and emotion ties to others. Religion has always acted as guide and shaped entire not only of individuals, but also of communities. Hence, it promotes social good of the highest value. It has been the greatest source of consolation to millions of sorrowing and suffering people. Religion does not consist in merely refraining from evil, but in a persistent performance of noble deeds. True religion does not come from the teaching of men and the reading of books but the awakening of the spirit within us as human beings. Therefore, human progress is a consequence of the action of the human spirit.

In addition, religion serves as a form of social 'cement' which binds people together into an integrated social group. Through the sharing of common religious beliefs and values, and participation in common religious rituals and practices, members of a society or group becomes united as one common community. Thus, regularly bringing adherents together to commonly held beliefs and values, religion promotes group sense of identity, oneness, purpose, and group solidarity. This function is most evident in a crisis when a society faces a formidable threat to its existence such as during outbreak of drought, a condition that confronts a society with a possibility of societal disorganization or disintegration.

An interesting example of how religion can contribute to group unity and cohesion is the case of the Jews were scattered from many centuries across many nations but they were able to

maintain their original identity and unity as Jews simply through their commitment to their religion, which served as a bond of solidarity among the irrespective of the geographical location where each cluster of Jews was. To explain this, Durkheim developed the concept of social solidarity. **Social solidarity** described the social ties that bind a group of people together such as kinship, shared location, or religion. Durkheim combined these concepts with the data he analyzed to propose a theory that explained the religion-based differences in suicide rates. He suggested that differences in social solidarity between the two groups corresponded to the differences in suicide rates.

Social Control Functions of Religion

Every society uses religious imagery and rhetoric to promote conformity. Societies give many cultural norms - especially those that deal with marriage and reproduction are given religions justification and control. Religion even legitimizes the political system. In medieval Europe, in fact monarchs claimed to rule by divine right Few of today's political leaders invoke religion so explicitly, but many publicly ask for God's blessing, implying to audiences that their effort are just and right. Many of the society's values and norms as well as its legal prohibitions have their source in religious morality. Specifically, the secular laws, which prohibit murder, manslaughter, theft, rape, assault, false witnessing or evidence, and so on and so forth, are derived from other prophetic or messianic sources. Because social rules and laws are backed up by religious norms and doctrine, the latter acquires a much greater in their ability to control behavior.

Since people link secular laws with divine authority and actually come to see these laws as the laws of God or god-given laws, and their contravention as contravention against God himself, they tend to readily obey them, If only to escape divine judgments and personal condemnation. When government draws moral authority from religion, it legitimizes political authority. For centuries, monarchs sought a religious seal of approval to 'divinely sanction' their reign. In contemporary religious states, political policies are dictated by religious interpretation; thus, the government is imbued with sacred. In these circumstances, a person who questions government

authority is also questioning religious authority. Therefore, the two social institutions (government and religion) come together as powerful mechanisms of social control.

Psychological Functions of Religion

Also, religion helps provide a sense of emotional security, acting much like he security blanket from which a small child derives comfort when distressed (Barber, 2013). The security blanket idea succeeds in explaining why some situations evoke a religious response. It encompasses the known physiological effects of religious rituals and beliefs. It also helps us to understand why religion is in decline in most developed countries where citizens enjoy an exceptionally good standard of living. Like a child's security blanket, religious prayers offer comfort when people are distressed. World religions generally offer peace of mind. Recent research shows that they can deliver, although the same benefits are available through secular techniques of relaxation and mediation.

Religion provides individuals with emotional support during major events in their lives. Religious rituals and ceremonies such as baptism, weddings, and funerals normally mark births, marriages, and deaths. When misfortune strikes such as when death occurs, the religious group is often a veritable source of psychological support. Members would usually gather to provide company for over a period in order to ward off loneliness, fear and helplessness, and to offer labor services in the course of burial. Their psychological support helps the bereaved family to cope and adjust to the dislocation that has taken place.

Religion helps in stressed reduction. Research has shown that religious prayers function as anti-stress mechanism. They have also demonstrated that individual prayers as well as attending Church services reduces blood pressure, a reliable index of reduced psychological stress. Elevated blood pressure causes heart disease and heart disease is the number one killer in many developing and developed countries. This buttresses Marx's political idea of religion as a calming opiate of the people (Barber, 2013). The implication of this is that prayers and rituals may contribute directly to health and long life. Moreover, the availability of an effective stress-reduction mechanism helps people to feel more confident and optimistic about their lives, a frame of mind that yields health dividends. Additionally, religious beliefs promote positive

personal behaviors, which can lead to a sound social morality, although the relationship between religious adherence and responsible social behavior is not statistically clear.

Providing Meaning and Purpose

Religious beliefs offer the comforting sense that the vulnerable human condition serves some greater purpose. Strengthened by such conviction, people are less likely to despair when confronted by life's calamities. For this reason, major life – course transitions – including birth, marriage, and death – are usually marked by religious observances that enhance our spiritual awareness.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit provides a general introduction of religion with emphasis on the definition of religion, characteristics emphases in the definition of religion, typology of religious beliefs, aim for the study of religion and functions of religion in the Society. Religion is seen as an indispensable institution in the society despite of its positive and negative influences.

5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points of this unit:

- Religion can be defined from various perspectives.
- There are six types of religious beliefs: These include: deism, humanism, monism, theism, polytheism and henotheism
- Most functions of religion are sociological

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Define religion with reference to its sociological, theological, psychological, phenomenological, anthropological, and philosophical definitions.
2. Does religion have any function(s) in human society? Explain.
3. State briefly the sociological and theological definitions of religion.
1. Briefly explain the various types of religions that are regarded as world religions.
2. What are the functions of religion in Nigerian society?

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UNIT 2: THE ELEMENTS OF RELIGION

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main content

    3.1 The Structural Elements of Religion

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

7.0 References/further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We had discussed the nature of Religious beliefs in the previous unit. Religion, be it Christianity, Judaism, African traditional religion etc possessed elements that are very fundamental to its continued sustenance. We will therefore identify and discuss these basic elements of Religion.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of the unit you should be able to:

- Explain the various elements of Religion
- Define the role which these elements play in sustaining religion in the society

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Structural Elements of Religion

Religion all over the world has been found to comprise of four structural elements. The elements as identified by Eddiefloy include; Belief, ritual, emotions and organization. Beliefs are strongly held conviction by the people who are adherents to a religion that their object of worship is capable of solving their problems. Religions of the world are based on belief and the recognition and creation of a sacred supernatural being. The sacred supernatural being is therefore venerated and worship by followers. Indeed, without belief, there would be no religion. Ritual as an element of Religion refers to religious acts, ceremonial practices and customs that are geared towards the worship of the sacred. Religious rituals are a way of venerating and honouring the sacred.

Rituals reaffirm the total commitment of adherents and reinforce their belief in the sacredness of the object being worshiped. They constitute practical avenues where members demonstrate their strong religious belief. Normally, religious rituals require the observance of certain special types of behaviour such as prayers, offering of sacrifices, observance of feast, meditations and the wearing of particular clothes. Ritual observance is identified with groups and sects that practice particular religious doctrines. Among the Roman Catholic Churches in the world, several rituals exist inform of sacraments which members are obliged to partake, for example, the ritual of baptism, the consecration of the holy Eucharist, the genuflection in the church are seeing as rituals that must be imbibed by all practicing Catholics. A very important function of ritual is that it brings faithful together for mutual stimulation and motivation and for reaffirming their belief in the power of the sacred object of worship.

Rituals also provide an avenue for expression of emotional unity and open declaration that members have absolute commitment to the supernatural being which is being worshipped. The third element of religion is emotions. This is a reference to the spirit of reverence, humility, ecstasy, excitement and even terror that is evoked in the believer as he presents himself in the presence of the sacred. The notion that one is present in the midst of the sacred evokes behavior that is considered appropriate for the occasion. When faithful engage in religious rituals and

ceremonies, there is a tendency for them to become engrossed by the presence of the sacred. At such a period, individuals are emotionally attached to each other and may be persuaded to do whatever their leaders would ask them to do. This is because they are at this point overshadowed by the presence of the supernatural. You will find that most religious conflicts in Nigeria involving Christians and Muslims often commence immediately after religious meetings. They are made to be overwhelmed by the presence of the sacred as they are psyched to consider their fellow brothers who do not belong to their faith as unbelievers who deserve no fairer treatment but to be eliminated from the surface of the earth.

To Christians, God is emotional as he does not want his own to suffer. Emotion therefore becomes an important element of Religion. The fourth element of religion is organization. All Religions are characterized by some form of organization. There are trained officials; priests, cardinals, Bishops, pastors, church assistants, catechists, church leaders etc who occupy the church hierarchy with full powers and authority vested in them. There are also ordinances, rules and laws that govern the day to day conduct of members. Indeed, depending on the type of society one comes from, religion exhibit different degrees of organization. In developed societies of the west, religion is organized along Bureaucratic lines with a list of officials and hierarchy. There are rules that govern relationship among members. In developing societies however, religion is not differentiated in terms of organization.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Religion as an integral part of culture of a society has four basic structural elements. These elements include belief, emotions, ritual and organization. Beliefs provide the basic foundations for religious faith and trust in the ability of the supernatural to control and intervene in situations. Rituals provide an avenue for the re-enactment of religious belief and open proclamation of adherents in the ability of the object of worship. During rituals and ceremonies, emotions are easily displayed as adherents become overwhelmed by the presence of the sacred. Religions are also characterized by some form of organization. There is a hierarchy of officials and a body of rules and regulations which govern the conduct of members.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we identified and explained the structural elements of Religion. These elements include Rituals, Belief, emotions and organization. These elements provide the necessary structural foundations for the continued relevance and sustenance of Religion in the society.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. List and explain the structural elements of Religion as discussed in this unit.
2. Discuss ritual as an element of Religion.

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UNIT 3: HISTORY OF WORLD RELIGIONS

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

    3.1 Taoism

    3.2 Islam

    3.3 Judaism

    3.4 Christianity

    3.5 African Traditional Religion

    3.6 Hinduism

    3.7 Buddhism

    3.8 Confucianism

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In unit previous we discussed the definition of religion and the difficulties one face in defining religion. We also treated the types of religious beliefs, the purpose for study religion and functions of religion in the society. In this unit, our focus will be on the taxonomy of world religious traditions such as: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shintoism, African Traditional Religion, Judaism, Christianity, these religions are the revealed religious traditions of the world.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the teaching of Taoism
- Discuss the history of Islam
- Expatiate on the doctrines of Judaism
- State how Christianity was introduced into Africa
- Explain the nature of African traditional religion
- List the doctrines of Hinduism
- Give the major features of Buddhism
- Highlight the teaching of Confucianism

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Taoism

Taoism also known as Daoism is a tradition of Chinese philosophy and Chinese religion, first arising in about the 4th century BC. Among native Chinese schools of thought, the influence of Daoism has been second only to that of Confucianism. Daoism as now understood consists of two separate streams, a school of philosophical thought originating in the classical age of Zhou dynasty China, and a system of religious belief arising some 500 years later in the Han dynasty. These two are normally termed philosophical and religious Daoism and the *Daoist* basis of the latter lies in the revelation from the sage *Laozi t*hat a *Daoist* called *Zhang Daoling* claimed to have received in AD 142 in the Sichuan Mountains. Philosophical Daoism has therefore been preserved beneath a mass of religious accretions derived from native Chinese paganism, shamanism, divination, and superstition; while religious Daoism is now a thriving creed interwoven with Chinese popular culture.

Philosophical Daoism arose out of the intellectual ferment of the Zhou dynasty, in which various philosophical schools competed to advise rulers and others on the correct way to live and

govern in a world racked by political and social change. Its likely origins are in the so-called *Yangist* school, despised by Mencius, who caricatured its doctrines by declaring that *Yangists* would not pluck a hair from their own heads to benefit the whole world. In fact, it apparently preached self-cultivation and withdrawal to private life, drawing on a native Chinese tradition of mysticism and contemplative exercises resembling *yoga*.

This tradition was developed in the late 4th century BC by the philosopher *Zhuangzi* (*Chuang-tzu*), who began as a *Yangist*. Soon after, an anonymous thinker, perhaps a minor official, produced a book of related reflections under the name of the semi-mythical figure *Laozi* (*Lao-tzu*), who had allegedly instructed Confucius. Evidence suggests that while *Zhuangzi* saw his beliefs as purely for private use, *Laozi* presented his as an explicit manual of government.

3.2 Islam

The Arabic word Islam literally means "surrender" or "submission". As the name of the religion, it is understood to mean "surrender or submission to God". One who has thus surrendered is a Muslim. In theory, all that is necessary for one to become a Muslim is to recite sincerely the short statement of faith known as the *shahadah*: I witness that there is no god but God (Allah) and that Muhammad is the Messenger of God. Although in an historical sense Muslims regard their religion as dating from the time of Muhammad in the early 7th century AD, in a religious sense they see it as identical with the true monotheism which prophets before Muhammad, such as Abraham (Ibrahim), Moses (Musa), and Jesus (Isa), had taught. In the Koran, Abraham is referred to as a Muslim. The followers of these and other prophets are held to have corrupted their teachings, but God in His mercy sent Muhammad to call humanity yet again to the truth.

Islam has five duties, which traditionally are seen as obligatory for all Muslims, although some mystics (Sufis) have allegorized them, and many Muslims observe them only partially. These duties are called five pillars of Islam: bearing witness to the unity and uniqueness of God and to the prophethood of Muhammad (*shahadah*); prayer at the prescribed times each day *(salat);* fasting during the month of Ramadan (*sawm*); pilgrimage to Mecca, and the performance of certain prescribed rituals in and around Mecca at a specified time of the year (hajj); and

paying a certain amount out of one's wealth as alms for the poor and some other categories of Muslims (*zakat*). The first of these pillars balances external action (the recitation of the *shahadah*) with internal conviction (although different groups within Islam have held different views about the relative importance of recitation and belief in the *shahadah* the other four, although they take belief for granted, consist predominantly of external acts.

There are other duties and practices regarded as obligatory. As in Judaism, the eating of pork is prohibited and male circumcision is the norm (the latter is not mentioned in the Koran). Consumption of alcohol is forbidden. Meat must be slaughtered according to an approved ritual or else it is not *halal*. In some Muslim communities, practices, which are essentially local customs, have come to be identified as Islamic: the wearing of a sari, for example. There are variant practices concerning the covering of the head or face of a woman in public. Koranic texts that address the issue are interpreted by some to mean that the entire head and face of a woman should be covered, by others as indicating that some sort of veil or headscarf should be worn. Others argue that the Koran does not require any such covering.

3.3 Judaism

Judaism is the religious culture of the Jews (also known as the people of Israel); one of the worlds is oldest continuing religious traditions. Judaism originated in the land of Israel (also known as Palestine) in the Middle East in c. 1800 BC. Due to invasions and migration, today's Jewish communities are found all around the world. In mid-1993, the total world Jewish population was some 14.5 million, of whom about 6.8 million lived in North America, more than 3.6 million in Israel, and more than 1.9 million in the countries of the former Soviet Union, the three largest centres of Jewish settlement. Just fewer than 1 million Jews lived in the rest of Europe, most of them in France and Great Britain, and 600,000 in the rest of Asia. Around 1.1 million Jews lived in Central and South America, and about 200,000 in Africa.

As a rich and complex religious tradition, Judaism has never been monolithic. Its various historical forms nonetheless have shared certain characteristic features. The most essential of these is a radical monotheism, that is, the belief that a single, transcendent God created the universe and continues providentially to govern it. Underpinning this monotheism is the

teleological conviction that the world is both intelligible and purposive, because a single divine intelligence stands behind it. There is nothing that humanity experience that is capricious; everything ultimately has meaning. The mind of God is manifest to the traditional Jew in both the natural order, through creation, and the social-historical order, through revelation. The same God who created the world revealed Himself to the Israelites at Mount Sinai.

The content of that revelation is the Torah revealed instruction, the core of the Hebrew Bible), God's will for humankind expressed in commandments (*mizvoth*) by which individuals are to regulate their lives in interacting with one another and with God. By living in accordance with God's laws and submitting to the divine will, humanity can become a harmonious part of the cosmos. A second major concept in Judaism is that of the covenant (*berith*), or contractual agreement, between God and the Jewish people. According to tradition, the God of creation entered into a special relationship with the Jewish people at Sinai. They would acknowledge God as their sole ultimate king and legislator, agreeing to obey His laws; God, in turn, would acknowledge Israel as His particular people, and be especially mindful of them.

Both biblical authors and later Jewish tradition view this covenant in a universal context. Only after successive failures to establish a covenant with rebellious humanity did God turn to a particular segment of it. Israel is to be a "kingdom of priests", and the ideal social order that it establishes in accordance with the divine laws is to be a model for the human race. Israel thus stands between God and humanity, representing each to the other. The idea of the covenant also determines the way in which both nature and history traditionally have been viewed in Judaism. Israel's well- being is seen to depend on obedience to God's commandments. Both natural and historical events that befall Israel are interpreted as emanating from God and as influenced by Israel's religious behaviour.

A direct causal connection is thus made between human behaviour and human destiny. This perspective intensifies the problem of theodicy (God's justice) in Judaism, because the historical experience of both individuals and the Jewish people has frequently been interpreted as being one of suffering. Much Jewish religious thought, from the biblical Book of Job onward, has been preoccupied with the problem of affirming justice and meaning in the face of apparent injustice. In time, the problem was mitigated by the belief that virtue and obedience ultimately would be rewarded and sin punished by divine judgment after death, thereby redressing

inequities in this world. The indignities of foreign domination and forced exile from the land of Israel suffered by the Jewish people would be redressed at the end of time, when God will send His Messiah (*mashiah*, from the royal house of David, to redeem the Jews and restore them to sovereignty in their land.

Although all forms of Judaism have been rooted in the Hebrew Bible (referred to by Jews as the *Tanach*, an acronym for its three sections: Torah, the Pentateuch; *Naviim*, the prophetic literature; and *Ketubi* the other writings, it would be an error to think of Judaism as simply the "religion of The Book". Contemporary Judaism is ultimately derived from the rabbinic movement of the first centuries of the Christian era in Palestine and Babylonia and is therefore called rabbinic Judaism. A rabbi (rabbi meaning "my teacher" in Aramaic and Hebrew) is a Jewish sage adept in studying the Scriptures. Jewish tradition maintains that God revealed to Moses on Sinai a twofold Torah. In addition to the written Torah (Scripture), God revealed an oral Torah, faithfully transmitted by word of mouth in an unbroken chain from Moses to successive generations, from master to disciple, and preserved now among the rabbis themselves.

The oral Torah was encapsulated in the *Mishnah* (that which is learnt or memorized), the earliest document of rabbinic literature, edited in Palestine at the turn of the 3rd century. Subsequent rabbinic study of the *Mishnah* in Palestine and Babylonia generated the Talmud (that which is studied), a wide-ranging commentary on the *Mishnah*. It later became known as the *Gemara* (Aramaic for learning or completion), and today the term "Talmud" is often used to refer to the *Mishnah* and *Gemara* together. Two *Talmuds* were produced: the Palestinian or Yerushalmi (of Jerusalem) Talmud, completed around 450 CE, and the Babylonian Talmud, completed around 550 CE, which is larger and considered to be more authoritative. The Talmud is the foundation document of rabbinic Judaism. Early rabbinic writings also include exegetical and homiletical commentaries on Scripture like the Midrashim and the Midrash and several Aramaic translations of the Pentateuch and other scriptural books like the Targums.

3.4 Christianity

Christianity is a major world religion, having substantial representation in all the populated continents of the globe. Its total membership may exceed 1.7 billion people. Like any system of

beliefs and values, Christianity is in many ways comprehensible only from the inside to those who share the beliefs and strive to live by the values; and a description that would ignore these "inside" aspects of it would not be historically faithful. To a degree that those on the inside often fail to recognize, however, such a system of beliefs and values can also be described in a way that makes sense to an interested observer who even cannot share their outlook.

Creeds are authoritative summaries of the principal articles of faith of various Churches or bodies of believers. As religions develop, originally simple doctrines are subject to elaboration and interpretation that cause differences of opinion. Detailed creeds become necessary to emphasize the differences between the tenets of schismatic branches and to serve as formulations of belief when liturgical usage, as in the administration of baptism, requires a profession of faith. In the Christian Church, the Apostles' Creed was the earliest summation of doctrine; it has been used with only minor variations since the 2nd century. In addition to the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Athanasian Creed are in common use in the Roman Catholic liturgy. In the Orthodox Church, the only creed formally adopted was the Nicene Creed, without the insertion of filioque in connection with the source of the Holy Spirit.

With the Reformation, the establishment of the various Protestant Churches necessitated the formulation of new creeds, which, because of the many differences in theology and doctrine, were much longer than the creeds of the ancient Church. The Augsburg Confession is accepted by Lutherans throughout the world, as is the Smaller Catechism of Martin Luther. The Formula of Concord, accepted by most early Lutherans, is now more limited in acceptance. The doctrines of the Church of England are summarized in the Thirty-Nine Articles, and those of the Presbyterians, in the Westminster Confession. Most Reformed Churches of Europe subscribe to the Helvetica Posterior, or Second Helvetic Confession, of the Swiss reformer Heinrich Bullinger, and most Calvinists accept the Heidelberg Catechism.

3.5 African Traditional Religion

As mentioned above, the three religions of Nigeria are ATR, Islam, and Christianity. Their co-existence has been relatively peaceful until fairly recently. The problem between these religions is relatively recent, though for ATR and Islam, their contact with each other is about a

thousand years. Religious pluralism in the world today characterized by mutual suspicion, intolerance, exclusivism and uncompromising attitude, has made itself felt today in Nigeria in all these manifestations. We shall see more of this when we treat the relationship between the three below. Here lies the root of the problem of religious pluralism. Here lie the claim and counter-claim of uniqueness and possession of the entire religious truth. This claim of possessing the truth either between the religious or between different sects within one religion has led to a lot of bloodshed. Hans King writes:

> No question in the history of the Churches and of religions has led to so many disputes and bloody conflicts, indeed, "religious wars" as the question about the truth. Blind zeal for truth in all periods and in all Churches and religions, has ruthlessly injured, burned, destroyed and murdered. Conversely, a weary forgetfulness of truth has had consequently a loss of orientation and norms, so that many no longer believed in anything.

It is this situation that has given religion a very "bad name" and has caused in many, an attitude of "practical indifference. Many historians of comparative religion have adopted the attitude that all religions are equal and bring all equally to salvation. Mahatma Ghandi writes that all religions are likes "rivers that meet in the same ocean…if we look to the aim, there is no difference among religions. Again, over this problem, *Sergio Bocchini* asks: "*Una* religion vale l'altra?" (Is one religion as good as another is?) to this question, one ought to affirm the undeniable fact that all religions contain some truth which must respected but equally clear is the fact that all cannot be equal, even from the point of view of their origin and from the fact as to whether they are revealed or natural; grace is always higher than nature. Again, with regard to their differences, for example, concept of God and of salvation, some are so basic and contradictory that not all can be equally correct. Thus, all non-Christian religions contain some truths even if not the whole truth. Vatican Council II says:

> Men look to the various religions for answers to…profound mysteries of the human conditions…other religions…found everywhere strive variously to answer

the restless searching's of the human heart by proposing "ways" which consist of teaching, rules of life, and sacred ceremonies…The Catholic Church rejects nothing which is true and holy in these religions.

As to the position of the Church among these various religions, we shall go into that as we discuss Christian response through dialogue. What this section wishes to affirm is that religious truth is found in all religions though the degree differs. Not all religions are equal but they agree on this one point, that religion is man's search for God or the ultimate reality.

3.6 Hinduism

Hinduism is a religious tradition of Indian origin, comprising the beliefs and practices of Hindus. The word Hindu is derived from the River *Sindhu*, or Indus. The geographical term was Al-Hind, and the people of the land east of the Indus were therefore called Hindus. This was not initially a religious label. The word Hinduism is an English word of more recent origin. Hinduism entered the English language in the early 19th century to describe the beliefs and practices of those residents of India who had not converted to Islam or Christianity and did not practise Judaism or Zoroastrianism. Hindus themselves prefer to use the Sanskrit term, *sanatana* dharma for their religious tradition. *Sanatana* dharma is often translated into English as "eternal tradition" or "eternal religion" but the translation of dharma as "tradition" or "religion" gives an extremely limited, even mistaken, sense of the word.

Dharma has many meanings in Sanskrit, the language of some of the Hindu scriptures, including "moral order", "duty", and "right action". The Hindu community today is found primarily in India, Nepal, and Bali in the Indonesian archipelago. Substantial Hindu communities are present in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Mauritius, Fiji, the Caribbean, East Africa, and South Africa. Scattered Hindu communities are found in most parts of the Western world. Hindus today number nearly 900 million, including about 20 million who live outside India, making them the third largest religious community in the world, after Christians and Muslims. Three other religions that originated in India branched off from Hinduism: Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism.

Belief in Brahman: The Ultimate Reality Various schools have contributed to Hindu thought, each school with a different emphasis. The school known as Vedanta has been the standard form of intellectual Hinduism. According to Vedanta, the highest aim of existence is the realization of the identity or union of the individual's innermost self (atman) with the ultimate reality. Although Vedanta states that this ultimate reality is beyond having a name, the word Brahman is used to refer to it. Reincarnation in Hinduism is referred to as *Samsara*. According to Hinduism, this current life is merely one link in a chain of lives that extends far into the past and projects far into the future.

The point of origin of this chain cannot be determined. The process of involvement in the universe-the chain of births and deaths-is called *samsara. Samsara* is caused by a lack of knowledge of the true self and resultant desire for fulfilment outside self. We continue to embody ourselves, or be reborn, in this infinite and eternal universe because of these unfulfilled desires. The chain of births lets us resume the pursuit. The law that governs *samsara* is called karma. Each birth and death we undergo is determined by the balance sheet of our karma-that is, in accordance with the actions performed and the dispositions acquired in the past. The belief in Karma is a crucial Hindu concept. According to the doctrine of karma, our present condition in life is the consequence of the actions of our previous lives. The choices we have made in the past directly affect our condition in this life, and the choices we make today and thereafter will have consequences for our future lives in *samsara*.

An understanding of this interconnection, according to Hindu teachings, can lead an individual towards right choices, deeds, thoughts, and desires, without the need for an external set of commandments. The principle of karma provides the basic framework for Hindu ethics. The word karma is sometimes translated into English as "destiny", but karma does not imply the absence of free will or freedom of action that destiny does. Under the doctrine of karma, the ability to make choices remains with the individual. When we cause pain or injury, we add to the karmic debt we carry into our future lives. When we give to others in a genuine way, we lighten our karmic load. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, an important Hindu text, Krishna states that the best way to be free of debt is by selfless action, or by dedicating every action as an offering to Krishna himself.

In addition, human beings can purify themselves of karmic debt through different *yogas* (disciplines*), kriyas* (purification processes), and *bhakti* (devotions). Hindu thought takes the personality of the seeker as the starting point. It divides human personalities into types dominated by physicality, activity, emotionality, or intellectuality. The composition of our personality intuitively predisposes us to a type of *yoga*, that is, a path we might follow to achieve union with Brahman. Although many people associate the word yoga with a physical discipline, in its original Hindu meaning yoga refers to any technique that unites the seeker with the ultimate reality.

While physical fitness buffs may seek such a union by practising *Hatha yoga*, people with different personality traits have other choices. For the action-oriented person there is Karma yoga, the yoga of action, which calls for a life of selfless deeds and actions appropriate to the person's station in life. For the person of feeling, *Bhakti yoga,* the yoga of devotion, calls for unconditional love for a personal divinity. For the person of thought, *Jnana yoga*, the yoga of knowledge, calls for spiritual and physical discipline intended to bring direct insight into ultimate reality. The *yogas* do not represent tightly sealed compartments, merely convenient classifications. A well-balanced personality might well employ all four. These *yogas* are sometimes called *margas* (paths), suggesting that the same destination can be approached by more than one route, and indeed by more than one mode of travel.

3.7 Buddhism

Buddhism, a major world religion, founded in north-eastern India and based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, who is known as the Buddha, or the Enlightened One. Though Buddhism originated as a monastic movement within the dominant Brahman tradition of the day, it quickly developed in a distinctive direction. The Buddha not only rejected significant aspects of Brahmanic philosophy, but also challenged the authority of the priesthood, denied the validity of the Vedic scriptures, and rejected the sacrificial cult based on them. Moreover, he opened his movement to members of all castes, denying that a person's spiritual worth is a matter of birth. Gautama was born around 560 BC in Northern India.

His father was a king from the *Sakya* clan and by all standards; he was from a background of opulence and luxury. At the age of 16, he got married to a princess called *Yasodara* who bore him a son named *Rahula*. On his 29th birthday, he came face to face with some of the harsh realities of life when for the first time he saw a sick man, an old man, and a dead man. This made him to realize the subjectivity of all human beings to birth, disease, and death. This marked a turning point in his life as he turned to seek a panacea to the problem. Seeing all his possessions as impediments, he renounced them and went in search of peace. He went through much unsuccessful self-denial until under the Bo tree; he attained the state called 'nirvana'.

The major feature of Buddhism is the concept of the Four Noble Truths. Four Noble Truths, which in Sanskrit is called *Catvari-Arya-Satyani*, is the four fundamental principles of Buddhism, expounded by the Buddha first sermon in the deer park at Benares after the enlightment. They are as follows: (1) The Holy Truth of Suffering: all existence is suffering *(dukkha)*; (2) The Holy Truth of the Cause of Suffering: the cause *(samudaya)* of suffering is ignorant craving *(tanha)* for pleasure, for perpetuating life, and an inclination to assume that everything ends at death; (3) The Holy Truth of the Suppression of Suffering: suffering can be suppressed *(nirodha)* by withdrawal from and renunciation of craving; (4) The Holy Truth of the Way to the Suppression of Suffering. The path *(magga)* that leads to the suppression of suffering is the Noble Eightfold Path.

Although interpreted in various ways, these precepts are accepted by all schools of Buddhism, and essentially summarize the religion. They are held to provide the key to attainment of nirvana. The Buddhist sacred texts called the *tipitaka* comprise of 31 books that are organized into three collections called the *Vinaya Pitaka* (basket of discipline), the *Sutta Pitaka* (basket of discourses), and the *Abhidhama Pitaka* (basket of ultimate doctrines). Presently, Buddhism has large population of followers especially in countries like Thailand, China, Mongolia, and Sri-Lanka. Some of the states in America have Buddhist temples, which attest to the emergence of Buddhism in the United States.

3.8 Confucianism

Confucius, which in Chinese is called *Kongfuzi,* was a Chinese philosopher, founder of Confucianism and one of the most influential figures in Chinese history. According to tradition, Confucius was born in the state of Lu of the noble Kong clan. His original name was *Kong Qiu*. Accounts of his life record that his father, commander of a district in Lu, died three years after Confucius was born, leaving the family in poverty; but Confucius nevertheless received a fine education, for *Lu* was famous for preserving the state traditions of the *Zhou* dynasty. He was married at the age of 19 and had one son and two daughters.

During the four years immediately after his marriage, poverty reportedly compelled him to perform menial labours for the chief of the district in which he lived. His mother died in 527 BC, and after a period of mourning, he began his career as a teacher, usually travelling about and instructing the small body of disciples that had gathered around him. His fame as a man of learning and character with great reverence for traditional ideals and customs soon spread through the municipality of Lu. Living as he did in the second half of the Zhou dynasty, when central government had degenerated in China and intrigue and vice were rampant, Confucius deplored the contemporary disorder and lack of moral standards.

He came to believe that the only remedy was to convert people once more to the principles and precepts of the sages of antiquity. He therefore lectured to his pupils on the ancient classics of Chinese literature. He also stressed the importance of music, for the Chinese music of this time had ceremonial and religious functions important in state functions and worship. He taught the great value of the power of example. Rulers, he said, can be great only if they themselves lead exemplary lives, and were they willing to be guided by moral principles, their states would inevitably attract citizens and become prosperous and happy.

One popular tradition about Confucius's life states that at the age of 50 he was appointed magistrate of *Zhongdu*, and the next year minister of crime of the state of Lu. His administration was successful; reforms were introduced, justice was fairly dispensed, and crime was almost eliminated. So powerful did Lu become that the ruler of a neighbouring state manoeuvred to secure the minister's dismissal. It is more likely, however, that he was only a minor official in Lu. In any case, Confucius left his office in 496 BC, travelling about and teaching, vainly hoping

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that some other prince would allow him to undertake measures of reform. In 484 BC, after a fruitless search for an ideal ruler, he returned for the last time to Lu. He spent the remaining years of his life in retirement, writing commentaries on the classics. He died in Lu and was buried in a tomb at *Qufu*, Shandong.

The entire teaching of Confucius was practical and ethical, rather than religious. He claimed to be a restorer of ancient morality and held that proper outward acts based on the five virtues of kindness, uprightness, decorum, wisdom, and faithfulness constitute the whole of human duty. Reverence for parents, living and dead, was one of his key concepts. His view of government was paternalistic, and he enjoined all individuals to observe carefully their duties towards the state. In subsequent centuries, his teachings exerted a powerful influence on Chinese philosophy and the history of China. The principles of Confucianism are contained in the nine ancient Chinese works handed down by Confucius and his followers. These writings can be divided into two groups: the Five Classics and the Four Books. The *Wujing* (Five Classics), which originated before the time of Confucius, consist of the *Yijing* or *Ching* (Book of Changes), *Shujing* (Book of Documents), *Shijing* (Book of Poetry), *Liji* (Book of Rites), and *Chunqiu* (Spring and Autumn Annals).

The *Yijing* is a manual of divination probably first compiled under the Shang dynasty before the 11th century BC; its supplementary philosophical portion, contained in a series of appendices, may have been written later by Confucius and his disciples. The *Shujing* is a collection of ancient historical documents, and the *Shijing*, an anthology of ancient poems. The *Liji* deals with the principles of conduct, including those for public and private ceremonies; it was destroyed in the 3rd century BC, but presumably, much of its material was preserved in the present compilation, which dates from the Han dynasty. The *Chunqiu*, the only work reputedly compiled by Confucius himself, is a chronicle of major historical events in Confucius's home state of Lu and elsewhere in feudal China from the 8th century BC to Confucius's death early in the 5th century BC.

The *Sishu* (Four Books); compilations of the sayings of Confucius and Mencius and of commentaries by followers on their teachings, are the *Lunyu* (Analects), a collection of maxims by Confucius that form the basis of his moral and political philosophy; *Daxue* (The Great Learning) and *Zhongyong* (The Doctrine of the Mean), containing some of Confucius's

philosophical utterances arranged systematically with comments and expositions by his disciples; and the Mengzi (Book of Mencius), containing the teachings of one of Confucius's great followers. Confucius's own teachings were passed on as oral traditions and collated in the *Lunyu.* They show him as a self-confessed moral conservative in a turbulent age, appalled at the political chaos and social changes, which followed the disintegration of the Zhou kingdom into warring feudal states.

This turbulence had forced Confucius and others to start thinking about the lost "Way of the Ancient Kings" of *Zhou*, and how to restore it, obliging them to become philosophical innovators despite themselves. For Confucius, social and political order was the same, and the personal virtue of rulers and people ensured the health of the state. His keys to good order were rites (li) and music, for Chinese music of the period was central to religious and official rites, and Confucius valued both its ritual function and its power to move men's hearts. He also valued the poems of ancient Chinese literature (most of which were sung to music) as civilizing and edifying influences. Allied to this was his emphasis on the rectification of names, ensuring that the correct social and other distinctions were maintained by using only the appropriate words for them.

A state provided with the most befitting rites and music, selected from the various available traditions, would automatically produce virtuous and happy citizens; laws would be almost unnecessary because disputes would never arise. Confucius roamed China seeking in vain for a sympathetic ruler to adopt his scheme. The keynote of Confucian ethics is term, variously translated as "love", "goodness", "humanity", and "human-heartedness". *Ren* is a supreme virtue representing human qualities at their best; in Confucius's time, it apparently was associated with the ruling class and had a meaning more like "nobility", but its usage soon broadened. In human relations, construed as those between one person and another, term is manifested in *zhong*, or faithfulness to oneself and others, and *shu*, or altruism, best expressed in the Confucian golden rule, "Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself".

Other important Confucian virtues include righteousness (i), propriety (ii), integrity (iii), and filial piety (iv). One who possesses all these virtues becomes a *junzi* (perfect man). Politically, Confucius advocated a paternalistic government in which the sovereign is benevolent and honourable and the subjects are respectful and obedient. A ruler should cultivate moral

perfection in order to set a good example to the people, and to attract subjects to swell his realm. In education, Confucius upheld a theory, which was remarkable for the feudal period, in which he lived, that "in education, there is no class distinction".

4.0 CONCLUSION

This unit provides a general introduction of world religions with emphasis on the types of religions, their doctrines and teachings, history of religion, religious beliefs and practices. These world religions include: Taoism, Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and African traditional religion, Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism. These are the living religions of the world.

5.0 SUMMARY

- Taoism also known as Daoism is a tradition of Chinese philosophy and Chinese religion, first arising in about the 4th century BC.

- Philosophical Daoism arose out of the intellectual ferment of the Zhou dynasty, in which various philosophical schools competed to advise rulers and others on the correct way to live and govern in a world racked by political and social change.

- The Arabic word Islam literally means "surrender" or "submission". As the name of the religion, it is understood to mean "surrender or submission to God".

- Judaism is the religious culture of the Jews (also known as the people of Israel); one of the worlds is oldest continuing religious traditions. Judaism originated in the land of Israel (also known as Palestine) in the Middle East in c. 1800 BC.

- Christianity is a major world religion, having substantial representation in all the populated continents of the globe.

- African traditional religion is the religion practiced by the Africans on timely memorial.

- Hinduism is a religious tradition of Indian origin, comprising the beliefs and practices of Hindus. The word Hindu is derived from the River Sindhu, or Indus. The geographical term was Al-Hind, and the people of the land east of the Indus were therefore called Hindus.

- Buddhism, a major world religion, founded in north-eastern India and based on the teachings of Siddhartha Gautama, who is known as the Buddha, or the Enlightened One. Though Buddhism originated as a monastic movement within the dominant Brahman tradition of the day, it quickly developed in a distinctive direction.

- Confucius, which in Chinese is called Kongfuzi, was a Chinese philosopher, founder of Confucianism and one of the most influential figures in Chinese history.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Describe the geographical spread of Islam in Africa
2. List and discuss the doctrines of Hinduism
3. African religion is the indigenous religion of Africans. Discuss

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UNIT 4: NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS INN NIGERIA

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of new religious movements (NRMs) has been treated harshly in many parts of the world. In Africa, new religious movements are groups often described as cults who claim to be persecuted simply because of their faith. This unit examines new religious movements (NRMs), with particular emphasis on Africa and Nigeria.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Defined new religious movements

- Give the typology of new religious movements

- State African attitudes to new religious movements

- Discuss the reasons for the expansion of new religious movements

- Explain the characteristics features of new religious movements

- Highlight the problems facing new religious movements in Africa

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition of New Religious Movements

The concept of new religious movement is a problematic one in that it is refers to organized attempts to mobilize human and material resources for the purpose of spreading new ideologies and sensibilities of a religious nature. The term "New" is historically relative and no longer applies to many religious groups that traditionally have been considered as such. New religious movements (NRMs), therefore, refer to principally to groups, which have achieved most publicity and notoriety. They include: the Unification Church (UC), the Children of God (COG) or Family of Love, the international Society for Krishna Consciousness (DLM), Transcental Mediation (TM), and the Rajneesh Foundation. Since new religious movements vary not vastly, impartial analysis of these groups is not easy task, and as a result, our knowledge of some of the groups tends to be rather sparse. New religious movements have been responsible for truly dramatic situation. They have also been the subject of innumerable studies and hours of debate by "politicians" all over Africa and Europe, as Iban has noted thus:

> They (politicians) constantly appear in the mass media, and yet not only would there appear to be no solution to the problem. But it does not seem possible to obtain a clear definition of what they actually are.

Although, the general perception is that there are vast armies of people whose lives have been greatly affected by these movements. In reality, their number compared to more established religions is still relatively small (Barker, 1989). In this regard, it has been observed that the

significance of new religious movements lies not in their numerical strength, for new religious movements (NRMs) in Africa have traditionally failed to emulate the success of their counterparts in some nations of Africa, but to the extent in which they demonstrate African's tolerance of religious diversity.

New religious movements refers to the wide range of groups whose religious approaches are in evident contrast to the principles, of not only well established faiths, but also of those that have attained, or are in the process of acquiring a similar status. Although, earlier generations of new religions could be recognized as "deviations" or "heresies" within the Judeo-Christian tradition, a wide range of new practices have inspired new religious movements which are generally not considered praise worthy in comparison to absolute values consolidated by the established in the West.

New religious movements are described with phrases such as "new religion", "unconventional fringe", "alternative" or "non-traditional religions", "intense religious groups" and "new religious movements", among others. The phrase new religious movements are often used in professional literature even though it has serious deficiencies. Despite the above observation, scholars have found the phrase new religious movements more convenient hence the emergence of the phrase as convenient expression to designate collective phenomena, pattern of religiosity that has become highly visible in both the West and African continent. Behind the concept lies the prominent figure of Turner, Walls described as the architect and master builder of the study of new religious movements. In Turner's words NRMS are:

> Historically new developments arising the interaction between a tribal society and its religions and are of the foreign cultures and its major religions involving some substantial departure from the classical religious traditions of both cultures concerned in order to find renewal by reworking the rejected traditions into a different religious system.

Working in the shadow of Turner drawing from her rich experience of the Nigeria religious scene defined NRMS as an indigenously created religious organization starting from social and selecting and combining local and exogenous religious elements I diverse and dynamic ways.

Turner (1991) placed the subject within a universal conspectus; Hackett derived her definition from the Nigerian situation. The phrase NRMS has been open to series of discussion to establish the appropriateness of the term. Commenting on the "newness" of the phenomena in Nigeria and indeed Africa at large, Layiwola notes that:

> The term "new" is used to describe these movements because on historical sense they are rawer that either ATR or orthodox Christianity or some Islam with which they are in constant contact and because of the fact that they do not form an integral part of or identify wholly with the major religious traditions of the area where they emerged.

Rajashekar argued in respect of the Western world (America and Europe) that a large number of the NRMS are perceived to be new because their ideas and beliefs came from non-western and non-Christian cultures. Saliba arguing in the same line said, these NRMS seems to accompany the changing socio-cultural conditions of the west and world at large where geographical boundaries are becoming less and less rigid, which give room to enhance cultural communication. Thus, people are becoming aware of religious options open to them. Secondly, she argued that the sphere of secularization might have been affected by the sudden and apparent revival of religions in the west, thus people notice the newness of NRMS with ease.

Besides, she added, that, some of the converts of this NRMS were first generation converts, thus their attitudes to some members was strange and new, especially when the conversion was taking place on a large scale. Other scholars argued that, the term movement is appropriate, because they reflect important transitions in people's lives. They cause a shift not only in the convert's previous religious allegiance but also in the behaviours of people who are affected by the change. When they become an issue discussed in the public forum and in law courts, they may also trigger modifications in social norms that could have undesirable repercussions on the relationship between the Church and state. Essentially, new religions can be an indication of social and psychological changes in the individual or society at large.

On the Jos Plateau professor Tasie and his students of the university of Jos has showed a lot of interest in the emergence of these NRMS, from their research, they coined the term *Iri-Iri*

Church movements to describe NRMS on the Plateau and Nigeria at large. By their definition *Iri-Iri* Church movements refers to:

> A range of Church starting from Church which are almost indistinguishable from the most westernized products of Christian missions to cults that are a survival of traditional pagan religions with no more than a few Christian glosses.

While the term is a fitting innovation, its usage of the term "Churches" restricts its wider application to other NRMS, which are not related to Christianity. Groups such as Eckanker and Hare Krishna (ISKCON) are not accommodated in the definition. Thus, in this presentation the phrase *Iri-Iri* Church movements remain a useful term, for our purpose NRMS shall refer to: "Religions that emerged as a result of the contact of ATR category alongside foreign religions that were brought into the environment in-situ without any indigenous influence or is in the process of been influenced. This goes further to reiterate the difficulty of a generally acceptable definition for NRMS. Thus, definitions must be made with the context of the environment of emergence or existence of NRMS taking into cognizance the necessary unique features.

3.2 Historical Development of the Emergence of New Religious Movements

New religious movements have been described as a global phenomenon which is unprecedented in history. Because of its global outlook, the phenomenon has always been presented from a regional or continental perspective taking into cognizance the varied and distinct world of their emergence other scholars group them in terms of the period of emergence maintaining the regional or continental restriction. Thus, Saliba for instance divides the history of new religious movement in the west into four periods, namely, the early western history, the middle ages, the post reformation period, and the nineteenth century. These periods saw the emergence of select movements, such as Classicism in the second century, in the Middle Ages, the Cathers and Flagellants, during the post reformation period; the NRMS were the Ranters and Shabbatean movements while the nineteenth century saw the emergence of Mormonism. Christian Science, Seventh Day Adventism, Jehovah Witnesses, Spiritualism, Unity school of

Christianity and Zen Buddhism among others. A host of other new movements that came into the west, in the twentieth century have their background in the Far East, specifically in Shamanism, Hinduism and Buddhism, they are notably divine light mission, and International society for Krishna consciousness (ISKCON), Christian oriented movements such as the Jesus people, Family of love, the unification Church, Scientology, Transcendental meditation and the worldwide Church of God. In Japan, Lande and Clarke provides an estimated two hundred new religious movements arising from the Japanese traditional religions. While in the west most NRMS are imparted, in Japan out of the estimated two hundred NRMS only the Unification Church and Hare Krishna are to be foreign origin.

In South America and the Caribbeans the interaction of Christianity with American Indians and African Traditional Religions gave birth to myriads of cults. This fit into our category of NRMS, these religions are often referred to African-American, movements some of these religious movements include Vodun, Shango, Xango, Cumina, Winti, Santeria, Rastafari and a host of others. These movements flourished in both South and North America and Europe, in the 19th and 20th centuries. Most of them have found their way back into Africa soil from where they originated, for example the Rastafari and Winti movements. On the African scene, the emergence of NRMS have attracted so much interest and scholar of history, ATR, Sociology, history of religions, Anthropology, Missiology and indeed Church history have been at work. Turner one of these pioneer scholars observed in relation to the interaction of ATR and Christianity and Islam that:

> One massive result, more extensive in the Christian context than the Islamic, has been the emergence of a wide range of new religious movements which draw on the local traditions and one or other of the introduced faiths to produce a new syntheses.

Barrett had surveyed the movements in Africa and estimated it to be about five thousand when his work was published in 1968. According to him:

Hackett provides a concise but sufficient survey of NRMS in Nigeria. In her recent studies, she traced the emergence of the new religious phenomenon in Nigeria to the African Churches, which seceded from the major protestant missions from the 1980s until 1911. Then came the Aladura and spiritual Churches, she observed further that neo-traditional movements such as the Ijo Orunmila, the Arouse cult or Edo National Church, and Godianism also existed on the NRMS scene in Nigeria. She identified the Bori cult as a NRM in Islam dominated areas of the North. She further identifies prayer Houses, the Brotherhood of the cross and ster, Amorc, Eckankar, the Grail message and Hare Krishna as some of the new philosophies that have appeared on the Nigerian religious scene. Literature on the NRMS in the Northern part of Nigeria is virtually absent, except the issue of the Maitasine group discussed py Peter Clarke. Thus, the need to study this phenomenon on the Jos Plateau, which is located in the middle belt of the country, is pertinent.

3.3 Cause of New Religious Movements

Many scholars have written to provide explanation for the emergence of the phenomenon of NRMS within the context of their emergence. This is because of the diverse but unique nature of the movement which are a universal phenomena and also particulars because they belong to certain culture and regions. Thus, a single causal factor as responsible for the phenomenon worldwide cannot be provided nor accepted by scholars. Simpson for example provides an explanation for the emergence of NRMS in the Caribbean, South and North America in the interaction of three major variables namely cultural, socio-economic and psychological factors. He argued that, culturally, the Africans and religious, independency in the post colonial period and many of such movements were not protesting against anything but are seeking positive spiritual goals. Thus, he concluded that:

Among the many factors that can be identified, there are the stress an rootlessness arising from the great cultural, social and political disturbances, bringing new values and lifestyles and from particular issues, such as employment, marriage, alcohol and above all sickness.

Thus, Turner sees the causal factors in the emergence of NRMS in Africa and indeed in other indigenous societies of the world in the historical and cultural experience of the people and the desire for spiritual and religious independency. He is behind the school of thought that sees the emergence of NRMS in African as basically religious drives toward the attainment of a satisfying religion. In Barretts words Tuner:

> Sees the phenomenon as primarily spiritual and religious movements striving for cultural and spiritual autonomy they are a creative response to the breakdown of old forms of African society by the formation of new groups for providing fellowship, security and some sanctions and guidance for living. At the same time independency can have the character of or be aligned with movements of economic or political protest, but it is the religious factor which is the root cause.

Barretts agrees with the position too. In his studies of African NRMS, Barrett collated from literature various scholars' views relating to causation. These include historical, political, economic, sociological, ethnic religious, non-religious and theological factors. From his analysis,, no single factor could provide a simple explanation to the emergence of African RNMS. He concluded therefore that:

> The explanation for the presence or absence of independency in a given area must therefore lie in the presence together of a number of factors at the same time. For each case there proves to be a whole complex of causes, some of which are of only local application whilst others are of universal significance these are in each case certain historical reasons, sociological and ethnological factors, political situations, the psychology of the dramatis personae, non-religious as well as religious causes and ultimately theological interpretations. All of these may be perfectly valid explanation.

Based on the above, no single causal factor can be given as a valid explanation for the emergence of NRMS on the global scene. Rather each NRM must be seen as a unique

phenomenon with its causal factors to be found within its *sitz-in-leben,* either a local regional or continental one. Thus, many scholars have carried out studies of these NRMS within their world of emergency. SUnler's captures the South African situation well where he sees some of them as Ethiopian oriented movements aimed mainly at political liberation of the African from white dominated South Africa. While the Zionist where groups that emerged to challenge the traditional African society in the face of urbanization. Marthnnus L. Daniel also writing from the South African perspective sees them more as agents of religious liberation rather than political protest movements.

Studies of Nigeria NRMS have been carried out by notable scholars such as Turner, Pel, Omoyajawo, and Afesimo Adogame. They provide a clear picture of the causes of emergence of the first sets of NRMS, Aladura type on the Nigerian religious scene. There are to be found in the schism of 1888 caused by pure racial matters and the need for independence and also the emergence of the Aladura and Celestial Churches which came about as a result of the socio-economic situation of the country at that time and specifically in the influenza epidemic. Rosalind Hackett provides us further details on the nature of the causes of NRMS in Nigeria in her edited work.

Gandihi's position was rooted in religious commitment rather than political expediency. To the tradition, conscience and reason must all be consulted to determine the rights and duties of humans. Rights and duties of different people in different situations are different but each human being deserves and should have equal consideration and concern. This was/is not individual rights in the western sense but rather dharma "an ethnic of community, responsibility and loyalty. Therefore, Gandhi affirmed human rights in the context of Hindu tradition. If we all discharge our duties rights will not be far to seek if leaving duties unperformed, we run after rights, they will escape us like a will O the wisp… the same teaching has been embodied by Krishna in the immortal words Action alone is thin. Leave thou the fruit severely alone."

Action is duty, fruit is the right. Clearly, modern concepts of human rights are a reflection of western influence and interfere with traditional notions of Dharma. Hindu reformers seek to interpret dharma in ways that support the notion of human rights, and this cannot be easily done. The fact remains, however, that most educated Hindus not only accepted these human rights but

insisted that they expressed age old Hindu principles. Thus, it is only within the context of Hinduism can Human rights find meaning among its followers.

3.4 Typology of New Religious Movements

There is a significant amount of diversities in what is called "New Religious Movements". However, we shall categorize the new religious movements into three groups. This include: Missionary Christianity, Nigerian Indigenous Christianity and Nigerian Pentecostalism.

Missionary Churches

Missionary Churches represents the mainline Churches established by Christian missionary agencies from Europe and America in Africa, during the 18th and 19th centuries. These Churches came with the advent of European colonialism, although there are some exceptions, for example, in Nigeria, where the first contacts between the indigenous peoples and European missionaries was in the 16th century, when Portuguese Catholic priests visited the kingdom of Bini. Although the type of Churches planted in these areas later died out because of so many reasons, cultural traces still existed till this day as a result of this early encounter. The Portuguese missionaries resorted to "a Church state" model of planting Christianity by targeting local chiefs and hoping that once these chiefs have converted, their people will follow suit.

Because the new faith did not issue from the people's religious conviction, and the Portuguese were more concerned with commerce than missionary works, Churches did not take deep roots. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to take away slaves from the West Coast of Africa to Europe. They popularized the shameful slave trade. And this was the strongest reason why the Christian message they brought was scorned and therefore ineffective. The first contact between European missionaries and what is today Ghana in the 15th century, when Portuguese Catholics visited the coast. But interest in trade superseded the evangelical imperative, and also the harsh climate conditions made European survival immensely difficult, especially as quinine, the anti-malarial drug, was yet to be discovered about this time.

In Nigeria, many attempts were made by the European missionaries to introduce Churches. In 1733, for example, the local chief in Warri reverted to indigenous religion and with him his

people because the new religion failed to end a spell of drought; they smashed a statue of Jesus to display the failure of Churches to be of practical benefits to them in their search for a meaningful and reciprocal relationship with the divine. The second attempt to introduce Christianity in Nigeria came in September, 1842 where ex-slaves from Sierra-Leone, led by the Methodist missionary, Thomas Birch Freeman, reached Badagary near Lagos. In South Africa, by the 1820s, missionary Christianity has been introduced in some remote areas by the Congregationalist of the London society (CLM).

Missionary Churches, exemplified by such organizations as the Catholic, the Anglican, the Presbyterian Churches, the Methodists, the Baptists, among others, expanded slowly but steadily, making itself attractive not just by preaching the gospel but more importantly, by bearing other valued goods, technical skills and the superiority of their guns over spears, bows and arrows. African belonging to this strand of mainstream Churches constitutes more than one half of the total Christian population. For example, Nigerian Catholics alone make up 17% of the Christian population of the continent. There are features of missionary Churches in Africa that varied in denominational incarnations and carried with them, Euro-American formalized theology, liturgy and method. Because of their long historical traditions of theological articulation and systematization, doctrines and ways of worship came last in thought categories alien to the people.

This formalized structure of dogma increasingly alienated the indigenous peoples to whom it was directed (Nwokeji, 2005). What further accentuated this feeling of religious alienation were the use of foreign language in the transmission of teachings, and the feeling of superiority by the missionaries, because missionary Churches came with the baggage of European culture. This causes them to demonize indigenous cultures and everything Nigeria. The European missionaries viewed Nigerians as "savage", "primitive", "pagan" and "heathen", who needed western/missionary intervention in overcoming their "barbaric stage" of development and access civilized stage" which the missionaries represented. While there were some exceptions to this practice such as was evident in the works of Bishop Calenso, the Anglican Bishop of South Africa, who was pro-zulu culture and suffered great persecution for it, many of the agenda of missionary Churches was to eradicate Nigerian cultures and replace them with Euro-American ways of living.

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This is not just true with material and non-material aspects of culture such as: names, drinks, organizational systems, dress codes, among others. Missionary Churches was properly engaged with the totality of African ways of life, a reason that caused schisms in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in these Churches in Nigeria. Because Nigerians were conceived of as "uncivilized", one important defining social structure of missionary Christianity was, and still is, its immersion in social services: education and hospital works. In some places like Nigeria, missionary Churches had a leadership structure that was dominated by non-Nigerians. The Church of Scotland in Calabar established the first printing press in 1846. Rev. Henry Townsend, a Church missionary society missionary Churches in Abeokuta, published the first newspaper in Nigeria, *Iwe Irohim,* on 3rd December, 1959.

Missionary Churches provide significant strategies of social transformation through the construction of schools and health care facilities in many Nigerian cities and towns, thus, creating a new cadre of educated Nigerian elites necessary to man the new bureaucracy of colonialism. These projects introduced new forms of learning and knowledge, as well as further demonized and discredited Nigerian indigenous knowledge and medical traditions and systems. The most important image of missionary Churches was, and still is, its identification with colonialism. It was perceived as a religion "the Whiteman", which came with the "Whiteman ideas" and cultural baggage of the Euro-Americans who did not separate the gospel message from western cultural practices and idiosyncrasies.

Colonialism was associated with the obnoxious trade in Nigerians as slaves. It was also seen as unjust oppressive and repressive. Churches were a well perceived as an ally or collaborator in a system of unwarranted economic, cultural and political exploitation. This was a basic contradiction in the integrity and sincerity of the gospel message the group of Whiteman and women claimed to bring. According to Isichei, there was a basic contradiction between converting Nigerians and purchasing them as slaves. Colonialism actually produced racism and discrimination based on the colour of one's skin. Many of the missionary Churches also had a policy that looked down on the Nigerians as inferior and incapable of self-management. These above listed features of missionary Churches fuelled the emergence of new strand of Churches which aimed at rectifying the social, political and religious ills in Nigeria.

African Indigenous Churches

African Indigenous Churches or Nigerian independent Churches (AICS) refers to those Churches that at the beginning of the 20th century either broke away from mission Churches or missionary/mainline Churches or were founded independently of European missionary activities and are handled by Nigerians. Some people referred to them as "Nigerian Initiater/Instituted Churches". It is generally argued that Nigerian indigenous Churches started in South African in 1884. There are so many reasons for the establishment of these Churches. First, the mission Churches expanded and took roots, the Bible was translated into indigenous languages and African appropriated the message of the gospel according to their local worldviews, often breeding conflicts and disagreements. The Nigerian worldview is intensely charismatic and alive; the gospel was interpreted in a lively manner and infused with many culturally relevant events.

Second, there have been debates about finding an appropriate nomenclature for Nigerian Independent Churches. Sometimes, they have called "Separatist Churches", a derogatory term that is only used by outsiders to signify the "Otherness" of the new Churches. But since not all of the Nigerian Independent Churches "Separated" from mission Churches, the term rarely does justice to the complexity of the phenomenon. Some of the Nigerian Independent Churches, especially in South and West Africa, seceded from the mission Churches for political and economic reasons. According to Sundkler who first adopted this class of Ethiopian Churches in 1948 posits that those who broke away from the mission Churches did primarily on racial ground or as a result of the struggle for prestige and power. Internalizing the imperative of psalm 68: 31 which reads: "Let Ethiopia hasten to raise its hands to God", the pioneers of the protests against Euro-American domination in the "colonial Churches" soon constructed "the self-government of the Nigerian Church under Nigerian leaders.

The first Nigerian Church to break away from a mission Church in Nigeria was in 1888 and the reason was to protest against Nigerian treatment of a local leader (Turner, 1979). There are many such Churches in different parts of Africa. As a result, these Churches that broke away from mission Churches for political reasons are now called "Ethiopian Churches", signifying that they are indigenous initiatives without foreign financial or doctrinal support designed to recover indigenous leadership roles and tradition. They are also African in ecclesiology, emphasizing

autonomous Christian life and administration. Thus, Ethiopianism is a movement of religious and cultural protest against mistreatment of Africans in some mission Churches. In Nigeria, a large group of the Nigerian Indigenous Churches (AICS) is called "Aladura" (praying movement, while in South Africa, a similar group is known as "Zionist Churches". Aladura movement in West Africa has its roots in the 1918 outbreak of influenza in Yorubaland in Nigeria.

This small group within the Nigerian Church resorted to prayers alone to tackle the problem posed by the influenza but soon ran into doctrinal and ritual difficulties with the authorities of the Church which kicked them out by 1925. The Aladura group emphasized prayer, healing and visionary guidance and grew rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s. The Eternal Sacred Order of the Cherubim and Seraphim Movement (C&S) was founded in 1925 by Moses Orimolade and Christianah Abiodum Akinsowon; the Church of Lord Aladura was founded in 1930s by Josiah Oshitelu (Peel, 1968); the Celestial Church of Christ (CCC) was established in 1947 by Samuel Oschoffa (1909-1985); the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star (BCS) was founded by Olumba Olumba Obu (born Ca 1909) in 1958 after a vision.

In South Africa, the "Zionist" Churches emerged primarily against political and social discrimination against Nigerians. Because Nigerians were restricted in terms of residence, labour, association and movement, the adherents of these Churches nursed the ambition to construct "Zion", a land of freedom, and a home free from oppression and subjugation. Many of these Churches had "Zion" as part of their official names. Sundkle, a Bantu Prophet in South Africa asserts that Zionist Churches historically have their roots in Zion city, Illinois, the United States. Ideologically, they claim to emanate from the mount of Zion in Jerusalem. A popular example of Zionist Church is Zion Christian Church (ZCC). There are over seven thousand Zionist Churches in South Africa alone. According to Anderson, over 30% of the South African population is made of members of Nigerian Zionist and Apostolic Churches. Both Aladura and Zionist Churches have three important characteristics. These includes: self-financing, self-governance and self-supporting.

In addition to these are: the emphasis on cultural appropriation of significant themes and practices such as the use of indigenous music and language, emphasis on the activities of evil spirits such as witches and demons, the claim by the leaders to have the power to deliver people

from the influences of these baneful spirits and the active role given to women as some even became Church founders. These Churches were initially regarded with great disdain by those who ridiculed them by calling them "Schismatic Movements" and regarding them as syncretistic, and therefore, impure Churches. The colonial administrators also looked at them with great suspicion and perceived them as threat to their colonial agenda, especially as these Churches engineered mass revivals in many parts of colonial Nigeria. In some cases, the leaders of these Churches, such as Garrick Sokari Braide and Joseph Babalola were arrested and imprisoned by the colonial authority. The leadership of the mission Churches also disregarded them with ridiculous names such "white garment Churches", or "Mushroom Churches".

The spread of the Nigerian Independent Churches has been phenomenal not only in Nigeria where they constitute more than 10% of the Christian population but in Europe and North America where they are attractive to a large segment of disaporan Africans. As Nigerian migrant to distant locations in search of work, education and better life, they carry their religious traditions with them. But as they face forms of life crisis generated by modernity and its anxieties, these indigenous forms of Churches become more appealing to many Nigerians whether in Nigeria or in Europe. This however, shows that Nigerian indigenous movements represent attempts at Nigerianise Churches, to make it relevant to the cultural needs to the Nigerian people. They were part of incipient efforts to decolonize the continent from external religious, social and cultural influences.

African Pentecostalism

Pentecostalism represents the fast expanding sector of Churches in Nigeria. It emerged through many pathways and in different forms. Three district stands are noticeable, namely: classical/mission Pentecostal Churches, Indigenous/Independent Pentecostal Churches and New Pentecostals/Charismatic Churches/Ministries.

Classical Pentecostalism

In Nigeria, classical Pentecostalism made its first appearance in 1930-1931, when the leaders of the Aladura revival made contact with the Apostolic Church, a "British Pentecostal Body" to provide guidance. This was the first external encounter between indigenous religious groups and foreign Pentecostal Church. Other foreign Pentecostal missions that soon came to Nigeria include: the Assemblies of God, which came in 1939 at the instance of an indigenous Church in eastern Nigeria; the Four Square Church was established in 1941, followed soon after by the Apostolic Faith Church. The activity of Karrick Braide, which started within the Anglican Church also, had all the hallmarks of Pentecostalism such as faith healing, prophecy, exorcism, speaking in tongues, spontaneous prayer, exuberant liturgical expression, stress on dreams and visions.

In South Africa, Pentecostalism made its debut in 1908, soon after the 1906 Azusa street event. Three of the largest classical Pentecostal Churches are: the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM), established through the direct missionary activities of Azusa street missionaries; the South African Assemblies of God, and the Full Gospel Church of God. While classical Pentecostal Churches in Nigeria are not North American impositions on Nigerians, but products of North American experiences and missionary impulse.

Indigenous Pentecostalism

Indigenous or independent Pentecostal Churches refers to those Pentecostal Churches established by the Nigerians between 1920s and 1960s without any relationship with mission Pentecostal Churches. These Churches, though did not achieve social visibility, were significant in appropriating the Christian message in a distinctive way that attempts to provide locally meaningful answers to local questions and problems based on the perspective of the Bible as they understood it. Thus, the Christ Apostolic Church was established in 1940 as a fusion between the Aladura revival of the 1930s, and the British Apostolic Church.

The Apostolic Faith mission in Nigeria was established by Timothy Gbadebo Oshokoya, an Evangelist from CAC, in 1944 and the Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG), a Nigerian

Church founded in 1952 as an Aladura Movement, soon became Pentecostalised through appropriating the prevailing Pentecostal spirit of the time. It went into affiliation with the South African Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) in 1956 through to 1960. Today, this Church is at the forefront of Pentecostal expansion in Africa.

New Pentecostalism

New Pentecostal Churches refers to the group of new Churches which emerged since the 1970s in Nigeria. Most Nigerians, this period is marked by increased insertion into liberal marked ideology and globalization processes characterized by rapid travels and mass communication. Anderson posits that this new form of Christianity is fast becoming one of the most important expressions of Churches on the African continent, especially in African's cities. In Nigeria, for example, this was a period characterized by post-civil war deprivations and increased spiritual quest for salvation and solutions to the social problems. The expansion of education also provided an important infrastructure which facilitated the emergence of an educated elite eager to appropriate the goods of modernity. These and other factors fuelled the quest for spiritual solution to people's questions. Consequently, a new class of religious elite with university education and strong appetite for foreign ideas and taste emerged, bearing a new religious message.

The new Pentecostalism espouses doctrines that mark them out among other groups of Christians. They believe that they constitute a special people of God, who alone are saved and the rest of humanity is doom to perdition. Theologically, a person is saved who is "born again" and is regenerated or sanctified by an inward feeling of holiness. Sanctification purifies a believer from sin and all forms of pollution. One of the most important doctrines of new Pentecostalism is their teaching on baptism of the Holy Spirit and external manifestation of speaking in tongues. This new gospel message which promises individuals a comprehensive solution to all their worries, on condition that they become born again, and given generously to the religious leaders in exchange for material and spiritual blessings in the form of healing, wealth, abundant life, success and earthly promotion, is known by a variety of names. These

include: prosperity Churches, health and wealth Gospel, the Faith movement, Name-it-and claim it, among others.

New Churches were founded by individuals in the late 1970s and 1980s. They consolidated in the turbulent 1990 and are now witnessing a runaway expansion as they are opening branches in many different countries of the world. Thus, in Johannesburg alone, there are over hundred Nigerian founded new Pentecostal Churches existing in March, 2007 (Laurent, Andre and Rene, 2007). In these and other African countries, a new form of Churches has flowered, rapidly changing the social, religious, economic and political landscape. There are certain important social characteristics of the new Churches, espousing the theology of prosperity and abundance which has been widely regarded by scholars as an "American export". Many of the founders of these Churches claim divine authorization for establishing an economic empire than a religious organization. They unabashedly look to principal preachers and televangelist in North America as their mentors, coping what they think to be responsible of the "success" of these American god/fathers. They attempt to understand the new religious landscape of Africa without critically assessing the influence of American preachers and the roots of the message they propagate to Africa is impossible. Gifford is unequivocal about the American roots of prosperity message in African even as Ojo insists the prosperity gospel has an African roots.

Ojo is not correct in this respect because many African proponents of prosperity gospel such as Oyedepo of Winner's Chapel, Idahosa, and E.A Adebayo of the RCCG clearly state their indebtedness to their American mentors. Although indigenous religions in Nigeria are inherently materialistic, that is, their adherents seek material benefits from the worship of the gods, the prosperity gospel as preached and practiced by its principal African exponents does not spring from this feature of indigenous Nigerian cosmology. What accounts for the appeal of the prosperity doctrine is the cultural resonance which indigenous ideas offer, and this certainly does not account for its origin.

3.5 Characteristic Features of New Religious Movements

The basic features of new religious movement are the unhittable "American Heritage" of the prosperity message and the emphasis on faith healing and deliverance. In Nigerian cultural

worldview, religion and healing are inextricably linked. An important function of religion is therefore, to bring restoration in the face of brokenness to man's body, established relationships between different religions of the world, and to create social and spiritual networks in the society (Lee and Jakes, 2005). Healing is not restricted to diseases alone but to other situations of morbidity or disability-physical, material, financial or spiritual. It is conceived as a comprehensive restoration of a believer to superabundant health or statue accruing to him or her as a result of what Jesus Christ has wrought on the cross. The ministers of new Pentecostals Churches believes that they have been endowed by God to bring physical healing and deliverance to their followers as a proof of the validity of their preaching as maintains by Oyakhilome, one of Nigerian foremost Pentecostal faith healers thus:

I have a message that certainly heals people. You cannot hear that message and remain sick, poor or dejected. It would bring you hope and life…of a necessity; there will be healing and miracles. Miracles of healing are like your credentials. If you preach Jesus Christ and he sent you, he will back up your claims.

While some of these Churches claim to heal all diseases without exception, others make a claim to a particular set of diseases. Christ Embassy, for example, claims to heal all diseases, including economic and financial failures, which are interpreted as forms of "barrenness". The Liberty Gospel Church, another Nigerian new Church founded by Helen Ukpabio, a confessed former witch, specializes in delivering people who are under the possession of witchcraft spirit. The Laughter Foundation, a Church in Lagos, claims only to provide barren women with what is a call "fruits of the womb", T.B Joshua's Synagogue Church of all Nations heals only those suffering from HIV/AIDS, Mountain of Fire and Miracles specializes in casting out demons of all specifications. Because of the proliferation of new Churches, competition among them is life and each thus makes efforts to carve out a niche that it will serve through a well-defined or streamlined set of product.

Wendl posits that healing and deliverance Churches form a special strand of Pentecostalism that has endeared itself to a large segment of the African population. These features of

Pentecostalism Churches partly account for "widespread conversion to Pentecostalism. The third feature of new Churches is their firm-like structural organization. As a carryover of the American influence, these Churches are organized as firms or commercial enterprises engaged in the production, distribution and pricing of religious and non-religious commodities with primary motives of making satisfactory profit and maintaining a market share. They are founded and owned by one person who claims a special divine authorization with a specific mandate with global ramification. He is a "bank of grace", a repository of Charismata, and a special bridge between his followers and God. He controls both Charisma and cash; even though there is a Board of Trustees (BOTs) appointed by the founder and registered with the appropriate government agency.

As the chairman of the Board of Trustees (BOTs), the control of the founder doubles as president and chief executive officer (CEO). He is an oracular instrument and initiator of doctrines and orientation. He alone holds a special privilege of interpreting the will of God to his followers. In Nigeria, the three wealthiest religious organizations are Pentecostal mega Churches: the Christ Embassy owned by Chris Oyakhilome, Winner's Chapel of Ayodepo and the RCCG of Enoch Adeboye . The fourth feature of these Churches is that the role of women in the new Churches is both interesting and intriguing. It is nothing close to what obtains in the mission Churches although it is closer to how women functioned in the Nigerian indigenous Churches. In the new Churches, women receive a great deal of visibility. They are integrated in the decision making processes and exercise a certain degree of power and authority. Some Church founders are women and there are cases those wives of deceased Church founder and owners have successes their late husbands.

The spouses of Church founders are usually the second-in-command in the hierarchy of power and authority. Knowing the power of women to attract men into religious organizations, some Churches exploit this in giving women into the fold. Pastor's wives also serve another purpose in the Church; they protect the family's estate and control most financial dealings in the Church. There are now Churches with "Department of family affairs", which cater to the needs of family members, particularly women. Related to the firm structure is another feature which reveals their economic character. Their leaders are media savvy individuals who, with the

university education background, have introduced commercial practices into their organization and in the production of religion and other goods.

It is now a common feature, particularly among the mega-Churches, but also medium-sized Pentecostal groups, that they produce a huge array of videos, magazines, CDs, DVDs, books, booklets, and pamphlets, stickers, key holders and other religious memorabilia (handkerchief, Olive oil). The sixth social feature of the new Churches is the increasing use of marketing strategies, particularly advertising. Religious advertising, which constitute a specific form of religious communication, has increased since the emergence of the new Churches in the late 1970s. Different methods of advertisement are used, the most popular of which is the poster and hand bills, bill boards, branded vest, caps, pens, among others. Some mega-Churches own television and radio broadcasting stations. Others place advertisement on these electronic media as well as in print media of newspapers and magazines.

Pentecostal advertisement serves multiple functions of creating and managing positive social visibility and image for Church owners as well as creating public awareness for Church events. They also create product differentiation and shorten the searching time for religious seekers. The seventh feature of Nigerian New Pentecostalism is the tendency to reconstruct religious geography through the construction of religious camps. In Nigeria and Ghana, these Churches buy up large expenses of land and construct s large facilities such as schools, auditoriums, guesthouses, banks, gas station, hospitals, dormitories and presidential villas, for VIP guests such as politicians.

These camps, which often constitute an "alternative city", provide the physical venues for commercial companies to patronize the Churches by sponsoring some of the religious programmes in exchange for marketing their products and services during the events. These camps are a veritable structure of Pentecostal sub-politics, attempting by Pentecostal ministers and their followers to influence the dynamics of national politicking and to achieve mutually beneficial ends for both pastors and politicians.

3.6 Reasons for the Presence and Expansion of New Religious Movements

There are valances of reasons responsible for the presence and expansion of Nigerian Churches. These include:

Distinctive Doctrines

The doctrines of a religion are very important factor in attracting people, and those of Nigerian Churches have undoubtedly been so attractive for large numbers of people. Nigerian Churches, particularly new Pentecostalism believes its doctrines are not new but a commitment to the full gospel, that is to say, they are re-emphasizing the old doctrines as found in the Bible. Akoko, outlines the old doctrines as:

(i)   The Biblical emphasis on salvation and justification by faith
(ii)   The doctrine of the second coming of Christ
(iii)   The stress on divine healing
(iv)   The doctrine of the Holy Spirit that empowers a Christian to live victoriously and to witness effectively and whose gifts enable a believer to perform the supernatural.

These Churches believe strongly in the baptism of the Holy Spirit that occurred on the day of Pentecost among the early disciples. They believe that the out pouring of the Holy Spirit on the disciples that made them speak in tongues on the day of Pentecost was not only for the day and only to the early disciples. However, they hold that *glosso lalia* is not the individual's final goal in his/her religious experience but rather a beginning of a new kind of Christian living that is empowered and graced by one of the nine gifts of the spirit: discernment of error, power over satanic influences, healing and miracle-working abilities, wisdom, among other. Nigerian Churches, particularly Pentecostals believe that physical illness should be treated through spiritual means. A good number of them prefer praying to physical ill persons, rather than taking them to the hospital. They believe every one can have this spiritual ability to treat illness.

This is accomplished by the laying on of hands on the head of the patient and praying. This faith healing doctrine provides a strong solution to the problem of ill health, thereby attracting many people. These Churches vehemently condemn the baptism of children as a public profession of faith after conversion. They are expected to be pragmatic and charismatic in their preaching and move with their Bibles ready for evangelism. They manifest holiness of life they give up smoking, alcohol, secular dancing and going to theatres, which are considered demonic. Another reason that accounts for the growth of Nigerian Churches in the whole range of economic opportunities that have been opened up by these groups during this period of economic crisis affecting Sub-Saharan Africa.

These Churches need a team of pastors and other workers to work in their establishments. Many unemployed people have enrolled in Pentecostal Bible Colleges, not because of the pastoral call to serve but to earn a living. Some of the Churches have enormous projects and establishments such as schools, hospitals and banks. Employment opportunities are offered only to members of the Church and, as such, many people have joined in order to be employed. Given all of such conditions that have paved the way for African Christianities to flourish, the rate is much higher than expected but several problems have been acting as barriers to its growth.

3.7 Challenges Confronting the Growth of New Religious Movements

There are many challenges confronting new religious movements. These challenges include: First, the mainline Churches, older Pentecostal groups and other religious bodies have in protection of their own interests prevented or discouraged the entry of new religious bodies into their stronghold because they very much understand the consequences of such innovations on their own membership. Thus, if a new group does succeed in entering, everything is done to frustrate its activities or block the members of pre-existing Churches from crossing over. Second, financial difficulty has also been of the reasons hindering the growth of the faith. A good number of the converts are from the lower social class and with low financial status, and as such they contribute only small sums of money that can be used in the running of the Church and evangelization.

Third, internal wrangling with some Nigerian Christian Churches and the blocking of the entry of new ones by the already existing ones is a serious problem hindering the growth of the faith. Fourth, governments or institutions have sometimes banned the activities of the Churches in the name of peace. Fifth, the attitude and beliefs of some non-Pentecostals towards the Pentecostals is so disturbing that some people would not feel comfortable associating with the faith. Thus, it is gradually believed (rightly or wrongly) that only frustrated people join the faith. Some call them "social misfits" because of their bars, whatever their popularity with other people. Some people capitalize on the questionable behaviour of some of the Nigerian Churches, particularly Pentecostals as a reason for not joining.

Sixth, mainline doctrinal conservatism has been another of the factors hindering the successful implantation of Nigerian Churches, especially in the rural areas, and extending into realm of marriage. Parents have prevented their children from getting married to partners from other Churches because it would entail changing faith. In a bid to stop the further defection of members to the new Pentecostal Churches, the mainline Churches have introduced liturgical changes and incorporated some Pentecostal beliefs and practices into their worship. Singing accompanied by clapping and dancing is a good example of a practice little used earlier by the mainline Churches, but it has been incorporated in their own mode of worships to make them equally lively and attractive. The mainline Churches are dominated by the older generation and the leadership is monopolized by this generation in a bid to keep the young people in their place, while the new Nigerian Churches are dominated by young people, mostly, university, secondary school students, and the unemployed.

Seventh, the verdict on Nigerian Churches, especially how best Lutherans view Pentecostals until now has been a mixed one. Most Pentecostals have accepted the fact that in keeping with the motif of restoration the emergence of Pentecostalism signalled the soon return of the Lord. The earliest Pentecostals embrace this view experience as an eschatological sign that the Lord would return at any movement (Rothberg and Maqrui, 1970). From their perspective, this suggests a challenge to the whole Church. As a result, these earliest Pentecostals emphasized the power of the Holy Spirit to enable them to live their lives of holiness while emerging in evangelism and missionary work.

Eight, the inability of some Pentecostals to embrace strictly restorationist approach makes historiography ambivalent, embracing restorationism on the one hand, but also recognizing the movement's continuity with the larger Church on the other. The restorationist perspective has dominated in the popular apologetic, and it has contributed to a second important concern. In some respects, it has contributed both to judgmental Pentecostal attitudes regarding most historic Churches, and it has provided them with an explanation for why many denominations viewed them as ranging from aberrant to demonic. Thirdly, the connection between the rejections that Pentecostals experienced at the hands of the historic Churches left many of them with unforgiving attitudes and mistrust toward these Churches. When that is placed adjacent to the Pentecostal conviction that they had been brought into existence as an eschatological sign, they began to read contemporary events in the light of the warning that they believed were meant in biblical prophecy. This opposition from other faiths as a result of religious pluralism makes it difficult for Pentecostalism to contend in the midst of African Christianities.

Finally, Christian Ethics and Church strategy are other challenges faced by Nigerian Churches. A number of the internal ambiguities of Nigerian Churches are subsumed under this heading. These include: the issue of conversion, the issue of the pitfalls inherent in the faith gospel, especially its emphasis on materialism, the issue of how to maintain their distance from the world system, which is considered corrupt, and at the same time utilize its technology to proselytize, the challenge of political participation and public involvement, the challenge of trans-nationalism, and the challenge of Christian unity (Oyedekpo, 1997). These challenges which are by no means exhaustive represent some of the core issues facing African Christianities in Sub-Saharan Africa.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Nigerian Churches is complex in its history, structure, doctrines and practices. Religion increasingly asserts itself in the multiple ways in which Nigerians engage with the world and with the management of change. The vitality and diversity of Nigerian Churches in Africa hold great promise for global Churches as a whole as already some Nigerians have engaged in what is now characterized as "reversed mission" or the sending of missionaries from Africa to

proselytize the frontiers of western societies. However, the permeation of liberal market practices and strategies into certain strands of these Christianities, especially the increasing use of business strategies, excessive recruitment of funds, display of scandalous wealth by the leaders and increase in instances of clergy malfeasance, indicate troubling future for many individuals and groups of Christians both in Nigeria and outside. It is a result of these latter features of the latest strand of Churches that prompts many scholars to maintain that the Pentecostal charismatic Church is the only legally and politically accepted movement in world that is fully and completely based upon systematic fraud, deception and cheating. The merchandising of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is the primary source of all the problems, enervating the spiritual life of the Church. This however, vitiates the transforming power of an otherwise socially and economically visible strong religion.

5.0 SUMMARY

The concept of new religious movement is a problematic one. The term "New" is historically relative and no longer applies to many religious groups that traditionally have been considered. New religious movements (NRMs), include principally groups, which have achieved most publicity and notoriety such as the Unification Church (UC), the Children of God (COG) or Family of Love, the international Society for Krishna Consciousness (DLM), Transcental Mediation (TM), and the Rajneesh Foundation. Since new religious movements vary not vastly, impartial analysis of these groups is not easy task, and our knowledge of some of the groups tends to be rather sparse. New religious movements have been responsible for truly dramatic situation. They have also been the subject of innumerable studies and hours of debate by "politicians" all over Africa and Europe,

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENR

1. Defined new religious movements
2. Discuss the historical development of new religious movements
3. What are the causes of new religious movements in Nigeria?

4. List and discuss the typology of new religious movements

5. Discuss the characteristic features of new religious movements in Nigeria

6. State the reasons for the presence and expansion of new religious movements in Nigeria

7. Enumerate the challenges confronting the growth of new religious movements in Nigeria

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UNIT 5: METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGION AND SOCIETY

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

There are many methods for studying religion. All these Methods would be examined one after the other with the view of showing their relevance in the study of religion.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- List all the Methods that have been used for the study of religion.

- Evaluate the appropriateness and otherwise of these Methods to the study of religion.
- State applicability of all the various Methods for the study of religion

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Methods for the Study of Religion and Society

There are various Methods to the study of religion. However, author is yet to agree on the methodology for studying religion. This is because; the systematic study of religion is confronted with many problems quite inherent in the religion itself, while others derive from the historical development of the religion. For example, religion has no sacred books, it is ethnic based, and highly influenced by evolutionism, colonialism, the British Anthropological School, African Nationalism, etc. It is because of this that, different categories of people, such as missionaries, historians, anthropologists, sociologists, and theologians, have claimed to have authentic interpreters of religion and have methods its study in various ways. We shall look at the Evolutionalist, Anthropological, Philosophical, Descriptive, Historical and Comparative Thematic method for the study of religion in spite of thee other numerous methods people have proposed.

3.1.1 Evolutionist Method

The study of religion in the later part of the 19th century was influenced by the doctrine of evolutionism. This had far-reaching effects on the study of religion. Under the spell of evolutionism, the study of religion for the most part concerned itself with the search for the most primitive form of religion, and the stages of its development to its highest form. This they assumed was monotheism, the form of religion practiced in Europe. Religion was very in focus at this time, not because it was thought that, it deserved study for its own sake, but because, the evolutionist authors believed that it is primitive forms of religion.

One of these theories is the called "Hamitic Theory" according to which, higher religions of civilization like iron working, sacred kingship, the notion of thee Supreme Being were

brought by the Hamites- a branch of European race who was indigenized. It is true that Africa has been in contact with the outside world especially North Africa and the Middle East for several centuries. It must therefore have imported from but also have exported ideas to these areas. Therefore, the attitude of training the outside source of whatever is noble and of some worth in Arica is unscientific and racist in the sense that it denies Africans any inventive capabilities.

Evolutionist method lost its appeal when it was discovered that monotheistic concepts existed side by side with animistic and fetishistic beliefs among many so-called primitive peoples, put forward thee opinion that monotheism, not fetishism or animism, was the earliest form of religion, and polytheism, animism, and fetishism were later degenerations. This opinion was not popular with evolutionists. It in fact makes the beginning of the decline of the evolutionist approach in the study of religion. However, Schmidt's work did focus attention on the significance of the Supreme Being in religious traditions.

3.1.2 Anthropological Method

The colonial occupation of Africa in the 19th century and the establishment of colonial rule in most parts of Africa created a favourable atmosphere for anthropologists to carry out extensive fieldwork and documentation of traditions, customs, beliefs, and practices of the people before they were contaminated by foreign influences. For this reason, anthropological writings still constituted an important documented source of religion today. Anthropologists of course were primarily concerned with the study of small-scale societies. They studied religion as one of the many cultural items in each small-scale society. Consequently, social anthropologists have all along insisted that the religious beliefs of different peoples must be studied in the social context in which they are found.

On the one hand, this particularist method has shed new light on the various symbols, values, significance, and functions of different traditional beliefs. On the other hand, the refusal of only anthropologists to go beyond this, and their insistence on seeing religious beliefs only through the binoculars of their social and psychological functions, has given rise to the charge of reductionism- reducing religion to merely psychological, sociological, or political devices. A

move within the anthropological camp imitated by Evans Pritchard sought to counter balance particular comparative method, and functionalism with a quit for meaning. On particular comparison, he suggests:

> A number of systematic studies of primitive philosophies have to be made. When that has been done a classification can be made on the basis of which comparative studies can be undertaking which possibly may lead to some general conclusions".

The comparative method, which Evans-Pritchard is proposing here, presumes the study of the philosophy, i.e., the meaning of religious belief and practices of each group as a system of ideas and practices in its own right. In other words thee comparative method presumes the through study of the meaning of religious beliefs and prerequisite for the comparative method.

3.1.3 Philosophical Method

In contrast to the early British anthropologists who focused on the social order and studied religion from the point of view of it functions in the social order, the French focused on the symbolic- philosophical order, and regarded this as the determinant of both social structure, and other aspects of African life- their law, ethics, psychology and ritual. This method seeks to demonstrate that religious systems form coherent systems of ideas and practices in their own right, supported by and under-lying philosophy or worldview. In pursuit of this belief, the French anthropologists made great advances in elucidating African cosmological systems and the philosophies implicit in their belief systems. Thus, the anthropological research mission led by Griaule discovered a fascinating cosmogony and a set of cosmological ideas among the Dogon people of mail, which shape their beliefs and habits.

This led Griaule to observe that in fact, the Dogon live by a cosmogony, a metaphysic, and a religion, which Christian theology might study, with profit. The methods and conclusions of the British and French are so diverse that one is sometimes inclined to inquire how far the assumptions and method of each group influenced their findings. At a seminar on "African

Systems on Thought", in 1960, at which both parties were represented, there was general agreement that both methods were convergent and complimentary as shown below:

> What was required was a theoretical frame, which would take full account of both the structural, functional, and logico-meaningful modalities of religion and would reveal their hidden interconnections.

True to their philosophical traditions, several French-speaking authors (European and African) have tried to identify the unifying philosophical principles, which underlie African religious systems. The most influential of these attempts is placid Temples' use of the Bergsonian concept Vital force (which he claims to be an authentic Bantu traditional concept) to explain every aspect of their life and beliefs- their psychology, epistemology, ethics, jurisprudence as well as their religious beliefs. According to Temples, the Bantu see beings primarily as vital force or living, which is capable of growth or weakening. At the head of the hierarchy of all vital forces is God, "the Supreme Force", next come the deities, then the ancestors, founders of the clan and finally man, followed by animals, trees, and mineral forces while a network of relationships links beings to one another.

Harmonious interaction of beings results in the mutual strengthening of their vital forces, while any pernicious influence emitted by any of the forces results into evil. His theory which is in the nature of a hypothesis so well argued and illustrated that some writers who may have some reservations about some of his conclusions would still agree that over-all, his theory is on the right lines. Less successful perhaps is the attempt of Alexis Kagame, followed by Jan Jahnheinz to use Aristotelian categories to classify African concepts of being. They retained Tempel's basic concept that essence of being is force (Ntu) and identified four categories of Ntu (forces). Mu-ntu forces endowed with intelligence and will like God, Spirits, Man; Ki-ntu visible beings without intelligence like animals, trees and mineral; Ha-ntu, beings of space and time category; Ku-ntu, modality or qualities of being like beauty, happiness, size, etc.

There is no doubt that Kagames' theory as that of Temples has been inspired by European philosophy. Kagame in particular, openly admitted that he was inspired by Aristotle because as he said his philosophy has a universal application and relevance. However, the impression one

gets is that it is an attempt to work our African equivalents of Aristotelian categories and the two slot in African concepts forcibly into these categories whether they fit or not.

3.1.4 Descriptive Method

This method tries to make a systematic presentation of religion by describing its major tenets as found in different African societies. The description centres around the main items of belief common to most African societies- the supreme being, the Deities, Ancestors, Worship, and the system of morality. However, variations and divergences of the beliefs are pointed out where they exist. Representatives of this approach include such big names as Parrinder in two of his famous books, "African Religion" and "Religion in African" and Mbiti in his "African Religions and philosophy". The big name on the French side is decamps in his book, "Les Religions De L'Afrique Noire". Mbiti's description of his method is typical of this approach; "my approach here is chiefly descriptive interpretative, bringing together in a comparative way those elements which are representative of indigenous religions from all over Africa".

The weakness of this method is in fact that it tries to cover too many societies and too many religious phenomena. This weakens its attempts at making comparisons, and it often ends up making enumeration of different items of beliefs and traditions from a large collection of societies. Furthermore, it has been criticized for ignoring the socio-cultural contexts and the historical dimensions of religion. Consequently, its analysis is lacking in depth and often paints a larger-than-life picture of religion.

3.1.5 Historical Method

The neglect of the historical dimension of religion was not restricted to the protagonists of the descriptive method. No writer would deny that religion has a history. Many writers like Evans-Pritchard were sceptical. He wondered whether Nuer religion, like any other, has a history, which survives in the memories of the Nuer themselves. Consequently, his anthropological and descriptive accounts continued to present an image of a religion that was not subject to historical changes.

The conference on the historical study of religion organized recently by African scholars in collaboration with some American colleagues reviewed that there has been a high degree of cultural interaction between different African ethnic groups, and this has resulted in the introduction of new cults and modification of new ones. The research demonstrated that the study of the history of religion is not only possible but also that no study of religion which ignores this dimension can be said to be objective.

3.1.6 Comparative Thematic Method

This method seeks to remedy some of the shortcomings of the descriptive method, which as we have seen is that its coverage tries to span the whole Africa and too many themes. Geographical continuity and environmental and cultural affinity will facilitate the comparative work and is more likely to lead to historical conclusions about the factual interactions of people. This has been called the Limited Comparative Method. The thematic method aims at limiting the scope by selecting specific themes and studying them in details, in the contexts of two or more societies, and comparing them the findings in order to identify the similar and dissimilar features. In other words, each theme is developed and illustrated with examples from two or more societies whose beseech of the themes in dept and in its various dimensions, and at the same time, draw examples from all over Africa.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The methodology for the study of religion is six fold: evolutionist method, anthropological method, philosophical method, descriptive method, historical method, and comparative thematic method.

5.0 SUMMARY

Six main methods made up the methodology of religion. These methods help in systematic study of any religion, including African culture.

6.0 TOTUR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. List and discuss the different methodologies for the study of religion
2. How appropriate are these methodologies in the systematic study of religion and culture?

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UNIT 6: THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

You have studied the meaning of Religion in the last unit before this one. Religion is based on the belief in the existence of supernatural beings who exert control and influence over people in the society. Now we are going to explain to you the nature of Religious beliefs. This will help you appreciate why issues of religion are often contentions

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to;

- Explain the nature of religious beliefs
- Explain the fact that all religions of the world are based on one form of belief or the other.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The General Natural of Beliefs

Beliefs are strongly and deeply held ideas or views about a thing. Beliefs provide guidance to social behavior whether this is religious, scientific, or political behavior. In life, human beings are faced with a bewildering array of choices to take. We often have to cope with pressures and counter pressures to follow this or that alternative course of action. In the absence of beliefs we will probably find ourselves switching undecidedly between alternative courses of action and perhaps end up accomplishing nothing. Our beliefs provide us with direction and guidance and the sense of purpose that we need to decide and select a particular course of action. Belief in what we are doing, why we are doing it and how we are doing it, is necessary as a motivation factor within the individual. The beliefs we hold also influence our perception and interpretation of the things going on around us.

This means that our actions are based on beliefs. Beliefs differ from person to person, from group to group, and from society to society. Beliefs do not exist in isolation but normally belong to one or other of the complex belief system together that form part of a society's culture. Beliefs hang and connect together in a compound integrated way. Belief systems are learned simultaneously as we learn the other aspects of our culture in the process of socialization. Beliefs can be verifiable or non-verifiable. Religious beliefs are largely non-verifiable (in terms of the "scientific method") whether nonreligious or secular beliefs are largely verifiable. Beliefs systems give rise to systems of values and ethics which are evaluative systems that specify how people ought to behave or what social good or evil they ought to pursue or refrain from.

When such value or ethical system flow from a religious beliefs, they a referred to a religious morality, but when they derive from secular or non-religious sources they are called secular morality. These two typologies are however not mutually exclusive. In a great number of cases secular ethics and religious morality support each other. Indeed much of secular ethics are derived from religious ethics. This is explained by the fact that both the religious and the secular are parts of the same whole which we call the social system. Being parts of the same whole one cannot be isolated from the other except in an analytic sense only.

3.2 The Nature of Religious Beliefs

Religion is a cultural phenomenon which reflects man's attempts to come to terms with his environment particularly as it concerns those aspects of it which he does not understand such as death, pain and suffering. In their explanations of for example, volcanoes, thunder, lightening etc. have supernatural power). Edward B. Tylor and F. Max Muller stated that religion originated to satisfy man's intellectual nature, to meet his need to make sense of death, dreams and visions. All societies have one form of religion or the other. In these different cultures, there exist different systems of religious beliefs. What is however common among the different belief systems is that in each case such beliefs are centered on a fundamental belief in the supernatural being or something which is above and beyond the natural world. The human person is limited in his thought processes such that he can conceptualize phenomena only in terms which he is familiar with i.e in terms of the conditions operative in the natural world of which he personally is a part.

Consequently, gods and spirits in the unseen supernatural world are perceived as good or evil, proud and jealous, they marry and beget children, can be offended and appeased when offended, can revenge either in the present life or in the afterlife. These beliefs about the supernatural beings and the supernatural world are couched in the form of religious creeds and myths in order to make them meaningful. They present pictures of heaven, hell, Hades, the Elysian Fields etc. and characterize them as places inhabited by God, Satan or gods and spirits. Religious beliefs formulated as creeds and myths also explain the link or relationship between the natural world and the supernatural world. Such relationships often hinge upon a belief in the ability of God or gods to assume human likeness or form and come into human communities to associate directly with mortal men.

The supernatural being or beings are also believed to maintain contact with the natural world through an ability to beget children through human mothers and in such manner establish an indirect relationship with the human world. In every society, there are certain objects (e.g tree, stone, animal) which are associated with religious beliefs and are regarded as sacred.

Such objects are usually treated with reverence. What is sacred in one society may not be sacred in another society, but what is common among societies is that each share its peculiarities and people treat religion with some degree of seriousness.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Beliefs are found amongst all religions of the world. Beliefs provide the necessary foundations for religion. Beliefs are strongly held ideas of individuals in objects of the sacred. The phenomenon of belief is centered on the existence of a supernatural being that wields influence over adherents. The supernatural may be perceived as benevolent, wicked, protective and generous. Consequently, reverence, honour and adorations are accorded the object of worship based on the belief that he is capable of influencing decisions for the people of a society draws a dividing line between what is sacred and what is profane or secular. For Christians as an example, the cross is regarded as sacred, for the Jews the Ark of the Covenant Muslims regard the Black stone of Kabah as sacred while the Hindus treat the cow as a sacred object. It is also on record that most preliterate societies had one form of animal totem or the other.

In some societies it is the turtle, the python, the monkey, fish, or whatever other animal a group has chosen as a sacred religious totem or object, and which it treats with reverential respect and an attitude of worship. To keep creeds, myths and sacred objects from losing their religious force in the minds of people, and thus keep them from dying away, they are backed up with religious rituals and ceremonies which are occasions for re-enacting and reinforcing those religious beliefs.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, we discussed the nature of religious beliefs. Beliefs as a fundamental element of religion are based on the inability of man to provide concrete answers to basic questions of life. Individuals in society therefore hold beliefs relating to the existence of supernatural beings that are deified in form of objects of sacrilege. Such objects are worshipped and honoured with sacrifices and libations.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

Discuss the nature of religious beliefs.

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UNIT 7: RELIGION IN THE SOCIETY

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

    3.1 Religion in the Society

    3.2 Religion and Social Cohesion

    3.3 Religion and Social Control

    3.4 Religion and Social Support

    3.5 Religion and Social Change

    3.6 Religions and Psychotherapy

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Understanding the connection between religion and society is the main focus in this unit. The functional interpretation has been the dominant one. It asserts that every society has a number of necessary conditions that it must successfully meet in order to survive and one of these is the cohesion or solidarity of its members. Religion, it is asserted provides this function for society. This unit will put you through these roles of religion in our society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the connectivity between religion and society

- Express how religion serve in achieving social cohesion

- Describe the role of religion in social control

- Demonstrate how religion can be used for psychotherapy

- Specify the role of religion as social support

- Explain the role of religion in social change.

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Religion in the Society

How to explain or even define religion has probably yielded less scholarly agreement than almost any other matter studied. Religion is so diverse in historical development, so culturally varied that definitions developed from either our African or Western experience often fail to encompass it adequately. What comes out of these scholarly efforts, however, is the recognition that religion emerges from common experience in society and offers explanations that transcend whatever mundane, factual knowledge is available. These are explanations expressed in symbolic forms and acts which relate a people to the ultimate conditions of their existence. As human societies have evolved over long periods of time, so also have religions. Each of the world's religion, in its own distinctive way, has conferred a sacred meaning upon the circumstances of a people's existence.

Some religions, such as Christianity and Islam, have grown far beyond their social origins, now counting their believers in the hundreds of millions. Though Christianity may not claim the largest number of adherents, Christians nonetheless are not less than 40 percent of all religious believers in the world. We have no historical or archeological reason to believe that religion began full-blown. Instead, it developed slowly with the evolution of human society, and in its more primitive forms-itself an evolutionary development beyond the earliest pre-religious people – possessed no organization or special roles (no church or clergy), only a communal sharing in rituals that gave _expression to religious symbols.

As religion and society evolve, a sense of sacredness takes concrete form in objects and images that become sacred, whether these are persons, animals or natural objects, human artifacts or symbolic expressions. The sacred also becomes conveyed and expressed for the living in ritual, where behavior gives objective form to mood and feeling. A division among the sacred and the profane eventually marks off religious from nonreligious activity.

3.2 Religion and Social Cohesion

According to the functionalist perspective, sharing the same religious interpretation of the meaning of life unites a people in a cohesive and binding moral order. This was what Emile Durkheim meant when he defined religion as:

> . . . a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden – beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.

But these members of the moral community also share a common social life. The religious community and the society have the same members. When that occurs, religion provides a society with powerful social "cement" to hold it together. The moral community of believers is identical with the social community, as is common in more traditional societies. The symbolism of the sacred supports the more ordinary aspects of social life and religion then legitimizes society. Religion also provides sacred sanction for the social order and for its basic values and meanings. Furthermore, the commitment of individuals to these shared beliefs is renewed and refreshed each time the members come together to worship, when, that is, they become a congregation. Such a sense of renewal is even stronger when they come together on ceremonial occasions of great sacred meaning such as, for example *Id-el fitr or Id-el kabr* for Muslims, on Easter and Christmas for Christians.

But the unifying rituals of faith are also called upon by individuals on the most significant occasion for family and for the individual; at birth, at marriage, and at death. In traditional societies the religious and the nonreligious spheres of life are not sharply differentiated. But in

modern, industrial societies, religion and society are not the same. The emergence of different modes of life experience leads to different meanings about life, producing a religious differentiation. The all –encompassing church gives way to competing religious group. Religion may still provide cohesion, but now only for subgroups of society.

3.3 Religion and Social Control

Liberation theology is a relatively recent phenomenon and marks a break with the traditional role of churches. It was this role that Karl Marx opposed. In his view, religion impeded social change by encouraging oppressed people to focus on other-worldly concerns rather than on their immediate poverty or exploitation. Marx acknowledged that religion plays an important role in propping up the existing social structure. According to Marx, religion reinforces the interests of those in power, grants a certain religious legitimacy to social inequality, and contemporary Christianity, like the Hindu faith, reinforces traditional patterns of behaviour that call for the subordination of the powerless. The role of women in the church and in Islam is another example of uneven distribution of power.

Assumptions about gender roles leave women in a subservient position both within Christian churches in Islam and at home. In fact, women find it as difficult to achieve leadership positions in many churches as they do in large corporations. Like Marx, conflict theorists argue that to whatever extent religion actually does influence social behaviour; it reinforces existing patterns of dominance and inequality. From a Marxist perspective, religion functions as an "agent of de-politicization". In simpler terms religion keeps people from seeing their lives and societal conditions in political terms- for example, by obscuring the overriding significance of conflicting economic interests. Marxists suggest that by inducing a "consciousness among the disadvantaged, religion lessens the possibility of collective political action that can end capitalist oppression and transform society".

3.4 Religion and Social Support

Most of us find it difficult to accept the stressful events of life- death of a loved one, serious injury, bankruptcy, divorce, and so forth. This is especially true when something "senseless" happens. How can family and friends come to terms with the death of talented college student, not even 20 years old, from a terminal disease? Through its emphasis on the divine and the supernatural, religion allows us to "do something" about the calamities we face. In some faiths, adherents can offer sacrifices or pray to a deity in the belief that such acts will change their earthly condition. At a more basic level, religion encourages us to view our personal misfortunes as relatively unimportant in the broader perspective of human history or even as part of undisclosed divine purpose.

Friends and relatives of the deceased college student may see this death as being "God's will" and as having some ultimate benefit that we cannot understand. This perspective may be much more comforting than the terrifying feeling that any of us can die senselessly at any moment- and that there is no divine "answer" as to why one person lives a long and full life, while another dies tragically at a relatively early age. Faith-based community organizations have taken on more and more responsibilities in the area of social assistance. In fact, as part of an effort to cut back on government funded welfare programmes, government leaders have advocated shifting the social "safety net" to private organizations in general and to churches and religious charities in particular.

3.5 Religion and Social Change

Many religious activists, epicyclically in Latin America, support liberation theology, which refers to use of a church in a political effort to eliminate poverty, discrimination, and other forms of injustice evident in secular society. Advocates of this religious movement sometimes display sympathy for Marxism. Many believe that radical liberation, rather than economic development in itself, is the only acceptable solution to the desperation of the masses in impoverished developing countries. Indeed, the deteriorating social conditions of the last two decades have nurtured this ideology of change. A significant portion of worshippers are unaffected by this

radical mood, but religious leaders are well aware of liberation theology. The official position of Pope John Paul II and others in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church is that clergy should adhere to traditional pastoral duties and keep a distance from radical politics.

However, activists associated with liberation theology believe that organized religion has a moral responsibility to take a strong public stand against the oppression of the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, and women. The term liberation theology has a recent origin, dating back to the 1973 publication of the English translation of A Theology of Liberation. This book is written by a Peruvian priest, Gustavo Gutierrez, who lived in a slum area of Lima during the early 1960s. After years of exposure to the vast poverty around him, Gutierrez concluded: "The poverty was a destructive thing, something to be fought against and destroyed…. It became crystal clear that in order to serve the poor, one had to move into political action". Gutierrez's discoveries took place during a time of increasing radicalization among Latin American intellectuals and students. An important element in their radicalization was the theory of dependencia, developed by Brazilian and Chilean social scientists.

According to this theory, the reason for Latin America's continued underdevelopment was its dependence on industrialized nations (first Spain, then Great Britain, and, most recently, the United States). A related approach shared by most social scientists in Latin America was a Marxist- influenced class analysis that viewed the domination of capitalism and multinational corporations as central to be problems of the hemisphere. As these perspectives became more influential, a social network emerged among politically committed Latin American theologians who shared experiences and insights. One result was a new approach to theology, which rejected the models developed in Europe and the United State and instead built on the cultural and religious traditions of Latin America.

In the 1970s, many advocates of liberation theology expressed strong Marxist views and saw revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism as essential to ending the suffering of Latin America's poor. More recently, liberation theology seems to have moved away from orthodox Marxism and endorsement of armed struggle. As an example, Gutierrez (1990:214, 222) has written that one does not need to accept Marxism as an "all-embracing view of life and thus exclude the Christian faith and its requirements". Gutierrez adds that the proper concerns of a theology of liberation are not simply the world's "exploited against," "despised cultures," and

the "condition of women, especially in those sectors of society where women are doubly oppressed and marginalized".

3.6 Religions and Psychotherapy

In Africa, particularly in Nigeria there is another way in which religion sustains people; it becomes a supporting psychology, a form of psychotherapy. Religion is viewed in upbeat terms, and God is conceived of as a humane and considerate God; such a hopeful perspective turns away from the older Christian conception of a stern and demanding God.

Psychologizing Religion

This "psychologizing" of religion has created an "Americanized religion" (as sociologists Louis Schneider and Sanford M. Dombusch have called it) for which someone like Norman Vincent Peal, a prominent Protestant clergyman, with his "power of positive thinking" serves as a typical example. It provides peace of mind, promises prosperity and successes in life, as well as effective and happy human relations. It is thus a source of security and confidence, of happiness and success in this world. But it does not stop there; Pastoral counseling- for which clergymen get psychological training- is apparently a more significant function of American clergy than it is European or African clergy. According to one careful observer:

> The more routine but flourishing engagement of religion in the affairs of a very large proportion of Americans consist in their submitting hurts and hopes to the care and help of pastors. Gauged by both consumer demand and by clergymen's self-emulation, the chief business of religion in the United States is now- as it has probably long been-the cure of souls.

The religious practitioner has now moved into a relevant place in the mental health field as a helping professional. Consequently, pastoral counseling has become so much a specialty that a

national organization – the American Association of Pastoral Counselors- has been formed, to set professional standards, regulate practice, and certify practitioners.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The connectivity between religion and society became evident when the functional interpretation of religion by scholars became dominant. You must have through this study understood that religion plays vital role in social cohesion, social control, social change and social support and even as psychotherapy in many societies.

5.0 SUMMARY

Religion gives expression to the sense of sacredness in human life; a division between the sacred and the profane marks off religious from nonreligious activity. A functional interpretation of religion stresses how sharing in religious beliefs creates moral cohesion and thus makes society morally legitimate. But religion also provides a mechanism for social control and a source of psychic and emotional support for individuals.

6.0 TUTOR- MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give a scholarly definition to the term social cohesion
2. What role has religion played in the achievement of cohesion in Nigeria?
3. What is social control?
4. In what ways has religion been used as a tool for social control?
5. Explain how religion evolved in human society?
6. Explain social support. How has religion influenced the social support system in your community?
1. What social change has religion introduced into the Nigerian society?
2. Discuss the role of religion as psychotherapy in the Nigerian society.

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MODULE 2   SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

UNIT 1: MEANING OF SOCIOLOGY OF RELIGION

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

    3.1 The Meaning of Sociology

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7.0 References/Further Reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit is a foundation unit in the course. It therefore covers definition of sociology generally and then sociology of religion in particular. The subject matter of sociology of religion is also discussed.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this Unit, you should be able to;

- Explain the meaning of sociology in general
- Explain the meaning of sociology of Religion
- Know the subject matter of sociology of Religion

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Meaning of Sociology

The word sociology was coined by the French Philosopher- Sociologist, Auguste Comte in 1837 (Peil: 1977). Comte combined the Latin word "socio" (meaning society) with the Greek word "logy" (meaning science) to arrive at the term sociology which he defines as the science of society. To Comte, a science of the society was possible. This science should base its findings on systematic observation and classification of facts rather than casual, off hand observation, tradition, speculation and rumor. Sociology therefore is the scientific study of human, environmental, material and ideological components of society. It analyses human ideas, behavior, grouping, organizations, administration, law, crime and punishment. Human problems of hunger, disease, homelessness, unemployment, ignorance, divorce and violence engage the attention of Sociologist.

The founding fathers of Sociology such as Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber and Talcott Parsons have various ideas as to the focus of sociology. Comte was of the opinion that sociology should focus on social statics and social dynamics. Social statics refers to structures and functions of subsystems, institutions and persons. Social dynamics refers to the changes occasioned to institutions over time. The task of sociologists is therefore to make understandable the fundamental laws of nature and why people behave the way they do under different prevailing conditions. Comte formulated the law of three stages of

societal growth i.e theological, metaphysical and scientific. The theological stage is the primitive or preliterate state where the powers of priest and the clergy dominated human society and explanations to events were purely religious.

The metaphysical stage marks the period of enlightenment and reformation as well as reasoning. People began to seriously challenge the religious explanations for social phenomenon. The enlightenment scholars were pre-occupied with seeking answers to questions of nature through reasoning based on overt facts. The scientific stage is the stage of individual revolution and scientific discoveries as well as technological growth and development. Following Comte, Herbert Spencer regards sociology as the study of society and likens society to a biological organism with interdependent but inter-related parts functioning independently and interdependently so as to ensure the survival of the entire system. Society as a system has subsystems comprising of institutions and persons with status and roles necessary for their existence and survival.

Durkheim considers the network of human relationship and societal growth as progressing from a simple undifferentiated form. Societal development is from homogeneous to highly differentiated or complex forms of industrial society. To Durkheim, society is a moral entity that is external to the individual but coerces his compliance through belief system into a moral community of adherents. Other founding fathers of sociology such as Karl Marx were equally concerned with the nature of human society and focused largely on the role of conflict in human societies that are highly stratified along class dimensions. The existence of classes in human societies makes conflict over material resources inevitable. Marx contended that all human societies have progressed from primitive communism, to slavery, to feudalism and to capitalism characterized by high exploitation.

The continued exploitation of the masses will lead to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, resulting in socialism, a classless and egalitarian society. Contrary to Marx, Weber considers sociology as dealing with the study of organizations and the role of ideas in the development of human society. He contended that modern contemporary societies are being organized especially along bureaucratic dimensions as demonstrated by his theory of Bureaucracy. The role of ideas is also significant in transforming the societies as was demonstrated in the protestant ethics and the spirit of capitalism. Weber has also drawn the attention of sociologists to the study of power and

authority relationships in the society which he called domination. He argued that legitimated power results in authority which leads to three types of domination. These are legal or rational, traditional and charismatic domination. Rational domination is the basis for modern bureaucracies with definite hierarchical arrangements and structures as well as functions.

The traditional domination is through customs and traditions, while that of charismatic is through gift of grace or extra-ordinary qualities of the individual or person.

Parsons also lend his contributions to sociology (Parsons: 1964). He was concerned with human behavior in the society which he christened social action. It is known as social action analysis which sociologists should also concern them with. Parsons therefore classify human behavior based on motivations for human action. He describes human behavior as been determined by the motives of the actor. Parsons further argued that for society to survive and develop it requires functional prerequisites. These are identified to include; pattern maintenance, tension management, goal attainment, adaptation to environment and integration of the various components.

3.2 Factors that Necessitated the Emergence of Sociology

Before the Comtian era, Greek and Roman philosophers of old had reflected intellectually on the societies of their time. Notably among these social philosophers were Thomas Hobbe, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rosseau who focused their attention on the question of political and social life of the people. They examined the basis of the organization and administration of society, as well as the relationship between government and citizens. During the enlightenment era, violent revolutions became widespread in Europe. Notable among these revolutions were those of Germany, Britain, Italy and France. German unification brought wars in the country that revolutionaries the nation. The English revolution brought about by conflict between king James 1 and parliament in the 17th Century brought many changes in Great Britain. Before the revolution, it was the church that crowned the kings and gave them the supreme political power over the kingdoms.

These positions, the revolution challenged vigorously and sought to change. There was also the French revolution in 1789 which saw the violent overthrow of King Louis xviii and the

subsequent strengthening of parliament. The major demands of the French revolutionaries were liberty, equality and fraternity. These developments notwithstanding, the major event that shaped the emergence and development of sociology was the industrial revolution in Britain. The industrial revolution brought about widespread changes which made people to ask fundamental questions about life and society generally. Among the changes that occur were the disruption that accompanied the industrialization process; societies becoming more chaotic and the pollution to environment emanating from industrial byproducts. Peasant migration from rural to urban towns for factory employment was witnessed. There was also the rise of cities with its anonymity.

Also the collapse of religion as a source of moral authority, the demise of the old view of social order as ordained by God and the rise of explanations based on science change events. These changes occurring in traditional European societies necessitated the impetus that encouraged the emergence of sociology as a scientific discipline. The emergence of sociology was further aided by the currency and popularity of the evolutionist theory of Charles Darwin which traced the history of all species of plants and animals from their earliest origins. The influence of Darwinic organic or biological evolution theory led such social philosophers as Herbert Spencer in England who sought to understand the developments of human society to apply the theory of organic evolution to human society. Other pioneers in the development of sociology included Lester Ward, an American who published his dynamic sociology in 1883.

In this work Lester Ward advocated social progress through social action guided by sociologist. Two other factors facilitated the development of sociology as a discipline. First, been its adoption of the scientific method of investigation in the study of social behavior. Sociology emerges as a scientific discipline using all the principles and methods of investigation as found in the other pure sciences of chemistry, physics, Biology etc. Auguste Comte was very zealous about developing science for the society and was instrumental in the development of rules of sociological method. The other factor for the development of sociology was the exposure of Europeans to the radically different societies of Africa, Asia and the Americans whose exposure revealed that different societies were at different levels of development. This difference they believe called for analysis and explanation.

Sociology attained the status of an independent academic discipline in 1892 with the establishment of the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago, United States of

America. In Africa, the first Department of Sociology was established at the University of Ghana in 1951. In 1895, the American Journal of Sociology was established to publish and document research and intellectual works of sociologists. By 1905, the American sociological society, a professional body of practitioners in the field of sociology came into existence.

3.3 Methodology of Sociological Study

The methodology of sociology as conceived by the founding gathers of the discipline, which has been summarized by John Rex, refers to classification and searching for laws, and establishment of causal relations and sequences. Sociology should classify social facts in terms of observable characteristics of human behaviours, and institutions or organizations. This is normally based on empirical investigations. This method is similar to the biological sciences which deal largely with the classification of living things into animals and plants. Even amongst animals further classifications are made. The human body in particular is classified into various systems; the digestive, excretory, skeletal, and reproductive etc. In a similar vein, the sociologists classify human society into various system e.g the political, economic, cultural, and religious, amongst others.

In searching for laws, sociologists achieve it in two ways. First, by process of induction, moving from a particular phenomenon to generalizations of the phenomenon or by observing characteristics of a group of people and in understanding the behavior manifestations of the larger segments, or corporate groups in society, second, by process of deduction moving from the general characteristics to the particular phenomenon being observed, leading to the identification of similar characteristics or differences involved with the phenomenon under study. The manifest characteristics can thus be utilized to understand the unobservable of any given phenomenon. Sociologists establish causal relations and sequences through cause and effects relationships. In understanding the relationships among variables, in terms of independent and dependent variable, the sociologists apply the causality model. In any given event or social occurrences, there is always cause and effects.

The causes may not be the direct outcomes in terms of effects, nevertheless, that relationship can be or is being established in terms of causes and consequences of social behaviors or events or even social action. In any case, sociology has applied and will continue to

apply its methodology in the understanding of society and network of human relationships. The founding fathers were concerned or pre-occupied with these models of investigations as they relate to human behaviours and the social system. The study of man and his society requires these methods and approach, yet it cannot be as exact as in the case of the physical sciences. Moreover, sociology is a social science dealing with human beings who are complex and difficult to experiment under controlled laboratory situations to give solid results. Nevertheless, its objectivity and methodology give credence to the discipline as the science of society.

3.4 Definition and Subject Matter of Sociology of Religion

Sociology of Religion is the study of the Society from a religious perspective. It is the systematic study of societal variables from a religious view. Sociology of religion therefore constitutes an integral part of a more general study of culture and knowledge. Culture is a total way of life of a people learned and passed from generation to generation. Religion is a cultural element and as found in all societies is powerful and pervasive. Religion is found to be at the centre of political, economic, social, educational, technological and scientific life of a people. Inbuilt in religion are theological and doctrinal teachings as well as values, laws, ethics, creeds and beliefs that shape the life of adherents in a society. Sociology of religion therefore is interested in understanding the extent of involvement, participation and contribution religion has made in patterning and providing direction in the society. It is interested in studying the extent to which religion has brought about change and development in the society.

Sociology of Religion also examines the historical development of religion, its origin and the various forms religious beliefs have taken over time. Also, sociology of religion seeks to understand the impact of religion on the individual as well as institutions of the society. It tries to understand the impact of religion on families, marriages, politics, technology and development in a society. Indeed, the sociologist of religion studies the entire society paying particular attention to human interactions, relationships, beliefs, norms and values among the various religious groups in the society. It studies changes that have taken place among the various religious denominations found today and seek to understand the dynamics and dialectics of such changes including the direction such changes take. Sociologists of religion study social aggregates,

groups and organizations as well as institutions, law and crime as they relate to religion. The discipline study conflict, deviance and tries to undertake research that will enhance peace, order and stability in the society.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Sociology is the scientific study of the society. The discipline emerged out of the desire to understand the chaotic nature of the society following the industrial revolution in Britain. The concern of early sociologists therefore was to maintain order and stability in the society. Sociology of Religion as one of the sub-disciplines of sociology is concerned with studying society from a religious perspective. The course is interested in understanding the degree to which religion impacts on the society generally.

5.0 SUMMARY

In this Unit, we have dealt with definitions of Sociology and Sociology of Religion. We have discussed the circumstances under which Sociology emerged as a discipline. Sociology of Religion as a sub-discipline under the general discipline of Sociology covers all aspects of the society where humans are involved. It tries to look at social phenomenon from a religious perspective drawing conclusion from a holistic approach to issues of interaction, relationship and development as well as science, technology and law.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

l. Identify and explain the factors that necessitated the emergence and development of sociology as a scientific discipline.
2. Discuss the methodology of sociological enquiry.
3. Define sociology of Religion and explain its subject matter.

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UNIT 2: THE CONCEPT OF SOCIETY

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main content

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor marked Assignment.

7.0 References

1.0 INTRODUCTION

We are still on the foundation units of this course. We therefore need to discuss the concept of Religion and society having discussed the meaning of Sociology and Sociology of Religion in the previous unit. Religion as a cultural element is powerful and permeates all facets of life. In this unit, we shall discuss the concept of religion and society with a view to familiarizing ourselves with these concepts. We will also look at the various types of societies.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to;

- Explain the meaning of the concept of society
- List and explain the types of society

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Meaning of Society

The world society emerged in the 16th century, derived from the French *société* which stemmed from the Latin *societas*, a "friendly association with others," from *socius* meaning "companion, associate, and comrade or business partner." The Latin word is probably related to the verb *sequi*, "to follow," and originally may have meant "follower." In the social sciences, a society has been used to mean a group of people that form a semi-closed social system in which most interactions are with other individuals belonging to the group. Society is a group of people who share a common culture, occupy a particular territorial area and feel themselves to constitute a unified and distinct entity. It is a network of relationships that binds members together. This is because human beings live in groups known as communities whose members share common and peculiar culture. A community is a unit which has common boundaries. Communities require planning, organization, administration and control. In several ways there is stratification in the society. Members of a society are educated on how to think, act, work, relate to their neigbours and make decisions on their own. Society has several elements. Dzurgba (2009), listed elements of the society as follows:

Population

A society has a population, while groups and organizations have members. The difference is simple but basic. In Leon Mayhew's phrase, the societal population is "the self perpetuating inhabitants of territorial areas." By mating and reproduction, a population reproduces itself. Note

that we are dealing here with a population, not necessarily a people. Whether or not the population of a society shares a culture and views itself as one people is something to be determined by observation of the actual case, not something to be taken for granted. The Ghanaians in Nigeria are a distinct people but they are also only part of the population of a larger national society, even though, many of them wish to be separate.

Territory

A self-perpetuating societal population inhabits a given territory on a relatively permanent basis. Such a territory is the largest within which mating is common and residence is relatively permanent.

Social Organization

A societal population in its territory is involved in complex processes of social interaction. It carries on a set of activities – economic, political, and educational among others – that organizes social life. Each of these several social activities becomes a partly independent structure of social relations with their own specific characteristics. Yet they also overlap with each other, link together and share much in common, for they are activities carried on by the same population. These components give us a definition: Society is all of the systems of social interaction carried on by a population within a specified territory. While we can easily recognize that we live our lives inside a society, not outside or independent of it, we often do not fully grasp what this means. For one thing, we become the unique person, as a particular society encourages, or at least allows certain forms of personal development – and discourage, even forbid others.

In some cases, forms of personal development fall beyond what is humanly possible within that society. Miniver Cheevy could not be a warrior bold with bright sword on a prancing steed because nobody can in the twentieth century. That is beyond the limits of what his society can offer him for personal development. No one society, then, offers us the entire range of the humanly possible. History provides us with a long record of ways to be human long since lost in

practice, though sometimes still alive in books and movies and so still available to us in fantasy. From anthropology we learn of very different peoples and what may seem to us their strange though sometimes quite attractive ways to be human. In each case different kinds of societies provide different ways to be human.

In living our own lives, we do so necessarily within the roles and routines of our own society, which constrain us to be and do some things and not be and do some other things. We never escape society which was there before us and will be there after us, though it may change during our lifetime, a little or a lot. To live within a society means to be involved in a small and personal world of everyday life, of the familiar and manageable, of people we know and love (or even hate). We experience in face-to-face relations family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, fellow students, teachers, employers, traffic cops, local merchants and the like. Our daily activities interlock with theirs. There once was a time when this small world of daily life could be the limits of a society, for there were tribes and little villages for which no larger world existed.

But that is long since past; now society extends into a larger world which we do not directly experience but relate to only impersonally and indirectly. Large and remote systems penetrate our small worlds. In Nigeria, laws are made which affect our daily lives. Our own small daily world of town, neighbourhood, or campus then is not a world unto itself. It is, instead, part and parcel of a large society which always extends well beyond the range of our daily experience. In the past, when people's lives were entirely bound within the small world of daily life, the common sense developed from living within this small world seemed sufficient to understand what was happening and what to expect. But for a few of us, that is no longer the case; modern society includes so much more than our own small worlds that the experience of everyday life is not an adequate guide to understanding society. Sociology came into being for just that reason. Something else besides common sense was needed to understand what society was all about.

3.2 Why is there society?

To answer this question, we must start with two basic observations about the nature of individuals.

1. At birth, the human organism is helpless to meet its own needs. Others must protect and care for it or it will die. Also, it needs others from whom it can learn how to do the things necessary to live. Human life can be sustained only if the slowly growing human organism (slowly growing compared to most other animals) is cared for while it learns how to do the things necessary to take care of it.

2. The above, in turn, tells us that the human organism is not genetically programmed, that is, its specific behaviour is not provided by some set of inherited instincts. Instead, all human beings must go through a prolonged, complex learning process. We become human by this learning process, and this, in turn, requires persistent association with other human beings. Human beings, then, do not come into the world ready-made by nature, already fitted out with the necessary instincts to adapt to the natural environment. The consequences which flow from these basic points are fundamental to an understanding of why there is society.

In the first place, it means that human beings have had to work out for themselves ways to survive. Possessing no instinctive knowledge and skills, human beings have learned from experience, have developed useful skills and have made tools and constructed shelter from whatever materials the environment made available. Secondly, human survival can only be accomplished if human beings act collectively. Cooperation can accomplish things no one person could manage alone. From the earliest period of human existence, providing food and shelter, while also bringing into being a new generation, taking care of it and teaching it what it must know, required that individuals cooperate with one another. They had to develop some organized way to see that what needed to be done got done. Some tasks need to be shared, some to be divided among different persons.

African Bushmen, for example, hunted down game, while their women collected roots, fruits, nuts and other vegetable foods, a task that could be carried out while taking care of

infants. And both sources of food were necessary, since hunting did not provide a regular and predictable source of food. From this perspective, human society is the outcome of collective adaptation to a natural environment, a process of finding how to live cooperatively in such a way as to make nature yield enough to sustain life. By cooperative activity among humans learning from one another, skills are acquired; knowledge is accumulated, techniques and tools are developed; and all are transmitted to the next generation.

It seems that human life must have been carried on in social groups, however small and primitive from the very beginning of human existence. There is a basic lesson to be learned from this out of their struggle with nature, human beings provided for their biological survival and they produced a special life. The answer to our question – why is there society? Is surely not starting or even surprising, but is nonetheless basic; society is produced by the cooperative activity of human beings, and the human organism becomes human only in a society. Neither the fully human organism – the person – nor society comes from nature readymade; neither, that is, is genetically produced.

3.3 The Nature of Society

This definition of society does not assume in advance that a society is highly integrated and culturally united. It can be, of course, but often it is not. Culturally different peoples may share the same society. They may even participate in common activities in a reasonable workable way. The world today abounds in such societies; so much so that it is difficult to find a society with a population that shares one culture. While a society can absorb and contain culturally different peoples, it nonetheless suffers strain and conflict for doing so. This becomes particularly apparent when the cultural differences are differences of language or religion (and sometimes both). The strife in Nigeria among the Tivs and the Jukuns of Taraba State, the Modakekes and the Ifes of Osun State, the Muslims and Christians of Northern Nigeria, in South Africa between the Whites and the Blacks, in Sudan between the Muslims North and the Christians South, in Northern Ireland between Catholic and

Protestants and in Canada between French-speaking and English-speaking peoples are examples frequently in the news. (In both of these cases, of course, the differences of religion

and language are matched by differences of class and wealth; if this were not so, the conflict symbolized the religion and/or language would be less severe). Among the new nations of Africa, the original tribal identities which distinguish one African people from another, still persist and even flourish. However, the new national boundaries do not coincide with the original tribal territories and as a result; most African nations contain more than one tribal people. Some tribes have even been divided by boundaries cutting across their ancient tribal lands. As a consequence, tribal loyalties are the basis for intense struggle for power within these newly developing societies. These new societies, in effect, are still emerging out of old tribal ones.

Societal Boundaries

Most of us – social scientists included – hold the idea that a society is a relatively self sufficient, self contained structure with well-marked boundaries that both separate it and insulate it from the surrounding environment of other societies. From this perspective, a society is but the largest system of social interaction, within which all other groups, organizations and institutions are but sub-units. But such a conception is no longer adequate in the modern world, however reasonable it might once have seemed. In the world today, societies cannot be viewed as self sufficient and self-contained. Several crucial activities of modern society – economic production, technological development and use, scientific research and development – flow easily across societal boundaries. Furthermore, the trained managers, technicians and scientists involved in these activities also move readily from one society to another. The mobility of goods and technology is matched by the mobility of the world's most highly trained personnel.

By these activities such forms of modern culture as scientific and technological knowledge also flow into and across societies. Modern ideologies do also and no society in the world is exempted from the influence of one or more ideological currents: capitalism or socialism, for example, in one variant or another managerial ideology, technological ideologies, ideologies about what is modern and so on. Mass culture too penetrates almost all societies. Wearing jeans and listening to rock music on records or radio become the aims of millions of young people in many societies. Nigerian movies and television programs are seen all over Africa and Hilton

hotels and even McDonald hamburgers can be found all over the globe. Now European football – soccer to us – a truly worldwide sport, is finding acceptance in Nigeria and world over.

3.4 Types of Society

Sociology recognizes many types of society and defines these types of society in a very clear manner. Following are some of those types of society and their characteristics.

Tribal Society

A tribe is group of bands occupying a contiguous territory or territories having a feeling of unity deriving from numerous similarities in culture, frequent contacts and a certain community of interests. A tribe may also be defined as a social group with territorial affiliation that are endogamous with no specialization of functions ruled by tribal officers hereditary or otherwise, united in language or dialect recognizing social distance with other tribes. A large section of tribal population depends on agriculture for survival.

Characteristics of Tribal Society

The tribe inhabits and remains within definite and common topography. The members of a tribe possess a consciousness of mutual unity. The members of a tribe speak a common language. The members generally marry into their own group but now due to increased contact with outsiders there are instance of tribes marrying outsider as well. The tribes believe in ties of blood relationship between its members. They have faith in their having descended from a common, real or mythical, ancestor and hence believe in blood relationships with other members. Tribes follow their own political organization which maintains harmony. Religion is of great importance in the tribe. The tribal political and social organization is based on religion because they are granted religious sanctity and recognition.

Agrarian Society

The invention of plough marked the beginning of agrarian societies 6000 years back. According to Collins dictionary of Sociology Agrarian society refer to any form of society especially very traditional societies primarily based on agricultural and craft production rather than industrial production. Wallace and Wallace described agrarian societies as employing animal drawn ploughs to cultivate the land. The mode of production of the agrarian society that is cultivation distinguishes it from the hunter-gatherer society which produces none of its food. The theories of Redfield and Tonnies are considered important. Robert Redfield talks about folk-urban continuum and little tradition and great tradition as his paramount focus in rural studies. Tonnies on the other hand discuss concepts of Gemeinschaft and Gesselschaft.

Industrial Society

The Industrial mode of production began some 250 years ago in Britain and from there it spread to the entire world. In the simplest sense an industrial society is a social system whose mode of production focuses primarily on finished goods manufactured with the aid of machinery. According to Wallace and Wallace, in industrial societies the largest portion of the labour force is involved in mechanized production of goods and services. The term industrial societies originated from Saint Simon who chose it to reflect the emerging central role of manufacturing industry in the 18th century Europe in contrast with previous pre-industrial and agrarian society.

Characteristics of Industrial Society

Industrial society is associated with the emergence of industrialization which transformed much of Europe and United States by replacing essentially agriculture based societies with industrial base on the use of machines and non-animal sources of energy to produce finished goods. Industrial societies are in a continual state of rapid change due to technological innovations. The high level of productivity in industrial societies further stimulates population growth where people start living in cities and urban areas. New medical technologies and

improved living standards serve to extend life expectancy. The division of labour becomes complex with the availability of specialized jobs. The status are achieved rather than ascribed. The family and kinship as social institutions are relegated to the background. There is breakup of joint family system and nuclear family units become prominent. The influence of religion diminishes as people hold many different and competing values and beliefs.

The State assumes central power in the industrial societies. Industrialism is associated with the widening gap between two social classes of 'haves' and 'have notes.' The rich or the captitalist class is seen as exploiting the class of the poor known as working class However in most of the industrial societies there is steady reduction in social inequalities. Industrial societies have given rise to a number of secondary groups such as corporations, political parties, business houses and government bureaucracies, cultural and literary associations. The primary groups tend to lose their importance and secondary groups come to the prominence.

Post-Industrial Society

The concept of post-industrial society was first formulated in 1962 by D. Bell and subsequently elaborated in his seminar work 'Coming of post industrial society' (1974). It describes the economic and social changes in the late twentieth century. To Bell, theoretical knowledge forms the axial principle of society and is the source of innovation and policy formulation. In economy this is reflected in the decline of goods production and manufacturing as the main form of economic activity, to be replaced by services. With regard to the class structure, the new axial principle fosters the supremacy of professional and technical occupations which constitute a new class, in all spheres of economic, political and social. Decision making is influenced by new intellectual technologies and the new intellectual class. Other writers have also commented on the growing power of technocrats in economic and political life. Galbraith (1967) believes that power in the United states economy and therefore in American society as a whole lies in the hands of a technical bureaucracy of the techno-structure of large corporations.

Features of Post-Industrial Society

Post-Industrial societies are marked by:

· A declining manufacturing sector, resulting in de-industrialization.

· A large service sector

· An increase in the amount of information technology, often leading to an "information age". Information, knowledge, and creativity are the new raw materials of such an economy. The industry aspect of a post-industrial economy is sent into less developed nations which manufacture what is needed at lower cost. This occurrence is typical of nations that industrialized in the past such as the United States and most Western European countries.

3.5 The Development of Complex Society

Human societies have been developing in form and structure for thousands of years. While it is not our task to review that long history here, it is useful to have some conception of what that process was. Though the time span, by human perspective is very long, the historic record is quite clear, human societies have become increasingly more complex in their organization and also larger in size. If we ignore all the extraordinary variation and diversity in human societies known to archeologists and historians, we can account for this evolutionary process from the time of wandering bands to today's modern industrial society as an evolution of forms of society distinguished from one another by four basic processes.

1. Improved technology for production of food, clothing and shelter.

2. Increased population and expansion into a larger territory.

3. Greater specialization of groups and roles and a greater differentiation of occupations, classes and other groups in the organization of society.

4. Increasing centralization of control in order to manage and coordinate an increasingly complex society.

Hunting and Gathering Societies

The most primitive form of human society was that of hunting and gathering. Lacking all but the most simple tools, hunting and gathering peoples grouped together in small, usually nomadic bands – nomadic because they had constantly to move on to find more edible plants and more animals to hunt. For such people, life was an existence lived close to the subsistence level, with little surplus food ever available. Since they could not store or preserve food, life often went quickly from feast to famine. Each group was small, probably an average about fifty persons. They were self-sufficient, having little contact with any other people, so that each small band or tribe lived largely by itself, depending solely on its own resources. When primitive people learned to cultivate the soil, about ten thousand years ago, the way was set for the emergence of a more complicated form of society, though one still primitive in character.

The digging stick and later the hoe permitted the planting of seeds and the harvesting of crops. Now some time could be devoted to activities other than tilling the soil. In some societies, such as that of the Zuni Indians of New Mexico, a great deal of time was devoted to ceremonial activities while other horticultural societies spent much time and energy in war. In either case, there were new specialized roles, priests and warriors. There was also a modest economic specialization with some people designated to specialize in the production of the now greater range of goods made for daily use: weapons, tools and pottery and utensils. These were larger societies than those of the hunting and gathering stage. Such increased size of society led to a necessary political organization, with headmen or chiefs as full time political leaders, something not possible for hunting and gathering people. Horticultural societies gradually improved in technology.

The hoe replaced the digging stick, terracing and irrigation developed as did fertilization and there was also the development of metallurgy and the manufacture of metal tools, axes and knives especially. These technological advances made possible the further enlargement of society both in expansion over a greater geographical area and by increased density – a larger population could be sustained in the same geographical area. The settled village relatively permanent and enduring was now fundamental to social life.

Agrarian Societies

If the horticultural society began to emerge with the invention of the digging stick and later the hoe, it was the invention of the plow, harnessed to domesticated animal that set in motion the evolution of agrarian society some five to six thousand years ago. A wide range of technological developments greatly increased the productivity of society, accompanied by increases in the territory occupied and the size of the occupying population. This led to the growth of governing systems, with armies and ruling classes (warfare was a common activity in agrarian societies). The political extension of control over wide territories even led to the development of great empires. But perhaps most important characteristic of agrarian societies was the emergence of the urban community. Cities emerged as coordinating and controlling centers for agrarian societies, producing the historic contrast between rural and city life, between farmer and peasant, on the one hand and artisan and merchant on the other. Indeed, the advanced technology produced a surplus that made possible an extensive trade and commerce and the emergence of classes of artisans and merchants.

The cities also housed a ruling class, as well as administrators and religious and military leaders. Within the class of artisans increasing specialization produced a vast increase in the number of different crafts, perhaps as many as 150 to 2,000 in the larger cities. When one adds to this the many other kinds of occupations – officials, soldiers, priests, merchants, servants, and laborers – it becomes clear that the urban centers of agrarian societies had produced a notable diversity of occupations. Though these cities were the controlling centers of agrarian societies, they were never more than a minority of the entire population. Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries in Europe, for example, the urban population was probably never more than 10 percent of the total. For any agrarian society, the limits of the technology required that the large majority of the population live in rural villages and be directly engaged in the tilling of the soil. Only with the coming of industrial society was that changed.

Industrial Societies

Over the last two hundred years, advances in technology and changes in economic organization have altered the agrarian form of society beyond recognition and brought about industrial society. What first marks industrial society is its enormous technological advance, which permits the use of far more diversified raw materials, quite different sources of energy, far more complex and efficient tools, and as a consequence, an enormous increase in the production and consumption of material goods. The industrialization of society, in fact, has vastly increased the standard of living of industrial populations. It has had other consequences as well as the destruction of local market systems through integration into larger ones, the growth of large corporations to produce goods and employ large staffs, and even more intensive specialization of labour, producing thousands of occupations where before there were merely hundreds, and an increase in the size of cities as well as the steady increase in the proportion of the total population living in cities. Industrialization urbanizes the population.

The growth of societies with such large and diversified populations had a further political consequence; it means the emergence of the modern nation-state, a political entity that takes on more and more functions of service and control. There are many other changes in society involved in the transition from agrarian to industrial society in community, in family, in life-style, in politics and in culture. Much of what sociology is about is an effort to understand how thoroughly industrialization has altered human society over the past two hundred years, what forms and modes of life it makes available and what in turn it has put beyond the possibility of experience for today's people. It is concerned with understanding what has happened to reshape human society, what society is now like and what directions of change seem now to be in the making.

3.6 Social Institutions

Fundamental to the analysis of society is the understanding of social institutions. There are two different ways to speak of institutions. One begins with the idea of an institutions norm and defines an institution as a complex of such norms. Institutional norms are supported by strong

group consensus and sanctions for violation are imposed by enforcing agencies for they are obligatory. They are, indeed, what Sumner meant by the 'mores.' A second conception of institution stresses the social acts which the norms govern, thus suggesting institutional roles and relations. These two ways to define institutions are not incompatible. One calls institutions the norms that govern action, the other calls institution the action itself. An institution is clearly composed of both norms and actions. But we still need to know something else, why some activities are institutionally normative and some are not. It is conventional to designate such major patterns as the family, the economy and politics as social institutions.

But this is misleading for not every kind of familial, economic and political activity is institutionalized. What is basic is that some activities are more important than others for the maintenance of society. Each societal population devises ways to produce goods and feed itself to govern and regulate its ways of living and to educate the young to carry on social life. But if it is important that these activities are carried out, it is equally important how they are carried out. It is here that we get closer to the idea of an institution. In a capitalist society, there are legal contracts and private property. In modern society, marriage is monogamous and bigamy is forbidden. In a political democracy, the citizens possess the right to vote and only the legislature the citizens elect can enact laws.

Within the framework of economy, family and politics, each of these specific actions – making contracts – are legitimate actions morally and legally sanctioned and supported. They are institutions. Social institutions have two components (1) established practices and actions and (2) the norms that make these practices and actions the legitimate ones. That second component tells us something important about the institutions and about the organizations of society. The varieties of human experience make it clear enough that there is more than one way of carrying out these important activities; property needs to be privately owned and marriage needs to be monogamous. But while different societies choose different ways, any one society chooses only one way and makes it the only legitimate way for it, morally and legally. Seeing an institution as composed of norms and actions gives us a definition.

An institution is a normative system of social action deemed morally and socially crucial for a society. If we were properly technical, we would not call the whole range of economic or political activities institutions but perhaps, institutional spheres, for only some of these activities

are institutionalized. Selling a used car or writing a letter to your congressman are not institutionalized actions but the right of private property and voting in an election are institutionalized activities. With that warning, then, the institutions of society are:

1. Family: Every society develops a social arrangement to legitimize mating and the care and socializing of the young.
2. Education: The young must also be inducted into the culture and taught the necessary values and skills. In pre-industrial societies, this is accomplished largely within the kinship system but in modern societies, a separate system of education develops.
3. Economy: Every society organizes its population to work to produce and to distribute material goods.
4. Polity: Every society develops a governing system of power and authority, which ensures social control within a system of rights and rules, protects and guarantees established interests and mediates among conflicting groups.
5. Religion: In societies, there is always a sense of sacredness about life. It is still a powerful integrating and cohesive force. Religion gave cultural _expression in symbol and rite to this sense of the sacred.

But in some modern societies, religion performs this integrating function but weakly, if at all. The legitimation that religion once provided, science now does though not in exactly the same way, but claims to possess the only valid knowledge and which then legitimizes a wide range of practices and actions in modern society.

Institutions

Consensus and Coercion – While it is proper to emphasize those institutions are the legitimate way to carry out necessary social activities; it would be wrong to create the impression that they originated only through common agreement and are supported by an unchallenged moral consensus. This historical record would support no such interpretation. Complex societies were shaped in processes of ecological expansion in the struggle for control of territory and

populations, victorious groups imposed their institutions on others. Many people became Christian for example, through "conversion by the word." Conquest and coercion have had as much to do with the establishment of social institutions as have consensus.

3.7 Modern Society

While human society has taken many forms over thousands of years and has become more complex, now we inhabit a modern society. It is that form of society that interests us the most. The gradual emergence of what we now call modern society was complex process of social disruption and change that altered old institutions beyond recognition and gave them radically new forms. It was a turbulent historical process, marked often by violence, revolution and class struggle. Eventually, it changed the whole world. Whatever else it is, modern society is an industrial society. The recognition of this fact is perhaps the first (and therefore now the oldest) idea in understanding how modern society differs from what went before.

Those scholars who insist that we define modern society as basically an industrial society point out that the demands and consequence of industrial production which most basically influence the structure of modern society. Industrial societies emphasize industrial production of goods and thus give priority to whatever will maximize that production. That gives them some features in common, however else they differ in cultural traditions, the same technology, similar technical and scientific knowledge and the same effort to provide the necessary technical training, the same job classifications and skill rankings, which in turn shape the structure of occupations and occupational rewards.

Industrial societies strive for technical and productive efficiency and so for them the "rational" course of action is always determined by cost-accounting, they strive to get more for less. In industrial society, technical occupations increase at the expense of nontechnical ones, and the distribution of wages and salaries among occupations is fairly similar. In such a society, management and administration emerge as major functions and as major occupations of authority and prestige. There is increasing specialization and furthermore, the separation of the economic system from the family and from religion; home and work place are no longer the same.

3.8 The Master Trends

But modern society is more than an industrial structure; it is the outcome of a number of master trends that have been going on for several hundred years. They include the following:

Capitalism

The emergence of capitalism began as far back as the thirteenth century in medieval Europe. It developed into powerful tradition destroying system of privately owned production for profit, which enormously increased material productivity, reshaped the class structure and fundamentally altered the basic institutions of society.

Industrial Technology

The development of mechanized processes vastly increased the production of goods, shifted the base of work from agriculture to industry and raised the material level of the population. Capitalism exploited technology to create wholly new factory systems of industrial manufacturing and many new specialized occupations. The development of this industrial system is what is meant by the Industrial Revolution. It is this system that makes a society into an industrial society.

Urbanization

The transformation of society by capitalism and industrialism then shifted the population from predominantly rural to predominantly urban locations. While cities are not new, only in modern society has most of the population lived in urban areas.

The Nation State

The ecological expansion created by industrial capitalism brought the nation state into being as the politically controlling unit, extending national loyalties into more diverse human populations than ever before.

Bureaucracy

The need to administer larger units of population brought about by ecological expansion, particularly with people from diverse cultural origins, brought into common use the bureaucratic form of organization, particularly in the economic and political spheres. Again, modern society did not invent bureaucracy, but it has made it a basic feature of its structure.

Science

Scientific knowledge is the most valued knowledge in modern society. It makes possible the control and exploitation of nature and the harnessing of varied forms of energy. From such knowledge, technological advance is assured.

Mass Education

Modern society requires, at a minimum, the literacy of all its population. Beyond that, it requires mass education to train the population in industrial techniques and skills, to build commitment and loyalty to the nation-state and its institutions, and to produce a highly trained scientific and technological class. In modern society, by contrast, the realm of the sacred shrinks. Modern society maximizes the practical and useful. Furthermore, the rational mind of science encourages skepticism about practices not based on tested procedures. Science also develops attitudes that welcome new practical ideas and new technical knowledge. In modern society, in short, the dominant place once accorded religion is replaced by the primacy given to science, its methods and its practical application.

3.9 The Good Society

Communal

The good society is communal. It is a community, rather than a bureaucracy or an aggregate of unrelated people. This means that social life is based upon a consensus of values and ideals about how society should be organized and how we should live our lives. Each of us feels that we belong and are bound to enduring social relations with people we love and respect. People care and cooperate.

Controllable

In the past, people felt that the conditions of their existence were largely beyond their control. Limited knowledge and a limited technology gave but a limited control over nature and human existence was necessarily one of scarcity and unending labour. The poverty and suffering of most human beings was accepted as inevitable. The fear of the unknown, the uses of magic, the ever present threat of disaster, even the concept of punishing gods for God in religion were expressions of this experience of limited control. Now, in modern society, science and technology have much diminished these fears of uncontrollable natural forces, yet modern people still do not feel they control the conditions of their lives. Now, it is not nature but society that seems uncontrolled, or even in control.

For modern people, a utopian image of a good society tends to emphasize the capacity of human beings to have a rational control over the circumstances of their lives. Bell warned that conflict between professionals as experts and the populace would be common in postindustrial society. Decentralization and self government become goals for social change, designed to bring the social world down to human scale and within the reasonable control of those who must live in it. But it is a goal ridiculed or even denounced in turn by those committed to the continuity of trends in modern society which will make post-industrial society seem even more uncontrollable by the majority of people.

Self Fulfillment

More and more in modern society increasing numbers of individuals demand the opportunity for a fulfilling and rewarding life, free of demeaning drudgery and boring routine. They expect to be able to realize their full potential of abilities and skills. Once it was common to think that only the elite, a naturally gifted minority could achieve such self-fulfillment and personal self-development. But in the modern world, it is no longer easy to sustain such notions of a few who deserve the privilege of self realization while the rest labour in drudgery to make that possible.

The Ideal and the Possible

The concept of the good society operates at two levels, the ideal and the historical. The ideal is simply a statement of what human society is at its best, a community ordered by the values of justice, equality and liberty. At the historical level, the good society is the historically possible approximation, the nearest and best given the limitations of knowledge and technology.

3.10 Measuring Society

Human societies are large, complex and ever changing structures. Getting the measure of them, that is, analyzing and assessing them, is always a difficult task. There are, however, at least, two ways in which some assessment of society can be made: the evolutionary and the comparative. The evolutionary development of society from more primitive to complex forms, as we have seen, culminated in a modern society which was capitalist, industrial and urban. That evolutionary process we can expect to go on. It suggested how a new form of society would evolve in the near future out of trends in the present society. Karl Marx too used an evolutionary conception of the development of human society which was then to be followed by a new form, a socialist society that would create the conditions he argued for the creation of a community of

truly free and equal individuals. (That, by the way, was his meaning of communism, not what is meant by the term today as a consequence of the society created by the Russian revolution).

The comparison of folk and modern society is but one effort to be comparative. There are many other ways, including the comparison of developed with underdeveloped for dependent societies or of one particular society, say that Nigeria with another which is basically similar, say Ghana or with one which is both like it in some ways and quite different in others, say the United States. A disciplined comparison of societies is a method for bringing out basic features that might not be so evident if we just examine one society. Comparing Nigeria to some other societies or comparing Nigeria today to what it was before 1999 is a way of bringing out its distinctive features. Lastly, comparing the real society with an image of the good society provides another point of analysis. In particular, it enables people to ask whether the real as it really is, is all that is possible, or whether it is reasonable to hope and struggle for something better.

4.0 CONCLUSION

It is important to note that society never existed in a vacuum. However, all the systems of social interaction carried on by a population within a specified territory contribute to the society. The evolutionary development of society from more primitive to complex forms culminated in a modern society. The concept of the 'Good Society' was also presented by Sociologist. The good society is said to be communal, controllable and gives its population a fulfilling and rewarding life. Religion however, has influenced and is still affecting the various societies world over. All such influences will be our focus in subsequent units.

5.0 SUMMARY

The concept of society with emphasis on its development from primitive to modern has been the focus in this unit. The development from simple to complex and the institutions that make up the society were also studied. Historic image of the good society compares real and imagined societies by such criteria as communal, controllable and self-fulfillment and two other

ways to measure society which are by evolutionary development and by comparison of one society to another or by one society to different historic periods in its development, were highlighted in the study.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Describe the term Society.
2. Give an account of the evolutionary process of society from the primitive to modern times.
3. What do you understand by social institution?
4. Identify and explain any five institutions of society.
5. Identify and explain briefly the three elements of Society.
6. What are the features of society?
7. List and explain the various types of societies mentioned in this unit.
8. What are the major characteristics of a Complex Society?
9. Describe a Modern Society. What are the Master Trends that make a Society modern?
10. What prompted the concept of 'The Good Society?' Mention some significant ingredients of the Society.

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UNIT 3: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND SOCIETY

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The religious institution has been found to be an institution that has exerted profound influence on the society. Religion has been found to be a viable tool in the order and stability of many societies. In this unit therefore, we shall examine the relationship between religion and society. We shall attempt to look at the influence religion has on the society generally and how this has shaped the direction of events in the society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to;

- Describe the relationship between religion and society

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Relationship between Religion and Society

Religion is the worshiping of society. The society makes religious rules for its peace, order, harmony and stability. Religious beliefs and practices therefore do not exist in a vacuum. They exist in the society and are practiced by individuals who live in the communities that form the society. Religious values are themselves a reflection of values of the society where a particular religion is practiced. The mode of religious practices and worship reflects the nature of the society where such religions exist. In traditional African societies the practice of Ancestral worship, beliefs in magic, witchcraft, divination, secret societies and indigenous medicine are widespread. These various practices and beliefs are aimed at creating unity and solidarity among the people. For example, the practice of Ancestral worship among African societies has its roots in the belief that there exist a link between One's dead ancestors and the living members of the community.

The dead is believed to know and reward or punish its descendants. Ancestors are therefore in constant watch over the behavior of the living. At death anybody may be called by the body of ancestors to render account of his or her relationships with the kinsmen left behind on Earth. This belief which is widespread among African societies help maintains morality, discipline and order. Society receives rewards or punishments from supernatural beings based on their observance and adherence to laws handed down by such supernatural beings. The development and transformation of societies is also tied to the level of adherence to its religious practices. Consequently, evil communities are visited with diseases, draughts and floods.

Evil societies are dominated by witches and switchyards. Witches are believed to poses supernatural elements and powers by which they do harm to their fellow human beings. They are also believed to meet and operate chiefly at night and in secrect places. Religion therefore ensures that members of society maintain a high level of morality so as to avoid punishment from their God. Members of the society also depend on religion for their well being. The gift of rains, bounty harvest and good health depends on the extent to which members of a society obey God. Among societies of Africa it is believed that drastic droughts, pestilence, turmoil and other

forms of misfortune and sicknesses befall a community because of their evil deeds and disobedience to the will of God.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The relationship between religion and society existed from times immemorial. Members of a community practice religion so as to find answers to questions relating to life after death, meaning of life and relationship between God and man. Religion is therefore an inevitable part of society. It is an integral part of all societies of the world. Societies depend on religion to provide meaning to life, provide answers to questions of life after death as well as emotional, and psychological support.

5.0 SUMMARY

This unit dealt with the relationship between religion and society. Religion as an integral part of societies is found to have predominant influence on the people. Religion constitute of set of norms, and dogmas that relate the individual with the supernatural being. Religion is therefore meant to ensure the continued peace and order in society so as to enhance man's capabilities and well being.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss the relationship that exist between religion and the society

7.0 REFERENCES/ FURTHER READING

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UNIT 4: SOCIALIZATION AND RELIGIOUS INDOCTRINATION

CONTENT

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

    3.1 Meaning and Definitions of Socialization and Religious Indoctrination

    3.2 Socialization and Religious Indoctrination

    3.3 Doctrines of Religious Indoctrination

    3.3 Conflicting Agencies of Socialization and Religious Indoctrination

    3.4 Inter-Relatedness of Socialization and Religious Indoctrination

    3.5 The Role of Socialization and Religious Indoctrination in Enhancing Peaceful Co-Existence

    3.6 Abuse of Socialization and Religious Indoctrination

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we studied the relationship between religion and stratification, especially religion and radical politics, the relationship between religion and the oppressed. We also examined the comparison between radical and conservative religion. In this unit, we will be discussing socialization and religious indoctrination, the conflicting agencies of socialization, inter-relatedness of socialization and religious indoctrination, as well as abuse of socialization and religious indoctrination.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

- Define socialization
- Enumerate the conflicting agencies of socialization
- Discuss the doctrines of religious indoctrination
- Explain the inter-relatedness of socialization and religious indoctrination
- Highlight the abuses of socialization and religious indoctrination

3.0 COURSE CONTENT

3.2 Meaning and Definitions of Socialization and Religious Indoctrination

Socialization is the process by which a person acquires the knowledge, skills and disposition that make him/her more or less able member of the society. Odumuyiwa, also posited that socialization calls for the development of a type of personality that can adjust to the changing patterns to meet the needs in the society. Thus, in the above context, socialization becomes an interaction with others; the experience of emotional acceptance and symbolic communication through language. However, in the context of this paper, the term socialization simply refers to "the process by which one internalizes the attitude, belief and values of one's culture". There are two kinds of socialization: Primary socialization (of child); and Adult socialization.

In adult socialization, a person must learn to function in any group or organization that he enters; he must learn not only new practices but also new values and norms, a new and specialized vocabulary, new ways of interacting with others. When entering an occupation or converting to a new religion, he is making such a significant change in his life that he can be described as developing a new self. Hence adult socialization is usually thought of as building upon primary socialization since the basic human equipment of a self-human sentiments and language have been fashioned during primary socialization.

The term indoctrination on the other hand, comes from "doctrine" which is derived from "docco", meaning "to teach". Indoctrination therefore, denotes both the act of teaching and the subject taught. Thus, Ushe asserts that indoctrination refers to "filling the mind of man with particular ideas or beliefs". It is the study of theories in which there may be differences of opinions or even disputes. Stenhouse describes indoctrination as the questionable means to cause a pupil to reach a premature opinion. According to him:

> To talk of indoctrination is to suggest that the teacher uses unfair means to induce the child to come to conclusion which himself/herself intends to make, but which the subject does not necessary demand.

Another characteristic of indoctrination is that it is something that takes place over a period of time. One might see a teacher as being stupidly ignorant if he tries to get a class to accept an untruth and ill-advised by imparting belief which one disagrees. But one would not call him an indoctrinator, unless he/she continues to do this over a space of time in order to change the attitude, judgment and opinion of his class. Religious indoctrination implies teaching without making available to the learners the reason for what is being taught or the reasons why they should accept it. Religious indoctrination is therefore; teaching with the intention that the pupil will believe what is taught in such a way that nothing will subsequently shake his/her belief. Therefore, shook, affirms that faith may be one result of religious indoctrination. According to him:

> I suggest that the following provides a necessary and sufficient condition of indoctrination. A person indoctrinates if he teaches with the intention that the pupil(s) believes, regardless of the evidence.

Maher, in his appendix to the "Fourth Republic", places emphasis on the context involved where he describes religious indoctrination as "teaching as true that which is disputatious". However, in the context of this paper, the term religious indoctrination will simply refer to "the essential teaching of every religion to help the adherents of such a religion to comply with the

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doctrinal practices". Every religion serves as an agency of socialization and indoctrination. As long as religion teaches its adherents ethics and holds strictly to its beliefs and doctrinal practices, it is socializing and indoctrinating its adherents. But as soon as its doctrinal teachings shake the basis of peaceful co-existence, harmony and religious tolerance in the society, indoctrination becomes dangerous and offensive.

Man is a social and religious being that has knowledge skills and disposition develop his personality as a follower of a religion. Through the processes of socialization and religious indoctrination, he is capable of adjusting to the changing patterns in the society and to fashion himself into a sincere adherent of a religion to meet the social and religious needs in the society. Sometimes, the required personality is developed against a background of conflicting agencies of socialization, and indoctrination, thereby creating infinity of confusion and conflicts which expose the person to violence in the society. Consequently, the religious people who are in constant conflicts with the family, church and the school become purposeless, miserable and hopelessly disorganized due to conflicting influences of socialization and religious indoctrination.

3.2 Socialization and Religious Indoctrination

Socialization and religious indoctrination are essential elements for the development of human personality. Socialization is built upon religious indoctrination because human sentiments and language are fashioned during religious indoctrination. Thus, any religious adherent who remained indifferent to his or her religious indoctrination could not be counted as an adherent of such a religion, particularly Christianity and Islam, for religious indoctrination is a set of beliefs system. Christianity accepts the Bibl as the authoritative revelation of God to man of the truths which could otherwise, be known no matter how trustworthy his source of knowledge is. Therefore, God's revelation to man is regarded as the specific, progressive, inspired and final transmission through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

In the Islam the Koran (Qur'an) is believed to be sacred book which contains the revelations received by Prophet Mohammed. It is the word of God incarnate, eternal and uncreated. The Koran contains 114 chapters of 6,236 verses of 77934 words and of 323,621

letters, which are sacred that none but the most purified shall touch it (56:78). The Muslims are religiously indoctrinated to believe that the Qur'an is God's revealed words dictated to Prophet Mohammed. Thus, Islam teaches the doctrine of God that is Muslim profession of faith that "there is no god but Allah" (La ilaha illa ilan). It is an absolute monotheism that admits either filiations or the personification of love between the father and the son that is the spirit. Islam does not talk of unity in God but unity which is strict "Tawheed", the doctrine that God is just one in an absolute sense. Islam makes the doctrine of God oneness very central in its doctrine and practice. This religious indoctrination is similar to the Christians teaching that God is the beginning and the end of existence, the first and final cause of all that exist both man and things were created by his decision and through his action.

Hence, Odumuyiwa noted that there are three main stages in the development of the dominating scriptures; the revelation of God in Christ; and the record of revelation by the Holy Spirit in the sacred word. To this end all Christians and Muslims believe in the doctrine of God who has absolute powers and is omnipresent, eternal and immutable. He is God who possesses intrinsic and transcendent holiness. He is God of love and justice with infinite existence.

Christianity and Islam emphasis religious ethics which the Holy Books (the Bible and Qur'an) summarize, for example, both the Bible and the Qur'an encourages inter-personal relationship between God and human beings. In Christianity, the first four commandments of God emphasize the relationship between God and human beings, while the remaining six commandments are termed the bedrock of ethics and nucleus of social integration among the Christians. Islam also emphasizes the fact that the Qur'an is the basis of their religion as well as cannon of ethics and moral life. Thus, there is tendency among the Muslims to exaggerate the claims that since all Muslims are true believers, where as the vast majority of Christians are nominal adherents, Islam is by far the target religious community in the world.

The Muslims are also made of the divine revelation according to Prophet Mohammed. Therefore, every Muslim must learn the obligatory prayers in Arabic as the only language that should be used in public worship. It is for this reason that Muslims are made to known the Qur'an by heart and could endlessly repeat it to themselves to exercise hypnotic powers on the minds of those who understand the meaning. Christians maintains that the miracle of the Bible is that part of it that has been translated into more than 1,700 languages and which coveys

essentially the same message to the speakers of these myriad tongues. The Muslims asserts the exact opposite that the Qur'an is so excellent that it can never the same in any language other than Arabic language given by Allah himself. It was translated into many languages by those who were not Muslims.

The Muslims further claim that the though Christians believe that Christ has made the whole world one in him, the brotherhood which Islam has established is far deeper and more real than anything which Christians have achieved. This unity finds visible expression in the pilgrimage to Mecca, which earth adult male Muslim ought to accomplish once at least in the life time. The Christians also emphasize the necessity of its faithful to go on pilgrimage to holy land, Jerusalem where Christ was born. All the aforementioned facts show that socialization and religious indoctrination seek to transmit rationally the religious.

3.3 Doctrines of Religious Indoctrination

There are two major doctrines of religious indoctrination. These include: the doctrine of divine revelation and the doctrine of predestination.

Doctrine of Divine Revelation

Christians accept the Scriptures as the authoritative revelation of the purpose and plan of God; therefore the doctrine of divine revelation is considered as a specific revelation. Progressive revelation, inspired revelation and final revelation, Christians believe that a divine revelation is the communication or discourse by God to man of truths which could not otherwise be known, no matter how trustworthy his source of knowledge human search can never find God out. Whatever one desires or needs to know about God, all truth in revelation, must come from God himself, such revelation of God to man is transmitted to others through inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it is a religious indoctrination for Christian that the scripture is not man's collections but God's divine revelation to man through dreams, visions, institution and prophets.

Christianity has doctrines on God the Creator which adherents of the religion are taught; for instance, to the Christians, God is the beginning and end of all existence, the first and final

cause of all that exists. Both man and things were created by His decision and through His action as revealed through divine revelation. According to Gibson, there are three main stages in the development of the doctrine of God namely:

(i) The being of God, dominating scripture
(ii) The revelation of God in Christ; and
(iii)The record of that revelation by the Holy Spirit in the sacred word.

To this end, all Christians believe in the doctrine of God who has absolute attributes as omnipotence, omnipresence. He is external. He is immutable. He is God who possesses intrinsic and transcendent holiness. He is God of Love. He is a just and infinite God.

Doctrine of Predestination

In Christianity, predestination is the effective exercise of the will of God by which things before determined by Him are brought to pass (Eph. 1). Predestination is linked to God's love; therefore He can never to guilty of anything capricious. Predestination is the exercise of divine sovereignty in the accomplishment of God's ultimate purpose or decree. He is never influenced by any external consequence. God does not predetermine who should and who should not be saved. Scripture does not teach this view, what it does teach is that the doctrine of predestination concerns the future of believers. Predestination is determining of the glorious consummation of all who through faith and surrender become the Lord's. He has determined beforehand that each child of His will reach adoption or "the son-placing" at his resurrection when Christ returns. It has been determined beforehand that all who are truly Christ's shall be conformed to the image (Roman 8:29; Eph. 1). Christians believes in life after death and the Day of Judgment.

The concepts of paradise and hell are predominant in the religion. This belief influences the social and moral behaviour of adherents of Christianity, thereby saving as a social control on their behaviour. The fear of judgment that is surely believed in Christianity and the rewards and condemnation that could follow after life help to mould the morals of the adherents-this is a form of social control within the process of socialization. Another predominant doctrine is "faith".

Christians believe in the Trinity-God the father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit, faith is a patent force, and Christ said that faith is able to remove mountains for faith laughs and triumphs over impossibilities. Faith is important because all men are dependent upon it as the avenue of access to God.

In Christianity for instance, the covenant at Sinai resulted into Decalogue which is given fuller explanation in the New Testament (Mathew 5-7) and its principles fully adopted by Christians. All the above-listed moral and social obligations in Christianity would be analysed to know how much socialization is found in such religious moral indoctrination. To start with, Christianity emphasised among its adherents the Christian ethics which the Decalogue summarised. The first four commandments of the Christian faith analysed the relationship that should exist between Christians and God:-God instructed Christians not to have any other God but Him; this is absolute monotheism-the worship of only one God. Thou shall not create no graven image for thyself is a check on idolatry. Thou shall not call the name of thy God in vain for the Lord will not hold guiltless those who call His name in vain.

This commandment deals with demand for absolute respect and honour for the name of the Lord. Remember the Sabbath Day and hallow it. This fourth commandment demands sincere worship-life among Christians. The second part of the Decalogue deals with inter-personal relationship among fellow Christians. The six commandments can be termed the bedrock of Christian ethics and nucleus of social integration and peaceful co-existence among Christians. For instance, the fifth commandment says honour they father and thy mother so that your days may be long. In much society, if honour is given to whoever honour is due, there would be co-operation, unity and progress in such a society. People brought up in such a way would always endeavour to maintain peace, law and order thereby socializing them to be good citizens. The sixth commandment "Thou shall not kill:: Killing is an anti-social behaviour.

When Christians are indoctrinated in abstaining from killing and having respect and concern for other people's lives, then such Christians are been socialized and preserving their lives and the lives of other people within the society. There could not be peace and stability whenever life is arbitrarily taken and where there is no security for human existence. Therefore, when Christians observe this commandment, they are undergoing some process of socialization within their system of beliefs-indoctrination. The Seventh Commandment states that "Thou shall

not commit adultery". Adultery brings enmity into society. It brings moral decadence and scandal and it breathes hatred between couples concerned. Because adultery does not augur well for maintain social stability and peaceful co-existence, Christians considers it as anti-social and even sin. Hence Christians get themselves religiously indoctrinated by keeping the commandment and thereby helping to keep peace with the society.

The Eighth Commandment "Thou shall not steal" is very significant. Stealing is a social ill. Highway robbers are threats to people's lives. Society condemns rogues and all acts of stealing. Therefore, when Christians keep the commandment, they become assets to the society. This act of religious indoctrination helps to socialize Christian converts within their religious set-up. The Ninth Commandment says "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour" and the Tenth Commandment "You shall not covet your neighbour's house, you shall not covet your neighbours wife or his man-servant or maid-servant, his ox or donkey or any that belongs to your neighbour." These two commandments, if strictly obeyed, will ensure peaceful co-existence and social stability in society.

To my mind, the above listed Decalogue of the Old Testament of the Bible help to maintain law and order in Judaism and among the Jews. In the New Testament of the Bible, the Christian ethics were expanded by Jesus Christ in his Sermon on the Mountain (Mathew 5-7). This could be summarised in the following words: Faith in God, Love, Peace and Joy for Fellowmen. In my opinion, I believe that wherever the above-listed agencies of religious indoctrination are well looked into by the agents of religious indoctrination-(Priest, Prophets, Bishops, Teachers, the Church) etc., all Christians would be socialized with the religious system of belief, and Christian ethics. In return, Christians would be better assets in our society.

3.3 Conflicting Agencies of Socialization and Religious Indoctrination

There are many conflicting agencies of socialization and religious indoctrination that could hinder peaceful co-existence in Nigeria due to disagreement and lack of cooperation among them to work harmoniously as social and religious factors of development. Consequently, the youths see the family, school and Church/Mosque as major influences that are working at cross purposes. Thus, many strict homes may recent sex education, play, stories and novels given at

schools to their children because of religious indoctrination (Stenhouse, 1978:540. Parents who are strict disciplinarians may regard the teachers as too weak and permissive, and may threaten to remove their children from such schools. However, children reared in fundamentalists' homes, schools and Church/Mosque may be taught conservative doctrines and strict ways of living which can hinder peaceful co-existence in the society.

Conflicts in socialization and religious indoctrination develop when there is no consistent pattern in relationship between parents and offspring's due strictness. Socialization and religious indoctrination that is influenced by less peaceful agencies such as schools, Churches/Mosques and the family could throw an individual off balance with others, because the individual is being influenced by unrecognized agencies (some featuring sex and violence), new type of companions, and general awareness of a world of bright light or frivolous pleasures. All kinds of new contradictions come into the teaching of the individuals through these agencies. Ambivalence on the part of the society towards violence becomes common conflicts that accompany the socialization and religious indoctrination of the individual in the society. Exposure to violence through the media also contribute to aggressive tendency in youths, this is something that socialization and religious indoctrination should positively work against.

Outside the school, Church and family, the individual is being influenced by less recognised but very powerful agencies of socialization-magazines, television, advertisement, movies (some featuring sex and violence), new types of companions and the general awareness of a world of bright lights and frivolous pleasures. All kinds of new contradictions come into the teaching of the individual through these agencies. Ambivalence on the part of society towards violence is among the various conflicts that accompany the socialization. Exposure to media violence does not drain off aggressive tendencies. The socialization process presents infinity of confusions and conflicts. In summary, socialization is the process by which one internationalizes the attitudes, beliefs and values of one's culture. Socialization requires:

(i) Interaction with others
(ii) The experiences of emotional acceptance; and
(iii) Symbolic communication mainly through language

Language is not only a means of communication but, to a great degree, it is a means of perception and thought. Cultural and sub-cultural groups try to preserve their identity by socializing children into their own pattern, but socialization patterns change.

3.4 Inter-Relatedness of Socialization and Religious Indoctrination

Socialization and religious indoctrination work hand in hand to make man fit into his society, both secular and religious. They emphasize development of moral ideals I n order to maintain peaceful co-existence of citizens in a secular or religious community. Thus, one may claim that socialization is to secular society what religious indoctrination is to religious society (Maher, 1976:38). Socialization of one society may result in conflicts with another society and during this stage; children and adult are taught how to be socialized, just as conflicts could exist within the religious indoctrination of various religious. For example, Christians believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God, while Muslims do not hold such belief. According to Muslims God has no wife and so has no son. Hence, the religious indoctrination given to Christians and Muslims are different from African traditional religious beliefs which see nothing wrong in approaching God through the divinities, intermediates of God. Thus, both Christianity and Islam oppose worshipping any graven image of divinities.

Thus, in post-colonial countries like Nigeria, Ghana, socialization and religious indoctrination have been grossly abuse due to influence of western civilization. Traditional beliefs and practices such as dressing, greetings and interaction with families have been thrown overboard. By reading the holy books (the Bible and the Qur'an) and interpreting them wrongly, they have misled many youths to "religious madness", this make them unfit to live harmoniously with members of other religions in the society. Such religious fanatics in Christianity and Islam have done more harm than good and should therefore be condemned. This in a way will lessen the problem of Nigeria.

3.5 The Role of Socialization and Religious Indoctrination in Enhancing Peaceful Co-Existence

Socialization and religious indoctrination as discussed above are concerned with the creation of a congenial atmosphere for rapid development and transformation of personality that will enhance the development of the society. This paradigm for understanding the society and religious needs involves certain knowledge about societal and religious values, as well as peaceful co-existence among citizens in national development. Although socialization and religious indoctrination aim at achieving effective national development and harmony, it has contributed only marginally Nigeria's development due to abuse by extremism, and handicapped roles of parents, teachers and religious leaders. It is a pity that the family, school, and the church/Mosque have wrongly employed methods of indoctrinating Nigerian populace on values and religious doctrines that could enhance development and peaceful co-existence among the three major religions in Nigeria, (African traditional religion, Christianity and Islam). This form of indoctrination is not only given to the youths by the extremists, but also to those who have misconceptions about other tribes and cultures, thereby retarding peaceful co-existence in the nation.

Consequently, communism and religious tolerance appear to be issues of menace to Nigerian citizens, especially as most youths have become fanatics who are too hard. The products of this kind of socialization and religious indoctrination are mass breeders of fundamentalists, and criminals who the society in the name of protecting their religion. Socialization and religious indoctrination in Nigeria needs to be stabilized to curb the violent fanatics who are filled with terrorist's ideologies, western mentality and civilization. The wrong socialization and religious indoctrination given to the youths by their parents, teachers and religious teachers not presuppose hope for future youths neither does the decaying situation give a clear sign that things will soon change because Nigerians look more helpless and religiously more violent than in the past.

This pessimism, however, does not write out the hope that an effective national peace can be achieved in Nigerian in the future. In my view, there is still hope if the process of better socialization and religious indoctrination are revived. The Nigerian government and the populace

must be determined or willing to channel their methods of indoctrination and of socialization toward development. This will not only change the attitudes of Nigerian extremists, but also enhance religious tolerance, inter-faith dialogue and brotherliness in the Nigerian society. This is a task that parents, teachers and secular/religious leaders must be co-opted to be involved in.

3.6 Abuse of Socialization and Religious Indoctrination

Some processes of socialization could be abused. For instance, in many advanced countries like Britain, America, U.S.S.R., there are some television movies and films which harden children's heart and make them ardent criminals. In some other developing countries like Nigeria which still nurses some colonial mentality for the sake of civilization, some Nigerians have thrown overboard the culture and tradition in dressing, greetings, interaction with their family; there is no respect for elders, our cultural heritage destroyed for foreign culture. For example, Obas, Emirs and Obis in Nigeria have no recognized place of leadership because of the foreign system of government we inherit in Nigeria. Most Nigerian traditions and culture are being sacrificed at the altar of colonialism and modern civilization.

In religious indoctrination, religious extremists have gone to the extent of behaving as "half mad religious people". Such extremists live 'Peter-Hermit' type of life-isolating themselves from other Christians and by so doing; they go against the communal living of the early Christians which the Bible fully supports. Some of the religious extremists practice disobedience to the Fifth Commandment-"honour your father and your mother" under the practice of "holier-than-thou-attitudes". By reading the scripture and wrongly interpreting the scriptures to younger ones, they have misled vary many youths to "religious madness" whereby they find themselves unfit to live harmoniously with other fellow Christians.

Such religious fanatics in Christianity have done more harm than good by wrongly socializing their adherents through their inconsistent religious indoctrination. At this juncture, one can claim that wrong socialization and fanatical religious indoctrination are the same and should be condemned so as not to add more problems to the existing social ills, such as the recent Maitatsine religious war in the Northern states of Nigeria in which many lives were lost. In Christianity, some people who had been wrongly indoctrinated and who wrongly interpreted

what the contents of the Bible say had made life extremely miserable for themselves. A few examples would be given here.

Among the Christian youths, some of them in the process of claiming not be of the world deny themselves of some socializing agencies like the family. Many of them refuse to get married and yet, they are not Catholic fathers or sisters. Some of them reject their parents and call their parents all sorts of names. Some even die untimely when as a result of wrong indoctrination; refuse to take medical treatment in hospitals. For all these, such wrongly indoctrinated Christians contribute more to the social problems of Nigerian society. Apart from making themselves miserable, they also make their parents and relatives very miserable. It is a good thing to follow strictly the tenets and doctrines of one's faith; but at the same time, religious extremism and wrong indoctrination should not be encouraged in any religion. Jesus Christ who was the founder of Christianity did not isolate himself from his society and relatives; instead, he interacted with the sinners, the sick, the trust, the rich and the poor.

He healed the sick and assisted the poor in spirit to sustain their spiritual life. Jesus Christ was never a religious fanatic. He was an ideal religious leader and founder of Christianity. What most of the Christian fanatics do nowadays is interpreting the contents of the Bible to justify their own selfish ends and to behave like the Pharisees and Sadducees who Christ condemned and described as hypocrites. He also described their righteousness as white sepulchre. Therefore, there is need for the present-day Christians who claim the holier-than-thou attitudes to control their wrong indoctrination of the tenets of the Christian faith so as not to continue to mislead their teaming adherents. Christianity is a very good agency of socialization and indoctrination but it is unchristian to allow Christian indoctrination to degenerate into religious fanaticism thereby increasing our societal problems rather than minimizing or removing such societal problems. Excess in the practice of Christian indoctrination is as bad as misleading and causing confusion in Christian society. This should be condemned and discouraged.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt about the various usages of the world culture as well as the definition that would be adopted in this module. You have also been exposed to the various

elements and aspects of culture and the fact that religion as an aspect of culture is a cultural universal.

5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major items you have studied in this unit:

- Culture has different meanings to different professionals
- Culture in thus module would be seen as the totality of the way of life of a particular group of people
- Religion as an aspect of culture is a cultural universal

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Enumerate and discuss the elements of culture.
2. Discuss the aspects of culture.
3. Discuss the implication of the concepts that grow out of culture and their impact on humanity.
4. List the elements of culture and write short notes on five of them.

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UNIT 5: RELIGION AND SECULARIZATION

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit you have focused on the issue of religion and culture and you have seen that religion is an aspect of culture and it is a cultural universal. You have also seen the different theories that rise out of the concept of culture like culture lag, culture trait, culture shock and subculture. In this unit however, you will be studying a more volatile issue: religion and its relationship with secularization. First, you will have to know what secularization is and the sources of secularization as well as the relationship between religion and the secular world as well Islam as a religious entity on its own and the secular world.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- Define secularization
- List the sources of secularization.
- Discuss how religion should relate to the secular world.
- Analyze the response of Islam to the secular world.

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 Meaning of Secularization

Secularization's first widely accepted meaning was essentially the process of separation of Church and state. More specifically, it meant the confiscation of some of the Catholic Church's property after the Reformation (then, the same transfer in many Catholic countries after the French Revolution). According to Chaturvedi, "secularization is the giving up of religious thought and feeling in the normal day to day interaction in the society. One may believe in one's own religion but those beliefs do not form the basis or part of social behavior with others. Religion should remain subjective and should not turn objective". In the words of Smith, "a state which guarantees individuals and corporate freedom of religion, deals with the individual as a citizen irrespective of his religion nor does it seek either to promote or interfere from, unconnected with it" (Smith: 454).

The process of secularizing states typically involves granting religious freedom, disestablishing state religions, stopping public funds to be used for a religion, freeing the legal system from religious control, freeing up the education system, tolerating citizens who change religion or abstain from religion, and allowing political leadership to come to power regardless of religious beliefs. A secular state is, therefore, a state where citizens are not discriminated in any form or manner based on their religion. The secular state views the individuals as citizens

and not as a member of a particular religious group. Religion becomes entirely irrelevant in defining the terms of citizenship; its right and duties are not affected by the individual religious beliefs.

3.2 Factor Attributed to the Emergence of Secularization

The factors below are attributed sources of secularism;

The Emergence of Higher Criticism

Though biblical criticism has started long before the Enlightenment, it was not until the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries that the Bible came to be examined in a truly critical fashion. The Protestant Reformation had reintroduced serious study of the Bible after centuries of neglect, and the new critical methods that developed in historical and literary scholarship during this period were soon applied to biblical texts. Among the first biblical critics were the 17th-century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, the 17th-century Dutch Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza, and the French scholar Richard Simon. This radical criticism soon gave birth to the Tubigen School with its lots of anti-faith assertions. The anti-faith assertions led to the erosion in the authority of the Bible, thereby preparing the ground for secularism.

18th Century Darwinism

Cornish Paul was quite right when he says that in Europe and North America, secularism can be traced to the 18th-century Age of Enlightenment or Age of Reason. Enlightenment thinkers attacked classical traditions and religious authority. In particular, they argued that the separation of Church and State would enable the free exercise of human intellectual capacities and imagination, and would bring about government by reason rather than by tradition and dogma. The 1787 Constitution of the United States is the outstanding example of 18th-century secularist thinking and practice.

The Medieval Church

It sounds ridiculous to say that one of the sources of secularization is the church. But it is the truth because the relationship of the church towards what is political and even knowledge at that time was unwholesome. This is an objective appraisal of the period: Christianity in medieval Europe, it is argued, was responsible for the emergence and success of secularism in the West. It Recognized the division of life into what belonged to God and what belonged to Caesar, it lacked a system for legislation and regulation of mundane affairs, and it had for many centuries been associated with despotic regimes and with oppressive theocracies.

Furthermore, Medieval Christianity entertained the existence of a special class of people, the priests, who claimed to be God's representatives on earth, interpreting what they alleged was His words and using their religious powers to deprive members of the community of their basic rights. In other words, the Christian theocratic establishment constituted a major obstacle hindering progress and development, and consequently hindering democracy. The need to challenge the overbearing attitude of the church in those periods actually paved the way for the Enlightenment.

Renaissance Humanism

Renaissance Humanism is a term that is used to describe a literary and cultural movement focusing on the dignity and worth of the individual that spread through Western Europe in the 14th and 15th centuries. This Renaissance revival of Greek and Roman studies emphasized the value of the Classics for their own sake, rather than for their relevance to Christianity. The movement was further stimulated by the influx of Byzantine scholarswho came to Italy after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 and also by the establishment of the Platonic Academy in Florence. The academy, whose leading thinker was Marsilio Ficino, was founded by the 15th-century Florentine statesman and patron of the arts Cosimo de' Medici. The institution sought to revive Platonism and had particular influence on the literature, painting, and architecture of the times. The collection and translation of Classical manuscripts became widespread, especially among the higher clergy and nobility.

The invention of printing with movable type, around the mid-15th century, gave a further impetus to humanism through the dissemination of editions of the Classics. Although in Italy humanism developed principally in the fields of literature and art, in Central Europe, where it was introduced chiefly by the German scholars Johann Reuchlin and Melanchthon, the movement extended into the fields of theology and education, and was a major underlying cause of the Reformation.

Rationalism

Rationalism is derived from the Latin word *ratio,* which actually means "reason". In philosophy, it is a system of thought that emphasizes the role of reason in obtaining knowledge, in contrast to empiricism, which emphasizes the role of experience, especially sense perception. Rationalism has appeared in some form in nearly every stage of Western philosophy, but it is primarily identified with the tradition stemming from the 17th-century French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist René Descartes. Descartes believed that geometry represented the ideal for all sciences and philosophy. He held that by means of reason alone, certain universal, self-evident truths could be discovered, from which much of the remaining content of philosophy and the sciences could be deductively derived. He assumed that these self-evident truths were innate, not derived from sense experience.

The rationalists were keenly interested in science and played an important part in its development; not so much by any discoveries they made as by their willingness to press the importance of the mathematical and geometrical approach in going beyond, and helping to explain, sensory appearances. Epistemological rationalism has been applied to other fields of philosophical inquiry. Rationalism in ethics is the claim that certain primary moral ideas are innate in humankind and that such first moral principles are self-evident to the rational faculty. Rationalism in the philosophy of religion is the claim that the fundamental principles of religion are innate or self-evident and that revelation is not necessary, as in deism. Since the endof the 1800s, however, rationalism has chiefly played an anti-religious role in theology.

3.3 Sources of Secularization

Secularization is a way of life and thought that is pursued without reference to God or religion. It comes from the Latin word *saeculum* which referred to a generation or an age. "Secular" thus came to mean "belonging to this age or worldly." In general terms, secularism involves an affirmation of immanent, this-worldly realities, along with a denial or exclusion of transcendent, other-worldly realities. It is a world view and life style oriented to the profane rather than the sacred, the natural rather than the supernatural. Secularism is a nonreligious approach to individual and social life. Historically, "secularization" first referred to the process of transferring property from ecclesiastical jurisdiction to that of the state or other non-ecclesiastical authority. In this institutional sense, "secularization" still means the reduction of formal religious authority as in education as an example.

Institutional secularization has been fueled by the breakdown of a unified Christendom since the Reformation, on the one hand, and by the increasing rationalization of society and culture from the Enlightenment to modern technological society, on the other. A second sense in which secularization is to be understood has to do with a shift in ways of thinking and living, away from God and toward this world. Renaissance humanism, Enlightenment rationalism, the rising power and influence of science, the breakdown of traditional structures such as, the family, the church and the neighborhood, the over-technicization of society, and the competition offered by nationalism, evolutionism, and Marxism have all contributed to what Max Weber termed the "disenchantment" of the modern world.

Fujio also describes secularization thus: "secularization might be explained more accurately as being a process of the functional differentiation of other social elements, such as politics, law, economics, and education, from religion, as the result of social changes in the society where religion was once the dominant norm". Having got an idea of what secularization is you can now proceed to the sources of secularization.

3.4 Religion and Secular World

In this section you will be concerned with studying the relationship between religion and the secular world. This relationship has been one of suspect, wherein religion suspects the secular world of being demonic and of being an instrument in the hands of the devil to destroy people's faith. Consequently, the majority of the reaction of religion to the secular world is that urgent steps needed to be taken in order to salvage the world from the grips of secularism. D. W. Gill in the Elwell Evangelical Dictionary says that "in no sense, of course, is the distinction between the sacred and the secular an unbridgeable gap. In the same way that God speaks and acts in the *saeculum*, Christians must speak and act creatively and receptively. This means that the secular world must not be abandoned to secularism". In his analysis of the effects of secularism on the world, John Stott, one of the leading British evangelical writers in his book *The Contemporary Christian* notes three major effects. These will be discussed below.

The Quest for Transcendence

Stott says that the increase in the world's quest for transcendence is one major fall out of the secularization of the world. He opines that the quest for transcendence as witnessed in the world today is not just the search for ultimate reality but also a protest against the attempt to eliminate God from our world. This quest for transcendence is lived out in four major areas:

a. The recent collapse of Euro-Marxism (the classical Marxism that has been presented as a substitute for religious faith).
b. The disillusionment with secularism as epitomized in the rejection of materialism either in the capitalistic or the communistic guise.
c. The epidemic of drug abuse which can be seen as a genuine search for a higher consciousness.
d. The proliferation of religious cults alongside the resurgence of New Religious Movements (especially the ancient religions of Oriental world).

The Quest for Significance

One of the after-effects of secularism is the fact that most human beings have been diminished in the value or worth. The followings are the agents of dehumanization:

a. Technology: despite the fact that technology can be liberating it is also dreadfully dehumanizing. For example, in the United States today human beings are no longer identified by their proper names but by numbers.

b. Scientific Reductionism: in most scientific teachings today, human beings are seen as animals.

The Quest for Community

One of the effects of secularism is social disintegration. This is felt more in Africa as there is social tension between those embracing the secularizing tendencies of the West and those struggling to remain African. In the face of all these devastating effects, what should be the response of religion? 1. The people of faith must live their lives in this secular world under the Lordship of the God and in obedience to his will rather than the will of the word. 2. The people of faith must work to ensure that religion is given a voice among the many other voices struggling to choke it out. To fail to articulate the Word of God in the *saeculum*, however, is to acquiesce in a secularism which, by excluding the Creator, can lead only to death. We will end this section by quoting Stott who though is writing for Christians have summarized what will happen if religion leaves our world completely to secularism:

> At the same time, unless we listen attentively to the voices of secular society, struggle to understand them, and feel with people in their frustration, anger, bewilderment and despair, weeping with those who weep, we will lack authenticity as the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. Instead we will run the risk (as has often been said) of answering questions nobody is asking, scratching where nobody is itching, supplying goods for which there is no demand – in order words, of being totally irrelevant, which in its long history the church has often been.

3.5 Secularization Debate

Since the rise of science in the 17th Century, some sociologists have commented that religion may be on a permanent decline while others have proposed that science and intelligence, both rooted in the Enlightenment, are anathema to religious faith. Karl Marx (1818-1883), Durkheim (1857-1917), Max Weber (1864-1920), the founders of sociology, and William James (1901-1902) are four eminent scholars who noted this decline. Intellectual and scientific developments have undermined the spiritual, supernatural, superstitious and paranormal ideas on which religion relies for its legitimacy. Hence, 'religion becomes more and more "hollow", surviving for a while on empty until loss of active membership forces them into obscurity'.

This feature of secularization commonly known as desacralisation, is the idea that the social and natural worlds have become progressively 'demystified'. In the natural world, for example, sciences like chemistry explain the world in a rational way that leaves no room for metaphysical (religious) explanations. Social sciences (for example sociology) provide explanations for individual and group development that similarly leave little or no space for religious explanations. On a political level, desacralisation involves the removal of religious authorities and religious laws from secular affairs (www.sociology.org).

The relative decline in religious participation can be explained in terms of a general 'process of withdrawal from the public sphere' in modern societies. Secularization theorists have argued that the 'decline of religion' can be traced to modernity. Because of this decline, religions gradually come to lose their 'supernatural' preoccupations; 'accommodating themselves' with secular society and turning their attention and ministry to looking after secular needs rather than disappearing completing. This explains conformity as a feature of secularization. Consequent upon the features of conformity and desacralisation, Reinhold Niebuhr explains that:

> The fact is that we are living in a completely secularized civilization. The secularization of modern civilization is partly due to our inability to adjust the ethical and spiritual interests of mankind to the rapid advance of the physical sciences. However much optimists may insist that science cannot ultimately

destroy religion, the fact remains that the general tendency of scientific discovery has been to weaken not only religious but ethical values. Humanism as well as religion has been engulfed in the naturalism of our day. Our obsession with the physical sciences and with the physical world has enthroned the brute and blind forces of nature, and we follow the God of the earthquake and the fire rather than the God of the still small voice.

Because the world's modern trend is gradually destroying the world's spiritual order, the modern self assumes an autonomy that seeks to reject the claims of authority, religious tradition or religious community. This has become a passionate fear of clerics and believers worldwide. In fact, there are indications that secularization promises a less unified and less advanced spiritual order. However, when reduced to an ethnic, political, or state emblem, religious affiliations to Judaism, Islam, Orthodoxy, Catholicism, Protestantism have become and still are tools for the sacralization of military and political conflicts. In religiously motivated conflict situations in Nigeria, opposing parties de-sacralize their Sacred Books as their acts contradict the books' moral content. The ethos of major religions, presented in their Sacred Books (particularly in Christianity and Islam) is mostly linked to ideas and recommendations that support humility, patience, non-resistance, love for one's fellow men, especially the weak and poor.

The Bible for instance promotes love for one's fellow men, one's enemies included, as a supreme Christian value (Apostle Paul). Similarly, in the Qur'an, the poor, the weak and those suffering, in the Qur'an the poor, weak and suffering enjoy particular care and respect. At the same time, it is repeatedly pointed out that national, ethnic and sex differences cannot be a basis for division and opposition wherever people are united by the same creed (Christianity or Islam) . For early Christianity, the moral commitment was of paramount importance. The specific features of the Christian ethos then was acceptance of suffering, nonresistance to evil, resignation, humility, leaving it to God to mete justice, and so on all of which are incompatible with violence over others.

In modern times, the cultural area of this type of morality has been severely reduced. The cult of human activeness, the implementation of control mechanisms and regulations in all spheres of activity, the emphasis on the present, are all modern values, which have gradually

turned Christian and Muslim morality into a marginal, rarely encountered phenomenon. This is largely true for all modernizing countries (including Nigeria regardless of the religions prevailing in them) where the type of Christian morality is rather a question of personal character and choice rather than a matter of religious or social culture. This type of morality is not amenable to group regulation and mobilization, for it implies both a certain type of behavior and a corresponding motivation and feeling.

This personal spiritual commitment of the doer is in line with the completely regulated culture of modern times. As a result of what can be described as a wide range or faces of religious phenomenon, Georg Simmel (1858– 1918) explains that:

> The sources and essence of religion are concealed in a deceitful semi-obscurity. Things do not become any clearer, if, as earlier, no more than a single problem is perceived here, requiring a single solution. Today, no one has succeeded in proposing a definition of religion that be not vague and imprecise, yet that encompass all the phenomena and tell us what religion is… religion is not clearly distinguished, on the one hand, from metaphysical speculation and, on the other, from faith in providence. The indefinite essence of religion corresponds to the multiple psychological motives that are recognized to be its sources.

Is religion truly concealed in a deceitful semi obscurity? Is there a link between religion and violence? Is there a bond uniting religion and violence? Can violence be religiously justified? Is Violence is an expression of modern man's emancipation from dependence on God? What is the essence of religion?

3.6 Politics and Secularization in Nigeria

Colonialism laid the foundation for the politics of secularism in Nigeria. Prior to the advent of colonialism, each major group of what later became known as Nigeria had its distinct religion under what is generally referred to as African Traditional Religion (ATR). Many gods and goddesses were revered in different parts of Nigeria, including Ogun (god of iron), Sango or

Amadioha (god of thunder), among others. Islam penetrated several parts of the Nigerian society long before the arrival of the Europeans. As part of their "civilizing mission," the Europeans introduced Christianity as an instrument of civilization. While the southern part of Nigeria received Christianity, the northern part was predominantly Muslim. By the early decades of the twentieth century, Islam had dominated the northern region while Christianity had been widespread in the south. For political expediency, the British prevented European missionaries from operating in the Muslim-dominated North, where their indirect rule system was very efficient.

Thus, religious tension and dichotomy existed in Nigeria throughout the colonial period. The religious division of the country played major roles in the political arrangement, which came into existence at independence in October 1960 when Nigeria inherited a parliamentary democracy deeply implicated in ethnic and religious pluralism. The ethno-religious configuration and attendant troubled inter-group relations set the tone of the politics of secularism. The Nigerian state soon realized the deadly impact religious issues could have on politics, following the virulent and vituperative debates it generated in the 1977–78 constitutional conference, which gave birth to the Second Republic in 1979; hence, the constitutional adoption of secularism. The attendant politicization of religion has limited the effectiveness of the secular clause.

As the Nigerian experience illustrates, religion can hardly be separated from the state and its politics, in so much as people give serious considerations to it when they are confronted with political issues and decisions. Discourses on secularism in Nigeria have been reduced to engagement and/or confrontation between Muslims and Christians, allowing adherents of ATR little or no space to engage the state. This may not be unconnected with the relative powerlessness that has come to characterize ATR, especially given its limited population vis-à-vis other religions. The exact population of each religion has been controversial, but a popular estimate puts it at 50:40:10 for Islam, Christianity, and ATR, respectively. This has been challenged by another source, which claimed to be relying on "informed estimates," puts it at 53:45:2 on the same order.

Another dominant feature of the secular politics in Nigeria is the upper hand of Islam over Christianity in the public sphere. The overlap of ethnic and religious boundaries made the North

predominantly Islamic and the South primarily Christian. At independence, the North had only one region and the South had two (East and West), but the northern region was larger in size and population than the two southern regions combined. Today, the continuous processes of adjustment to the structure of Nigerian federation have altered the balance in favor of the Islamic North. Through state creation exercises (1967, 1976, 1989, 1991, and 1996), the North has gained at the expense of the South, as they now have nineteen and seventeen states respectively. The same goes for local government creation, a development that gave the North more access to national wealth since state and local governments are the bases of revenue allocation.

This development may not be unconnected with the long rule of the military where ethnicity was an issue and northern officers were more prominent than southerners' were. Of the thirty years of military rule in Nigeria, the northerners led for twenty-five years, leaving the south with only five. The politics of secularism in Nigeria violates what is generally known as the principle of institutional separation, that is, 'the constitutional provision which forbids the making of any law, and therefore the taking of any executive action, that involves the interlocking of the official functions of the state with the official or institutional functions of any religion. Some of such contradictions manifest in state patronage and involvement in religious institutions or affairs in various forms. The politicization of secularism by all principal actors (the state, Islam, and Christianity) mainly underscores its ineffectiveness in guaranteeing religious freedom, harmony and stability in Nigeria.

Shria'a, for example, has intermixed with politics to cause disturbances, riots, and insecurity since democratic rebirth in 1999, thereby constricting the public (religious) space for non-Muslims in the North. In Nigeria especially, religion plays a very vital and influential role in the society that has manifested itself as a potent force in the political development of the Nigerian state from pre-independence to post-independence. Hardly can the Nigerian state be talked about without reference to religion. However, religion in Nigeria, at different levels, is mostly mentioned in negative terms. Or rather, historical events linked to religion tilts more towards its negative than its positive contribution to the Nigerian state. The Jihad, the civil war propaganda, the *Sharia* law controversy, the tensions provoked by the Nigerian accession to the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) and the incessant religious crises that have engulfed the

Northern part mainly indicate that religion cannot be ignored or wished away in the Nigerian political development.

3.7 Religion in the Modern World: Between Secularization and Resurgence

Until the late 1970s, most sociologists knew exactly, the role religion would play in the modern world. As part of the process of Western modernization, all societies were also undergoing a process of secularization. Religion would not disappear, but would be marginalized and privatized. Sociological theories since the 1960s described modernization more-or-less in Weberian fashion, as rationalization through institutional differentiation. Differentiation produces relatively autonomous social spheres and frees them from religious control. This applies in particular to the separation of Church and state, but also leads to the emergence of various institutional orders, like the economy, politics, and secular culture, which now can pursue their own goals and develop their own rules without being constrained by religion.

Nevertheless, obviously process of differentiation also institutionalizes religion as a separate social sphere. It was his displacement of religion from a force permeating society as a whole to a sphere of its own that originally has been understood to be the central feature of secularization and was believed to be an undisputed necessity for the emergence of truly modern societies. Had secularization theorists stuck solely to the thesis of institutional differentiation, the secularization debate would have been less confusing.

However, unfortunately, most scholars made the concept of secularization much more complex. Many reasoned that this institutional differentiation should imply a general decline of religion. Religion would be relegated from the center of society to the periphery; science would replace religious beliefs; religion would disappear from the public sphere and become primarily a private matter; religious associations and participation in religious ritual practices would decrease. Often somewhat limited evidence from various European countries was sufficient to transform this prediction of religious decline into a universal law. Unfortunately, these theorists did not explain how these occasionally concurrent processes of institutional differentiation, disenchantment, and privatization were actually linked. Instead, they just assumed that they were all part of a complex epochal process called secularization.

This assumption of a general and necessary religious decline turned out also to be a poor marketing strategy for the sociologist of religion. By predicting the demise of its object of study, it also attested to its own future irrelevance. Given these strong opinions about the role of religion in the modern world, hardly anybody was prepared for the dramatic resurgence of religion that happened since the late 1970s. just to remind you of some events:

-In 1979 we witnessed the Islamic Revolution in Ran and the war of the Islamic mujahidin against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

-In 1980, Ronald Reagan elected president of the United States with the support of politicized evangelical Christians, but also Catholics, Jews, and Mornons.

-In Israel religious nationalists challenged secular Zionism

-In Palestine the first Intifada shifted power from secular nationalists to Islamist groups

-In India Sikh separatists challenged the secular state; and after the violent conquest of the Golden temple in Amritsar, Sikh bodyguards assassinated Indira Gandhi. The 1980s also saw the rise of the Hindu-nationalist BJP party.

-In Poland Solidarnose with support from the Catholic Church challenged the Communist state.

These few examples should suffice to demonstrate that the resurgence of religion into politics was for real. Since the late 1970s, religion had re-emerged as a public force, as a marker of ethnic identities, as a shaper of modern subjects and their ways of life. This renewed political importance of religion turned out to be a global phenomenon, occurring in North America, the Middle East, Africa, South and East Asia, as well as Latin America and even Europe where Yugoslavia fell apart along religious lines. Religion has been identified as one of the forces behind several attacks in many Northern parts of Nigeria. However, government has made series of attempts to reduce religious conflicts in this country.

On one hand, legislation intended to protect national security threatens the religious liberty of some religious groups. On the other, lack of such legislation is an indication that people are legally free to practice their religion the consequence of which may cause violent religious attacks which threatens national security. However, virtually every religious tradition is permeated with certain fundamental values relating to peace, love, sacredness of human life and

human security. For many religious scholars, the essence of religion is life and the law is love. Unfortunately, these religious values have been displaced by modernism and its emphasis on secularization. The consequence is that the modern religious universe is being subordinated to partial group and individual values, instead of standing above them.

Recent violent attacks in the Northern parts of Nigeria have demonstrated not only the roles religion can play when religious divisions overlap with national and ethnic differences, but also how eager religious authorities are to exploit religion for political reasons. Religiously motivated political struggles in this country provide the foundation for religious terrorism to develop. In fact, new breed of terrorists have recently appeared: terrorists who are religiously motivated and kill in the name of God. In many cases, hope of a supernatural reward makes religious terrorists indifferent toward their own lives; they are prepared to die because they are persuaded God will reward their sacrifice with eternal life. This is quite contrary to what obtained in the past when religion had occasionally been a component of political, ethnic, or national secular terrorism.

It is based on this that Mayer explains that the most hideous form of violence, directed against defenseless people in Nigeria, is inextricably related to religion. This is evident in many violent attacks in the Northern parts of this country. Many scholars have debated whether religion is the true motivation for terrorism or whether it is a ploy for recruiting followers and a medium by which to amplify the impact of terrorist actions. For other scholars, religious violence can be attributed to modernism and its feature of secularization, which has led to a decline in religious values such as love, peace, concern for others and so on.

These events had a profound impact on the study of religion. Most important, it challenged conventional theories of secularization. After all the talk about the marginalization of religion, religions were calming again a place at the center. After all the emphasis on invisible, privatized religions, there were suddenly plenty of visible ones. After all the attention that had been paid to subjectivist forms of religion, to "spirituality" or "implicit" religion, there were rather explicit religions with strong ontological claims and political agendas. Contrary to expectations of secularization, religious movements challenged the secular state and social theorists had to cope with their cognitive dissonance.

3.8 Islam and the Secular World

It is generally believed in the Islamic society that secularization is bequeathed to the world by the Christian movements of the 18th century. This has somehow given a basis of rejection of the movement because an average Muslim would repudiate anything Christian. Until early 19th century, it is claimed that the entire Arab region was Islamic in norms, laws, values and traditions. Secularism is alien to Islam whose values provide guidance and direction for both spiritual and mundane affairs. To the conservative Muslim therefore secularism is a new cultural model being introduced quietly by enthusiasts and admirers of the West or imposed by the authorities of colonialism that are putting forward a new set of standards that are claimed to be alien to Islamic standards. Institute of Islamic Political Thought holds that the leaders of the Islamic trend believed that modernization and progress should be sought but without relinquishing the accomplishments of the Islamic civilization.

This position is stated in strong clear terms by the Arabic world and it is strengthened in the words of R. Ghannouchi, in paper presented at Pretoria University, South Africa, August 1994 titled "*al-harakah al-islamiyah wal-mujtama` al-madani*" (The Islamic Movement and Civil Society) as follows: Arab secularism has been a declaration of war against Islam, a religion that, unlike any other, shapes and influences the lives of Muslims, a religion whose values and principles are aimed at liberating mankind, establishing justice and equality, encouraging research and innovation and guaranteeing the freedoms of thought, expression and worship. Therefore, secularism is entirely unnecessary in the Muslim world; for Muslims can achieve progress and development without having to erect a wall between their religious values and their livelihood.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have studied the concept of secularization which is a very interesting concept. Secularization has been defined as an attempt to take God away from the world. The sources of secularism have been identified as the emergence of higher criticism, 18th century Darwinism, humanism, rationalism and the church herself. You have also seen the position that

Islam has taken on the issue as well as the effects of secularization and what the response of the church should be to it.

5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points that you have learnt in this unit: Secularization has been defined as a way of life and thought that is pursued without reference to God or religion. The sources for secularism are: the emergence of higher criticism, 18th century Darwinism, humanism, rationalism and the church herself. Secularism is alien to Islam whose values provide guidance and direction for both spiritual and mundane affairs. To the conservative Muslim secularism is a new cultural model being introduced quietly by enthusiasts and admirers of the West. The effects of secularism includes: the quest for transcendence, the quest for significance and the quest for community. People of faith must struggle to see that the word of God remains a force to be reckoned with in the world.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. What are the effects of secularism?
2. Discuss how religion should respond to the devastating effects of secularization.
3. What are the factors that prepare the way for secularism?
4. Evaluate the Islamic position on secularism.

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UNIT 6: THE FAMILY PATTERN

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the last unit you have studies about human sexuality, sexual development at the various stages of childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The view of Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism about sex was also studied along the relationship between religious discourse and

human sexuality. In this unit, you will focus your attention on the family pattern. You will look at the composition of the family unit, the various types of family, the descent pattern as well as the authority pattern in the family. Finally, you will examine the religious prescriptions and sanctions on the family.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Define the family
- Discuss the types of family that exists
- Discuss the functions of a family unit
- Evaluate the authority patterns in the family
- Explain the various religious prescriptions on the family

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 The Family and its Concepts

In this section we are concerned mainly by the definition of the family, the types of families that exists and the descent pattern within the family.

Definition of the Family

Sociologically, the family is seen as the smallest unit of the society or the basic social group united through bonds of kinship or marriage, present in all societies.

Types of Families

As a result of the pressures and demands of the modern day society, three main types of families have evolved. The first is the nuclear family—two adults and their children—is the main unit in some societies. In Africa however, the nuclear family is not really very independent of the extended family as it is in the Western societies. The extended family is the second type of family. In this second type, the nuclear family is a subordinate part. The extended family consists of grandparents and other relatives. A third family unit is the single-parent family, in which children live with an unmarried, divorced, or widowed mother or father. In the African society however the extended family was and is still is the most common traditional pattern of family organizations in most African societies. The extended family sometimes constitutes a lineage with the members' spouses and their children who may not have married.

3.2 Descent Patterns in the Family

Kinship is reckoned in a number of different ways around the world. This has resulted in a variety of types of descent patterns and kinship groups.

Unilineal Descent

This traces descent only through a single line of ancestors either male or female. Though both male and females are members of a unilineal family, descent links are only recognized through relatives of one gender. The two basic forms here are patrilineal and matrilineal. Patrilineal descents. In patrilineal both males and females belong to their father's kin group but not their mother's and only males pass on their family identity to the children. Matrilineal Descent In matrilineal descent both males and females belong to their mother's kin group but not their father's and only females pass on family identity to the children. In matrilineal descent, the social relationship between children and their biological father tends to be different since the father is not a member of the matrilineal family.

Cognatic Descent

Nothing less than 40% of the world's societies has their descent through both their father's and mother's ancestors. This is what is called the nonunilineal or cognatic descent. This can occur in four different variations: Bilineal is when both patrilineal and matrilineal descent patterns are combined. Ambilineal is when the individual is permitted to use only one out of the two lines of descent that are open to him. Parallel is when descent is traced through gender. A male descent is traced through the male lines and the woman's descent is traced through the females. Bilateral system is the descent pattern traced through both the male and the female lines.

3.3 Authority Patterns in the Family

In early history, many Western thinkers believed that male dominance was the natural or God-given order of society. That belief declined after the 18th century, particularly with the advent of feminism. In the late 20th century, partly due to the growth of religious fundamentalism, there has been resurgence in some parts of the world of the belief that patriarchy is the natural order of society. For example, after a new fundamentalist Muslim regime took over in Iran in 1979, women were segregated from men at social functions, barred from becoming judges or senior religious leaders, forbidden to leave the country without the permission of their husbands, and required to wear the chador, a long black cloth that covers the head and body. This represented a considerable blow to women in Iran who had been living in comparative freedom.

The Taliban movement, which has been the unofficial government of Afghanistan since 1996, has imposed even stricter limitations on women, including forbidding them from working outside the home. This pattern has been replicated in other parts of the world including the West. For instance, in the United States a male Christian revival movement known as Promise Keepers maintains that men have relinquished their authority in the family to women, and they need to reclaim it. In the Indian household, lines of hierarchy and authority are clearly drawn, shaping structurally and psychologically complex family relationships. Ideals of conduct are aimed at

creating and maintaining family harmony. All family members are socialized to accept the authority of those ranked above them in the hierarchy. In general, elders rank above juniors, and among people of similar age, males outrank females.

Daughters of a family command the formal respect of their brothers' wives, and the mother of a household is in charge of her daughters-in-law. Among adults in a joint family, a newly arrived daughter-in-law has the least authority. Males learn to command others within the household but expect to accept the direction of senior males. Ideally, even a mature adult man living in his father's household acknowledges his father's authority on both minor and major matters. Women are especially strongly socialized to accept a position subservient to males, to control their sexual impulses, and to subordinate their personal preferences to the needs of the family and kin group. Reciprocally, those in authority accept responsibility for meeting the needs of others in the family group. This set up in the Indian society gives a typical description of the Yoruba group in Nigeria.

3.4 Functions of the Family

The functions of the family can be discussed under the following broad categories:

Sexual Function

The family serves for the institutionalization of mating and the channeling of sexual outlets. Consequently it establishes a legal father for a woman's children and a legal mother for a man's children.

Reproductive Function

The reproductive function of the family includes the nurture and basic enculturation of the young in an atmosphere of intimacy. It is also expected that the young ones will be prepared within the family for the demands of the stage of adulthood.

Economic Function

In its economic function, the family serves as the organization of a complementary division of labor between spouses, it does this by allocating to each certain right in the labor of the other and in such goods or property as they may acquire through their individual or joint efforts.

Educational Function

Within the family the education of the young ones takes place. The young ones are usually exposed to the family trade and are trained to carry out the skills that are in this part of the word more of family secrets.

Social Function

Ideally, the family provides its members with protection, companionship, security, and socialization. The companionship is usually done because the family provides for the linkage of each spouse and the offspring within the wider network of kinsmen, thus establishing relationships of descent and affinity. Also the sociological fatherhood is determined to place the responsibility for the child on a specific adult and the jural fatherhood is established also to regularize transference of status from one generation to the next.

3.5 Religion and Sex

There are religious teachings concerning the issue of sex. Although not the case in every culture, most religious practices contain taboos or fetishes in regard to sex, sex organs and the reproductive process.

Judaism

In Jewish law, sex is not considered intrinsically sinful or shameful when conducted in marriage, nor is it a necessary evil for the purpose of procreation. Sex is considered a private and holy act between a husband and wife. Certain deviant sexual practices, enumerated below, were considered gravely immoral "abominations" sometimes punishable by death. The residue of sex (as with any lost bodily fluid) was considered ritually unclean outside the body, and required ablution. Recently, some scholars have questioned whether the Old Testament banned all forms of homosexuality, raising issues of translation and references to ancient cultural practices. However, rabbinic Judaism had unambiguously condemned homosexuality up until the reform movements of the modern era.

The Torah, while being quite frank in its description of various sexual acts, forbids certain relationships. Namely, adultery, some forms of incest, male homosexuality, bestiality, and introduced the idea that one should not have sex during the wife's period: *You shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to become defiled by her.* (Lev. 18:20) *Thou shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.* (Lev. 18:22) *And with no animal shall you cohabit, to become defiled by it. And a woman shall not stand in front of an animal to cohabit with it; this is depravity.* (Lev. 18:23). *And to a woman during the uncleanness of her separation, you shall not come near to uncover her nakedness.* (Lev. 18:19). The above passages are, however, open to modern interpretation.

Christianity

Christianity supplemented the Jewish attitudes on sexuality with two new concepts. First, there was the idea that marriage was absolutely exclusive and indissoluble, thereby restricting the sphere of sexual activity and eliminating the husband's ability to divorce at will. Second, there was the notion of virginity as a moral ideal, rendering marital sexuality as a sort of concession to carnal weakness and the necessity of procreation.

The Teachings of Jesus

Jesus' teachings in the Gospels generally presume knowledge and acceptance of Jewish norms of sexual ethics. There are several significant departures, however. Divorce and remarriage is condemned as an aberrant departure from the divine order permitted by Moses. Merely looking at a married woman lustfully is considered a kind of adultery, and to look on any woman lustfully is considered a kind of fornication.

New Testament

The **Council of Jerusalem** decided that, although Jesus may have admonished Jews to keep to their traditions and laws, these were not required of **Gentiles** converting to Christianity, who did not, for instance, need to be circumcised. The Council's final communication to the various Gentile churches reads thus: "*That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well*" (Acts 15:29). It is unclear exactly which sexual practices are considered *fornication* (sometimes translated as *sexual immorality*). Throughout the New Testament, there are scattered injunctions against adultery, promiscuity, homosexuality, and incest, consistent with earlier Jewish ethics supplemented by the Christian emphasis on chastity.

Later Christian Thought

A general consensus developed in medieval Christianity that all sexual acts were at least mildly sinful, owing to the necessary concupiscence involved in the act. Nonetheless, marital relations were encouraged as an antidote to temptations to promiscuity and other sexual sins. St. Augustine opined that before Adam's fall, there was no lust in the sexual act, but it was entirely subordinate to human reason. Later theologians similarly concluded that the unavoidable concupiscence involved in sexuality was a result of original sin, but nearly all agreed that this was only a venial sin if conducted within marriage without inordinate lust. In the modern era, many Christians have adopted the view that there is no sin whatsoever in the uninhibited

enjoyment of marital relations. More traditional Christians will tend to limit the circumstances and degree to which sexual pleasure is morally licit.

Hinduism

In India, Hinduism accepted an open attitude towards sex as an art, science and spiritual practice. The most famous pieces of Indian literature on sex are *Kamasutra* (Aphorisms on Love) and *Kamashastra* (which is derived from *Kama* which means "pleasure" and *shastra* which means "specialized knowledge" or "technique"). This collection of explicit sexual writings, both spiritual and practical, covers most aspects of human courtship and sexual intercourse. It was put together in this form by the sage Vatsyayana from a 150 chapter manuscript that had itself been distilled from 300 chapters that had in turn come from a compilation of some 100,000 chapters of text. The *Kamasutra* is thought to have been written in its final form sometime between the third and fifth century AD. Also notable are the sculptures carved on temples in India, particularly the Khajuraho temple.

The frank depiction of uninhibited sex hints towards a liberated society and times where people believed in dealing openly with all aspects of life. On the other hand, a group of thinkers believe that depiction of sexually implicit carvings outside the temples indicate that one should enter the temples leaving desires (kama). Apart from Vatsyayana's Kamashastra, which is no doubt the most famous of all such writings, there exist a number of other books, for example: The *Ratirahasya*, which literally means secrets (*rahasya*) of love (*rati*, the union); The *Panchasakya*, or the five (*panch*) arrows (*sakya*); The *Ratimanjari*, or the garland (*manjari*) of love (*rati*, the union). The *Anunga Runga*, or the stage of love.

The *Secrets of Love* was written by a poet named Kukkoka. He is believed to have written this treatise on his work to please one Venudutta, considered to be a king. This work was translated into Hindi years ago and the author's name became Koka in short and the book he wrote was called *Koka Shastra*. The same name crept into all the translations into other languages in India. *Koka Shastra* literally means doctrines of Koka, which is identical with the *Kama Shastra*, or doctrines of love, and the names *Koka Shastra* and *Kama Shastra* are used indiscriminately.

3.6 Sexuality and Religious Discourse

On the whole, in Africa because there is a silence on the issue of sex or because it was considered sacred or x-rated, sex is not discussed openly. This same attitude was carried over into the church. This attitude is also corroborated by the Western culture of repression on sexual issues. For example, even in China that was said to be initially open to discuss sexual issues, the contact with the West brought in the issue of repression on sexual issues. Writing on the issue of sexual discourse in China (and also India by extension), the Wikipedia writes that "Sexuality was treated in a straightforward and unembarrassed way until contact with Westerners influenced Chinese to treat these behaviors as more shameful than before".

The culture of repression on sexual issues either due to the culture of the people as is the case of most African society or the overt influence of the Western culture as in the case of China and India has so much eaten into the fabrics of modern civilization until recent times when what is called sex revolution occurred. However, the modern day scourge of HIV/AIDS has drastically called the culture or repression into question and the world is now clamoring for proper sexuality education.

3.7 Marriage and the Family

Marriage can be defined as a union between a man and woman such that any child born within the union is regarded as legitimate offspring of the parents. In the Microsoft Encarta 2006 marriage is defined as a "social institution (usually legally ratified) uniting a man and a woman in special forms of mutual dependence, often for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family". Marriage as a contract between a man and a woman has existed since ancient times. As a social practice, entered into through a public act, it reflects the purposes, character, and customs of the society in which it is found. It is important to note that in some cultures, community's interest in the children, in the bonds between families, and in the ownership of property established by a marriage is such that special devices and customs are created to protect these values. The following are some of such practices:

Child or Infant Marriage

Usually, when a child is about nine or ten years, she is sent to her prospective husband's house. He then looks after her until she is of marriageable age. This is usually as a result of concern for the child's safety and other issues. This practice is however dying out because most families cherish education and allow their children to go to school.

Levirate Marriage

This is the custom by which a man might marry the wife of his deceased brother for the purpose of raising a family for the deceased. This was practiced chiefly by the ancient Hebrews, and was designed to continue a family connection that had already been established.

Sororate Marriage

Sororate marriage is a form of marriage that permits a man to marry one or more of his wife's sisters, usually if she has died or cannot have children. It is actually the opposite of levirate marriage.

Monogamy

Monogamy is the union of one man and one woman. It is thought to be the prototype of human marriage and its most widely accepted form, predominating also in societies in which other forms of marriage are accepted. It has to be noted that most religions accept monogamy as the best form of marriage though polygamy is also deemed acceptable.

Polygamy

Polygamy is the general word for many spouses and it can be broken down to two different forms. The first is *polygyny*, in which one man has several wives. This is widely practiced in Africa despite the influence of Christianity. The second form is *polyandry*, in which one woman has several husbands. This type of marriage is known to exist among the Nayars of Malabar in India and the Lele of Kasai in Central Africa.

3.8 Mate Selection

In the traditional society, the choice of a spouse was largely the responsibility of the family. More than often, the spouses themselves have no hand in the decision of who they are to marry. However, today the influence of Christianity and Western civilization is changing this and the people are now mostly the ones deciding who they are to marry. This has now led to a major dilemma. One of the greatest problems facing most youths today is the problem of mate selection. They want to know the process they had to take in deciding who God's choice is for them as spouse. In most cases they turn to their religious leaders for counseling and may in the end not be fully satisfied. It has to be stated that for Christians the followings facts are relevant in the process of making choices:

1. The spouse has to be someone from the same faith.
2. The process of choice has to be accompanied by prayer for guidance.
3. The spouse as to be someone of excellent character.

All these steps are important to avoid wrong choices and to prepare the ground for a solid marriage. This process is not too different from that of Islam except for the introduction of parental influence. Mohammad Mazhar Hussain in his book "Marriage and Family in Islam that was quoted by SoundVisioin.com has the following to say on the guideline for mate selection in Islam: Normally the criteria for selecting matrimonial mates are many: wealth, beauty, rank, character, congeniality, compatibility, religion, etc. The Quran enjoins Muslims to select partners

who are good and pure (tayyib). Prophet Muhammad recommended Muslims to select those partners who are best in religion (din) and character. Islam according to him encourages the freedom of choice for the would-be spouses under the consideration and the influence and consent of their parents or guardians.

Courtship

Courtship is normally understood as the period of romantic relationship that serves as a prelude to marriage. Most religions are concerned about how the would-be-spouses conduct themselves in this period so that they do not commit unwarranted sin. It has to be noted that some people confuse dating with courtship and use them synonymously. The truth however is that courtship indicates a more serious commitment than dating. Dating can lead to courtship but most importantly courtship is expected to lead to marriage. For Christians, though this period of courtship is encouraged so that the would-be-spouses will be able to know each other better, it is always counseled that they do not do things that could lead to fornication or sexual immorality. It is to this end that some denominations would not allow courting people to spend time together all on their own. This also applies to Islam. M. M. Hussain also has this to say:

> The would-be-spouses are allowed to see each other for matrimonial purposes under the direct supervision of theirmahram relatives. This provision is expected to be conceived and executed with piety and modesty. Prophet Muhammad (S) instructed: "No man has the right to be in the privacy with a woman who is not lawful for him. Satan is their third party unless there is a mahram. In the traditional African societies too, the period of courtship is one that is also guided so as to avoid sexual immorality. Most religions counsel that people get married as virgins and frown at pre-marital sex.

3.9 Adoption

After marriage, childlessness or barrenness is one of the common problems that face couples especially in the African society that places a high value on children. One of the ways by which couples have dealt with the problem is adoption. Adoption is the legal act of permanently placing a child with a parent or parents other than the birth parents. In other countries apart from barrenness, the following are other reasons for adoption:

Reasons for Adoption

Inability of the Biological Parents to cater for their children

There are times when parents for one reason or the other, for example, poverty may feel highly inadequate to cater for their children and so seek adoption for them within families that would be able to cater for them.

Single Parenthood

In some countries, where single motherhood may be considered scandalous and unacceptable, some women in this situation make an adoption plan for their infants. In some cases, they abandon their children at or near an orphanage, so that they can be adopted.

Gender Preference

In some cases and some cultures, a parent or parents prefer one gender over another and place any baby who is not the preferred gender for adoption.

Involuntary Loss of Parental Rights

Some biological parents involuntarily lose their parental rights. This usually occurs when the children are placed in foster care because they were abused, neglected or abandoned. Eventually, if the parents cannot resolve the problems that caused or contributed to the harm caused to their children (such as alcohol or drug abuse), a court may terminate their parental rights and the children may then be adopted. There are times also that parent lose their parental rights due to illness like poor mental health that can be considered dangerous to the upbringing of the child.

Death of Parents

Though not usually the case in Africa because of the extended family system, some children are adopted because of the death of their biological parents.

3.10 Types of Adoption

There are two types of adoption based on the assumption that the biological parents are still alive. These are open and closed adoption. Closed also known as confidential adoption is that type of adoption where further contact between the biological parents and the foster parents are foreclosed or prevented. Open adoption accepts varying degrees of future contact between the parties, though such openness can be closed at any time.

Problems of Adoption

Though it is a good concept and serves as a safeguard to the future of the society through the protection of the young ones that may not have or suffer rough upbringing, adoption results in the severing of the parental responsibilities and rights of the biological parents and the placing of those responsibilities and rights onto the adoptive parents. The severance of the parental responsibility from the biological parents usually leads to a kind of apathy from the foster

parents. Though, after the finalization of adoption process, there ought to be no legal difference between biological and adopted children, it is usually psychologically traumatic to maintain equal love between adoptive and biological children.

3.11 Divorce

Though one of the most devastating and traumatic events of life is love turned sour, the reality of divorce has become more graphic than ever. Describing the dangerous trend of divorce in the West, John Stott quoting the Office of Population Censuses and Survey says that:

In 1980 in Britain there were 409,000 marriages (35% of which were remarriages) and 159,000 divorces. The previous years it was calculated that a marriage took place every 85 seconds and a divorce every 180. The total number of divorced people is now over 2 million, and there is an alarming number of one-parent families. The British divorce rate, which has increased by 60% during the last twenty-five years, is now one of the highest in the Western world. In the UK one in every three marriages breaks up; in the USA it is more than one in every two. Though this figure seems to picture the state of things in the UK and the USA, the African situation may not be any different but the absence of reliable statistics may not give us an accurate picture. Apart from this, many who wish to avoid the social stigma that divorce carries with it are contended to live as separated people or continue to live together in the pain of a broken home.

3.12 Causes of Divorce

Causes for divorce can be said to be under two broad categories: sociological and religious (spiritual). Sociological causes of divorce include the following: Extra-marital affairs, Family strains, Emotional/physical abuse, and Mid-life crisis, Addictions, such as alcoholism and gambling as well as Workaholism. Religiously, the rise in divorce rate has to do with more disenchantment with the things of God and man's carefree attitude to the demands of his faith.

Divorce in Religion

The fact is that most religions actually forbid divorce. Let us have a brief overview of some religions:

Islam

In Islam, divorce is allowed, although discouraged. A commonly mentioned Islamic ruling is that divorce is the least liked of all permissible acts. Islam considers marriage to be a legal contract; and the act of obtaining a divorce is essentially the act of legally dissolving the contract. According to Shariah (Islamic Law), there is a required waiting period before a divorce is considered valid. After three divorces, the man and the women are not allowed to remarry, unless under specific circumstances. It is important to note that in Islam a woman may never sue for divorce on any ground except by the permission of her husband to do so.

Judaism

Judaism recognized the concept of "no-fault" divorce thousands of years ago. Judaism has always accepted divorce as a fact of life as reflected in the Mosaic injunctions of Deuteronomy chapters 22 and 24, albeit an unfortunate one. Judaism generally maintains that it is better for a couple to divorce than to remain together in a state of constant bitterness and strife.

Christianity

Within Christianity, divorce has become almost commonplace, and the interpretation of the Holy Scripture on divorce widely varies among Christian denominations. However, the first 400 years of the Early Church, the church maintained a unanimous voice opposing divorce. Bible commentary on divorce comes primarily from the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Paul. Although Jesus touched on the subject of divorce in three of the Gospels, Paul gives a rather extensive

treatment of the subject in his First Epistle to the Corinthians chapter 7: "Now, for those who are married I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her husband. But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else go back to him. And the husband must not leave his wife." (1 Corinthians 7:10-11), but he also includes the Pauline privilege. He again alludes to his position on divorce in his Epistle to the Romans, albeit an allegory, when he states "Let me illustrate. When a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive.

But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. So while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit adultery when she remarries." (Romans 7:2-3).
Recent research, however, interprets the words of Jesus and Paul through the eyes of first century readers who knew about the 'Any Cause' divorce, which Jesus was asked about ("Is it lawful to divorce for 'Any Cause'" (Matthew 19:3). This suggests that Christians in the generations following Jesus forgot about the 'Any Cause' divorce and misunderstood Jesus. The 'Any Cause' divorce was invented by some Pharisees who divided up the phrase "a cause of indecency" (Deuteronomy 24.1) into two grounds for divorce: "indecency" (*porneia* which is usually interpreted as 'Adultery') and "a cause" (that is 'Any Cause'). Jesus said the phrase could not be split up and that it meant "nothing except *porneia*".

Although almost everyone was using this new type of divorce, Jesus told them that it was invalid, so remarriage was adulterous because they were still married. The Old Testament allowed divorce for the breaking of marriage vows, including neglect and abuse, based on Exod.21.10f. Jesus was not asked about these Biblical grounds for divorce, though Paul alluded to them in 1 Corinthians 7 as the basis of marriage obligations. This new research emphasizes that Jesus and Paul never repealed these Biblical grounds based on marriage vows. They were exemplified by Christ and they became the basis of Christian marriage vows (love, honor, and keep). Dharmic religions do not have a concept of divorce. However, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 applicable to Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains in India does have provisions for divorce under some circumstances.

3.13 Religious Influence on Marriage and Family

On the whole, the religion of a man does not only affect his concept of the family (that is whether his family will be polygamous or monogamous), but also affects his relationship with the other members of the family, that is the wife or husband and the children. In fact, most religions have duties prescribed for all the parties involved in the family. For example, Islam, Christianity, Judaism and other Oriental religions have duties prescribed for the husband, the wife and the children.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In this interesting unit you have studied about the relationship between religion and the family. You have seen the definition of the family, the various types of family. The functions of the family in the sociological, economical, sexual and educational realms have also been spelt out. You have also seen the various types of family descent pattern and the concept of authority in the family with examples from Christianity, Islam and Hinduism as seen in the Indian example.

5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points that you have learnt in this lesson: The family is the smallest unit of the society or the basic social group united through bonds of kinship or marriage, present in all societies. The following are the types of families: the nuclear, the extended and the single-parent family. There are two main descent patterns: the unilineal and the cognatic patterns. In most societies, an authority pattern in the home is usually patristic and moves from the older to the younger members of the family. The functions of the family can be viewed from the following categories: sexual, reproductive, economic, educational and social. Many religions of the world such as Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism have different view on sex and the repression of sexuality in religious discourse.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Evaluate the descent pattern through the descent pattern of your group.
2. Discuss the types of families.
3. Discuss the various religious attitudes to sex
4. Discuss the various types of marriage.
5. What are the influences of religion on mate selection?
6. What are the factors that can lead to adoption?
7. Discuss the influence of religion on divorce

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UNIT 7: FUNCTIONS OF RELIGION IN THE SOCIETY

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This unit examines the overview functions of religion in society as postulated by some prominent sociologist. It also discusses the integrative functions of religion in the society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of a thorough study of this unit you should be able to:
- Discuss the overview functions of religion in the society
- Explain the integrative function of religion
- Distinguish between latent and manifest function of religion

3.0 MAIN CONTENTS

3.1 Overview of Functions of Religion

Sociologists are interested in the social impact of religion on individuals and institutions. Consequently, if a group believes that it is being directed by a "vision from God," a sociologist will not attempt to prove or disprove this "revelation." Instead, he or she will assess the effects of the religious experience on the group. Since religion is a cultural universal, it is not surprising that it plays a basic role in human societies. In sociological terms, these include both manifest and latent functions. Among its manifest (open and stated) functions, religion defines the spiritual world and gives meaning to the divine. Religion provides an explanation for events that seem difficult to understand, such as our relationship to what lies beyond the grave. The latent functions of religion are unintended, covert, or bidden. Even though the manifest function of church services is to offer a forum for religious worship, they might at the same time fulfill a latent function as a meeting ground for unmarried members.

Functionalists and conflict theorists both evaluate religion's impact as a social institution on human societies. We will consider a functionalist view of religion's role in integrating society, in social support, and in promoting social change, and then look at religion as a means of social control from the conflict perspective. Note that, for the most part, religion's impact is best understood from a macro-level viewpoint, oriented toward the larger society. The social support function is an exception: it is best viewed on the micro level, directed toward the individual.

3.2 The Integrative Function of Religion

Emile Durkheim viewed religion as an integrative power in human society a perspective reflected in functionalist thought today. Durkheim sought to answer a perplexing question: "How can human societies be held together when they are generally composed of individuals and social

groups with diverse interests and aspirations." In his view, religious bonds often transcend these personal and divisive forces. Durkheim acknowledges that religion is not the only integrative force- nationalism or patriotism may serve the same end. Why should religion provide this "societal glue"? Religion, whether it is Buddhism, Christianity, or Judaism, offers people meaning and purpose for their lives. It gives them certain ultimate values and ends to hold in common. Although subjective and not always fully accepted, these values and ends help a society to function as integrated social system. For example, the Christian ritual of communion not only celebrates a historical event in the life of Jesus (the last supper) but also represents collective participation in a ceremony with sacred social significance.

Similarly, funerals, weddings, bar and bar mitzvahs and confirmations serve to integrate people into large communities by providing shared beliefs and values about the ultimate question of life. Although the integrative impact of religion has been emphasized here, it should be noted that religion is not the dominant force maintaining social cohesion in contemporary industrial societies. People are also bound together by patterns of consumption, laws, nationalistic feelings, and other forces. Moreover, in some instances religious loyalties are dysfunctional; they contribute to tension and even conflict between groups or nations. During the Second World War, the Nazis attempted to exterminate the Jewish people, and approximately 6 million European Jews were killed. In modern times, nations such as Lebanon (Muslims versus Christians), Northern Ireland (Roman Catholics versus Protestants), and India (Hindus versus Muslims and, more recently, Sikhs) have been torn by clashes that are in part based on religion.

In the 1990s, the bloody conflict in the former Yugoslavia has been exacerbated by related religious and ethnic tensions. Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro are dominated by the Orthodox Church, and Croatia and Slovenia by the Catholic Church; the embattled republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina has a 40 percent Islamic plurality. In many of these areas, the dominant political party is tied into the most influential church. Religious conflict has been increasingly evident in the Sudan and in Nigeria as well as exemplified in the clashes in Northern Nigeria between Christians and Muslims.

4.0 CONCLUSION

We have taken time to study the critical and scholarly position of some sociologist on the role of religion in the society in this unit. The integrative function of religion in the society was also examined. This clearly shows how significant religion is in human society.

5.0 SUMMARY

Religion is found throughout the world because it offers answers to such ultimate questions as why we exist, why we succeed or fail, and why we die. Emile Durkheim stressed the social aspect of religion and attempted to understand individual religious behaviour within the context of the larger society. Religion lessens the possibility of collective political action that can end capitalist oppression and transform society.

6.0 TUTOR- MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Explain manifest and latent function of religion
2. Define integration. In what way has religion performed integrative function in Nigeria?

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MODULE 3: SOCIAL THEORIES ON THE FUNCTIONS OF RELIGION IN SOCIETY

Unit 1: Durkheim Theory of Religion

Unit 2: Marxist Theory of Religion

Unit 3: Weberian Theory of Religion

Unit 4: Auguste Comte Theory of Religion

Unit 5: Sigmund Freud Theory of Religion

Unit 6: The Functionalist Theory of Religion

Unit 7: Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Religion

UNIT 1: DURKHEIN THEORY OF RELIGION

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Contents

    3.1 Definition of Social Theory

    3.2 The History of Religion as a Sociological Concept

    3.3 Emile Durkheim Biography and Philosophy

    3.4 Durkheim Theory of Religion

    3.5 The significant of Durkheim theory of religion in the society

    3.6 Criticism of Durkheim theory of religion

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments

7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The last unit of module two, treated religion and family and it was pointed out that marriage is a social institution ordained by God. It is a union between a man and a woman for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family. Marriage as a contact between man and woman legally ratified has existed since ancient times. This unit will focus on theories on the functions of religion in society as postulated by a prominent sociologist, Emile Durkheim who introduced the first approach to the study of religion.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define social theory
- State briefly Emile Durkheim biography and philosophy
- Explain the position of Emile Durkheim on the role religion play in the society
- Discuss Emile Durkheim theory of religion
- Show how religion is a sociological concept
- Give the significant of Durkheim theory of religion in the society
- Make a critique of Durkheim theory of religion

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Definition of Social Theory

The art of theorizing is natural to man/woman in every society. At least it is in the nature of man to seek to know and explain happenings around him. Human beings, unlike animals, tend to have explanations for every phenomenon within their society. Indeed, the capacity for thoughts and possession of reasoning power, offer man the ability for interpretations and reinterpretation of phenomena in their society. In any case, theory holds as many meanings as many scholars

who try to conceptualize it. This is because a single and simple conception of theory is unlikely to apply across all fields.

Nevertheless, in social sciences, in spite of the differences in definitions and meanings of theory, all scholars accept that theory is a system of related ideas that enable one to generate accurate explanation of and sometimes predict social phenomena. For Kendall theory is a set of logically interrelated statements that attempt to describe, explain, and (occasionally) predict social events. Similarly, Giddens and Duneier show that theory involves the construction of abstract interpretations that can be used to explain a wide variety of practical situations. Sociologists study social events, interactions, and patterns. They then develop theories to explain why these occur and what can result from them. In sociology, a **theory** is a way to explain different aspects of social interactions and to create testable propositions about society. For example, early in the development of sociology, Émile Durkheim was interested in explaining the social phenomenon of suicide. He gathered data on large groups of people in Europe who had ended their lives.

When he analyzed the data, he found that suicide rates differed among groups with different religious affiliations. For example, the data showed that Protestants were more likely to commit suicide than Catholics. To explain this, Durkheim developed the concept of social solidarity. **Social solidarity** described the social ties that bind a group of people together such as kinship, shared location, or religion. Durkheim combined these concepts with the data he analyzed to propose a theory that explained the religion-based differences in suicide rates. He suggested that differences in social solidarity between the two groups corresponded to the differences in suicide rates. Although some have disagreed with his methods and his conclusions, Durkheim's work shows the importance of theory in sociology. Proposing theories supported by data gives sociologists a way to explain social patterns and to posit cause-and-effect relationships in social situations.

Sociologists who study religion examine the social framework in which it operates. In particular, sociologists are interested in how the processes of fundamentalism and secularization are swayed by religious pluralism and the tolerance by society of many religions, which invariably compete with one another for members. Each sociological theory offers insights into why religious pluralism may or may not thrive in society. Sociologists are interested in studying

religion for two reasons. First, religion is very important to many people. Religious practices are important parts of many individuals' lives. Religious values influence many people's actions, and religious meanings help them interpret their experiences. Sociologists seek to understand the meaning of religion for believers themselves. Second, religion is an important object for sociological study because of its influence on society and society's impact on religion.

Analysis of this dynamic relationship requires examining the interdependence of religion and other social institutions of society. From the earliest foundations of sociology of religion, sociologists have sought to understand the larger society through examining religion and its influence. In the main text of this lecture note, notable scholars such as Auguste Comte, Karl Marx, Emile Durkheim, Marx Weber, Sigmund Freud, among others and their theoretical contributions to the understanding of religion will be discussed.

3.2 The History of Religion as a Sociological Concept

In the wake of 19th century European industrialization and secularization, three social theorists attempted to examine the relationship between religion and society: Émile Durkheim, Max Weber, and Karl Marx. They are among the founding thinkers of modern sociology. French sociologist Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things" (1915). To him, sacred meant extraordinary or something that inspired wonder and which seemed connected to the concept of "the divine." Durkheim argued that "religion happens" in society when there is a separation between the profane (ordinary life) and the sacred (1915). A rock, for example, is not sacred or profane as it exists. But if someone makes it into a headstone, or another person uses it for landscaping, it takes on different meanings—one sacred, one profane.

Durkheim is generally considered the first sociologist who analyzed religion in terms of its societal impact. Above all, Durkheim believed that religion is about community: It binds people together (social cohesion), promotes behavior consistency (social control), and offers strength for people during life's transitions and tragedies (meaning and purpose). By applying the methods of natural science to the study of society, he held that the source of religion and morality is the collective mind-set of society and that the cohesive bonds of social order result from common

values in a society. He contended that these values need to be maintained to maintain social stability. But what would happen if religion were to decline? This question led Durkheim to posit that religion is not just a social creation but something that represents the power of society:

When people celebrate sacred things, they celebrate the power of their society. By this reasoning, even if traditional religion disappeared, society would not necessarily dissolve. Whereas Durkheim saw religion as a source of social stability, German sociologist and political economist Max Weber (1864–1920) believed it was a precipitator of social change. He examined the effects of religion on economic activities and noticed that heavily Protestant societies—such as those in the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and Germany—were the most highly developed capitalist societies and that their most successful business leaders were Protestant. In his writing *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), he contends that the Protestant work ethic influenced the development of capitalism.

Weber noted that certain kinds of Protestantism supported the pursuit of material gain by motivating believers to work hard, be successful, and not spend their profits on frivolous things. (The modern use of "work ethic" comes directly from Weber's Protestant ethic, although it has now lost its religious connotations). German philosopher, journalist, and revolutionary socialist Karl Marx (1818–1883) also studied the social impact of religion. He believed religion reflects the social stratification of society and that it maintains inequality and perpetuates the status quo. For him, religion was just an extension of working class (proletariat) economic suffering. He famously argued that religion is "is the opium of the people" (1844). For Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, who were reacting to the great social and economic upheaval of the late 19th century and early 20th century in Europe, religion was an integral part of society.

For Durkheim, religion was a force for cohesion that helped bind the members of society to the group, while Weber believed religion could be understood as something separate from society. Marx considered religion inseparable from the economy and the worker. Religion could not be understood apart from the capitalist society that perpetuated inequality. Despite their different views, these social theorists all believed in the centrality of religion to society.

3.3 Emile Durkheim Biography and Philosophy

Emile Durkheim is one of the pre-eminent figures during the period of classical sociology in France. He was born into the family of a rabbi. And his early childhood education was in Catholic schools. He grew up to be an atheist and an anti-cleric. Durkheim believed that scientific understanding of society was more preferred than religion. Like other theorists of religion, Durkheim believed that religion was a fundamental illusion of human society. A pupil of Fustel de Coulange at the *Ecole Normale Superieuvre,* Durkhwim occupied the chair of sociology at the Sorbonne for about twenty years. Within this period Durkheim edited a journal *Annee Socioloqique* which attracted a large company of intellectual disciples.

Durkheim was not only a sociologist, but also a statesman. As a man of integrity and wisdom, Durkheim was influential in the formulation of government policies. His patriotic contributions to statecraft boosted his social and political image. His teacher, the historian Fustel de Coulanges, inspired Durkheim. In his book *La Cite Antique* (1864), translated into English by William Small as *The Ancient City,* Coulanges had contended that the foundations of the Greek and Roman cities were strictly and exclusively religious. Coulanges argued that religious influence was pervasive and comprehensive affecting the family, marriage, law and political institution: "A comparison of benefits and laws shows that a primitive religion constituted the Greek and Roman family, established marriage and paternal authority, fixed the order of relationship, and consecrated the right of property and the right of inheritance" .

It was from Coulanges that Durkheim came to the proposition that social phenomena had a sacred or religious foundation. It was Durkheim's opinion that religious beliefs, in simple or complex form, presuppose a classification of human thought into two god's classes; the sacred and the profane. By sacred, Durkheim does not limit himself to gods or spirits, it covers natural and inanimate objects like rocks, trees or woods. In fact, anything can be sacred. The contribution of Durkheim's theory lies in his emphasis in the normative basis for social integration, the dangers of individualism and anomie, and the significance of the collective. Within its tradition, society is viewed as an integrated unity that, in some sense, is comparable to that of a living organism. Whereas a material relation governs the biological organism, the ties of ideas and social unity bind society together. This tradition points to two key themes in the writings of Durkheim: morality and social solidarity.

3.4 Durkheim Theory of Religion

A greater part of Durkheim's intellectual career was spent in the study of religion, with a concentration on totemism Australian aboriginal societies. In his *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, first published in 1912, Durkheim argued that totemism represented religion in its most "elementary" form, and that religion's origin is social. He connected religion with the collective nature of society. People who live in society share similar feelings and sentiments, which culminates into the formation of collective conscience. Bibby explains the Durkheimian views:

> When individuals have the feelings of being in the presence of a higher power, the experience is real. But what they actually are experiencing is the collective conscience... In reality, Durkheim asserted, "God" is the group experiencing itself".

Religious rituals, according to Durkheim are expression of the unity of society and that its functions is to 're-create' the society by strengthening the sentiments on which the social solidarity depend. Religion is eminently a collective thing. The gods are man-made symbols of society. Religion is a social fact. It represents something over and beyond individual minds and lives. Religion is thoroughly objective. John Lewis elucidates on the views of Durkheim on religion: "It is transmitted from one generation to another. It is something we grow up into and then pass onto our children. It is accepted and believed by all. In such a primitive community, dissent is inconceivable. It is obligatory. To neglect the rites of religion is as impossible as rejecting the language that is spoken".

Durkheim categorized all religious phenomena into beliefs and rites. Religious beliefs consist of conceptions, and religious rites of specific actions. Religious belief presupposes a classification of all things into two groups, the sacred and the profane, with religion embodying

the sacred. Durkheim interpreted the meaning of religious beliefs and rites and concludes that when members of society participate in a religious rite, they are actually worshipping society. Society controls its members according to their physical strength, and gives them respect for a moral authority. Men get the idea that outside exist one or several powers, which they worship in religion. These powers are symbolic expressions of a moral reality, namely society.

According to Durkheim, all religious rituals have the same function, no matter where and when they take place. In this way, religion is both indispensable and universal. In his discussion of the role of religion in modern societies, this idea is evident. He opines that traditional religion will not be able to fulfill its function in specialized societies. For Durkheim, function expresses a form of utility, which points to society and its needs. He describes religion in modern society, he believes will be rational and will express the sacred values of society and its unity. Faith will be based on reason, and justice will be one of its core values. In this religion, man will be the subject for a new cult. Durkheim refers to this new religion as individualism or moral individualism; as the cult of the man or the cult of the individual or, finally, as the human personality cult.

Since the cult of the individual represents the highest moral ideal of society, the state should organize the cult and be its head. Many of Durkheim's central ideas came to have a profound effect on general sociology as well as the sociology of religion. Durkheim belongs to the school of early functionalism and he considered sociology to be the science of social integration. In his assessment of Christianity, Durkheim observed that traditional Christianity was in a state of decline and that society was going through stages of negative transition and moral mediocrity (1965:475). Durkheim did not subscribe to the view that religion will die, or vanish from society. But that forms of religious expression might change with the passage of time. He predicted that social forces that give rise to religion will persist and that there will always be a place for religious expression in the social order.

Emile Durkheim was perhaps the first sociologist to recognize the critical importance of religion in human societies. He saw its appeal for the individual, but – more important- he stressed the social impact of religion. In Durkheim's view, religion is a collective act and includes many forms of behavior in which people interact with others. As in his work on suicide,

Durkheim was not as interested in the personalities of religious believers as he was in understanding religious behavior within a social context. Durkheim initiated sociological analysis of religion by defining religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things". In his formulation, religion involves a set of beliefs and practices that are uniquely the property of religion- as opposed to other social institutions and ways of thinking.

Durkheim argued that religious faiths distinguish between the everyday world and certain events that transcend the ordinary. He referred to these realms as the sacred and the profane. The sacred encompasses elements beyond everyday life which inspire awe, respect, and even fear. People become a part of the sacred realm only by completing some ritual, such as prayer or sacrifice. Believers have faith in the sacred; this faith allows them to accept what they cannot understand. By contrast, the profane includes the ordinary and commonplace. Interestingly, the same object can be either sacred or profane depending on how it is viewed. A normal dining room table is profane, but it becomes sacred to Christians if it bears the elements of a communion. For Confucians and Taoists, incense sticks are not mere decorative items; they are highly valued offerings to the gods in religious ceremonies marking new and full moons.

Following the direction established by Durkheim century ago, contemporary sociologists view religious in two different ways. The norms and values of religious faiths can be studied through examination of their substantive religious beliefs. For example, we can compare the degree to which Christian faiths literally interpret the Bible, or Muslim groups follow the Qur'an (or Koran), the sacred book of Islam. At the same time, religions can be examined in terms of the social functions they fulfill, such as providing social support or reinforcing the social norms. By exploring both the beliefs and the functions of religious, we can better understand its impact on the individual, on groups, and on society as a whole.

3.5 The Significant of Durkheim theory of religion in the society

Emile Durkheim emphasized that religion is not simply a system of beliefs and ideas; it is also a system of actions involving formal rituals and symbolic ceremonies to mark the major passages of birth, marriage, a death, as well as the regular seasonal celebrations. These rituals played an essential function for society as a whole, Durkheim suggested, by sustaining social

solidarity and cohesion, maintaining order and stability, thereby generating collective benefits. Durkheim argued that industrialized societies are characterized by functional differentiation, where specialized professionals and organizations, dedicated to healthcare, education, social control, politics, and welfare, replaced most of the tasks once carried out exclusively in Western Europe by monasteries, priests, and parish Churches.

Faith based on voluntary and charitable organizations in the mediaeval era-the alms-house, the seminary, and the hospice-were displaced in Europe by the expansion of the welfare state during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth century's. The growth of the state created publicly funded schools, health care, and welfare safety nets to care for the unemployed, the elderly, and the destitute. Stripped of their core social purposes, Durkheim predicted that the residual spiritual and moral roles of religious institutions would gradually waste away in industrial societies, beyond the traditional formal rites of births, marriages and death, and the observance of social holidays.

3.6 Criticism of Durkheim theory of religion

Durkheim's theory of religion was criticized when it first appeared. In the more empirically oriented critiques, questions were asked about the validity of Durkheim's work, especially related to his book on the elementary forms of the religious life. In this book, Durkheim based his analyses on collected ethnographic material on totemism in Australia, material that is considered insufficient by today's standards. Furthermore, Durkheim's use of the material is criticized. The criticism has primarily been directed against Durkheim's theory of society. As already mentioned, Durkheim was influenced by his contemporaries' view of society as an organism. According to this idea, society was perceived as an organic system where each part performs functions that contribute to the maintenance of the system. It is difficult to explain such functions without including a conscious purpose. In this way, Durkheim's theory ends in teleology, where he presumes the existence of some form of higher intelligence that creates aspects of society that will serve some form of purpose. Durkheim's system perspective also affects his views on the origin and acceptance of religion. In contrast to Marx, who interprets a dominant religion to be the outcome of social struggle, Durkheim sees religion as a phenomenon

that has an a priori meaning or social function. In this way, Durkheim's approach does not invite studies of how one particular religion is able to achieve a position of dominance. Instead, religion becomes a presupposition for society.

4.0 CONCLUSION

Durkheim's theoretical explanation of religion was one of the classical works that provided proper understanding of roles of religion in society. From this unit therefore, students must have learnt from the significant contributions of Emile Durkheim theory towards comprehensive understanding of religion and to appreciate its values in the domestication of religious beliefs in the contemporary world.

5.0 SUMMARY

From the unit above, we have discussed Emile Durkheim biography/philosophy, his theory of religion, it significance in the contemporary society and criticisms against Durkheim theory of religion. It is therefore, expected that students should use the platform in analyzing religious issues in the society.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What do you understand by Theory?
2. Examine the relevance of theory in the discussion of religion in the contemporary society.
3. Trace the historical origin of religion as a sociological concept.
4. What is the difference between the profane and the sacred according to Durkheim?

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 2: MARXIST THEORY OF RELIGION

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The last unit examined Emile Durkheim theory of religion. It also presented Durkheim biography and philosophy, the significance of Durkheim theory of religion and the criticisms against Durkheim theory of religion. This unit is about Karl Marx theory of religion. It treats Marx biography and philosophy, significance of his theory of religion as well as criticisms against Marx theory of religion.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Give Karl Marx biography and philosophy

- Explain Karl Marx theory of religion

- Discuss the significance of Karl Marx theory of religion in the society

- Provide a critique of Karl Marx theory of religion

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Karl Marx Biography and Philosophy

One of the greatest and most influential thinkers in the history of social thought was the German Jew, Karl Marx. Born in Trier on 5th May, 1818, to a Jewish Lawyer, Heinrich (Heschel) Marx, Karl was only six years when the whole family became converted into German Protestantism and baptized into the Lutheran Church in August 1824. Religiously, Marx formative years were a combination of both Jewish and Christian traditions. As a young man, Marx was not hostile to Christianity. A strong evidence of Marx commitment to Christianity was his youthful piece *The Union of Believers with Christ,* published in 1835. In that book, Marx spoke about the inner bond that could cause Christians to love one another. He also observed union with Christ could bring, "… inner elevation, comfort in sorrow, calm trust, and a heart susceptible to human love, to everything noble and great, not for the sake of ambition and glory, but only for the sake of Christ". Marx was later to shift from belief to unbelief, from Christian commitment to militant atheism.

Many scholars have reached a consensus that alienation and the task of overcoming it was central to Marx's socialist humanism and the aim of socialism. Hegel who posited that the world, which comprises of nature, things and others have become alien to man originally developed the concept of alienation. Man no longer see himself as the subject of his own acts, as a thinking, feeling, loving person. Before Marx, Hegel had posited that God was the subject of history. Hegel saw God in man, in a state of self-alienation, and that through historical process, God returned to himself. For Ludwig Feuerbach, God represented man's inherent powers transferred from man, the owner only by his worship of God; the stronger and richer God is, the weaker and poorer becomes man" quoted in Fromm, in his *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts,* applied theoretically the phenomenon of religious alienation to the alienation labour.

Just as in religion the spontaneous activity *Selbsttaetigkeit* of human fantasy, of the human brain and heart, reacts independently as an alien activity of gods and devils upon the individual, so the activity of the worker is not his own spontaneous activity. Even though the views of Karl Marx have dominated sociology of religion for many decades, Marx never studied religion in any detail. His views on religion were derived from the writings of Ludwig Feuerbach, who posited that through the process of alienation, human beings attribute their culturally created values and norms to alien, or separate beings (i.e divine forces or gods), because of the ignorance of their cultural history. Marx endorsed the view that religion represents human self-alienation.

3.2 Karl Marx Theory of Religion

Marx argued that religion is man-made without any element of the supernatural and that religion is the self-consciousness of man who has failed to realize his authentic self and capacities, and that the struggle against religion is therefore indirectly a fight against the world of which religion is the spiritual aroma. "Religion is the general theory of that world, its encyclopedic compendium, its logic in a popular form, its spiritualistic point *d'honneur,* its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn complement, its universal source of consolation and justification". Karl Marx perceived religion as essentially the product of a class society. His ideas on religion are part of hi general theory of alienation in class societies. He considered religion as both a product of alienation and expression of class interests.

It is considered a tool for the manipulation and oppression of the form of subordinate class in society, an expression of protest against oppression and a form of resignation and consolation in the face of oppression. In Karl Marx's (1848/1964) classic formulation, religion is the 'opiate' of the people; he uses the symbol of the depressive drug to suggest apathy, lethargy, and a dulling of the sense. Religion lulls people into a people into a *false consciousness,* Marx's term for the tendency of an oppressed class to accept the dominant ideology of the ruling class, thereby legitimizing oppression. In pre-class societies, Marx believed, human beings were at the mercy of nature. Primitive peoples had little control over nature and little knowledge of the natural processes. They attempted, consequently, to gain control over nature through magical and religious means. When class division characterized society, Marx argued that human beings got

into a position where they were unable to control the forces which affected them and in which their understanding was inadequate.

In class society, it was stressed that the social order itself is seen as something fixed and given which controls and determines human behavior. Yet the social order is nothing but the actions and behavior of the members of society. It is in fact their creation in the sense that they maintain it by their own actions. In short, in class society, poorer human beings are alienated. The poor developed a mystified view of reality. Human products are seen as such but as being the creation of external forces. They take on an independent reality, which is seen as determining rather than being determined by spirits and not by human action. Marx added the observation that Christian believe that God created man in his own image whereas the truth is that man created God in his own image. Man's own powers and capacities are projected into God who appears as an all-powerful and perfect being.

To Karl therefore, religion is a reversal of the true situation because it is a product of alienation. The criticism of religion, then, is also the criticism of the society, which produces religion. The most extensive passage of Karl Marx contribution to the discussion of religion occurs in his *Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right,* which contains in highly condensed from his overall approach to the analysis of religion. It is worth quoting in full thus:

> The basis of irreligious criticism is: *Man makes religion,* religion does not make man. In other words, religion is the self-consciousness of man who has either not yet found himself or has already lost himself again. However, *man* is no abstract being squatting outside the world. Man is *the world of man,* the state, and society. This state, this society, produces religion, *a reversed world-consciousness,* because they are a *reversed world.* Religion is the general theory of the world, its encyclopedic compendium, it logic in a popular form, its spiritualistic *point d'honneur,* its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn completion, its universal ground for consolation and justification. It is *the fantastic realization of the human essence* because the human essence has no true reality.

The struggle against religion is therefore, mediate the fight against *the other world,* of which religion is the spiritual *aroma. Religious* distress is at the same time the *expression* of real distress and *the protest* against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the *opium* of the people. The abolition of religion as the *illusory* happiness of the people is required for their *real* happiness. The demand to give up the illusions about its condition is the demand to up a condition which needs illusions. The criticism of religion is therefore in embryo the criticism of the vale of woe, the halo of which religion.

Religion, then, is a 'reversed world-consciousness' because it is a product of a reversed world. In this claim, we see the characterization of religion as essentially ideological. Ideology, for Marx, is a form of thought in which people and their circumstances appear upside down, because, in a class-divided society a society in which we see ourselves as essentially determined rather than as determining agents, in which, we actually are determined by our social creations to a degree-things are upside down. At first, it was the forces of nature, which were so reflected, but with the emergence of social classes, social forces were deified. Karl Marx concluded that religion is also the 'universal ground for consolation' and 'the opium of the people'.

3.3 Significance of Karl Marx Theory of Religion

The clear implication here is that whatever tribulations religion may meted on those who are oppressed, it also provides drugs, which give temporary relief by blunting the critical senses that would lead to rebellion. Religion thus plays its part in helping to perpetuate the very conditions in which the bearer class is oppressed. It promotes resignation rather than the search for means of changing the world. It is a force, which legitimates oppression. The very thing that gives consolation and produces resignation is also used to convince those classes that might benefit from change that their condition is not only inevitable but has been ordained by a higher non-human authority, for example, in the caste system. The caste system teaches reincarnation into a better state. Christianity teaches eternal bliss for the meek.

Other religions reach predestination for all conditions in human beings find themselves. The submissiveness of the exploited and oppressed classes is reflected in their submissiveness to the commandments of religion. Religion offers compensation for the hardships of this life, in some future life but it makes such compensation conditional upon acceptance of the injustices of this life. However, not only the oppressed classes are religious. Members of the ruling class are often equally so. Religion is not a mere manipulative device to control the exploited groups in society. To some extent, the ruling class may uphold religion because consciously or unconsciously it is seen as a force for social control, but it may be followed also because the ruling class is itself alienated to a considerable degree.

The need to take various measures to maintain privilege leads this class to see the social order as something other than simply the human beings have chosen to organize themselves. "Their perceptions is, of course, not that privilege is been preserved but that good order and stability must be maintained. Inadequately, superiority and subordination, the distinction between rulers and the ruled are all perceived as inevitable features of human society. This is just rationalization. Commitment to such ideas and their legitimating by religion results from the ruling class's own fear of social disruption and its own dependence upon forces, which are beyond its control. Marx also suggests that religion can be an expression of protest against oppression and distress experienced in a class society as well as something which promotes acceptance of such a society. It is a form of protest, however, which cannot help the oppressed to overcome their conditions of oppression – a palliative drug, not a cure.

3.4 Critique of Karl Marx Theory of Religion

Karl Marx described religion as an "opiate" particularly harmful to oppressed peoples. In his view religion often drugged the masses into submission by offering a consolation for their harsh live on earth: the hope of salvation in an ideal after life. For example, during the period of slavery in the United States during the period of slavery in the united state, white masters forbade blacks to practice native African religion, while encouraging them to adopt the Christian religion. Through Christianity slaves were prodded to obey their masters; they were told that obedience would lead to salvation and eternal happiness in the hereafter. Viewed from a conflict

perspective, Christianity may have pacified certain slaves and blunted the rage that often fuel rebellion.

Marx acknowledged that religion plays an important role in legitimating the existing social structure. The values of religion, as already noted, reinforce other social institution and the social order as a whole. From Marx perspectives, religion promotes stability within society and therefore helps to perpetuate patterns of social inequality. In a society with several religious faiths, the dominant religion will represent the ruling economic and political class. Marx concurred with Durkheim's emphasis on the collective and socially shared nature of religious behavior. At the same time, he was concerned that religion would reinforce social control within an oppressive society. Marx argued that religion's focus on otherworldly concerns diverted attention from earth problems and from needless suffering created by unequal distribution of valued resources. Religion reinforces the interests of those in power. For example, India's traditional caste system defined the social structure of that society, at least among the Hindu majority.

The caste system was almost certainly the creation of the priesthood, but it also served the interests of India's political rulers by granting a certain religious intimacy to social inequality. In the view of Karl Marx and later conflict theorists, religion is not necessarily a beneficial or admirable force for social control. For example, contemporary Christianity, like the Hindu faith, reinforces traditional patterns of behavior that call for the subordination of the powerless. Assumptions about gender roles to leave women in the subservient position both within Christian churches and at home are usually upheld in the church. In fact, women find it as difficult to achieve leadership position in many churches as they do in large corporations. In 1993, 89 percent of all clergy in the united state were males compare to 99 percent in 1983. While women play a significant role as volunteers in community churches men continue to make the major theological and financial judgment for nationwide church organization.

Conflict theorists argue that to whatever extent religion actually does influence social behaviors. It however reinforces existing patterns of dominance and inequality. From a Marxist perspective, religion function as an "agent of de-politicizing" In simpler terms, religion keeps people from seeing their lives and societal condition in political terms –for example by obscuring the overriding significance of conflicting economic interest Marxists suggest that by inducing a

"false consciousness" among the disadvantaged religion lessens the possibility of collective political action that can end capitalist oppression and transform society. It should be noted, however, that religious leaders have sometimes been in the forefront of movements for social change. During the 1960s, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. supported be numerous ministers, priests, and rabbis, fought for civil rights for Blacks.

In the 1980s, the sanctuary movement of loosely connected organizations began offering asylum, often in churches, to those who seek refugee status but are regarded by the Immigration and Naturalization Service as illegal aliens. By giving shelter in homes, offices, or places of worship to those refused asylum, participants in the sanctuary movement are violating the law and become subject to stiff fines and jail sentences. Nevertheless, movement activities (including many members of the clergy) believe that such humanitarian assistance is fully justified. The efforts of religious groups to promote social change are noticed all over the world today.

Much as we agree with Marx that religion could be manipulated as an instrument of oppression, we disagree with him on the view that religion originate from pains of alienation. This is erroneous and misleading; the intrinsic nature of religion is deeper than the phenomenological observation. It has been said that man is a political animal, but suffice to say that man is primarily a religious animal. Religious feelings are innate in man. This is justified by man's sense of the "numinous" that is man's idea of the transcendent reality which comes upon man, challenges, seizes and controls him.

Marx contention that religion will end in a classless society is not borne by history, hence baseless. Religion cannot die a natural death. Religion can thrive even when it is banished. Although religion can serve as the sacred guarantor of oppression, deprivation, social inequality, and marginalization of the masses, Marx ought to have carried out a comparative, socio-historical study of religion in order to determine whether religion has always, and everywhere displayed similar tendencies. That Marx field to do this was a major flaw in his social scientific analysis. It was a serious error for Marx to have said that religion makes poverty tolerable by promising a better world in future. Neither Marx, nor his followers can deny the fact that poverty to some extent is a problematic dimension of human existence. Almost all religious preach the social gains of justice, fair play, equity and self abnegation.

Marx was too hasty in concluding that religion was socially irrelevant. In war torn areas, religious groups are always seen providing relief materials. Modern man can testify to the fact that in many parts of the world, religion has provided humanity with food, Medicare, habitat, education and culture. Africans throughout the continent, still remember the positive impact of Christian missionary enterprise.

4.0 CONCLUSION

We have taken time to study the critical and scholarly position of Karl Marx on the role of religion in the society in this unit. The perspective of Karl Marx who was a prominent sociologist was highlighted.

5.0 SUMMARY

Religion is a phenomenon that is found everywhere in the society. It offers answers to such ultimate questions as why we exist, why we succeed or fail, and why we die. From Marxist point of view, religion lessens the possibility of collective political action that can end capitalist oppression and transform society.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give brief account of Karl Marx biography and philosophy
2. Discuss the Marxist ideology in relation to the role of religion
3. How is Karl Marx theory of religion different from Emile Durkheim?
4. What is the significance of Marx theory of religion in the society?
5. State the criticisms against Karl Marx theory of religion

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

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UNIT 3: WEBERIAN THEORY OF RELIGION

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

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3.0 Main Content

    3.1 Max Weber Biography and Philosophy

    3.2 Max Weber Theory of Religion

    3.3 Significance of Max Weber Theory of Religion

    3.4 Criticisms against Max Weber Theory of Religion in the Society

4.0 Conclusion

5.0 Summary

6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment

8.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTORDUCTION

This unit focuses on Weberian theory of religion. It discusses in brief the biography, philosophy, the significance of Max theory of religion as well as criticisms against Weber theory of religion in the society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss Max biography and philosophy
- Explain Max Weber theory of religion
- Give the significance of Max Weber theory of religion in contemporary society
- Provide a critique of Max Weber theory of religion

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Max Weber Biography and Philosophy

Max Weber (1864–1920) was born in Thuringia, Germany. In 1869, the family moved to Berlin, where his father became a National–Liberal politician in the Germany of Bismarck. In 1889, he obtained his Ph.D. in jurisprudence, whereas his interests thereafter turned to economics. After a few years as a *Privatdozent* at the University of Berlin, Weber became full professor of economics at Freiburg University in 1894, and accepted a position at the University of Heidelberg in 1896. From 1904 to 1905, he wrote *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. Many of his writings appeared posthumously, among them his vast systematization of the social sciences, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, Economy and Society.

Although Weber lived at approximately the same time as Durkheim, he belonged to a different intellectual tradition. Germany did not have a positivistic tradition like France's, but the dominating school was historicism. Historicism argues that research methods used in the natural sciences cannot be applied to study human phenomena – one must use intuition. Weber agreed that human action does not exist in the subject matter treated by the natural sciences, but he pointed out that causal analysis and objectivity cannot be replaced by intuition. His aim was to understand human action, which is rational and predictable. For him, the individual is the atom of sociology. This means that although it is necessary in the social sciences to use concepts that refer to collectivities, such as states, classes, and groups, references to a collective implies references to individual action.

3.2 Max Weber Theory of Religion

Weber was concerned with religious action as a particular type of social action. To achieve an understanding of social action, he looks at it from the viewpoint of the meaning that the action has. He believes that the reason that ordinary men are influenced by religion is related to their mundane expectations, namely the hope for a good life in this world. Religious action is, therefore, meaningfully oriented toward ordinary ends. Furthermore, religiously motivated action

is relatively rational (Weber 1964: 1). In his theory of social action, Weber distinguishes between two different kinds of rationality. Action that has a calculable character is motivated by purposive rationality, whereas action, which is meaningful in itself, is motivated by value rationality. He attempts to interpret religious action by understanding the motives of the actor from a subjective point of view. He postulates a basic drive for meaning and discusses the problem of meaning. According to the American historian, Arthur Mitzman that the historical quest for a theological answer to the problem of suffering is the beginning of philosophy and rational thought. In this way, the world's monotheistic religions have created the basis for a rational world-view.

Weber's interest in religion extended beyond Protestantism and included analyses of Hinduism in India, Confucianism in China, and ancient Judaism. His basic argument was that these other religious orientations did not provide the moral incentive for breaking with tradition that could stimulate economic expansion. In this comparative perspective, it becomes clear that whether religion promotes economic change or reinforces tradition and economic stability depends in part on the nature of the religious beliefs themselves. In addition, Weber recognized that the social location and material interests of those who adhere to particular religious orientations are also relevant as well as the overall material conditions in the society. Protestantism was "inner-worldly" (not "other-worldly") and emphasized asceticism (i.e. deferred gratification, discipline, self-denial, and active engagement in the world), as opposed to mysticism. Other types of religious orientation, such as otherworldly mysticism, for instance, would not be expected to have such strong effects in stimulating economic innovation but would instead support the status quo by default.

A consistent theme in Weber's work is to define and explain the distinguishing characteristics of Western civilization. He did this through his work titled; *The Protestant Ethic*. Here, Weber specifies the interrelation of religious ideas and economic conduct. Weber begins by arguing that economic conduct seems to possess an ethical content of its own. His thesis is that the Puritan ideas influenced the development of capitalism in Europe. Max Weber (1904) posited that, in Europe in his time, Protestants were more likely than Catholics to value capitalist ideology, believing in hard work and savings. He showed that Protestant values directly influenced the rise of capitalism and helped create the modern world order. Weber thought the

emphasis on community in Catholicism versus the emphasis on individual achievement in Protestantism made a difference. He defined the concept "spirit of capitalism" as the idea of hard work as a duty that carries its own intrinsic reward. He proceeds by looking for its origin in the religious ideas of the Reformation.

Although the Reformers did not intend to promote "the spirit of capitalism," their doctrines contained implicit incentives in this direction, especially the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. Perhaps one might think that a dogma stating that God has predetermined all things, including eternal salvation and damnation, would lead to apathy. However, in a popular version of Calvinism, each individual was inspired to look for signs that one was among the favorites. Such signs were, most significantly, to be found in economic success. In his *Collected Essays in the Sociology of Religion*, which was published in 1920, Weber emphasized that through the process of rationalization, religion has been shifted into the realm of the non-rational. He describes the modern world as "a world robbed of gods".

For him, the primitive world is a world of unity, where everything was magic. At some point of time in history, this unity was broken and split into rational cognition. Weber connects religion to social classes and groups are evident in his sociology of religion (Weber, 1964/1922). Here, he examines the religious propensities of different social groups whose material interests might give rise to divergent religious beliefs (1964: 80117). Weber distinguishes between groups that depend upon agriculture, commerce, industry, and handicraft. Economically and politically advantaged groups, as he describes them, use religion to legitimate their own life pattern and situation in the world. Underprivileged groups are more inclined toward religious ideas that promise rewards for one's own good deeds and punishment for the other's injustice.

Furthermore, Max Weber stressed that peasants have a general tendency to magic and animistic magic (animism), and bureaucrats are generally carriers of a rational religion. The middle classes are inclined to embrace rational, ethical, inner-worldly religious ideas, and the working class is characterized by indifference to or rejection of religions common to the modern bourgeoisie. In this way, Weber emphasizes the material conditions and status situations of various social groups, which he thinks, in turn, give rise to different lifestyles to which some religious ideas correspond. However, historical conditions can change the relationship between status groups and systems of belief. Because ideas are more than adjustments to the social

situation, intellectual leaders are important in the development of religious ideas. The relationship between ideas and given historical conditions is the result of individual choices. These choices are, again, affected by what the members of the various status groups find congenial to their interests.

3.3 Significance of Max Theory of Religion

Weber demonstrated that religion is not only a dependent variable, but also an independent variable, or a determinant factor for social change. Weber maintained that religion is never purely the reflection of society, but also contain, within its traditions, critical and creative elements. Weber's approach to the study of religious phenomena was an evolutionary perspective. He shared the views of anthropologist like Frazer who posited that religion evolved from magic. Weber's concern was to discover the influence of religion on society. On the distinction between religion and magic, Weber pointed out that the transition from magic to religion has a social root. As a point of agreement with Durkheim, Weber suggests that while magic seek divine power for private ends, religion acquire similar power for social ends, Weber stated that religion is a principle that create a believing community, while the priest as guardian of religion speaks in his own name as a man of great personal power.

The major reason for transition from magic to religion is the rational understanding of man's social life. Man as a meaning-making animal, realizes that significant progress can take place in culture and society when the various aspect of social life is properly coordinated. When personal needs are integrated into the need of the community, society will achieve a more unified world-view. Religion, by overcoming personal trends, which was intrinsic in magic, create a more complex and ordered society whose demands, supersedes private and stake. It was because of this unifying role of religion that led Weber to describe religion as a principle of socialization, which detaches people from fulfilling their personal ambition.

Religion, Weber observed, generates a selfless and sacrificial communal spirit by serializing the destiny of the entire community. Weber shares a theoretical similarity with Durkheim. Both theorists magnify the social functions of religion. Weber's description of

religion as a principle of socialization is analogous to Durkheim's description of religion as a "collective consciousness of the society".

3.4 critique of Weber Theory of Religion

Like Durkheim, a major flaw in Weberian thesis is the preoccupation with the view that religion is a communal consciousness and the seeming neglect of personal religion. It must be emphasized that communal religion is a cumulative, or aggregate of personal religion. The individual's religiosity produces communal consciousness. Communal religion will be impossibility without personal religion. Weber also posited that religion originated with the rise of a charismatic and emergence of an innovative movement. Weber did not account for how individual members of the movement. Weber ignored the essence and efficacy of personal religion, and like Durkheim, magnified the indispensable impact of communal religion.

4.0 CONCLUSION

We have discussed the scholarly position of Max Weber on the role of religion in the society in this unit. It was observed that religion impeded by encouraging oppressed people to focus on other worldly concerns rather than on their immediate poverty or exploitation.

5.0 SUMMARY

Religion is an important phenomenon throughout the world. Max Weber held that Calvinism and other branches of Protestanism produced a type of person more likely to engage in capitalistic behavior.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Compare and contrast Max Weber and Karl Marx opinions of the role of religion in social change
2. Give an account of Max Weber biography and philosophy
3. Explain the significance of Max Weber theory of religion in contemporary society
4. What are the criticisms against Max Weber theory of religion?
5. How is Max Weber theory of religion different from Marxist position on the place of religion in the society?

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UNIT 4: AUGUSTE COMTE'S THEORY OF RELIGION

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Objectives

3.0 Main Content

    3.1 Auguste Comte Biography and Philosophy

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7.0 References/Further Readings

1.0 INTORDUCTION

Through history, philosophers and sociologists have made countless contributions on religious behaviours and the role of religion in the society. Prominent among these scholars was Auguste Comte, the founding fathers of sociology. This unit examines his theory of religion in contemporary society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss Auguste Comte biography and philosophy
- Understand Auguste Comte theory of religion
- State the significance of Auguste Comte theory of religion in contemporary society

- Make a critique of Auguste Comte theory of religion

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Auguste Comte Biography and Philosophy

Auguste Comte was the first to use the term *sociology*. He had an enormous influence on later sociological theorists (especially Herbert Spencer and Emile Durkheim). He believed that the study of sociology should be scientific, just as many classical theorists did and most contemporary sociologists do. Comte was greatly disturbed by the anarchy that pervaded French society and was critical of those thinkers who had spawned both the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. He developed his scientific view, "positivism," or "positive philosophy," to combat what he considered to be the negative and destructive philosophy of the Enlightenment. Comte was in line with, and influenced by, the French counter revolutionary Catholics (especially Bonald and Maistre).

However, his work can be set apart from theirs on at least two grounds. First, he did not think it possible to return to the Middle Ages; advances in science and industry made that impossible. Second, he developed a much more sophisticated theoretical system than his predecessors, one that was adequate to shape a good portion of early sociology. Comte developed *social physics,* or what in 1839 he called *sociology*. The use of the term *social physics* made it clear that Comte sought to model sociology after the "hard sciences." This new science, which in his view would ultimately become *the* dominant science, was to be concerned with both social statics (existing social structures) and social dynamics (social change). Although both involved the search for laws of social life, he felt that social dynamics was more important than social statics. This focus on change reflected his interest in social reform, particularly reform of the ills created by the French Revolution and the Enlightenment. Comte did not urge revolutionary change, because he felt the natural evolution of society would make things better.

Reforms were needed only to assist the process a bit. This leads us to the cornerstone of Comte's approach—his evolutionary theory, or the *law of the three stages.* The theory proposes that there are three intellectual stages, through which the world has gone throughout its history.

According to Comte, not only does the world go through this process, but groups, societies, sciences, individuals, and even minds go through the same three stages. The *theological stage* is the first, and it characterized the world prior to 1300. During this period, the major idea system emphasized the belief that supernatural powers and religious figures, modeled after humankind, are at the root of everything.

In particular, the social and physical world is seen as produced by God. The second stage is the *metaphysical* stage, which occurred roughly between 1300 and 1800. This era was characterized by the belief that abstract forces like "nature," rather than personalized gods, explain virtually everything. Finally, in 1800 the world entered the *positivistic* stage, characterized by belief in science. People now tended to give up the search for absolute causes (God or nature) and concentrated instead on observation of the social and physical world in the search for the laws governing them.

3.2 Auguste Comte Theory of Religion

It is clear that in his theory of the world, Comte focused on intellectual factors. Indeed, he argued that intellectual disorder is the cause of social disorder. The disorder stemmed from earlier idea systems (theological and metaphysical) that continued to exist in the positivistic (scientific) age. Only when positivism gained total control would social upheavals cease. Because this was an evolutionary process, there was no need to foment social upheaval and revolution. Positivism would come, although perhaps not as quickly as some would like. Here Comte's social reformism and his sociology coincide. Sociology could expedite the arrival of positivism and hence bring order to the social world.

Above all, Comte did not want to seem to be espousing revolution. There was, in his view, enough disorder in the world. In any case, from Comte's point of view, it was intellectual change that was needed, and so there was little reason for social and political revolution. Comte was in the forefront of the development of positivistic sociology (Bryant, 1985; Halfpenny, 1982). To Jonathan Turner, Comte's positivism emphasized that "the social universe is amenable to the development of abstract laws that can be tested through the careful collection of data," and "these abstract laws will denote the basic and generic properties of the social universe and they

will specify their 'natural relations" (1985:24). This "positive" approach would enable us to understand social order as well as the stages of progress in society. Social reform efforts must always work within the constraints of the currently existing beliefs and traditions as discovered through empirical investigation. Otherwise, these efforts run the risk of undermining social order instead of promoting progress.

Despite his emphasis on systematic empirical research, Comte's own analysis was quite general and highly speculative and would not conform to contemporary standards of rigorous empirical research. Comte later offered a rather elaborate social reorganization project of his own that he believed was consistent with the positivist approach. Briefly, his "research" convinced him that religion had played a major role in the past in promoting social solidarity, especially in the long "theological" stage of history. However, as the new age of positivism replaced religion, Comte feared that selfish individualism would increase as the moral codes previously promoted by religious beliefs were undermined. Therefore, faced with the challenge of promoting altruism and social solidarity in the new positivist society of the future, Comte proposed a new religion— the religion of humanity. Sociologists would serve as the moral guardians of this new society, educating people regarding the need to conform to the requirements of the social order.

Comte further divides the theological stage into three sub-stages. In the first stage, fetishism where all things, even inanimate objects, are believed to be animated by a life or soul like that of human being prevails. This, Comte argued, underlies all religious thought and was perfectly understandable when seen in the context of early human development. It was quite reasonable and logical to generalize from human nature and experience to the rest of reality, to see all things as having the same essential nature, and to conclude, in the absence of any better knowledge. They believed that nature would be much like their own perception of all things being governed by spiritual forces. In the second sub-stage, polytheism, material things are no longer seen as animated by an indwelling life or soul. Matter is seen as inert in itself but subject to the external will of a supernatural agents. Belief in supernatural agencies arises because of the human capacity and tendency to generalize.

Supernatural agencies are progressively perceived to possess several spheres of jurisdiction. They were increasingly seen as not attached to specific objects but that they manifest in all objects. The process goes something like this. At first, it is believed that in every

single baobab tree there is an indwelling spirit. Nevertheless, because all baobab trees are alike it comes to be believed that there is a general spirit governing all baobab trees. Then, because all trees are similar, it is concluded that there must be a spirit, which governs all trees. In this way a conception of a god of the forest grows up and conceptions of other gods. Similar beliefs would be held about water, mountain, spirits etc. This is the stage of polytheism in which, a pantheon of gods and deities with power to affect the world and human beings are worshipped and propitiated. At this stage, a priestly cadre emerges whose task it is to mediate between the human realm and the gods.

This priesthood constitutes a new class freed from normal toil and able to spend time in thought, contemplation and speculation. With the emergence of priesthood we see the emergence of learning. Taken a step further, the process which led from fetishism to polytheism led logically to the final sub-stage of the theological phase, which monotheism. This is characterized by the development of the great world religions and the emergence of distinct religious organizations such as the church. From this monotheistic stage human thought passes through the transitional metaphysical stage in which spirits and deities give way to more abstract conceptions of general principles or forces which govern reality. This, in turn, gives way to the scientific thought of the positive stage which seeks to explain reality in terms of causal laws and generalizations. Comte, however, did not think that with the arrival of science, religion would disappear entirely.

Religion, he thought, was not only an attempt to explain and understand reality but also the unifying principle of human society. In effect, Comte, as Preus (1987) had pointed out, produced two theories of religion. On the one hand, he believed in the inexorable progress of knowledge and mastery of nature while on the other, he feared a social crisis and breakdown. The first produced his evolutionary theory in which religion was the first stage in the advancement of human thought; the fear of social breakdown led him to see society as requiring an ordering, regulating and unifying force. The force was found in religion the name of which was attached to whatever fulfilled this function.

3.3 Significance of Auguste Comte Theory of Religion in the Society

Through the work of Auguste Comte, we are meant to understand that society undergoes social transformation whereby people begin to appreciate the influence of religion on human interactions. In this, Comte differs from most of those who followed him who, for the most part, believed religion would disappear entirely in a modern rational society. For them, reason alone would govern conduct and they would have thought Comte's imagery of sociological religion with its priesthood, robes and rituals absurd. Comte believed religion to be a product of reason and of the human capacity to generalize in an attempt to understand and explain the world.

3.4 Criticisms of Auguste Comte Theory of Religion

From Comte contributions to theoretical understanding of religion, it is observed that Comte did not come out clearly on the role of human religion in society, though, he acknowledged that fact that in spite of advancement in science and technology, religious values and sentiments can never be over-emphasized in society. In addition, Auguste Comte failed to acknowledge the native functions of religion in society. In a similar view, his history of religion is over-genralized in nature as he failed to separate his philosophy from his theory of religion. For instance in Nigeria, at different levels religion is mostly mentioned in negative terms. Or rather, historical events linked to religion tilts more towards its negative than its positive contribution to the Nigerian state. It is important to note that several religious crises have occurred in Nigeria. Lastly, Auguste Comte failed to provide historical background about the origin of religion as his evolutionary approach did not tell us how religion emerged in society.

4.0 CONCLUSION

It is important that religion plays a significant role in the society. Whereby people begin to appreciate the influence of religion on human interactions, the society undergoes social transformation. It is therefore, wrong assumption to believe that religion would disappear entirely in modern rational society, only reason would govern human conduct.

5.0 SUMMARY

The theory of religion with emphasis on its role in contemporary society has been the focus in this unit. Auguste Comte held that intellectual disorder is the cause of social disorder which stemmed from idea systems (theological and metaphysical) that continued to exist in the positivistic (scientific) age. Only when positivism gained total control would social upheavals cease.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give account of Auguste Comte biography and philosophy
2. Explain Auguste Comte theory of religion
3. Compare and contrast Auguste Comte theory of religion and Max Weber opinion in relation to the role of religion in contemporary society
4. What are the criticisms against Comte theory of religion?
5. State the significance of Comte theory of religion in contemporary society

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UNIT 5: SIGMUND FREUD THEORY OF RELIGION

CONTENTS

1.0 INTORDUCTION

Understanding the relationship between religion and the society is the main focus of this unit. It examines the influence of social structure and the theoretical understanding of religion from the psychological point of view, as the major reason for the emergence of religion in the society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss Sigmund Freud biography and philosophy
- Explain Freud theory of religion
- Give the significance Sigmund Freud theory of religion

- Make a critique of Sigmund Freud psychological theory of religion in the society

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 Sigmund Freud Biography and Philosophy

Sigmund Freud (1856–1939) grew up in Austria in a Jewish family. Towards the end of his life, the difficult conditions for Jews in his home country led him to immigrate to Britain. Freud began his scientific career in physiology and anatomy, and gradually developed an interest in human psychology. Freud is a towering and controversial figure in the history of psychology. Since his theories of religion had such an impact on the sociology of religion, he is included here. The new and original aspect of Freud's work is his radical break with the well-established optimistic and rationalistic view of human nature. Freud is known as the founding father of psychoanalysis. He pictures man as a being with strong biological instincts, especially sexual instincts. Even the little child is a sexual being. Freud believes that unacceptable social instincts to a certain degree can be sublimated into artistic, religious or other energy-demanding activities.

Such socially illegitimate instincts are, metaphorically speaking, pushed into the subconscious, and the individual does not openly acknowledge this process. However, the subconscious material will strike back upon the individual's conscious life and actions, for instance in the form of slips of the tongue, dreams, neuroses, and compulsive thoughts. Psychoanalysis is not only an analysis; it is also a program for action. According to Freud, experienced psychoanalysts can uncover unreleased and unconscious conflicts through conversations with patients and their uncensored associations. By lifting this conflictual information from the subconscious, the information can be approached and handled in a rational way. Individuals can therefore achieve a more harmonious life, more governed by reason. Freud continued to refine his psychoanalytical program throughout his life. His first comprehensive presentation was published in 1901, entitled *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1953–74/1901).

3.2 Sigmund Freud Theory of Religion

Freud's concept in religion is extremely critical and reductionist. He had a strong antagonism towards the Catholic hierarchy, an antagonism that has been related to his feelings of discrimination as a scientist, discrimination which he attributed in part to the widespread anti-Semitism that dominated the Christian Austria (Isbister 1985: 208). In 1913, a breach appeared between Freud and the psychologist Carl Gustaf Jung, who had been his primary disciple for a long time. Their different views on religion were a key element in this breach. Nevertheless, Freud was not consistently anti-religious in his private life; for example, he had a lengthy and humorous correspondence with Oskar Pfister, a Swiss pastor and a strong admirer (Freud and Meng 1963). In several publications, Pfister attempted to uphold the main ideas of psychoanalysis, while at the same time toning down the critique of religion. For him, psychoanalysis was useful in Christian pastoral care. The major issue was to bring everything up from the deep waters of the soul, analyze it, and then live a life in Christian freedom.

In some instances, Freud voices a relatively functionalist explanation of religion, as in *Civilization and its Discontents* (1953–74/1930). He argued that the existence of religion is partly explained by its contribution to tame man's natural aggressive instinct. Religion supports morality and prevents society from disintegrating into a dog-eat dog existence. However, Freud's dominant view of religion is negative. According to him, religion emerges as a psychological necessity, but the religious attitude is infantile, imprisoned, and immature. Early in his academic production, Freud reached the conclusion that religious concepts were solely projections of the inner psyche. In 1901 he wrote, "I think that a great part of the mythological world-view, stretching far into most of the modern religions, is nothing but psychology projected into the outer world" (Freud 1953–74/1901: 259). In the same place, he writes that psychic factors and conditions in the unconscious are "reflected in the construction of a supernatural reality."

Freud's discussion of religion appears in three books: *Totem and Taboo* (1960/1913), *The Future of An Illusion* (1928/1921), and *Moses and Monotheism* (1964/1938). In many ways, he drew parallels between religion and neurotic suffering. He explained that magicians and participants in religious rituals are compelled to act in fixed ways, because they are governed by compulsive ideas. These to him make the origin of religion psychological. God is an exaggerated

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father figure, and religion is an attempt to handle frustrations created in the relations between the little child and its parents, especially the father. As the child is both afraid of and dependent upon its parents, the religious man is dependent on God. In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud includes in his explanation of religion a "narrative of origin," of a horde killing their father to access their mother. In *Moses and Monotheism*, he develops a narrative with the same structure in order to explain the Jewish religion and its descendant, Christianity.

According to Freud, Moses was an Egyptian who forced his religion upon the Jews. This resulted in conflict, as the Jews wanted to believe in their tribal god Jahweh. The conflict culminated in the Jews murdering Moses on the mountain just outside the Promised Land. These events caused a sense of guilt, which created the need for salvation in generation after generation of Jews and Christians.

3.3 Significance of Sigmund Freud Theory of Religion

Generally, Sigmund Freud theory of religion has reminded us the fact that religion beliefs and values emanate from individual mind. In other words, the values attached to any religion by individuals develop from innate ability of the concerned individual to understand and examine the perceived benefits derived from such religious beliefs. In other words, the spread of religion starts from the individual levels of understanding, then, to the wider society.

3.4 Criticisms against Sigmund Freud Theory of Religion in the Society

Freud's theories of the origin of religion are, of course, extremely speculative. He was aware of this weakness and admitted that they were based on psychological probabilities, and that objective proof was impossible to obtain (1964/1938). At the same time, he stated that it was scientifically validated that unconscious ideas can be transmitted from generation to generation, which is a highly controversial proposition as well. Sigmund Freud's theory of psychoanalysis has always been controversial. The critique has pointed out that it is too deterministic. Freud is a distinctive representative of the belief, which was prevalent at his time that the human and the

social sciences could uncover laws of the mind in the same way as the natural sciences could detect laws of nature.

The critique has also argued that he exaggerated the significance of sexuality in human life. In the philosophy of science, psychoanalysis has been criticized for presenting propositions and conclusions that are impossible to validate empirically. Despite the Freudians' strong rhetorical emphasis on science, it opens up the way for unscientific speculation (Hamilton, 2001). Criticisms have also been directed against Freud's sweeping generalizations. Based on a limited number of treatments of bourgeois women from Vienna, he draws general conclusions about humankind. Furthermore, his descriptions of religion are too general, as his theory actually is closely connected to a strict version of Christianity.

4.0 CONCLUSION

We have seen in this unit that Sigmund Freud theory of religion has contributed in the dynamics of religious discourse in contemporary world. It serves as a new platform to explore better arguments for scholars in relation to religious discourse.

5.0 SUMMARY

We have been made throughout this unit to understand that religious ideas do not have divine origin but psychical. The dogmas of religion are neither the residue of experience nor the result of reflection. They are illusions, fulfillment of the oldest, strongest and most insistent wishes of mankind. The secret of their strength is the strength of these wishes.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Give account of Sigmund Freud biography and philosophy
2. How Sigmund Freud theoretical argument does explains religious practices in African society?
3. What are the criticisms against Sigmund Freud theory of religion?

4. Compare and contrast Sigmund Freud theory of religion with Auguste Comte ideology in relation to the role of religion in the society.

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UNIT 6: THE FUNCTIONALIST THEORY OF RELIGION

CONTENTS

1.0 INTORDUCTION

This unit focuses on the function of religion in the society as postulated by some prominent sociologists. Particular attention will be given to the insights of Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Max Weber, among others.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the functionalist theory of religion

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Functionalist Theory of Religion

Functionalist theory seeks to explain social phenomenon by looking at its component parts as interrelated and inter-dependent. It treats each component as a unit that has a function to play for the continuity of the whole social system. The functionalists view society as a system; that is, a set of interconnected parts, which together form a whole. Thus, social institutions such as the family (kinship), politics (power), economy (food) and religion, amongst others, are analysed as part of the wholistic social system rather than isolated units. According to Mishra, the functionalist theory is concerned with the "analysis of the relationship between whole and their parts. It also explains the part they play in the larger system". He further states:

> The key concepts in the analysis of social changes or social developments are structural differentiation. Development consists in the movement of societies from a simple (undifferentiated) to a complex (highly differentiated) type of social structure... what changes primarily is the structure - the nature of institutional arrangements through which the different functions are performed. The structure becomes more specialized in the course of social development; a multi-functional institutional structure which splits up into several structures each with a more specialized function.

Furthermore, any malfunction or breakdown of one component would lead to the disruption of the equilibrium and harmonious relationship of the parts thus resulting to crisis in the entire system. From the functionalist theoretical viewpoint, it is the structural differentiation in social institutions together with its disrupting consequences that gives rise to other new institutions that are directed towards reducing the pangs of social change. This functionalist school of thought, which once dominated sociology, has now largely fallen into disrepute. This because to maintain a state of equilibrium, the various parts of the system should be in a state of balance. For the purpose of this study, funeral rites perform a clear function in the socio-cultural

and even economic institutions. The increasing funeral rites are not relevant for those family members who are not functionally integrated. Robinson posits that, it drew participation and co-operation from a large social group. It also provides a deal of independent and individualistic activity that ought not to be overlooked.

Human social behaviour is now used to enhance social status in the society. People have become socially incline in their way of doing things so as to boost their personal ego and social status. It is not unlikely that this will be the case in Nigerian society. Some of these behaviours are performed by the people who have some religious demands. Modern and traditional religions all require that human beings should behave morally and in accordance with norms and traditions laid down by the society. It is often assumed that if this is not properly carried out, there is bound to be moral decadence, thereby reducing social interaction in the society. Modern religions usually emphasize sound ethics and morality of all members in the society.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The functionalist theory stressed the social aspect of religion and attempted to explain social phenomenon by looking at its component parts as interrelated and inter-dependent. It treats each component as a unit that has a function to play for the community of the whole social system.

5.0 SUMMARY

Religion and society are closely inter-related. The functionalists view society as a system or a set of inter-connected parts, which together form a whole. Thus, social institutions such as the family (kingship), politics (Power), economy (food), and religion, among others, are analyzed as part of the wholistic social system, rather than isolated units.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Compare functionalist theory of religion with Emile Durkheim opinion of the role of religion in the society

2. Discuss the problems of social change in contemporary society

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UNIT 7: SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONIST THEORY OF RELIGION

CONTENTS

1.0 INTORDUCTION

This last unit of module 3 will discuss the symbolic interactionist theory of religion. It also treated the relationship between theory and society in contemporary society. These aspects of social theories of society will help us in understanding the role of religion in the contemporary society.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the symbolic interactionist theory of religion
- Discuss the theoretical postulations on the relationship between theory and society

3.0 MAIN CONTENT

3.1 The Symbolic Interactionist Theory of Religion

In this theory, the sub-structural level of analysis is abandoned, and the scene is almost completely occupied by interacting individuals who modify their respective conduct regardless of their position in the social structures. Turner supports this position when he asserts that:

> Symbolic interactions tend to conceptualise human interaction and society in terms of the strategic adjustments and readjustments of players to the game... depending upon the course of their interaction, create, maintain and change the rule of the game.

Turner's conception is that, human beings act towards social objects mainly in terms of the meaning those objects have on their intrinsic character. Such meanings are constructed and reconstructed in the process of social interaction. It is basically concerned with a small-scale interaction rather than society as a whole. It usually rejects the notion of a social system. The theory rejects conceptual generalization and abstraction and allows concepts to perform at best a sensitising function. For them, the actors involved are always engaged in fluid interpretation, evolutional, and definitional processes so that only strictly inductive procedures can help elucidate their behaviours. The Symbolic interactionist theory does not believe in social institutions impacting on the individual.

They tend to emphasize individual interpretation of the phenomenon. However, this theory has not covered much on social change rightly because it does not see the social world as not being external to the individual but rather as individuals interpreting the social world and acting on the basis of that interpretation. If they were to extend beyond what has been covered, they would definitely assert that individuals might assign different meanings to religion and society and consequently act on the basis of that interpretation. This interpretation may of course vary from one individual to the other.

3.2 Theoretical Postulations on the Relationship between Theory and Society

A discourse on religion and society will be inadequate without referring to the Durkheim view on the subject. French sociologist Emile Durkheim (1858-1917) defined religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred thing" (1915). To him, sacred meant extraordinary-something that inspired wonder and which seemed connected to the concept of "the divine." Durkheim argued, "Religion happens" in society when there is a separation between the profane (ordinary life) and the sacred (1915). A rock, for example, is not sacred for profane, as it exists. Nevertheless, if someone makes it into a headstone, or another person uses it for landscaping, it takes on different meanings-one sacred, one profane.

According to Durkheim (1915), religion is a reflection of man's representation of society. He believed that religion is about community: it binds people together (social cohesion), promotes behavior consistency (social control), and offers strength for people during life's transitions and tragedies (meaning and purpose). By applying the method of natural science to the study of society, he held that the source of religion and morality is the collective mind-set of society and that the cohesive bonds of social order result from common values in a society. He contended that these values need to be maintained to maintain social stability.

Durkheim further argues that religion is a foundation for individual identification within society and without religion, a social system cannot function. For him, social harmony is rooted in man's religion and religious obligations to God and the human community of which he is a part. Modern scholars on the subject support these views. Tregenza (2003:155) posits that what religion offers is not a timeless truths, the knowledge of which leads to salvation, but a language of self enchantment through which salvation is worked out in the present. In this sense, religion can be an element that foments aesthetic happiness within the groups and in the society. Consequently, religion has been described as coming into existence due to an individual's ability to reason. Thus, it can be said that religion acts as political and psychological cement that binds society together.

Whereas Emile Durkheim saw religion as not just a social creation but something that represent the power of society and source of social stability, the German sociologist and political economist Max Weber (1864-1920) believed it was a precipitator of social change. He examined

the effects of religion on economic activities and noticed that heavily Protestant societies-such as those in the Netherlands, England, Scotland, and German-were the most highly developed capitalist societies and that their most successful business leaders were Protestant. In his writing *The Protestant Work Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905), he contends that the Protestant work ethic influenced the development of capitalism. Weber noted that certain kinds of Pentecostalism supported the pursuit of material gain by motivating believers to work hard, be successful, and not spend their profits on frivolous things. The modern use of 'work ethic" comes directly from Weber's Protestant ethic, although it has now lost its religious connotations.

Another German philosopher and revolutionary socialist, Karl Marx (1818-1883) also studied the social impact of religion. He believed that religion reflects the social stratification of society and that it maintains inequality and perpetuates the status quo. For him, religion was just an extension of working class (proletariat) economic suffering. He famously argued that religion is "the opium of the people". For Durkheim, Weber, and Marx, who were reacting to the great social and economic upheaval of the late 19th century and early 20th century in Europe, religion was an integral part of society. For Durkheim, religion was a force for cohesion that helped bind the members of society to the group, while Weber believed religion could be understood as something separate from society.

Marx considered religion inseparable from the economy and the worker. Religion could not be understood apart from the capitalist society that perpetuated inequality. Despite their different views, the social theorists all believed in the centrality of religion to society. In Nigeria especially, religion plays a very vital and influential role in the society that has manifested itself as a potent force in the political development of the Nigerian state from pre-independence to post-independence. Hardly can the Nigerian state be talked about without reference to religion.

4.0 CONCLUSION

This is the last unit of this module as well of this course. We have examined the symbolic interactionist theory of religion which tends to conceptualize human interaction and society in terms of the strategic adjustments and readjustments of players to the game who depending upon the course of their interaction, create, maintain and change the rule of the game. Symbolic

interactionist emphasized individual interpretation of the phenomenon rather than social institutions impacting on the individual.

5.0 SUMMARY

The following are the major points in this unit:

- This theory abandoned the sub-structural level of analysis and the scene is completely occupied by interacting individuals who modify their respective conduct regardless of their position in the social structures.
- Human beings acts towards social objects mainly in terms of the meaning those objects have on their intrinsic character.
- The theory of symbolic interactionist rejects conceptual generalization and abstraction and allows concepts to perform at best a sensitizing function.

6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the symbolic interactionist theory of religion
2. Discuss the theoretical postulations on the relationship between theory and society

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Bogomilova, N. (2009). A Philosophical Approach to the Religion–National Mythology: A Synthesis. *Filozofija I Drustvo*, *3*, 83-96.

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