FROM THE EDITOR

Insight: Journal of Religious Studies has continued to provide a platform for vibrant academic presentations and discussions. This would not have been possible without our senior academics and colleagues from both the Nigerian and foreign Universities. We are highly encouraged especially by the response, commitment, and contributions of academics from many top rated Universities in Nigeria and beyond. So far, the Journal has traversed the Universities in the three major people groups in Nigeria, namely North, West and East. We have also received contributions beyond Nigeria and West Africa.

In this volume 10, there are nine contributors cutting across six universities, five from Nigeria and one from outside, namely, Bugema University, Uganda. This is the distribution of the contributors: the University of Ibadan has three, two from Babcock University and one each from Adekunle Ajasin University, Ogun State, Adeyemi University of Education, Ondo State and Mcpherson University, Seriki-Sotayo, Ogun State. We are grateful to the authors who have painstakingly presented these propositions that will engage you academically. As you interact with this edition, our intention, among other lofty ideals, is that we all gain some thoughts from these academic contributions as we continue our symbiotic academic relationships in the ivory towers.

I am thankful to all my colleagues in the Religious Studies Department of Babcock University and indeed all the other virtual colleagues around the world for their support in getting out this volume. The Journal is alive because of your contributions and patronage. Do continue to submit your articles on time to enable us subject them to the rich rigors of acceptable peer-review process so as to achieve continual excellence in the field of academics.

Gaius Anonaba Umahi, Ph.D
Editor
Religious Education as a Panacea for Conflict Resolution and Development of the Nigerian Nation

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I. Introduction

Religious Education is the teaching of a particular religion especially when it refers to a secular usage. It also refers to education concerned with religion such as education provided by a church, mosque, traditional religious institution or any religious organization that borders on instruction or issues of doctrines or faith. This paper attempts to explore the meaning of Religious Education and examines how it can be applied to resolve all forms of conflicts in order to attain and enhance the much needed socio-economic development of Nigerian nation. The paper will adopt critical historical method in looking at the real concept of religious education desirable for the realization of development and well-being of Nigeria. The paper concludes by offering suggestions and recommendations on how religious education is considered a panacea for resolving conflicts of all sorts and fostering the socio-economic development of Nigerian nation in all ramifications.

Religious Education has been defined by many scholars to suit the individual's personal religious experiences. Scholars are however beginning to ask whether there is any religion that promotes peace and imbibes in its
Igbalẹ is the shrine of Egúngún.

Niyi Oladeji (1998), Proverbs as Language Sign Posts in Yorùbá Pragmatic Ethics, p. 49


I heard this on “Aditu Programme” presented by Muyiwa Orisatola et al on Living Spring F.M. 104.5 on the 30th of March, 2007 between 10.00 pm and 11.00 pm.


There are different categories of Egúngún that come out during festivals. Some go out with canes, while some dance round.


The story was reported by Taiwo Olanrewaju (2007), in the Sunday Tribune, 14 October, 22

M. A. Makinde (1983), Immortality of the Soul and the Yorùbá Theory of Seven Heavens (Ọrùn Méje), p. 44

Ibid., p. 48

SOCIAL INJUSTICE AND INSECURITY IN NIGERIA:
A DISCOURSE (Hab. 1:1-4).

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I. Introduction

The book of Habakkuk opens with the stern concern and outcry on the prevalence of injustice. Habakkuk has this to say:

How long, O Lord, must I call for help, but you do not listen? Or cry out to you, violence! but you do not save? Why do you make me look at injustice? Why do you tolerate wrong? Destruction and violence are before me There is strife, and conflict abounds. Therefore the law is paralyzed, and Justice never prevails. The wicked hem in the righteous, So that justice is perverted. (1:1-4)

The prophet complains to God of the violence done by the abuse of the sword of justice among his own people and the hardships thereby put upon many good people. Through the prophet, God foretells the punishment of that abuse of power by the sword of war, and the desolations which the army of the Chaldeans should make upon them. Then the prophet complains and is grieved that the Chaldeans prevail so far, so that he scarcely knows which is more to be
lamented, the sin or the punishment of it, for in both many harmless good people greatly suffer.  

In the same vein also is Nigeria situation, Omoregbe rightly observes,

The immorality of citizens of a nation is the greatest hindrance to the development of that nation. A country where egoism rules; where public funds meant for developmental project are diverted into private and selfish goals; where the citizens are bereft of sense of duty, sense of moral responsibility and social accountability. A country where bribery and corruption have become the currency of its social exchange; where law enforcement agents can easily collect bribe from criminals and economic saboteur and set them free; where judges take bribe and acquit the criminal guiltless, while the innocent or victim is denied justice. A country where teachers collect gifts or demand sex from students to award them high grades, while the brilliant ones take second place. A country where businessmen and women import and sell to fellow citizens adulterated and fake products just to make gain can hardly develop. This kind of society places premium on material achievement at the expense of the dignity of human person. It is a society that pursues development from purely a materialistic worldview jettisoning the ethical and spiritual aspects.  

At this juncture, it is of necessity to look at the meaning of the key terms contained in the paper which include:

II. Social Justice

Social justice generally refers to the idea of creating a society or institution that is based on the principles of equality and solidarity, that understands and values human rights, and that recognizes the dignity of every human being. Social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality and involves a greater degree of economic egalitarianism through progressive taxation, or even property redistribution. These policies aim to achieve what developmental economists refer to as more equality of outcome in cases where incidental inequalities appear in a procedurally just system.

The Preamble to the Constitution of the International Labour Organization affirms that "universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice."  

Furthermore, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action treat social justice as a purpose of the human rights education. The term and modern concept of "social justice" was coined by the Jesuit Luigi Taparelli in 1840 based on the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas and given further exposure in 1848 by Antonio Rosmini-Serbati. The word has taken on a very controversial and variable meaning, depending on who is using it. The idea was elaborated by the moral theologian John A. Ryan, who initiated the concept of a living wage. Father Coughlin also used the term in his publications in the 1930s and the 1940s. It is a part of Catholic social teaching, the Protestants' Social Gospel, and is one of the Four Pillars of the Green Party upheld by green parties worldwide. Social justice as a secular concept, distinct from religious teachings, emerged mainly in the late twentieth century influenced primarily by philosopher John Rawls. Some tenets of social justice have been adopted by those on the left of the political spectrum. Agreeing with these definitions, Social Justice can then be said to be a process, not an outcome, which seeks fair redistribution of resources, opportunities, and responsibilities; challenges the roots of oppression and injustice; empowers all people to exercise self-determination and realize their full potential; and builds social solidarity and community capacity for collaborative action.

III. Social Injustice

The terms "Social Justice" and "Social Injustice" are amorphous terms that have no codified meaning in the law. Social injustice is any point at which society at large is letting any kind of oppression go by unlocked, they are things that desperately need to be dealt with for human rights purpose.

Social injustice is a concept relating to the denied unfairness or injustice of a society in its divisions of rewards and burdens and other incidental inequalities. The concept is distinct from those of justice in Law, which may or may not be considered moral in practice, or from the concept of justice within a coherent ideological system, which focuses on just process rather than on incidental inequalities. Social injustice arises when the distribution of advantages and disadvantages in society are not equal. "Social injustice is moral unfairness or inequality in the division of a society's reward or burdens. Differing perceptions of the presence and inevitability of social injustice lie at the root of many of the world's political conflicts. Social injustice is the unfair distribution of resources, opportunities, and responsibilities, oppression of any form and anything that prevents people from exercising self-determination and realizing their full potential.

With different definitions mentioned above, Social injustice simply means when people in the world are treated in inhumane/unfair ways and don't
have the resources (food, clothing, shelter) and opportunities (political freedoms, and work opportunities,) that they should.

The purpose of this work is the act of being unfair or partial to the rule that governs human existence. It can also be said to be ungodly act to Human existence or group of people, even an individual when denied.

IV. Insecurity

Insecurity is the state of being open to danger or threat; lack of protection. It can also mean uncertainty or anxiety about oneself; lack of confidence. These definitions will be appropriate in the context of this work.

V. Cause and Effect of Social Injustice in the Time of Habakkuk

The prophet sadly laments the iniquity of the times, as one sensibly touched with grief for the lamentable decay of religion and righteousness. It is a very melancholic complaint which he here makes to God, that no man could call what he had his own; but, in defiance of the most sacred laws of property and equity, he that had power on his side had what he had a mind to, though he had no right on his side: The land was full of violence, as the old world was (Gen. 6:11). The prophet cries out of violence (Hab.1:2), iniquity and grievance.

In families and among relations, in neighbourhoods and among friends, in commerce and in courts of law, everything was carried out with a high hand, and no man made any scruple of doing wrong to his neighbour, so that he could but make a good hand of it for himself. It does not appear that the prophet himself had any great wrong done him (in losing times it fared best with those that had nothing to lose), but it grieved him to see other people wronged, and he could not but mingle his tears with those of the oppressed. Note, doing wrong to harmless people, as it is an iniquity in itself, so it is a great grievance to all that are concerned for God's Jerusalem, who sigh and cry for abominations of this kind. He complains (Hab.1:4) that the wicked doth compass about the righteous. One honest man, one honest cause, shall have enemies besetting it on every side; many wicked men, in confederacy against it, run it down; nay, one wicked man (for it is singular) with so many various parts of mischief sets upon a righteous man, that he perfectly besets him. This is a lamentation to all the sons of peace: There are that raise up strife and contention (Hab.1:3), that foment divisions, widen breaches, incense men against one another, and sow discord among brethren, by doing the work of him that is the accuser of the brethren. Strives and contensions that have been laid asleep, and begun to be forgotten, they awake, and industriously raise up again, and blow up the sparks that were hidden under the embers.

The torrent of violence and strife ran so strongly as to bid defiance to the restraints and regulations of laws and the administration of justice, (Hab.1:4). Because God did not appear against them, nobody else would; therefore the law is slacked, is silent; it breathes not, its pulse beats not (so, it is said, the word signifies); it intermits, and judgment does not go forth as it should; no cognizance is taken of those crimes, no justice done upon the criminals; nay, wrong judgment proceeds; if appeals be made to the courts of equity, the righteous shall be condemned and the wicked justified, so that the remedy proves the worst disease. The legislative power takes no care to supply the deficiencies of the law for the obviating of those growing threatening mischief; the executive power takes no care to answer the good intentions of the laws that are made; the stream of justice is dried up by violence, and has not its free course. That all this was open and public, and impudently avowed; it was barefaced.

The prophet complains that this iniquity was shown him; he beheld it which way so ever he neither turned his eyes, nor could he look off it: Spoiling and violence are before me. Note, the abounding of wickedness in a nation is a very great eyesore to good people, and, if they did not see it, they could not believe it to be as bad as it is. King Solomon often complains of the vexation of this kind which he saw under the sun; and the prophet would therefore gladly turn hermit, that he might not see it, (Jer.9: 2). But then we must needs go out of the world, which therefore we should long to do, that we may remove to that world where holiness and love reign eternally, and no spoiling and violence shall be before us. That he complained of this to God, but could not obtain a redress of those grievances: "Lord," says he, "why dost thou show me iniquity? Why hast thou cast my lot in a time and place when and where it is to be seen, and why do I continue to sojourn in Mesec and Kedar? I cry to thee of this violence; I cry aloud; I have cried long; but thou wilt not hear, thou wilt not save; thou dost not take vengeance on the oppressors, nor do justice to the oppressed, as if thy arm were shortened or thy ear heavy." When God seems to connive at the wickedness of the wicked, yet, and to countenance it, by suffering them to prosper in their wickedness, it shocks the faith of good men, and proves a sore temptation to them to say, We have cleansed our hearts in vain (Ps.73:13), and harden those in their impiety who say, God has forsaken the earth.
Habakkuk's eyes are firmly on the men and women who profess a belief and commitment to God and who have distorted the way He intend them to live so that their society has descended into a violent and aggressive place where, although there was law, it was not enforced. Having a good law system doesn't mean that the people become righteous with time for law will only work where men and women are willing to respect the decisions of the law and do all that is expected of them.

There can be the most righteous of laws in any society but, unless there's a respect for them, they're as useless as any other group. Lawlessness isn't the abolition of rules and regulations necessarily but it is the overthrow of their importance by the people who should be mindful of them. 

Surprisingly, there are sins which we would have expected as being observed by God's servant which go unmentioned. For example, there is no accusation of murder (Ex 20:13), adultery (Ex 20:14), theft (Ex 20:15) or covetousness (Ex 20:17) - he doesn't note that the Sabbath isn't being observed (Ex 20:8-11), that familial respect has broken down (Ex 20:12) or that the nation has sold itself over to serve foreign gods (Ex 20:3-6).

Instead, the observations the prophet has are traits which are destroying the correct functioning of the legal and judicial system (Hab 1:4), something which we might find puzzling. No doubt that there were transgressions in all the areas spoken against in the ten commandments but, for Habakkuk, the real problem is the nature of men and women because it's this which is nullifying the upholding of the civil law which is based upon the Mosaic law and, therefore, meant to be a reflection of the character and nature of God. 

A growing crime rate misses the point entirely even though it seems to be an attempt to put into present day words what we might think to have been the case. It wasn't that the powers that were in existence were lamenting the growing civil unrest within society and attempting to exert themselves through the legal system but that such transgressions of the law were going largely unpunished and untried because the law was being slackened and perverted (Hab 1:4).

In other words, the law had become nothing more than the tool of those who wanted to make sure that they got their own will done over and above the will of those who were more righteous than they were. These traits that Habakkuk saw, then, amongst the people of Israel were same and similar to the present day Nigeria system of government and the society at large.

VI. Social Injustice in Nigeria Context

One can ask: is there social injustice in Nigeria? Before we find an answer to this important question, let us quickly x-ray some examples of what can be called social injustice in Nigeria, so as to bring it home and make it clearer. This could mean: Police brutality, Genocide, Child Soldiers, Child Suicide bombers, Poverty, Discrimination, Bullying, Child labour, Corruption, Prejudice, Oppression, Racism, Cartelism, Ageism, Sexism, to mention few among others. With the presence of all these, injustice in any society will lead to a state of insecurity.

In an interview, Fasehun states that, insecurity in the country emanated from lack of Social Justice. A country that lacks Social Justice will not have peace. The cradle of national insecurity anywhere has been the absence of Social Justice and we know that social justice is absent in our country. So why should it be peaceful? The level of social injustice currently prevailing in Nigeria is reaching alarming heights and we are beginning to feel the effect in the level of discontent amongst the citizenry as demonstrated by various uprising against the state such as the Boko Haram incidence, the Niger Delta Militancy, OPC and Bakassi vigilantes among others. These social injustices seem are obvious to the common man on the street and has led to a large spectrum of our population to lose faith in Nigeria, if not properly addressed, Nigeria could soon become a failed state.

Under-Policed: When you consider that Nigeria has a population of about 140 million people and a police force of 370,000 policemen it does not take a lot of thinking to come to the conclusion that Nigeria is severely under policed particularly when the United Nation prescribes a ratio of 1 police man per 400 citizens. But the sad aspect of this situation is that even as we are grossly under policed, the federal government tolerates a situation where 100,000 police men are detailed to guard privileged Nigerians who are connected to those in political power circles. So in actual fact there are only 270,000 police men catering to the security demands of a little less than 140 million Nigerians. The question begging to be answered here is of what importance is the security of the average citizen to the government? Stating further,

So when we have 100,000 police men guarding fewer than 100,000 'big men' can we be surprised that our security forces were caught unawares by the Boko Haram incidence? Or should we be surprised that they were caught napping when Atlas cove was attacked? So when we read in the papers that robbers spent three hours robbing a bank...
without any resistance, we should understand that the reason behind this is that our policemen are otherwise engaged in providing security for our 'big men' leading citizens to self-policing as a reaction to the current state of insecurity existing in Nigeria.  

Unproductive System of Government and Poor Worker’s Remuneration

While it is common knowledge that most of us live on less than a dollar a day, we are made to understand that 523 billion naira has been expended on our National Assembly since 1999. In the period between 1999 and now, the National Assembly has passed only 523 laws and this begins to raise questions as to the relevance of the National Assembly to Nigeria given its productivity. But consider that ASUU (Academic Staff Union of Universities) is on strike over poor salary. Now also consider that our Universities graduate over 250,000 graduates every year. When you juxtapose this against the fact that since 1999, our public universities have not seen the type of money that has been committed to our legislature; in a situation where university lecturers that provide such a vital service and are so poorly remunerated while our legislators individually walk away with tens of millions each year even where their productivity is so low? This is even sadder when you consider that the president, vice president, the minister of information and the minister of education (who had a multimillion naira bash while lecturers are in penury) are former lecturers (in the case of the minister of education, he is a former ASUU state chairman). While an average Nigerian worker cannot earn N18,000 monthly as minimum wage.

Poverty

"Hunger anywhere threatens peace everywhere." Poverty and deprivation are seen as underlying causes of endemic conflict and civil violence. Persistent poverty and oppression can lead to helplessness and despair. Considering the fact that the IMF has recently reported what we already knew: the report that 85% of Nigeria's resources are consumed by 1% of her population leaving the remaining 99% to share the balance 15%. Obviously we begin to see why there is a crisis in the Niger Delta and why Boko Haram extremists took arms (not that I support them). Currently, Nigerian elites have gone beyond flying themselves and their families to Europe for treatment; there are some who actually fly their polo horses to Europe for treatment among the 1%.  

VII. RECOMMENDATION

This work recommends that the Nigerian leadership should begin to pay greater attention to the welfare of the average Nigerian and begin to take action that creates a level playing ground and provides for social justice in Nigeria. The government needs to begin to prioritize how the nation’s resources are being allotted. Things that matter most should not be at the mercy of things that matter least. (So before the government spend 4 billion naira in furnishing the ministry of Foreign Affairs in Abuja) the government needs to make sure that we have furnished the needs of our intellectuals who man our ivory towers and produce the work force that Nigeria needs to compete in a knowledge-worker age. Before the leadership spend 2 billion fuelling generators in the presidential villa, it is important to ensure that the salaries of primary school teachers who have been owed salaries for several months in many states are paid. The study also recommends the need for Social Reform, which is a progressive manner to change society for the better of mankind using Temperance control, Human Right respect, Education and Religion as tools of reforms.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Peace is a cherished good of humanity. But it is a good that many people have not enjoyed for decades. Millions of people have been deprived of peace for much of their foreshortened life, while an even greater number — possibly all humankind — can feel the threat of being severed from peace and stability - if not for themselves, for their children. Good in itself, peace — true, lasting peace — is also a symptom of well-being, a symptom of people living in harmony with themselves and others. Otherwise peace can be more than elusive, an appearance maintained through repressed violence, undermined by the sense of frustration and impotence, and which will eventually be threatened
by revolt. The call for action to eliminate injustice that form the social bed of violence, is getting louder every moment – action at the local and national level by governments and their partners in civil society, action at the regional and international levels by governments in cooperation among themselves, and by the inter- and non-governmental institutions and organizations. Action is needed to promote and support the development of well governed societies, where all segments of society, women and men equally, share rights and obligations equitably. Action is required to remove the social, institutional, political and economic barriers that prevent the most vulnerable from having their voice heard, from participating in decision-making affecting their lives, from accessing productive resources, from enjoying human development and the right to exert their initiative; and for those momentarily or lastingly deprived of the means to sustain their livelihoods, action is needed for them to benefit from national and international solidarity.

Finally, God does not tolerate evil neither does He support injustice, but many a times, He allows things to happen for a purpose, so as to appreciate Him better as God. He can use 'Slave to correct 'Son', 'Heathen' to bring to repentance 'His Own'. May be God is using this insecurity to bring us back to social justice. It is of interest to note that the book of Habakkuk which begins with a complaint ends with one of the most beautiful songs in the Bible.

Endnotes


2 Omoregbe J (1993), Ethics: A Systematic and Historical study, pp.144-8


11 Ibid.

12 Ibid.

A HISTORY OF ISLAM IN NIGERIA: ITS SIMILARITIES WITH CHRISTIANITY AND ITS IMPACT ON NIGERIAN CULTURE

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I. Introduction

Islam is one of the major religions of the world. The religion confirms the creed in one Almighty God prevailing among adherents of Judaism and Christianity. Islam establishes that there is only one God and that this God is called Allah. Islam, like other great world religions such as Christianity, Buddhism or Confucianism is doctrinally concerned with ultimate causation, truth and morality, and with man's relation to his Creator. Islam distinguishes itself from other religions by emphasizing absolute submission to Allah and a strong belief that Mohammad, the prophet of Islam, is the last of all prophets. Extremely important to the new religion was the Qur’an, the collection of divine messages which God commanded Muhammad to preach. Though the Prophet continued to receive divine revelations until his death in 632 A.D., these were not collected together to form the Muslims' holy book, the Qur’an, until some fifteen years after his death.