

Religion and Leadership in Nation-Building

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Abstract

This write-up looks at the contributions of religion to nation building and the impact of leadership towards the growth of nation building. Hence, bringing out religious and leadership focus towards the upliftment of the nation. Thus, this writings are broken down into different stage and steps to allow understanding. It touches topics like the concept of religion: meaning and definition of religion. It also touches the contribution of Islamic and Christian religion in nation-building. This study anchored on the overview and definition of leadership. In the same vein, the contributions of leadership in nation-building are well outlined and explicated for easy understanding. Nation-building in question are fairly treated and explained for a clearer comprehension. Finally, recommendations and conclusion was made to give insight for further research and criticism.

Introduction

This write-up deals on the religion and leadership in nation-building. Thus, religion specifically x-rays the role religion play in nation-building. Since nation-building, however, opines “the calls for value orientation of the citizens about their nation” as stated by Ezegbo (1992). Value orientation will teach the citizen to realize the need for honest, honour, hard work and co-operation. Value orientation trains people to be effective leaders and good followers. For Spancer (1979), nation-building involves “changing the attitude of the citizens' form traditionalism to nationalism, patriotism and modernity”. Ikwumelu (1993) maintains that nation-building is a phenomenon interview with modernization. According to Durrmat (1970) “our science and technology has become a threat, our research- dangerous, our knowledge –fatal, physicist must capitulate before reality. It cannot resist us, we destroy it. It is against this background that religion emerged when the sciences and technology (modernity) had leapt forward and threatened to over-power human thoughts. On the other hand, leadership is an important ingredient for administrative effectiveness at all level in Nigeria for effective growing of nation building and productivity. Leadership behavior has been found to be positively neglected to such organizational characteristics, as the moral and group performance. So, religion and leadership contribute immensely to nation-building

The concept of religion

Religion, a belief that God (supernatural) made the world and control it resisted this one sidedness and over-specialization of sciences. Once the sciences and their adjunct technologies had jumped out of the unit-coloured fabric, religion helped in developing and fashioning their own domain towards God.

Religion is constantly and consistently playing that role according to Nwankiti (1983)

There is a limit beyond which knowledge cannot be verified and here we need religion (God) as a tool to break through the unknown. Science requires the powerful and critical force of religion to prevent any scientific imbalance as such it requires the aid of literature and art to carry its conclusions to their destinations.

No wonder, Kopher as reported by Ihekweazu (1992) observed that:

I thank you Lord, our Creator for allowing me to see the beauty of your creation and rejoice with the work of your hands. See, I have completed the studies to which I was called. I have used the talent you gave me to show mankind the beauty of your creation.

In the recent years, it has been more clearly recognized that modern science could have evolved only within the context of the Christian world view, with its teaching about God of order and of rationality, who created world was under the rule, not of chance, but of regular law. No wonder, Richardson (1972) reiterated that it was in Christendom, not in any other of the world's great civilization that modern scientific method was evolved.

It is expedient to note that despite the fact that the world is masquerading in scientific dress, yet it cannot make pronouncement upon the validity of religion or theological statements,. Religion is in the service of man; religion exists because it performs important functions for man and his society.

Writing in the importance of religion to the believers, Lewis (1966) Stated that “a living faith serves to integrate the individual behavior in society, to give him confidence in meeting the crisis which life inescapable brings, and to introduce into his existence a stable central core in the basis for ethics “. It enters into everything an individual does, every judgment he makes and every point of view he develops. In the primal societies, religion was functional and natural. In the traditional setting, the worshipper of the ancestral gods look to his religion to protect him from sickness, from disease and rain, an abundant harvest, sufficiency of wives and children, and victory over his service.

Thus, Firth (1952) has this to say, “it is obvious that religion is one of the great driving forces in human activity, both individually and socially”. In a similar development Abendei (1997) has this to say about the role of religion. “Religion is very important in human society, it provides meaning for life, and answers the most fundamental questions regarding life, death and life hereafter. It confesses sacred values on people, social laws and institutions, a cohesive and integrative element in society and above all, consoles man in crisis situations.

Moreover, religion has produced religious leader in some communities who stand firm in the era of diverse philosophy of science and technology and remain sacrosanct, refusing to countenance their claims at all. It is the idea of the sacred or holy that worship and veneration. The relationship between God and man is further reflected on man's relationship to his fellows in human society.

However, the power of religion to perform its function in any society depends on the type of society and the place of religion in it. A society cannot continue to be religious which the individuals who compose it are irreligious. Also religion is handicapped where there is no freedom of workshop or where the state is anti-religious nation like Nigeria.

The Contribution of Islamic Religion in Nation-Building

Sultan of Sokoto is the Religion overlord leader of the Hausa-Muslim, he had an agreement with the colonial master and joined force with them to bring so many development in nation, it was this religion that brought intellectual development such as arts and crafts, aside music, it lays emphasis on memorization of chapters of their Koran which they introduce in Nigerian Education. The advance of studies focus student in specialized area. These gave rise to the development of the intellect Muslims contributed a lot to the development of science and mathematics; in Physics for example, they invented the pendulum and advanced the world' knowledge of optics. In Chemistry, they discovered many new substances like potash, silver nitrate, tetra oxosulphate 6 Acid (H₂SO₄), which is very useful in this time.

They also contributed in the medical field, the Muslims were the earliest in the study of physiology and hygiene at a time when Christian European still believe in magic and mysticism, Muslim had advanced far in the scientific pharmacy, they invented castor oil for embalming the dead, which is still in existence today.

Muslims established the earliest centers of higher learning located at Salamanca and Baara in the East; here art and science excelled and served as a model for European Universities. Islamic scholars helped to bring back the ancient Greece and Rome to Western world. It has been said that Western European rediscovered

Aristotle through the effort of Arab Muslims. All these contributions help in moving the nation forward.

The contributions of Christian religion in nation-building

Christian contributed immensely in the development of the nation, especially in the aspect of spiritual upliftment. We have so many leaders in this field like Rev. Father, Sisters/Brothers, Pope, Canon, Pastors etc. they all have their own part to play in the nation-building. They are the leaders who make a remarkable change in our nation today. These religious leaders unite people together, elevate people's mind to God, that alternate being whom man in society depends, they help in binding people together irrespective of race, ethnic affliction giving them strong social solidarity and obligation. It also create forum and the experience of oneness in transendent, through series of worship or ritual, the leaders help through religion to give people comfort in time of distress, economic crisis in time of agony probably sickness.

In our nation today, there are crisis here and there in the family, between man and his fellow man, and between religious groups, the leaders in the religion help in social communication, People meet together for a common purpose-to understand one another, communicate ideas, share feelings together and help one another without minding where they come from.

In summary, any nation that does not have a good leader, not just a leader but religious leader is like a stagnant water that does not move forward or backward, everything about that society will be stagnant, that is why it is necessary for any nation to encourage a good leadership in any organization so as to move the organization forward. We have seen from the above discussion that contributions of religion to the development and building of our nation both in medicine, spiritual upliftment, agriculture, education and so on, which are the reasons why our country or nation has come to this extent of development we are now.

Overview of the leadership

Leadership is a universal concept, and one of the most talked about issues in different areas of man's life. However, it is also of the most misunderstood phenomenon on earth. There are diverse viewpoints surrounding its meaning. Some people think of it as the power to manipulate or control others. Others see it as inborn talent and a skill that can be learned by following few guidelines or the key to group success.

In every organization or establishment, there are often people who are in the forefront of the groups' activities. They are usually responsible for directing the business or programmes of the organization. Without them coordinating and

implementing group's activities, thereby making attainment of the group's goals and objectives up till-tasks. Leadership therefore gives any group or organization a sense of direction. Consequently, the position of leadership is crucial to business survival to the extent that it does not only define strategies and overall direction, but also the mission of an enterprise.

Meaning of Leadership

Contrary to popular belief that leadership is simply the first biggest and most powerful; leadership has different meanings and more meaningful definitions. It has been defined differently by many scholars and practitioners. Stogdill (1974) acknowledged that there are many definitions of leadership and there are researchers who have cared to define it. According to him, there are eleven perspectives of leadership. Suffice it to say that “the more any definition embrace the above perspective, the more comprehensive it is. However, there are some scholars and practitioners whose definitions of leadership is appropriate for this discourse.

Yuki (1987) defines leadership as “the process by which a person exerts influence over other people and inspires. Motivate and directs their activities to help achieve group or organizational goals”. Rue and Byars (1997) defines leadership as “the ability to influence people to willingly follow one's decision.” Lucey (1991) saw it as “the ability to influence the behavior of others within a working group for the achievement of the group's tasks and objectives.”

Thus, Cole (1993) also describes leadership as “a dynamic process in a group whereby one individual influences the others to contribute voluntarily to the achievement of group task in a given situation.

The contribution of leadership in nation-building

Three issues naturally stand out as major contributions of leadership in nation-building. They include:

- 1) Leadership is Principally a Function of Influence: That leadership is not ultimately a matter of power, position or pleasure. It is a matter of influence. Influence affects people and events. It conveys the idea of something flowing from one body to another in the way that the outcome of the second. A good leader must realize that to be effective or successful, his life must flow in the lives of others. Without influence, it is impossible to lead any group no matter the size or composition.
- 2) Leadership deals with the Followership: It takes followers, to have leaders. There are no followers; there will be no leaders. This is because a leader leads people and not himself. A leader achieves his goal through

his subordinates. A leader who fails to influence his followers effectively will find it difficult achieving organizational goals.

- 3) Leadership Determines Outcome: The extent of attainment of organizational goals is greatly dependent on the quality of leadership that exists therein. Good leadership involves releasing the energies of other people towards accomplishing organizational goals. To this end, effective leadership helps in the accomplishment of group tasks or goals.

Theory of the Nation-Building

There is no single definition of nation-building. Nevertheless, from the theoretical viewpoint, it may be defined as a process of encouraging people with diverse beliefs, different social-political opinions, varied cultural values and orientation values to agree to live together as member of one nation which is economically viable, political stable and culturally homogenous. Ikemuelu (1993) describes nation-building as “a phenomenon interwoven with modernization.” For Spancer (1979), nation-building involves “changing the attitude of the citizens from traditionalism to nationalism, patriotism to modernity.” Nation-building is a difficult task whose magnitude only a few can realize.

Ezeanya (1980) maintains that the building of people that made up the nations precedes the building of the nation that contains the people. He means that nation-building starts with the development of the people who compose the nation. The nation cannot exist if the individual that form the nation are not first develop in their hearts, minds, and deeds. However, Ezege (1992) opines that “nation-building calls for orientation of the citizens to realize the need for honesty, hard work and co-operation. Value orientation trains people to be effective leaders and good followers. It helps people of a diverse nation to appreciate their differences and need to live together as one people.

Recommendation

In this study on the religion and leadership in nation-building the researchers wished to make the following recommendation as follows:

- 1) Religion should be alive and sensitive to its roles in the nation-building.
- 2) Religion should be seen as the vehicle that drives us to God, and it is absolute in the society.
- 3) Leadership behavior should be positively related to such organizational characteristics as moral and group performance.
- 4) Leaders should show example to their followers.
- 5) Religion and leadership should be seen as twin babies in nation-building.

Conclusion

Let us admit at this junction that this paper is not and cannot be exhaustive of the feature of religion and leadership in nation-building. The features that are mentioned in this paper are however, enough to make a good reading on the subject. The conclusion that can be drawn, therefore, is that the modern man is easily fascinated by the modern world while oblivious of the great dangers it portends to his life. By and large, what has been said is that man must allow religion to guide his activities in life whether the age is primitive or modern (nation-building). In fact, religion and leadership should be considered a paramount issue in the nation-building.

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