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# An Appraisal of Ethical Values and Tolerance Among Major Religious Groups in Nigeria

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**ABSTRACT :** The paper critically investigates impact of ethics and tolerance among major religion in Nigeria. Promoting peaceful coexistence in a religiously diverse community like Nigeria has made the global search for religious tolerance even more urgent. Given how frequently religious conflict has occurred in Nigeria over the past three decades, religious tolerance as a tool for peace is practical. In light of this, this paper explores religious ethics and tolerance as a strategy for amicable cohabitation in Nigeria. It examines the signs and effects of religious intolerance as well as the pursuit of religious tolerance as a solution to harmonious coexistence. It is therefore recommended that there should be encouragement of dialogue between various religious and ethnic groups through community forums and workshops. These platforms should be designed to address misunderstandings, share perspectives, and build trust.

**KEYWORDS:** Ethics, Tolerance, Religion

## INTRODUCTION

Religious adherents are guaranteed a holy and pure life. Therefore, it is expected of followers to instil certain characteristics and principles in order to foster social harmony. Religion was the source of literacy in human society during the time of the ancient prophets of Israel, but in the Christian world, religion was a major factor that brought European races together to such an extent that it was observed that the more Europeans adhered to the religion, the less violent and barbaric they became. Religion has a strong track record of bringing Arabs together internally in the Arab world and parts of the Middle East.

With an estimated 200 million people, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa and is a multi-religious nation with half of its population being Muslims (Pew Research Center, 2019).“Nigeria, which has the sixth-largest Christian population in the world (87 million), also has the world’s fifth-largest Muslim population (90 million)” According to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (2016), approximately 80% of Nigerian Muslims live primarily in the country's north, with the remaining population favoring traditional African religions. Between 1980 and 1994, Nigeria experienced a number of religious crises and/or conflicts (Warner 2012). This energy which has been utilized to unite Nigerians is the same force that has led to various conflicts in the country. The rivalry between followers of Christianity, Islam and Traditions has resulted in one religion imitating the customs of another to demonstrate that it has similar rituals or is superior in its tradition.

The three main religions practiced by the majority of Nigerians are Islam and Christianity and Traditional Religion. Scriptures from the Islam and Christianity religions provide clear documentation of their teachings. Despite the fundamental contrasts between the three religions' creeds, their moral qualities promote positive interpersonal relationships among its adherents. One example would be between two Muslims who had been convinced to convert to the faith. Unfortunately, there are a number of ways that conflicts or misguided statements among religious groups might occur, undermining the atmosphere of peace and our ability to survive as a country.

Traditional religious adherents existed in Nigeria before the arrival of Islam and Christianity. They believed in the existence of a Supreme Being who created the earth, the sky, the people, the mountains, the rivers, animals, trees to mention a few. This means that the followers of the traditional religion believed that the Supreme Being whose name varied from one society to another was the Creator, controller and sustainer of the whole universe (Balogun, 2012). However, the followers of the Traditional religion considered the Supreme Being as too high to be spiritually approached directly, but through intermediaries or smaller gods or spirits, when there is a need to seek his spiritual intervention in the affairs of

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people and for the purpose of worship. In Nigerian societies, for example, various names were given to the Supreme Being. In Igboland, he is referred to as Cineke. In Yorubaland, they called Him Olorun/Olohun. In Nupeland, they called him Soko. In Edo, it is referred to as Osanobwa. Among the Akan, it is called Nyame. In Hausaland, he is referred to as Ubangiji, and in Arabic, the Supreme Being is called Allah. (Balogun, 2012).

One would typically question the actual purpose of religion as a concept, philosophy, or practice given the extent of religious diversity in Nigeria and the associated crises. In an attempt to restore the lost moral and ethical principles through the worship of a single God, religion—Christianity, Islam, and Traditional in particular has emerged. According to Ephesians 2:14, "He himself is our peace because he has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility." Because they are vicegerent to God, worshippers who uphold these ideals are also able to be more tolerant. Nigerians have remained steadfastly faithful to their ancient faiths, sometimes in combination with various foreign religions such as Islam, Christianity. Without a doubt, Nigerian religious traditions frequently do not align with the actual theory that underpins the beliefs and behaviours surrounding the concept.

It is thought that regardless of the type of social differences, religion tends to foster a sense of ethics and tolerance as two of the main components of its integrative endeavor. There is little benefit in pointing out that proof of fair hearing will follow in a society where religious virtues and tolerance endure. And there will inevitably be unity when different groups are satisfied with the way a decision affects their interests. Therefore, it is imperative to critically study ethics and tolerance among religious in Nigeria.

**Framework of Religion**

"Religion" is a term that encompasses a wide range of various faiths. Its derivation is derived from the Latin term "religio", whose precise roots are uncertain. However, Lego "read" may have been tied to a reduplicated "Leligare", according to Cicero's opinion. Religion is a structured set of worldviews, cultural systems, and beliefs that connect people to spirituality and the divine.

For example, when a researcher defines religion as the ideas and practices that foster social cohesion or that give one direction in life, it is an unavoidable aspect of the human condition (Conelly, 2012). As religion develops in its creation and elaboration, it transforms into a process that sustainably generates significance for itself in terms of both its initial experiences and its own continuing responses. Religion starts as a bid to present and organize convictions, emotions, imaginings, and decisions that arise in response to a specific expertise of the revered and the spiritual. One's definition, not a discovery, is what leads to the transcendence of spirituality that one later finds. However, a social genus can exist in multiple cultures without being present in all of them. As a result, there are ways to define religion that are both substantive and functional. For example, there have been people throughout human history who have no beliefs in an afterlife, supernatural creatures, or explicit metaphysics, just as prevalent as beliefs in cosmic orders or disembodied spirits.

Ofuafo (2019) religion is defined as "man's effort or desire to be at peace with the spiritual powers on one hand and with his fellow man on the other". In all of his sacred duties, man strives to achieve spiritual unity with the divine because he believes that failure to do so will spell his doom. However, achieving this harmony would be difficult unless the divine will were accurately ascertained or interpreted. In essence, religion requires two prerequisites: man's experience and his expression.

**Framework of Ethics**

With its roots in the ancient Greek term "ethos," which means "the way of living," ethics is a field of philosophy that is only concerned with the behavior or personality of a particular person. Since Socrates' day, the application of ethics, or the sense of ethics, has been clearly evident. The conscience decides what to complete, when to do it, and how to do it based on ethics. Many definitions of "ethics" have been offered, and the word has been used to advance justice in our contemporary society by defining how individuals and organizations ought to behave and operate in a just and morally upright way. The government has taken extreme measures to control religious people's moral conduct to promote moral behavior, since most people behave or display certain features without understanding whether they are right or wrong.

According to Akpanobong (2018), ethics is the study of ethical standards or principles, which are the fundamental concepts and convictions that guide an individual's actions and choices. Every field and faith has its own set of moral standards, behavioral norms, and ethical codes, and ethics, as a part of philosophy, often highlights moral concerns. Ethics is a normative discipline that establishes guidelines for human conduct by categorizing some behaviors as necessary, forbidden, or appropriate. According to Rossouw (2015), several behaviors are generally regarded as immoral, and most people think that people should not engage in them.

Ethics can be defined as "A subject that emphasizes the accuracy of the actions of people through investigating the purposes, tenets, and implications associated with a particular act or general conduct" (Quampah, 2014). This approach has been successful in avoiding the complexities that arise from elevating the person above society and vice versa. The concepts of principle, responsibility, and consequence—all of which are discussed in ethical research—are not diminished by this. Ethics is an academic examination of concepts such as moral standards, moral principles, good and evil, right and wrong, and the associated concepts of morality, duty, and responsibility.

**Framework of Tolerance**

Tolerance is defined as "put[ting] up with differences one disapproves of, such as religious and ideological beliefs, cultural practices, sexual orientations, and modes of behaviour differing from one's own" (Verkuyten, Yogeeswaran, & Adelman, 2020). When an individual decides either to accept or reject the practices that offend them, this comprises a principled judgement to endure or not to endure that has been weighed against the perceived cost of putting up with the disliked behaviour (Verkuyten 2022). Thus, the following four ideas of tolerance are distinguished by Rainer Forst's socio-philosophical assessments of the word, which emphasize its intrinsic ambiguity with a dynamic of acceptance and defiance of the other (Forst, 2017):

i. The "permission conception," according to which an increasingly powerful social majority permits a minority's divergent beliefs as long as they stay within the parameters established by the more powerful group;
ii. Coexistence Conception: The "coexistence conception," which holds that organizations or people in power-symmetrical configurations use tolerance as a strategy to prevent conflict; Tolerance in densely populated environments refers to being aware of others, including knowing

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when to keep one's distance, when to overlook insensitivity, oddities, or unsettling behavior, when to embrace differences with humor, when to aim for embracing oneself, recognition, or consensus, and when to keep a certain distance. Despite language-related, social, cultural, and religious differences, social behaviors in this setting are characterized by a rich combination of tolerance that allows for peaceful coexistence.

iii. Respect Conception: When members of a legally recognized community respect one another's inherent liberties and privileges, presumably within the context of formally being equal or in the notion of a shared humanity that is cognizant of the form of existence, this is known as the "respect conception" of tolerance.

iv. The "esteem conception" maintains that although certain aspects of the different way of life are disapproved of, both sides cherish other intellectual, cultural, and religious differences between the tolerant parties.

Tolerance may be based on a rather strict separation regarding what can be expressed and accomplished in the private and public realms (Forst, 2013). In such a case, attitudes and actions linked to minority group identities (like shaking hands with the other sex or wearing a hijab) are limited to the private sphere, while the basic civic norms and values of the majority group are applicable in public settings. Tolerance may have an indirect impact on a person's condition via enhanced information gathering to evaluate alternative resources or heightened foraging motivation. Female eastern chipmunks (Tamias striatus), a kind that can tolerate human presence, had better bodily circumstances in urban settings than in their native habitats, according to Lyons et al. (2017). Human food, however, may serve as an ecological trap for certain animals. Unhealthy coyotes (Canislatrans) are more tolerant of human stimuli and rely more on subpar food from anthropogenic sources than their healthy conspecifics (Murray et al. 2015). Tolerance may influence a person's health or body weight by affecting their ability to digest food. For example, allowing human disturbance may lead to a sufficient and consistent supply of food, improving people's quality of life.

**Christianity Practice in Nigeria**

Nigeria has often been named one of the most religious countries in the world. Christianity is one of the faiths that is growing and gaining popularity in the country. One indicator of this is the proliferation of churches, in almost every nook and cranny of every state in the country, especially in the south. Our check on the Corporate Affairs Commission's website revealed that there are really around 2,995 registered churches in Nigeria (Public check 2020). This number excludes their many branches and unregistered ones. The two primary, geographically and culturally separate areas that comprise Nigeria's geopolitical landscape are the North and the South. This categorization serves as the foundation for comprehending Nigeria's historically ethno-regional politics, religious and cultural disputes, and political and socioeconomic, moral, and ethical challenges.

The first Christian contact in Nigeria occurred in the fifteenth century when the Portuguese introduced Roman Catholicism. However, it was almost exterminated in the years that followed until Roman Catholic missionaries returned in the 1800s. The first Protestant missionaries to reach Nigeria were Wesleyan Methodists. They began collaborating with the Yoruba in southern Nigeria around 1842. Following them were the Southern Baptists, the United Free Church of Scotland, and the Church Missionary Society (Evangelical Anglican) (Todd, 2013).

Christianity believed that all living things were deserving of compassion and care. Adulterous unions do not exclude those born into them. Therefore, Christianity has always worked to defend human life against cruel treatment and the threats that come with the idea that life is holy. Christianity, non-violently proclaimed equality, is the historical source of the fundamental equality of all men. It was affirmed that God is a common father and that all men are brothers and sisters of God.

**Utilizing Christianity Ideas as a Strategy to Enhance Ethical Standard and Tolerance in Nigeria**

**Christianity and Ethics:** The field of Christian ethics acknowledges and validates thinking through and with holistic character, which encompasses the virtues. Characteristics that are dependable, steady, and consistent are called virtues. In order to establish standards, accountability, probity, and justice for the entire church, a code of ethics is necessary. Virtues seek to identify and act in ways that are beneficial to the purpose life .

As Gula (2010) further articulates, a code of ethics for the church that is “properly developed, personally appropriated, structurally supported, responsibly implemented, and justly enforced can strengthen a just ministry. It may also contribute, in a modest way, to restoring trust in the church by setting standards for high-quality and accountable ministerial service. Benefits include vetting new hires for the ministry, establishing trust, creating checks and balances, defining, interpreting, and measuring appropriate ministerial practices, setting an example of moral behavior and excellent character, and more.

In addition to being socially relevant in the human context, Christian ethics can also adapt to a pluralist setting and develop new ethical principles in response to emerging ethical issues, all without sacrificing its core values and objectives, of course. Throughout its whole adaptive and evolving environment, its need for obedience to God is a constant decree (Quampah, 2014). According to Onyinah (2016), the Ghanaian Church of Pentecost, which sprang from the Apostolic Church, teaches sanctification in some capacity. According to him, the Apostolic Church“a rigorous ethical stance was upheld with the prohibition of things such as drinking alcohol and smoking.

Members who were found of making a practice of going to questionable places of falling into open sin were to be disciplined” (Oyinah, 2016). However, sanctificationists are considered "fundamentalists" in the Church of Pentecost. disregarding the importance of sanctification to Ghanaians. Christian morals and maturity. Whatever its instantaneous or processual form, it is a necessary experience that promotes spiritual growth and a stronger relationship with God. It is conceivable that the lack of attention to holiness has had detrimental effects on church growth beyond just numbers. Christian ethics is profound and compelling, flexible and unwavering, and it requires and directs one toward the end goal.

**The Concept of Tolerance in Christianity**

Tolerance is the “ability to endure, disposition or willingness to tolerate or allow permissible range of variation” (Chambers 20th Century, 1971, p. 1418). "Religious tolerance or intolerance arguably must have begun with an individual who subsequently influenced others to be similarly tolerant or intolerant, thereby forming a religiously tolerant or intolerant group," according to Van der Walt (2016). According to Koffeman (2016), tolerance is a component of striking a balance between freedom and authority. The attitude or willingness of adherents of a particular faith to embrace or accommodate religious ideas, practices, or beliefs that are different from their own is known as religious tolerance. It also describes how well religious adherents can strike a balance between the theoretical and practical aspects of their beliefs. It may also be used to describe the

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ability of religious adherents to suppress feelings of hostility and disavowal toward religions that differ from their own. “All faiths are going to grow increasingly respectful of one another while maintaining their historical identities as the world's vast historical and metaphysical heritages become more widely shared by all people”, said a leading religious tolerance advocate. The following biblical verses promote the importance of tolerance: Romans 15:7 (NIV) "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God." Ephesians 4:2 (NIV): "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love." Colossians 3:13 (NIV): "Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."

**Islamic Practice in Nigeria**

Around the 14th century, Islam was brought to Nigeria, challenging the cultural and ceremonial practices of ATR (African Traditional Religion), which are incompatible with Islamic teachings and traditions (Abiona & Abioje, 2021). In essence, these customs involved the utilization of certain enigmatic abilities as well as the worship of idols (gods), divinities, ancestors, and spirits. Islamic adherents who had immigrated to various regions of Nigeria via commerce and other channels found that the Hausa and Yoruba people's traditional religious rituals complemented their culture and customs, and they were unwilling to abandon them. The Fulani clerics and Scholars regarded the Hausa, who were the first to embrace Islam, as practicing a syncretized form of the religion. This is one of the factors that led to the Jihad of Shaykh Uthman Dan Fodio in 18th century. The Jihad's religious influence was to rid the Hausa states of several customs that were not in line with Islam. According to Kenny (2001), the theological impetus for the 1804 Jihad to capture vast swaths of northern Nigeria was to rid the governing culture of its brash disposition toward Islamic practice and its ongoing support of traditional religious rituals.

However, despite accepting Islam, the Yoruba people maintained strong cultural ties since the Muslims adopted some of their comparable beliefs and customs, such as polygamy and the spirit of fraternity. It is important to realize that diversity is God-ordained; in fact, Allah stated that He purposefully created a diverse world and that no one should question this decision, saying, "And if your Lord had willed He could have made (all) mankind on community; but they will not cease to differ" (Qur’an 11:118).

The most noble of you in God's eyes is the most virtuous of you, Allah declares in another verse, "O mankind, indeed we have created you from male and female and made you into diverse nations and tribes so that you may know one another" (Quran 49:13). This verse makes it clear that variety is one of the things that keeps the world turning. The Quran expressly condemns believers who propagate Islam as the sole authentic religion, see other faiths as false, or regard non-Muslims as unimportant. This further demonstrates how religion fosters harmony among differences. Given the competition involved in attempting to develop their separate areas in a fair and justified way, distinctions in tribe and religion stand out and aid in quick growth and development.

**Utilizing Islamic Ideas as a Strategy to Enhance Ethical Standards and Tolerance in Nigeria**

**Islam and Ethics**

In order to investigate the connection between ethics and faith, Brubaker (2015) explained that religion plays a significant—possibly excessive—role in comprehending and navigating life. TerHaar's (2005) claim that spirituality is a complicated phenomenon that is hard to describe exactly and that religious beliefs are deeply embedded lends credence to this viewpoint. These beliefs are derived from the teachings of inspiring individuals and religious books. Over time, these teachings acquire common ideals and standards (found in Islam and Judaism), validated by a transcendental source, and seldom open to discussion or compromise because of their acknowledged divine origin.

The British Broadcasting Corporation claims that in 2014, a Nigerian Muslim man named Mubarak Bala was drugged by a group of Islamic extremists after declaring he was an atheist and was forced to spend eighteen days in a mental facility in Kano by his family with the assistance of Islamic law enforcement. Bala's human rights were infringed, according to the International Humanist and Ethical Union, which took up the matter (The Associated Press, 2014).

Abba Kabir Yusuf, the governor of Kano state, brought up the subject of human rights abuses involving the actions of the state's Islamic police, or Hisbah, as recently as March 1, 2024. "I saw a disturbing video of a raid on a place, and when the offenders are about to flee, sticks are used to hit them, and when they are caught, individuals are treated like animals and are thrown into a Hilux vehicle," the governor said. He said, "This act is unacceptable and a big mistake," to further convey his anger. A person's spinal cord may sustain injury if they are unlucky enough to get struck in the back (The Cable, 2021).

The Governor urged that proper procedures be used in the management of circumstances pertaining to these in order to prevent misuse of people's basic rights, including maltreatment (AriseTV, 2024). Sheikh Daurawa, the Commander-General of the Hisbah Board, promptly resigned and apologized in public when the governor criticized Hisbah's behavior. The Christian minority in the region, especially in Zamfara state, was impacted by many of the social provisions of Sharia law, such as the prohibition on the sale and consumption of alcohol and the requirement that genders be kept apart in public vehicles. As a result, Christian organizations had to offer private transportation services for their female members, even though the extension of Shar’iah law in Northern Nigeria is technically not applicable to non-Muslims (United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, 2001).

**The Concept of Tolerance: Islam and Tolerance**

Certain verses in the Qur’ān emphasize the need to tolerate people of different religions and encourage tolerance in Islam. At the start of his mission, Prophet Muhammad also showed some tolerance for non-Muslims and occasionally urged his followers to love them. "The overall direction of the Qur’ān and Hadith promotes freedom of worship, but numerous aspects of these texts can be, and customarily have been, construed as denying it," according to Abdullah (2011).

Additionally, he points out that the Qur'anic understanding of the human person is the cornerstone of the Islamic argument for religious freedom (Abdallah, 2011). This vision is based on verses in the Qur’ān that promote positive interactions with non-Muslims. Nevertheless, there are also issues with tolerance for religion in a diversified country like Nigeria, such as syncretism, which is evident in Nigerian Christianity and Islam. For an individual to be tolerant, the content of this reasoning must be produced by value-based judgment rather than heralded by extrinsic pressures. Therefore, a non-Muslim who accepts a proposal to build a mosque in their community is tolerant if they accept because they value the right of all

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persons to religious expression; another non-Muslim who accepts this proposal because they feel powerless to change the course of the decision is not. As stated below, the following Quran holy bible verses promote the importance of tolerance in our society today.

i. Surah Al-Baqarah (2:256):"There shall be no compulsion in [acceptance of] the religion. The right course has become clear from the wrong. So whoever renounces false gods and believes in Allah has certainly grasped the firmest, unfaltering hand. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing."
ii. Surah Al-Hujurat (49:13): "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you. Indeed, Allah is Knowing and Acquainted."
iii. Surah Al-Anfal (8:61): "And if they incline to peace, then incline to it and rely upon Allah. Indeed, it is He who is the Hearing, the Knowing."

These verses encourage understanding, respect, and peaceful interactions among individuals, regardless of differences in beliefs or backgrounds.

**African Traditional Religion Practices in Nigeria**

Religion is a means of worshiping, connecting with, and appreciating God. In this sense, the Africans have not chosen a single unified picture to represent God, the Absolute Creator, operator, and ruler of everything, as well as the Father of all people. For example, the Yorubas have no plural name for God (Olodumare), the Efik have no plural name for God (AbasiIbom), the Igbo have no plural name for God (Chineke), and the Urhobo have no plural name for God (Oghene). This idea is widespread in Africa. Aside from that, Africans think that God has predetermined the form of government, whether it be democratic or monarchical. Because He bestows power, the honor is typically attributed to Him. God is represented by the deities and human beings (rulers). They are to be revered as representatives of God, not to be worshipped or deified.

Nigeria's most popular religion is African Traditional Religion, which is not unrelated to the reality that it is not an evangelical faith that seeks out followers and converts others. In Nigeria, the ATR leaders and followers are often subjugated during interfaith prayer and official events. Neither the Federal nor most of the state governments acknowledge their existence. It is discouraging to allow this kind of instability that casts a religion with global power into the background. Occasionally, when a Muslim or Christian is in the position of leadership, they often take advantage of each other. This dominance periodically results in internal strife, persecution, demotion, inefficiency, low productivity, and the fostering of hatred and prejudice. Sometimes it is so evident, and other times it is not. However, in an inclusive and religiously diversified nation like Nigeria, which is prone to religious crises, it is a pathology that should not be allowed to persist.

**Utilizing ATR Ideas as a Strategy to Enhance the Promotion of Ethics and Tolerance in Nigeria**

**Traditional Religion and Ethics**

An extremely high position in the spiritual realm, where they may both punish offenders and care for the living, is occupied by the ancestors. In traditional Igbo society, there are a number of taboos or prohibitions for the maintenance of social cohesion and the promotion of morality. Anedo (2019) classified taboos prevalent in Igbo society into: general Taboos, specific Taboos, major and minor taboos, general taboos. Specific taboos apply to specific persons or animals. The rules and penalties of the ancestors reflect moral conduct that upholds the law and the customs of the people, guaranteeing a fair traditional society.

Ossai (2014) wrote in describing the ancestors' responsibilities for upholding law and order. In this context, traditional Africans promote moral behavior by honoring their ancestors, who are seen as the guardians of morality and who have the power to both reward and punish members of their traditional community.

The same belief is shown by the reverence given to the natural symbols upon which these gods and goddesses are claimed to have appeared: trees, rivers, rocks, mountains, hills, streams, and grooves. African countries are able to maintain moral conduct within their communities because of the many roles that deities and divinities play in their societies. Through the rules and regulations that control their worship and relationships, these gods and divinities fulfill some of these functions. Some of the taboos surrounding these gods and goddesses in African tribes even serve as the foundation for traditional religious ethics in Africa. For example, adhering to taboos, laws, and regulations that govern the principles pertaining to divinities and deities is focused on fostering positive human relationships, which in turn reflect on the spiritual with the ultimate goal of creating a fair society.

The communal nature of African life is a powerful manifestation of the proverb "A single tree cannot make a forest." Living in a community that fosters solidarity helps Africans recognize their needs. Respect for elders, especially one's parents, grandparents, and other family members, is another important traditional African virtue. In addition to this virtue, "ancestor worship" is a significant associated value in African culture. Since the African views his deceased relatives or old relations closest to his ancestors in his cosmological conceptual scheme, the foundation for the honor and respect given to elderly people in traditional African culture is really their connection to the ancestors. There are Christian parallels to the traditional teaching on elder respect as well: “My son, hear the instruction of your father, and forsake not the law of your mother” (Prov. 1:8). Africans conceive humility as a wise policy which must be patronized at all times. It is therefore not surprising that many African proverbs and stories insist on humility.

**The Concept of Tolerance in ATR**

Tolerance could mean allowing people of other religious beliefs to practice their faith without any form of hindrance (Benson, 2016). It could also mean the ability to understand and accept the value of other people’s spiritual values, worldviews, and practices. Tolerance involves a willingness to take action in private and public spheres to make religious minorities feel accepted based upon an acknowledgment of the subjective value that minorities attribute to their beliefs.” Therefore, openly opposing someone else's religious views or denying them rights or advantages might be an example of religious intolerance. It could also manifest as a refusal to accept the objective principles that underlie the religions of others. According to the Yoruba metaphysical (traditional religion) viewpoint, the Ede people historically worshiped the Creator via a variety of divinities (Orisa). However, due to its military heritage, the Ede likely gravitated toward Ogun and then Sango deities.

Christianity and Islam spread over Ede in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Since many of Ede's ancient rulers, or monarchs known as Timi, like Timi Ajeniju, personally converted to Islam, Islam predated Christianity and gained popularity (Oyeweson & Raheem, 2020). Islam essentially spread over Ede by force, coercion, and diplomacy. Islamic legal norms were also implemented by successive Timi, the majority of whom were

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Muslims (Oyeweso & Raheem, 2020). In the twentieth century, the Baptist mission brought Christianity to Ede following Islam. The first missionary work was carried out by Jacob Oyeboade, an Ede native who became a Christian at Ogbomoso. He got several converts after preaching to the Ede in Oke Babasanya, Ede (Alao & Efuntade, 2015). various indigenous people were later converted to Christianity by the efforts of various leaders, including Pastor E. D. Ladipo, Reverend J.A. Ajani, and a European woman named Miss N.C. Young.

In Ede, evangelizing, proselytization, and the delivery of social development and educational services were the primary means by which Christianity expanded (Alao & Efuntade, 2015). Other academics such as Siyan Oyeweso have also validated these missionary tactics (Oyeweso & Raheem, 2020). However, there are a few recorded instances of Traditional Religion adherents in Ede violently assaulting Islamic preachers who hosted wasi, or public preaching sessions (Oyeweso & Raheem, 2020). In the instance of Dag-Heward Mills' Jesus Healing Crusade evangelistic campaign, a number of strategic discussions with important individuals, including Christian and Muslim leaders, customary rulers, state security officials, and other stakeholders, made sure that what might have descended into violence did not. It is important to remember that African traditional religion has traditionally been more accepting of other faiths. However, Islam and Christianity did not accept the Ede people's original faith.

**Empirical Studies on Religious Ethics and Tolerance**

Verkuyten et al. (2020) have used a range of strategies to interrogate the demarcation between (in)tolerance and prejudice, including quantitative and experimental approaches. They asked native Dutch participants to judge how tolerable a series of practices performed by a religious outgroup were (e.g., the wearing of religious icons at work). Experimental conditions varied whether this outgroup was Turkish Christians or Turkish Muslims, with the latter religious group (Muslims) encountering high levels of prejudice in many European countries. On average, the presented practices were all judged negatively by participants. However, there was no significant difference in tolerance judgements when the outgroup was Turkish Christians compared to Turkish Muslims, suggesting this negativity was unrelated to group-based antipathy (i.e., prejudice).

Another study by Dangubić et al. (2023) that used nationally representative survey samples obtained from majority group members in two Western European countries to examine tolerance judgements of practices carried out by three different religious groups (Christians, Jews, and Muslims). Latent profile analysis identified a fifth of respondents who applied a double standard by rejecting practices more strongly when the Muslim outgroup was involved, suggesting anti-Muslim prejudice. However, another clear subgroup accepted some religious practices and rejected others, equally for all three religious groups. This profile incorporates practice-based acceptance and rejection that cannot easily be explained by prejudice toward a particular group and thus is more consistent with definitions of tolerance and intolerance from the forbearance perspective. As these indicative examples show, the social psychological scholarship on (in)tolerance thus offers good evidence that tolerance and intolerance are conceptually distinct from prejudice.

## CONCLUSION

Teaching followers of their respective religions from their texts in formal educational institutions and adult education centers can solve all of the issues concerning Nigeria's religious practices. Good preachers are needed in the churches and mosques. It is possible to urge the communities to visit these institutes and learn their religions accurately. If religious leaders are encouraged to carry out such a task by governmental authorities and traditional rulers, this can be accomplished. Family-level training is provided by the home, where parents receive instruction from churches and mosques to help them teach their children the correct religious doctrine and the importance of promoting peace, which is a requirement of any missionary work. Based on the findings, it is there recommended that:

i. Schools should incorporate values of respect, empathy, and understanding of different cultures and religions. Workshops and extracurricular activities that celebrate diversity can also foster a culture of acceptance.
ii. There should be encouragement of dialogue between various religious and ethnic groups through community forums and workshops. These platforms should be designed to address misunderstandings, share perspectives, and build trust. Collaborative projects, such as community service initiatives, can also help break down barriers.
iii. There should be use of media platforms to promote stories and narratives that highlight examples of moral integrity and acts of tolerance in various communities. Campaigns should focus on showcasing positive behavior, promoting peace, and celebrating the country's rich diversity to counteract negative stereotypes.
iv. There should be support grassroots initiatives that bring together people from different backgrounds to work on common goals, such as economic development, environmental conservation, or health awareness. These programs can create opportunities for collaboration and understanding, fostering a sense of unity.
v. There should be encouragement of leaders at all levels to model moral behavior and advocate for policies that promote social cohesion and tolerance. This includes implementing anti-discrimination laws, supporting equitable access to resources, and ensuring justice for all community members, regardless of their background. Political leaders should publicly denounce hate speech and any form of violence based on ethnicity or religion.

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