

CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS STUDIES AS AN ANCHOR OF WORLD PEACE MOVEMENT

Rev. Dr. Peter Tyohemba Anyam

Abstract

There is violence of all kinds on the entire globe which has put man in a difficult situation that needs the attention of universal approach by scholars. In many places of the world, there is no peace; people are witnessing wars, terrorism, armed robbery attacks, kidnapping, bomb blasts and a lot of social vices. As a result many lives have been wasted. Besides shedding of innocent blood, the society is affected by social, political, economic, religious and psychological problems that affect man all over the world. In most countries bribery and corruption are the order of the day; leadership tussles affect man, marginalization and human manipulation affect the entire society. In Nigeria particularly, the society is experiencing war songs in the air, where the Fulani herdsmen are constantly attacking peasant farmers; secession and 'avengers' have become a threat to the entire Nigeria. In this paper, the researcher looks at the internationalization of education in Nigeria as a welcome agenda to be discussed. To be specific the internalization of Christian Religious Studies if properly handled will bring peace and stability at local, national and world levels. To realize this dream, our country Nigeria in conjunction with other nations should prepare a solid ground where scholars will sit at a round table and discuss strategies for a way forward. In doing this they should work out the modalities on curriculum planning and teaching which will not just rely on Bible stories but the moral lessons and practical aspects of life as demonstrated by Jesus Christ. Both the curriculum and teaching will be centred on Jesus Christ as the prince of peace in order to make Christian Religious Studies the anchor of the world peace movement. The method adopted in this paper is library base and research, and the paper finally encourages everybody to embrace Jesus Christ the prince of peace for peaceful co-existence.

Life on earth is full of more problems than solutions, for there are more questions than answers here on earth planet. Because of plenty questions and insufficient answers to them the cost of living has become difficult, complex and very unaffordable. As a result of this man is living in confusion, anxiety, fears, doubts, and sadness as happiness has eluded the face of man. Man is suffering, a lot of things are happening to man that he cannot control. Man finds it very difficult to get at success, as bad luck is the order of the day.

According to Anyam (2014:2) almost every field of life in education needs research in order to assist mankind to supply answers to life problems. The questions may arise thus: where did man come from? What is the purpose of man here on earth? And where is man going? The questions will help us to arrive at our subject matter "The Internationalization of Christian Religious Studies as the Anchor of World Peace Movement." Scientists will be using experiments to answer the questions, anthropologists and historians will be going into their archives for solution, while Philosophers will apply wisdom and knowledge... But to face the reality, only theologians will be able to attempt a

satisfactory solution to the problem. Although we have a lot of World leading religions, only Christianity has a sacred book (The Bible) that clearly states the beginning of man, the purpose of man on earth and the final destiny of man.

In the creation account, Man was elevated by God and was given the cultural mandate to rule the entire creation. This single act of God is in line with the Tiv proverb: **“Wanmasetyô ye angôr,”** Meaning the last male child inherits his sisters. Man being the last born of the entire creation was to rule the entire creation (Gen 1:28). Man was created by God to live in harmony and peaceful co-existence in five good relationships: man was to live peacefully in relationship with God, creation, time, himself and finally his neighbor. Man was to live forever only the fall of man in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3) that broken all the relationships and today man is experiencing violence, war, battles, difficulties, suffering and above all man is to die.

In this paper, the researcher looks at internationalization of Christian Religious Studies as one among the possible ways of bring the desired peace of the world. And this will be in line with the focus of creation by God. In his own analysis Ugwu (2013:5) says; concerning the focus of creation, at the initial stage God’s intention was generally towards the entire universe. The focus here was to deal with the whole nations that are being represented here on earth. For the world to experience ultimate peace, scholars will turn their attention to internationalize Christian Religious Studies as a beacon of world Peace Movement. But before we go into details, the paper briefly defines Christian Religious Studies and World Peace.

Christian Religious Studies

Christian Religious Studies is a branch of Religious Studies which is the multi-disciplinary academic field devoted to research into religious beliefs, behaviors, and institutions. It describes, compares, interprets, and explains religion, emphasizing systematic, historically based, and cross-cultural perspectives. There are two main branches of the study of religion; theology and the academic study of religion. Theology studies religion from the perspective of a particular community of believers, has historically been an important part of the entire globe. In another development, theology attempts to understand the nature of transcendent or supernatural forces (such as deities), religious studies try to study religious belief from outside any particular religious’ viewpoint, (en.wikipedia.org/.../Religious-Studies).

Religious Studies is also called “The academic study of religion”, it is a relatively new field that aims to treat all religious traditions even-handedly. It utilizes tools from many other academic fields such as Philosophy, History, Sociology, Anthropology, Psychology and Theology itself. The overall of religious studies is an exciting new field that is constantly crossing boundaries and breaking new grounds as it attempts to bring its subject into a better focus. It originated in the 19th C, by early influential scholars like Friedric Max Muller in England and Cornelius P. Tiele in Netherland, (www.studyreligion.org/why/study.html).

In Nigeria, education and Christian Religious Studies came into existence as a result of the activities of the Missionaries in Nigeria. According to Fafunwa (1974:80) the missionaries adopted a strategy by using education as a means of converting Nigerian people to Christianity. They used the knowledge of the Bible, ability to sing hymns and recitations of catechisms, as well as the use of English and native languages in communication both orally and in writing to win more souls for Christ. This was the beginning of Christian Religious Studies in Nigeriaproably around the 18th C. It

therefore means that the Church has contributed greatly in the education and Christian Religious Studies in Nigeria.

World Peace

Peace is the situation where man experiences comfort, the absence of anxiety and the psychological minds of people is at rest. Peace is dealing with the freedom of war as well as all these social vices that put man to stress and difficult situation that upset the psyche of man. Peace is a lack of conflict and freedom from fear of violence between heterogeneous social groups. Benevolent leaders throughout the history have struggled and shown restraint establishing regional peace and economic growth through peace treaties that results from de-escalating conflict and multilateral and bilateral peace talks. In moments of peace people experience absence of war, violence and hostility, instead, people promote genuine mutual understanding, (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/peace).

World Peace can be viewed as the embracement of international friendliness among nation on the entire globe. Peace on earth is an ideal state of freedom, peace, and happiness among and within all nations and people. This ideal of a non-violence world provides a basis for peoples and nations to willingly cooperate either voluntarily or by virtue of a system of governance that prevents warfare. While different cultures, religious, philosophies, and organizations may have differing concepts about how such ideal state might come about, they have in common this idea of a cessation of all hostility amongst all humanity, (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/world-peace). In this regard the world can achieve peace or establish peace through religious or secular organizations that address human rights, technology, education, engineering, medicine, or diplomacy used as an end to all forms of fighting. In this world where two or more people lived, there must be a conflict, and there is need to work and resolve conflicts without war or declaration of war.

As a result of the above, world peace groups have listed about seven principles that define what is world peace:

1. Immediate cessation of violence conflicts
2. Rapid evaporation of terrorist activity
3. Softening of ideological conflict
4. Lessening of the dangerous super power rivalry between super power nations
5. Growing friendliness between nations
6. Spontaneous growth in economic activities and international trade and commerce
7. At national level there will be a reduction in antisocial behavior, (www.worldpeacegroup.org/what-is-wr...).

There is every need for each individuals to conceive these principles, share them with one another and work out how one can help create world peace.

World Peace at Stake

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the achievement of world peace by helping people find inner peace and providing a platform of peaceful coexistence. And this aim will be achieved through Internationalization of Christian Religious Studies as an Anchor of World Peace Movement. The reality of the matter is that the entire globe is affected with a lot of atrocities and social vices that endanger mankind. Man is not free, there is no peace, no stability and no egalitarian society. Since the Israelites occupation of their Promised Land in the Biblical account, the entire Palestinian region is not at peace. There is a long range of hostility among the Arab countries against Palestine where the

world keeps on witnessing wars. In 2011 the former USA President Barack Obama lamented that people could no longer guide their destiny as free citizens in a free country and enjoy the fruits of their resources. He was talking of the glorious “Arab Spring” that is ushering a new era in that troubled part of the world. The Arab terrorists affected Libya, Israel, Sudan, Sri Lanka, the entire Palestine and more. It was the concern of USA and the UN to come to a General Assembly sessions to address the issue. This Assembly was initiated by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), a former guerrilla group that renounced violence and terrorism to achieve its political goal of regarding statehood for the Palestinians, (www.sundaytimes.k/./Editorial.html).

In other selected part of the world; India and China are standing toe to toe against each other at Dokolam. None of them wants to pull back as it has turned out to be a prestige issue for both nations. As none refuse to lose this part of the land, it becomes a do-or-die issue, (steemit.com/war/%40honeychum/world_...). Between July 2016 up date, Germany is unsettled, Social Peace is at stake, Germany has been rocked by an axe attack on a train, a mass shooting in Munchi that left many dead, a machete attack in which a pregnant woman was killed and a suicide bomb in Ansbach. Speaking at a press conference, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said assailants “wanted to undermine our sense of community, our openness and our willingness to help people in need. We firmly reject this”. (www.theguardian.com>world>Germany). In November 2015, the world witnessed series of attacks in Paris, France and the city of northern suburb Saint-Denis. It was suicide bombers struck, mass shooting, and gunmen carried out mass shooting and took many to hostages. This attack was identified by Islamic terrorism in Europe, (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/November_2015...).

From media news around the globe, there are cases of terrorism, bomb blasts, gunmen attacks, massive shooting, war, violence and all sorts of social vices. The paper encourages internationalization of Christian Religious Studies to channel World Peace and stability.

Nigeria and the Elusive Peace

Nigeria as the giant of Africa is suffering from the effects of terrorism alongside with other African countries like Egypt, Libya, Somalia, Burkina Faso and many others. Today terrorism is one of the key threats of the international security system, effects of terrorism on national security are enormous. The greatest danger to the modern world carries a religious type of terrorism. Religious terrorism is becoming a factor of destabilization of socio-political and economic processes, it is an element of contemporary geopolitics and Tool for achieving political leadership in various countries around the world, ([www.naij.com>NewsPortalNo\[\]>\[\]AskNaij](http://www.naij.com>NewsPortalNo[]>[]AskNaij)).

The most of the terrors all over Nigeria areas a result of the rise of Boko Haram in Nigeria on 19th September, 2011. The little-known Islamist group Boko Haram claimed responsibility. Founded in 2002 by Mohammed Yusuf, the group’s name translates as “Western education is forbidden” in the Hausa language. Yusuf instilled the group with extremist ideology, extolling a version of Islam where any interaction with Western society is considered a sin. For over a decade, this group had kept part of Northern Nigeria to hostility especially in the North East. The political goal of Boko Haram is to create an Islamic nation in the 12 northern states of Nigeria, eventually spreading to the rest of the country. From this inception, Boko Haram viewed Nigeria as a state run by non-believers and made the government its main target- even when the country had a Muslim president, (www.worldpolicy.org/blog/2011/09/19...).

Another problem of Nigeria is the Fulani herdsmen who move around freely with sophisticated weapons without the challenge of the Federal Government of Nigeria. They aimed at

attacking farmers at places where they will get greener pasture to feed their flock. They moved from the northern state with cattle, attacking farmers and killing them mostly in Taraba, Plateau, Benue, Nasarawa, Enugu, Oyo and many other states. In Benue State particularly they are killing the Tiv people massively everyday with the intention to push them out and receive the fertile Benue valley for grazing. This single act of Fulani has eluded the peace expected in Nigeria, (buzznigeria.com/news/Fulani-herdsmen/).

Beside the issue of Fulani herdsmen, another problem that has eluded peace in Nigeria is Boko Haram abduction and rampant kidnapping are going on in most parts of Nigeria. People are afraid to move freely in Nigeria since the regime of president Goodluck Jonathan because of the insecurity risk only that the emergency of President Muhammadu Buhari had made effective efforts to restore security in Nigeria. Abduction, insurgency and kidnapping are the order of the day. For example, on the night of 14-15 April 2014, about 276 Chibok School girls were kidnapped from Government Secondary School in the town of Chibok in Borono State. After that the country has faced been with similar cases of abduction, insurgency and kidnapping, (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/chibok-school...).

Because of dirty politics in Nigeria where the cabals want to rule Nigeria alone, a lot of groups are now calling for the division of Nigeria into different countries. One of such groups is the Biafera agitator. Chief Ralph Uwzuruike is the founder of the Movement for Actualization of sovereign state of Biafra (MASSOB), and Nnamdikanu is their leader. Nigerians are having sleepless nights for this case. If this case is not properly handled, it will result into another civil war and the country will be devastating and catastrophic... ([www.naji.com>NewsPortalNo\[\]>\[\]localnews](http://www.naji.com>NewsPortalNo[]>[]localnews)).

Another group of people that are causing upheaval and instability of Nigeria are the “Niger Delta Avengers.” It is a Nigeria’s new militant group that operates in the main oil-producing areas of Niger Delta. Their multiple attacks on oil installations have been carried out for a long time causing a decline in oil production. One of their Primary goals is ‘to cripple Nigeria’s economy’. They are doing this because of too much marginalization in Nigeria for a long time. Even though the government of Buhari is looking into the matter, but they have since announced their plans for massive attacks and many lives are lost, property destroyed and it declines Nigeria’s economy. ([www.naij.com>NewsportalNO\[\]>\[\]BREAKINGNEWS](http://www.naij.com>NewsportalNO[]>[]BREAKINGNEWS)).

All the few selected cases above had eluded the peace expected of the giant of Africa called Nigeria. Many Nigerians now become refugees in their own country and many are living at Internally Displace Camps (IDC). It became the concern of individuals, local, state and Federal government of Nigeria as well as foreign organization to make sure that peace is restored in Nigeria. As a result, this paper has turned to internationalization of Christian Religious Studies to chip in its contribution for a peaceful movement.

Internationalization of Christian Religious studies for Peace and Stability

Christian Religious Studies is the teachings that came out of Christianity, one of the leading religions entire world. Christianity is built solemnly on the life and teaching of Christ the savior of the world. This teaching has its fundamental goal to fight against the evils of man that was initiated in the Garden of Eden by our first parents. It is the fall of man that brought about the issue of the original sin, and by this man’s negative attitude had resulted into a destabilized universe. For peaceful co-existence to be restored in the world, mankind must turn to the fold of Christ the Prince of Peace.

Humanity needs a conducive atmosphere in order to operate effectively the God given talents so that the world will develop to its fullest for the glory of God. Man needs peace at home, local, national and international just like the peace that was experienced during the Roman Empire where the message of salvation was passed to the then world. This peace will be found only in Christ the Prince of Peace. By his Peace, Jesus became man in order to communicate with us, to proclaim the importance of our immortal soul to reconcile people among themselves and with God the Father.

Christ is the Leader and source of peace, he came to the earth to free us from the bonds of sin and to grant us salvation. He visits us in the flesh, to bring peace on earth, His kind of peace is unshakeable and everlasting. His peace touches first our innermost being. His peace is like that of fresh water that quenches our thirsty mind and soul, giving lives meaning and satisfaction. It comforts our souls; it brings harmonious coexistence with one another. Through the peace of Jesus Christ, we are reborn and reconciled with those around us and are elevated spiritually. We now experience the Divine Grace and so find salvation, (www.sprint.net.au/./PrincePeace.htm).

Jesus Christ's peace is not like the peace that the world offers documented on paper and torn by swords. True peace is the greatest gift of the Lord Jesus Christ. It calms the mind and comforts our hearts. It pacifies the waves of our passions. It strengthens our love and rekindles our hope, in order that we can tolerate and forgive. It leads us to benevolence and prepares us to endure sacrifices, (www.sprint.net.au/./PrincePeace.htm).

The Internationalization of Christian Religious Studies is to make Christ's teaching and life acceptable by the nations of the whole world. In Genesis 12:3 God told Abraham that through you all nations of the earth shall be blessed. When Christ had successfully bought the whole world by his blood on the Cross of Calvary, he was buried and rose again on the third day. As he met with the disciples in Galilee He openly declared that; "All Power in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Then he extended the powers to His followers and gave them Great Commission Movement to internationalize His teaching and win Souls for the Kingdom of God (Matt 28:16-20). Anyam (2012:1) says that "In every culture and tradition, the arrival of a son or a male child in the family is very important and it is really treasured." Therefore, in order to internationalize Christ's life and teaching to the whole world, Biblical scholars must introduce Christ to each culture and tradition found on the surface of the earth. Biblical scholars should do their best to make global citizenship to be under the canopy of Jesus Christ. This could be done through the teachings of Jesus Christ as found in the Bible.

Christian Religious Studies is one of the most challenging subjects of study. In any culture and tradition, it comes, it brought modernization and development in various shapes and forms. It usually comes along with education, health facilities, improvement in agriculture and introduction of modern technology. There is every need for Christian scholars all over the world to come together and fashion the teaching of Christ to suit Asia, North America, South America, Europe, Africa, Antarctica and Australia. This means that Biblical scholars should make the teachings of the Bible Superior over each culture, tradition, norms and values and they should contextualize the Bible to each world culture in order to bring the desired peace of Christ. As a result of that the theme of this conference "Internationalization of Education in Nigeria: A progressive Approach" with particular attention to Christian Religious Studies is a welcome idea. The world needs peace, stability and peaceful coexistence and Christian Religious Studies stands tall to bring this peace through Christ our savior.

Christian Religious Studies Curriculum Planning and Teaching

The overview of the Curriculum development process is like a journey which begins with the first step. The curriculum development process systematically organizes what will be taught, who will be taught, and how it will be taught. Each component affects and interacts with other components in order to achieve the desired goal. Professionalism is needed here; the people planning the Curriculum should be professionals in each area of study, so that they will know what is to be taught at each stage of life and the method to be adopted for effective teaching, (www.fao.org/./AH650E03.htm).

For the world to achieve peaceful coexistence, scholars in charge of Christian Religious Studies Curriculum Planning and teaching should follow all the steps that are needed in educational curriculum. The subject is dealing with the knowledge of the nature of God and the nature of man as expressed in the life and death of Jesus. The subject to an extent, is dealing with the knowledge of ourselves in relation to the nature of God and the teaching of Jesus. The teaching of Jesus is summarizing in one word "Love," love of God and love of yourself and your neighbor, (archive.spetator.co.uk/article/22n...). For those planning Curriculum for Christian Religious Studies should not just base their teaching on knowing the stories of the Bible, reading it for knowledge alone, but must apply the practical aspect which Christ did and has the authority of the Prince of Peace. Let the whole world know that every human being has an allegiance to God, to the society and to himself. If one is placed in any leadership position, he should first of all know that one day he is going to present his stewardship before God for reward or punishment. Equally the person must humble himself and save the masses like our savior Jesus Christ. When all these are done, then God will add you all other things to yourself. This type of teaching will be best summarized: Service to God-Man-and yourself. Human beings on earth should fear God and give themselves to bring peace to one another. For example: When one is eating he should give food to another fellow human who is in need, visit those in hospitals, prison and counsel them to have the peace of Christ. Sit peacefully with your neighbor who is affected in one way or the other and share the gospel of Christ together, for the world needs peace. The society needs to be patient with one another, love one another, appreciate one another and condemn all the social vices that usually bring unhealthy living.

Conclusion

The world is filled with war, terrorism, turmoil and confusion, while men have created many amazing technological inventions, they cannot create peace. Scientists have unleashed the power of the atom but are powerless to "unleash" peace upon Earth. Astronomers have discovered much about the size, majesty and precision of the universe, but they cannot "discover" the way to peace. They can find galaxies far away throughout the universe, they cannot "find" peace here on earth. Peace is elusive and all nations long for it in vain. Leaders negotiate for it, armies fight for it, many pray for it, etc, yet it remains more elusive than ever.

But the people who will help restore peace on the planet (earth) is the church and scholars of Christian Religious Studies. If these bodies carefully carry out their assignment, they will think seriously about the internationalization of Christian Religious Studies because it is the only anchor of world peace movement. For their teaching are based on the life and teaching of Jesus Christ who is the Prince of Peace. So if Biblical Scholars plan their curriculum very well involving the practical aspect of Jesus Christ to be carried out in every nation, peace will be restored. Finally, we are living in the eschatological days, and the Bible has a lot of eschatological messages that will help the society to shun violence and embrace peace. When this is done, the kingdom of God, the most comfortable place

will be gained by more, especially those who accepted Jesus Christ as their savior, and those who are striving to bring peace on earth. Jesus finally summarizes in the Beatitudes that: "Blessed are those peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God," (Matt 5:9). And the reward of peacemakers is very great.

Recommendations

1. The paper recommends that biblical scholars should come under one common umbrella and plan Christian Religious Studies Curriculum based on the teaching of Jesus Christ. If this is done the Promise of God in Genesis 12:3 will be fulfilled; all nations of the earth will be blessed and the peace of Jesus Christ will prevail. The teaching of Christ will now spread all over the world.
2. When the entire society takes precedent from the life and teaching of Christ, many people will remove fears away from them and they will now learn how to say yes or no and stand by it. In this regard the corrupt practices that is going on among our leaders, politicians, security agents, etc, the society will vehemently say no to it and then stand by what is right.
3. When Christian Religious Studies is internationalized and the society is inculcated with the true teaching of Christ, everybody will see the need for establishing love with God, neighbor and himself. As a result of this many social vices like terrorism, abduction, kidnapping, bomb blast, massive shooting and killing of all sorts will be minimized. Then security will become the order of the day, and violence of all kinds will be reduced drastically.
4. Isaiah 9:6 pictures Jesus Christ as a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father and the Prince of Peace for the world to accept the government of Jesus Christ and experience true peace, the church and biblical scholars need to work hard. It is their duty to extend Christ's kingdom to every nation through preaching, teaching and sharing Christ with one another, and they must do it with their practical life (good deeds) as well.

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