

PROMOTING NATIONAL PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE THROUGH PEACE AND SECURITY EDUCATION IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES 9 YEAR- BASIC CURRICULUM

BY

Dr. Francis A. Abimbola

Department of Christian Religious Studies, Federal College of Education, Abeokuta
Ogun State, Nigeria

E-mail: francisabimbola02@gmail.com

Abstract

The main purpose of this paper is to examine promoting national peaceful co-existence through peace and security education in school religious studies curriculum. The paper explains the concept of peace and peaceful co-existence; it also traces the theological teaching of Jesus Christ about peace. The paper discusses the problem of peaceful co-existence in this 21st century. Another aspect of the paper dealt with the need for peaceful co-existence in Nigeria, the relevance of peace and security education in enhancing peaceful co-existence. It emphasizes that Peace and Security Education would ensure a peaceful society. It made suggestions on how best to teach the subject in schools.

Introduction

Various schools of thoughts have clarified the term peace from different perspectives. To a sociologist peace is simply a condition of social harmony in which there are no social antagonism. In other words, peace is a condition in which there are no social conflicts and individuals and groups are able to meet their needs and expectations. A structural functionalist is of the opinion that peace is achieved when structures (institutions) perform their functions according to their mandates. For the Marxist, peace is attained when everybody has equal access to community of country resources, thereby extinguishing class distinctions that result to exploitations and the domination of one class by the other which will give rise to antagonism between the rich and the poor. (Bajah, 2008).

The Need for Peaceful Co-existence in Nigeria

The peace question, therefore, is not an exclusive preserve of political scientists, sociologists, historians or policy-makers. It is also a challenge before the ethicists to raise opinions and fundamental issues that are of serious importance in peace-making process. It is in this direction that we shall discuss the peace question in Nigeria. In doing this, we shall consider challenge for peace in Nigeria, discuss the relationship between peace and religion by identifying the areas of similarities in teaching for peaceful co-existence between Christianity and Islam. We will also suggest ways for maintaining peace through the government and non-governmental organisations and then finally subscribe to dialogue as the viable alternative of maintaining peace in Nigeria. Peace in its true meaning does not comprise solely absence of physical security or absence of war and conflict. This condition is only a limited one though a very important essential aspect of the wider concept of peace. Peace means beneficent adjustment of harmony

between individual and his creator on the one side and his fellow man on the other. This applies to the entirety of the concentric relationship between individual and individual, individual and community, community and community, nation and nation, and in short between man and universe. (Harris, 2008)

Connected with peace are two other concepts without which peace or harmony would be impossible. These are justice and development. There can be no peace without justice. Justice in our context here means equal distribution of benefits derived from the government, which can cement good relationship among its citizens. It is also important to stress that there is a fundamental relationship between peace and human rights which is grounded in justice. Any structure which deprives persons of their human rights and dignity and prevents justice from being realized, forces men to resort to violence or war. The same could be said of development: Underdevelopment breeds deprivation, poverty, hunger and disease. "A hungry man is an angry man," is a popular saying. This is true whether another man causes his hunger, by under-development or by natural disaster. Development by removing strains and deprivation from human life and making it possible for man to live a worthy life of his human dignity brings about harmony and peace. For the essence of peace is for the individual to be at peace with his maker. It must be remarked that development must not be pursued for its own sake or worse still as a means of dominating other human beings. Rather, development should be in the service of needs and indeed of the whole man, his material needs and the demands of his intellectual, moral, spiritual and religious life. (Cardozo, 2008)

Jesus' Theological teaching about Peace

Although the noise of life makes it difficult to have peace, this is exactly what Jesus promises, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). Jesus' peace most likely won't quiet a screaming child. Jesus' peace doesn't guarantee a slick commute in the morning. Jesus' peace won't make all your problems and all the world's conflicts fade away. Jesus does, however, promise a peace that will quiet your heart. Knowing that Jesus came into this world to heal damaged relationships with God brings peace to a troubled soul. Knowing that Jesus came to open wide the doors to heaven brings true peace to confused and searching minds. Knowing that Jesus is waiting to welcome you to his eternal home where there will be no more "noise" makes all the noises of life a little easier to deal with. We enjoy discussing Jesus' peace and what it means for our lives. We offer formal classes that provide this opportunity. We also welcome informal one-on-one conversations with a pastor or other members of our church. Feel free to take us up on these invitations to learn more about Jesus' promise, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you." (Cromwell, 1999)

The Theological Message of John 14:15-31

John was very selective in recording the words and works of Jesus Christ in order to achieve the goal that his readers might, by reflecting on his account, come to express faith in Christ and have life in His name (John 20:30, 31). In general, the gospel has four major movements beyond the theological prologue (1:1-18) which are tailored according to John's purpose: 1) Jesus' interaction with individuals (1:19-4); 2) Jesus' sayings and resultant opposition from religious leaders (5-12); 3) Jesus' personal instruction to the twelve (13-17); 4) Jesus' passion (18- 21). The purpose of this paper is to focus on the personal instruction of Jesus to his

disciples, in particular John 14:15-31. These words appear to have been spoken by our Lord in the upper room as he ate a meal with his disciples (13:1, 2). For their part, the disciples are grieving and anxious about the thought of being separated from Jesus (cf. Jesus' need to encourage their hearts with peace 14:1, 27, 28). Indeed, the whole section from 13:36-14:31 is concerned with the departure of Jesus and the response of the disciples. In light of this and other factors it has commonly been referred to as a "farewell discourse." (Cromwell, 1999).

Promoting Peaceful Co-existence Through Peace Education

In order to promote national security, there is need to adopt a participatory approach for teaching Peace Education concepts in our schools. To this end Carter (2006) recommended the following standards for peace educators at the primary and secondary school levels:

a) Facilitating students' construction from their collective experience; b) Engage in cross cultural communication with multicultural school participants (;c) Train students through molding of dispoelation to respect for other peoples rights and progressive observance of their own rights. As the saying goes, the learners must be educated on the essence of the dictum: other people's rights begin where your own rights end (Ogunyemi & Raheem, 2006). The use of diverse Social Studies education strategies such as, role playing, drama, values clarification, inquiry and peace-building goes a long way in achieving this goal.

Role-Plays

Using role-plays, for example, on sample conflicts from their lives, students develop positive attitudes and practice skills which, when applied, can transform a potentially violent situation into a healthy and amicable growing experience. These paradigms and skills can be applied in conflicts ranging from the personal and home setting to international diplomatic process. Young people have the capabilities to not only solve their own conflicts but to act as mediators and help others solve their conflicts. As observed by Olivia (2003), student mediators are active in solving disputes in most primary and secondary school in Aotearoa, New Zealand, following the cool schools peer mediation programme, led by the pace foundation (www.Peacenet.nz) Graphic and statistics can also for instance be used to reflect the disproportionate drain of funding away from human security into building up military might. When seeking to hold governments accountable for attaining the Millennium Development Goals in education, young people should for instance learn that the cost of a single new nuclear submarine is the equivalent of the total education spending in 23 low-income countries with 160 million school-age children (Olivia Martin, 2003).

The Use of Drama

Taking active part in peace building drama could enable young people to express themselves and serve as community educators. Also films and movies could be shown to children with the main ideas centred on peaceful conflict resolution but not projecting the actors as aggressive. For instance, the UNESCO's Global Study of Media violence found that 88% of the children (that took part in the study) from India, Brazil, Japan etc. knew and looked-up to terminator. This is a worrying phenomenon. The multiplicity and appeal of this kind of movie "heroes" transmit the message to children and youth that aggression is a good means to resolve conflicts, while it offers status and can be fun (Olivia Martin, 2003). This implies that it is time for History and Social Studies curricula to glorify peacemakers, not warriors and to encourage young people to emulate the lives of people like Gandhi and Mother Teresa; the Nnamid

Azikwe; Tai Solarin, Obafemi Awolowo, Gani Faweyinmi, of Nigeria; Mandela of South Africa; Matins Luther King etc. rather than notorious criminals like Rambo, Lawrence Anini and the Terminator. For example, efforts are being made in Brazil to elevate peace heroes in order to provide Braz. This is a concept around which UNICEF ESARO organizes its work in peace Education in 1997. Peace Building through schools focuses on using the activities of daily school community – the children (class by class), the teachers, and the parents through the PTA to contribute to peace-building in the community. The school develops a peace plan with all the stakeholders, the aim of which is to assist the community. The peace plans would include such elements as organizing games and sports in which out-of-school children join in with the children enrolled in the school; clearing a market space in the village; having rotating groups of students assist families in need with their chores, work, or children-minding; using some Saturdays to work with or play with out-of-school children; making improvements to the school environment; helping children in younger classes with their home assignments, listening to them practicing reading or teaching them new games. Further more, the school as an institution reaches out to other school, given children the opportunity of mixing with a „different“ community. This equally increases the feeling of belongingness and encourages children to communicate with others, accept differences; and value the qualities of other schools“ children. The collaborative partnerships that are formed between schools help to promote peace in wider society thereby ensuring national security. (Harris, 2003).

The New Secondary School Curriculum in Nigeria

It is a common knowledge that 21st Century School recognizes the critical need for developing 21st century skills. It is believed that authentic education addresses the “whole child”, the “whole person”, and does not limit our professional development and curriculum design to workplace readiness. Commeyras (2011) argues, “The focus and objectives of education are to develop natural talents to enhance the quality of environment; production of skilled manpower and generation of knowledge necessary for modern economy; inspiring and enabling individuals to develop capacities to the highest level throughout life so that they can grow intellectually and contribute effectively to society; creating learning society necessary for participation in a world undergoing phenomenal changes; inculcation of the right attitude and values for fostering a democratic and civilized society, and finally, to increase knowledge and understanding for their own sake and foster their application for the benefit of the economy”. In the light of the above, new secondary school curriculum was developed by the National Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The restructuring of the SSS curriculum resulted in the development of 42 subjects and 34 vocational Trades/Entrepreneurship curricula. The curriculum which was approved by the National Council of Education in 2009 would provide for a systematic connection between its contents and the learning of future contents.

Obioma (2010), the curriculum is structured in a way that will ensure that senior secondary school graduates are well prepared for higher education and that they had acquired relevant functional trade/entrepreneurship skills needed for poverty eradication, job creation and wealth generation. That the graduates would have also acquired skills, with the capacity to set up their own businesses as a fall-out of the skills they acquired from the 34 trade subjects. This functional education will make them job creators instead of job seekers, thereby banishing poverty from their lives. In the same vein, the new curriculum aimed at strengthening the foundations for ethical, moral and civic values acquired at the basic education level, building and

sustaining a culture of strategic educational research and development that will inform the formulation and effective implementation of programme and policies in education and in other related sectors of the national economy (NERDC, 2004). In pursuance of the above, the new curriculum referred to our primary education as Basic Education. Basic Education shall be of 9-year duration comprising 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education. While the goals of basic education shall be the same as the goals of the levels of education to which it applies. National Policy on Education (2004) identified the broad goals of secondary education to include preparation of individual for useful living within the society; and preparation for higher education. (Harris, 2003).

Conclusion

Peace and Security Education if properly handled by the school through appropriate curriculum and effective teaching, a peaceful society will be possible. Peace education does not promote only objective understanding of social issues and problems, most importantly it should help students to be creative, non-violent and make their social, cultural and political environment peaceful and habitable. For a long period, what people cared about was the resolution of disputes after they emerged, not the prevention of disputes. However, the new security concept stresses the establishment of general principles, the mechanism of self-regulation through peaceful means like education. Therefore, through peace and security Education, small conflicts can be resolved before they occur. If the world community can eliminate the potential conflicts, or runs large-scale conflicts into minor ones, or turns minor conflicts into nothing, the world and each nation state will be safer for humanity. The imperative of Peace and Security Education for the development of culture of peace has stimulated political leaders to incorporate Peace Education into the school curriculum and Security Education in Christian Religious Studies Curriculum. Nigeria with her myriad of conflicts which created a lot of security challenges prompted her to integrate Peace and Security Education concepts into the lower and upper Basic Education Social Studies curriculum. This paper has examined the concept of Peace and Security Education and has drawn its potentials in promoting national security in Nigeria. It equally emphasized the relevance of participatory approach to the teaching of peace and security Education as a means of achieving peaceful co-existence in Nigeria.

Recommendation

Based on the issues raised the following recommendations were made

- Some other relevant topic in CRS curriculum should be used to teach about peace peaceful co-existence.
- More teachers should be part of the problem of peace in our society by using the relevant topic in their subject areas to illustrate to students the concept of peace and peaceful co existence.
- There should be a critical re-orientation of the Curriculum across all discipline and at all levels of education to reflect peace and peaceful co-existence.
- The entire school system should create a cordial atmosphere where peace, justice and equity prevail.
- Holistic approach to teaching of peace and peaceful co-existence is recommended, others include dialogue and mediation in the event of conflict resolution.
- Government should create a systematic inquiry to establish the efficacy of peace
- Government should find ways of improving the living standard of its populace

- Government should find ways of eradicating corruption and creating job opportunities in all sectors of our economy, so as to eradicate poverty
- Government should creates an effective body to guide peoples by the word of God, so as to eradicate moral decadence in the Nation

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