

RELIGIOUS LEADERSHIP TRAINING AS TOOL FOR PROMOTING PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE IN SOUTH WESTERN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

Various measures have been adopted to promote peaceful co-existence in African societies, Nigeria as an example but the problems persist. This piece explores the role of leadership training in religion as germane to peaceful co-existence in humanities. Human beings are socio beings and cannot exist without interacting with other people. There are needs for social interaction starting from the smallest unit as the family, community, society, peer groups, age grades, religious institutions, and place of work to mention a few. At one point in life we are bound to step on toes due to individual differences, therefore conflict can arise which need to be settled for peaceful co-existence. Leadership training in religious sphere could go a long way in shaping lives and promoting peaceful co-existence among religious organizations which could eventually spread to the society at large. The Research adopts descriptive methods of data collection with the use of one hundred (100) questionnaire as sample selected purposively conducted among selected church leaders in Pentecostal churches and mainline churches using questionnaire methods to source for information. Analysis will be made using percentage. The paper concludes that if leaders of three major religions can manifest attributes that can engender unity and cohesion and if they should lead by examples, there will be peaceful co-existence in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS: *Religion, leadership training, peaceful co-existence and society.*

Introduction

Nigeria occupies a major space in the history of the Pentecostal movement in Africa (Ajibade, 2013). Ruth Marshall has proved that, "One of the most remarkable trends of the last decade among the Christian population of Southern Nigeria has been the dramatic rise of the so-called "Charismatic" or "Pentecostal" movement."¹ While attempting the definition of Pentecostalism Ayegboyin and Ishola (1997: 16) have this to say on Pentecostalism that it is:

...a general term used to describe the groups and sects which have traditionally placed emphasis on the speaking and receiving of certain gifts of the Spirit, such as, speaking in tongues, prophesying and healing as a sign of the baptism of the Holy Spirit.²

The above definition clearly excludes the mainline churches that do not place emphasis on speaking in tongues, prophesy and healing as signs of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Ojo (2006:9) writes that, "The Pentecostal movement arose from the various Baptist bodies and

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holiness groups, which were reacting against the secularism and rationalism then seemingly dominant in the Protestant churches at the beginning of the twentieth century.”

Marshall-Fratani (1998: 282) says:

The wave of conversions to Pentecostalism which has swept across urban Nigeria in the past decade or so has brought a number of changes in doctrine, membership, organisation and transnational affiliation to the already existing Pentecostal churches which expanded or were established in the earlier revival of the seventies.³

Cox, Harvey (1995:3) has noted that:

THE PEOPLE who call themselves "Pentecostals" today take their name from a story recounted in chapter two of the Acts of the Apostles. The plot describes how the confused followers of the recently crucified rabbi they believed was the messiah gathered in Jerusalem to mark the Jewish holiday called Pentecost that occurs fifty days after Passover.⁴

Pentecostal movements represent a new dimension in the history of African Christianity especially in Nigeria. This new dimension represents another layer of local appropriation and contextualisation of the Christian message (Ajibade, 2013).

Marshall (1991: 21) has made this observation concerning Pentecostal churches when she asserts that:

One of the remarkable recent trends in Nigeria has been the rise to religious and social prominence of the ‘charismatic’ or ‘Pentecostal’ Christian movement...thousands of new churches and evangelical groups have cropped up in the cities and towns of the south.

Several scholarly works have been carried out by scholars on Pentecostalism in Nigeria. Some are mainly on historical foundations and social networks among them (Ojo, 1997, 1998, 2005, 2006 and 2010), the contributions of the Pentecostal movement to church growth and spiritual awakening in Nigeria (Ayuk Ausaji Ayuk, 2002; Achunike, 2004).

The beginning of Christian faith in Nigeria is usually traced to the evangelisation activities of the Portuguese in 15th century.⁵ Imokhai (1982:1) has noted that the first priests of the Catholic that accompanied the Portuguese trading ships made several attempts to plant Christianity in both Benin kingdom and Warri kingdom from about 1482. This is equally discernible in the words of Onwubiko that:

The Portuguese missionaries were very active in Benin in 1485, and 1520, and on a few occasions, the Oba came close to being converted to the new religion. The missionaries were more successful in the kingdoms of Warri where two successive kings were known to have become Christians.⁶

Ajani (2013:2) says:

The explosion of the Pentecostal movement in Nigeria and globally has been astounding. By the 1980s the rise of the movement was very visible and too important to be ignored, because the movement was reshaping the religious

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landscape of the majority continents; Africa, Asia and Latin America. By the 1990s, Pentecostalism had become a major factor in the Nigerian public life; the movement gave religious visibility to the middle class which had been fragmented by unfavourable economic policies. By the beginning of the 21st century, it was certain the movement had become a major expression of Nigerian Christianity.

This study investigates the impact of Leadership roles in the Nigerian Pentecostal Churches, with particular reference to certain purposively selected Pentecostal churches in southwestern Nigeria. Living in harmony with fellow human beings will promote good ethical living, good governance and leadership in the religious sphere and the society at large.

A leader is someone who is assertive, not aggressive but assertive, clear about their choices and opinions that are not going to infringe on someone else's. Leadership quality and good governance has been in existence from the biblical context right from Genesis when God called people such as Abraham, Moses, Joshua to mention a few to lead the Israelites. Governance begins in the smallest unit as the family where the father serves as the head according to biblical injunction. A group, community, religious group, state or Nation cannot do without a leader who direct and coordinates the activities of the group.

Leadership is about relative influence since a leader is about someone who has more influence over others than they have over him or her (Fageyinbo, 2005). Leadership is about building and maintaining a sense of vision, culture and interpersonal relationships as well as involving management issues that include the co-ordination and support and monitoring of schools and organization. It is the process by which a person influences other to accomplish an objective (Akhilshabani 2018).

Furthermore, Leadership is the complex process where a leader influences the people within the organization in order to accomplish a mission task or objectives and direct the organization in a way that makes it cohesive and concurrent (Northhouse, 2007). The central theme of leadership is getting things accomplished through people.

Peretomode and Peretomode (2008) defined Leadership as the art or process by which a member of a group or organization persuades, inspires or influences the attitudes, behaviors and actions of others of their activities so that the group or organizational members will work willingly, cooperatively and enthusiastically towards the accomplishment of set goals.

To buttress the above assertion, Leadership is an input into an organization and involves inter-personal influences or initiated structures and acts the result in a Constance pattern or group interaction aimed at productivity and individual fulfillment. This is done by applying leadership attributes such as belief, values, ethics, character, knowledge and skills appropriate styles. There are different types of Leadership styles: Autocratic, Democratic, Laissez-faire and charismatic leadership styles in religious, education, also the three tiers of government to mention a few.

A leader is expected to encourage his followers to develop willingness not only to work but work with zeal and confidence. To achieve this, a Leader among other attributes

“Is to possess basic innate intelligence, have good sense of Judgement, be emotionally mature, be zealous, exclude self-confidence, be versatile, have initiate and relevant task knowledge and technical skills. He is to stand behind a group as he facilitates progress and inspire the group to accomplish religious or organizational goals (Wehrich & Konta, 2005).

Peaceful Co – Existence

Oxford dictionary. Com termed peaceful co-existence as a policy of mutual tolerance between states, government and people, religious groups, society and community at large etc. having different beliefs, ideologies and outlooks, in internal and extended use.

Furthermore, according to Marian -Webster dictionary defines as peaceable sense, peaceable people, untroubled by conflicts, agitation or commotion. Also, a living together in peace rather than in Constance society. To change society through peaceful means.

To live peaceably connotes, to live in harmony without problem. The atmosphere and interaction will be without hitch. The physical, social, spiritual conformity and interpersonal relationships are germane to peaceful life. It led to longevity and good healthy living.

Religious diversity and religious pluralism are closely related and interwoven save the fact that the former is given while the latter was created.

Religious pluralism can be defined as "respecting the otherness of others". Freedom of religion encompasses all religions acting within the law in a particular region. Religious pluralism is an attitude or policy regarding the diversity of religious belief systems that co-existing in society. It can indicate one or more of the following:

As the name of the worldview, according to which one's religion is not the sole and exclusive source of truth, and thus the acknowledgement that at least some truths and true values exist in other religions.

As acceptance of the concept that two or more religions with mutually exclusive truth claims are equally valid. Giving one religion or denomination special rights that are denied to others can weaken religious pluralism.

The pluralist's stance in regards to religious pluralism is stated by Brian et al (2000:167) thus:

...recognizes the existence of a religious or spiritual absolute reality but allows for multiple interpretations and paths toward it. In contrast to the exclusivist who maintains that there is a single path "up the mountain of God," the pluralist recognizes many paths as valid. Although both the exclusivist and the pluralist may agree on the existence of religious or spiritual reality, the pluralist recognizes that this reality is expressed in different cultures and by different people in different ways. Because humans are mortal and limited, a single human religious system cannot encompass all of the religious or spiritual absolute reality.

Nigeria is a pluralistic society especially in the area of religion. Religion permeates every area of their life style, culture and society. Despite the fact that the Nigerian constitution has given an individual the right to practice any religion of their choice without infringing on the right of another person, there are assaults, killings, abuses, oppressions and devastations to mention a few.

Understanding the media representation of religious diversity, freedom and pluralism is germane to national security and development. As an ongoing paper, we shall take samples from the recent *Tell Magazines* and other print media of between January -September, 2014 to illustrate our view of the current state of religious diversity and pluralism in the Nigerian state.

One of the devastating effects of Boko Haram insurgence was seen from the words of Bishop Oliver Doeme Dashe (Tell September 2014, page 22) that, "We have over 2,000 widows, Orphans... My diocese is shrinking daily... over 90,000 Catholics have been displaced. We have

recorded a lot of widows and Orphans numbering over 2000. A lot of churches and rectories have been burnt down.”

More specifically, the tables below provide information on the effects of religious intolerance especially the menace of Boko Haram sect on Nigerians.

Examples of evil effects of conflicts in Nigeria.

Table 1: Victims of Boko Haram Attacks in the Catholic Diocese of Maiduguri, 2009-2012

Name of parish.	No of churches displaced or relocated.	No. of persons Churches or rectories burnt.	No. of deceased persons Adult.	No. of children killed.	No. of widows as a result of the attacks.
St. Mary's Maiduguri.	5,809		12	5	9
St. Monica's Biu	2,802	1		8	13
CIC Nguru	2,157		5	3	5
St. Mary Damaturu.	7,150	1		8	19
St. Andrew, Mubi	2,456		13	5	9
St. Paul Potiskum	3,198	2		3	11
St Rita, Maiduguri	3,150		9	5	23
St. Joseph, Geshua	1,098				
St. Michael, Maiduguri	7,200	1	13	12	31
St. Augustine, Maiduguri	3,186		31	8	12
St. Patricks, Maiduguri	9,309	2	22	9	
St. Timothy, Maiduguri	350		2		21
St. Hilary, Maiduguri	2,254		4		8
All Saints, UniMaid	120		3		
St. Joseph, Gamboru	3,567	1	2	6	19
Total	55,806	8	104	72	186

Source: Catholic Diocese, Maiduguri

Table2: Victims of Boko Haram Attacks in the Catholic Diocese of Maiduguri, 2009-2012

Name of Parish	No. of Persons displaced	No. of churches burnt	No. of persons killed	No. of children killed	No. of widows after the attack	No. of widowers after the attack	No. of orphans after the attack
St. Dennis Magadai	5,000	1	40	1	27		107
St. Pius Shuwa	3,910	1	10	7	16		12

St. John,	2,098	23	6	3	4		
Potiskum							
St. Peters,	4,000	3	25	2	21	1	
Pulka							
St. Timothy,	3,456	1	6		5	2	
Bama							
Our Lady's		1	4		2		16
Barracks							
St. Joseph,	3,000	1	11	3	18		
Kaya							
St. Perters,	3,000		21	1	1		
Yaffa							
Maffa	50	1	10	6			9
St. Joseph,	2,100	1	10		5		
Gamboru							
St. Joseph,	6,555	1	3	2	3		5
Mongonu							
Madayi							
Total	33,169	33	146	27	102	3	149

Source: Catholic Diocese, Maiduguri

Effect of Violence

There are lots of negative and evil effects of any form of violence on mankind. Violence is detrimental to man and his well-being. Peaceful co-existence and tolerance in respective of religion, ethnic groups, political party to mention a few are highly valued and significant to mankind.

Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population for the study comprised all the General Overseers/ Church founders, Reverend, Pastors, Deacon/Deaconess and Stake holders in Christian religious bodies in Osun States. The sample for the study consisted of 100 church leaders and stakeholders in Christian religious bodies in all in Odo-Otin Local Government Area (LGA) using the purposeful sample procedure. One self-designed instrument was used to elicit information for the study. The instrument was titled; 'Religious Leadership Training Questionnaire (RLTQ)'. The RLTQ was divided into two sections. Section A contained information on the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents while section B contained descriptive items that align with the objectives of the study. Data were analyzed using simple percentage and frequency counts.

Specific Objectives

1. Identify the negative influence of conflicts in our society.
2. Evaluate the role of Christian ethics in promoting peaceful co-existence
3. Examine the leadership training in Pentecostal churches as a means of integrity that promote peaceful co-existence in the society.
4. Proffering solutions to internal and external conflicts in the society through religious training.

Research Questions

This study answered the following questions:

1. Does conflicts in the society affects the society peaceful co-existence?
2. To what extent are the strategic leadership programme promotes religious ethical behaviour in the society?
3. Does the leadership training in Pentecostal churches promote people's integrity in the society?
4. How can we proffer solutions to these problems?

Scope of Study

The scope of the research work is limited to the evaluation of leadership roles and training in Pentecostal churches as tools for promoting peaceful co-existence in the society. The study population was limited to the assessment of Pentecostal Church leaders training ethics as tools for promoting peaceful co-existence in Osun states.

Analysis of Results

Section A: Social-Demographic characteristic of Respondent.

Table 1: Showing Demographic Information of Respondents

Age of Respondents		
Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
21-25	10	10%
26-30	20	20%
31 above	70	70%

Data on the age of the respondents revealed that 10% of the respondents are between the ages of 21 and 25 years, 20% range from 26 and 30 years and 31 years above (70%)

Gender of Respondents		
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	56	56%
Female	44	44%

Data on the gender of respondents revealed that 56% of respondents are male while 44% are female.

Marital Status of Respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	22	22%
Married	88	88%
Divorced	—	—
Window	—	—

Data on the marital status of respondents shows that 22% of the respondents are single while 88% of the respondents are married.

Religious Group of Respondents

Religious Group	Frequency	Percentage
Pentecostals	70	70%
Main line	30	30%
Others	-	-

Data on the religious group of respondents reveals that 70% of the respondents are Pentecostals and 30% are main line.

Leadership Status of Respondents

Leadership Status	Frequency	Percentage
Pentecostal churches	60	60%
Mainline churches	40	40%
Others Specify	-	-

Leadership Status	Frequency	Percentage
General Overseer	05	5%
Pastor/Reverend	46	46%
Deacon/Deaconess	33	33%
Unit leaders	16	16%
Others Specified	-	-

Data on the leadership status of respondents revealed that 60% of the respondents are from Pentecostal churches why 40% are mainline churches. In the same vein, 5% of the respondents are General Overseer, 46% are Pastor/Reverend, 33% are Deacon/Deaconess 16% are Unit leaders.

Section B: Results Results and Findings

Table 2

S/ N	Descriptive Items	True	%	False	%
1.	Do you like attending leadership programme.	90	90%	10	10%
2.	Strategic leadership programme promotes your leadership ethical behavior.	80	80%	20	20%
3.	Church leaders must love their enemy and pray for them as the bible commands.	70	70%	30	30%
4.	Religious Leaders must live by example.	90	90%	10	10%
5.	Leaders are role model in the society.	85	85%	15	15%

Source: Researcher, 2018

Findings of the study revealed that 90% respondents agreed (true) that they attend leadership programme while 10% disagreed that they do not. In the same vein, 80% of the respondents agreed that strategic leadership programme promotes leadership ethical behaviour of the respondents while 20% disagreed with the item. It was revealed that 70% of church leaders must love their enemies and pray for them as the bible commands while 30% disagree that they do not. While the study found that 90% religious leaders must live by example, 85% of leaders are said to be role models.

Table 3

S/ N	Descriptive Items	True	%	False	%
6.	Any deviant behavior by Pentecostal leaders are liable to punishment	80	80%	20	20%
7.	Religious leadership role makes you to be conscious of your integrity in the society.	90	90%	10	10%
8.	Religious leaders serve as agents of conflicts resolution.	80	80%	20	20%
9.	Leaders form the pillars in Pentecostal churches.	70	70%	30	30%
10.	Pentecostal leaders must participate in community development programme.	77	77%	23	23%

Source: Researcher, 2018

The study further found that 80% and 90% agreed consecutively that any deviant behaviour by Pentecostal leaders are liable to punishment and religious leadership role makes one to be conscious of one's integrity in the society. Also, 80% religious leaders serve as agents of conflicts resolution while, 70% leaders form the pillars in Pentecostal churches, 77% Pentecostal leaders must participate in community development programme

Table 4

S/ N	Descriptive Items	True	%	False	%
11.	Does the periodic strategic programme promotes your spiritual life	90	90%	10	10%

12.	Religious leadership role is good for male and female	90	80%	10	20%
13.	Youth leaders are significant in church growth and development.	86	86%	14	14%
14.	Religious ethics promotes good behavioral interaction our society.	86	86%	14	14%
15.	Good family life in paramount before ordination in your church.	100	100%	0	0%

The study found that 90% of the periodic strategic programme promotes their spiritual life while 10% of the respondents do not attend with the item, 80% of religious leadership role is good for male, 86% youth leaders are significant in church growth and development, 86% of the religious ethics promotes good behavioral interaction the society, 100% good family life is paramount before ordination in the church.

Table 5

S/ N	Descriptive Items	True	%	False	%
16.	A good Christian leader must have one wife.	90	90%	10	10%
17.	Christian leader can also lead in the community.	80	80%	10	20%
18.	Religious leaders can participate in conflict resolutions in their community.	90	90%	10	10%
19.	Religious leaders are committed to peaceful co-existence.	77	77%	23	23%
20.	Good Character is contagious and can affects other people in the society.	91	91%	09	09%
21.	Do you have leadership trainings in your church or Ministry?	77	77%	23	23%
22.	Do you participate whenever the organized it?	80	80%	10	20%

The findings of the study further revealed that 90% of good Christian leaders must have one wife and that 80% Christian leader can also lead in the community. The study also revealed that 90% religious leaders can participate in conflict resolutions in their community, 77% religious leaders are committed to peaceful co-existence, 91% of the respondents agreed that good character is contagious and can affects other people in the society while 77% of the respondents have leadership trainings in their church or ministry.

Conclusion

The study concludes that the negative influence of conflicts in our society cannot be over emphasized, the role of religion especially Christian ethics in promoting peaceful co-existence in our society as agreed by the results of the research that has been reveal. Also, the leadership training in Pentecostal churches as a means of integrity that promote peaceful co-existence in the society. Conflicts can be resolve through religious maturity and integrity through religious training and leaderships skills acquired in various spiritual bodies.

Recommendations

- Training and periodic training of Leaders will go a long way in developing a strong leader ship, which in turn lead to peaceful co-existence.

- The practitioners of all religions should regard each religion as partners in progress with the other one especially in securing peace, unity and progress of the nation.
- There should be a National curriculum developed for training of leaders in respective of their religion before they assume the position of leadership.
- Leaders should be people of integrity
- The ultimate aim and pursuit of all religions should be avoidance of rivalry and work towards achieving a sustainable development in Nigeria.
- Religious differences or doctrinal invariance should not be the pursuit of religious practitioners but the beauty of plurality.
- The patrons of each religion should lend from a Yoruba aphorism that says, *Ona kan ko woja*-not a single road leads to the market.
- All the citizens of this nation should be preoccupied with the thematic content of a folkloric song by Sunny Ade, a popular Nigerian singer thus:

Nigeria yii ti gbogbo wa ni- Nigeria belongs to all of us

Ko maa gbodo baje –It must not be destroyed

Tori ko sibomiran ti a le lo Because there is no other place that we can go

Ajo ko le dun bi ile-other person's country cannot be compared to your home

Gbe e, ke mi gbe e –You must support and I must support its (Nigeria) development

The role of religious ethics in good leadership if strictly imbibe will lead to peaceful co-existence despite the various ethnic's groups in southwestern Nigeria and Nigeria at large.

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