



## THE CONTRADICTIONS IN RELIGIOUS TENETS AND THE MORALITY OF POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN THE NIGERIA PUBLIC SPACE

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### Abstract

The paper examines the nexus between religious tenets and leadership morality within the Nigerian context. Religious adherents are not only expected to be conversant with the tenets of their religions but also are expected to practice the same. As a result, much is expected of those who are in one level of government or the other. However, the phenomenon has proved a paradox. This is because what is professed by many political leaders is contrary to what is displayed. As a result, many onlookers have expressed disappointment in the double-standard of some religious adherents who are in political leadership and have concluded that there is no difference between religious persons in politics and their counterparts who do not profess any faith. The aim of this Paper is therefore to encourage religious persons in various levels of governance to demonstrate and abide by their various religious tenets while in public service. Therefore, in order to carry out a thorough investigation, the paper adopts the historical, expository as well as analytical interpretation approaches to investigate the phenomenon. The investigation reveals that leadership morality runs contrary to the basic tenets enshrined in the beliefs. Whereas religious leaders are expected to be true reflectors of what is expected in leadership, the opposite appears to be the case for many religious adherents. The common knowledge is that, while the lives of so many are pointing towards one direction, their moral lifestyles are pointing to another. The paper therefore recommends that all religious professors should abide by the tenets of their faith, religious adherents who are in government should be held accountable for their actions and inactions and various religious groups should take active part in public leadership by training their members to on how to serve the public effectively.

**Keywords:** Religious, Leadership, Morality, Nigeria, political.

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## **Introduction**

The paper examines the connection between leadership morality and religious tenets. This is because the researcher believes that there should be a strong relationship, between religious tenets and leadership morality. Unfortunately, there is a clear contradiction between the two in Nigeria because most of the religious practitioners who found their way into politics have not lived up to this expectation. Many religious persons who found themselves in leadership have failed to demonstrate strong commitment to their religious professions and ethos. Consequently, many Nigerians do not see any difference religion has made in terms of the outcome produced by political leaders who belong to one religion or the other (Isiorhovoja, 2019). Here, we are concerned with the actions and opinions people have of religious adherents in public service. Experience has shown that the public speeches of some religious leaders are in direct contradiction to their personal lifestyles. Hence, the paper is concerned with how this apparent contradiction can be resolved especially a time such as this when the Nation is at a cross road, looking for light bearers to lead it out of the woods.

Religious adherents in leadership are expected to be familiar with the tenets or moral codes of their different religions. They are in positions to be able to distinguish between what is right and wrong. Unfortunately, the opposite is often the case in the Nigerian experience. One can say without any fear of contradiction that the leadership morality of many of our leaders contradicts their religious tenets (Okwueze, 2013). This obvious conflict is not a phenomenon that is hidden from the persons involved. That is, these groups of leaders who profess one thing but do the opposite are aware of their double standards which show in terms of the quality of representation, award and execution of contracts and accountability to the electorates. The various religions they represent are also aware that what many of their members display in leadership falls short of what is expected of them (Ikechukwu, 2010). The reasons for this contradiction shall be examined in this discuss.

The objective of this Paper is to examine the relationship between religious tenets and leadership morality with a view to ensuring that religious adherents, who occupy public offices, remain true to their various religious principles while in office. To achieve this, the paper adopts the historical, expository and analytical interpretation methods to investigate the phenomenon. It has been observed that there is an apparent contradiction between leadership morality and religious tenets amongst many religious persons in political leadership. The result is that, the



electorates and other on-lookers do not see any clear-cut difference between the religious and non-religious in the delivery of good governance.

The paper examines the meaning of religious tenets and leadership morality. It identifies and discusses the reasons for the contradictions in the religious tenets and the morality display by many religious who are in public leadership and service. The paper also performs an assessment of the impact of religion on political leadership in Nigeria and highlights what is expected of religious adherents holding public trust. The paper concludes by recommending possible solutions to the malaise.

## **Definition of Terms**

### **a. Religious Tenets**

The word tenet is derived from the Latin word “*tenere*” which means to hold (Okwueze, 2013). Tenet refers to a doctrine or opinion which an individual or a group of persons hold as a philosophy or religion (Horton, 2006). Religious tenets therefore are those principles or core values which people of the said religion uphold or strictly adhere to. It is an absolute principle which prescribes the behavioral or thought pattern of members of the faith. Religious tenet is synonymous with doctrine, creed, stipulation, conviction, value, teaching, principle, etc. It can also be referred to as a set of teaching, creed, doctrine or values that are particular to a group of persons who are bound by a common faith.

Religious tenets are structures by which members of the faith hold their lives together. The identity of a person can be deduced following the types of tenets he or she observes. They are meant to be followed vigorously. They are instructions that direct how each member thinks and acts. Hence, they are formed from an unconditional view of the way the world works (Asaju, 1997). The following are some of the examples of religious tenets: being patient with one another, non-violent approach to issues, equality before the law, respect for others and the rule of law, contentment with what one has, transparency, honesty, sincerity, industry, etc.

Religious tenets are put in place by every religion to keep people honest. Religious adherents are expected to familiarize themselves with the religious tenets of their faith through many platforms. This is with a view to ensuring that they are strictly observed. They are usually in form of commands on what to and what not to do. They allow members of the same religion to function in the same way. The *Sharia* law, the Ten Commandments and the Sharma are excellent examples of core or central tenets set by a religion (Olofinkua, 2011). They all forbid stealing,



murder, embezzlement of public funds, etc. It is unfortunate therefore when religious adherents who serve in public spaces fail to adhere to their religious tenets. Instead, they engage themselves in things that are contrary to their religious principles (Abogunrin, 1986). The importance of ethics in the public space cannot be under-estimated. It prevents both economic and financial corruption. It also creates the atmosphere for effective and efficient public service; helps to prevent situations of conflict of interest. It ensures proper and prudent management of resources and transparent use of public funds and resources. In the present Nigeria where corruption has become endemic, ethical revolution is necessary for the sustenance of the Nation.

#### **b. Leadership Morality**

Morality refers to the principles or rules governing the way to distinguish between what is right and wrong, good and bad behavior. In other words, it is the recognition of the distinction between good or evil or between right or wrong. According to Mariaye (2006), morality is what people perceive to be good. It also means respect for or obedience to the rules of right conduct; the mental disposition or characteristics of behaving in a manner intended to produce morally good results (Ikegbu and Enyimba, 2019). It is the standard of society used to decide what is wrong or right behavior. An example of morality is the belief that it is wrong to take what does not belong to someone, even if no one would know. Other words used for morality includes ethics, right or wrong, correctness, ethicality, virtue, goodness, good behavior, righteousness, rectitude, uprightness, morals, principles, honesty, integrity, justice, fair play, decency, chastity, blameless, standard, moral codes, etc.

From the above definitions, one would observe a common denominator in all the definitions which is that morality is relative, subjective and involves decision-making. This is because every society has its own set of moral codes. However, some moral codes cut across cultural divides. How to determine whether a particular action or behavior is right or wrong involves a rule which usually is based on religious disposition of the individual (Emeri, 1999). Hence, we shall consider the origin and types of morality.

Five types of morality shall be highlighted in this discuss. They are Absolute morality, cultural morality, religious morality, legal morality and situational morality. Absolute morality refers to the totality of what the Divine (God) requires from man as his Creator. It is absolute because the standard is constant and cannot be lowered. Cultural morality refers to that conviction or principle which is created or devised by a group of people. That is, a notion of



good or evil which is molded by the culture of a community (Okwueze, 2003). Examples are *Sharia* law and the *Sharma* which are moral codes in many Islamic and Jewish societies respectively. Religious morality refers to the set of rules that determine what is good or bad which are of religious origin. The determination of the rightness of an action or inaction which is based on the approved rules, regulation or constitution by a people is called legal morality. Similarly, situational morality has to do with what is considered right at a particular time and situation.

Morality is good because it increases the quality of life in any community. It helps individual members of a community to be able to distinguish between what is good and bad. They help to build good relationships in a community and between individuals and reveal the character of individuals. Morality produces a healthy society by prescribing what is right and wrong so that people's behavior can be modeled towards what is generally acceptable (Abogurin, 1986).

The ability to understand and apply moral values is not inherent in man; People over time develop their moral values and standards by what they learn and see in the society. Aristotle was one of the earliest Greek philosophers who believed that moral abilities, which he called values or morally good habits, develop solely through constant practice and repetition. He also adds that humans acquire their moral values/abilities from their families and the society (Rahama, 2014). Values that can be acquired range from honesty, courage, justice, fairness, self-control, modesty, sociability, etc. Once they are acquired, virtuous behaviors come easily and naturally (Ushe, 2011). Today, there are so many moral questions in the Nigerian society. There is a continuous betrayal of trust and confidence repose on leaders because of money, women, power, etc.

According to White in "The Portable Seminary" as quoted by Norton (2006, 634-635) as Moses, Daniel, Paul and other Biblical figures demonstrate direct participation in the political and other structures and institutions of society is another strategy available for the implementation of social ethical concern. When religious adherents are invited and given opportunity to exercise political and social responsibility, it is most appropriate to regard such as a valid means of implementing ethical conviction. They are expected, if possible, to coerce the moral standards of God's Kingdom on the world. For example in the Bible, the Christians are regarded as the light of the world and the salt of the earth. They have presence and impact, but not by way of coercion and domination.



Badawi, as quoted by Muhammad (2017, 146-7) illustrates the Islamic leadership principles by presenting the following four bases for Islamic moral character:

The first moral base of the Islamic leader is in his belief that himself and whatever he has belongs to Allah. This thought, according to Badawi makes a Muslim bow his ego, ideas and thinking before Him. This eventually makes him obey the injunctions of Allah (Hudud) and His Prophet without hesitation (Quran 33:36). Therefore, a Muslim leader with a strong faith in Allah will always emphasize good deeds. There are over sixty Quranic verses that support the relationship between faith in Allah and good deeds.

The second layer of the Muslim leader personality is Islam which simply means peace and submission to Allah. Islam in a simple term means achievement of peace with Allah. A Muslim leader will normally submit himself to Allah and will never see himself as above all.

The third layer is what Badawi calls inner consciousness (*Taqwah*) of one's duty and responsibility towards Allah. He opined that a Muslim with a strong *Taqwah* will develop fear or awe for Allah which will lead to avoid behaviours that are contrary to Allah's will (Quran 2:2-5; 2: 177). Those who have *Taqwah* are those who believe in the Quran and acts justly and do not allow their personal feelings hamper justice, equity and fair play.

The fourth and final layer is the love of Allah (*Ihsan*). *Ihsan* motivates Muslims to obey Allah and work towards His pleasure. The constant feeling that Allah is watching prompts every Muslim who has *Ihsan* to behave at his best.

The above principles suggest that every Muslim leader has a standard expected of him. Another implication is that the application of these principles is entirely the prerogative of each Muslim; it is not automatic.

In the same vein, though there are no written codes of conduct in the African Traditional Religion but each person knows by association what is expected of him and the consequences that follows each action (Omordia, 2001). He added that in the traditional public service in Ika land, no leader is expected to divert what belongs to the community into personal property without one form of disaster or another befalling the individual. He stated further that sharing of communal patrimony is usually according to seniority. These practices and sanctions help to maintain sanity and justice in the African traditional setting.



Jegede (2001) asserts that faith and sincerity are the highest virtue any one can display. The issue here is man's behavior to others. There has always been a yardstick to measure what is wrong or right. There are those who believe that morality is a product of common sense. As there is accumulation of experience for a long period, the consequent result is what we call the sense of right or wrong. Others believe that morality is the fruit or product of religion and that from the beginning, morality has been dependent on religion. That is, man's conception of the deity and the strength of His religion have everything to do with morality. Very important is the fact that God who made man has written his laws in man's essential constitution (Idowu, 2011).

c. Contradiction: copy from the former

### **1. The Structure of Political Leadership Practice and religious Tenets in Nigeria**

There is no human institution that is perfect including leadership in its various forms. The expected role of religion in leadership therefore is to bring into political leadership that sense of responsibility that compels leaders to demonstrate good will towards those they lead or represent. However, for such impact to be realized, there should be a good number of religious adherent who are determined to ensure that there is responsibility and accountability in governance. Painfully, the nature of political leadership in Nigeria is such that individual leaders are left to their whims and caprices while in office. That is, there are not strong mechanism of checking the actions and in-action of political office holders. The office of the electorate has been so relegated to the background so much so that whatever anyone does while in office may be swept under the carpet by successive government because they are likely going to go the way of their predecessors.

### **2. Factors Responsible for the Contradictions**

There are many factors responsible for this phenomenon especially in the political leadership in Nigeria. The foremost is ethnicity. Many religious professors allow their ethnic affiliations to override their religious conviction and values. Generally, leadership in Nigeria tilts towards ethnicity and when the chips are down, they allow their ethnic nationality to supersede their religious tenets. They appear to be willing to always vote, elect or appoint persons who are of their ethnic groups whether they possess the capacity to provide leadership or not (Okwueze, 1998). The problem of mutual suspicion allows people to align with their identities for agitation of power and controlling of resources (Eliagwu, 2005). Inclination to one's ethnic nationality has





made many religious persons in leadership unable to hold on to what they ordinarily know is right. Only few Nigerians have been described as “detrified”

Lack of leadership accountability has contributed greatly to the contradiction. Many public office holders, especially political leaders, take advantage of the absence of the platform where the electorates demand accountability from the leaders. To allow an individual access to millions or billions of Naira without any proper check and balances has made many to abandon their religious tenets and begin to engage in corrupt practices. People commit economic, political and financial crimes in Nigeria and are able to go away with it because their political parties and religious organizations are not ready to demand for accountability hence many enrich themselves with public funds while in office. The electorates in Nigeria have not been able to initiate strong and reliable accountability culture and platform for all their representatives in government. Religious adherents are tempted to follow the examples of their colleagues, especially those who have been in power for a long time. They use the people’s mandate to enrich themselves yet are not accountable to the people. Naturally, man requires a system of check and balance to continuously put him on the right track.

Lack of understanding of leadership of the nature of leadership is another factor. True leadership is service to both God and humanity. Many seem not to have understood it as such. Many persons in Nigeria, rather than see leadership as a privilege and sacrifice perceive leadership as opportunity to grab their own share of the national cake and to loot the nation’s treasury. As a result, selfishness, greed, embezzlement is the order of the day. Only few are in leadership to serve. Many seek their own interest and not the interest of the masses.

Greed among public servants contributes immensely to the contradiction. It is one of the greatest factors bedeviling leadership in Nigeria including among religious adherents. Nigeria is a country where an individual who has been battling with poverty begins to donate money publicly as soon as he wins any political election. It has been established that Nigerian politicians are among the highest paid in the whole world. Many law makers have been in the national assembly since 1999 yet are not ready to give opportunity for others to come because of the financial gains. Some of our leaders fight, and sometimes kill to continue to perpetuate themselves in office. A visit to car garage of many of our political including those who are religious professors, one will be amazed at the number of exotic cars that are stocked. They amass so much wealth while those they represent languish in poverty. It is expected that the





religious adherents who find themselves in political space should be able to influence their colleagues positively towards good governance and service to humanity. Unfortunately, many of them have not been able to wield any influence due to the amount of money involved. In fact, there is hardly any politician today in Nigeria who does not belong to one religion or the other.

Another reason for the contradictions is that many religious persons who are in political leadership are considered as 'non-serious' religious members of their religion. That is, those who are involved in political activities or active politics are regarded as not grounded in their religious tenets, as a result, are ready to live a substandard religious life in leadership. This is true especially of Christianity where many Christians believe that no genuine Christian can really participate in political leadership. The Christian politicians are not regarded as genuine Christians in many quarters of unlike Islam where politics is not divorced from religious practice. Until we begin to have those who are grounded in their faith come to leadership, the unenlightened persons will continue to abuse trust. Religious adherents can provide exemplary leadership if they are willing to allow their religious tenets control their actions and inactions. But this can only be achieved if the persons who come into leadership have been properly trained and disciplined for leadership.

### **3. Religious Teaching and Political Leadership**

It is a fruitless labour to try to show that religion belongs to one world and politics to another. In the view of Okwueze (2003),

Argument that tries to delineate religion from politics belongs to a context where political leaders and their apologists seek unsuccessfully to save themselves from the painful experience of facing issues raised by religious leaders about their roles in leadership. Many religious individuals in leadership merely use religion to achieve their objectives and when it comes to accountability, they insist that religion should not be brought to it.

The involvement of religion in leadership dates back to the beginning of the nation in the traditional African society. There is no distinction between political and religious leadership as it is in Islam. Those who led their communities in religious life were same as those who led in political life. Primarily, religion seeks to regulate the behavior of the leaders, especially to ascertain whether their lifestyle is in agreement with their religious tenets. Eboh (1994) posits that,



Anyone who is exercising political power has a responsibility to those upon whom he exercises it. Both politics and religion advocate responsibility in the exercise of power. If the politician is religious, it helps him and the society all the more. If he is responsible, it is expected that religion owes him a duty of reminding him of his responsibility to his people.

In the Holy Bible, the Prophets, while carrying out their responsibilities denounced some kings who abdicated their responsibilities to the people of Israel and Judah. Prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Joel, Hosea and Micah were all known to have kept kings on their toes and never kept quiet when the kings reneged on their responsibilities. The situation in Nigeria reveals that since independence in 1960, religion has been part and parcel of political leadership and unfortunately, largely in a negative way. For example, the Northern People's Congress (NPC) was formed to represent the interest of Northern Muslims. On the other hand, the National Council of Nigerian Citizens (NCNC) as well as the Action Group represented the interest of Christians. This dangerous political inclination brought a lot of leadership challenges in Nigeria. Today, it has become very difficult, if not impossible to unite the Christians and Muslims even though both religions preach peace, love and tolerance, etc. What is obvious is a situation where one religion discriminates against the other. Religion, though very necessary in leadership, has been employed in negative ways in Nigeria.

It is the hope of the paper that in the very near future, religion will play a role in eliminating the mess which political leadership has produced. In Nigeria, political leaders are expected to use their positions to bring positive influence in leadership. The role of religion should not be to support any person in leadership because he/she is a member of one's religion and irrespective of what such person is doing. Religious leaders are expected to challenge and fight corruption, discrimination, injustice and nepotism in Nigeria's leadership. According to Amos (1984), being faithful and being committed is not a function of personal convenience. Many are capable of making convenience when things get difficult. Yet, commitment is not a function of self-indulgence, happiness and economics. It is a function of doing the right thing even when the cost is dear. As such, commitment does not appear to reflect the reality of our culture anymore.

Jesus Christ remains the greatest example of a leader, and one of his most important teachings was on leadership. According to Him, leadership is for service and nothing else. There



must be a clear demarcation between Christian attitudes to leadership and those of non-Christian leaders. St. Matthew's Gospel records Jesus' teaching on leadership as follows: "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and their men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you, but whoever must be great among you must be your servant and whoever must be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:25-28). In the early Church, leaders were those men and women of virtue who were also willing to make sacrifice. Commending Paul and Barnabas as emissaries of the Apostles to Antioch, they were described as "men who have risked their lives for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:20). From this, one can observe that the greatest requirement of leadership is sacrifice.

Furthermore, by the standard of the early Church, a leader must lead an exemplary life that is worthy of emulation. Paul, in writing to Timothy who became the first Bishop of Ephesus, instructed him not to allow anyone to despise his youth but to be example to believers in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity (I Tim.4:12). Peter corroborated Paul's stance when he wrote to the Jews of the exile and dispersion spread over many cities, exhorting them to tend the flock of God that was in their charge not by domineering over those in their charge but by being example to the flock (1Peter 5:1-3).

Peretomode (2012) defines leadership as an art or process by which a member of a group or organization persuades, inspires and influences the attitudes, behavior and actions of others and directs their activities so that the group or organizational members work willingly, cooperatively and enthusiastically towards the accomplishment of set goals and a new and improved position. A good leadership therefore will mean a process by which elected or appointed leaders show good influence on the people they lead. Corruption has invaded the religious sphere. Today, many religious leaders exploit, and mislead fellow believers through their wrong teachings on prosperity, while they themselves live in affluence. According to Archbishop Dr. Olubumi Okogie, a one-time president of Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN), as quoted by Uthman (2002), "the phenomenon is nothing but an anthropocentric gospel that plays on people's superstitions and sorrows". It is a dialogue in dilemma that Nigeria with all the growing religious activities has now been rated as a leading underdeveloped country with one of the highest corruption rates in the world (Corruption Perception Index, 2015).



An assessment of the Nigerian scene has not shown remarkable semblance between the religious life of the individual as a person and a public office holder. For example, the denunciation of the Pharisees and Scribes by Jesus significantly brings to bear the contemporary challenges bedeviling the nation (Matt. 23). Tugwell (1980) presents the beatitudes as the tangent between religious life and public practice. He contends that the only way we can bring about the needed change in the society is to follow these simple teachings of Jesus which serves as the Magna Carta for all believers. It is not only Christian politicians who have failed to allow their religious ethos guide their behavior in public service but we have other Muslims politicians who are guilty of the same double standard. In acknowledging the phenomenon, Faris and Parry (2011) opined that one of the reasons some Muslim politicians are engaging in corrupt practices is because of the influence of the non-Muslim colleagues around them.

In his study of great religious leaders of the world, Potter (1962) admits that there is a line of symmetry across all religions. He concluded on the theosophical values of religion as that point where ethical values are appreciated rather than compromised. He states further that the failure of some religious adherents who are in public leadership remains a personal weakness and not the fault of the religion the individual belong to. This is the predicament of the Nigerian State as of today. However, there are few individuals in leadership who have remained true to their religious tenets no matter the conditions and temptation to do contrary like Daniel in the service of the king of Babylon (Daniel 1-3) and Joseph in Potiphar's house (Gen. 39).

Speiser (1989) decries the loss of ethical values which he says are premised on quest for material and monetary gains. This is the major reason why prominent individuals hold on to power and position. They are also afraid of the unknown. The situation remained enigmatic because men have demonstrated that they have two natures: while one seems to portray the religious identity, the other strictly reveals the true identity as office holder. Isiorhovoja (2017) appraised the role of prophet Amos in his denunciation of social injustice. He did observe that the society in the time of Prophet Amos was not different from ours. Even though men with high religious inclination were occupying high positions of power yet social injustices was the order of the day. Amos therefore called for free flow of justice like river.

Faris and Parry (2011) argued that the inability of some Muslims to follow the injunctions of the Quran and the Hadith of the Prophet (pbuh) is because of interaction of different cultures within a system and the level of righteousness of each leader. They literarily



blame Western culture for the obvious contradiction between religious tenets and leadership morality.

Today, the greatest problem in Nigeria as pointed out by Chinua Achebe is that of leadership, the greatest of which is the syndrome of winner-takes-it-all. Leadership disposition has been that of nepotism, tribalism, favoring of one group against the other leading to lopsided appointments. Those who attempt to do the right thing in terms of equity, justice for all and transparency are considered foolish. Hence, everyone seems to be caught up in doing the wrong things. This is where religious tenets of the leaders are supposed to play out as a model in practical ethical terms. Tribalism has been magnified in Nigeria so much so that it overrides religious values and tenets. Leaders, whether in the secular or religious circle, try to appoint or vote leaders who have tribal affiliation with them. This has denied Nigeria from having leaders who are qualified in their own rights, no matter their religious inclination or tribal affiliation (Aderinto, 2014).

There is a common trend in leadership in Nigeria. Every time someone is appointed to leadership, he/she sees that as an opportunity to share in the national cake. In the words of Mohammed (2012), “the level of official theft, mismanagement of resources, embezzlement, unwilling attitude, lack of provision of social amenities and improper conduct of the political class summed up the leadership’s roles and responsibilities in Nigeria”. This has brought a whole lot of temptation to religious persons in leadership. Even if one is not ready to act in this manner, the information one would receive from workers who have been in the office will compel religious persons to abandon their religious tenets in order to benefit from unethical behavior which has become institutionalized.

#### **4. The Way forward**

Religion has not been able to produce the kind of leadership that is expected in Nigeria. The reasons for this failure have been highlighted in this discuss. However, it is a challenge that can be handled if the following steps are taken.

- i. Religious groups should initiate platforms within to train members in the act of leadership. It has always been said that leaders who misbehave are usually unserious members of their religious groups. Leaders should be raised and trained before they can engage in leadership. Until religious faith changes people’s attitudes towards leadership to prepare them to serve in public offices, there will always be hypocrites in leadership.



- ii. Demand Accountability from Leaders: One of the reasons for leadership failure is that leaders are not made to account to the people their stewardship while in office. Most often, leaders are allowed to do whatever they want in office and soon as they leave office, anti-graft agencies begin to go after them. But how much have the latter been able to recover from those embezzlers?
- iii. Corrupt leaders should be sanctioned by their faith. In traditional Africa, the community could ostracize any of its members involved in gross misconduct.

### **Conclusion**

Leadership is central to all human interactions and endeavours. Indeed, leadership failure is one of the major social problems that have kept Nigeria in a demoralized state. Many who are in leadership have failed to set good examples as a result the expected impact of religion on leadership is not clearly noticed. The study reveals that most religious adherents who are in leadership often fail to demonstrate the expected high moral standard in comparison with the non-religious. In some quarters, it is actually believed that religious persons demonstrate more corrupt tendencies than the non-religious; this is indeed a dialogue in dilemma. The reasons for this anomaly which include preference and loyalty to ethnic affiliation rather than national interest, absence of a strong mechanism that enables the electorates to demand accountability from their representatives, wrong notion about public leadership, gross indiscipline among the political leadership, corrupt tendency associated with greed and avarice and particularly, hypocrisy of many religious figures who are in leadership were articulated and discussed in the paper.

The obvious contradictions between religious tenets and the nature and level of morality of Nigerian leaders, especially those who are affiliated to one religion or the other have resulted in loss of confidence in the Nigerian masses. It is expected that a country that is highly religious like Nigeria should have been able to produce leaders with sincerity of purpose, integrity and accountability but the political experience appears to be far away from the common expectation of the public. There is lack of progress in every facet of the country. Development has been retarded due to the quality of leaders that are in charge of the common patrimony of the nation. Subsequently, poverty, instead of decline has continued to increase. The presence of religious adherents in public domain should have been able to positively shape the conscience of the leaders but that kind of anticipated influence is missing in the entire system.



It is the hope of this paper that the Church, Muslims and other religious bodies will rise up to train their adherents on the act of public service so that the blessing of religion can be brought to influence the management of the Nation positively. Ordinarily, leaders will not give account of their stewardship except it is demanded from them. Therefore, the religious organizations should be ready to demand accountability from members who are in leadership. The recalcitrant ones should be sanctioned to serve as a deterrent to others.





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