

REACTIVATING NIGERIAN NORMS AND VALUES THROUGH RELIGIOUS STUDIES FOR NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Faith Nkem Okobia, Mary I. Okafor & Justinia N. Osajie

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/og.v12i1.s1.10>

Abstract

Reactivating Nigerian norms and values are essential ingredients in the transformation of the nation, because it is a missing link that is breeding moral decadence in the society. Therefore religious education which inculcates good moral values such as honesty, fidelity to one's duty, love for one's neighbour and self-discipline should be given a prominent position in the schools. Moral decadence is a pervasive evil that poses great challenge to Nigerians. It is also a national problem with certain destructive tendencies, hence the need for the entrenchment of moral values to salvage the nation from decay. Societal norms and values play important roles in the social lives of individuals and society at large. This is because they deal with values, behaviours and attitudes exhibited and encouraged by members of the society. Thus Religious Education is essential for activating Nigerian moral values in order to infuse sanity into the fast decaying Nigerian's value system. Morality is an integral part of societal progress and transformation. It is also the life wire of any successful society. In fact a society that is experiencing moral decadence is not only being inactive but indeed sick. The knowledge gotten from religious education will enable one to conform to the societal norms and values, so that he will not be a social deviant. This paper therefore examines the concept of reactivating Nigerian norms and values through religious education for national transformation. A number of recommendations are made which include the inclusion of religious education at all levels of Education and students should be taught the Nigerian norms and values and encourage them to conform to it to avoid being sanctioned or labeled social deviants.

Introduction

The Nigerian norms and values are not human invention or product of society but the fruit of religion. They exist as a result of the sanctions and demands of God, divinities or deities and the Nigerian values are essential components of our socio-cultural system. Nigeria is experiencing moral decadence as a result of negligence of religious education and Nigerian norms and values, which made society secured and safe. The pre-colonial Nigeria life was heavily influenced by religion because man is naturally a religious being. Almost every aspect of life was seen and interpreted in the supernatural. The belief that God, the ancestors and deities played prominent roles in the maintenance of morality in the community hardly dies. However, it is true that modernity or civilization altered the belief and values of the Nigerians significantly, there is need to reactivate the Nigerian values such as the sacredness of human life, communal living, good human relations, hospitality, religion and the sacred and respect for constituted authority and elders will bring sanity to the nation. The society will immensely benefit if its moral norms and values are intensively promoted. Ubrurhe (2000) posits that, all concerned Nigerians are crying because of the present state of insecurity in the nation. Kidnapping, arm robbery, killing and destruction of property which have made many Nigerians to loss their property and lives. Where norms and values concerning fundamental human rights in both public and private sectors have been violated, the people and government will live in an atmosphere of instability and insecurity which do not promote national transformation. A word or two on the key concepts used in this study may be relevant.

Religion

According to Madu (1996) religion is an institutionalized system of symbols, beliefs, values and practices focused on questions of ultimate meaning. Adogbo (2000) defines religion as a feeling of absolute dependence on the supernatural being.

Religious Studies

According to Nwaorie (2010), Religious Studies is the exploration of the expression of religion in human culture. It explores human idea about the divine, as well as the way religious concepts are expressed

in text, rituals and belief systems. It studies the history of religion as well as important religious figures. It analyses the influence of religion on other aspects of culture, as well as the influence of culture on religion. As an academic discipline religions studies is not limited to a single tradition or religion, it encompasses all religions from all cultures and all time. It is global in scope and multicultural in tenor.

Values

Ubrurhe (2000) defines values as beliefs, standards, ideals about desirable or undesirable behaviour. Values are the most general component of social action. Values are found in every culture. They are necessary for the fostering of group existence, harmony and the promotion of group welfare. Examples of moral values which are core to societal integration and development include honesty, integrity, truth, obedience, loyalty, kindness, purity or chastity. Our goals in life are usually defined in terms of the value system of the society. Omofehinse (2001) posits that, Values may be ideas that propel man's daily actions. In other words, they are the standard which members of the community adhere to in their personal and communal interaction towards the achievement of the goals. It is they that determine those who are to be praised or reprimanded for their actions in another sense, values refer to what is 'good' or 'desired'. Values can be institutional and cherished by individual and by a group of people. Values can refer to the usefulness of a thing which is a function of choice-making. In so far as values are universal, they can be material, spiritual religious, moral, aesthetic, communal or individualistic. Another feature is that values are found in all religions. People's values are largely based upon traditional religious and moral principles that they cling to.

Transformation

Transformation is a complete change in outward appearance of something or somebody (Hornby, 2005). It also means the change of the moral character for better through the renewal of the inner-most nature, Pfeiffes (2005). States that national transformation happens when people managing a system focus on creating a new future that has never existed, based on continual learning and new mindset and apply various methods for its actualization.

Types of Nigeria Norms and Values

According to Ademilokum (1990) norms and values are attributes of the cultural system. Both are part and parcel of the non-material culture of the society. Though values are more abstract and general in nature than norms, both complement one another. In other words where there are identified values, there must also be rules or regulations (norms) guiding their realization. Norms are usually divided into two. This is based on the strength of sanction it carries. The obligatory norms usually have harsh sanctions for their violations. They are referred to as mores. The mores are the “must do” of the society. All members of the society must conform to them or face disapproval and sanctions. Mores are regarded as essentially good for the group survival. Taking another man’s life and incestuous relationship are prohibited in Nigerian society. The second category of norms is referred to as folkways. Folkways do not carry harsh or strong sanctions for their violations. Violations are generally overlooked. Folkways are practices conventionally accepted and deemed appropriate but violations or deviations are not sanctioned or punished. Some values and norms are subject to socio-economic and political changes in the society.

According to Ighovojah and Okumagba (2000), conformity and sanctions are very important to the discussion of norms and values. Though there are always conflicts and consensus in the society, people tend to agree rather than disagree most of the time. To conform means to agree to societal norms and values. If one does fail to conform he is termed a social deviant. Sometimes non-conformists are always labeled as rebels. Most people tend to conform to the societal norms and values because of group pressure and prestige, existence of sanctions and group identification.

Failure to conform brings about social sanctions. A sanction is a societal tool of social control. Social sanctions are important societal tools for the regulation of modes of behaviour. Sanction takes the form of a reaction of a considerable number of members of the group towards another member’s behaviour which is either approved or disapproved. We have both negative and positive sanctions. Negative sanction shows disapproval while positive sanction indicates approval. Behaviours that are positively sanctioned usually go with acceptability, honour, rewards or awards.

Similarly, behaviours that are negatively sanctioned bring about shame, ridicule, ex-communication, fine trial sentences and ostracism, in order to bring about conformity in the society which will enhance peaceful co-existence.

The Roles of Norms and Values to National Transformation

Norms and values are very important to national transformation. Since transformation has to do with change of moral character for better, through the renewal of the inner most nature the norms and values defines the objectives or goals, and the directions or path it should follow. The failure of any society to follow the identified positive norms and values will bring about retrogression in its development. Norms and values have the power of social integration in the society. Both have the force to unite various groups within the society.

The society will immensely benefit if its moral norms and values are intensively promoted. All concerned Nigerians are lamenting about the present state of corruption in the nation. There is wealth without hard work; dishonesty, fraud and cheating. This has actually discouraged many Nigerians from giving their best in service to the nation.

The Link between Religion and Values

Igboin (2011) posits that, in Nigerian traditional belief, God is the explanation of all things. The world was created by him. The Africans therefore believe that the environment is knitted to the presence of God. As Mbiti (1999) states that, God is the explanation of man's origin and sustenance; it is as if God exists for the sake of man. God's agents are charged with the responsibility of maintaining law and order in the society. Thus, both physical and supernatural forces are always present in the administration of the society. Values have to be linked to religion to be meaningful and functional in human society morality cannot stand without religion. In other words, religion is the basis for the meaningfulness and functionality of values. Morality is God-given law. Morality or value in Africa traditional religion is strictly traced to the Supernatural Being. Values in most Nigerian societies cannot be divorced from religion. In Nigeria there are agents of moral implementation such as the ancestors and the deities or gods of the land. They police the

responses of man to the values of the society. They reward the obedient and punish the culprit that is why Adegbola (1993) states that in traditional Nigerian society before; they were no policemen and no need for them because the gods were the policemen.

Ekenife (1990) Posits that African traditional religion “means those institutionalized beliefs and practices of indigenous religion of Africa which are rooted in the past Nigeria religious culture, transmitted to the present generation. through oral traditions by sacred specialists and persons, sacred places and objects and religious work of art, a religion which is slowly but constantly updated by each generation in the light of new experiences. Some objective Western travelers have written that Africans before the coming of the Westerners had “an idea of the true God, and ascribe to Him the attributes of Almighty and Omnipresent; they believe He created the universe, and therefore vastly prefer Him before their idol-gods; but they do not pray to Him or offer sacrifices to Him” (Gyekye 1996). It is this true God that Africans respond to in their daily engagements, upon whom they depend for their moral law through the divinities, spirits and ancestors. All religions imply in one way or another that man does not, and cannot stand alone, that he is virtually related with and even dependent on powers in nature and society external to him. Religion draws men closely to super natural power believed to control nature and the affairs of men.

Megasa (1997) states that Nigeria experience of God is depicted in their various attributes to Him. These attributes are somehow expressed mythically, and metaphorically. In the mythical sense, the Nigerians transmit their experience of God in stories that are held to be sacred. Such stories tell us about the beginning of human race - creation. This leads to the belief in God as the creator of the universe. In the same vein, the moral standard of the Nigerians are also believed to be derived from God. The metaphors attributed to God were such that God could be ‘understood’ from what He is. For instance, God is kind, God is just, etc.

Igboin (2011) avails that, Nigerian religious thought of moral codes is steeped in tradition, which flows from God to the ancestors. The ancestors are the repositories of the tradition. Through the spirits and the priests/medicine men, the morality of the society is maintained. It holds the belief in the ubiquity of the spirits. This is why the spirits are believed to play vital roles in the

implementation and maintenance of morality. For example, Nigerians believed that the spirits punish the culprit that was why a seller would keep his wares on the roadside and designate the price with stones or pebbles. Without being there physically, the buyer would pay exactly the same amount and keep the money there for the owner of the goods. No other person would steal the money because it was believed that the spirits were present. Thus, the belief was strong that the goods, the forests, the road, the money had spirits that could haunt any culprit. This helped a great deal in the maintenance of morality in Nigerian societies (Ejiogu, 2000).

The ancestors, described as the “living dead” or the “revered dead”, are believed to be the moral agents in their immediate families they have physically left behind. They oversee and superintend over the family ethical code. For example, whenever a woman commits adultery, it is believed that the ancestors will expose her by afflicting her with sickness. It is also true when a man commits adultery with a woman in the same ancestral affinity. If a thief steals something he will be afflicted with sickness also. The divinities supervise the activities of their worshippers. The worshippers of any particular divinity are careful in relation with the moral demands of that divinity. Otherwise, offenders would be punished.

The Nigerian society is not made up of human beings alone but the dead and other supernatural forces are essentially parts of the society. These supernatural forces are not, and cannot be, inhibited from coming into, and going out from, the society. They guide man’s activities; they reward the obedient as well as punish the culprits.

Nigerian Values

Sogolo (1993) avails that “Nigerian values may be taken to mean a set of institutionalized ideals which guide and direct the patterns of life of Nigerians. Nigerian values therefore are goal-oriented because they point to a desired goal, which actions are geared towards and upon which the expectation of every individual and community is hinged. Individual actions are mirrored through the approved society’s values upon which the test for justification is based. This makes an action a desired one. The question of moral justification provides us with the notion of ultimate value. The society may or

may not actually or consciously recognize it, yet it is a part of its moral value. According to Igboin (2011) the various Nigerian values are thus:

Sacredness of Human Life

The sacredness of human life is of utmost importance. The respect and dignity accorded human life cannot be over-emphasized. Respect for humanity spreads beyond the confine of nuclear family. Members of extended family, community or tribe are regarded as brothers whose lives must be preserved and protected. In this case, the notion of human value is intrinsically linked with a wide range of brotherhood, which may not be biologically based. The concept of brotherhood in Nigeria goes beyond that of the Western understanding. Therefore, in whatever circumstance, the spirit of brotherhood stimulates patriotic response and disposition of one towards another. Man is valued above every other possession. This informs the reason Nigerians place high premium on children. Nigerian attitude to human life has an ultimate worth because of its intrinsic relation with the creator of life.

Communal Living

Nigerians place high value on communal living. Communal values express the worth and appreciation of the community; the values which guide the social interaction of the people towards a common goal. Interpersonal bonds go beyond biological affinity in expressing the values of communality, Nigerians share mutually; they care for one another, they are interdependent. Whatever happens to one happens to the community as a whole. The joy and sorrow of one extend to other members of the community in profound ways. The willingness to help others for the development of the community is reciprocal. It is within this communality that they are mostly fulfilled. This is beautifully expressed by Mbiti (1999) when he states that: "I am because we are. And since we are therefore, I am." This is opposed to the Western rugged individualism, which has unfortunately threatened the very root of Nigerian communalism through colonial contact. Individualistic values are linked closely with communal values. Nigerians have and also appreciate personal will and identity. The communal values that guide the social life of the individual members of the community appear to all that matters.

But when one takes an intent look at the people, one discovers that there are individualistic values. Both communal and individualistic values co-exist perfectly together. They may sometimes clash, but the communal values are the superintending ones in adjudication. In spite of this, individualistic values of the persons in the community are not consciously trampled upon. They are respected just like the communal (Gyekye, 1996).

Moral Values

Igboin (2011) posits that, moral values are intrinsically social, which arise from interdependent relationship. Morality is crucial to the proper functioning of the community. It is central to the orderly nature of the community. We have said earlier that morality in African traditional religion is derived from supernatural powers. It is only through this basis that one can justify the Nigerian moral code. The total well-being and welfare of the community are essentially important to the moral values. Thus, responsibility, kindness, honesty, hospitality, accommodation, generosity, compassion, faithfulness, fruitfulness, love, dignity, diligence, etc., are all considered to be moral values. This forms the bedrock of social value which abhors ethical egotism. Ethical egotism in its conceptual meaning holds that everybody is to pursue to his own welfare and interest. This gives rise to selfishness.

Value for Family

In Nigeria the value of the family cannot be over-emphasized. It is the primary unit of the social life of the community. Its forms the unity of the community. As fundamental as the family is, it has social and moral values. The nuclear family functions within the extended family. Interestingly children have their rights and obligations towards their parents, just as the parents towards the children. The husband has his duties and privileges as the head of the family just as the wife, towards her husband. In this unit, marriage becomes the basic institution for the establishment of a family. Marriage as part of rites of passage has its social and moral code in various societies that make it worth the name. For a woman to be found a virgin carries a high value and dignity that attracts respect and honour to her parents. To bear children is very important because of the socio-religious implications. Divorce had no place

except as an excruciating last resort. Even today, traditional Nigerians still view divorce as obstructing the solidarity, mutuality, love, care, togetherness, cohesion, nourishment, fellowship and continuity of the family (Gyekye, 1996)

Hard Work

Igboin (2011) states that hard work is highly appreciated by Nigerians. Even the indolent also acknowledges that hard work is a value that engenders positive influence in the family and communal circles. A Nigerian who is hard working makes persistent efforts regardless of failures and setbacks. In fact, those who were not industrious became the initial victims of slave trade. The hard-working people of Nigeria were almost the last in receiving Western education at the inception of Christian missions and colonialism. Parents only sent their lazy children to school while the hardworking ones were doing the family job. The value of hard work is appreciated at worksites with proverbs, songs and praise names. Work is regarded as the cure for poverty. Poverty or failure is an orphan while success has many fathers and a long genealogy. Nobody wants to associate with lazy people, and many of them cannot even get married or perform the required social responsibility demanded by the family and community. Nigerians believed that wealth comes from hard work. Anyone who possessed wealth he could not account for was viewed with suspicion. The community scorned at such a person. The value of wealth is linked with accountability and transparency. The people also believe that one cannot be poor for being hard working unless there were extraneous reasons.

Good Human Relations

Okafor (1998) asserts that, life in the Nigerian community is based on the philosophy of live-and-let-live. According to Onwubiko, (1999) “Inter-community relationship realized in the interaction between individuals of different communities is different from the intra-community relationship based on interpersonal relationship realized in a definite community, among its members, to express the practical traditional Nigerian concept of humane living”. Chiekalfemesia (1997) states that Humane Living among Nigerian people as a concept which is defined as “...a way of life

emphatically centred upon human interests and values; a mode of living evidently characterized by empathy, and by consideration and compassion for human beings”’.

Relationship between individuals recognizes their worth as human beings and not only what they possess or what can they do for each other. However, these can come as secondary considerations, in terms of reciprocity and in terms of inter-personal relationship. People help one another without demanding immediate or an exact equivalent remuneration. Everyone is mindful that each person has something to contribute to his welfare, some time and somehow.

A good human relationship based on inter-personal communication has always been emphasized in the Nigerian Community. Onwubiko, (1999) posits that Westerners have in many occasions been surprised at the capacity we have for talking to each other not for the sake of arriving at a particular conclusion but merely to enjoy the communication for its own sake. Intimacy is a term not exclusive for particular friends but applying to a whole group of people who find themselves together whether through work or residential but the discussions must respect individuals’ sentiments, hence conversations that may cause misgivings are avoided. Hence, in Nigerian community, everyone is accommodated, This Nigerian sense of accommodation accounts for why, “In traditional Nigeria culture, the weak and the aged; the incurable, the helpless, the sick were affectionately taken care of in the comforting family atmosphere” The “comforting family atmosphere” is provided by the extended family system. It is a system that ultimately rested and still rests on the philosophy of “live-and-let-live”, otherwise known as “the eagle-and-kit’ principle. It is a principle which defined rights and duties, responsibilities and obligations towards the less fortunate, those incapacitated in one way or another”. For instance, a man obliged to cater for the widow and orphans of his dead relatives. Failure to do so this earns him strong public criticism and as a result, it is difficult to find someone in the community without help. Therefore no beggars existed.

Religion and the Sacred

Mbiti (1999) asserts that in traditional Nigerian societies there were no atheists. This is because religion, in the indigenous Nigerian

culture, was not an independent institution. It is an integral and inseparable part of the entire culture. Religion in the African sense was practical. One's entire action is reflective of one's religious concepts and practices as is seen in the ordering of society. This is because social morality is derived from religion, because morality is certainly the fruit of religion. They do not make any attempt to separate the two; and it is impossible, for them to do so without disastrous consequences".

The traditional Nigerian culture fashions moral, religious and philosophical attitudes to life. All were interrelated in reality. The result of inseparability of religion from morality was that: the traditional Nigeria society was far from being an abode of laissez-faire morality. There were strict moral principles and determined code of conduct. Custom laid down the code of law which established the nature of right-doings and custom established penalties and taboos against malefactors. Moral sanctions were mainly religious sanctions, and these metaphysical sanctions were truly effective". The sense of respect and the idea of the sacred filled the Nigerian as he approached religious elements and matters. It has been observed that the traditional Nigerians do not know how to live without religion.

Respect for Old Age

Traditional Nigerians generally have deep and ingrained respect for old age, and even when we can find nothing to admire in an old man, we will not easily forget that his grey hairs have earned him right to courtesy and politeness". Though it is natural for the Nigerian to respect, an elder, this respect in some cases, can be relative to what "we can find" and admire in an elder. Respect for elders starts within one's immediate family. Parents have dignity and respect and the elders in Nigeria are respected for many reasons, because they are believed to be the teachers and directors of the young. Among the Efik, it is said: "The words of one's elders are greater than amulets", it means that they give more protection than the amulet does. In the same way, the Igbo say: He who listens to an elder is like one who consults an oracle. The oracles are believed to give the infallible truths, thus the elders are also believed to say the truth and their words and instructions are heeded to for the promotion of good behaviour among the young. Furthermore, the elders are taken to be

the repository of communal wisdom and therefore they are conceded leadership in the affairs of the people. One of the reasons for this is the nearness of the elders to the ancestors. And in the Nigerian concept, of Legitimate power lay in the office sanctioned by ancestral norms, not in the person; and the person lost his right to exact obedience once he abused that office". But the elders themselves respect authority and hardly abuse it, and often are committed to the demands of their office.

The respect given to the elders has its practical effect in the maintenance of custom and tradition. The young are always looking forward to being elders and they are often told that if a child respects an elder, he would be respected by the young when he becomes an elder. The care of the aged, as a Nigerian institution, is situated within the family. It is so cherished and so organized that there is no need, for nursing homes for the aged as exist today in Europe and America. The idea of old people's home and its introduction into Nigeria would lead to the abuse of respect for old age.

The Effects of Moral Decadence on Nigeria Society

Igboin (2011) posits that the decline of moral value is catastrophic. The society is moving toward sexual norms that give freedom for individual sexual gratification and individual self-expression. This has led to the prevalence of children in giving birth to children syndrome, which is pervading our society. Dignity of labour as a cherished value has been infested with corrupt virus of quick way to success. The success highway code does not include hard-work anymore for most people. This accounts for the thriving illegal but smart business called 419. Academic laurels among students have gone to stock exchange. Just as we now have organized crime, a more sophisticated organized examination, which in the slang is called "ECOMOG exams", is taking over the educational system. Miracle Centre Syndrome (MOS) where candidates pay exorbitantly to people who help them write their examinations is eroding the value of study. Certificate forgery and racketeering is no more viewed with serious disapproval because it is almost becoming a part of acceptable norm. The government too is not free from the agents at erosion of our values. Insincerity, dishonesty, unfaithfulness, cheat, corruption, bribery, favoritism, irresponsibility, irresponsiveness, pen-robbery, embezzlement, harassment,

organized crime and gambling, deceit, lies, exploitation, etc. have characterised the activities of the government. The list is endless.

The deterioration of values is so pervading that Ewelu (1999) states that “in Nigeria, a blind person can be given a driving license if he is able to put on table the “required amount”. Igboin (2011) also states that the devaluation of our value is so much that new values have been adopted and canonized. Dishonesty and cheating, fraud and getting away with it have now replaced ancestral moral uprightness and probity. Logic and legal smartness have banished truth and integrity from traditional values to the archives. Getting rich overnight without working for it has become the new criterion for achievement. Hence some youths resort to arm robbery and kidnapping. Nobody wants to be honest anymore simply because honesty “does not pay”. Honesty has no cash value”.

The Way Forward

Nigerians image has been marred due moral decadence which has become rampant in the society. It has become a way of life which is exhibited in various capacities by Nigerians. Hence, it should be terminated through reactivation of Nigerian norms and values which will bring about national transformation. To achieve this, religious education should be entrenched in schools. Moral value is an integral part of societal development and progress. Therefore, a moral decay nation is in all ramifications handicapped in all aspects of human development.

Omorogbe (1993) asserts that the moral sickness of a society is the moral sickness of the individual members of the society and the cure has to start from the individual members. Certainly, morality is the life wire of any successful society. Thus, a society that is faced with the problem of moral decadence is not only being inactive but indeed sick. It is against this background that the school system should renew its efforts in handling value regeneration with all sense of commitment.

Religious education exposes students to the norms, customs, values, skills and interrelationship that exist in the society, making social awareness possible when students are rightly directed and guided. Okwueze (2003) opines that morality can also be seen as a form of social consciousness in which one relates to another in the society. The development of moral values in any society is an

attempt to map out life pattern to be followed. Indeed reactivation of moral values through religious education will bring transformation in the entire society. This is because education is a moral endeavour in which the role of the teachers is to create a just and caring environment. The religious teachers should be ready to reactivate the Nigerian moral values by possessing the knowledge, desire, skills, fortitude and moral competence to do so. So that they will be able to help students to develop their moral values religious education can contribute to the transformation that the present government and the people of Nigeria desperately desire because it fosters love, nobility, high ideals, responsibility, kindness and respect for others. More so, Religious Education produces transparent, accountable, hardworking and honest people who shun corruption in public and private sectors. It also propels people to be committed to their duties.

If the character of students in the institutions of learning is transformed, they will impact positively in the nation. A morally conscious individual thinks and acts better and is amendable to the dictates of conscience. Adewole (1990) states that an individual who increases consciousness of himself as a person with the awareness of the needs, problems and aspiration of others is an agent of progress in his society. Individuals serve as mirror through which the moral value of the society can be determined. Religious Education makes a good citizen and creates in him the awareness of his rights and duties in the society. The reactivation of Nigerian values would produce emancipated individuals who can best further the interests of the people and are prepared to champion the collective will of the people.

Conclusion

From the discourse so far, it has been revealed that moral decadence in Nigeria is as a result of negligence of Nigerian norms and values. For effective national transformation, religious education should be accorded a prominent status in the schools. The paper states the potentiality of religious education to play some roles in national transformation. Religious education helps in disciplining the mind, life and character of individuals including the youths. Every player in the education sector should therefore be available to promote the teaching of moral values through religious education. This is

because when the society gives the people proper moral values their minds will be fine-tuned to achieve national objectives.

Therefore, Religious Education is the only tool that will reactivate the Nigerian values because the separation of moral values from religion made the Nigerians to be exposed to ideas which are contrary to their traditional norms and values, also the separation of moral values from the supernatural agents made things to fall apart and this has affected every aspect of human life from spiritual to physical. Our societal norms and values constitute the frame works for the sanity of our society. Megasa (1997) posits that the revitalization of Nigerian moral values is inevitable because no sane society chooses to build its future on foreign culture, values and systems. Therefore Nigerian society is obliged to search deep in to its own history, culture religion and morality in order to discover the values upon which its development, transformation liberation, civilization and identity should be based, in order to bring sanity to Nigerian society and enhance national transformation.

Recommendations

The paper recommends that:

1. To teach moral values in the school, religious education should be included in the school curriculum. In addition, parents should conform to societal norms and values so that they will inculcate Nigerian moral values to their children
2. Religious education teachers should be aware of the societal norms and values, teach students the norms and values, and encourage them to conform to it, so that they will not be social deviants.
3. The social deviants who have corruptibly enriched themselves should not be given primary place of recognition and respect in the society.
4. Honesty, faithfulness and hard work should be rewarded greatly in the society. All men of honest reports who profess practical fear of God by conforming to the norms and values of the society should be encouraged to serve the nation in positions of higher responsibilities.
5. Schools should establish religious clubs which can serve as a good medium for religious and moral teaching.

6. Government should lay more emphasis on religious education by making it a compulsory subject in nursery, primary and secondary schools and a General Study (GST) course in tertiary institutions. So that everybody will undergo the training.
7. The Government, the community leaders and the school authority should sanction or punish the non-conformist or the social deviants to serve as a deterrent to others.

References

- Admilokum, M.K. (1990). *Moral Values among the Yorubas*. Ibadan: New Era.
- Adogbo, M.P. (2000). *Contemporary Essays in the Study of Religions*. Lagos: Fairs and Exhibitions.
- Della, S. (2003). *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English England: Norhaven Paperback*.
- Deming, W.E. (1993). *The New Economics*. Cambridge: MIT.
- Ekwenife, A.N.O. (1990). *Consecration in Igbo Traditional Religion*. Enugu: SNAAP.
- Gyekye, K. (1996). *African Cultural Values: An Introduction*. Accra: Sankofa.
- Igboin, B.O. (2011). Colonialism and African Cultural Values. *African Journal of History and Culture*, 3 (6), pp. 96 – 103.
- Ighovojah, P. & Okumagba P.O. (2000). "Nigerian Norms and Values" In Uweru B.C. and Ubrurhe J.O. (Eds) *Nigerian People and Culture*. Warri: Foresight.
- Magesa, L. (1997). *African Religion: The Moral Traditions of Abundant Life*. Nairobi: Paulines.
- Mbiti, J.S. (1969). *African Religions and Philosophy*. London: Macmillan.
- Nwaorie, A.I. (2000). *Religion and Moral Education*. Benin-City: New Age.
- Okafor, F.C. (1998). *Africa at Crossroads*. Lagos: Bright Star.
- Omotehinse, J.K. (2001). *Ethics of Virtue and Vice*. Ibadan: Ben-El Books.
- Onwubiko, O. (1998). *The Essentials of Nigerian Culture*. Enugu: Newlife.
- Sogolo, G. (1993). *Foundations of African Philosophy: A Definitive Analysis of Conceptual Issues in African Twilight*. Ibadan: Ibadan Uni.
- Ubrurhe, J.O. (2000). *Nigeria Peoples and Culture Warri: Foresight*.