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**THE PARADOX OF RELATION BETWEEN HATE SPEECH
AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH: A PATHWAY TOWARDS
UNDERSTANDING RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE**
**[PARADOKS RELACJI POMIĘDZY MOWĄ NIENAWIŚCI
A MOWĄ WOLNOŚCI. DROGA DO ZROZUMIENIA
DIALOGU RELIGIJNEGO]**

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1. PREAMBLE

One of the greatest qualities that makes the human person unique from every other creature is the ability to communicate by means of speech. It is by this medium that dispositions are exposed, sentiments are expressed and objective truths are re-echoed. This is so powerful a tool that has the capacity of influencing a change of opinion and perception. It affects reasoning and arouses emotions. It has the potency of changing the quality and character of truth when placed in the hands of the powerful and manipulators. A dangerous weapon in the hands of political and religious fanatics, not less than it is in the hands of those who advocate for unguided human freedom. Speech has the constructive and destructive dynamism of water. It is so powerful that even silence is sometimes perceived as a by-product of the suppressive and controllable quality of speech. Not to speak is a speech, since it either affirms, opposes or compromises. It is this character of speech that makes freedom of speech one of the fundamental human rights.

Contrary to the views of many liberal theorists who see the Catholic Church as being suppressive, the reality is that, the dignity of the human person has been at the

centre of the Church's tradition which is evident through centuries of her magisterial teaching, especially the Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae* of Vatican II.

2. THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Although used interchangeably, freedom of expression has more depth in relation to freedom of speech. We shall however, apply their usage interchangeably. As a foundation and the gateway to many other human related rights and privileges, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, opines that:

“Freedom of expression is a fundamental human right enshrined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Along with its corollaries of freedom of information and press freedom, freedom of expression serves as an enabler of all other rights”¹.

The Organization recognizes herself as that agency with a specific mandate to promote “the free flow of ideas by word and image”,. This seems to chip into the discuss a religious and political connotation, giving that the use of symbol and images characterizes both spheres at different degrees.

As fundamental as this factor might be, without proper monitoring and reasonable guidelines, the concept of freedom of expression would destroy the very foundation on which it was constructed, which is the dignity of humanity itself. There will be chaos and anarchy. The question must be asked. Does any and every expression justify this right? Is there any motive and intention in such expressions? Who sets the limits for what can be termed free? All these and other related questions must be asked if we must avoid the conflict of interest in the expression of freedom of speech.

Pope Leo XIII, acknowledging the consequential abuses related to man's quest for self expression in the utopia of freedom, cautioned the world of its impending danger. He declared thus:

“So, too, the liberty of thinking, and of publishing, whatsoever each one likes, without any hindrance, is not in itself an advantage over which society can wisely rejoice. On the contrary, it is the fountain-head and origin of many evils. Liberty is a power perfecting man, and hence should have truth and goodness for its object”².

Here the church clearly states her position on the need for a reference point in the quest for freedom. There must be some basic truths, which remain unchangeable, natural and divine. The motivating factor must be truth and goodness which are constant. Even the state has its limitations, since it cannot go contrary to divine law in the enactment of such laws on human freedom.

To my mind, one of the major problems of the modern world is the fact that the distinction between emotions and feelings on the one hand, objective and subjective realities, truths, have all been mashed into a cake of unidentified confusion. Today,

¹ UNESCO “Freedom of Expression” https://en.unesco.org/70years/freedom_of_expression (Accessed: 8.04.2019).

² Leo XIII, Encyclical on the Christian Constitution of States *Immortale Dei*, 32.

any media pornographic material is an expression of freedom. To promote the tenets of abortion, euthanasia, to encourage lesbianism and homosexuality, all fall under the umbrella of freedom. We seem to have forgotten that humanity or rationality is defined more by its limitation rather than by its capability. It is not what we can do, but what we should do. Thus, to go beyond the bounds of “reasonable rationality” is the very foundation for the dehumanizing of humanity. Freedom must have the prudence of decency. Every right must have a corresponding responsibility. The Church is very clear on this:

“But the character of goodness and truth cannot be changed at option. These remain ever one and the same, and are no less unchangeable than nature itself. If the mind assents to false opinions, and the will chooses and follows after what is wrong, neither can attain its native fullness, but both must fall from their native dignity into an abyss of corruption”³.

When we as humans begin to determine for ourselves what is right or wrong, then, freedom as the power of the will rooted in reason, ceases to exist. Despite his somewhat controversial hypothesis as an economist, the position on Thomas Sowell calls for a deeper reflection on freedom and change, when he writes that:

“Much of the social history of the Western world over the past three decades has involved replacing what worked with what sounded good. In area after area – crime, education, housing, race relations – the situation has gotten worse after the bright new theories were put into operation. The amazing thing is that this history of failure and disaster has neither discouraged the social engineers nor discredited them”⁴.

This is exactly what is happening today, institutions are busy substituting the values and traditions that have sustained human civilization from time immemorial, with things that appear pleasing to the present “human condition”. We are going through rapid external and superficial development without the essential elements of civilization. We are pursuing a freedom that is self destructive and the breeding ground for egocentrism and rational anarchy.

3. THE AMBIGUITY OF HATE SPEECH

There is no general consensus with regards to what might be considered a hate speech. However, the common bearing is that it connotes negativity and abuse or misuse of the freedom of speech. Definitions have also been modified and adapted over time to fit into and address new situations. There is always the human tendency to accommodate new concepts in the use of language. The dynamic of understanding human equality and discrimination makes the definition of hate speech very fluid. This is dangerous since humans are now the determinants of the value of truth. Just to cite an example with a common concept. Today *human sexuality* has been substituted with *sexual orientation*. The distinction between the natural and the nurtured has become very blink. So that we place of male, female and transgender as “normal

³ Ibidem.

⁴ Th.Sowell, *Is Reality Optional? And Other Essays*, Hoover Institution Press (Nov. 1993), 192.

sexes”. My fear is that a day would come when pedophilia and homosexuality would be placed on the platform of natural sexual orientation. This is the very problem of freedom of speech, which seeks its freedom in man, rather than in God.

The Encyclopedia Britannica describes hate speech in an article by William M. Curtis, as thus:

“speech or expression that denigrates a person or persons on the basis of (alleged) membership in a social group identified by attributes such as race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical or mental disability, and others”⁵.

At face value, this definition is on the presumptions that all the factors mentioned have the same application globally. The definition is totally devoid of the interconnectedness between religion and understanding humanity. Neither is the motive or intention of action given due consideration. For example, the Magisterium of the Catholic Church, in line with the Holy Scripture, clearly teaches against homosexuality. The Church sees homosexuals as people in need of help, while the western society considers them a “normal sexual orientation”. The Congregation For The Doctrine of the Faith addressing this, issued a statement through its Prefect, Joseph Ratzinger, as follows:

“To choose someone of the same sex for one’s sexual activity is to annul the rich symbolism and meaning, not to mention the goals, of the Creator’s sexual design. Homosexual activity is not a complementary union, able to transmit life; and so it thwarts the call to a life of that form of self-giving which the Gospel says is the essence of Christian living...”⁶.

The secular government and human rights institution would consider sermons and teaching of the church on homosexuality as hate speech. Unfortunately, the Church is beginning to succumb to the pressure through her “sitting on the mode”. To even the content of some church documents are playing “safe mode”. We preach out of convenience and not out of conviction. Yet the Magisterium is faithful to the scripture. It states that:

“As in every moral disorder, homosexual activity prevents one’s own fulfillment and happiness by acting contrary to the creative wisdom of God. The Church, in rejecting erroneous opinions regarding homosexuality, does not limit but rather defends personal freedom and dignity realistically and authentically understood”⁷.

From the content of this article, it is now obvious that the content of the definition of hate speech is grossly erroneous and intrinsically inadequate. Not every pronouncement that does not find comfort or contradicts any subjective disposition should be considered a hate speech, for there is more to it. Let us examine how this has played in the Nigerian situation, amidst the ethno-religious crises and tension, fuelled by political recklessness and insecurity.

⁵ W.M. Curtis, *Hate Speech*, in: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hate-speech> (Accessed: 22.03.2019).

⁶ *Letter To The Bishops Of The Catholic Church On The Pastoral Care Of Homosexual Persons*. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/cfaith/documents/rc_con_cfaith_doc_19861001_homosexual-persons_en.html (Accessed: 08.04.2019)

⁷ *Ibidem*.

4. THE NIGERIAN SITUATION

A professor of sociology and an expert in Religious Violence, Mark Juergensmeyer reported in 1998, how the statistics from that the United States Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, listed thirty of the world's most dangerous groups; and surprisingly more than 50% of them were religious groups⁸. She was not far from the truth. The Nigeria situation as a case study is pathetic. There seems to be no constitutional law with regards to what should be termed a hate speech and to what extent can it be considered a crime. The degree of influence of any hate speech is only measured by the destructive effect of its aftermath. Thus, reaction determines definition. This was the real problem of anti-Semitic writings and speeches. The breeding ground was considered an acceptable way of propagating the Nazi manifesto of Hitler and somehow even the Christian faith, but the implementation has demonstrated itself to be a catastrophe. Examine this quotation from Hitler:

“Cleanse the country of Jews and there would be jobs for the unemployed, outlets for professional talents, a new world for the youth, industrialists would be more secure in their profits, German maidens would be saved, German nationalisms would thrive, and the Aryan blood would remain uncontaminated. Indeed, the almighty Creator would be pleased”⁹.

Political leaders and preachers of the word have demonstrated great level of irresponsibility in their utterances with total disregard to the possible outcome of this venture.

4.1. AREAS AND SOURCES OF CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

The relationship between Islam and Christianity in Nigeria has been one of tension and volatility. Protagonists of Religious Dialogue, such as Archbishop Kaigama of Jos, has always insisted that the root of conflict is not religious but the scrambling for relevance and the unhealthy competition for scarce resources. However he agrees that both politicians and religious leaders at different points in time do employ religious sentiments to launch their ambitions.

The heightened religious propaganda in Nigeria in recent times are certainly not connected with the desire to attain holiness, but sometimes intended merely to score cheap political, social and even economic goals. Politicians use religion as a tool to canvas for political votes or run down opponents¹⁰.

Since our political independence from Britain in 1960, Nigeria has been practically operating under the principle of “winner takes all”. The President or Head of State controls the economic, the personnel, appointments, the allocation and

⁸ M. Juergensmeyer, *Responding to Religious Terrorism*, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs Vol. 1 (Winter/Spring 2000), No. 1, 27–33

⁹ E.H. Flannery quoted Adolf Hitler's, *Mein Kampf* in: *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty Three Centuries of Anti-Semitism*. New York: The Macmillan Company 1965, 209

¹⁰ I.A. Kaigama, *Dialogue of Life: An Urgent Necessity for Muslims and Christians*, Jos: Fab Educational Books, 2006, 18

distribution of infrastructural and developmental projects and intuitions in the country. This explains why the quest for our leaders to perpetuate themselves in office employing all means accessible.

Although the constitution of Nigeria says Nigeria is a secular state and protects the freedom of religion, Islam, as practiced in some parts of Northern Nigeria does not reflect a demarcation between the social, political, and religious life of the people. It is simply a way of life. This is the same element we see Judaism. Even Christianity share in some of this element, but to a lesser degree, since it makes a clear distinction between state and Church. Hence, adherents of the faith (Islam) owe greater allegiance to the faith than the “project” called Nigeria. But another disturbing emerging trend is that some Muslims in Nigeria have gone beyond allegiance to the faith, beyond and above the state. They mostly feel culturally affiliated to the roots and “origin” of their faith, i.e. North Africa or Middle East. Whatever happens to Muslims in those regions, equally affects the Muslims in northern Nigeria on a personal level. There is nothing wrong with the ideology of the Islamic Umma. The problem occurs when fanaticism sets in. After all, even the Catholic Church stresses the importance of its allegiance to “Rome” and Traditions. But there are limits to how the political problems of Rome should affect the Catholic faith as a Nigerian. Neither should Christians attack Muslims because a Muslim journalist depicts Jesus as a mere Jewish freedom fighter. Of course this is wrong and offensive representation. But still, it does not justify attack on the journalists by Christians. Why is Nigeria then religiously hyper sensitive to the level of fanaticism.

Let us examine some “amplifiers” that have placed us in this situation. Since the importance and weight of any value system is determined to a greater extent by the credibility of the source, likewise the consequences of any hate speech will be measured by factors such as the quality, content, context, intention, audience and character of the speaker.

4.2. AMPLIFIERS OF HATE SPEECH AND VIOLENCE

Influence of prominent or popular speakers: The speeches of powerful, charismatic, popular, political or religious leaders, with direct or indirect power, have greater influence and authority over their audience. Moreover, the confidence and moral rectitude posed on these speakers, obscure the thinking faculty of their audience or listeners, thus they become unidirectional, easily brainwashed without the potency to objectively oppose the dangerous propaganda or ideologies. This is the first factor in indoctrination and the implantation of dangerous ideologies. The culture of impunity makes the Nigerian situation very pathetic.

The type of audience: Hate speech would not be dangerous without an audience that is being influenced by the message. Feedbacks can also be a booster to the speaker. It guarantees possible support. Thus, by way of incitement an audience is rendered vulnerable and pruned to committing violence against a perceived targeted group. This danger is evident when the audience is constantly reminded of their

shared grievances and fears. In other words “when it resonates with the listeners’ experience, shared beliefs, especially with respect to their own identity”¹¹.

The content of subject matter: The sensitivity of any speech and the influence on an audience, is to a large extent dependent on the issue of discussion. A speech containing hallmarks describing some group of persons as murderers, invaders; intruders, foreigners, immigrants, undesirable competitors, etc., can lead to the vulnerability of a target group. Connotations which tend to present others as enemies will certainly pollute the audience mind. The dehumanization of persons is one of the keys to violence.

The fallacy of hasty generalization: When the principle of – one represents the whole – is applied, there is always the risk of errors. Stereotyping has become the *modus operandi* of many propagandists. The inability to single out culprits as criminals and to deal with them in accordance with the law, has not only encouraged the culture of impunity, but rendered the target group vulnerable. To brand all Muslims are terrorists as a reactions to the event of 911 (World Trade Center), is erroneously dangerous.

The context of speech: The value of a speech lies in its contextual application. There is a distinction between formal and private speeches. However, when the distinction between the person and the office he occupies are so conjoined, there is little or no room for this division. Thus, when the Pope speaks in whatever context, the moral and social implications become reference points, regardless of the situation. Public figures must therefore are cautious in their utterances.

The Mass Media influence: These means of transmitting information adds credibility to the content passed. Online spaces such as social media platforms, private and public messaging forums and blogs, as well as more established platforms such as print and broadcast media, provide platforms for dangerous speech to occur, be shared and amplified.

4.3. THE INFLUENCE OF WESTERNIZATION

The southern Christians on the other hand have accepted the western way of life that accompanies Christianity. This way of life includes, the western-style of education, dress code, type and style of marriage, social gatherings, entertainment and the use of English language. Putting these two positions (Muslims and Christians) together clearly shows the possibility of friction. The Christian orientation sees a line between religion and politics while Islam believes the two cannot be separated. In Islam, society has to be Islamic in its foundation and structure. This is the situation that must be considered for any meaningful and productive dialogue to occur, or else it shall only be a manifestation of external formalities. Some governors in Northern Nigeria, have instituted full Sharia Law in their states. The content and implication of this law remains obscure and discriminatory against other religions. According to the Grand Khadi of Plateau State, Hon. Justice Adamu Kanam:

¹¹ Ch. Ogbonna, *What is Hate Speech*, A paper presented for tutorial at the Dialogue Reconciliation and Peace, Centre, Kwang, Jos (Accessed: 21.08.2018).

“To a Muslim, Sharia is Islam and Islam is Sharia. In as much as a Muslim cannot do without his religion, he cannot equally do away with Sharia and he cannot live in isolation in order to practice Sharia...The Qua’an says: And he whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, then they are unbeliever – Qur’an 5:44”¹².

Unfortunately, there has been series of conferences on dialogue, without the parties having sufficient knowledge of the tenets of the belief content of the “opponent”. Sometimes dialogue is based on the presumption that we have a common humanity without taking into consideration the understanding of the concept of humanity of the parties involved. Unless concepts and values such as truth, humanity, love, faithfulness, state and religion are understood, dialogue will remain a mere pursuit of the external manifestation of coexistence. If this is based on the *accidentals* and not the *essence*, then for sure it would not be binding. This would explain the endless and fruitless array of dialogue between Jews and Palestinian.

5. THE MEDIA AND HATE SPEECH

If we must curtail hate speech, the media which serves as vanguard in the dissemination of information should ensure censorship of content. They have the moral obligation to truncate and thus deprive any dangerous content from reaching the public. They should clearly condemn *vice* and promote *virtue*. Today the communication and information industry talks not only of the *ethics of journalism* but the *morality of journalism*. The culture of stereotyping which generalizes and imposes on a people an identity based on the action of a few should be discouraged. Today, religious leaders give dangerous and inciting sermons with great impunity on the side of relevant government institutions. Sometimes both the print and the electronic media have not helped in this regard, as they operate without the journalistic ethical responsibilities. The Church’s position is very clear:

“All who, of their own free choice, make use of these media of communications as readers, viewers or listeners have special obligations. For a proper choice demands that they fully favour those presentations that are outstanding for their moral goodness, their knowledge and their artistic or technical merit. They ought, however, to void those that may be a cause or occasion of spiritual harm to themselves, or that can lead others into danger through base example, or that hinder desirable presentations and promote those that are evil. To patronize such presentations, in most instances, would merely reward those who use these media only for profit”¹³.

The situation in Nigeria is so precarious and volatile that even the Cartoon publication in faraway Denmark in 2006 reverberated in Borno State, North East of Nigeria, taking a violent and brutal turn on Christians. The region became a theatre of destruction and killings. What started as a peaceful protest by a few Muslim youth reacting to the blasphemous publication on Prophet Mohammed became a terrible

¹² I.A. Kaigama, *Dialogue of Life...*, op.cit., 63–64. Archbishop Kaigama is the Catholic Archbishop of Jos since 2000 who has been a global figure in the sphere of dialogue. Also the former President of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Nigeria.

¹³ Decree On The Media Of Social Communications *Inter Mirifica*, No 9.

assault on the peace and harmony of Maiduguri, leading to the loss of lives and property. The Daily Sun of Tuesday February 21, 2006 Newspaper captured the unfortunate incidence which triggered a corresponding hostile reaction from Christians in South Eastern Nigeria. Today there is a religious hyper sensitivity in Nigeria to the extent that what is regarded or perceived as harmless could be the cause of a full blown crisis. The removal of Arabic inscriptions on the nation's national currency, the *Naira*, by the Central Bank of Nigeria, and its replacement with description of the value of each denomination in the three major Nigerian languages, Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba became a source of controversy. While some Christians felt the Arabic inscription was an Islamic symbol that was unnecessary in a secular state, Dr. Ishaq Akintola, the director of *Muslim Rights Concern*, commented that removing the Arabic inscription was a dastardly crime against the Muslims of the country (The Punch, April 30 2007, 15)¹⁴.

6. EFFORT OF THE CHURCH ON DIALOGUE IN THE FACE MUTUAL SUSPICION

While many remain pessimistic about dialogue, a closer look at the totality of the issue suggests that it is the best option for now, the only way forward. Dialogue is not only possible, it is necessary in our modern world. As two groups of believers, Muslims and Christians in Nigeria share broad range of common concerns on basic human issues. They face similar challenges as they try to live their lives and shape the moral conscience of their followers in a world influenced by consumerism. They face common religious challenges as they seek to apply values "revealed by God" to the lives of a people facing a frustrating social and economic environment. Muslims and Christians face the challenges of poverty, unemployment, health hazards and the destruction of family value system. Regardless of our religious affiliations, people generally long for governments that can manage the economy, create jobs opportunity and guarantee trustworthy security. If the majority of these is lacking people are affected, and unless these issues are raised at the level of sincere discussions, the central point of dialogue, which is the promotion mutual coexistence, will be missed. Who will take the lead? The church in her role as defender and promoter of the truth must take the lead and show the way. The Catholic Church already has a well developed theology of religions, and interest in dialogue with other faiths, as emphasized by the Holy See. The Second Vatican Council in her declaration of the Church and Non-Christian Religions declares:

"The Church, therefore, exhorts her sons, that through dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions, carried out with prudence and love and in witness to the Christian faith and life, they recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values found among these men"¹⁵.

¹⁴ Ishaq Akintola is a professor of Islamic Eschatology and Director of Muslim Rights Concern in Nigeria.

¹⁵ Declaration On The Relation Of The Church To Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*, no 2.

The document acknowledges the guilt of its dark past, urges both Christians and Muslims to forget the hurt of the past and strive sincerely for mutual understanding and on behalf of all mankind make common cause of safe-guarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace and freedom¹⁶.

It was in the light of the African Synod of Catholic Bishops in 1994, that Pope John Paul noted in his post Synodal Exhortation and identified interreligious dialogue as a major mission of the Church in Africa. He states that,

“Commitment to dialogue must also embrace all Muslims of good will. Christians cannot forget that many Muslims try to imitate the faith of Abraham and to live the demands of the Decalogue.... Christians and Muslims are called to commit themselves to promoting a dialogue free from the risks of false irenicism or militant fundamentalism, and to raising their voices against unfair policies and practices, as well as against the lack of reciprocity in matters of religious freedom”¹⁷.

The Vatican newspaper *L'Osservatore Romano* recalls the extra ordinary gesture of Pope John Paul II, who was presided over the first inter-faith prayer for peace in Assisi in 1986. First of its kind. This was imitated 25years later in 2011 by pope Benedict XVI. As the Bertone opines:

“On 25 January 1986, in his Homily at the Mass he celebrated in the Basilica of St Paul Outside-the-Walls, John Paul II launched an appeal in the context of the International Year for Peace declared by the United Nations Organization. It was not only addressed to Catholics or believers in Christ but also to the members of the world’s various religions and to all people of good will so that they might all pray insistently for the gift of peace”¹⁸.

As bleak as the situation may seem, there are many who know in truth that most of the so called religious conflicts originate from tussles over control of land and other resources. They believe that religions must be instruments of peace and should contribute to the integral development of persons instead of being sources of conflicts¹⁹.

7. THE WAY FORWARD

Silence is never an option. History has shown that silence could be interpreted as consent. The church of today should therefore outwardly condemn in strong terms, the ills of society perpetrated by those in government. If the Church must remain the voice of the voiceless then silence can never be an option. What is the universal Church saying about the thousands dying in Nigeria. The crises today in the Middle East have been lingering for years. The Israeli – Palestinian problem has taken thousands of human lives, and millions are suffering the side effects. The Church should clearly point out the faults and institutionally condemn the policies, practices and perpetrators, otherwise the next generation of Palestinians might accu-

¹⁶ Ibidem, no 3.

¹⁷ John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Ecclesia In Africa*, no 66.

¹⁸ T. Bertone, *From Assisi 1986 to Assisi 2011, the Meaning of a Journey*, Reports of EWTN, <http://www.ewtn.com/library/HUMANITY/86assisi11.htm> (Accessed: 8.04.2019).

¹⁹ I.A. Kaigama, *Peace Not War*, Jos: Hamtul Press Ltd 2012, 5.

se the church of been a silent conspirator. The Church must never forget that even the Jews themselves have accused the church of not voicing out enough, when Hitler's Nazi Germany was killing millions of Jews. Referring to Pope Pius XII, the Lau of Tel Aviv says:

“His silence cost us millions of lives. One who stands upon the blood and does nothing to avoid the bloodshed is like a partner to the mass murder of human beings. He didn't do it, but he didn't stop it”²⁰.

Therefore, the church today cannot sit on the fence and allow moral and human values be determined by the waves of politics and secularism. This is a central point in the tenets of Catholic Moral Theology when it speaks of negligence and the sin of omission²¹.

The strength and relevance of the words of Pope John Paul, directed to the twenty different religions and their leaders in Rome 1999, remain a challenge to us even today. It is a call to a deliberate and positive action:

“Any use of religion to support violence is an abuse of religion. Religion and peace go together: to wage war in the name of religion is a blatant contradiction. Religious leaders must show that they are pledged to peace precisely because of their religious belief. The task before us therefore is to promote a culture of dialogue. we must show how religious belief inspires peace, encourages solidarity, promotes justice and upholds liberty”²².

Proactive measures must be taking by stakeholders. Dialogue is far more difficult and requires more patience, forbearance and self discipline to hold one's anger in check, to listen, to try to see all sides, to search for long term solutions rather than give in to the impulse of the moment and engage in a violent reaction. Our religions must therefore teach that violence is short sighted and in the end, ineffective, it may show which party is stronger at a given period but it may not necessarily be right. As Archbishop Kaigama observes:

“The onus lies sorely on religious leaders to take that bold but crucial step of entering into dialogue. It is simply an imperative. Most of the crises had the violence that follows end up being suspected to be religious. Most of those affected forget other affiliations whether politics or ethnic and take solace and cover under religion”²³.

Religion has a very strong influence on a typical Nigerian as the adherents listen to their leaders on a daily and weekly basis. Most of the opinions the masses adopt are largely shaped by their religious leaders. Independent thinking and action is a little bit remote for now. There is doubt with regards to the sincerity and integrity of some religious leaders in Nigeria. Religious pluralism today threatens Nigeria's social stability.

²⁰ Israel Meir Lau, https://jewishaction.com/jewish-world/people/speaking_with_rabbi_israel_meir_lau/ (Accessed: 11.07.2018).

²¹ K.H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics: Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II*. Bangalore India, Theological Publications, 1995, 308–309.

²² John Paul II, *Collaboration among the Diverse Religions*, in: *Sourcebook of the World's Religions*, ed. by J. Beversluis, Novato, CA: New World Library, 2000, 160–161.

²³ I. Kaigama, op.cit., 20

8. CONCLUSION

The several ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria clearly show that Nigeria has complex history is yet to be at home with that reality. The strong influence of religion on an average Nigerian is obvious. Religious leaders may have the blue print for peace but the affiliation to their immediate religions often inhibit their sense of honesty and the quest for common good which interreligious dialogue can foster. As a pluralistic society Nigeria can rise from conflicts to a level of tolerance and positive compromise leading to an active coexistence. Once this is achieved then consensus and cooperation will not be difficult in charting a common path for progress and development. Government should make the deliberate effort in guaranteeing relative security and the fair distribution of the nation's wealth, as most of the crises have their roots in the scrambling for basic resources. Education and human development are indispensable for any meaningful civilization.

However, we must not underestimate the psychological influence of a hate speech. In describing this Flannery considers Hitler's rhetoric on the state and the German Church as a perfect example, when he states:

“There was no doubt that his influence over the masses was an important factor. His mastery of crowd psychology is clearly seen in the *Mein Kampf*, but more effectively still in his obvious ability to turn huge throngs into roaring submission. Nor is there any doubt that Hitler told his hearers much what they wanted to hear”²⁴.

The words of Christ: “My words are spirit and they are life” (John 6: 63)²⁵ must constantly remind us of the potential energy a speech is capable of generating. It can penetrate any sphere of human experience. Words are irretrievable once spoken. There are no parameters to measure their potential influence. They can build but can also destroy. And in some situations, not to speak is in itself a speech. What a paradox. Let us therefore think deeply. Because sometimes, meanings are not in words, but in the people who use the words.

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²⁴ E.H. Flannery *The Anguish of the Jews: Twenty Three Centuries of Anti-Semitism*. New York: The Macmillan Company 1965, 209–210.

²⁵ This is not a theological interpretation of the verse. It is used here only to stress the importance of speech. More importantly, is the fact that Jesus is the Word and in Him we find real life and true meaning of freedom.

Juergensmeyer M., *Responding to Religious Terrorism*, Georgetown Journal of International Affairs Vol. 1, Winter/Spring 2000, No. 1, 27–33.

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PARADOKS RELACJI POMIĘDZY MOWĄ NIENAWIŚCI A MOWĄ WOLNOŚCI DROGA DO ZROZUMIENIA DIALOGU RELIGIJNEGO

Streszczenie

W świecie, który szuka i promuje wyrażanie siebie oparte na przesadnej koncepcji wolności, zawsze istnieje ryzyko zderzenia interesów. Dzieje się tak, kiedy człowiek tworzy dla siebie to, co uważa za moralne i prawdziwe, bez odniesienia do jakiegokolwiek obiektywnej prawdy. Opierając się na godnych pożałowania wydarzeniach w historii, artykuł analizuje relacje między muzułmanami a chrześcijanami w Nigerii pośród szerzących się konfliktów etno-religijnych. Zwraca uwagę na niektóre czynniki polityczne, religijne i ekonomiczne wpływające na to zagrożenie. Podkreśla także wpływ współczesnej kultury indywidualizmu i rozpowszechniania informacji pozbawionych etyki. Z pomocą zarówno dokumentów kościelnych, jak i świeckich artykuł ten przedstawia sugestie, które mogą prowadzić do szczerego dialogu jako środka do pokojowego współistnienia. Niezbędna jest odpowiedzialna rola jednostek i instytucji, jeśli musimy przywrócić godność ludzką, która doznała uszczerbku.

Słowa kluczowe: mowa nienawiści, wolność słowa, dialog, konflikty religijne, pokój, współistnienie, etyka mediów polityka i religia

THE PARADOX OF RELATION BETWEEN HATE SPEECH AND FREEDOM OF SPEECH: A PATHWAY TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

Summary

In the world that seeks and promotes self-expression based on an exaggerated concept of freedom there is always the risk of a clash of interests. It happens in particular when a person formulates for himself something that he considers moral and true without reference to any objective truth. Leaning from some regrettable events in history, this article examines the relationship between Muslims and Christians in Nigeria amidst the rampant ethno-religious conflicts. It looks at some political, religious, economic factors influencing this menace. It also highlights the influence of modern culture of individualism and dissemination of information devoid of ethics. With the help of both ecclesiastical and secular documents this article offers suggestions that might lead to a sincere dialogue as means to peaceful coexistence. Responsible roles of individuals and institutions are indispensable if we want to restore human dignity that has been debased.

Key words: hate speech, human dignity, freedom of speech, dialogue, religious conflicts, rights and responsibilities, peace building, coexistence, media ethics, politics and religion

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