

## ROLE OF CHRISTIAN ETHICAL TEACHING IN CURBING MORAL DECADENCE IN NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*The study explored the role of ethical teaching in curbing Moral Decadence in Nigeria: The Christian Perspective. Any community, organization, and country must be founded on the principle of ethics, which shapes the types of people that live there, how they are portrayed, their cultures, and their value systems. Before the colonial invasion, Nigeria's moral uprightness was very high, and it was the nation's pride. Today, our value system has been declining, casting its shadow of constant desecration on every aspect of polity. The glorious days of moral uprightness in Nigeria are remembered with social vices. Right from the colonial invasion to the present day of Nigeria, the nation has witnessed progressive degeneration of morality. Before the colonial invasion, Nigeria was characterized by norms that were pivoted to the running of the society. But in recent times, all the prohibitions that aided the maintenance of high morals and disciplined society have been neglected and abandoned due to the influence of Western culture mainly brought about by colonial invasion. Therefore, there is a need for moral reorientation among Nigerian citizens. This study aims to examine the role of ethical teaching in curbing moral decadence in contemporary Nigerian society. It examines ethical teaching in Christian homes, schools, churches, and society as an agency of moral training. The paper also proposes a recapture of the lost moral uprightness through profound efforts by ethical teachings.*

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### Introduction

It is believed that any nation's development hinges on the sincerity of its ethical practice. Nigeria today, there is widespread concern about the moral crisis faced by the country. Moral decadence permeates almost all aspects of our public lives, and rampant corruption cases are easily noticeable. Many youths have imbedded the culture of immorality for their selfish gains. This Nigeria youths in the secondary schools manifest moral decay in the following ways, sexual harassment, robbery, truancy, and maiming. A society where the youths no longer think of how tomorrow will be better than today or how to be instrumental to the development of the country is really in dilemma. This write up therefore focuses on how ethical teachings in Nigerian schools and society can bring about

positive changes in reshaping the lives of every individuals in the society.

Ethic is derived from the Greek word 'ethos' meaning good behavior or attitude by the people living in a particular community. It could also be interpreted to mean the study of what is right or wrong, avoiding what is wrong and doing what is right, and what is approved, and acceptable, (Sherman, 2020). Ethical teaching is the systematic approach of helping an individual to understand the important of ethics, moral principles and how to apply those principles in the nations' lives and wellbeing.

Christian views ethics as the standard of behavior or attitude of the followers of Christ as supposed to be practiced and live by it, Oyetubo (2021).. Jesus Christ in his sermon on the mount in Mathew 5:1ff taught that ' we are the light of the world' he also taught that we are

the salt of the earth and if the salt losses it taste it becomes useless because it has loss it value and can only be thrown away and be trampled upon by men. By implication, Christians supposed to live transparent lives anywhere they found themselves and avoid those things that will profane the name of the Lord. Christians are also supposed to preserve the Christian culture and the value system, no matter the changing world and should make the world seasoned with good taste so that God's name be glorified.

The word decadence is tantamount to disapproved behavior or attitude which shows a fall in standard of moral and ethical ones, not on interest in pressure and enjoyment rather on more serious things. Moral or morality simply means conduct or behavior while the word ethics means the study of moral conduct, or system. Moral decadence comes in when there is deviation from the standard expected of every member of the society. Moral decadence is seen when people are no longer virtuous, honest or law abiding. It is a decline in moral values or standards, especially in the society or group. The term is used to describe behaviors that are seen immoral or unethical, such as greed, dishonesty and many others.

### **Elements of Moral Decadence in Nigeria**

Moral decadence in Nigeria today is increasing on daily basis in our various learning institutions, homes and society at large, this has become a global issue not only locally but has grown internationally. According to Adebisi, (2018), the element of moral decadence are multifarious and of different and great varieties. Some of such elements include religious intolerance, exam malpractices, forgery, vandalism, armed robbery, killing, smuggling, victimizations, favoritism, absenteeism, nepotism and abortion.

For example. In some institutions of learning we have seen several acts of malpractice and cheating all over venues of examinations. In fact the examination conducting bodies as WACE, NECO, and JAMB are not left out such. Recently, in the

WACE written in 2006, almost all the papers leaked and this resulted in the cancelation of paper and rewriting. On several occasion students are involves in this obnoxious practice, students don't have interest in reading but want to pass their examinations, likewise, some teachers have become cheaters that do not pick interest in doing their job, rather they dictate books for students to write and students do not have access to those books due to financial constraints.

One of the major problems besetting the youth in the Nigerian society is moral decadence. Indeed, religion has been plagued with youth restlessness and this situation has continuously taken a heavy toll on humans and material resources, peace and development. This study employs both historical and analytic methods in its approach suffice to say that it has given the nation a toga of notoriety. Especially, the pressing and obviously daunting challenges facing political leaders and policy makers alike and this has a ways of stemming the attitudes of youths who seem to have taken militancy as a way of life. The Nigerian society has a large group of Christians who tends to be serving God, but yet the moral upbringing and behavior are poor which are assumed to be the caused of illiteracy , and poor parental upbringing, low level of income and lack of sound Christian teaching in the churches spread across the metropolis. But it is observed that with sound ethical Christian teaching, most of the menace will be put to rest as in line with the biblical teaching of training a child in the way he should go and when he is old he would not depart from it, it becomes evidence that providing religious education to the youths would go a long way in resolving the menace of the youths delinquency and youth militancy in the society.

Today, cases of bribery and corruption, cuts across all facet of Nigerian society. Shockingly, bribery and corruption have found their ways into schools, and even in some places of worship in the nation. We see students, teachers, even some religious leaders find ways of extorting money from their

students, and some religious followers. Students who are unable to pass their tests and examinations pay specific amounts of money to lecturers or invigilators to help them pass their papers.

In 2020, along Bauchi -Jos road, a security agent shot a driver to death instantly just because he declined to give bribe and after the incident, other drivers plying the road blocked it for hours, seeking justice for their dead colleague. (kobi.2003). Apart from that, today there are several road blocks on many roads by hoodlums seeking to extort money from road users and passengers. Even security personals. On several occasions we have had of canalization and bonkers in some part of Nigeria. We also had of the teenager involves in premarital sex, abortion and taking of hard drugs. There are also examples of cultism and secret cult activities going on in our educational institutions and some communities. Ehimidu and Uyagu (2006) stated that there are some known secret cults operating in our society such as black axe, black cats, buccaneers, pirates confraternity, black berets, sea dogs, brother hood of Sahara, panama etc. for example in August 2000 in Ondo state, ten (10) ss1 student where expelled from the school because they were discovered to be members of seven star cult. Similarly, in 2003 in Enugu state university of technology, the members of the black axe disrupted a party organized by the black beret. In the punch newspaper of October 13<sup>th</sup> that year four (4) students were killed by cultists. In the daily trust July 5<sup>th</sup>, 2002 five (5) suspected cultists where burnt at Owo polytechnic and in punch Jan 4<sup>th</sup> 1994, 22 student of the "eye fraternity" a secret society in Ondo state university where arrested while initiating new members. The list continue. The rate of moral decadence in Nigeria is alarming and something need to be done urgently before it will be too late.

### **Causes of Moral Decadence**

In Nigeria today moral decadence does not just exist in a vacuum but there are said to be initiated or caused by some agencies or

means. Right from the eighteens century even in Europe, moral decadence was evident even among the clergy, Some of the causes of moral decadence are connected to the home, media, government, schools and society.

1. Home: the home involves the parents, children or peer groups or friends. The home as the cases may be is a place where moral values are taught, patent are responsible for the moral upbringing of their children because that is where life started but today the reverse is the case. The parents who are to serve as models to their children do not even have time to spend with them, there by entrusting their children into the hands of the maid at home, parent come back from work late at night when children are far asleep tell me when will they pass across moral instruction to the children, this is contrarily to the scripture which says train up a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it (proverb 22:6).
2. Media: there are strong influences of the media on the people of the society, mass media such as pornography film and other immoral program watches by people has expose them, the movie star fashion advertiser, the gang star rappers all this things are powerful forces that pull down the culture and the value of the society, people today spend most of their time watching movie which does not teach moral but immorality.
3. Government: the government in this case is not left out they are to serve as model but reverse is the case, the government itself is corrupt what example could they offer, government are accuse of embezzling the money that are meant for development, they are been diverted into their own account, workers are paid accordingly which lead to several strike in the society.
4. School: the school is to serve as one of strongest agents of social change, a place where moral values are taught and learnt but the reserve is the case. Teachers in our institution has become the displayer of

immoral acts and contributor of moral decadence in Nigeria. Teachers who are seen as custodians of norms, value and moral have debased themselves and luring themselves into immoral act Yildirin and Durdaji (2020). Several girls who are innocent have to succumb to teacher's quest in order to pass their paper and some of innocent student carryover courses because they fail to sleep with the teachers.

5. Society: our society is not left out in this case morality has decline greatly in Nigeria society to the extent that we can no longer see anyone who is the custodians of moral values that can lay example, for instance in the 60s dressing code is decent, children cannot look to the face of an adult, you can leave your farm product for months and come back to meet it, you can entrust your female daughter into the hands of a male neighbor and come back to meet her as a virgin but today due to socialization, civilization, and self-interest this can no longer be found, bribing, corruption, religion in tolerance, cultism, favoritism and many other have taken over our wonderful and cherish value, norms, custom and culture.

### **Effects of Moral Decadence in Nigeria**

Moral decadence in Nigeria have quite devastating effect in the society at large, its effect is multifarious but to mention few are:

Untimely or premature death: people who involves in act which are immoral such as involving in prostitution die of HIV/AIDS before their appointed time, some get involve in arm robbery, occultism, banditry, kidnapping and other social vices. Many of them die at the early age, some of them get involved in drug addiction while others which have negative effects on them. Some in to smoking to destroy themselves just as the federal ministry of health always advertise "smokers are reliable to die young, those who involves in illicit sex can become pregnant and as a result of aborting or terminating the pregnancy may loses their lives. Moral

decadence has led people of their grave before time.

Drop out from school: a student been caught in the practice of cultism would not be scared he would be driven away from the school, his name would be published and such student cannot be given admission to any of our educational institution of learning.

Underdevelopment: people with potential that would have help in developing the Nigeria potentials have been left unattended to by the government. Invariably, they turned out to become arm robbers, ritual its kidnappers, bandits and hire killers in our society.

### **The Role of Ethical Teaching in Curbing Moral Decadence in Nigeria**

According to Yildirin and Durdaji, (2020) there are certain things that every individual should always be mindful of, one personality, integrity and his professional ethic because this will enhance the productivity, the efficiency of his or her profession example his relationship with his or her follow being in the society. Teaching ethics can have many positive effects on students and society as a whole. For example, it help students to develop the following character:

- Moral character, developing their own sense of morality and ethics, and to understand the important of acting ethically on their own lives and their interactions with others.
- It also help in improving decision-making, teaching ethics help students and every individuals how to think critically about ethical decision in their personal and professional lives.
- It help to reframe from speaking unfavorable about your neighbor or colleges. For instance, do not says things that will present your neighbor or college in bad light to his mates, eventually get to his or her ears in an adulterated form which may cause him or her to react unfavorable towards you. The bible say thou shall not speak evil against thy neighbor.
- It keeps oneself from arrogant and pride, gives all glory to God for everything you

have accomplished. Patient which is a virtue that every living being required in order to succeed in life emanated from the teaching of ethics. Life transform by the power of God therefore only God can tell the certainty, the exact time it will take to effect a particular transformation.

- It help to learn how to take criticisms patiently without taking your critics as your enemies for a wise man and woman there are benefit to drive from every criticisms. Though by this reason a critics is not justified, he or she will bear his or her iniquity while, by your wisdom, benefit from an intended evil, Proverb 24:15-20, Lev 19:34, Matt 5:34. Be slow to act in respond to complain presented to you by an individual before taking actions, investigate every report thoroughly. 1Thess. 4:4, psalm 21:17, 1 peter 2:29, lam 2:39-40.

### Recommendations

Since there is a belief that the development of any nation depends on the sincerity practice of ethical teaching of that nation and moral principles, it is therefore recommended that, a every citizen should endeavor to uphold the acceptable norms and ternate of the society. The following recommendations becomes imperative for the good of the nation.

You should not develop the spirit of covetousness. In other word do not desire the good of others to be your own. Such an attitude can give birth to ungodly rivalries among individual, this can affect once emotionally and physical life, Duet 28:1, Prov 3:31-35, 2 Tim 2:25.

Beware of developing a critical spirit, foe such a spirit will make your profession unattractive and will also damn your own life. Always find some good things to talk about others. Col 3:3, Isa 3:11-14, Phil 2:2-3.

Do not live as someone who is lawless you should follow the example of our lord Jesus. Roman 13:5

Make it a policy within your level and income even by your faith Phil 4:11, Hebrew

13:5, 6:12 Rom 1:17. His required adequate self-disciple.

The above recommendations can be made practicable if federal ministry of education should make it mandatory that moral education should be taught at all levels of education in Nigeria with sanction on the defectors. Religious institutions like churches and mosques should continue to emphases on teaching on moral education on children and youths.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, from the above discussion, it is important to note that there is no significant different between the roles of Christian ethic in pastor, the church and Christian organizations. it is seen here that people's expectations of ethical teaching is as high as that of a follower of Christ. It is therefore expected of all Christians or believers of Christ to put in his or her best by trusting God to help them live according to people's expectations in the church in the society whether in the area of economy, politic, culture or religious beliefs since he or she is regarded as a pace setter. Therefore in this paper one will observe that, the paper itself is an embodiment of recommendation if every individual can endeavor to imbibe the fundamental principle guiding the ethical teaching or Christian ethics.

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