

## **RELIGIONS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN NATION BUILDING**

**Agunwa Teresina V. C**

**Department of Christian Religious Studies  
Nwafor Orizu College of Education,  
Nsugbe**

### ***Abstract***

*This paper starts by recognizing the importance of Religion as bedrock of moral living in building the nation as well as the major role played by Religion and Economics toward nation building. It also looks at the definition of the concept "Religion and Economics". And as well go further to stress the value of Region and Economics towards the development of any nation, and finally, suggestion on what to do in order to improve the role of Religion and Economics for the betterment of the nation. It also discuss Human being as an interacting being with others in the society which can be seen as the way in which man relate well with other fellow human being and his community in order to see the smooth running of the community or nation.*

### **Introduction**

The study of Religious and Economics development in Nation building is an interesting topic to write on, because it does not only treats the meaning of the concept "Religion and Economics", but it also reviews the importance and major roles played by economics and Religion towards building our nation.

Looking at the concept Religion, it is one of the recognized factors that can enhance or destabilize the security of any nation at any given period of history. Religious valued systems play a very

significant role in collective self-awareness and identity, which draw together individuals. Families are religions and pull them towards greater self-consciousness needed to build and animate a nation from within. Religion can be manipulated as an instrument of distinction and disintegration, which threatens the peace, stability and security of a nation.

Also Economic development is also recognized as one of the major factor that gears the idea of nation building, because it is the process of increasing real per-capita income and engineering substantial positive transformations in the various sectors of the economy. The positive changes which take place improve in various areas of economic activities of a given country or nation.

### **Definitions**

Human beings interact with others in the society and this brings us to the concept of social animal which can be seen as how man relates well with other fellow human beings and his community. In order to see the smooth running of the community, it could mean scientific study of human social behavior and it concerns all group activities, economic, social, political and religious.

### **Religion**

Many scholars have in one way or the other given their views on the religious and economic situation of our contemporary society. For example, Harris and Judith (1968:15) see religion as a system of

though, feelings and action that is shared by group and that gives the members of that group an object of devotion, code of an behavior by which an individual may judge the personal kind, social consequence of his action frame of reference by which an individual may relate himself to his group and his universe". Modern scholars have frequently argued that religion is derived from magic. But magic is a man centered business and seeks to control the actions of the sacred in the interest of man. Religion on the contrary, is mainly God-centered and aims at bringing the human element under the control of the sacred. Nevertheless, religion is often intertwined with magic and is seldom entirely pure. Brien (2001) defines religion as "the whole complex of attitudes, convictions emotions, gestures rituals, beliefs and institutions by which we came to terms with and express, our most fundamental relationship with reality (God and the created order". Religion regulates the lives of an individual in the society, thereby making the society good for harmonious living.

**Economic:** Economics as a principle connotes several meaning depending on people's conception of the concept "economic", Economics according to Lionel Robbins, he defines economics as the science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means which have alternative uses. Economic situation of a place varies from time to time sometimes good and sometimes bad. Economics limits itself to the material aspect of human endeavor. It looks into how to satisfy as much as possible the

needs of man out of the scarce resource of money, food and production. This shows the essence of market which is the only place where produced goods can be sold or exchanged either through trade by barter or with money.

According to Ilogu (1974:74) he says that in the olden days that the Igbo people traded by barter (exchange of goods), this type of trade is not favorable because in most cases the person who may want to exchange with you may not have the exact thing you need for exchange. In order to overcome this difficulty, there is an introduction of cowries which is equivalent to our recent exchange for commodities. Igbo traditional society knows only of subsistence economy and trade by barter. Self-supporting family limits do farm work on land sometimes commonly owned and sometimes on privately owned land. They alternate this farm work with the making of crafts of house hold necessities such as baskets, brooms, hand fans which are sometimes marked. Some people indulge in hunting of animals. In some places, this hunting is being done in group, all these helps in supporting a family's or nations economic situation. For one or a town or nation to have a prosperous economy, there must be an act of saving which will help her to solve unforeseen problems. Furthermore, Nation building as it applies have discusses the efforts of the various African groups since the end of colonial rule to build their respective nations. The virtue of self-denial is developed by such co-operation which involves all the community. The man without money or property can offer willingly his time, labour and skill without any charge because it is expected

of *everyone* to cooperate with whatever resources he has. One who has sent all his earnings in the days of money income to educate relatives, does not expect any special "thank you" for; after all, he has done no more than his routine community duty.

### **The Role of Religion in Nation Building**

Religion has been an exchangeable spring of artistic expressions; this can be seen in the production of idols and icons of every emery. Religion is continually brought to recognize the undeniable "divinity" of artistic achievement. Mass religion is frequently and directly dependent on artistic device for the required potency of its effects since it inclined to make concessions to needs of the masses.

Religion as a-tool to nation building plays the following roles:

- a) It serves as societal integration.
- b) It serves as social control.
- c) It acts as shock absorber in reducing the forces of societal crises.
- d) It also acts as bedrock of moral living because is seen as the power on each that can form man to virtue. Through religion we can inculcate in individual virtual virtues like: obedience, humility, meekness, love for one's neighbor, forgiveness of injuries and resignation to God's will,

Religion gives food for spiritual hunger. In many religions of the world, it is recognized that people have both physical and spiritual parts. It is only religion which nourishes the spiritual part of man and physical side.

Finally Religion is also a means of communication, in the sense that it helps people to communicate in two directions -horizontally and vertically. There is social communication. People meet together for a common purpose, for instance; to pray together, to perform a ritual together, and to worship together. From the above point, we can now agree that religion play a vital role towards nation development.

### **Justice**

Any nation which wants to develop believes in the power of justice which in its nature is believed to involve transparent, honesty, innocence and fair play, the rain like justice may seem weak but it is capable of leaving its mark on the hard ground. So can a man who observes justice succeeds in the difficult job of pursuing life. An over-used proverb among the Igbo is "Egbe bere, ugo bere, Nke si ibe ya ebela, nku akwapu ya". This shows that greed, jealousy, destruction of other people's chances for making success of life and lack of the spirit of give and take by which the community could live harmoniously and grow are greatly depreciated by the Igbo.

### **The Role of Economic Development in Nation Building**

Economic as a concept contributes a lot towards building a nation, in the sense that it pave way towards citizenship education, not only that, other major roles are included like.

1. Inculcating in an individual the spirit of how to use scarce resources to stratify unlimited wants.
2. It also enables an individual in that country to be self-reliance,

3. When there is economic development, there will be full employment, standard of living will be very high and it will lead to low cost of living.
4. There will be mass literacy
5. It will help to bring an increase in national income and also economies- development will bring about increase per-capital income and increase in social amenities and infrastructure facilities.

We found out that if a particular country or nation meets up with all these points, the nation is already developed and the nation is already built. Apart from the above points on Region, it may also interest us to know that Religion in its various institutional and social forms and manifestations is a human and moral, spiritual and cultural, national and international force to be reckoned with; its claims are both human and divine. Its incarnate nature and foundations gives it an inescapable and essential human dimension. In view of its human character, Religion in the course of human history and in various nations demonstrated itself as the custodian and promoter of human values. Though one may not rightly assert that Religion has always played the role flawlessly, there is however, sufficient historical evidence to justify its claims to it. For example, according to Iwe (1975:29), "it is to be remembered that some Religion like Christianity had a pumfying and humaning impact on the pagan and impenalistic role and violence of the ancient Roman Empire. In this dark age of 8th and 9th centuries, Christianity stood singularly firm in west as the sole symbol of light

and guidance and as the pledge of brighter prospect for the future. There is no doubt that it was Religion that laid the intellectual and ethical foundations likewise the economic development of infant and adolescent Europe. The academics of Rome and Constantinople the monistic of the universities of pzologna, Paris Oxford and Cambridge stand to testify. It would therefore not be a wild claim to say that the culture contribution of Christianity were the historical pre-requisite for the European Renaissance and for the down of the so called age of reason.

Iwe also stated that the advent and progress of industrial revolution did not fine the presence of Christianity entirely wanting. It was the forces of Christianity that insisted that the industrial revolution and its institution should put on a human character and wear a human face". Christianity and some Christian elements stood implacably against the inhuman exploitation of the labour of children and women of the factories. Against thee-nature and consequences of the slave trade of the 19<sup>th</sup> - 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, Christianity registered strong opposition. Christian crusader and missionaries made strenuous and fruitful effort which contributed to the eventual abolition of his hideous national and international commercial crime against humanity. It is a well known fact that our economic resource are in disarray and dormant, especially in the rural areas. Staggering and alarmingly increasing unemployment figures are one of the striking features of our economy. In these economic spheres, there is no doubt that Christian leaders can at least offer some solace and relief. They can summon the people to co-operative



endeavors aimed at pooling their resources to improve their lot. The various Christian communities can help reduce the degree of unemployment by embarking on such projects as farm settlements, cottage industries and similar ventures such measure as these would convince people that Religion realistically appreciates those economic problems which inhibit the realization of personal fulfillment and the good life.

Man is dominated by the making of money, by acquisition as the ultimate purpose of his life. Economic acquisition is no longer subordinated to email needs. Weber (19076:83) says that "this is what we should call the natural relationship, so irrational from a have point of view, is evidently as definitely a leading principle of capitalistic influenced" Also according to Presson (1979:47) Christianity is always in search of an economic coder through which to express itself "It cannot simply say that socialism is the economic expression of Christianity. In so far as socialism is a utopian from each, according to his ability, to each according to his needs, It is an inspiring vision beyond empirical realization and it is as impossible to move from it directly to immediate decisions in the economic order as it is to base them directly on the New Testament concept of the kingdom of God.

### **Conclusion**

In every human society, religion seems to have a tremendous influence on the people. The religion and economy has a great-impairt on development of any nation. No nation can fully stand

without the prior help of religion and economy which is given through teaching of moral, helping the needy and praying for the leaders so as to make peace in the society. This is also got through establishing of industries and investment in human capital development. Religion in its power and sense preaches how the natural mineral or endowment should be shared to every individual for the betterment of the entire nation.

### **Suggestion**

Since Religion(s) are playing a vital role in nation building, Government should endeavour to strengthen and encourage the practice. They will meet-tip with the recent world globalization. In Nigeria as nation (with more than one religions practices, government should avoid discrimination of any laid so that there will be an equilibrium in religious practice all over the nation. Also the Government should try as well to meet up with the requirement that will enable them to attain that level of development, by so doing they will apply source strategies to produce the desired growth related objective and tries to implement policy/decision makers to establish a meaningful "fit" between economic progress, power politics and the good of the good of the society. And as well lack of synergy between political and religious institutions. I therefore, argue for "new partnerships" between states, government religious bodies and international institutions<sup>a</sup> way forward for meaningful economic development in Nigerian and effective nation buildings.

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