

**STRATEGIES FOR RECONCILIATION OF DISCREPANCIES IN AFRICAN  
RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL PHILOSOPHY WITH CHRISTIAN  
IDEDLOGY AMONG AFRICIANS IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

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DOI: 10.13140/RG.2.2.18277.47848

**Abstract**

*There has been discrepancies between the religious and cultural philosophy of Africans with the religious and cultural ideology or philosophy of Christianity among African adherents. Another problem that bothers this paper is that strategies have been put in place to reconcile these disagreements, but expected success has not been achieved. Amongst the strategies that have been advocated and adopted are religious dialogue, ecumenism, etc. This research advocates for anti-fanaticism campaign, infants religious and cultural integration campaign, central and annual religion and cultural archival interactions, etc. It has been discovered these disagreements have drastically affected social, economic and religious development, growth and awareness of African Christians and Traditionalists. The paper is therefore designed with the aim of addressing the negative effects of religious and cultural dilemma for a better futuristic relationships. The paper employs phenomenological research methodology. Data were collected through direct interviews, text books, journals, and other secondary data. Data gotten were analysed with historical and comparative sociological styles of data analysis.*

**Keywords:** Christianity, African Religion, Culture, and Philosophy

**Introduction**

African traditional religious and cultural philosophy has been in dispute with the ideology of Christianity in Africa. As at the early time, Achebe (1958) had stated that the white man has used a sharp knife to cut the things that held us together and things started falling apart. The sharp knife Achebe meant is simply Western religion and culture. The discrepancies on the philosophy and ideology of African and Christian religions' cultures are expected to have died naturally

before this century, but the issue seems to escalate on daily basis. Christianity itself took its root as an embodiment of a church, from Roman Catholic Mission before the proliferation of other churches with withdrawal and emergency of Anglican Communion. It could be suggested that the more churches sprout, the more divergent ideologies are developed. The development of Christian denominations on daily basis triggers the outburst of numerous ideologies which encourage immense discrepancies between the indigenous religion of the aboriginal and the Western (Christian) religion.

These disconnections are obvious in such practices like: title-taking, dedication of children, marriage rites, certain religious rituals, cultural dances, secret societies, offering and sacrifices, other norms and customs, etc. One of the problems of serious concern in this paper is that strategies have been employed to settle these differences, but to no reasonable and positive results. Groups and individuals have adopted religious ecumenism, dialogue, seminars, symposium, etc, but expected success has not been attained. In this research, anti-fanaticism campaign, central and annual religion and cultural archival interactions, infants religious and cultural integration campaign, inter and intra religious monthly programme, digitalizing African Tradition, religious and culture beyond the ordinary and secularization of common religious philosophy and ideologies among Christians and traditional religious votaries. It is found in this study, that these differences have immensely affected social, economic and religious awareness, growth and development among African Christians and Traditionalists. Therefore, this paper is designed with the purpose to address the negative effects of religious and cultural misconceptions and proffer solutions for a better futuristic relationships. The paper adopts phenomenological research approach. Data were generated through direct interview, and through secondary sources, e.g. text books, journals, etc. historical comparative and sociological styles of data analysis were used.

It is pertinent to emphasize on the view of Obiefuna et al (2016:19) thus:

The unbridled proliferation of churches in Nigeria has steered up concerns among adherents of religious faiths, onlookers and academics alike. Nigerian society today is undergoing significant constant proliferation of churches which has brought not only changing values, but also source of solutions to people's problems. The origin of this phenomenon could be traced to Martin Luther's 95 theses which sparked off religious revolution in 16<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Following Luther, Zwingi and John Calvin started

reforms in Switzerland, John Lawx in Scotland, also Holland and other countries witnessed the reform.

It could not be conceived as a blunder to concur with the assertion on that contrary views or ideologies to existing philosophy constitute reformation and reformation produces more recent philosophy to the affected society or societies. These contrary ideologies and philosophy between Christianity and African traditional religious and cultural adherents propagate the discrepancies in this context.

### **Clarification Of Terms**

The terms that are considered for clarification in this article include Christianity, African Traditional Religion, Culture and philosophy. Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in the world, with more than 2 billion followers. The Christian faith centers on beliefs regarding to birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (History vault, 2017:1) Christianity is viewed as a monotheistic religion irrespective of the fact that arguments have risen against the monotheistic conception of Christianity as a contradiction generated by the trinity, that is the Christian belief in three persons in one God. Christianity is a religion that believes in one God. God the son and God the Holy Spirit are presided by God the Father. Through Christianity is centered on personality of Jesus Christ, His birth, messiahship, activities, death and resurrection, yet it appreciates the supremely of one God the father. African traditional religion on the other hand has been defined by scholars of Africans traditional religion as a unit in Religious Studies. Ekwunife in Ugwu (2014: 6) defines it thus:

Those institutionalized beliefs and practices of indigenous Religion of African which are rooted in the past Africans religious culture, transmitted to the present by successive African forebears mainly through oral traditions (myths and folklores, songs and dances, liturgies, rituals, proverbs pithy sayings and names) sacred specialists and persons, sacred space and objects religious works of art, a religion which is slowly but constantly updated by each generation in the light of new experiences through the dialectical processes of continuities and discontinuities.

In this definition African Traditional Religion should be understood as an indigenous and religious property of African aboriginals. Every other religion that exists and practiced in and by Africans is foreign and not primal. The

religion is a chief carrier of African culture and tradition. It has appeared to be difficult to separate African Traditional Religion from African culture.

Culture has been viewed by a layman just as a way of life. Center for Advanced Research on language Acquisition in Pappas and Mickelie (2021:2) perceive culture as:

Shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialization. Thus, culture can be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group. Cristiana de Rossi in Pappas and Mickelvie (2021:3) adds that culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe if right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with the loved ones and a million other things”

Culture, therefore, could be ascertained to be a unique and special identity of a people which provides a special identification of a people’s dressing style, housing patterns, dances, songs, religion, economic activities, politics, health management, food and feeding habit other behaviors. Greetings and responses, language and literal expositions, e.t.c, “culture, then is the primary means by which human beings adapt to the challenges of their environment” (Ikeyi, 2004:171). Onyibo (203:1) adds that: “culture is the totality of the people’s way of life. It gives honor and respect that is the reason why people are proud of their culture. Therefore culture could be said to be the pride of a people.

Philosophy has commonly been connected to human thought. 1xL Leaning (2022:3) has viewed the term philosophy thus;

The noun philosophy means the study of proper behavior and the search for wisdom the original meaning of the word philosophy comes from the Greek roots philo,-Meaning “love” and - sophos, or “wisdom”. When someone studies philosophy they want to understand how and why people do certain things and how to live a good life.

Philosophy deals with the search for fruit and meaning of nature and life. Philosophy covers the areas of Epistemology, Metaphysics and ethics -moral philosophy. This article therefore, looks into strategies that will yield better fruits in reconciling the Christian and African Traditional, religious ideologies.

### **Highlights On Some Areas Of Discrepancies**

The ways of conceptions of different idea, practices and beliefs among Christians and African religious adherents call for attention especially in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. This discrepancies exist between Christianity and Islam, but, it seems ordinarily gratuitous inessential and undeserved to encounter an experience of hostile relationship between these two religions as a result of existence of different ideologies. Of course two entities from different cultural background must not be expected to work or think alike. But the major issue is that one of the religions is primal while the other is alien and are practiced by the primal people of African origin. It is expected that a similar understanding between the converted Jews and Judaisic Jews would occupy the psyche of African Christians and their traditionalists. Unfortunately crises become the case of these sets of African and Christian religious practitioners or votaries. Jewish tradition and culture were able to build themselves gently in transition, from Old to New dispensations with cordial growth development and harmonized differences. In Africa, the two major foreign religions are in conflicts, one among them opens local confrontations with the indigenous religion of the aboriginals. This creates chaos in African religious scene as a whole.

Few areas where these differences are obvious are include: the idea and use of symbols, cultural or certain materials or object, health management and treatments, covenant / oath and administration of justice, priesthood sacrifices, rites of passage, gender sensitivities, festival and accompanied masquerade cult prophecy / divination, etc. Things fall apart: the centre cannot hold mere anarchy is loosed upon the world. (Achebe, 1958 : v). It is in some of these areas highlighted that the Whiteman Achebe meant and his religion found faults in African traditional religion and culture. Yet, at the exit of the white missionaries and colonization, the same converted Africans have decided to fanatically follow the beliefs and practices of the white who did not familiarize themselves very well with the Africans traditional practices hook, line and sinker. Consequently, African and Christian religious atmosphere is littered with antagonists. Achebe (1974 : 70 - 71) posits thus:

As he approached the centre of the market place Ezeulu reenacted the first coming of *Ulu* and how each of the four days put obstacle in his way. At that time, when lizards were still in one and twos, the whole people assembled and chose me to carry their new deity. I said to them "Who am I

to carry this fire on my bare head? A man who knows that his anus is small does not swallow an *udala* seed. They said to me:

“Fear not. The man who sends a child to catch a shrew will also give him water to wash his hand” I said: “So be it”. And we set to work. That day was Eke”.

Achebe narrates the process of choosing priests of deities of shrines in Africa – Igbo traditional society. This is similar to Old Testament process of choosing priest. This choice of priest / priesthood in some cases were revealed to the people in divinations as a divine call. As it was in the case of Samuel. For the Christians in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, priestly vocations are decided by the individual priests who may believe to have been called by God but has to work hard, and would be sponsored by family, friends and philanthropists within his reach, before he could be ordained by the priest of a higher order. More so, in this 21<sup>st</sup> century people have chosen on their own to function as priests with different nomenclature viz: Evangelists, Apostles, etc and as Christian religious ministers of various ministries. Most of these specialists in priestly order, in Christianity, criticize and condemn traditional religious priesthood.

In Africa, there are actions and items that have cultural and religious symbolic interpretations. On the traditional Igbo society encapsulated in Chinua Achebe’s novels, three food items stand out: Kolanut, Palm wine and yam (Onwuka, 2019). Most Christians especially those from the new generation African independent churches, Pentecostal churches, etc, have condemned the social symbolic significance of yam, kola nut and palm-wine. They counter claim that the yam which is acknowledged by the traditionalists especially among the Igbo as a leading food, item that it has a divinity, *Ufajjoku* attached to it and should be celebrated annually.

For this reason, such Christians have refused to participate in Igbo New Yam Festivals. And believe that the masquerading cult display is an alliance to other religion. Some have refused to use kola-nut and palm wine even in occasions where they are traditionally compulsory, like marriage rites, birth rites, child dedication, just because they believe that they are major food items used for traditional rites, rituals, and worship. There are other concerns given by such Christians to the symbolic regards of such food items. For example kola nut has some genders considerations. On issues of kola nut, for instances, some argue that the sharing practices in traditional societies are male oriented. There are

some practices, which seemingly marginalize women. Women are not allowed to present kola nut directly to a visitor in the presence of a male even if it is her small son. From a common kola dish, instead she was given one. A woman owned no kola nut trees and even when she dared to plant one, she owned it only by proxy (Eze, 2019). Kola nut has serious socio-cultural and religious symbol held in very high esteem by the Igbo. Mr Izuchukwu Okalu (personal communication, 14 April 2022) points that in some Igbo communities females do not cultivate yam or put it inside the yam hips or make yam hips in the farm physically by themselves. In some places, it is against the custom to march yam tuber(s). he continues that women do not own palm trees.

Discrepancies are also attracted by the Christian rejection of the use of certain cultural materials or objects. Most of them claim that all of them (cultural objectives) are meant for fetish intention. There are eleven different versions of pot suffixed with 'ite', seven different types of 'Udu' and five different types of 'Oku'. Some are either prefixed or suffixed with the name 'Chi'. These are: *Onu Udu chi*, *Chiagaliga / Chi Okpa nibo Chi okpa naa* (Nwokike, 2006 : 23). Most Christians do not want to use any pottery products because they were used for traditional religious purposes in the past and present, no matter the type. These Christians do not listen to the purposes for which those pottery materials were made for, and the purpose for which the present pottery materials are made. They discard any pottery products in their homes even though those products can be used to preserve food items, seeds and seedlings, water, etc. Apart from pottery products, there are other cultural objects they reject. For examples traditional stools, *Okobo*, fresh palm fronds – *Omu*, the metal gong, wooden gongs, etc.

Some Christians divorce their relationships with people who acknowledge traditional health care delivery in all ramification. Okafor (2019 : 67) points thus:

...Traditional medicine is of prophylactic (preventive and therapeutic (curative) while magic is of contagious, sympathetic and homeopathic types. In some cases, medicine can be simply administration of herbs, roots, ointment without any immediate spiritual attachment ...

Perception of some Christians as far as traditional health care delivery is concerned is that it is the use of dangerous amulets, talisman, charms, and a shift from their faith to a devilish belief system. This causes a great difference in the

understanding of some Christians against the traditional religious practitioners in Africa.

There are other discrepancies that exist between them on idea of prophecy and revelation of hidden facts or thing beyond physical sight and observation or reasoning. For the Christians divination is not from the God Almighty. Though they believe that there is serious gift of prophecy given to men by God, but it does not call for divination. Mr Okeh Donald (Personal communication, 4 May, 2022) is of the view that divination in most cases come as a gift from God to the expert just like prophecy among Christians. Hence there are fake and real diviners and prophets among Christians and traditional practitioners.

There are also disagreement in worship prayers, sacrifices etc. Okafor in Okafor (2020 : 115 - 116) has identified up to fourteen types/forms of worship in African Traditional Religion. They include: public, individual, communal, private, daily, annual worships and so on. Okafor (2020 : 116) adds thus:

In all these worships, prayers are the most observable element... It is pertinent to stress here that as far as prayers are of so much importance to Africans, it must at the same time, significantly influence the indigenization of African knowledge and values.

African prayer has significant space in the brains of Africans. The names they and their children answer are radiating to their knowledge foundation. Even when an African man is a Christian, there is serious attachment of spiritualities in whatever happens around them. Therefore, it could be suggested that African traditional contents of prayers influence even the African Christians beliefs and practices. In African prayers many spiritual bodies are put at the forefront. They include God, gods, oracles, divinities, magic and medicine, ancestors, and ancestresses. In every worship in African Traditional Religion, prayer forms the major element. It is also the same thing in Christian Religion, the types of worships observed by Okafor in African Traditional Religion are virtually seen in Christian Religion, but here, the problems lie fundamentally on the belief systems on certain spiritual bodies and the images that represent them in worship (places) and during prayers.

While the African acknowledge the spiritual being of God the father, lower gods, divinities, deities and ancestors and ancestresses, water spirits, spirits of living creatures and things; animals and plants, natural bodies e.g mountains, hills,

caves, grove, etc. the Christians, acknowledge the spiritual values of God Almighty, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit (Trinity), Mother Mary, Angels, Saints, etc. all these spirit being are important in these two religious faiths, meanwhile create a serious demarcation in the relationship between the members of these two religion to an extent that chaos arise between blood relations on the basis of differences in their religious faiths. In extreme cases, it has created disunity between blood relations from different Christian denominations.

Other practices that create differences among these religions are Oath-taking /covenant offering and sacrifices. The Christian bible teaches adherents not to swear in the name of anything, otherwise say the truth and go. For example James 5:12 says thus:

Above all, my brothers and sisters, do not swear not by heaven or by earth or by anything else. All you need to do say is a simple “yes” or “No” otherwise you will be condemned.

Hence, Christian bible does not support swearing of any kind of oath. But for African Traditional Religion, swearing on oath serves as the major means through which one could be trusted or exempted from an evil or crime. All things being equal, Christians today swear oaths of allegiance to office, affidavit, assets declaration, and attestations etc, in most cases with a judiciary authority. For the Traditionalists the gods, divinities, deities, spirits and their priests are both religions and authorities in charge. This art of swearing oath still causes havoc between these two religions because of the differences in their background philosophies and ideologies. On the practice of instituting covenant, the two religions adhere to that in different religious platforms. For the African traditional religious practitioners, animals can be killed, and other traditional religious objects could be used, the basis of uses of animal or food items for covenant in Africa generally and Igbo in particular is that there is the belief that after having a sensitive religious and life sustaining agreement between two persons or parties, dinning together with the same animal and food used to sacrifice to the divine order solidifies such treaty (personal communication, 31 May,2022). So, if any of these parties or persons violates the conditions of the agreement must be divinely and humanly punished. For the Christians, the only item that is vital in their covenant is the “bible” Okwueze and Kanu (2003 : 97) examine this significance of traditional covenant thus:

This type of traditional covenant was recently made between the people of Aguleri, Umuleri, and Umuoba Anam communities meant to set the wounds inflicted by fratricidal war, which took place among them. The situation in these communities of Amanbra East Local Government Area of Anambra State was to say the least a war of attribution, which degenerated to a state of anarchy. The conflicts was the death of hundreds of people with properties worth millions of naira destroyed... The covenant that took place is called in the local language *Iko Mme* which means removing the bloodshed. ...*Iko Mme* means traditional reconciliation. It is a sort of cleansing to appease the gods

The truth is that it was this covenant that reconciled Aguleri, Umuleri and Umuoba Anam communities up till today, such crisis has never risen among their communities. It is clear that both traditional and Christian covenant system are efficacious in crisis conditions. Therefore, there is need to reconcile the differences that exist in these contrary religions ideologies because of their relevance to mankind.

Sacrifice is another area of misconception among Christians and African traditional religious practitioners. Gbenda (2006 : 61) has conceived sacrifice in Nigeria tradition thus:

Sacrifice in Nigeria traditional religion is deeply religious. It is one of the elements of worship in which material things like cow, goats, fowls, rice, yam, wine, kolanuts, e.t.c are offered to the supreme being or through his agents for good relationship, harmony, communion to heal old wounds of trouble and expect response.

Sacrifice traditionally in African traditional religion can involve human sacrifice which for Christians is unnecessary for man because for them, Jesus Christ has died once and for all humanity. In this area, this paper support Christian philosophy because religion should stand to save man than to take life. Though human sacrifice has been condemned by most traditionalists especially in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Traditional religious practitioners insist that animal and food offered to the Supreme Being /gods should be killed and shared amongst the congregation. While for the Christians the priests can take the offerings to their domains respectively, whatever offering made during worship fullstop, then capital approaching for one prayer on the other hand is an embodiment of Christianity as laid by Jesus. Prayer is a means of God that one needs in life, and

expressing gratitude and praise to God or an object of worship (Gbenda 2006 : 67). Importance of prayer in Christian life includes the avoidance of temptation, sin, to persevere in Christian life and seek the assistance of God in prayer and African traditional religion serves the same importance. The processes and places and personalities involved in both religions' prayer create the difference.

The Christians also criticize the traditionalists that they offer sacrifices to man-made objects while the traditionalists accuse Christians that their priestly order is self-centred by taking custody of whatever that is offered during worship without allocating any to the congregation or members, at service even the persons that brought the offerings. All the same, these criticisms should not arise as far as members of each of these religions are comfortable with the practices on the order of sacrifice especially where human life is not at risk. There are other areas of discrepancies but the nature of this research would limit its scope to these areas at this point to be able to attend to other sub-headings of this article.

### **Initial Strategies Adopted In The Reconciliation Of The Differences Between African And Christian Religious And Cultural Ideologies In Africa**

Religious misconceptions and differences in ideologies have remained a tormenting problem to Nigerian religious practitioners. Among the Christians there arose serious denominational crises that called for a lasting solution. There is need for reconciliation, giving rise to religious dialogue, ecumenism, etc. Gaiya (2018 : 120). "Dialogue is not only a conversation involving persons but also, the exchange of ideas or views on opinions. 2. Exchange of religious by people who have faith in their religious traditions for mutual experiences enrichment and aid to perfect each others religions pursuits 3. An effort that demands respect for the identity and integrity of other religious outside one's faith". Dialogue involves understanding other people's idea and pattern of life and adjust to accommodate them in co-inhabiting in the environment. Traditional religion, Islamic religion and Christian religion are the three major religions in Nigeria. In recent years conflicts are often common, that seem to be unprecedented in the history of these religions especially between traditionalists and Christians and between Christians and Muslims. With this development, there is need for inter-religions dialogue (Gaiya, 2018 : 121). Ganya (2018) continues that Conflicts and misunderstanding between traditionalists and Christians with examples from Igbo society where instances of bloody clashes involving issues such as: Masquerades. On issues of misunderstanding between traditional practices and Christianity, dialogue has helped to certain extent within the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This

strategy had gone as far as it can to close the gap in the understanding of each other's religious beliefs and faith. But discrepancies are still too much between these two religions.

Ecumenism was later adopted as another strategy to support inter-religions dialogue. Gaiya (2018 : 112) has defined ecumenism as: "a body (movement, council) representing the whole Christian world or universal church in seeking to restore the unity of the Christians churches... Ecumenism is the principle or aim of uniting different branches of the Christian churches". This ecumenical thought has motivated the establishment of related institutions in Africa as far back as the 1990s. Ani (1990 : 47), "Let us remember once more that the institute of Ecumenical Education, Thinkers Corner, Enugu is already nationally accredited to pursue research and teaching in ecumenical education and the social sciences in Nigeria in order to promote a better understanding between Christian churches, different faiths and divided communities. Ecumenism as a concept has developed a unifying concept even beyond Christendom but for the fact that the idea was originally developed to unite churches, it became less active in uniting other religious faiths in Nigeria. Mrs E. Chikelu (personal communication, 14 June, 2022), stressed that ecumenism as a concept is developed and spitted as general courses round all levels and disciplines of studies in the institution. Such institute should have been for the study of ecumenical concepts as a discipline instead of malcing it a general course for all students. On this background, the institute has not gotten to an expected or recommendable degree of achievement. The society of Nigeria in particular and Africa in general still face inter-religious and cultural mischief and differences. Ecumenical dialogue demands just as we accord ourselves the valency of having reasons, logic and feelings peculiar to us, other people, since they are human beings consequently have feelings, logic and reasons peculiar to them (Ani, 1987 : 9). Ecumenism should be built to seriously tackle negative reasoning, logic and feeling against other people's faith and culture other than one religion's affairs.

Another strategy employed by some Africans in tackling Christian - Traditional religions' discrepancies was conferences, seminar, media programmes in radio, televisions etc. Mr Nnebedum Chima (personal communication 4 June, 2022) is of the opinion that print and other media platforms have tried in tackling religion and cultural differences between traditional and Christian religions at least in Igbo communities, but could not get down well to the interior or rural villages very well. More so, low literacy has contributed to the low output of these strategies including conferences and seminars.

Before the recent years churches trained their ministers. For example, the Roman Catholic mission made special academic training compulsory for her priests. At a time, other churches like the Anglican Communion joined. Mr. Okolo Okenwa (Personal communication, 6 June, 2022), points that a more accommodating understanding among Christian priests who are academically trained on missionary works in the contemporary African environment makes commendable impact in closing the discrepancies in inter-religious relationships. That notwithstanding, more seminar strategies need to be put in place.

### **Strategies For Reconciliation Of Differences Between African Traditional And Christian Religious And Cultural Perceptions In Africa In The 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

In this 21<sup>st</sup> century, African indigenous religion and Christianity are suffering some issues that anchored on understanding their individual religious and culture orientated beliefs and practices. It is on this background that this paper suggests for training for collaboration of inter-religious and cultural ideologies. Ugorie (2017 – 2018 : 103) avers thus:

Owing to the religious leaders training on interfaith relations, the need arises for a training agency in Nigeria immediately. The agency's work would be to train religious leaders for interfaith relations. The Federal Government in conjunction with the Nigerian Interreligious Council (NIREC) should establish one. In that circumstance their role should focus on research and planning on how to achieve religious peace in Nigeria. Meanwhile the body or team should be thoroughly trained in all aspects of inter-faith relations possibly by the Cambridge inter-Faith Team, London or any other recognized interfaith relations organisation.

Training for collaboration of inter-religious and cultural ideologies is similar to inter-faith training, but it is at the same time different from it, because it will be organized for both religious and cultural custodians or leaders, and other members of both Christian and African traditional religious and cultural practitioners, season after season with training centre in every African indigenous communities. Experts should be extracted among highly educated Africans in related fields within and outside borders of African continent in order to make the learning purely African. This will go a long way to reshape African traditionalists and Christians philosophies on religion and culture.

Anti-fanaticism campaign is a measure that could also help to tackle this discrepancies to its barest minimum. Agundu (2020:15) examines thus:

The history of Nigeria as a nation is replete with perennial struggle for national integration and Cohension as a result of tribalism or ethnicity and to some extent, regionalism. The Nigeria founding fathers in acknowledging the socio-cultural diversity and heterogeneity of Nigeria never contemplated it to constitute an albatross in Nigeria quest for national integration. This spirit was captured in a famous line of Nigerian anthem at independence.

The quest for national integration has been triggered by ethnicity and multiplicity of cultures and religions. A similar issue has contributed or caused the differences in the philosophy of Christianity and African Traditional Religion in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. This article, hence, advocates for development of anti-fanaticism campaign in line with the provisions of Nigerian constitution which solicitates for freedom of worship and association for her citizens. Other African countries constitutions also provided for such freedom for their citizens. Recently, one Miss Deborah was killed in a College of Education Sokoto in cold blood on issues relating to Christian and Muslim religion and cultural discrepancies in their philosophies and ideologies. Unenlightened traditionalists and Christians fight duo to fanatical thoughts where Christians demolish traditional worship places, objects while the traditionalists retaliate aggressively. Practical anti-fanaticism campaign is needed in serious practice. Mr. Okechukwu Nnaedozie (Personal communication, 17 June, 2022) finds that both Christians and traditionalists embark on processions at intervals. For the traditionalists processions are done on issues of the community concern, and are done on gender identity in most cases. Communities in Africa should plan intervals of the year when members should rally together on both rural and urban streets, roads, avenues, closes, markets, squares, civic centres on procession with the message war against fanaticism in all African communities. This practical and physical steady processions that conveys also penalties on fanatic actions will go a very long way in reducing the philosophical misconceptions between African traditional practitioners and Christians.

Infant religious and cultural integration campaign is another strategy towards managing misconceptions between Christians and traditionalists. Asso Prof. Christian Uzundu (personal communication, 18 June, 2015) teaches that in psychology, it is agreed that whatever you want from a child when grows be

done from 0 - 10 years. Programmes should be put in place by relevant stakeholders on reaching out to young children between 4 - 17 years on the need to avoid anti or opposition to religion and culture ideologies. They should be taught during vacations in their groups, in their rural and urban streets, roads, closes, avenues, villages and communities. These children should be consistently taught to accommodate other children and people from other religion, and culture, beliefs and backgrounds.

Central and annual religion and cultural archival interaction programme should be encouraged. Independent African states should organize annual activities where people of all works of life will meet to witness and watch different local archival contents and materials from both traditional religion, Christianity and other religions existing therein. The Archives should be planned to contain every culture's and religion's materials from history to present. This annual event will help different religious practitioners to observe areas of similarities in individual religions.

#### **Brief Hints On The Effects Of The Discrepancies**

Through, unprecedented violent and unpleasant conditions are experienced in Africa due to religious discrepancies the menace has at the same time fortified African people's thought towards adjusting menace for other international and external challenges facing their religions. While Christians fights to fortify their religions foundation, in Africa, traditionalists never relented. The two religious and African indigenous culture keep growing stronger every day. Mr. Chiekwe Nze (Personal communication, 8 May, 2022) points, that critics are a major reason why African traditional religion and culture and Christianity have lived to hold their principles tenaciously. Religious and cultural differences among the two religious groups have weakened social, religious, economic, political and health promotion and relationships in African. These differences do more harm than good in African environment in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Agha (1997 : 103) asserts that:

The priests and worshippers of the Native African Religion were hostile to the missionaries who brought New Religion as they felt that it was a threat to the growth of their "religious practices and worship. The Africans were regarded as Fetish people. There were constant frictions between the worshippers of the foreign and native religions. The Africans were branded as cannibals as human sacrifice were often made to the gods. The rules and the dread of malignant spiritual influences, whose power was thus to be placated, made the African religion a bondage of fear.

Among the effects of the discrepancies between African native religious adherents and Christianity is on the fact that inhuman practices were aborted to the barest minimum. Each of them is able to confront the other on inhumanity on their culture. Shehu et al (2021) are of the view that archives are sources of information preservation of African culture and tradition. When all these materials are annually displayed in various African countries for public consumption. Africans will begin to understand the best approaches to religions and cultures.

Development and establishment of special non-governmental organisation for interaction and collaboration of inter-religious and cultural ideologies, and ministry of inter-religious and cultural affairs in African countries will be of great importance to this menace. These two bodies will be very significant in execution of these aforementioned strategies. They can establish their offices in strategic locations for effective delivery of these suggested strategies. Mrs Owusu Janet (personal communication, 7 April, 2016) states that Africans need personnel specially designated to tackle religious and cultural misunderstanding for rapid growth and development. Staff of these public service can be managed by government at all levels and philanthropists in various African societies.

Divergent philosophies in religion and culture have caused some discrepancies between African religious and cultural adherents. These discrepancies do not exist without both positive and negative effects on social, religious, economic, political, health etc affairs of the citizenry. Religion is supposed to be a source of peace and tranquility but unfortunately, this hope has been lost in religions and cultures especially in heterogeneous African countries. Religious and cultural discrepancies have caused a lot of lost of properties and lives, sources of living and consistent tension and fear in inter-relationship between Christians and Traditionalists in Africa. These are respective wrong beliefs and practices, for example some Christians, reject their parents/relations because they refused to join their denominations' faith, African traditional religion believes in law of karma, do-me-I-do-you - jungle justice, (the law of karma), etc. Differences among these religions is also making each one to fortify for better practices, but still influenced by sentiments.

### **Recommendations**

This paper recommends that:

1. African should rather put the wellbeing of the continent first than the affairs of their individual religions.
2. Africans should try to be open minded to enable the suggested strategies give their expected results.
3. Africans should make plans for sophisticated care for the elders as major sources of traditional religious culture and information, since African religion and culture is based on oral tradition and lack written preservative measures.
4. African traditionalists and Christians should encourage preservation of religious and cultural materials outside museums and archives.

### **Conclusion**

African religion and Christianity have been facing a lot of disagreements from the advent of Christianity till today. Unity efforts have been made by concerned African traditionalists, Christians and foreigners, but expected results have not been convincingly achieved. These stakeholders had adopted ecumenisms, seminars, symposium, religious dialogue and so on, but much have not been gotten.

The research suggests for other strategies to see if a more productive results could be gotten. These new strategies suggested in this 21 century African society include: inter-faith training, anti-fanaticism campaign infant religious and cultural integration campaign among other strategies. It has been obvious that due to the fact that the negative effects of these discrepancies are more that the positive effects these strategies are believed to leave more positive impact than the previous strategies.

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**Interview**

1. Mr. Chiekwe Nze, farmer, Enugu 66yrs 8/5/22
2. Onwusu Janet, public servant, Ghana, 54yrs, 7/4/2011
3. Mr. Izuchukwu Okalu, farmer, Enugu, 49yrs, 14/4/2022
4. Mr. Donald Okeh Civil servant, Anambra 54yrs 4/5/2022
5. Mr. Thaddeus Tarkma. Businessman, Benue 44yrs, 31/5/2020
6. Mrs. Eugenia Chikelu, Lecturer, Enugu, 45yrs 14/6/2022
7. Mr. Nnabedum Chima. Civil Servant, Anambra State, 62yrs, 4/6/2022
8. Mr. Okolo Okenwa, Public servant, 53yrs 6/6/2022
9. Mr. Okechukwu Nnaedozie, Clergy, Enugu 56yrs 6/6/2022
10. Asso. Prof. Christian Uzondu, Lecturer, Anambra State 70yrs 18 July, 2015