CTH 001
RELIGION AND SOCIETY

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

| COURSE |
| GUIDE |

**CTH 001
RELIGION AND SOCIETY**

Course Developer:	Dr. A. R. Williams National Examination Council Minna.
Course Writers:	Dr. A. R. Williams National Examination Council Minna.
	Dr. Olubiyi A. Adewale National Open University of Nigeria Lagos.
Course Editor:	Dr. Mrs. M. Atere Department of Religions Lagos State University, Lagos.
Programme Leader:	Dr. Olubiyi A. Adewale National Open University of Nigeria Lagos.
Course Coordinator:	Dr. Awoju. J. Owolabi National Open University of Nigeria Lagos.

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

ii

Contents **Page**

Introduction

CTH 001: Religion and Society is a one semester two credit unit foundational level course. It will be available for students to take towards the core module of the certificate programme in Christian Theology. The course is suitable for any foundation student in the schools of Arts and Social Sciences.

The course consists of 14 study units and it introduces you to the dynamics, practice and place of Religion in the pre-historic societies of the world through to the contemporary society of the modern times. These you will study vis-à-vis the political, cultural, scientific and sociological development of the times. The material has been developed to suit students in Nigeria by using more practical examples from our environment. The intention is for you to demonstrate sound knowledge of the various types of societies and their religious beliefs and practices.

Course Aims

The aim of this course is to give you sound knowledge in the basic concepts of society, and their types with a view to understanding the place, the practice and the function of religion in our society. These will be achieved by:

- Studying the nature of society;
- Exposing you to the development of society from pre-historic to modern times; and
- Examining the operation of religion and its influence on all other phenomenon of human endeavour.

Course Objectives

To achieve the aims set above, there are set overall objectives. In addition, each unit also has specific objectives. The unit objectives are included at the beginning of each unit. You should carefully read them before you start working through the unit. They will serve as a guide to you as you progress in the study of each unit and also help in self evaluation.

Stated below are the objectives of this course. There is no doubt that as you successfully work towards the achievement of these objectives, the aim of the entire course would have been achieved.

On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:

- Differentiate between the various types of societies;

- Identify the role of religion in the society;

- Describe the different religious behaviour;

- Explain the influence of modernity on religion and vice versa;

- Differentiate between culture and religion;

- Outline the role of religion in politics;

- Identify the impact of religion on the family; and

- Explain the role of religion on health care and HIV/AIDS.

Working through this course

To complete this course, you are required to read the study units, and read other materials provided by the National Open University of Nigeria (NOUN). Each unit contains some self Assessment Exercises (SAEs) and at some points in the course, you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of this course is a final examination. Stated below are the components of the course and what you have to do.

Course Materials

1. Course Guide
2. Study Units
3. Textbooks
4. Assignment File
5. Presentation

In addition, you must obtain the text materials. They are provided by the NOUN.

Study Units

This course is divided into three modules and 14 study units. They are structured as follows:

Module 1: THE STUDY OF SOCIETY AND RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOUR

Unit 1: The Concept of Society
Unit 2: Religion in Society

Unit 3: Function of Religion
Unit 4: Dimensions of Religious Behaviour
Unit 5: Organization of Religious Behaviour

Module 2: RELIGION AND MODERNITY

Unit 1: Religion and Stratification
Unit 2: Religion and Culture
Unit 3: Religion and Secularization
Unit 4: Religion and Politics
Unit 5: Religion and Science

Module 3: RELIGION AND THE FAMILY

Unit 1: Sexuality and Religious Discourse
Unit 2: The family Patterns
Unit 3: Marriage and Family
Unit 4: Religion and Health

In Module 1, you will study the meaning, nature and development of society and the function of religion vis-à-vis postulations like the Marxist, Weberian and Durkheimian theses. The dimensions of religious behaviour and their organization will also be studied. In module 2, you will be introduced to religion and modernity. As a guide, you will be studying some important phenomenon such as religion and stratification, religion and culture, religion and secularization, politics and religion and science and religion. The last module, module 3 focuses on religion and family. Important issues such as sexuality and religion, family composition, descent pattern, authority pattern, courtship and marriage, parenthood, divorce, religion and health, and HIV and AIDS are discussed.

Each unit contains a number of Self Assessment Exercises (SAEs). In general, these self-tests question you on the materials you have just covered. It may require you to apply it in some ways. It will help you to measure your progress and to reinforce your understanding of the material. Together with the Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs), these exercises will assist you in achieving the stated learning objectives of the individual unit and of the course.

References/Further Reading

Schaefer R. T. (2001) *Sociology,* seventh edition. New York, McGraw Hill Companies

Schaefer R. T & Lamm R. P. (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York, McGraw – Hill Companies

Swatos Williams H. (1993) *Gender and Religion*, Brunkswick N. J. Transaction.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The Study of Society*, New York CBS College Publishing

Peter Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York Double Day Publishers

Emile Durkheim (1948) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York, The Free Press.

Bryan Wilson (1969) *Religion in Secular-Society*, Baltimore, Penguin Books

James W and Vander Z (1990). *The Social Experience: An Introduction to Sociology*, New York, McGraw-Hill Inc.

Zellner W. W. & Marc P. (1999) *Some Cults and Spiritual Communities. A Sociological Analysis*, Westport, C. T. Praeger.

Assignment File

The assignment file will be posted to you in due course. In this file, you will find all the details of the work you must submit to your tutor for marking. The marks you obtain for these assignments will count towards the final mark you obtain for this course. Further information on the assignment will be found in the assignment file itself and later in the course guide in the section on assessment. There are several assignments for this course as each unit is loaded with a minimum of one assignment at times two assignments.

Assessment

There are two aspects to the assessment of this course. First are the Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs) and second, there is a written examination. In tackling the TMAs, you are expected to apply

information, knowledge and experience gathered during the course. The TMA must be submitted to your tutor for assessment in accordance with the deadlines stated in the assignment file. The work you submit to your tutor for assessment will weigh 30% of your total course mark. At the end of the course, you will need to sit for a final examination of three hours duration. The examination will carry a weight of 70% of your total course mark.

Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs)

There are fourteen TMAs in this course. You are expected to carry out the assignments and submit accordingly. The score from the best three of the fourteen TMAs will be computed to form your assessment score. Each will be marked over 10. The 30 score from the three best assignments will however form 30% of your total score for the course. The final examination will produce the rest 70%, thus making the total score for the course 100%.

Assignment questions for the units in this course are contained in the assignment file. You will be able to complete your assignments from the information and material contained in your set books, readings and study units. However, it is desirable in all degree level education to demonstrate that you have read and researched more widely than the required minimum. Using other references will give you a broader view point and may provide a deeper understanding of the subject.

When each assignment is completed, send it, together with a TMA form to your tutor. Make sure that each assignment reaches your tutor on or before the deadline given in the assignment file. If for any reason you cannot complete your work on time, contact your tutor before the assignment is due, to discuss the possibility of an extension. Extensions will not be granted after the due date unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Final Examination and Grading

The final examination for CTH 001 will be of two hours duration and have a value of 70% of the total course grade. The examination will cover every aspect of the course.
Endeavour to maximally utilize the time between the completion of the last unit and the commencement of the examination to revise the entire course. You might find it useful to review your TMAs and comment on them before the examination.

Course Weighted Scores

The following table lay out how the actual course weighted score is broken down.

TABLE 1: Course Weighted Score

ASSESSMENT	MARKS
All Assignments	Best three marks at 10% each = 30%
Final Examination	70% of overall course marks
Total	100%

Course Overview

The table brings together the units, the number of weeks you should take to complete them and the assignments that follow them.

TABLE 2: Course Organizer

UNIT	TITLE	WEEKLY ACTIVITY	ASSESSMENT (End Of Unit)
	Course Guide	Week 1	
1	The concept of Society	Week 2	Assignment 2
2	Religion in Society	Week 3	Assignment 3
3	Function of Religion	Week 4	Assignment 4
4	Dimensions of Religions Behaviour	Week 5	Assignment 5
5	Organization of Religions Behaviour	Week 6	Assignment 6
6	Religion and Stratification	Week 7	Assignment 7
7	Religion and Culture	Week 8	Assignment 8
8	Religion and Secularization	Week 9	Assignment 9
9	Religion and Politics	Week 10	Assignment 10
10	Religion and Science	Week 11	Assignment 11
11	Sexuality and Religious Discourse	Week 12	Assignment 12
12	The Family Patterns	Week 13	Assignment 13
13	Marriage and Family	Week 14	Assignment 14
14	Religion and Health	Week 15	Assignment 15
	Revision	Week 16	
	Examination	Week 17	

	Total	17 weeks	

How to get the Most from this Course

In distance learning, the study units replace the university lecturer. This is one of the great advantages of distance learning; you can read and work through specially designed study materials at your own pace, and at a time and place that suit you best. Think of it as reading the lecture instead of listening to a lecture. In the same way that a lecturer might get you some reading to do, the study units tell you when to read, your text materials or set books. You are provided exercises to do at appropriate points, just as a lecturer might give you in class exercise.

Each of the study units follows a common format. The first item is an introduction to the subject matter of the unit and how a particular unit is integrated with the other units and the course as a whole. Next to this is a set of learning objectives. These objectives enable you know what you should be able to do by the time you have completed the unit. These learning objectives are meant to guide your study. The moment a unit is finished, you must go back and check whether you have achieved the objectives. If this is made a habit, then you will significantly improve your chances of passing the course.

The main body of the unit guides you through the required reading from other sources. This will usually be either from your set books or from a Reading Section.

The following is a practical strategy for working through the course. If you run into any trouble, telephone your tutor or post the question to his e-mail address. Remember that your tutor's job is to help you. When you need help, don't hesitate to call and ask your tutor to provide it.

1. Read this Course Guide thoroughly.

2. Organize a Study Schedule. Refer to the 'Course Overview' for more details. Note the time you are expected to spend on each unit and how the assignments related to the units. Important information, e.g. details of your tutorials, and the date of the first day of the Semester is available from Study centre or tutor facilitator. You need to gather together all this information in one place, such as your diary or a wall calendar. Whatever method you choose to use, you should decide on and write in your own dates for each unit.

3. Once you have created your own study schedule, do everything you can to stick to it. The major reason that students fail is that

they get behind with their course work. If you get into difficulties with your schedule, please let your tutor know before is too late for help.

4. Turn to Unit 1 and read the introduction and the objectives for the unit.

5. Assemble the study materials. Information about what you need for a unit is given in the overview at the beginning of each unit. You will almost always need both the study unit you are working on and one of your set books on your desk at the same time.

6. Work through the unit. The content of the unit itself has been arranged to provide a sequence for you to follow. As you work through the unit you will be instructed to read from your set books.

7. Keep in touch with your study centre as up-to-date course information will be continuously posted there.

8. Well before the relevant due dates (about 4 weeks before due dates), get in touch with your tutor or Study centre to obtain your next required Assignment. Keep in mind that you will learn a lot by doing the assignment carefully. They have been designed to help you meet the objectives of the course and, therefore, will help you pass the examination. Submit all assignments not later than the due date.

9. Review the objectives for each study unit to confirm that you have achieved them. If you feel unsure about any of the objectives, review the study materials or consult your tutor.

10. When you are confident that you have achieved a unit's objectives, you can then start on the next unit. Proceed unit by unit through the course and try to pace your study so that you keep yourself on schedule.

11. When you have submitted an assignment to your tutor for marking, do not wait for its return before starting on the next unit. Keep to your schedule. When the assignment is returned, pay particular attention to your tutor's comments, both on the tutor marked assignment form and also written on the assignment. Consult your tutor as soon as possible if you have any questions or problems.

12. After completing the last unit, review the course and prepare yourself for the final examination. Check that you have achieved the unit objectives (listed at the beginning of each unit) and the course objectives (listed in this Course Guide).

Tutors and Tutorials

There are 8 hours of tutorials (eight 1-hour sessions) provided in support of this course. You will be notified of the dates, times and location of these tutorials, together with the name and phone number of your tutor, as soon as you are allocated a tutorial group.

Your tutor will mark and comment on your assignments, keep a close watch on your progress and on any difficulties you might encounter and provide assistance to you during the course. You must mail your tutor-marked assignments to your tutor well before the due date (at least two working days are required). They will be marked by your tutor and returned to you as soon as possible.

Do not hesitate to contact your tutor by telephone, e-mail or discussion board if you need help. The following might be circumstances in which you would find help necessary. Contact your tutor if:

- you do not understand any part of the study units or the assigned readings;

- you have difficulty within the exercises;

- you have a question or problem with an assignment, with your tutor's comments on an assignment or with the grading of an assignment

You should try your best to attend the tutorials. This is the only chance to have face to face contact with your tutor and ask questions which are answered instantly. You can raise any problem encountered in the course of your study. To gain the maximum benefit from course tutorials, prepare a question list before attending them. You will learn a lot from participating in discussion actively.

Summary

CTH 001 aims at giving you sound knowledge in the basic concepts of society, and their types with a view to understanding the place, the practice and the function of religion in our society. The broad themes to be examined are the relationship between society and religious

behaviour, the influence of religion on modernity and vice versa, and religion and the family.

We wish you success in this course and hope you find it both interesting and useful.

<div style="border:1px solid black; display:inline-block;">

MAIN COURSE

</div>

COURSE CODE   CTH 001

COURSE TITLE   RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Course Developer: Dr. A. R. Williams
                         National Examination Council
                         Minna.

Course Writers: Dr. A. R. Williams
                         National Examination Council
                         Minna.

                         Dr. Olubiyi A. Adewale
                         National Open University of Nigeria
                         Lagos.

Course Editor: Dr. Mrs. M. Atere
                         Department of Religions
                         Lagos State University, Lagos.

Programme Leader: Dr. Olubiyi A. Adewale
                         National Open University of Nigeria
                         Lagos.

Course Coordinator: Dr. Awoju. J. Owolabi
                         National Open University of Nigeria
                         Lagos.

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

Table of Contents   **Page**

MODULE 1

UNIT 1   THE CONCEPT OF SOCIETY

CONTENT

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objective
3.0   Main Content
        3.1   The meaning of Society
        3.2   The nature of Society
        3.3   The development of Complex Society
        3.4   Social Institutions
        3.5   Modern Society
        3.6   The good Society
        3.7   Measuring Society
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignments
7.0   References/Further Readings

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Religion plays a significant role in the lives of people all over the world and religious practices of some sort are evident in every society. That makes religion a 'cultural universal', along with other general practices found in every culture. Currently, an estimated 4 billion people belong to the many religious faiths of the world. In an effort to explore the place, practice, role and influence of religion on its adherents, it becomes imperative to study and have a good understanding of the various types of societies in which religion has thrived. This unit therefore focuses on the basic concept and nature of society with a view to understanding the development of societies from pre-modern to modern society.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

It is desired that by the end of this unit, you should be able to:

• Define extensively what society is;

• Explain the nature of society;

• Describe how society develops from simple to complex one;

• Identify the various social institutions;

- Explain the features of modern societies;

- Describe a good society; and

- Measure growth and development in society.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Meaning of Society

In trying to understand what something is, it is often useful to break it down into its basic elements. The basic elements of society are three: population, territory and social organization.'

Population

A society has a population, while groups and organizations have members. The difference is simple, but basic. In Leon Mayhew's phrase, the societal population is "the self perpetuating inhabitants of territorial areas." By mating and reproduction, a population reproduces itself. Note that we are dealing here with a population, not necessarily a people. Whether or not the population of a society shares a culture and views itself as one people is something to be determined by observation of the actual case, not something to be taken for granted. The Ghanaians in Nigeria are a distinct people but they are also only part of the population of a larger national society, even though, many of them wish to be separate.

Territory

A self-perpetuating societal population inhabits a given territory on a relatively permanent basis. Such a territory is the largest within which mating is common and residence is relatively permanent.

Social Organization

A societal population in its territory is involved in complex processes of social interaction. It carries on a set of activities – economic, political, and educational among others – that organizes social life. Each of these several social activities becomes a partly independent structure of social relations with their own specific characteristics. Yet they also overlap with each other, link together and share much in common, for they are activities carried on by the same population. These components give us a definition: Society is all of the systems of social interaction carried on by a population within a specified territory.

While we can easily recognize that we live our lives inside a society, not outside or independent of it, we often do not fully grasp what this means. For one thing, we become the unique person, as a particular society encourages, or at least allows certain forms of personal development – and discourage, even forbid others. In some cases, forms of personal development fall beyond what is humanly possible within that society. Miniver Cheevy could not be a bold warrior with bright sword on a prancing stallion because nobody can in the twentieth century. That is beyond the limits of what his society can offer him for personal development.

No one society, then, offers us the entire range of what is humanly possible. History provides us with a long record of ways to be human long lost in practice, though sometimes still alive in books and movies and so still available to us in fantasy. From anthropology we learn of very different peoples and what may seem to us their strange though sometimes quite attractive ways to be human. In each case different kinds of societies provide different ways to be human.

In living our own lives, we do so necessarily within the roles and routines of our own society, which constrain us to be and do some things and not be and do some other things. We never escape society which was there before us and will be there after us, though it may change during our lifetime, a little or a lot. To live within a society means to be involved in a small and personal world of everyday life, of the familiar and manageable, of people we know and love (or even hate). We experience in face-to-face relations family, friends, neighbours, co-workers, fellow students, teachers, employers, traffic cops, local merchants and the like. Our daily activities interlock with theirs.

There once was a time when this small world of daily life could be the limits of a society, for there were tribes and little villages for which no larger world existed. But that is long since past; now society extends into a larger world which we do not directly experience but relate to only impersonally and indirectly. Large and remote systems penetrate our small worlds. In Nigeria, laws are made which affect our daily lives.

Our own small daily world of town, neighbourhood, or campus then is not a world unto itself. It is, instead, part and parcel of a large society which always extends well beyond the range of our daily experience. In the past, when people's lives were entirely bound within the small world of daily life, the common sense developed from living within this small world seemed sufficient to understand what was happening and what to expect. But for a few of us, that is no longer the case; modern society includes so much more than our own small worlds that the experience of

everyday life is not an adequate guide to understanding society. Sociology came into being for just that reason. Something else besides common sense was needed to understand what society was all about.

Why is there society?

To answer this question, we must start with two basic observations about the nature of individuals.

1. At birth, the human organism is helpless to meet its own needs. Others must protect and care for it or it will die. Also, it needs others from whom it can learn how to do the things necessary to live. Human life can be sustained only if the slowly growing human organism (slowly growing compared to most other animals) is cared for while it learns how to do the things necessary to take care of itself.

2. The above, in turn, tells us that the human organism is not genetically programmed, that is, its specific behaviour is not provided by some set of inherited instincts. Instead, all human beings must go through a prolonged, complex learning process. We become human by this learning process, and this, in turn, requires persistent association with other human beings.

Human beings, then, do not come into the world ready-made by nature, already fitted out with the necessary instincts to adapt to the natural environment. The consequences which flow from these basic points are fundamental to an understanding of why there is society.

In the first place, it means that human beings have had to work out for themselves ways to survive. Possessing no instinctive knowledge and skills, human beings have learned from experience, have developed useful skills and have made tools and constructed shelter from whatever materials the environment made available.

Secondly, human survival can only be accomplished if human beings act collectively. Cooperation can accomplish things no one person could manage alone. From the earliest period of human existence, providing food and shelter, bringing into being a new generation, taking care of it and teaching it what it must know, required that individuals cooperate with one another. They had to develop some organized way to see that what needed to be done got done. Some tasks need to be shared, some to be divided among different persons. African Bushmen, for example, hunted down game, while their women collected roots, fruits, nuts and other vegetable foods, a task that could be carried out while taking care

of infants. And both sources of food were necessary, since hunting did not provide a regular and predictable source of food.

From this perspective, human society is the outcome of collective adaptation to a natural environment, a process of finding how to live cooperatively in such a way as to make nature yield enough to sustain life. By cooperative activity among humans learning from one another, skills are acquired; knowledge is accumulated, techniques and tools are developed; and all are transmitted to the next generation. It seems that human life must have been carried on in social groups, however small and primitive from the very beginning of human existence.

There is a basic lesson to be learned from this: out of their struggle with nature, human beings provided for their biological survival and they produced a special life. The answer to our question – why is there society? – is surely not starting or even surprising, but is nonetheless basic; society is produced by the cooperative activity of human beings. It has to be stated that the human organism becomes human only in a society. Neither the fully human organism – the person – nor society comes from nature ready made; that is, neither is genetically produced.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.1

Identify and explain briefly the three elements of Society.

3.2   The Nature of Society

This definition of society does not assume in advance that a society is highly integrated and culturally united. It can be, of course, but often it is not. Culturally different peoples may share the same society. They may even participate in common activities in a reasonable workable way. The world today abounds in such societies; so much so that it is difficult to find a society with a population that shares one culture.

While a society can absorb and contain culturally different peoples, it nonetheless suffers strain and conflict for doing so. This becomes particularly apparent when the cultural differences are differences of language or religion (and sometimes both). The strife in Nigeria among the Tivs and the Jukuns of Taraba State, the Modakekes and the Ifes of Osun State, the Muslims and Christians of Northern Nigeria, in South Africa between the Whites and the Blacks, in Sudan between the Muslims North and the Christians South, in Northern Ireland between Catholic and Protestants and in Canada between French-speaking and English-speaking peoples are examples frequently in the news. (In these cases, the differences of religion and language are matched by

differences of class and wealth; if this were not so, the conflict symbolized by the religion and/or language would be less severe).

Among the new nations of Africa, the original tribal identities which distinguish one African people from another, still persist and even flourish. However, the new national boundaries do not coincide with the original tribal territories and as a result; most African nations contain more than one tribal people. Some tribes have even been divided by boundaries cutting across their ancient tribal lands. As a consequence, tribal loyalties are the basis for intense struggle for power within these newly developing societies. These new societies, in effect, are still emerging out of old tribal ones.

Societal Boundaries

Most of us – social scientists included – hold the idea that a society is a relatively self sufficient, self contained structure with well-marked boundaries that both separate it and insulate it from the surrounding environment of other societies. From this perspective, a society is the largest system of social interaction, within which all other groups, organizations and institutions are sub-units. But such a conception is no longer adequate in the modern world, however reasonable it might once have seemed. In the world today, societies cannot be viewed as self-sufficient and self-contained.

Several crucial activities of modern society – economic production, technological development and use, scientific research and development – flow easily across societal boundaries. Furthermore, the trained managers, technicians and scientists involved in these activities also move readily from one society to another. The mobility of goods and technology is matched by the mobility of the world's most highly trained personnel. By these activities, forms of modern culture such as scientific and technological knowledge also flow into and across societies. Modern ideologies do also and no society in the world is exempted from the influence of one or more ideological currents. Capitalism or socialism, for example, is one variant or another of managerial ideologies.

Mass culture too penetrates almost all societies. Wearing jeans and listening to rock music on records or radio become the aims of millions of young people in many societies. Nigerian movies and television programs are seen all over Africa and Hilton hotels and even McDonald hamburgers can be found all over the globe. Now European football – soccer to us – a truly worldwide sport, is finding acceptance in Nigeria and world over.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.2

In discussing the nature of society, what relevant features can you identify?

3.3   The Development of Complex Society

Human societies have been developing in form and structure for thousands of years. While it is not our task to review that long history here, it is useful to have some conception of what that process was. Though the time span, by human perspective is very long, the historic record is quite clear, human societies have become increasingly more complex in their organization and also larger in size. If we ignore all the extraordinary variation and diversity in human societies known to archaeologists and historians, we can account for this evolutionary process from the time of nomadic groups to today's modern industrial society as an evolution of forms of society distinguished from one another by four basic processes.

1. Improved technology for production of food, clothing and shelter.
2. Increased population and expansion into a larger territory.
3. Greater specialization of groups and roles and a greater differentiation of occupations, classes and other groups in the organization of society.
4. Increasing centralization of control in order to manage and coordinate an increasingly complex society.

Hunting and Gathering Societies

The most primitive form of human society was that of hunting and gathering. Lacking all but the most simple tools, hunting and gathering peoples grouped together in small, usually nomadic bands – nomadic because they had constantly to move on to find more edible plants and more animals to hunt. For such people, life was an existence lived close to the subsistence level, with little surplus food ever available. Since they could not store or preserve food, life often went quickly from feast to famine.

Each group was small, probably an average about fifty persons. They were self-sufficient, having little contact with any other people, so that each small band or tribe lived largely by itself, depending solely on its own resources. When primitive people learned to cultivate the soil, about ten thousand years ago, the way was set for the emergence of a more complicated form of society, though one still primitive in character. The digging stick and later the hoe permitted the planting of seeds and the harvesting of crops.

Now some time could be devoted to activities other than tilling the soil. In some societies, such as that of the Zuni Indians of New Mexico, a great deal of time was devoted to ceremonial activities while other horticultural societies spent much time and energy in war. In either case, there were new specialized roles, priests and warriors. There was also a modest economic specialization with some people designated to specialize in the production of the now greater range of goods made for daily use: weapons, tools and pottery and utensils. These were larger societies than those of the hunting and gathering stage. Such increased size of society led to a necessary political organization, with headmen or chiefs as full time political leaders, something not possible for hunting and gathering people.

Horticultural societies gradually improved in technology. The hoe replaced the digging stick, terracing and irrigation developed as did fertilization and there was also the development of metallurgy and the manufacture of metal tools, axes and knives especially. These technological advances made possible the further enlargement of society both in expansion over a greater geographical area and by increased density – a larger population could be sustained in the same geographical area. The settled village relatively permanent and enduring was now fundamental to social life.

Agrarian Societies

If the horticultural society began to emerge with the invention of the digging stick and later the hoe, it was the invention of the plough, harnessed to domesticated animal that set in motion the evolution of agrarian society some five to six thousand years ago. A wide range of technological developments greatly increased the productivity of society, accompanied by increases in the territory occupied and the size of the occupying population. This led to the growth of governing systems, with armies and ruling classes (warfare was a common activity in agrarian societies). The political extension of control over wide territories even led to the development of great empires.

But perhaps most important characteristic of agrarian societies was the emergence of the urban community. Cities emerged as coordinating and controlling centres for agrarian societies, producing the historic contrast between rural and city life, between farmer and peasant, on the one hand and artisan and merchant on the other. Indeed, the advanced technology produced a surplus that made possible an extensive trade and commerce and the emergence of classes of artisans and merchants. The cities also housed a ruling class, as well as administrators and religious and military leaders.

Within the class of artisans increasing specialization produced a vast increase in the number of different crafts, perhaps as many as 150 to 2,000 in the larger cities. When one adds to this the many other kinds of occupations – officials, soldiers, priests, merchants, servants, and labourers – it becomes clear that the urban centres of agrarian societies had produced a notable diversity of occupations. Though these cities were the controlling centres of agrarian societies, they were never more than a minority of the entire population. Between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries in Europe, for example, the urban population was probably never more than 10 percent of the total. For any agrarian society, the limits of the technology required that the large majority of the population live in rural villages and be directly engaged in the tilling of the soil. Only with the coming of industrial society was that changed.

Industrial Societies

Over the last two hundred years, advances in technology and changes in economic organization have altered the agrarian form of society beyond recognition and brought about industrial society. What first marks industrial society is its enormous technological advance, which permits the use of far more diversified raw materials, quite different sources of energy, far more complex and efficient tools, and as a consequence, an enormous increase in the production and consumption of material goods. The industrialization of society, in fact, has vastly increased the standard of living of industrial populations.
It has had other consequences as well as the destruction of local market systems through integration into larger ones, the growth of large corporations to produce goods and employ large staffs, and even more intensive specialization of labour, producing thousands of occupations where before there were merely hundreds, and an increase in the size of cities as well as the steady increase in the proportion of the total population living in cities. Industrialization urbanizes the population. The growth of societies with such large and diversified populations had a further political consequence; it means the emergence of the modern nation-state, a political entity that takes on more and more functions of service and control.

There are many other changes in society involved in the transition from agrarian to industrial society in community, in family, in life-style, in politics and in culture. Much of what sociology is about is an effort to understand how thoroughly industrialization has altered human society over the past two hundred years, what forms and modes of life it makes available and what in turn it has put beyond the possibility of experience for today's people. It is concerned with understanding what has

happened to reshape human society, what society is now like and what directions of change seem now to be in the making.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.3

What are the major characteristics of a Complex Society?

3.4   Social Institutions

Fundamental to the analysis of society is the understanding of social institutions. There are two different ways to speak of institutions. One begins with the idea of an institution's norm and defines an institution as a complex of such norms. Institutional norms are supported by strong group consensus and sanctions for violation are imposed by enforcing agencies for they are obligatory. They are, indeed, what Sumner meant by the 'mores.' A second conception of institution stresses the social acts which the norms govern, thus suggesting institutional roles and relations. These two ways to define institutions are not incompatible. One calls institutions the norms that govern action, the other calls institution the action itself. An institution is clearly composed of both norms and actions. But we still need to know something else, why some activities are institutionally normative and some are not.

It is conventional to designate such major patterns as the family, the economy and politics as social institutions. But this is misleading for not every kind of familial, economic and political activity is institutionalized. What is basic is that some activities are more important than others for the maintenance of society. Each societal population devises ways to produce goods and feed itself to govern and regulate its ways of living and to educate the young to carry on social life.

If it is important that these activities are carried out, it is equally important how they are carried out. It is here that we get closer to the idea of an institution. In a capitalist society, there are legal contracts and private property. In the modern society, marriage is monogamous and bigamy is forbidden. In a political democracy, the citizens possess the right to vote and only the legislature the citizens elect can enact laws. Within the framework of economy, family and politics, each of these specific actions – making contracts – are legitimate actions morally and legally sanctioned and supported. They are institutions.

Social institutions have two components (1) established practices and actions and (2) the norms that make these practices and actions the legitimate ones. That second component tells us something important about the institutions and about the organizations of society. The varieties of human experience make it clear enough that there is more

than one way of carrying out these important activities; property needs to be privately owned and marriage needs to be monogamous. But while different societies choose different ways, any one society chooses only one way and makes it the only legitimate way for it, morally and legally. Seeing an institution as composed of norms and actions gives us a definition. An institution is a normative system of social action deemed morally and socially crucial for a society.

If we were properly technical, we would not call the whole range of economic or political activities institutions but perhaps, institutional spheres, for only some of these activities are institutionalized. Selling a used car or writing a letter to your congressman are not institutionalized actions but the right of private property and voting in an election are institutionalized activities. With that warning, then, the institutions of society are:

1. Family: Every society develops a social arrangement to legitimize mating and the care and socializing of the young.

2. Education: The young must also be inducted into the culture and taught the necessary values and skills. In pre-industrial societies, this is accomplished largely within the kinship system but in modern societies, a separate system of education develops.

3. Economy: Every society organizes its population to work to produce and to distribute material goods.

4. Polity: Every society develops a governing system of power and authority, which ensures social control within a system of rights and rules, protects and guarantees established interests and mediates among conflicting groups.

5. Religion: In societies, there is always a sense of sacredness about life. It is still a powerful integrating and cohesive force. Religion gave cultural _expression in symbol and rite to this sense of the sacred. But in some modern societies, religion performs this integrating function but weakly, if at all.

The legitimisation that religion once provided, science now does though not in exactly the same way, but claims to possess the only valid knowledge and which then legitimizes a wide range of practices and actions in modern society.

Institutions

Consensus and Coercion – While it is proper to emphasize that, institutions are the legitimate way to carry out necessary social activities; it would be wrong to create the impression that they originated only through common agreement and are supported by an unchallenged moral consensus. This historical record would support no such interpretation. Complex societies were shaped in processes of ecological expansion in the struggle for control of territory and populations, victorious groups imposed their institutions on others. Many people became Christian for example, through "conversion by the word." Conquest and coercion have had as much to do with the establishment of social institutions as have consensus.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.4

What precisely is a Social Institution? Enumerate any five of such Institution.

3.5   Modern Society

While human society has taken many forms over thousands of years and has become more complex, now we inhabit a modern society. It is that form of society that interests us the most. The gradual emergence of what we now call modern society was complex process of social disruption and change that altered old institutions beyond recognition and gave them radically new forms. It was a turbulent historical process, marked often by violence, revolution and class struggle. Eventually, it changed the whole world.

Whatever else it is, modern society is an industrial society. The recognition of this fact is perhaps the first (and therefore now the oldest) idea in understanding how modern society differs from what went before. Those scholars who insist that we define modern society as basically an industrial society point out that the demands and consequence of industrial production which most basically influence the structure of modern society.

Industrial societies emphasize industrial production of goods and thus give priority to whatever will maximize that production. That gives them some features in common, however else they differ in cultural traditions, the same technology, similar technical and scientific knowledge and the same effort to provide the necessary technical training, the same job classifications and skill rankings, which in turn shape the structure of occupations and occupational rewards. Industrial societies strive for technical and productive efficiency and so for them

the "rational" course of action is always determined by cost-accounting, they strive to get more for less.

In industrial society, technical occupations increase at the expense of non-technical ones, and the distribution of wages and salaries among occupations is fairly similar. In such a society, management and administration emerge as major functions and as major occupations of authority and prestige. There is increasing specialization and furthermore, the separation of the economic system from the family and from religion; home and work place are no longer the same.

The Master Trends

But modern society is more than an industrial structure; it is the outcome of a number of master trends that have been going on for several hundred years. They include the following:

Capitalism

The emergence of capitalism began as far back as the thirteenth century in medieval Europe. It developed into powerful tradition destroying system of privately owned production for profit, which enormously increased material productivity, reshaped the class structure and fundamentally altered the basic institutions of society.

Industrial Technology

The development of mechanized processes vastly increased the production of goods, shifted the base of work from agriculture to industry and raised the material level of the population. Capitalism exploited technology to create wholly new factory systems of industrial manufacturing and many new specialized occupations. The development of this industrial system is what is meant by the Industrial Revolution. It is this system that makes a society into an industrial society.

Urbanization

The transformation of society by capitalism and industrialism shifted the population from predominantly rural to predominantly urban locations. While cities are not new, only in modern society has most of the population lived in urban areas.

The Nation State

The ecological expansion created by industrial capitalism brought the nation state into being as the politically controlling unit, extending national loyalties into more diverse human populations than ever before.

Bureaucracy

The need to administer larger units of population brought about by ecological expansion, particularly with people from diverse cultural origins, brought into common use the bureaucratic form of organization, particularly in the economic and political spheres. Again, modern society did not invent bureaucracy, but it has made it a basic feature of its structure.

Science

Scientific knowledge is the most valued knowledge in modern society. It makes possible the control and exploitation of nature and the harnessing of varied forms of energy. From such knowledge, technological advance is assured.

Mass Education

Modern society requires, at a minimum, the literacy of all its population. Beyond that, it requires mass education to train the population in industrial techniques and skills, to build commitment and loyalty to the nation-state and its institutions, and to produce a highly trained scientific and technological class.

In modern society, by contrast, the realm of the sacred shrinks. Modern society maximizes the practical and useful. Furthermore, the rational mind of science encourages scepticism about practices not based on tested procedures. Science also develops attitudes that welcome new practical ideas and new technical knowledge. In modern society, in short, the dominant place once accorded religion is replaced by the primacy given to science, its methods and its practical application.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.5

Describe a Modern Society. What are the Master Trends that make a Society modern?

3.6   The Good Society

Communal

The good society is communal. It is a community, rather than a bureaucracy or an aggregate of unrelated people. This means that social life is based upon a consensus of values and ideals about how society should be organized and how we should live our lives. Each of us feels that we belong and are bound to enduring social relations with people we love and respect. People care and cooperate.

Controllable

In the past, people felt that the conditions of their existence were largely beyond their control. Limited knowledge and a limited technology gave a limited control over nature and human existence was necessarily one of scarcity and unending labour. The poverty and suffering of most human beings was accepted as inevitable. The fear of the unknown, the uses of magic, the ever present threat of disaster, even the concept of punishing gods for God in religion were expressions of this experience of limited control.

Now, in modern society, science and technology have much diminished these fears of uncontrollable natural forces, yet modern people still do not feel they control the conditions of their lives. Now, it is not nature but society that seems uncontrolled, or even in control. For modern people, a utopian image of a good society tends to emphasize the capacity of human beings to have a rational control over the circumstances of their lives. Bell warned that conflict between professionals as experts and the populace would be common in post industrial society. Decentralization and self-government become goals for social change, designed to bring the social world down to human scale and within the reasonable control of those who must live in it. But it is a goal ridiculed or even denounced in turn by those committed to the continuity of trends in modern society which will make post-industrial society seem even more uncontrollable by the majority of people.

Self- Fulfilment

More and more in modern society increasing numbers of individuals demand the opportunity for a fulfilling and rewarding life, free of demeaning drudgery and boring routine. They expect to be able to realize their full potential of abilities and skills. Once it was common to think that only the elite, a naturally gifted minority could achieve such self-fulfilment and personal self-development. But in the modern world, it is no longer easy to sustain such notions of a few who deserve the privilege of self-realization while the rest labour in drudgery to make that possible.

The Ideal and the Possible

The concept of the good society operates at two levels, the ideal and the historical. The ideal is simply a statement of what human society is at its best, a community ordered by the values of justice, equality and liberty. At the historical level, the good society is the historically possible approximation, the nearest and best given the limitations of knowledge and technology.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.6

What prompted the concept of 'The Good Society?' Mention some significant ingredients of the Society.

3.7   Measuring Society

Human societies are large, complex and ever changing structures. Getting the measure of them, that is, analyzing and assessing them, is always a difficult task. There are, however, at least, two ways in which some assessment of society can be made: the evolutionary and the comparative.

The evolutionary development of society from more primitive to complex forms, as we have seen, culminated in a modern society which was capitalist, industrial and urban. That evolutionary process we can expect to go on. It suggested how a new form of society would evolve in the near future out of trends in the present society.

Karl Marx too used an evolutionary conception of the development of human society which was then to be followed by a new form, a socialist society that would create the conditions he argued for the creation of a community of truly free and equal individuals. (That, by the way, was his meaning of communism, not what is meant by the term today as a consequence of the society created by the Russian revolution).

The comparison of folk and modern society is but one effort to be comparative. There are many other ways, including the comparison of developed with underdeveloped for dependent societies or of one particular society, say that Nigeria with another which is basically similar, say Ghana or with one which is both like it in some ways and quite different in others, say the United States. A disciplined comparison of societies is a method for bringing out basic features that might not be so evident if we just examine one society. Comparing Nigeria to some

other societies or comparing Nigeria today to what it was before 1999 is a way of bringing out its distinctive features.

Lastly, comparing the real society with an image of the good society provides another point of analysis. In particular, it enables people to ask whether the real as it really is, is all that is possible, or whether it is reasonable to hope and struggle for something better.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.7

Identify and explain two major ways in which some assessment of Society can be made.

4.0   CONCLUSION

It is important to note that society never existed in a vacuum. However, all the systems of social interaction carried on by a population within a specified territory contribute to the society. The evolutionary development of society from more primitive to complex forms culminated in a modern society. The concept of the 'Good Society' was also presented by Sociologist. The good society is said to be communal, controllable and gives its population a fulfilling and rewarding life. Religion however, has influenced and is still affecting the various societies world over. All such influences will be our focus in subsequent units.

5.0   SUMMARY

The concept of society with emphasis on its development from primitive to modern has been the focus in this unit. The development from simple to complex and the institutions that make up the society were also studied. Historic image of the good society compares real and imagined societies by such criteria as communal, controllable and self-fulfillment and two other ways to measure society which are by evolutionary development and by comparison of one society to another or by one society to different historic periods in its development, were highlighted in the study.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1   a. Describe the term Society.
     b. Give an account of the evolutionary process of society from the primitive to modern times.

2   a. What do you understand by social institution?
     b. Identify and explain any five institutions of society.

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

Schaefer R. T & Lamm R. P. (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*
     New York, McGraw – Hill Companies

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The Study of Society*, New York CBS College
     Publishing

UNIT 2   RELIGION IN SOCIETY

CONTENT

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
        3.1   Religion and Society
        3.2   Religion and Social Cohesion
        3.3   Religion and Social Control
        3.4   Religion and Social Support
        3.5   Religion and Social Change
        3.6   Religion and Psychotherapy
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Readings

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Understanding the connection between religion and society is the main focus in this unit. The functional interpretation has been the dominant one. It asserts that every society has a number of necessary conditions that it must successfully meet in order to survive and one of these is the cohesion or solidarity of its members. Religion, it is asserted provides this function for society. This unit will put you through these roles of religion in our society.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

It is hoped that by the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Explain the connectivity between religion and society;

- Express how religion serve in achieving social cohesion;

- Describe the role of religion in social control;

- Demonstrate how religion can be used for psychotherapy;

- Specify the role of religion as social support; and

- Explain the role of religion in social change.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Religion and Society

How to explain or even define religion has probably yielded less scholarly agreement than almost any other matter studied. Religion is so diverse in historical development, so culturally varied that definitions developed from either our African or Western experience often fail to encompass it adequately. What comes out of these scholarly efforts, however, is the recognition that religion emerges from common experience in society and offers explanations that transcend whatever mundane, factual knowledge is available. These are explanations expressed in symbolic forms and acts which relate a people to the ultimate conditions of their existence.

As human societies have evolved over long periods of time, so also have religions. Each of the world's religion, in its own distinctive way, has conferred a sacred meaning upon the circumstances of a people's existence. Some religions, such as Christianity and Islam, have grown far beyond their social origins, now counting their believers in the hundreds of millions. Though Christianity may not claim the largest number of adherents, Christians nonetheless are not less than 40 percent of all religious believers in the world.

We have no historical or archaeological reason to believe that religion began full-blown. Instead, it developed slowly with the evolution of human society, and in its more primitive forms-itself an evolutionary development beyond the earliest pre-religious people – possessed no organization or special roles (no church or clergy), only a communal sharing in rituals that gave expression to religious symbols. As religion and society evolve, a sense of sacredness takes concrete form in objects and images that become sacred, whether these are persons, animals or natural objects, human artefacts or symbolic expressions. The sacred also becomes conveyed and expressed for the living in ritual, where behaviour gives objective form to mood and feeling. A division among the sacred and the profane eventually marks off religious from nonreligious activity.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.1

Explain how religion evolved in human society?

3.2   Religion and Social Cohesion

According to the functionalist perspective, sharing the same religious interpretation of the meaning of life unites a people in a cohesive and binding moral order. This was what Emile Durkheim meant when he defined religion as:

> *. . . a unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden –beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them.*

But these members of the moral community also share a common social life. The religious community and the society have the same members. When that occurs, religion, by providing a moral unity then provides a society with powerful social "cement" to hold it together. When the moral community of believers is identical with the social community, as is common in more traditional societies; then the symbolism of the sacred supports the more ordinary aspects of social life. Religion then legitimizes society; it provides sacred sanction for the social order and for its basic values and meanings.

Furthermore, the commitment of individuals to these shared beliefs is renewed and refreshed each time the members come together to worship, that is, when they become a congregation. Such a sense of renewal is even stronger when they come together on ceremonial occasions of great sacred meaning such as, for example Id-el fitr or Id-el kabr for Muslims, on Easter and Christmas for Christians. But the unifying rituals of faith are also called upon by individuals on the most significant occasion for family and for the individual; at birth, at marriage, and at death.

In traditional societies the religious and the nonreligious spheres of life are not sharply differentiated. But in modern, industrial societies, religion and society are not the same. The emergence of different modes of life- experience leads to different meanings about life, producing a religious differentiation. The all-encompassing church gives way to competing religious group. Religion may still provide cohesion, but now only for subgroups of society.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.2

What is social cohesion? What way has religion promoted cohesion in your society?

3.3   Religion and Social Control

Liberation theology is a relatively recent phenomenon and marks a break with the traditional role of churches. It was this role that Karl Marx opposed. In his view, religion impeded social change by encouraging oppressed people to focus on other-worldly concerns rather than on their immediate poverty or exploitation. Marx acknowledged that religion plays an important role in propping up the existing social structure. According to Marx, religion reinforces the interests of those in power, grants a certain religious legitimacy to social inequality, and contemporary Christianity, like the Hindu faith, reinforces traditional patterns of behaviour that call for the subordination of the powerless.

The role of women in the church and in Islam is another example of uneven distribution of power. Assumptions about gender roles leave women in a subservient position both within Christian churches, in Islam and at home. In fact, women find it difficult to achieve leadership positions in many churches as they do in large corporations. Like Marx, conflict theorists argue that to whatever extent religion actually does influence social behaviour, it reinforces existing patterns of dominance and inequality. From a Marxist perspective, religion functions as an "agent of de-politicization". In simpler terms religion keeps people from seeing their lives and societal conditions in political terms by obscuring the overriding significance of conflicting economic interests. Marxists suggest that by inducing a "consciousness among the disadvantaged, religion lessens the possibility of collective political action that can end capitalist oppression and transform society".

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.3

In what ways has religion influenced social control in Nigeria?

3.4   Religion and Social Support

Most of us find it difficult to accept the stressful events of life such as death of a loved one, serious injury, bankruptcy and divorce among others. This is especially true when something "senseless" happens. How can family and friends come to terms with the death of talented college student, not even 20 years old, from a terminal disease? Through its emphasis on the divine and the supernatural, religion allows us to "do something" about the calamities we face. In some faiths, adherents can

offer sacrifices or pray to a deity in the belief that such acts will change their earthly condition. At a more basic level, religion encourages us to view our personal misfortunes as relatively unimportant in the broader perspective of human history or even as part of undisclosed divine purpose. Friends and relatives of the deceased college student may see this death as being "God's will" and as having some ultimate benefit that we cannot understand. This perspective may be much more comforting than the terrifying feeling that any of us can die senselessly at any moment- and that there is no divine "answer" as to why one person lives a long and full life, while another dies tragically at a relatively early age.

Faith-based community organizations have taken on more and more responsibilities in the area of social assistance. In fact, as part of an effort to cut back on government funded welfare programmes, government leaders have advocated shifting the social "safety net" to private organizations in general and to churches and religious charities in particular.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.4

Explain social support. How has religion influenced the social support system in your community?

3.5   Religion and Social Change

Many religious activists, especially in Latin America, support liberation theology, which refers to use of a church in a political effort to eliminate poverty, discrimination, and other forms of injustice evident in secular society. Advocates of this religious movement sometimes display sympathy for Marxism. Many believe that radical liberation, rather than economic development in itself, is the only acceptable solution to the desperation of the masses in impoverished developing countries. Indeed, the deteriorating social conditions of the last two decades have nurtured this ideology of change.

A significant portion of worshippers are unaffected by this radical mood, but religious leaders are well aware of liberation theology. The official position of Pope John Paul II and others in the hierarchy of the Catholic Church is that clergy should adhere to traditional pastoral duties and keep a distance from radical politics. However, activists associated with liberation theology believe that organized religion has a moral responsibility to take a strong public stand against the oppression of the poor, racial and ethnic minorities, and women.

The term liberation theology has a recent origin, dating back to the 1973 publication of the English translation of *A Theology of Liberation*. This book is written by a Peruvian priest, Gustavo Gutierrez, who lived in a slum area of Lima during the early 1960s. After years of exposure to the vast poverty around him, Gutierrez concluded: "The poverty was a destructive thing, something to be fought against and destroyed…. It became crystal clear that in order to serve the poor, one had to move into political action".

Gutierrez's discoveries took place during a time of increasing radicalization among Latin American intellectuals and students. An important element in their radicalization was the theory of *dependencia*, developed by Brazilian and Chilean social scientists. According to this theory, the reason for Latin America's continued underdevelopment was its dependence on industrialized nations (first Spain, then Great Britain, and, most recently, the United States). A related approach shared by most social scientists in Latin America was a Marxist-influenced class analysis that viewed the domination of capitalism and multinational corporations as central to be problems of the hemisphere. As these perspectives became more influential, a social network emerged among politically committed Latin American theologians who shared experiences and insights. One result was a new approach to theology, which rejected the models developed in Europe and the United State and instead built on the cultural and religious traditions of Latin America.

In the 1970s, many advocates of liberation theology expressed strong Marxist views and saw revolutionary struggle to overthrow capitalism as essential to ending the suffering of Latin America's poor. More recently, liberation theology seems to have moved away from orthodox Marxism and endorsement of armed struggle. As an example, Gutierrez (1990:214, 222) has written that one does not need to accept Marxism as an "all-embracing view of life and thus exclude the Christian faith and its requirements". Gutierrez adds that the proper concerns of a theology of liberation are not simply the world's "exploited against," "despised cultures," and the "condition of women, especially in those sectors of society where women are doubly oppressed and marginalized".

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.5

What social change has religion introduced into the Nigeria society?

3.6   Religions and Psychotherapy

In Africa, particularly in Nigeria there is another way in which religion sustains people; it becomes a supporting psychology, a form of psychotherapy. Religion is viewed in upbeat terms, and God

is conceived of as a humane and considerate God; such a hopeful perspective turns away from the older Christian conception of a stern and demanding God.

Psychologizing Religion

This "psychologizing" of religion has created an "Americanized religion" (as sociologists Louis Schneider and Sanford M. Dombusch have called it). Norman Vincent Pearl, a prominent Protestant clergyman, with his "power of positive thinking" serves as a typical example. It provides peace of mind, promises prosperity and successes in life, as well as effective and happy human relations. It is thus a source of security and confidence, of happiness and success in this world. Pastoral counselling - for which clergymen get psychological training - is apparently a more significant function of American clergy than it is European or African clergy. According to one careful observer:

> The more routine but flourishing engagement of religion in the affairs of a very large proportion of Americans consist in their submitting hurts and hopes to the care and help of pastors. Gauged by both consumer demand and by clergymen's self-emulation, the chief business of religion in the United States is now- as it has probably long been- the cure of souls.

The religious practitioner has now moved into a relevant place in the mental health field as a helping professional. Consequently, pastoral counselling has become so much a specialty that a national organization - the American Association of Pastoral Counsellors - has been formed, to set professional standards, regulate practice, and certify practitioners.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.6

Discuss the role of religion as psychotherapy in the Nigerian society.

4.0   CONCLUSION

The connectivity between religion and society became evident when the functional interpretation of religion by scholars became dominant. You must have through this study understood that religion plays vital role in social cohesion, social control, social change and social support and even as psychotherapy in many societies.

5.0   SUMMARY

Religion gives expression to the sense of sacredness in human life; a division between the sacred and the profane marks off religious from nonreligious activity. A functional interpretation of religion stresses how sharing in religious beliefs creates moral cohesion and thus makes society morally legitimate. But religion also provides a mechanism for social control and a source of psychic and emotional support for individuals.

6.0   TUTOR- MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1a.   Give a scholarly definition to the term social cohesion
 b.   What role has religion played in the achievement of cohesion in Nigeria?
2a.   What is social control?
 b.   In what ways has religion been used as a tool for social control?

7.0   REFERENCES

Schaefer R.T. & Lamm R. P (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York: McGraw-Hill Companies.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The Study of Society*, New York: CBS College Publishing.

Peter Berger (1967). *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double day publishers.

Bryan Wilson (1969). *Religion in Secular Society*, Baltimore: Penguin Books.

UNIT 3   THEORIES ON FUNCTIONS OF RELIGION IN SOCIETY

CONTENT

1.0   INTRODUCTION

This unit will focus on theories on the function of religion in society as postulated by some prominent sociologist. It will begin with a brief overview of the approaches of the sociology. Emile Durkheim introduced the first approach while other sociologists used other approaches in studying religion. Particular attention will be given to the insights of Karl Marx and Max Weber.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of a thorough study of this unit you should be able to:

• Explain the position of Emile Durkheim on the role of religion in society;

• Explain the stand of Max Weber on the role religion could play in a society;

• Identify the position of Karl Marx on the function of religion in society;

- Compare and contrast the sociological positions of each scholar; and

- Explain the integrative function of religion in society.

3.0   MAIN CONTENTS

3.1   Overview of Functions of Religion

Sociologists are interested in the social impact of religion on individuals and institutions. Consequently, if a group believes that it is being directed by a "vision from God," a sociologist will not attempt to prove or disprove this "revelation." Instead, he or she will assess the effects of the religious experience on the group. Since religion is a cultural universal, it is not surprising that it plays a basic role in human societies. In sociological terms, these include both manifest and latent functions. Among its manifest (open and stated) functions, religion defines the spiritual world and gives meaning to the divine. Religion provides an explanation for events that seem difficult to understand, such as our relationship to what lies beyond the grave.

The latent functions of religion are unintended, covert, or hidden. Even though the manifest function of church services is to offer a forum for religious worship, they might at the same time fulfil a latent function as a meeting ground for unmarried members.

Functionalists and conflict theorists both evaluate religion's impact as a social institution on human societies. We will consider a functionalist view of religion's role in integrating society, in social support, and in promoting social change, and then look at religion as a means of social control from the conflict perspective. Note that, for the most part, religion's impact is best understood from a macro-level viewpoint, oriented toward the larger society. The social support function is an exception: it is best viewed on the micro level, directed toward the individual.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.1

Distinguish between latent and manifest function of religion.

3.2   Durkheimian Theory

Emile Durkheim was perhaps the first sociologist to recognize the critical importance of religion in human societies. He saw its appeal for the individual, but – more important- he stressed the social impact of religion. In Durkheim's view, religion is a collective act and includes

many forms of behaviour in which people interact with others. As in his work on suicide, Durkheim was not interested in the personalities of religious believers as he was in understanding religious behaviour within a social context. Durkheim initiated sociological analysis of religion by defining religion as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things". In his formulation, religion involves a set of beliefs and practices that are uniquely the property of religion - as opposed to other social institutions and ways of thinking. Durkheim argued that religious faiths distinguish between the everyday world and certain events that transcend the ordinary. He referred to these realms as the sacred and the profane.

The sacred encompasses elements beyond everyday life which inspire awe, respect, and even fear. People become a part of the sacred realm only by completing some ritual, such as prayer or sacrifice. Believers have faith in the sacred; this faith allows them to accept what they cannot understand. By contrast, the profane includes the ordinary and commonplace. Interestingly, the same object can be either sacred or profane depending on how it is viewed. A normal dinning room table is profane, but it becomes sacred to Christians if it bears the elements of a communion. For Confucians and Taoists, incense sticks are not mere decorative items; they are highly valued offerings to the gods in religious ceremonies marking new and full moons.

Following the direction established by Durkheim almost a century ago, contemporary sociologist view religions in two different ways. The norms and values of religious faiths can be studied through examination of their substantive religious beliefs. For example, we can compare the degree to which Christian faiths literally interpret the Bible, or Muslim groups follow the Qur'an (or Koran). At the same time, religions can be examined in terms of the social functions they fulfil, such as providing social support or reinforcing the social norms. By exploring both the beliefs and the functions of religious, we can better understand its impact on the individual, on groups, and on society as a whole.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.2

What is the difference between the profane and the sacred according to Durkheim?

3.3 **The Weberian Thesis**

For Karl Marx, the relationship between religion and social change was clear: religion impeded change by encouraging oppressed people to focus on other worldly concerns rather than on their immediate poverty or exploitation. However, Max Weber was unconvinced by Marx's

argument and carefully examined the connection between religious allegiance and capitalist development. His findings appeared in his pioneering work, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, first published in 1904.

Weber noted that in European nations with Protestant and Catholic citizens, an overwhelming number of business leaders, owners of capital, and skilled workers were Protestant. In his view, this was no mere coincidence. Weber pointed out that the followers of John Calvin (1509-1564), a leader of the Protestant Reformation, emphasized a disciplined work ethic, this-worldly concern, and rational orientation to life that have become known as the Protestant ethic. One by-product of the protestant ethic was a drive to accumulate savings that could be used for future investment. This "spirit of capitalism," to use Weber's phrase, contrasted with "the moderate work hours", "leisurely work habits", and "lack of ambition" that he saw as typical of the times.

Few books on the sociology of religion have aroused as much commentary and criticism as the protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism. It has been hailed as one of the most important theoretical works in the field and as an excellent example of macro-level analysis. Like Durkheim, Weber demonstrated that religion is not solely a matter of intimate personal beliefs. He stressed that the collective nature of religion has social consequences for society as a whole.

Conflict theorists caution that Weber's theory even if it is accepted-should not be regarded as an analysis of mature capitalism as reflected in the rise of large corporations, which transcend national boundaries. The primary disagreement between Kari Marx and Max Weber concerned not the origins of capitalism, but rather its future. Unlike Marx, Weber believed that capitalism could endure indefinitely as an economic system. He added, however, that the decline of religion as an overriding force in society opened the way for workers to express their discontent more vocally.

We can conclude that, although Weber provides a convincing description of the origins of European capitalism, this economic system has subsequently been adopted by non-Calvinists in many parts of the world. Contemporary studies in the United States show little or no difference in achievement orientation between Roman Catholics and Protestants. Apparently, the "spirit of capitalism" has become a generalized cultural trait rather than a specific religious tenet.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.3

Compare and contrast Weber and Marx opinion of the role of religion in social change.

3.4 The Marxist Critique

Karl Marx described religion as an "opiate" particularly harmful to oppressed peoples. In his view religion often drugged the masses into submission by offering the hope of salvation in an ideal after life as consolation for their harsh life on earth. For example, during the period of slavery in the United States, white masters forbade blacks to practice native African religion, while encouraging them to adopt the Christian religion. Through Christianity slaves were prodded to obey their masters; they were told that obedience would lead to salvation and eternal happiness in the hereafter. Viewed from a conflict perspective, Christianity may have pacified certain slaves and blunted the rage that often fuel rebellion.

Marx acknowledged that religion plays an important role in legitimating the existing social structure. The values of religion, as already noted, reinforce other social institution and the social order as a whole. From Marx perspectives, religion promotes stability within society and therefore helps to perpetuate patterns of social inequality. In a society with several religious faiths, the dominant religion will represent the ruling economic and political class.

Marx concurred with Durkheim's emphasis on the collective and socially shared nature of religious behaviour. At the same time, he was concerned that religion would reinforce social control within an oppressive society. Marx argued that religion's focus on otherworldly concerns diverted attention from earth problems and from needless suffering created by unequal distribution of valued resources.

Religion reinforces the interests of those in power. For example, India's traditional caste system defined the social structure of that society, at least among the Hindu majority. The caste system was almost certainly the creation of the priesthood, but it also served the interests of India's political rulers by granting a certain religious intimacy to social inequality.

In the view of Karl Marx and later conflict theorists, religion is not necessarily a beneficial or admirable force for social control. For example, contemporary Christianity, like the Hindu faith, reinforces traditional patterns of behaviour that call for the subordination of the

powerless. Assumptions about gender roles to leave women in the subservient position both within Christian churches and at home are usually upheld in the church. In fact, women find it as difficult to achieve leadership position in many churches as they do in large corporations. In 1993, 89 percent of all clergy in the United States were males compared to 99 percent in 1983. While women play a significant role as volunteers in community churches men continue to make the major theological and financial judgment for nation wide church organization. Conflict theorists argue that to whatever extent religion actually does influence social behaviours. It however reinforces existing patterns of dominance and inequality. From a Marxist perspective, religion functions as an "agent of de-politicizing". In simpler terms, religion keeps people from seeing their lives and societal condition in political terms by obscuring the overriding significance of conflicting economic interest. Marxists suggest that by inducing a "false consciousness" among the disadvantaged religion lessens the possibility of collective political action that can end capitalist oppression and transform society.

It should be noted, however, that religious leaders have sometimes been in the forefront of movements for social change. During the 1960s, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. supported by numerous ministers, priests, and rabbis fought for civil rights for Blacks. In the 1980s, the sanctuary movement of loosely connected organizations began offering asylum, often in churches, to those who seek refugee status but are regarded by the Immigration and Naturalization Service as illegal aliens. By giving shelter in homes, offices, or places of worship to those refused asylum, participants in the sanctuary movement are violating the law and become subject to stiff fines and jail sentences. Nevertheless, movement activities (including many members of the clergy) believe that such humanitarian assistance is fully justified. The efforts of religious groups to promote social change are noticed all over the world today.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.4

Marx and Durkheim concurred on the nature of religious behaviour. Discuss.

3.5   The Integrative Function of Religion

Emile Durkheim's view of religion as an integrative power in human society is reflected in the modern functionalist thought. Durkheim sought to answer a perplexing question: "How can human societies be held together when they are generally composed of individuals and social groups with diverse interests and aspirations." In his view, religious bonds often transcend these personal and divisive forces.

Durkheim acknowledges that religion is not the only integrative force-nationalism or patriotism may serve the same end.

Why should religion provide this "societal glue"? Religion, whether it is Buddhism, Christianity, or Judaism, offers people meaning and purpose for their lives. It gives them certain ultimate values and ends to hold in common. Although subjective and not always fully accepted, these values and ends help a society to function as an integrated social system. For example, the Christian ritual of communion not only celebrates a historical event in the life of Jesus (the last supper) but also represents collective participation in a ceremony with sacred social significance. Similarly, funerals, weddings, *bar mitzvahs* and confirmations serve to integrate people into large communities by providing shared beliefs and values about the ultimate question of life.

Although the integrative impact of religion has been emphasized here, it should be noted that religion is not the dominant force maintaining social cohesion in contemporary industrial societies. People are also bound together by patterns of consumption, laws, nationalistic feelings, and other forces. Moreover, in some instances religious loyalties are dysfunctional; they contribute to tension and even conflict between groups or nations. During the Second World War, the Nazis attempted to exterminate the Jewish people, and approximately 6 million European Jews were killed. In modern times, nations such as Lebanon (Muslims versus Christians), Northern Ireland (Roman Catholics versus Protestants), and India (Hindus versus Muslims and, more recently, Sikhs) have been torn by clashes that are in part based on religion.

In the 1990s, the bloody conflict in the former Yugoslavia has been exacerbated by related religious and ethnic tensions. Serbia, Macedonia and Montenegro are dominated by the Orthodox Church, and Croatia and Slovenia by the Catholic Church; the embattled republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina has a 40 percent Islamic plurality. In many of these areas, the dominant political party is tied into the most influential church. Religious conflict has been increasingly evident in the Sudan and in Nigeria as well as exemplified in the clashes in Northern Nigeria between Christians and Muslims.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.5

Define integration. In what way has religion performed integrative function in Nigeria?

4.0   CONCLUSION

We have taken time to study the critical and scholarly position of some sociologist on the role of religion in the society in this unit. The position of Durkheim who was the first to approach religion from the functional perspective was highlighted. Other scholars whose critical works were studied include Karl Marx and Max Weber.

5.0   SUMMARY

Religion is found throughout the world because it offers answers to such ultimate questions as why we exist, why we succeed or fail, and why we die.

Emile Durkheim stressed the social aspect of religion and attempted to understand individual religious behaviour within the context of the larger society.

From a Marxist point of view, religion lessens the possibility of collective political action that can end capitalist oppression and transform society.

Max Weber held that Calvinism (and, to lesser extent, other branches of Protestantism) produced a type of person more likely to engage in capitalistic behaviour.

6.0   TUTOR- MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1   a.   Explain manifest and latent function of religion
       b.   What is the Durkheimian position on the place of religion in society

2   a.   Give an account of the Marxist ideology in relation to the role of religion in society.
       b.   How is it different from Weber's opinion?

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Schaefer R.T. & Lamm R. P (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York: McGraw-Hill Companies.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The Study of Society*, New York: CBS College Publishing.

Peter Berger (1967). *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double Day Publishers.

Bryan Wilson (1969). *Religion in Secular Society*, Baltimore, Penguin Books.

UNIT 4   DIMENSIONS OF RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOUR

CONTENT

1.0   INTRODUCTION

All religions have certain elements in common, yet these elements are expressed in the distinctive manner of each faith. The patterns of social behaviour are of great interest to sociologists, since they underscore the relationship between religion and society. Religious beliefs, religious rituals, and religious experience all help to define what is sacred and to differentiate the sacred from the profane. Let us now examine these three dimensions of religious behaviour in this unit.

2.0   OBJECTIVE

It is expected that on the completion of this study unit you should be able to:

- Give account of a society's belief system;

- Explain religious rituals as practiced in societies;

- Express different kind of religious experience;

- Differentiate between beliefs and experience; and

36

- Differentiate between rites and rituals.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   **Belief**

Some people believe in life after death, in supreme beings with unlimited powers, or in supernatural forces. Religious beliefs are statements to which members of a particular religion adhere. These views can vary dramatically from religion to religion. The Adam and Eve account of creation found in Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, is an example of a religious belief. Many people in the United States strongly adhere to this biblical explanation of creation and even insist that it be taught in public schools. These people, known as creationists, are worried about the secularization of society and oppose teaching that directly or indirectly question biblical scripture.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.1

Explain religious belief. What are the common beliefs of most major religious groups?

3.2   **Ritual**

Religious rituals are practices required or expected of members of a faith. Rituals usually honour the divine power (or powers) worshipped by believers; they also remind adherents of their religious duties and responsibilities. Rituals and beliefs can be interdependent; rituals generally involve the affirmation of beliefs, as in a public or private statement confessing a sin. Like any social institution, religion develops distinctive normative patterns to structure people's behaviour. Moreover, there are sanctions attached to religious rituals, whether rewards (pins for excellence at church schools) or penalties (expulsion from a religious institution for violation of norms).

Among Christians in Nigeria, rituals may be very simple, such as praying at a meal or observing a moment of silence to commemorate someone's death. Yet certain rituals, such as the process of canonizing a saint, are quite elaborate. Most religious rituals in our culture focus on services conducted at houses of worship. Thus, attendance at a service, silent and spoken reading of prayers, and singing of spiritual hymns and

chants are common forms of ritual behaviour that generally take place in group settings.

From an interactionist perspective, these rituals serve as important face-to-face encounters in which people reinforce their religious beliefs and their commitment to their faith. One way to think of religious ritual is as how people "do religion" together. From Muslims, a very important ritual is the hajj, a pilgrimage to the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. Every Muslim who is physically and financially able is expected to make this trip at least once. Each year over 2 million pilgrims go to Mecca during the one week period indicated by the Islamic lunar calendar. Muslims from all over the world make the hajj, including those in Nigeria, where many tours are arranged to facilitate this ritual.

Some rituals induce an almost trancelike state. The Plains Indians eat or drink peyote, a cactus containing the powerful hallucinogenic drug called mescaline. Similarly, the ancient Greek followers of the god Pan chewed intoxicating leaves of ivy in order to become more ecstatic during their celebrations. Of course, artificial stimulants are not necessary to achieve a religious "high". Devout believers, such as those who practice the Pentecostal Christian ritual of "speaking in tongues", can reach a state of ecstasy simply through spiritual passion.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.2

Ritual is said to be common to all religious groups. Explain a common ritual in your religion.

3.3   Experience

In sociological study of religion, the term religious experience refers to the feeling or perception of being in direct contact with the ultimate reality, such as a divine being, or of being overcome with religious emotion. A religious experience may be rather slight, such as the feeling of exaltation a person receives from hearing a choir sing Handel's "Hallelujah Chorus." But many religious experiences are more profound, such as Muslim's experience on a hajj. In his autobiography, the late African America activist Malcolm X wrote of his hajj and how deeply moved he was by the way that Muslims in Mecca came together across lines of race and color. For Malcolm X, the colour blindness of the Muslim world "proved to me the power of the One God".

Still another profound religious experience is, at a turning point in one's life making a personal commitment to Jesus. According to a 1997 national survey, more than 44 percent of people in the United States

claimed that they had a born-again Christian experience at some time in their lives-a figure that translates into nearly 80 million adults. An earlier survey found that Baptists (61 percent) were the most likely to report such experiences; by contrast, only 18 percent of Catholics and 11 percent of Episcopalians stated that they had been born again. The collective nature of religion, as emphasized by Durkheim, is evident in these statistics. The beliefs and rituals of a particular faith can create an atmosphere either friendly or hostile to this type of religious experience. Thus, a Baptist would be encouraged to come forward and share such experiences with others, whereas an Episcopalian who claimed to have born again would receive much less support.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.3

What is religious experience? In what ways has it influenced adherents' commitment to their faith?

3.4   Varieties of Religious Behaviour

Because religious behaviour finds expression in so many aspects of everyday life, we find it difficult to disentangle religion from other institutional spheres. In fact classifying behaviour as religious or political or economic is a relatively recent custom. For instance, although the ancient Greeks had notions regarding various gods, they did not have a word for religion. But precisely because religious behaviour is so varied, we have difficulty thinking about it unless we find some way to sort it into relevant categories. Although no categories do justice to the diversity and richness of the human religious experience, sociologist Recce McGee has provided a scheme that is both intelligent and manageable: simple supernaturalism, animism, theism, and a system of abstract ideals.

Simple supernaturalism prevails in pre-industrial societies. Believers attribute a diffuse, impersonal, supernatural quality to nature, what some South Pacific peoples call *mana*. No spirits or gods are involved, but rather a "force" that influences events for better or worse. People compel the superhuman power to behave as they wish by mechanically manipulating it. For instance, a four-leaf clover has *mana*; a three-leaf clover does not. Carrying the four-leaf clover in your wallet is thought to bring good luck. You need not talk to the four-leaf clover or offer it gifts- only carry it. Similarly, the act of uttering the words "open sesame" serves to manipulate impersonal supernatural power; you say it, and the door swings open on Aladdin's cave. Many athletes use lucky charms, elaborate routines, and superstitious rituals to ward off injury and bad luck in activities based on uncertainty. *Mana* is usually employed to reach practical, immediate goals- control of the weather,

assurance of a good crop, the cure of an illness, good performance on a test, success in love, or victory in battle. It functions much like an old-fashioned book of recipes or a home medical manual.

A belief in spirits or otherworldly beings is called animism. People have imputed spirits to animals, plants, rocks, stars, rivers and, at times, other people. Spirits are commonly thought to have the same emotions and motives that activate ordinary mortals. So humans deal with them by techniques they find useful in their own social relationships. Love, punishment, reverence, and gifts- even cajolery, bribery, and false pretences- have been used in dealing with spirit. Occasionally, as with *mana*, supernatural power is harnessed through rituals that compel a spirit to act in desired way- what we call spells.

In theism religion is centred in a belief in gods who are thought to be powerful, to have an interest in human affairs, and to merit worship. Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are forms of monotheism, or belief in one god. They all have established religious organizations, religious leaders or priests, traditional rituals, and sacred writing. Ancient Greek religion and Hinduism (practiced primarily in India) are forms of polytheism, or belief in many gods with equal or relatively similar power. Gods of the Hindus are often tribal, village, or caste deities associated with particular place- a building, field, or mountain- or a certain object-animal or tree.

Finally, some religions focus on a set of abstract ideals. Rather than centring on the worship of a god they are dedicated to achieving moral and spiritual excellence. Many of the religions of Asia are of this type including Taoism and Buddhism. Buddhism is directed toward reaching an elevated state of consciousness, a method of purification that provides a release from suffering ignorance, selfishness, and the cycle of birth and rebirth. In the Western world, humanism is a religion based on ethical principles. Its adherents discard all the logical beliefs about God, heaven, hell, and immortality, substituting for God the pursuit of good in the here and now. Heaven is seen as the ideal society on earth and hell, as a world in which war, disease, and ignorance flourish. The soul is the human personality and immortality is a person's deeds living on after death, for good or evil, in the lives of other people.

Sociologist Robert N. Bellah suggests that a sharp dualism - the historic distinction between "the world" and some "other world" no longer characterizes the major religions of contemporary Western nations. Modern religions tend to mix the sacred and the profane. They increasingly ground their claim to legitimacy in their relevance for the contemporary human condition rather than their possession of supernaturally revealed wisdom. God becomes less remote and more

approachable. Religion is seen as providing a "sacred canopy" that shelters its adherents from feelings of chaos, meaninglessness, and ultimate despair.

Not only are believers brought increasingly face-to-face with God; they must also choose the God they are to worship. Creeds must not only be lived up to; they must be interpreted and selectively combined, modified, and personalized in ways each person finds meaningful. This process of choosing and adapting often assumes the character of a lifelong journey rather than a one-time determined reality. Simultaneously, the definition of what it means to be "religious" and the meaning of the "ultimate" expand, becoming more fluid and open to individual interpretation. Even so, as Bellah recognizes, sects and fundamentalist religions with orthodox beliefs and standards continue to retain the allegiance of segments of the population and undergo periodic revivals as reactions against the uncertainties of modern society.

4.0   CONCLUSION

This unit concentrated on the pattern of religious behaviour among people of different religious faith. Three common elements among the religious, group were treated. Namely religious beliefs, religious, rituals, and religious, experience. Other varieties of behaviour exhibited by religious groups were also highlighted.

5.0   SUMMARY

The three dimensions of religious behaviour which are belief, ritual and experience are the generally accepted as the most common elements to all religion of the world.

Belief in life after death and in supreme beings with unlimited power are said to be common to most religion. Ritual practices are expected of adherents of a faith. These are often carried out to honour the divine powers. Religion experience refers to the feeling or perception of being in direct contact with the ultimate reality. Varieties of religious, behaviour as presented by some scholars were highlighted.

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain religious rituals as one of the major dimensions in religious behaviour with a relevant example from your religion.
2. Define the term belief. Identify and compare two common beliefs in Islam and Christianity.

7.0   REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

Schaefer R.T. & Lamm R. P (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction* New York: McGraw-Hill companies.

Peter Berger (1967). *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double Day Publishers.

UNIT 5   ORGANIZATION OF RELIGIOUS BEHAVIOR

CONTENT

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objective
3.0   Main Contents
     3.1   Ecclesiae
     3.2   Denominations
     3.3   Sects
     3.4   Cults
     3.5   Comparing Forms of Religious Organization
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor Marked Assignments
7.0   References/Further Readings

1.0   INTRODUCTION

The collective nature of religion has led to many forms of religious association. In modern societies, religion has become increasingly formalized. Specific structures such as churches, mosques and synagogues are constructed for religious worship; individuals are trained for occupational roles within various fields. These developments make it possible to distinguish between the sacred and secular parts of one's life- a distinction that could not be made in earlier societies in which religion was largely a family activity carried out in the home.

Sociologists find it useful to distinguish between four basic forms of organization: the ecclesia, the denomination, the sect, and the cult. As is the case with other typologies used by social scientists, this system of classification can help us to appreciate the variety of organizational forms found among religious faiths. Distinctions are made between these types of organizations on the basis of such factors as size, power, degree of commitment expected from members, and historical ties to other faiths.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

It is hoped that at the end of this study unit, you should be able to:

- Define *ecclesiae*;

- Explain denomination and their forms;

- Differentiate between the sects;

- Explain what cult is and the types; and

- Compare the different forms of religious organization.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Ecclesia

An *ecclesia* (plural, *ecclesiae*) is a religious organization that claims to include most or all of the members of a society and is recognized as the national or official religion. Since virtually everyone belongs to the faith, membership is by birth rather than conscious decision. Examples of ecclesiae include the Lutheran church in Sweden, the Catholic Church in Spain, Islam in Saudi Arabia, and Buddhism in Thailand. However, there can be significant differences even within the category of ecclesia. In Saudi Arabia's Islamic regime, leaders of the ecclesia hold vast power over actions of the state. By contrast, the Lutheran church in contemporary Sweden has no such power over the Riksdag (parliament) or the prime minister.

Generally, *ecclesiae* are conservative in that they do not challenge the leaders or polices of a secular government. In a society with an ecclesia, the political and religious institutions often act in harmony and mutually reinforce each other's power over their relative spheres of influence. Within the modern world, ecclesiae tend to be declining in power.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.1

Define the term *ecclesia*. Compare the ecclesiastical setting of Iran and Rome.

3.2   Denominations

A denomination is a large, organized religion that is not officially linked with the state or government. Like an ecclesia, it tends to have an explicit set of beliefs, a defined system of authority, and a generally respected position in society. Denominations count among their

members large segments of a population. Generally, children accept the denomination of their parents and give little thought to membership in other faiths. Denominations also resemble ecclesiae in that few demands are made on members. However, there is a critical difference between these two forms of religious organization. Although the denomination is considered respectable and is not viewed as a challenge to the secular government, it lacks the official recognition and power held by an ecclesia.

No nation of the world has more denominations than the United States. In good measures it is a result of the nation's immigrant heritage. Many settlers in the "new world" brought with them the religious commitments native to their homelands. Denominations of Christianity found in the United States, such as those of the Roman Catholics, Episcopalians, and Lutherans, were the outgrowth of ecclesiae established in Europe. In addition, new Christian denominations emerged, including new Mormons and Christian Scientist.

Although by far the largest single denomination in the United States is Roman Catholicism, at least 20 other Christian faiths have 1 million or more members. Protestants collectively accounted for about 56 percent of the nation's adult population in 1993, compared with 26 percent for Roman Catholics and almost 3 percent for Jews. There are also 5 million Muslims in United States while a smaller number of people adhere to such eastern faiths as Hinduism, Confucianism, and Taosim.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.2

How is denomination different from an ecclesia?

3.3   Sects

In contrast to the denomination is the sect, which Max Weber termed a "believer's church", because affiliation is based on conscious acceptance of a specific religious dogma. A sect can be defined as a relatively small religious group that has broken away from some other religious organization to renew what it views as the original vision of the faith. Many sects, such as that led by Martin Luther during the Reformation, claimed to be the "true church". This is because they seek to cleanse the established faith of what they regard as extraneous beliefs and rituals.

Sects are fundamentally at odds with society and do not seek to become established national religions. Unlike ecclesiae, sects require intensive commitments and demonstrations of belief by members. Partly owing to their "outsider" status in society, sects frequently exhibit a higher degree of religious fervour and loyalty than more established religious groups do. Recruitment is focused mainly on adults; as a result, acceptance

comes through conversion. Among current-day sects in the United States and other countries are movements within the Roman Catholic Church that favour a return to use of Latin in the mass.

Sects are often short-lived; however, if able to survive, they may become less antagonistic to society and begin to resemble denominations. In a few instances, sects have been able to endure over several generations while remaining fairly separate from society. Sociologist Milton Yinger uses the term established sect to describe a religious group that is the outgrowth of a sect, yet remains isolated from society. The Hutterites, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, and Amish are contemporary examples of established sects in the United States.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.3

Explain how sects originate. Identify their major characteristic

3.4   Cults

The cult accepts the legitimacy of other religious groups. Like the denomination, the cult does not lay claim to the truth, but unlike the denomination it tends to be critical of society. The cult lacks many of the features of a traditional religious; sees the source of unhappiness and injustice as incorporated within each person; holds the promise of finding truth and contentment by following its tenets; believes it possesses the means for people to unlock a hidden or potential strength within themselves without necessarily withdrawing from the world; and holds a relatively individualized, universalized, and secularized view of the Divine.

The cult does not require its members to pass strict doctrinal tests, but instead invites all to join its ranks. It usually lacks the tight discipline of sects whose rank-and-file members hold one another "up to the mark". And unlike a sect, it usually lacks prior ties with an established religion: it is instead a new and independent religious tradition. The cult frequently focuses on the problems of its members, especially loneliness, fear, inferiority, tension, and kindred troubles. Some cults are built around a single function, such as spiritual healing or spiritualism. Others, like various "New Thought" and "New Age" cults, seek to combine elements of conventional religion with ideas and practices that are essentially nonreligious. Still others direct their attention toward the pursuit of "self-awareness," "self-realization." wisdom, or insight, such as Vedanta, Soto Zen, the Human Potential Movement and Transcendental Meditation.

International attention focused on religious cults in 1993 as a result of the violence at the Branch Davidians' compound near Waco, Texas. The Davidains' began as a sect of the Seventh-day Adventists church in 1934 and based their beliefs largely on the biblical book of Revelation and its dooms day prophecies. In 1984, the Davidians' sect split, with one group emerging as a cult under the leadership of David Koresh. After a 51-day standoff against federal authorities in early 1993, Koresh and 85 of his followers died when the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) attempted to seize control the Davidians' compound. In 1995, religious cults again received international attention when members of the Japanese religious group Aum Shinrikyo were accused of a poison gas attack on the Tokyo subway system that killed a dozen people and injured 5500.

As psychotherapist Irvin Doress and sociologist Jack Nusan Porter have suggested, the word cult has taken on a negative meaning in the United States and is used more as a means of discrediting religious minorities than as a way of categorizing them. They note that some groups, such as the Hare Krishnas, are labeled as "cults" because they seem to come from foreign (often nonwestern) lands and have customs perceived as "strange". This reflects people's ethnocentric evaluations of that which differs form the commonplace. James Richardson, a sociologist of religion, does not like the term cult and prefers to call such groups new, minority, or exotic religions.

It is difficult to distinguish sects from cults. A cult is a generally small, secretive religious group that represents either a new religion or a major innovation of an existing faith. Cults are similar to sects in that they tend to be small and are often viewed as less respectable than more established ecclesiae or denominations. Some cults, such as contemporary cults focused on UFO sightings or expectations of colonizing outer space, may be totally unrelated to the existing faiths in a culture. Even when a cult does not accept certain fundamental tenets of a dominant faith, such as belief in the divinity of Jesus or Muhammad, it will offer new revelations or new insights to justify its claim to be a more advanced religion.

As is true of sects, cults may undergo transformation over time into other types of religious organizations. An example is the Christian Science church, which began as a cult under the leadership of Mary Baker Eddy. Today, this church exhibits the characteristics of a denomination.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.4

Explain the term "cult". Identify and explain the operation of any cult in Nigeria.

3.5   Comparing Forms of Religious Organization

Clearly, it is no simple matter to determine whether a particular religious group falls into the sociological category of ecclesia, denomination, sect, or cult. Yet as we have seen, these ideal types of religious organizations have somewhat different relationships to society. Ecclesiae are recognized as national churches; denominations, although not officially approved, are generally respected. By contrast, sects as well as cults are much more likely to be at odds with the larger culture.

Ecclesiae, denominations, and sects are best viewed as ideal types along a continuum rather than as mutually exclusive categories. Since the United States has no ecclesia, sociologists studying this nation's religions have naturally focused on the denomination and the sect. These religious forms have been pictured on either end of a continuum, with denominations accommodating to the secular world and sects making a protest against established religions.

Advances in electronic communications have led to still another form of religious organization; the electronic church. Facilitated by cable television and satellite transmission, televangelists (as they are called) direct their message to more people than are served by all but the largest denominations. While some televangelists are affiliated with religious denominations, most give viewers the impression that they are disassociated from established faiths.

The programming of the electronic church is not solely religious. There is particular focus on issues concerning marriage and the family, death and dying, and education; yet more overtly political topics such as foreign and military policy are also discussed. Although many television ministries avoid political positions, others have been quite outspoken. Most noteworthy in this regard is Pentecostal minister Pat Robertson, a strong conservative. Robertson founded the Christian Broadcasting Network in 1961, served for many years as host of CBN's syndicated religious talk show. The 700 club, and took leave of his television posts in 1986 to seek the 1988 Republican nomination for president in US. He has continued his political activism through his leadership of the Christian coalition.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.5

Compare the characteristics and operations of sect with that of a cult.

4.0   CONCLUSION

Norms, beliefs and rituals provide the cultural fabric of religion, but there is more to a religion than its cultural heritage. As with other institutions, there is also a structural organization in which people are bound together within networks of relatively stable relationship. This unit has examined the ways in which people organize themselves in fashioning religious life.

5.0   SUMMARY

Distinctions are made between the varieties of organization forms found among religious faith. This were made based on factors such as size, power, degree of commitment expected from members and historical ties to the faith. The organization so studied included ecclesia, denominations, sects and cults. Comparisons of these forms of organizations were also examined in the unit.

6.0   TUTOR- MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1a.   What is meant by *Ecclesia*?
 b.   Distinguish between an *ecclesia* and a denomination.
2a.   Explain the term "cult".
 b.   How will you differentiate a cult from a sect?

7.0   REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

Schaefer R.T. & Lamm R. P (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction* New York: McGraw-Hill companies.

Peter Berger (1967). *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double Day Publishers.

MODULE 2

UNIT 1   RELIGION AND STRATIFICATION

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
       3.1   The Sub-Urban Church
       3.2   Religion and Radical Politics
       3.3   Religion among the Oppressed
       3.4   Radical and Conservative Religion
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Readings

1.0   INTRODUCTION

This is the first unit of the second module of this course. In the first module, you dealt with society and religious behaviour. Under that, you studied the meaning, nature and development of society and the functions of religion vis-à-vis postulations like the Marxist, Weberian and Durkheimian theses. You also studied the dimensions of religious behaviour and their organizations. In this module however, you will be studying religion and modernity. In this first unit, focus will be on religion and stratification in the areas of geography, economics, politics and religion itself.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

• Define the sub-urban church;

• Discuss the challenges involved in working in the sub-urban church;

• Discuss the relationship between religion and politics;

- Evaluate the role of religion among the oppressed; and

- Differentiate between the conservative and the radical in religion.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Sub-urban Church

According to the geographical distribution of churches, there are three types of churches namely the urban, the rural and the sub-urban churches. In this part, you will be focusing on the sub-urban church.

The Characteristics of the Sub-urban Church
1. The sub-urban church has a wide range of sizes: the size of the sub-urban church ranges from 30 to 800 people but it is usually less than 120 people.

2. The sub-urban church has a great variety theologically and denominationally. You will find out that within the environment you will find the charismatic, the evangelical, the liberal, the liturgical as well as the traditional oriented churches, thus making ministering in such an environment very challenging.

3. The sub-urban church caters for a wide range of ages. In such churches you will find the elderly, the family groups (consisting of parents and children) and also the youth. This diversity in the age range to be catered for makes ministering in the sub-urban church to be more challenging.

Despite all the challenges involved in the running of the sub-urban church, the church has a lot of potential for growth and expansion.

3.2   Religion and Radical Politics

When it comes to politics, especially in the Christian religion, there are many dissenting voices. Many Christian sects reject any involvement and participation in politics. Many of these sects rest their position on Jesus' statement that his kingdom is not of this world, which they interpret to mean that earthly politics should be rejected. Examples of these sects are the Amish and the Hutterites. Apart from Christianity, some of the Oriental religions also reject participation in politics. These include Taoism. Taoism teaches that politics was insincere and they actually have a very dim view of the state. They thus favour withdrawal from politics and promote life of contemplation. There are some conservative and severely ascetic schools of thought in Hinduism and

Buddhism that also reject political involvement. The following religions also reject participation in politics: Jehovah's Witnesses, Christadelphians, Old Order Amish and Rastafarians.

3.3   Religion among the Oppressed

Religion by its very nature can be subjected to various usages. This is expressed in the words of Karl Marx as follows: "Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of the spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people." In his explanation as to the continual existence of religion, Hazel Croft opines that "people look to religion because it fulfils a need in a world which is full of competition, misery and oppression. In a society divided by class, where the majority of people have no real control of their lives, religion can seem to provide a solution. This is why religious ideas have often found mass support at times of great upheaval".

The irony of the situation lies in the fact that traditionally the oppressed has looked up to religion in the acceptance of their position and the resignation to their fate while on the other hand the oppressors have appealed to the same religion to justify their continuous oppression of the oppressed. It looks as if the two divides are appealing to the same authority to justify what they are doing.

3.4   Radical and Conservative Religion

Among the religious people there have always been two great divides: the radicals and the conservatives (also known as the fundamentalists).

Conservative/Fundamental Religion

The Microsoft Premium Encarta defines fundamentalism as follows: "movement with strict view of doctrine: a religious or political movement based on a literal interpretation of and strict adherence to doctrine, especially as a return to former principles". Fundamentalism or conservatism has been known largely for its hard-line position on various religious, political as well as social issues. Fundamentalism as a religious principle is reflected in the three major religions of the world namely: Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Fundamentalism in Christianity

Fundamentalism, in Christianity arose as a movement among Protestants which began in the United States in the late 19th century. It emphasized

as absolutely basic to Christianity the following beliefs: the infallibility of the Bible, the virgin birth and the divinity of Jesus Christ, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as atonement for the sins of all people, the physical resurrection and second coming of Christ, and the bodily resurrection of believers.

Origin

Fundamentalism is rooted in 18th and 19th century American revivalism. Until the middle of the 19th century, its principal beliefs were held by almost all orthodox Protestant denominations, particularly by evangelical denominations. Fundamentalism as an organized, conservative movement dates from the early part of the 20th century. It developed out of a series of Bible conferences, the first ones held in 1876. These were called by members of various denominations who strongly objected to the following: the historical-literary study of the Bible, known as the higher criticism; the attempts (still continuing) to reconcile traditional Christian beliefs and doctrines with contemporary experience and knowledge; and the acceptance of a scientific view of the world, particularly the popularization of the theory of evolution. Such trends and beliefs were opposed by many conservative members of Protestant denominations.

The more conservative members of each denomination at first attempted to exclude from their own institutions people they considered outspoken or unyielding liberals. As a result a number of ministers and theologians were dismissed for espousing higher criticism. The exceptionally conservative, however, set up various rival bodies and educational institutions to spread their creed. Fundamentalism began to flourish in 1909 with the publication and distribution of 12 books called *The Fundamentals*. By the time the 12th of the series had been published, about 3 million copies of *The Fundamentals* had been distributed throughout the United States and elsewhere.

Development

Fundamentalism spread in the 1920s. It was strongest in rural areas, particularly in California, in the Border States, and in the South. In these areas, Fundamentalists sharply delineated the issue of biblical infallibility in historical and scientific matters. The controversy over this issue grew most intense in the secular sphere when Fundamentalists urged many states to pass legislation forbidding the teaching of evolution in public schools. Several southern and Border States, among them Tennessee, passed such laws. The Tennessee statute led, in 1925, to the world-famous trial of John Thomas Scopes, a high school instructor, who was convicted of teaching evolution in defiance of law.

The orator and politician William Jennings Bryan was an associate prosecutor at the trial; the lawyer Clarence Darrow defended Scopes. In 1968 the US Supreme Court ruled that such laws were unconstitutional.

Fundamentalism lost momentum in the early 1930s. The main reasons were the acceptance by most Americans of modern scientific theories and methods, more liberal religious doctrines, and the lack of an effective national organization to lead the Fundamentalist associations. Fundamentalism, along with the related, but more moderate Evangelical movement, has since revived, primarily in reaction to such contemporary theological movements as ecumenicity, neo-orthodoxy, and Modernism. In 1948 an international Fundamentalist group was formed; centred in Amsterdam, the International Council of Christian Churches claims support from 45 denominations in 18 countries.

Islamic Fundamentalism

Islamic Fundamentalism is also known as Islamic revivalism or Islamism. It is the name given to a movement of religious, social, and political reform in the Islamic world. Its particular doctrinal characteristic is the combination of traditional Muslim values based on the Shari'ah law of Islam with programmes of social and economic modernization. Most distinctively, Islamic fundamentalists (Islamists) aim to take power in Muslim states and use the state organization to carry out their objectives.

Origin

Islamic fundamentalist ideas first emerged in the *salafiyya* movement of Muslim purification and revival led by Muhammad Rashid Rida, a Syrian writer based in Egypt in the early 20th century. These ideas were taken up and modified by educational societies in Syria and Egypt during the 1920s; the best known was the Muslim Brotherhood founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna. During World War II the Muslim Brotherhood expanded, achieving a following estimated at 2 million, developed political ambitions, and threatened the survival of the Egyptian political system. Branches were established in other Muslim countries. In 1954, however, the Brotherhood was suppressed by the new Free Officer regime, and for the next 20 years Islamic fundamentalism was overshadowed by the secular regimes, such as the Baath parties, and ideologies that dominated most Muslim states. There were, however, continued developments in the ideas of fundamentalists, notably in the work of Abu A'la al-Maududi in Pakistan and Sayyid Qutb who was executed in1966 in Egypt.

Revival

Islamic fundamentalism spread rapidly from the 1970s, aided by several factors. These included the reverses suffered by secular Arab regimes in the Six-Day War with Israel of 1967; the wealth and influence of Saudi Arabia, which patronized Islamic causes; the economic difficulties of several states during the 1980s owing to the fall in the price of oil; and especially the acceleration in the pace of modernization in Muslim countries, including the rapid growth of cities. The leaders of Islamic fundamentalism tended to be men who had been exposed to modern education and came from outside the ranks of the traditional *ulema* (religious scholars): their followers came especially from the new immigrants to the cities. Islamic fundamentalism is essentially an urban movement, and may be seen as a response to the problems of transition from traditional rural to modern urban economic and social structures. Doctrinally, it takes the form of hostility to the Western styles of the older secular political leadership; and more generally to certain, but by no means all, ideas proceeding from the West.

Spread of Islamic Fundamentalism

Powerful fundamentalist movements developed in many Muslim states in the 1980s and 1990s, notably in the Middle East, North Africa, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Similar movements were visible in South East Asia, Central Asia, and Caucasia, and support was found among the growing Muslim communities in Western European states. The fundamentalists engaged widely in educational and charitable work and demonstrated the extent of their political support in elections. It is generally thought that the Muslim Brotherhood would have won far more parliamentary seats in Egypt had it not been for government interference. In 1992 the Algerian general elections were cancelled when it was supposed that the Islamic Salvation Front would win. In 1996 an Islamic party, Welfare, emerged as the largest single party in Turkey and its leader, Necmettin Erbakan, became prime minister, although resigning a year later. Islamists also won much electoral support in Lebanon, Jordan, Yemen, and Kuwait. In 1989 a fundamentalist party, the National Islamic Front, came to power through a military coup in Sudan. In Iran the 1979 revolution brought to power a mixed fundamentalist/traditional Islamic regime and in 1996 the Taliban, a traditional/conservative Islamic movement, won power in Afghanistan by military victory. Islamist movements in various states began to build links, a process fostered in particular by Hassan Abdullah al-Turabi, the Sudanese Islamist leader, who established the periodic Popular Arab and Islamic Conference as a forum for Islamist groups.

Repression and Militancy in Islamic Fundamentalism

During the 1990s secular and other established regimes became increasingly concerned at the threat from the Islamists and began to repress their organizations. Some Islamists began armed struggle against the regimes, although it should be noted that not all militants (jihadis) were Islamists; some came from other Islamic strains. The greatest violence took place in Algeria where the Groupe Islamique Armé (GIA) began a ferocious, bloody struggle directed against government and civilians and which led to a major civil war. Other wars took place in Chechnya and Tajikistan. In Egypt militant Islamists had been active since the late 1970s and had succeeded in assassinating president Anwar al-Sadat in 1981. They continued their attacks on government, the Coptic community, and foreign tourists. Islamist groups fought against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. A factor in militancy was the activities of so-called Afghan Arabs, that is to say those Arab volunteers who had fought against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan during the 1980s and who were found in various places including Bosnia-Herzegovina, Chechnya, Sudan, and Afghanistan during the 1990s. Best known among them was the Saudi Osama bin Laden, who went first to Sudan and then to Afghanistan. Many returned to Yemen where they were repressed in 2000 and 2001. The established regimes increasingly prevailed against Islamists who were dismissed from power: in Sudan, where Al-Turabi was first excluded from government and then arrested and imprisoned in 2001, and in Turkey, where the Welfare Party was shut down in 1998 and its successor soon afterwards. The civil war in Algeria reached its peak in 1995 and thereafter declined in intensity.

As they were defeated in Arab and other countries many Islamists took refuge in Western Europe. Egypt complained of the shelter given to the militants and demanded their extradition but European governments were reluctant to take action that might be regarded as illiberal or might offend Muslim communities in their countries. A feature of the 1990s, however, was that the Islamic militants increasingly turned their attacks against Western targets, complaining that Western powers supported anti-Muslim regimes. At first the targets were linked to Israel but the aim of the militants soon widened. In 1995 the GIA arranged a series of bomb explosions in Paris because of French support for the Algerian government. But the principal target of the Islamic militants was the United States, which was blamed for its support for Israel and for its military presence in the Arabian Peninsula following the Gulf War. In 1993 an Egyptian group bombed the World Trade Centre in New York; in 1996 a US complex in Dharan, Saudi Arabia, was bombed; in 1998 there were bomb attacks on US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania; in 2000 a group attacked the US destroyer, USS *Cole,* while it was refuelling in Aden, Yemen; and on September 11, 2001, the twin towers of the World Trade Centre were attacked and destroyed. The US blamed

Bin Laden for these last four episodes and they became the basis for the "war against terror" that was launched in 2001.

Conservatism in Judaism

Conservatism in Judaism has been reflected largely in the following movements: Judaism is closer to the Conservative position.

Orthodoxy

Modern Orthodoxy, championed by Samson R. Hirsch in the 19th century in opposition to the Reformers, sought a blend of traditional Judaism and modern learning. Orthodoxy is not so much a movement as a spectrum of traditionalist groups, ranging from the modern Orthodox, who try to integrate traditional observance with modern life, to some Hasidic sects that attempt to shut out the modern world. The emigration to America of many traditionalist and Hasidic survivors of the Holocaust has strengthened American Orthodoxy.

Around the world, Orthodoxy has many regional distinctions derived from their local cultures. North European and American Orthodoxy retain a more Ashkenazic flavour, while South European, North African, and Middle Eastern Jewry have maintained a more Sephardic version. In Israel, Orthodoxy is the only officially recognized form of Judaism and elsewhere, with the exception of America, most religiously affiliated Jews are nominally Orthodox.

Zionism

In Eastern Europe, where Jews formed a large and distinctive social group, modernization of Judaism also took the form of cultural and ethnic nationalism. It argued for the creation of a new state of Israel and for return to the historic homeland. Like the other resurgent national movements in the east, the Jewish movement emphasized the revitalization of the national language (Hebrew) and the creation of a modern, secular literature and culture. Zionism, the movement to create a modern Jewish society in the ancient homeland, took firm hold in Eastern Europe after its initial formulations by Leo Pinsker in Russia and Theodor Herzl in Austria in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Zionism is a secular ideology but it powerfully evokes and is rooted in traditional Judaic messianism, and it ultimately led to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. The issue of Zionism now dominates the relationship of Judaism and Israel with Muslims and Christians: it has become, often as a result of threats to Israel, a militant form of

nationalism. Some ultra-Orthodox Jews refuse to recognize Israel as they believe only the Messiah can create Israel again.

Conservative Judaism

The founding thinker of Conservative Judaism was the German Zacharias Frankel, but the founder of the movement was Solomon Schechter at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America. The Conservative movement embodies the sense of community and folk piety of modernizing Eastern European Jews. It respects traditional Jewish law and practice while advocating a flexible approach to the Halakah. It recognizes modern criticism of the authorship and composition of the Bible and other important texts. In 1983 the Conservative movement voted to ordain women as rabbis. It is possibly the single largest Jewish denomination in America accounting for 33 per cent of synagogue affiliation. It has also recently spread to Britain and Israel where it is called by its Hebrew name *Masorti* ("traditional").

Radical/Liberal Religion

Liberalism is an attitude or philosophy, or movement that has as its basic concern the development of personal freedom and social progress. Liberalism and democracy are now usually thought to have common aims, but in the past many liberals considered democracy unhealthy because it encouraged mass participation in politics. Nevertheless, liberalism eventually became identified with movements to change the social order through the further extension of democracy.

The course of liberalism in a given country is usually conditioned by the character of the prevailing form of government. For example, in countries in which the political and religious authorities are separate, liberalism connotes, mainly, political, economic, and social reform; in countries in which a state Church exists or a Church is politically influential, liberalism connotes, mainly, anticlericalism. In domestic politics, liberals have opposed feudal restraints that prevent the individual from rising out of a low social status; barriers such as censorship that limit free expression of opinion; and arbitrary power exercised over the individual by the state. In international politics, liberals have opposed the domination of foreign policy by militarists and military considerations and the exploitation of native colonial people, and they have sought to substitute a cosmopolitan policy of international cooperation. In economics, liberals have attacked monopolies and mercantilist state policies that subject the economy to state control. In religion, liberals have fought against Church interference in the affairs

of the state and attempt by religious pressure groups to influence public opinion.

A distinction is sometimes made between so-called negative liberalism and positive liberalism. Between the mid-17th and the mid-19th centuries, liberals fought chiefly against oppression, arbitrariness, and misuses of power and emphasized the needs of the free individual. About the middle of the 19th century many liberals developed a more positive programme stressing the constructive social activity of the state and advocating state action in the interests of the individual. The present-day defenders of the older liberal policies deplore this departure and argue that positive liberalism is merely authoritarianism in disguise. The defenders of positive liberalism argue that state and Church are not the only obstructers of freedom, but that poverty may deprive the individual of the possibility of making significant choices and must therefore be controlled by constituted authority.

Humanism

In post-medieval European culture liberalism was perhaps first expressed in humanism, which redirected thinking in the 15th century from the consideration of the divine order of the world and its reflections in the temporal social order to the conditions and potentialities of people on Earth. Humanism was furthered by the invention of printing, which increased access of individuals to the classics of antiquity. The publication of vernacular versions of the Bible stimulated individual religious experience and choice. During the Renaissance in Italy the humanist trend affected mainly the arts and philosophic and scientific speculation. During the Reformation in other countries of Europe, particularly those that became Protestant, and in England, humanism was directed largely against the abuses of the Church.

As social transformation continued, the objectives and concerns of liberalism changed. It retained, however, a humanist social philosophy that sought to enlarge personal, social, political, and economic opportunities for self-expression by removing obstacles to individual choice.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have studied the definition of the sub-urban church as well as the characteristics of the sub-urban church. You have also studied the major reaction of religion to politics and the basis for the religious opposition to political participation. You have devoted much time to the study of the development of fundamentalism in Christianity,

Islam and Judaism-the three monotheistic religions of the world and also the development of religious liberalism.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following are the major points that you have studied in this unit:

- Fundamentalism in religion has been expressed in the three great monotheistic religions of the world –Christianity, Islam and Judaism.

- Fundamentalism, in Christianity upholds the infallibility of the Bible, the virgin birth and the divinity of Jesus Christ, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross as atonement for the sins of all people, the physical resurrection and second coming of Christ, and the bodily resurrection of believers.

- Islamic Fundamentalism calls for the combination of traditional Muslim values based on the Shari'ah law of Islam with programmes of social and economic modernization.

- In Judaism, fundamentalism has been lived out in orthodoxy, Zionism and conservatism.

- Liberalism has been identified with modern humanism movement that decries any form of barrier on human freedom and is directed mainly against the church.

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1.   Discuss the development of fundamentalism in Christianity.

2.   What are the features of fundamentalism based on your understanding of Islamic fundamentalism?

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Schaefer R. T. (2001) *Sociology*, seventh edition. New York: McGraw Hill Companies

Schaefer R. T & Lamm R. P. (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York: McGraw – Hill Companies

Swatos Williams H. (1993) *Gender and Religion*, Brunkswick N. J. Transaction.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The Study of Society*, New York: CBS College Publishing

Peter Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double Day Publishers.

Emile Durkheim (1948) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.

Bryan Wilson (1969) *Religion in Secular-Society*, Baltimore: Penguin Books

James W and Vander Z (1990). *The Social Experience: An Introduction to Sociology*, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Zellner W. W. & Marc P. (1999) *Some Cults and Spiritual Communities. A Sociological Analysis*, Westport: C. T. Praeger.

Electronic Sources:

Microsoft Encarta Premium, DVD 2006.

UNIT 2   RELIGION AND CULTURE

CONTENT

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
      3.1   The Idea of Culture
      3.2   Elements of Culture
      3.3   Aspects of Culture
      3.4   Religion as Culture
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignments
7.0   References/Further Readings

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you studied the relationship between religion and stratification, especially religion and radical politics, the relationship between religion and the oppressed. You also studied the comparison between radical and conservative religion. In this unit, you will be studying the relationship between religion and culture. You will be exploring the elements and aspects of culture as well as how religion and culture inter-relate.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Define culture;

- Enumerate and discuss the various elements of culture;

- Enumerate and analyze the relationship between the various aspects of culture; and

- Analyze the relationship between religion and culture.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Idea of Culture

Culture is one of the common words that are so often used that we think we know what they mean but they are pretty difficult to define. The word culture has varied meanings from agriculture to medicine to sociology and anthropology. The multiplicity of meaning attached to the word makes it very difficult to define. You will now explore some of the many meanings of the word culture. In agriculture culture has been used to designate the process of nursing or cultivating plants or crops. In scientific and medical sciences it is used for the growing of biological materials. Knowledge and sophistication acquired through education and exposure to the arts is also termed culture. The development and use of artefacts and symbols in the advancement of the society is also termed culture.

Odetola and Ademola (1985) defined culture as "configuration of learned and shared patterns of behaviour and of understanding concerning the meaning and value of things, ideas, emotions and actions". Culture refers to the total way of life of a society. It is made up of its members' custom, traditions and beliefs, their behaviour, dress, language, their work, their way of living, relationship network and their attitudes to life, the focus of group loyalties and the way they all perceive the world. As far as this course is concerned, we shall see culture from the above perspective – that which makes a people what they are as distinct from other groups of people. The following are the concepts that grew out of the idea of culture.

Culture Traits

Traits are the smallest elements by which a culture can be described. It is thus a distinguishing or peculiar feature or characteristic of a given culture. Culture complex is derived from a number of culture traits that fit together and from culture complex culture patterns are derived.

Subculture

A subculture is a distinctive culture that is shared by a particular group within a culture, because that group exists as a smaller part of the total culture.

Culture Change

Culture is dynamic in nature and therefore does experience changes. Culture change can occur accidentally. For example, if there is a severe outbreak of epidemic that claimed a lot of lives, there are certain adjustment a society may make that will result in culture change. Culture change can also occur as a result of technological innovation. For example, many homes in Africa no longer use their hands to eat because of the introduction of spoons, forks and knives. Culture can also change when two groups with differing culture come to live together. There would be what is called cultural diffusion as the two cultures would intermingle and the people of one group will adopt the traits of the other group and vice versa.

Culture Lag

W. F. Ogburn in his book titled *Cultural Lag as Theory*, defines culture lag as follows: "culture lag occurs when two or three parts of culture which are correlated changes before or in a greater degree than the other part does, thereby causing less adjustment between the two parts than existed previously".

Culture Shock

Culture shock occurs when there is a sharp contrast between two different cultures and one group suffers a serious emotional reaction to the other group's behaviour. Most Africans suffer from culture shock when they find themselves in Europe where a child can tell the parents "don't be stupid". Such a statement is considered as an insult in Africa where respect for the elders is not taken lightly.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.1

Discuss the implication of the concepts that grow out of culture and their impact on humanity.

3.2   Elements of Culture

The following are the elements that you can point to and say "that is there to show and sustain this culture".

Artefacts

Artefacts are the physical things that are found that have particular symbolism for a culture. They may even be endowed with mystical

properties. Artefacts can also be more everyday objects, such as the bunch of flowers in reception. The main thing is that they have special meaning, at the very least for the people in the culture. There may well be stories told about them. The purposes of artefacts are as reminders and triggers. When people in the culture see them, they think about their meaning and hence are reminded of their identity as a member of the culture, and, by association, of the rules of the culture. Artefacts may also be used in specific rituals. Churches do this, of course. But so also do organizations.

Stories, histories, myths, legends, jokes

Culture is often embedded and transmitted through stories, whether they are deep and obviously intended as learning devices, or whether they appear more subtly, for example in humour and jokes. Sometimes there stories are true. Sometimes nobody knows. Sometimes they are elaborations on a relatively simple truth. The powers of the stories are in when and how they are told, and the effect they have on their recipients.

Rituals, rites, ceremonies and celebrations

Rituals are processes or sets of actions which are repeated in specific circumstances and with specific meaning. They may be used in such as rites of passage, such as when someone is promoted or retires. They may be associated with company events such as the release of a new event. They may also be associated with everyday events such as Christmas. Whatever the circumstance, the predictability of the rituals and the seriousness of the meaning all combine to sustain the culture.

Heroes

Heroes in a culture are named people who act as prototypes, or idealized examples, by which cultural members learn of the correct or "perfect" behaviour. The classic heroes are the founders of the society or organization, who are often portrayed as much whiter and perfect than they actually are or were. In such stories they symbolize and teach people the ideal behaviours and norms of the culture.

Symbols and symbolic action

Symbols, like artefacts, are things which act as triggers to remind people in the culture of its rules and beliefs among others. They act as a shorthand way to keep people aligned. Symbols can also be used to indicate status within a culture. This includes clothing, office decor and so on. Status symbols signal to others to help them use the correct behaviour with others in the hierarchy. They also lock in the users of the

symbols into prescribed behaviours that are appropriate for their status and position. There may be many symbols around an organization, from pictures of products on the walls to the words and handshakes used in greeting cultural members from around the world.

Beliefs, assumptions and mental models

An organization and culture will often share beliefs and ways of understanding the world. This helps smooth communication and agreement, but can also become fatal blinkers that blind everyone to impending dangers.

Attitudes

Attitudes are the external displays of underlying beliefs that people use to signal to other people of their membership. Attitudes also can be used to give warning, such as when a street gang member eyes up a member of the public. By using a long hard stare, they are using national cultural symbolism to indicate their threat.

Rules, norms, ethical codes, values

The norms and values of a culture are effectively the rules by which its members must abide, or risk rejection from the culture (which is one of the most feared sanctions known). They are embedded in the artefacts, symbols, stories, attitudes, and so on.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.2

1. List the elements of culture and write short notes on five of them.

3.3   Aspects of Culture

The following are the important aspects of culture:

Value

Values are relatively general beliefs that either define what is right and what is wrong or specify general preferences. A belief that homicide is wrong and a preference for modem art are both values.

Norms

Norms, on the other hand, are relatively precise rules specifying which behaviours are permitted and which prohibited for group members. When a member of a group breaks a group norm by engaging in a

prohibited behaviour, the other group members will typically sanction the deviant member. To sanction is to communicate disapproval in some way to the deviant member.

When asked to give examples of a norm in our society, most students tend to think of laws, especially, for instance, laws against murder and physical assault. Most laws in a society are indeed social norms. The more important point, however, is that your life is governed by many norms that are not laws.

Culture Variation

If we take an overview of the hundreds of societies that exist or have existed in the world, the first thing that strikes our attention is that there is tremendous variation with regard to the cultural traits found in these societies. Many societies have values and norms that are directly opposite to those that we might take for granted in this society. In most societies many individuals believe that there exists one God, responsible for all of creation, and they describe this God using imagery that is undeniably "male". Swanson (1960) found that about half the pre-industrial societies in the world also believe in a single God, responsible for creation, although that God is not always seen as a male. Among the Iroquois Indians, for instance, God was female, while among some South American Indians called the Lengua, God is a beetle. But the remaining societies in the world either believe in many gods, no one of which is responsible for all creation, or do not believe in personalized gods of any sort.

Cultural Universals

Despite all the diversity that exists in the world there are cultural universals. That is, there are elements of culture found in every single known society. Every society, for instance, has some rules limiting sexual behaviour, though the content of these rules varies greatly from society to society. In every known society there is a division of labour by sex, with certain tasks being assigned to females and other tasks to males. The task-assignments to either men or women, however, vary among societies.

One of the most important of all cultural universals has to do with the relative status of men and women. There are many societies in which men, on the average, have more political power and more social prestige than women. These societies are usually called *patriarchies*. Then there are a fair number of known societies in which men and women are roughly equal in social status, either because one group does not on the average, have more power and prestige than the other, or because greater

male power and prestige in certain areas of social life is balanced by greater female power and prestige in other areas of social life. Yet in all the societies of the world, there has never existed a true *matriarchy,* that is, a society in which women have more political power and more social prestige than men. The most important point to make in connection with cultural universals, however, is that the number of such universals is relatively small, at least as compared to the ways in which cultures vary.

Cultural Integration

Before closing this section it is necessary to point out that many of the elements of a given culture are interrelated, so that a change in one such element can produce changes in other elements.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.3

1. Discuss the aspects of culture

3.4   Religion as Culture

Religion is undoubtedly one of the most important aspects of culture. A culture's religious beliefs, passed down from one generation to the next, tell us much about the members' values, interests, and ideals, as well as explain customs and everyday activities.

This is particularly true of the African society. E. W. Smith confirms this in his book African Ideas of God (1950:14) when he says that, "any full explication of religion involves complete exploration of social and political, material, culture, law and custom as well as the physical environment". Odetola and Ademola (1985:84) also concur by admitting that "specific religious beliefs, as well as denominational membership, are associated with cultural surroundings".

It has to be noted that as an aspect of culture, religion can be regarded as cultural universal in that from time immemorial; religion has been in existence among different groups of people all over the world. The variation of religious object notwithstanding, there is the existence of religion among all the societies in the world.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt about the various usages of the world culture as well as the definition that would be adopted in this module. You have also been exposed to the various elements and aspects of culture and the fact that religion as an aspect of culture is a cultural universal.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following are the major items you have studied in this unit:

- Culture has different meanings to different professionals

- Culture in thus module would be seen as the totality of the way of life of a particular group of people

- Religion as an aspect of culture is a cultural universal

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Enumerate and discuss the elements of culture.
2. Discuss the aspects of culture.

7. 0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Schaefer R. T. (2001) *Sociology*, seventh edition. New York: McGraw Hill Companies.

Schaefer R. T & Lamm R. P. (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York: McGraw – Hill Companies.

Swatos Williams H. (1993) *Gender and Religion*, Brunkswick: N. J. Transaction.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The Study of Society*, New York: CBS College Publishing

Peter Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double Day Publishers.
Emile Durkheim (1948) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.

Bryan Wilson (1969) *Religion in Secular-Society*, Baltimore: Penguin Books.

James W and Vander Z (1990). *The Social Experience: An Introduction to Sociology*, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Zellner W. W. & Marc P. (1999) *Some Cults and Spiritual Communities. A Sociological Analysis*, Westport: C. T. Praeger.

Brown, A. *Organizational Culture*. London: Pitman, 1995.

T. O. Odetola and A. Ademola, *Sociology: An Introductory African Text*. London: Macmillan, 1985.

Electronic Sources:
Microsoft Encarta Premium, DVD 2006.

UNIT 3   RELIGION AND SECULARIZATION

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
        3.1   Sources of Secularism
        3.2   Islam and the Secular World
        3.3   Religion and the Secular World
        3.4   Renaissance Humanism
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignments
7.0   References/Further Readings

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we focused on the issue of religion and culture and you have seen that religion is an aspect of culture and it is a cultural universal. You also studied the different theories that rise out of the concept of culture like culture lag, culture trait, culture shock and subculture. In this unit however, you will be studying a more volatile issue: religion and its relationship with secularization. First, you will need to know what secularization is and the sources of secularization as well as the relationship between religion and the secular world as well Islam as a religious entity on its own and the secular world.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

• Define secularization;

• List the sources of secularization;

• Discuss how religion should relate to the secular world; and

• Analyze the response of Islam to the secular world.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Secularization

Secularization is a way of life and thought that is pursued without reference to God or religion. It comes from the Latin word *saeculum* which referred to a generation or an age. "Secular" thus came to mean "belonging to this age or worldly." In general terms, secularism involves an affirmation of immanent, this-worldly realities, along with a denial or exclusion of transcendent, other-worldly realities. It is a world view and life style oriented to the profane rather than the sacred, the natural rather than the supernatural. Secularism is a nonreligious approach to individual and social life.

Historically, "secularization" first referred to the process of transferring property from ecclesiastical jurisdiction to that of the state or other non-ecclesiastical authority. In this institutional sense, "secularization" still means the reduction of formal religious authority as in education as an example. Institutional secularization has been fuelled by the breakdown of a unified Christendom since the Reformation, on the one hand, and by the increasing rationalization of society and culture from the Enlightenment to modern technological society, on the other.

A second sense in which secularization is to be understood has to do with a shift in ways of thinking and living, away from God and toward this world. Renaissance humanism, Enlightenment rationalism, the rising power and influence of science, the breakdown of traditional structures such as, the family, the church and the neighbourhood, the over-technicalization of society, and the competition offered by nationalism, evolutionism, and Marxism have all contributed to what Max Weber termed the "disenchantment" of the modern world.

Fujio also describes secularization thus: "secularization might be explained more accurately as being a process of the functional differentiation of other social elements, such as politics, law, economics, and education, from religion, as the result of social changes in the society where religion was once the dominant norm". Having got an idea of what secularization is you can now proceed to the sources of secularization.

The Emergence of Higher Criticism

Though biblical criticism has started long before the Enlightenment, it was not until the Enlightenment in the 17th and 18th centuries that the Bible came to be examined in a truly critical fashion. The Protestant Reformation had reintroduced serious study of the Bible after centuries of neglect, and the new critical methods that developed in historical and literary scholarship during this period were soon applied to biblical texts. Among the first biblical critics were the 17th-century English philosopher Thomas Hobbes, the 17th-century Dutch Jewish philosopher Baruch Spinoza, and the French scholar Richard Simon. This radical criticism soon gave birth to the Tubigen School with its lots of anti-faith assertions. The anti-faith assertions led to the erosion in the authority of the Bible, thereby preparing the ground for secularism.

18ᵗʰ Century Darwinism

Cornish Paul was quite right when he says that in Europe and North America, secularism can be traced to the 18th-century Age of Enlightenment or Age of Reason. Enlightenment thinkers attacked classical traditions and religious authority. In particular, they argued that the separation of Church and State would enable the free exercise of human intellectual capacities and imagination, and would bring about government by reason rather than by tradition and dogma. The 1787 Constitution of the United States is the outstanding example of 18th-century secularist thinking and practice.

The Medieval Church

It sounds ridiculous to say that one of the sources of secularization is the church. But it is the truth because the relationship of the church towards what is political and even knowledge at that time was unwholesome. This is an objective appraisal of the period:

> Christianity in medieval Europe, it is argued, was responsible for the emergence and success of secularism in the West. It recognised the division of life into what belonged to God and what belonged to Caesar, it lacked a system for legislation and regulation of mundane affairs, and it had for many centuries been associated with despotic regimes and with oppressive theocracies. Furthermore, Medieval Christianity entertained the existence of a special class of people, the priests, who claimed to be God's representatives on earth, interpreting what they alleged was His words and using their religious powers to deprive members of the community of their basic rights. In other words, the Christian theocratic establishment constituted a major obstacle hindering

progress and development, and consequently hindering democracy.

The need to challenge the overbearing attitude of the church in those periods actually paved the way for the Enlightenment.

Renaissance Humanism

Renaissance Humanism is a term that is used to describe a literary and cultural movement focusing on the dignity and worth of the individual that spread through Western Europe in the 14th and 15th centuries. This Renaissance revival of Greek and Roman studies emphasized the value of the Classics for their own sake, rather than for their relevance to Christianity.

The movement was further stimulated by the influx of Byzantine scholars who came to Italy after the fall of Constantinople to the Turks in 1453 and also by the establishment of the Platonic Academy in Florence. The academy, whose leading thinker was Marsilio Ficino, was founded by the 15th-century Florentine statesman and patron of the arts Cosimo de' Medici. The institution sought to revive Platonism and had particular influence on the literature, painting, and architecture of the times.

The collection and translation of Classical manuscripts became widespread, especially among the higher clergy and nobility. The invention of printing with movable type, around the mid-15th century, gave a further impetus to humanism through the dissemination of editions of the Classics. Although in Italy humanism developed principally in the fields of literature and art, in Central Europe, where it was introduced chiefly by the German scholars Johann Reuchlin and Melanchthon, the movement extended into the fields of theology and education, and was a major underlying cause of the Reformation.

Rationalism

Rationalism is derived from the Latin word *ratio,* which actually means "reason". In philosophy, it is a system of thought that emphasizes the role of reason in obtaining knowledge, in contrast to empiricism, which emphasizes the role of experience, especially sense perception. Rationalism has appeared in some form in nearly every stage of Western philosophy, but it is primarily identified with the tradition stemming from the 17th-century French philosopher, mathematician, and scientist René Descartes. Descartes believed that geometry represented the ideal for all sciences and philosophy. He held that by means of reason alone, certain universal, self-evident truths could be discovered, from which

much of the remaining content of philosophy and the sciences could be deductively derived. He assumed that these self-evident truths were innate, not derived from sense experience.

The rationalists were keenly interested in science and played an important part in its development; not so much by any discoveries they made as by their willingness to press the importance of the mathematical and geometrical approach in going beyond, and helping to explain, sensory appearances. Epistemological rationalism has been applied to other fields of philosophical inquiry. Rationalism in ethics is the claim that certain primary moral ideas are innate in humankind and that such first moral principles are self-evident to the rational faculty. Rationalism in the philosophy of religion is the claim that the fundamental principles of religion are innate or self-evident and that revelation is not necessary, as in deism. Since the end of the 1800s, however, rationalism has chiefly played an anti-religious role in theology.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.1

What are the factors that prepare the way for secularism?

3.2   Islam and the Secular World

It is generally believed in the Islamic society that secularization is bequeathed to the world by the Christian movements of the 18ᵗʰ century. This has somehow given a basis of rejection of the movement because an average Muslim would repudiate anything Christian.

Until early 19ᵗʰ century, it is claimed that the entire Arab region was Islamic in norms, laws, values and traditions. Secularism is alien to Islam whose values provide guidance and direction for both spiritual and mundane affairs. To the conservative Muslim therefore secularism is a new cultural model being introduced quietly by enthusiasts and admirers of the West or imposed by the authorities of colonialism that are putting forward a new set of standards that are claimed to be alien to Islamic standards. Institute of Islamic Political Thought holds that the leaders of the Islamic trend believed that modernization and progress should be sought but without relinquishing the accomplishments of the Islamic civilization. This position is stated in strong clear terms by the Arabic world and it is strengthened in the words of R. Ghannouchi, in paper presented at Pretoria University, South Africa, August 1994 titled "*al-harakah al-islamiyah wal-mujtama` al-madani*" (The Islamic Movement and Civil Society) as follows: Arab secularism has been a declaration of war against Islam, a religion that, unlike any other, shapes and influences the lives of Muslims, a religion whose values and principles are aimed at liberating mankind, establishing justice and equality,

encouraging research and innovation and guaranteeing the freedoms of thought, expression and worship. Therefore, secularism is entirely unnecessary in the Muslim world; for Muslims can achieve progress and development without having to erect a wall between their religious values and their livelihood.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.2

Evaluate the Islamic position on secularism.

3.3   Religion and the Secular World

In this section you will be concerned with studying the relationship between religion and the secular world. This relationship has been one of suspect, wherein religion suspects the secular world of being demonic and of being an instrument in the hands of the devil to destroy people's faith. Consequently, the majority of the reaction of religion to the secular world is that urgent steps needed to be taken in order to salvage the world from the grips of secularism. D. W. Gill in the Elwell Evangelical Dictionary says that "in no sense, of course, is the distinction between the sacred and the secular an unbridgeable gap. In the same way that God speaks and acts in the *saeculum*, Christians must speak and act creatively and redemptively. This means that the secular world must not be abandoned to secularism". In his analysis of the effects of secularism on the world, John Stott, one of the leading British evangelical writers in his book *The Contemporary Christian* notes three major effects. These will be discussed below.

The Quest for Transcendence

Stott says that the increase in the world's quest for transcendence is one major fall out of the secularization of the world. He opines that the quest for transcendence as witnessed in the world today is not just the search for ultimate reality but also a protest against the attempt to eliminate God from our world. This quest for transcendence is lived out in four major areas:

a. The recent collapse of Euro-Marxism (the classical Marxism that has been presented as a substitute for religious faith).

b. The disillusionment with secularism as epitomized in the rejection of materialism either in the capitalistic or the communistic guise.

c. The epidemic of drug abuse which can be seen as a genuine search for a higher consciousness.

d. The proliferation of religious cults alongside the resurgence of New Religious Movements (especially the ancient religions of Oriental world).

The Quest for Significance

One of the after-effects of secularism is the fact that most human beings have been diminished in the value or worth. The followings are the agents of dehumanization:

a. Technology: despite the fact that technology can be liberating it is also dreadfully dehumanizing. For example, in the United States today human beings are no longer identified by their proper names but by numbers.

b. Scientific Reductionism: in most scientific teachings today, human beings are seen as animals.

The Quest for Community

One of the effects of secularism is social disintegration. This is felt more in Africa as there is social tension between those embracing the secularizing tendencies of the West and those struggling to remain African. In the face of all these devastating effects, what should be the response of religion?

1. The people of faith must live their lives in this secular world under the Lordship of the God and in obedience to his will rather than the will of the word.

2. The people of faith must work to ensure that religion is given a voice among the many other voices struggling to choke it out. To fail to articulate the Word of God in the *saeculum*, however, is to acquiesce in a secularism which, by excluding the Creator, can lead only to death.

We will end this section by quoting Stott who though is writing for Christians have summarized what will happen if religion leaves our world completely to secularism:

> At the same time, unless we listen attentively to the voices of secular society, struggle to understand them, and feel with people in their frustration, anger, bewilderment and despair, weeping with those who weep, we will lack authenticity as the disciples of Jesus of Nazareth. Instead we will run the risk (as has often been said) of answering

questions nobody is asking, scratching where nobody is itching, supplying goods for which there is no demand – in order words, of being totally irrelevant, which in its long history the church has often been.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.3

Discuss the effects of secularization on the people.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have studied the concept of secularization which is a very interesting concept. Secularization has been defined as an attempt to take God away from the world. The sources of secularism have been identified as the emergence of higher criticism, 18th century Darwinism, humanism, rationalism and the church herself. You have also seen the position that Islam has taken on the issue as well as the effects of secularization and what the response of the church should be to it.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following are the major points that you have learnt in this unit:

- Secularization has been defined as a way of life and thought that is pursued without reference to God or religion.

- The sources for secularism are: the emergence of higher criticism, 18th century Darwinism, humanism, rationalism and the church herself.

- Secularism is alien to Islam whose values provide guidance and direction for both spiritual and mundane affairs.

- To the conservative Muslim secularism is a new cultural model being introduced quietly by enthusiasts and admirers of the West.

- The effects of secularism includes: the quest for transcendence, the quest for significance and the quest for community.

- People of faith must struggle to see that the word of God remains a force to be reckoned with in the world.

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. What are the effects of secularism?

2. Discuss how religion should respond to the devastating effects of secularization.

7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Schaefer R. T. (2001) *Sociology*, seventh edition. New York: McGraw Hill Companies.

Schaefer R. T & Lamm R. P. (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York: McGraw – Hill Companies.

Swatos Williams H. (1993) *Gender and Religion*, Brunkswick: N. J. Transaction.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The Study of Society*, New York: CBS College Publishing.

Peter Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double Day Publishers.

Emile Durkheim (1948) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.

Bryan Wilson (1969) *Religion in Secular-Society*, Baltimore: Penguin Books.

James W and Vander Z (1990). *The Social Experience: An Introduction to Sociology*, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

John Stott, (1992) *The Contemporary Christian*, Leicester: Inter Varsity Press.

D. W. Gill, Elwell *Evangelical Dictionary*, Leicester: Inter Varsity Press, 1985.

UNIT 4   RELIGION AND POLITICS

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
       3.1   State Religion
       3.2   Islam as a Political Movement
       3.3   Concept of Political Religion
       3.4   Liberation Theology as an Aspect of Religious Politics
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0   References/Further Readings

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we examined the relationship between religion and secularism. In that section you learned what secularism is and the factors that led to the rise of secularism. You also studied the contributions of the church to the rise of secularism. We discussed the reaction of Islam to secularism as a concept bequeathed to the world by the church and the Western civilization. In this unit, you will also be examining another volatile concept: religion and politics. You will examine all the concept of political religion, the concept of Islamic as a political movement as well as the rise of what is called state religion.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define state religion;

- Describe types of state churches;

- List the countries with state religion in both Christianity as well as Islam;

- Discuss the development of the political character of Islam; and

- Discuss Liberation Theology as an aspect of Religious Politics.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   State Religion

A state religion is also called an official religion or established church or state church. It is a religious body or creed officially endorsed by the state. The term *state church* is associated with Christianity, and is sometimes used to denote a specific national branch of Christianity. State religions are examples of the official or government-sanctioned establishment of religion, as distinct from theocracy. It is also possible for a national church to become established without being under state control.

Types of State Church

Mono State Church

The degree and nature of state backing for denomination or creed designated as a state religion can vary. It can range from mere endorsement and financial support, with freedom for other faiths to practice, to prohibiting any competing religious body from operating and to persecuting the followers of other sects. In Europe, competition between Catholic and Protestant denominations for state sponsorship in the 16th century evolved the principle *cuius regio eius religio* ("states follow the religion of the ruler") embodied in the text of the treaty that marked the Peace of Augsburg, 1555. In England the monarch imposed Protestantism, with himself taking the place of the Pope, while in Scotland the Church of Scotland became the established Kirk in opposition to the religion of the ruler.

Poly State Church

In some cases, a state may have a set of state-sponsored religious denominations that it funds; such is the case in Alsace-Moselle in France.

Authoritarian State Church

In some communist states, notably the People's Republic of China, the state sponsors religious organizations, and activities outside those state-sponsored religious organizations are met with various degrees of official disapproval. In these cases, state religions are widely seen as efforts by the state to prevent alternate sources of authority. Countries with state religions include the following:

Roman Catholic

Jurisdictions which recognize Catholicism as their official religion are Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Haiti, Malta, Monaco and Vatican City.

Eastern Orthodox

Jurisdictions which recognize one of the Eastern Orthodox Churches as their official religion are Cyprus and Greece.

Lutheran

Jurisdictions which recognize the Lutheran church as their official religion are Denmark, Iceland and Norway.

Anglican

Only England with the Church of England recognizes the Anglican Church as her state religion.

Islamic countries

Countries which recognize Islam as their official religion are Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Brunei, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Tunisia , United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Sunni Islam is found in Algeria, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Somalia. Shi'a Islam is the state-sanctioned religion in Iran.

Buddhist countries

Countries which recognize Buddhism as their official religion are Bhutan, Cambodia, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.1

Define State Religion.
Discuss the implications of state religion.

3.2   Islam as a Political Movement

Islam as a political movement has a diverse character that has at different times incorporated elements of many other political movements, while simultaneously adapting the religious views of Islamic fundamentalism, particularly the view of Islam as a political

religion. A common theme in the 20th century was resistance to racism, colonialism, and imperialism. The end of socialism as a viable alternative with the end of the Soviet Union and the Cold War has increased the appeal of Islamic revolutionary movements, especially in the context of undemocratic and corrupt regimes all across the Muslim world. Islamism grew as a reaction to these trends, and as a desire to create a government based on the tenets of Islam.

The political character of Islam

Islam is a religion which has existed for over fourteen centuries in many different countries. As such, diverse political movements in many different contexts have used the banner of Islam to lend legitimacy to their causes. Not surprisingly, practically every aspect of Islamic politics is subject to much disagreement and contention between conservative Islamists and liberal movements within Islam.

Muhammad, the Medinan state and Islamic political ideals

Islamists claim that the origins of Islam as a political movement are to be found in the life and times of Islam's prophet, Muhammad. In 622 CE, in recognition of his claims to prophet hood, Muhammad was invited to rule the city of Medina. At the time the local Arab tribes of Aus and Khazraj dominated the city, and were in constant conflict. Medinans saw in Muhammad an impartial outsider who could resolve the conflict. Muhammad and his followers thus moved to Medina, where Muhammad drafted the Medina Charter. This document made Muhammad the ruler, and recognized him as the Prophet of Allah. During his rule, Muhammad instituted the laws of the Qur'an, considered by Muslims to be divine revelation. Medina thus became a state based on Islamic law, which is still a basic demand of most Islamic movements. Muhammad gained a widespread following and an army, and his rule expanded first to the city of Mecca and then spread through the Arabian Peninsula through a combination of diplomacy and military conquest. On the extreme end of the political spectrum, militant Islamic groups consider Muhammad's own military policies against the pagan tribes of Arabia to legitimize jihad against non-Muslims.

The early Caliphate and Islamic political ideals

After Muhammad's death, his community needed to appoint a new leader (giving rise to the title Caliph, meaning "successor"). Thus the subsequent Islamic empires were known as Caliphates. Alongside the growth of the Umayyad Empire, the major political development within Islam in this period was the sectarian split between Sunni and Shi'ite Muslims; this had its roots in a dispute over the succession of the

Caliphate. The Shi'ites favored a succession model based on the inheritance of Muhammad's authority by his family. However, the Sunni sect emerged as triumphant in most of the Muslim world, and thus most modern Islamic political movements (with the exception of Iran) are founded in Sunni thought.

Muhammad's closest companions, the four "rightly guided" Caliphs who succeeded him, continued to expand the state to encompass Jerusalem, Ctesiphon, and Damascus, and sending armies as far as the Sindh. The Islamic empire stretched from Al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) to Persia under the reign of the Ummayad dynasty. The conquering Arab armies took the system of Shariah laws and courts to their new military camps and cities, and built mosques for Friday jam'at as well as Madrasahs to educate local Muslim youth. These institutions resulted in the development of a class of *ulema* who could serve as *qadis* (Shariah-court judges), imams of mosques and *madrasah* teachers. These classical scholars and jurists all owed their livelihood to the expansionary Islamic empire. Not surprisingly, these *ulema* gave legal and religious sanction to militarist interpretations of jihad. The political terminology of the Islamic state was all the product of this period. Thus, medieval legal terms such as *khalifa, shar'iah, fiqh, maddhab, jizya,* and *dhimmi* all remain part of modern Islamist rhetoric.

The modern political ideal of the Islamic state

In addition to the legitimacy given by medieval scholarly opinion, nostalgia for the days of successful Islamic empire simmered under later Western colonialism. This nostalgia played a major role in the Islamist political ideal of Islamic state, which primarily means a state which enforces traditional Islamic laws. The Islamist political program is generally to be accomplished by re-shaping the governments of existing Muslim nation-states; but the means of doing this varies greatly across movements and circumstances. Many Islamist movements, such as the Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh, have found that they can use the democratic process to their advantage, and so focus on votes and coalition-building with other political parties. Other more radical movements such as Jamatul Mujahideen Bangladesh embrace militant Islamic ideology, and may even resort to Islamist terrorism.

In the face of the tremendous poverty, corruption and disillusionment with conventional politics, the political ideal of the Islamic state has been criticized by many espousing liberal movements within Islam as being utopian and not offering real solutions. Ziauddin Sardar is an example of such people.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.2

Discuss the development of the political character of Islam

3.3   The Concept of Political Religion

Political religion is actually a sociological terminology that is used to describe a political ideology with cultural and political power equivalent to those of a religion and often having many sociological and ideological similarities with religion. Examples of this case have been Nazism in Germany and Fascism in Italy.

Aspects of Political Religion

Suppression of Religious Beliefs

In political religion, loyalty to any other entity such as religion is not acceptable because it will interfere with loyalty to the concept of political religion. The authority of potential religious leaders is a threat to the authority of the political religion. In such cases, religious sects are either suppressed or banned altogether.

Absolute Loyalty

Loyalty to the state or political party and acceptance of the government or party ideology is supreme. Those that express dissenting voices may be expelled, ostracized, imprisoned, re-orientated or even exterminated. It is common to see people taking loyalty oaths before being employed especially into government offices.

Fear

The political religion often maintains its power base by instilling some kind of fear into the populace. To uphold this, there are frequent displays of the powers of the military in the face of the people.

Personality Cult

The leader of the party in political religion is often elevated to a near-godlike status. The people may be required to carry his posters at home as well as in the offices.

Propaganda

The state usually in doing this will through its control of the media feed the people with all sorts of propaganda.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.3

Discuss the aspects of political religion.

3.4   Liberation Theology as an aspect of Religious Politics

Discussions on Religion and Politics cannot be said to have been exhausted without discussing liberation theology. In this section, we will look briefly into what liberation theology is and why it has a political character.

Liberation theology is an important, sometimes controversial, school of theological thought. At its inception, it was predominantly found in the Roman Catholic Church after the Second Vatican Council; although some suggest that it was first articulated by Dietrich Bonhoeffer during the late 1930s. It is often cited as a form of Christian socialism, and it has had particularly widespread influence in Latin America and among the Jesuits, although its influence has diminished within Catholicism in the past decade. Though most elements of liberation theology were rejected by the Vatican, and liberation theologians harshly admonished by Pope John Paul II, curtailing its growth, within Protestant circles it is recognized as an important school of thought, of equal standing with neo-Orthodoxy, Feminist Theology and Process Theology among others.

In essence, liberation theology explores the relationship between Christian, specifically Roman Catholic, theology and political activism, particularly in areas of social justice, poverty, and human rights. The main methodological innovation of liberation theology is to do theology (that is, speak of God) from the viewpoint of the economically poor and oppressed of the human community. According to Jon Sobrino, S.J., the poor are a privileged channel of God's grace. According to Phillip Berryman, liberation theology is "an interpretation of Christian faith through the poor's suffering, their struggle and hope, and a critique of society and the Catholic faith and Christianity through the eyes of the poor."

Liberation theology focuses on Jesus Christ as not only Savior but also as Liberator of the Oppressed. Emphasis is placed on those parts of the Bible where Jesus' mission is described in terms of liberation, and as a bringer of justice. This is interpreted as a call to arms to carry out this mission of justice - literally by some. A number of liberation theologians, though not all, also add certain Marxist concepts such as the doctrine of perpetual class struggle.

Liberation theology also emphasizes individual self-actualization as part of God's divine purpose for humankind. In other words, we are given life so that we may pursue it to its full potential. Obstacles, or oppressions, put in our path must therefore be resisted and abolished.

In addition to teaching at some Roman Catholic universities and seminaries, liberation theologians can often be found in Protestant-oriented schools. They tend to have much contact with the poor, and interpret sacred scripture partly based on their experiences in this context - what they label praxis.

4.0   CONCLUSION

As you went through this unit, you would have realized the fact that religion is essentially political in nature and that hardly can the two be separated. You have learnt about the state religion where the state dictates what religion should be followed either by way of sponsorship or suppression of other religions. You have also been exposed to the development of the political character of Islam. You were finally exposed to liberation theology as an example of the political side of Christian theology.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following are the major points that you have studied in this unit:

• State religion is the religious body officially endorsed by the State.

• Countries that have state religions in Christianity, Islam and Buddhism have been listed.

• Islam as a political movement has incorporated the elements of political movements and has also adopted Islamic fundamentalism as a religious view.

• The origin of Islam as a political development has to do with the invitation of Prophet Muhammad to rule the city of Medina in 622 CE.

• After Prophet's Muhammad's death the political development in Islam brought out two sects: the Sunni and the Shi'ite Muslims.

• Political religion is a political ideology with cultural and political power equivalent to that of a religion.

- Liberation theology explores the relationship between Christian theology and political activism.

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1.   What is the relationship of political religion to religion itself?
2.   What are the advantages and disadvantages of state religion?

7.0   REFERENCE/FURTHER READINGS

Schaefer R. T. (2001) *Sociology*, seventh edition. New York: McGraw Hill Companies.

Schaefer R. T & Lamm R. P. (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York: McGraw – Hill Companies.

Swatos Williams H. (1993) *Gender and Religion*, Brunkswick: N. J. Transaction.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The Study of Society*, New York: CBS College Publishing.

Peter Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York Double Day Publishers.

Emile Durkheim (1948) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.

Bryan Wilson (1969) *Religion in Secular-Society*, Baltimore: Penguin Books.

James W and Vander Z (1990). *The Social Experience: An introduction to Sociology*, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Zellner W. W. & Marc P. (1999) *Some Cults and Spiritual Communities: A Sociological Analysis*, Westport: C. T. Praeger.

Brown, A. *Organizational Culture*. London: Pitman, 1995.

T. O. Odetola and A. Ademola, (1985) *Sociology: An Introductory African Text*. London: Macmillan.

Electronic Sources:

Microsoft Encarta Premium, DVD 2006.

UNIT 5   RELIGION AND SCIENCE

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit you learned about the relationship between religion and politics. In this unit, we will examine the age-long relationship between religion and science. We believe that one way or the other you have been drawn into the argument whether religion is anti-science and vice versa. In fact we feel you might have even taken a position according to your exposure. In this unit however, you will be exposed to some information that will lead you to build a more informed thinking on the issue. You will have to study the historical overview of the conflict between the two concepts and the sources of the conflict as well as what can be done to remove the seemingly conflict between science and religion.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

•   Define science;

•   Analyze the methods of science and religion in arriving at the truth; and

•   Discuss the historical overview of the conflict between science and religion.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Religion and Science

It would be very important to say that from the very beginning, there had been no conflict between science and religion. Keith Ward, a professor of Divinity of the University of Oxford and Dapo Asaju, a professor of New Testament in his inaugural lecture at the Lagos State University had said that in the13th century Europe, Christian theology was regarded as the queen of the sciences. This is because "Science", in the Aristotelian sense, was a systematic exposition of an area of knowledge which was ideally founded on self-evident or certain first principles. The first principles of Christian theology, it was thought, provide the most certain of all principles, since they were revealed by God. Thus theology becomes the paradigm of science.

It has to be noted however that since that time, the word "science" has changed its meaning, so that now most people would regard a science as an experimental investigation into a physical phenomenon, where precise observations can be made and measurements taken, where experiments are repeatable and publicly testable, and where hypotheses need to be constantly tested and re-assessed. In such a context, theology is no longer seen as a science at all. There are no precise measurements in religious faith, no repeatable experiments, no public testing, and no equations which might help one to predict events accurately. This is the beginning of the contemporary conflict between science and religion.

Historically, science has had a close and complex relationship with religion; religious doctrines and motivations have often been central to scientific development, while scientific knowledge has had profound effects on religious beliefs. A common modern view, described by Stephen Jay Gould as "non-overlapping magisteria" (NOMA), is that science and religion deal with fundamentally separate aspects of human experience and so, when each stays within its own domain, they co-exist peacefully. Another view known as the conflict thesis-popularized in the 19th century by John William Draper and Andrew Dickson White, but now largely rejected by historians of science-holds that science and religion inevitably compete for authority over the nature of reality, so that religion has been gradually losing a war with science as scientific explanations become more powerful and widespread. However, neither of these views adequately accounts for the variety of interactions between science and religion (both historically and today), ranging from antagonism, to separation and to close collaboration.

3.2   Methodology in Science and Religion

Generally speaking, religion and science use different methods in their effort to ascertain truth. The scientific method relies on an objective approach   to   measure,   calculate,   and   describe   the

natural/physical/material universe. Religious methods are typically more subjective (or inter-subjective in community), relying on varying notions of authority, through any combination of: revelation, intuition, belief in the supernatural, individual experience, or a combination of these to understand the universe. Science attempts to answer the "how" and "what" questions of observable and verifiable phenomena; religion attempts to answer the "why" questions of value and morals. However, some science also attempts to explain such "why" questions, and some religious authority also extends to "how" and "what" questions regarding the natural world, creating the potential for conflict.

3.3   The Attitude of Religion to Science

Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam all developed many centuries prior to the modern era; their classical works show an appreciation of the natural world, but most of them express little or no interest in any systematic investigation of the natural world for its own sake. However some religion, for example Buddhism, contains a systematic investigation of the truth. Some early historical scientific texts have been preserved by the practitioners of religion. Islam, for example, collected scientific texts originating from China to Africa and from Iberia to India.

Proponents of Hinduism claim that Hinduism is not afraid of scientific explorations, or of the technological progress of mankind. According to them, there is a comprehensive scope and opportunity for Hinduism to mold itself according to the demands and aspirations of the modern world; it has the ability to align itself with both science and spiritualism. This religion uses some modern examples to explain its ancient theories and reinforce its own beliefs. For example, some Hindu thinkers have used the terminology of quantum physics to explain some basic concepts of Hinduism such as the Maya or the illusory and impermanent nature of our existence.

In the Medieval era some leading thinkers in Judaism, Christianity and Islam, undertook a project of synthesis between religion, philosophy, and natural sciences. For example, the Jewish philosopher Maimonides, like the Christian philosopher Augustine of Hippo, held that if religious teachings were found to contradict certain direct observations about the natural world, then it would be obligatory to reinterpret religious texts to match the known facts. The best knowledge of the cosmos was seen as an important part of arriving at a better understanding of the Bible. This approach has continued down to the present day; Henry Drummond, for example, was a 19th century Scot who wrote many articles, some of which drew on scientific knowledge to tease out and illustrate Christian ideas.

However, by the 1400s tension was keenly felt under the pressures of humanistic learning, as these methods were brought to bear on scripture and sacred tradition, more directly and critically. In Christianity, for instance, to bolster the authority of religion over philosophy and science, which had been eroded by the autonomy of the monasteries, and the rivalry of the universities, the Church reacted against the conflict between scholarship and religious certainty, by giving more explicit sanction to officially correct views of nature and scripture. Similar developments occurred in other religions. This approach, while it tended to temporarily stabilize doctrine, was also inclined toward making philosophical and scientific orthodoxy less open to correction, when accepted philosophy became the religiously sanctioned science. Observation and theory became subordinate to dogma. This was especially true for Islam, which canonized medieval science and effectively brought an end to further scientific advance in the Muslim world. Somewhat differently in the West, early modern science was forged in this environment, in the 16th and 17th centuries: a tumultuous era, prone to favor certainty over probability, and disinclined toward compromise. In reaction to this religious rigidity, and rebelling against the interference of religious dogma, the skeptical left-wing of the Enlightenment increasingly gained the upper hand in the sciences, especially in Europe.

The phenomenon of religious fundamentalism, especially Protestant, Christian fundamentalism which has arisen predominantly in the United States, has been characterized by some historians as originating in the reaction of the conservative Enlightenment against the liberal Enlightenment. In these terms, the scientific community is entirely committed to the skeptical Enlightenment, and has incorporated, into its understanding of the scientific method, an antipathy toward all interference of religion at any point of the scientific enterprise, and especially in the development of theory. While many popularizers of science rely heavily on religious allusions and metaphors in their books and articles, there is absolutely no orthodoxy in such matters, other than the literary value of eclecticism, and the dictates of the marketplace. But fundamentalism, in part because it is an undertaking primarily directed by scientific amateurs, tends to be inclined toward maximal interference of dogma with theory. Typically, fundamentalists are considerably less open to compromise and harmonization schemes than their forebears. They are far more inclined to make strict identification between religiously sanctioned science, and religious orthodoxy; and yet, they share with their early Enlightenment forebears the same optimism that religion is ultimately in harmony with "true" science. They typically favor a cautious empiricism over imaginative and probabilistic theories. This is reflected also in their historical-grammatical approach to

scripture and tradition, which is increasingly viewed as a source of scientific, as well as religious, certainty. Most significantly, they are openly hostile to the scientific community as a whole, and to scientific materialism.

The fundamentalist approach to modernity has also been adopted by the Islamic movements among Sunni and Shi'a Muslims across the world, and by some Orthodox Jews. For example, an Enlightenment view of the cosmos is accepted as fact, and read back into ancient texts and traditions, as though they were originally intended to be read this way. Fundamentalists often make claims that issues of modern interest, such as psychology, nutrition, genetics, physics and space travel, are spoken to directly by their ancient traditions, "foretold", in a sense, by their religion's sacred texts. For example, some Muslims claim that quantum mechanics and relativity were predicted in the Qur'an, long before they were formulated by modern scientists; and some Jewish fundamentalists make the same claim in regard to the Torah.

In response to the free-thought encouraged by Enlightenment thinkers over the last two centuries, many people have left organized religion altogether. Many people became atheists and agnostics, with no formal affiliation with any religious organization. Many others joined Secular Humanism or the Society for Ethical Culture: non-religious organizations that have a social role similar to that which religion often plays; others joined non-creedal religious organizations, such as Unitarian Universalism. People in these groups no longer accept any religious doctrine or perspective which rests solely on dogmatic authority.

In between these extreme positions lies the position of non-fundamentalist religious believers. A great many Christians and Jews still accept some or many traditional religious beliefs taught in their respective faith communities, but they no longer accept their tradition's teachings as unquestionable and infallible. Liberal religious believers do believe in gods, and believe that in some way their god(s) revealed their will to humanity. They differ with religious fundamentalists in that they accept that the Bible and other religious documents were written by people, and that these books reflect the cultural and historic limitations and biases of their authors. Thus, liberal religious believers are often comfortable with the findings of archaeological and linguistic research and critical textual study. Some liberal religious believers, such as Conservative Jews, make use of literary and historical analysis of religious texts to understand how they developed, and to see how they might be applied in our own day. Liberal religious Jewish communities include Reform Judaism and Conservative Judaism.

3.4   Attitude of Science to Religion

Scientists have many different views of religious belief. The various views form the basis of the attitude of the person to religion. The following four are the summary of the views:

- Some scientists consider science and religion mutually exclusive;

- Some believe that scientific and religious belief are independent of one another;

- Some believe that science and religion can and should be united or "reunited;" and

- Some believe that science and religion can conflict because both attempt to accomplish the same thing: inform people's understanding of the natural world.

It has been argued that many scientists' conceptions of deities are generally more abstract and less personal than those of laypeople. Atheism, agnosticism, Humanism and logical positivism are especially popular among people who believe that the scientific method is the best way to approximate an objective description of observable reality, although the scientific method generally deals with different sets of questions than those addressed by theology. The general question of how we acquire knowledge is addressed by the philosophical field of epistemology.

According to a recent survey, that is carried out by Larson and Witham, in 1998 and published in their article "Leading Scientists Still Reject God" it is discovered that belief in a god that is "in intellectual and affective communication with humankind" and belief in "personal immortality" are most popular among mathematicians and least popular among biologists. In total, about 60% of scientists in the United States expressed disbelief or doubt in the existence of deities in 1996. This percentage has been fairly stable over the last 100 years. Among leading scientists defined as members of the National Academy of Sciences, 93% expressed disbelief or doubt in the existence of a personal god in 1998.

3.5   The Future of Religion and Science

One has to say that across the years the spirit that science is anti religion has been enormous. Today however, there seems to be a reversal. The anti-religion spirit of science is gradually on the decline. The overwhelming voice that may indicate the future path of religion and science is that the two can be married for a complimentary role.

Robert Russell opines that science can help to do theology better. He is quoted by Jodi Beyeler in *Science and Theology News* of April 28 2005 (on line version) to have said that "contrary to the popular myth that science is atheistic or that religion is irrelevant to science, we now know from the history of 20th-century cosmology that philosophy and theology can play a creative role in science." Henry Swift, in another magazine, *Metareligion*, also opines that the current scenario is being prepared for when there is going to be a marriage of the wisdom of the East about our inner world of consciousness (which is actually religious) and the Western scientific wisdom. He concludes that "future scientists may have to be trained not only in sciences but also be students of their inner spirituality".

Apart from this tendency that seems to come mainly from Christianity, other religions like the Baha'i faith also encourage intercourse between religion and science. In fact, one of the basic principles of the Baha'i faith is that religion and science should work together for the improvement of the world. From these indicators, you will discover that the future relationship between religion and science will move towards complimentary relationship and quit the antagonist relationship that seems to be the case.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have studied the history of the conflict between science and religion from when theology has been regarded as the queen of science to when there comes a change and science is being pictured as being anti-religion. You have also been exposed to the attitude of religion to science as well as the attitude of science to religion. You have been made to see the main problem that seems to create tension between the two, namely, methodology. While science takes the objective approach, religion more than often takes the subjective approach.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following are the major points that you have studied in this unit:

- Traditionally, theology has been regarded as the 'queen of the sciences".

- Scientific methodology relies on objective approach to measure, calculate and describe the universe.

- Religion uses the subjective approach based on revelation and intuition to do the same thing.

- The attitude of religion to science from history can be categorized into three broad divisions: the positive (that sees no crisis), the negative (that sees the crisis) and the moderate (that believes that a synthesis is achievable).

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Evaluate the attitude of religion to science.
2. Outline the broad history of the conflict between religion and science.

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDIES

Schaefer R. T. (2001) *Sociology*, seventh edition. New York: McGraw Hill Companies.

Schaefer R. T & Lamm R. P. (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York: McGraw – Hill Companies.

Swatos Williams H. (1993) *Gender and Religion*, Brunkswick: N. J. Transaction.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The Study of Society*, New York: CBS College Publishing.

Peter Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double Day Publishers.

Emile Durkheim (1948) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.

Bryan Wilson (1969) *Religion in Secular-Society*, Baltimore: Penguin Books.

James W and Vander Z (1990). *The Social Experience: An introduction to Sociology*, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Zellner W. W. & Marc P. (1999) *Some Cults and Spiritual Communities: A Sociological Analysis*, Westport: C. T. Praeger.

Brown, A. (1995) *Organizational Culture*. London: Pitman.
T. O. Odetola and A. Ademola, (1985) *Sociology: An Introductory African Text*. London: Macmillan.

Stephen Jay Gould. (1999) *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the Fullness of Life*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Electronic Sources:

Microsoft Encarta Premium, DVD 2006.

MODULE 3

UNIT 1   SEXUALITY AND RELIGIOUS DISCOURSE

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
        3.1   Introduction to Sexuality
        3.2   Sexual Development and the Life Cycle
        3.3   Sexual Activity in Adolescence
        3.4   Religion and Sex
        3.5   Sexuality and Religious Discourse
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignments
7.0   References/Further Readings

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last module, the focus was on religion and modernization and issues like stratification, culture, secularization and science in relationship to religion. In this module, you will be focusing on the relationship between religion and the family, and how religion affects family values. In this unit, we will be concerned with the issue of sexuality. We will examine sexuality and the various issues arising out of it and the view of religion on sexual discourse.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Define sexuality; and

- Discuss why religious discourse is often silent about sexuality.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Introduction to Sexuality

Microsoft Encarta 2006 defines sexuality as "all the characteristics of an individual's behaviour that are related to sex. It refers to people's sexual preferences and sexual identity, and may be described both in purely physical terms and as an essential part of love and relationships". Until recent times, there has not been much talk and materials on this issue because our thinking about sexuality has been largely informed by what is called the "repressive hypothesis," which claims that the history of

sexuality over the past three hundred years has been a history of repression. Sex, except for the purpose of reproduction is taboo.

Though some people like Foucault have faulted the repressive hypothesis, but as indicated in the Wikipedia, in the section on sources for sexuality, it was indicated that sexual speech - and by extension, writing - has been subject to varying standards of decorum since the beginning of history. The resulting self-censorship and euphemistic forms translate today into a dearth of explicit and accurate evidence on which to base a history. There are a number of sources that can be collected across a wide variety of times and cultures, including the following:

- Records of legislation indicating either encouragement or prohibition

- Religious and philosophical texts recommending, condemning or debating the topic

- Literary sources, sometimes unpublished during their authors' lifetimes, including diaries and personal correspondence

- Medical textbooks treating various forms as a pathological condition

- Linguistic developments, particularly in slang.

- More recently, studies of sexuality

The study of sexuality has brought to the fore the understanding of some terms and they are as follows:

Sexual Attraction

Sexual attraction, apart from promoting the propagation of the species, is, particularly in Western cultures, strongly linked to self-esteem in both men and women, throughout life. The biological imperative of sexual attraction used to permeate most aspects of many cultures. The status of the individual within sections of society may also be related to his or her sex appeal, and in the West there is commercial as well as social value placed on it. All the senses are involved in the so-called chemistry of sexual attraction. A person's appearance as well as how he or she behaves can be the basis of attraction. Appearance, behaviour, emotions, mannerisms, conversation, body language, and expressed views, among other things—as well as the circumstances of an encounter—all play a part, but in different ways for different people. There are no firm rules on what constitutes sexual attraction and it does not have to depend on Western ideas of attractiveness.

Once two people have met, their personalities become important, and to some extent each person often fulfils the unconscious needs of his or her partner. Attitudes and values may be similar and, in a number of respects, like will attract like: for instance, partners may both come from the same social class, or have the same level of education, or the same religious and ethnic background. This, however, is often due to the lack of opportunity or because of socially created barriers, which are now increasingly being broken down in many societies.

The response of the individual to another person affects the individual's attractiveness. A series of social interactions takes place when two people meet. Two people increase sexual attraction for each other as they face each other, touch, prolong eye contact, and synchronize body movements. The reaction to the sound of a person's voice or touch indicates attraction.

Sexual Desire

Sexual desire is influenced by the level of sex hormones in the body and by psychological factors. Social conditioning and a person's circumstances strongly affect the level of sexual desire, which varies greatly between one time and another, and from one individual to another. The person's sexual capacity by which is meant, the person's capacity to become sexually aroused and to reach orgasm (sexual climax), depends on physical health and the effective function of the nervous, muscular, and vascular systems. These vary markedly with age. The actual amount of sexual activity engaged in depends not only on physiological and psychological factors, but also on opportunity.

Sex Drive

At the beginning of the 20th century the word "drive" was a narrow biological term used in the same sense as the term "sexual instinct". It described an innate force that drove animals to avoid hunger or pain and which released physical tension through sexual activity. Sigmund Freud extended the idea of sex drive when he described the libido as a largely unconscious force motivating human behaviour. Current thinking uses the terms "sex drive" and "libido" loosely in the sense of sexual motivation, denoting the desire to engage in sexual behaviour. A difference in sex drive may influence a relationship, for example, if one partner is too demanding or impatient, or if one partner has less desire for sex than the other. People who otherwise have things in common may, in this way, be incompatible as regards their needs for sex.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.1

1. What is sexuality?
2. Write short notes on the following:
   a. Sexual attraction
   b. Sexual desire
   c. Sex drive

3.2   Sexual Development and the Life Cycle

Infancy and Childhood

Infants soon become aware of the biological differences between the sexes. However, differentiation and coordination of sexual responses arise gradually in the course of growing up and are influenced by social conditioning. Curiosity and imitation are powerful human qualities enabling a person's sexual self-exploration, as well as their exploration of the environment to help in their development.

For an infant to thrive emotionally, trust and love in relation to its parents is essential. This bond that is the bond between the child and the parents provides a powerful force to shape the child's later attitudes and behaviour. It is thought by many therapists that the capacity of an adult to relate well sexually, and to experience both intimacy and independence in loving, arises from happy, loving experiences of the first five years of life. However, unhappy experiences in teenage years may undo all this.

Adolescence

Adolescence is a process of psychological and social maturation occurring between puberty and adulthood. Puberty is the process of physical maturation during which the secondary sexual characteristics develop (such as breasts in girls and growth of the testicles in boys) and hormonal and other changes make the individual capable of reproduction. In adolescence, social and psychological maturation occurs over a period of about ten years, while the biological changes of puberty can take from two to up to seven years.

Physical Changes of Puberty

Reproductive and other hormones initiate physical maturation in girls at about the age of ten. In boys, maturation starts about the age of twelve, that is, two years after that of the girls. In the past few decades puberty has been starting at earlier ages owing to improvements in diet, and possibly because of altered social expectations. In girls, enlargement of the breasts and the growth of pubic hair is usually followed by

menstruation after about a year (although menstruation and increase in height may occur first). In boys, enlargement of the testicles and the growth of pubic hair is followed by the first penile ejaculation at about the age of 13. Development of secondary sexual characteristics at puberty varies from individual to individual, and may be a focus of self-consciousness. Temporary problems with appearance and self-image may occur as a result of acne, changes in fat distribution, and increases in weight. Sexual awareness of one's own self and others and the tensions that accompany growing independence require parental support-and the respect of adults and, to a certain extent, other people of the same age (peers), such as school friends, for a greater need for privacy.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.2

Discuss the various changes due to sexuality in the various stages of human development.

3.3   Sexual Activity in Adolescence

Physical arousal may occur in advance of puberty from physical activity or from one's own direct stimulation of the genitals, but in adolescence exploratory sex play may become actual, intended sexual behavior with others in the adult sense. The social expectations of parents and peers influence to a certain extent the way that sexual relationships develop. For boys self-masturbation (as opposed to being masturbated by someone else) and spontaneous nocturnal ejaculations during sleep tend to precede sexual contact with another individual.

Adulthood

Adulthood is the time of sexual maturity. A person's sex drive is regulated by higher centres in the brain via a surge of hormones, and is influenced by a host of external sources. Women have a monthly cycle with ovulation at its mid-point (when conception may occur), and with menstruation—the loss of the lining of the uterus—marking the start of a new cycle. Apart from periods of childbearing, women will normally continue to ovulate monthly until their 40s or 50s when a relatively abrupt decline in hormone levels is accompanied by the cessation of ovulation. Men, on the other hand, maintain fairly constant levels of sex hormone until their 50s. A gradual reduction in sexual function may then occur, depending on social, physical, and psychological factors as much as on lowered hormonal levels.
For the majority of young people the expression of libidinal energy and growing up in a stable family environment may lead to stable couple relationships. Enjoyment of sex starts to depend on feeling confident

and happy about one's own self-image and choice of partners, and on how comfortable the person is with his or her sexual preference.

Sexual behaviour and attitudes continue to change throughout life in line with changes in the individual's circumstances and physical capacity, as well as in response to pressures from other sources, such as the attitudes of other people at home and at work; fashion; the media; and advertising. Pressure also comes from diminished sexual activity accompanying physical illness or absence of a partner, and the cultural constraints placed, for example, on someone who "comes out" as homosexual. External influence apart, the amount and variety of sexual activity tends to vary greatly from individual to individual. Increasing age is accompanied by greater variation in the level of sexual activity. It is a widely held belief that libido tends to peak for men at about the age of 20, and for women at about the age of 40 but this, like many conclusions about sexual behaviour, is a popular generalization. While the greatest intensity of sexual sensation may occur in young people, a high degree of satisfaction in sexual contact is possible throughout life, particularly with the benefit of experience. Levels of sexual activity are, very broadly, related inversely to the length of a relationship: a man of 50 recently married is likely to be more active sexually than a 35-year-old man in a relationship of 15 years' standing.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.3

Discuss the various sexual activities of the human developmental stages.

3.4   Religion and sex

There are religious teachings concerning the issue of sex. Although not the case in every culture, most religious practices contain taboos or fetishes in regard to sex, sex organs and the reproductive process.

Judaism

In Jewish law, sex is not considered intrinsically sinful or shameful when conducted in marriage, nor is it a necessary evil for the purpose of procreation. Sex is considered a private and holy act between a husband and wife. Certain deviant sexual practices, enumerated below, were considered gravely immoral "abominations" sometimes punishable by death. The residue of sex (as with any lost bodily fluid) was considered ritually unclean outside the body, and required ablution.

Recently, some scholars have questioned whether the Old Testament banned all forms of homosexuality, raising issues of translation and references to ancient cultural practices. However, rabbinic Judaism had

unambiguously condemned homosexuality up until the reform movements of the modern era.

The Torah, while being quite frank in its description of various sexual acts, forbids certain relationships. Namely, adultery, some forms of incest, male homosexuality, bestiality, and introduced the idea that one should not have sex during the wife's period:

- *You shall not lie carnally with your neighbor's wife, to become defiled by her.* (Lev. 18:20)

- *Thou shall not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.* (Lev. 18:22)

- *And with no animal shall you cohabit, to become defiled by it. And a woman shall not stand in front of an animal to cohabit with it; this is depravity.* (Lev. 18:23)

- *And to a woman during the uncleanness of her separation, you shall not come near to uncover her nakedness.* (Lev. 18:19)

The above passages are, however, open to modern interpretation.

Christianity

Christianity supplemented the Jewish attitudes on sexuality with two new concepts. First, there was the idea that marriage was absolutely exclusive and indissoluble, thereby restricting the sphere of sexual activity and eliminating the husband's ability to divorce at will. Second, there was the notion of virginity as a moral ideal, rendering marital sexuality as a sort of concession to carnal weakness and the necessity of procreation.

The teachings of Jesus

Jesus' teachings in the Gospels generally presume knowledge and acceptance of Jewish norms of sexual ethics. There are several significant departures, however. Divorce and remarriage is condemned as an aberrant departure from the divine order permitted by Moses. Merely looking at a married woman lustfully is considered a kind of adultery, and to look on any woman lustfully is considered a kind of fornication.

New Testament

The **Council of Jerusalem** decided that, although Jesus may have admonished Jews to keep to their traditions and laws, these were not required of **Gentiles** converting to Christianity, who did not, for instance, need to be circumcised. The Council's final communication to the various Gentile churches reads thus: "*That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well*" (Acts 15:29).

It is unclear exactly which sexual practices are considered *fornication* (sometimes translated as *sexual immorality*). Throughout the New Testament, there are scattered injunctions against adultery, promiscuity, homosexuality, and incest, consistent with earlier Jewish ethics supplemented by the Christian emphasis on chastity.

Later Christian Thought

A general consensus developed in medieval Christianity that all sexual acts were at least mildly sinful, owing to the necessary concupiscence involved in the act. Nonetheless, marital relations were encouraged as an antidote to temptations to promiscuity and other sexual sins. St. Augustine opined that before Adam's fall, there was no lust in the sexual act, but it was entirely subordinate to human reason. Later theologians similarly concluded that the unavoidable concupiscence involved in sexuality was a result of original sin, but nearly all agreed that this was only a venial sin if conducted within marriage without inordinate lust.

In the modern era, many Christians have adopted the view that there is no sin whatsoever in the uninhibited enjoyment of marital relations. More traditional Christians will tend to limit the circumstances and degree to which sexual pleasure is morally acceptable.

Hinduism

In India, Hinduism accepted an open attitude towards sex as an art, science and spiritual practice. The most famous pieces of Indian literature on sex are *Kamasutra* (Aphorisms on Love) and *Kamashastra* (which is derived from *Kama* which means "pleasure" and *shastra* which means "specialized knowledge" or "technique"). This collection of explicit sexual writings, both spiritual and practical, covers most aspects of human courtship and sexual intercourse. It was put together in this form by the sage Vatsyayana from a 150 chapter manuscript that had itself been distilled from 300 chapters that had in turn come from a compilation of some 100,000 chapters of text. The *Kamasutra* is thought to have been written in its final form sometime between the third and fifth century AD.

Also notable are the sculptures carved on temples in India, particularly the Khajuraho temple. The frank depiction of uninhibited sex hints towards a liberated society and times where people believed in dealing openly with all aspects of life. On the other hand, a group of thinkers believe that depiction of sexually implicit carvings outside the temples indicate that one should enter the temples leaving desires (kama).

Apart from Vatsyayana's Kamashastra, which is no doubt the most famous of all such writings, there exist a number of other books, for example:

- The *Ratirahasya*, which literally means secrets (*rahasya*) of love (*rati*, the union);

- The *Panchasakya*, or the five (*panch*) arrows (*sakya*);

- The *Ratimanjari*, or the garland (*manjari*) of love (*rati*, the union)

- The *Anunga Runga*, or the stage of love.

The *Secrets of Love* was written by a poet named Kukkoka. He is believed to have written this treatise on his work to please one Venudutta, considered to be a king. This work was translated into Hindi years ago and the author's name became Koka in short and the book he wrote was called *Koka Shastra*. The same name crept into all the translations into other languages in India. *Koka Shastra* literally means doctrines of Koka, which is identical with the *Kama Shastra*, or doctrines of love, and the names *Koka Shastra* and *Kama Shastra* are used indiscriminately.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.4

Discuss the various religious attitudes to sex

3.5   Sexuality and Religious Discourse

On the whole, in Africa because there is a silence on the issue of sex or because it was considered sacred or x-rated, sex is not discussed openly. This same attitude was carried over into the church. This attitude is also corroborated by the Western culture of repression on sexual issues. For example, even in China that was said to be initially open to discuss sexual issues, the contact with the West brought in the issue of repression on sexual issues. Writing on the issue of sexual discourse in China (and also India by extension), the Wikipedia writes that "Sexuality was treated in a straightforward and unembarrassed way until

contact with Westerners influenced Chinese to treat these behaviors as more shameful than before".

The culture of repression on sexual issues either due to the culture of the people as is the case of most African society or the overt influence of the Western culture, as in the case of China and India has so much eaten into the fabrics of modern civilization until recent times when what is called sex revolution occurred. However, the modern day scourge of HIV/AIDS has drastically called the culture of repression into question, and the world is now clamouring for proper sexuality education.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have studied the definition of sexuality, the concepts that have risen out of sexuality like: sexual attraction, sexual desire and sexual drive. Apart from this you have also studied the sexual development of an individual at the various stages of development like childhood, adolescence and adulthood. You have also been exposed to the views of religion (Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism) on sex and the repression of sexuality in religious discourse.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following are the summary of the major points studied in this unit:

- Sexuality is all the characteristics of an individual's behaviour that are related to sex.

- Sexual attraction, sexual desire and sex drive are concepts arising out of sexuality.

- The various stages of human development has both physical and physiological role to play in the development of human sexuality.

- Various religions have various views about sexuality.

- There has largely been a repression of sexuality studies in either religions or fostered by Western civilization.

- Most religious discourses avoid talks on sexuality.

- The recent scourge called HIV/AIDS have forced the world to become more open on sexuality discussions.

6.0   TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Discuss the position of religion on sex.
2. Write short notes on the following:
a. Sexual attraction
b. Sexual desire
c. Sex drive

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDIES

Schaefer R. T. (2001) *Sociology*, seventh edition. New York: McGraw Hill Companies.

Schaefer R. T & Lamm R. P. (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York: McGraw – Hill Companies.

Swatos Williams H. (1993) *Gender and Religion*, Brunkswick: N. J. Transaction.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The study of Society*, New York: CBS College Publishing

Peter Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double Day Publishers.

Emile Durkheim (1948) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.

Bryan Wilson (1969) *Religion in Secular-Society*, Baltimore: Penguin Books.

James W and Vander Z (1990). *The Social Experience: An introduction to Sociology*, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Zellner W. W. & Marc P. (1999) *Some Cults and Spiritual Communities: A Sociological Analysis*, Westport: C. T. Praeger.

Brown, A. (1995) *Organizational Culture*. London: Pitman.

T. O. Odetola and A. Ademola, (1985) *Sociology: An Introductory African Text*. London: Macmillan.

Stephen Jay Gould. (1999) *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the fullness of life*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Electronic Sources:

Microsoft Encarta Premium, DVD 2006.

UNIT 2   THE FAMILY PATTERN

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives

3.0   Main Content
          3.1   The Family and Its Concepts
          3.2   Descent Patterns in the Family
          3.3   Authority Patterns in the Family
          3.4   Functions of the Family
4.0   Conclusion
5.0   Summary
6.0   Tutor-Marked Assignments
7.0   References/Further Readings

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit you studied human sexuality, sexual development at the various stages of childhood, adolescence and adulthood. The view of Judaism, Christianity and Hinduism about sex was also examined in terms of the relationship between religious discourse and human sexuality. In this unit, focus is on the family pattern. We will examine the composition of the family unit, the various types of family, the descent pattern as well as the authority pattern in the family. Finally, we will discuss the religious prescriptions and sanctions on the family.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

• Define the family;

• Discuss the types of family that exists;

• Discuss the functions of a family unit;

• Evaluate the authority patterns in the family; and

• Explain the various religious prescriptions on the family.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   The Family and its Concepts

In this section we are concerned mainly by the definition of the family, the types of families that exists and the descent pattern within the family.

Definition of the Family

Sociologically, the family is seen as the smallest unit of the society or the basic social group united through bonds of kinship or marriage, present in all societies.

Types of Families

As a result of the pressures and demands of the modern day society, three main types of families have evolved. The first is the nuclear family-two adults and their children-is the main unit in some societies. In Africa however, the nuclear family is not really very independent of the extended family as it is in the Western societies. The extended family is the second type of family. In this second type, the nuclear family is a subordinate part. The extended family consists of grandparents and other relatives. A third family unit is the *single-parent family*, in which children live with an unmarried, divorced, or widowed mother or father.

In the African society however the extended family was and is still is the most common traditional pattern of family organizations in most African societies. The extended family sometimes constitutes a lineage with the members' spouses and their children who may not have married.

3.2   Descent Patterns in the Family

Kinship is reckoned in a number of different ways around the world. This has resulted in a variety of types of descent patterns and kinship groups.

Unilineal Descent

This traces descent only through a single line of ancestors either male or female. Though both male and females are members of a unilineal family, descent links are only recognized through relatives of one gender. The two basic forms here are patrilineal and matrilineal.

Patrilineal Descent

In patrilineal both males and females belong to their father's kin group but not their mother's and only males pass on their family identity to the children.

Matrilineal Descent

In matrilineal descent both males and females belong to their mother's kin group but not their father's and only females pass on family identity to the children. In matrilineal descent, the social relationship between children and their biological father tends to be different since the father is not a member of the matrilineal family.

Cognatic Descent

Nothing less than 40% of the world's societies has their descent through both their father's and mother's ancestors. This is what is called the non-unilineal or cognatic descent. This can occur in four different variations:

Bilineal

This is when both patrilineal and matrilineal descent patterns are combined.

Ambilineal

This is when the individual is permitted to use only one out of the two lines of descent that are open to him.

Parallel

This is when descent is traced through gender. A male descent is traced through the male lines and the woman's descent is traced through the females.

Bilateral

In this system the descent pattern is traced through both the male and the female lines.

3.3   Authority Patterns in the Family

In early history, many Western thinkers believed that male dominance was the natural or God-given order of society. That belief declined after the 18th century, particularly with the advent of feminism. In the late 20th century, partly due to the growth of religious fundamentalism, there has been resurgence in some parts of the world of the belief that

patriarchy is the natural order of society. For example, after a new fundamentalist Muslim regime took over in Iran in 1979, women were segregated from men at social functions, barred from becoming judges or senior religious leaders, forbidden to leave the country without the permission of their husbands, and required to wear the chador, a long black cloth that covers the head and body. This represented a considerable blow to women in Iran who had been living in comparative freedom. The Taliban movement, which has been the unofficial government of Afghanistan since 1996, has imposed even stricter limitations on women, including forbidding them from working outside the home. This pattern has been replicated in other parts of the world including the West. For instance, in the United States a male Christian revival movement known as Promise Keepers maintains that men have relinquished their authority in the family to women, and they need to reclaim it.

In the Indian household, lines of hierarchy and authority are clearly drawn, shaping structurally and psychologically complex family relationships. Ideals of conduct are aimed at creating and maintaining family harmony. All family members are socialized to accept the authority of those ranked above them in the hierarchy. In general, elders rank above juniors, and among people of similar age, males outrank females. Daughters of a family command the formal respect of their brothers' wives, and the mother of a household is in charge of her daughters-in-law. Among adults in a joint family, a newly arrived daughter-in-law has the least authority. Males learn to command others within the household but expect to accept the direction of senior males. Ideally, even a mature adult man living in his father's household acknowledges his father's authority on both minor and major matters. Women are especially strongly socialized to accept a position subservient to males, to control their sexual impulses, and to subordinate their personal preferences to the needs of the family and kin group. Reciprocally, those in authority accept responsibility for meeting the needs of others in the family group. This set up in the Indian society gives a typical description of the Yoruba ethnic group in Nigeria.

3.4   Functions of the Family

The functions of the family can be discussed under the following broad categories:

Sexual Function

The family serves for the institutionalization of mating and the channelling of sexual outlets. Consequently it establishes a legal father for a woman's children and a legal mother for a man's children.

Reproductive Function

The reproductive function of the family includes the nurture and basic enculturation of the young in an atmosphere of intimacy. It is also expected that the young ones will be prepared within the family for the demands of the stage of adulthood.

Economic Function

In its economic function, the family serves as the organization of a complementary division of labour between spouses, it does this by allocating to each certain right in the labour of the other and in such goods or property as they may acquire through their individual or joint efforts.

Educational Function

Within the family the education of the young ones takes place. The young ones are usually exposed to the family trade and are trained to carry out the skills that are in this part of the word more of family secrets.

Social Function

Ideally, the family provides its members with protection, companionship, security, and socialization. The companionship is usually done because the family provides for the linkage of each spouse and the offspring within the wider network of kinsmen, thus establishing relationships of descent and affinity. Also the sociological fatherhood is determined to place the responsibility for the child on a specific adult and the jural fatherhood is established also to regularize transference of status from one generation to the next.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this interesting unit you have studied about the relationship between religion and the family. You have seen the definition of the family, the various types of family. The functions of the family in the sociological, economical, sexual and educational realms have also been spelt out. You have also seen the various types of family descent pattern and the

concept of authority in the family with examples from Christianity, Islam and Hinduism as seen in the Indian example.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following are the major points that you have learnt in this lesson:

- The family is the smallest unit of the society or the basic social group united through bonds of kinship or marriage, present in all societies.

- The following are the types of families: the nuclear, the extended and the single-parent family.

- There are two main descent patterns: the unilineal and the cognatic patterns.

- In most societies, an authority pattern in the home is usually patristic and moves from the older to the younger members of the family.

- The functions of the family can be viewed from the following categories: sexual, reproductive, economic, educational and social.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. Evaluate the descent pattern through the descent pattern of your group.
2. Discuss the types of families.

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDIES

Schaefer R. T. (2001) *Sociology*, seventh edition. New York: McGraw Hill Companies.

Schaefer R. T & Lamm R. P. (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York: McGraw – Hill Companies.

Swatos Williams H. (1993) *Gender and Religion*, Brunkswick: N. J. Transaction.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The study of Society*, New York: CBS College Publishing

Peter Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double Day Publishers.

Emile Durkheim (1948) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.

Bryan Wilson (1969) *Religion in Secular-Society*, Baltimore: Penguin Books.

James W and Vander Z (1990). *The Social Experience: An introduction to Sociology*, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Zellner W. W. & Marc P. (1999) *Some Cults and Spiritual Communities: A Sociological Analysis*, Westport: C. T. Praeger.

Brown, A. (1995) *Organizational Culture*. London: Pitman.

T. O. Odetola and A. Ademola, (1985) *Sociology: An Introductory African Text*. London: Macmillan.

Stephen Jay Gould. (1999) *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the fullness of life*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Electronic Sources:

Microsoft Encarta Premium, DVD 2006.

UNIT 3   MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit you studied the structure and the functions of the family. In this unit, you will be focusing on marriage as it is related to the family life. Various issues from mate selection, courtship, parenthood, adoption, divorce and religious influence on the family will be studied.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Describe how mates are to be selected;

- Define courtship;

- Define adoption;

- Describe the legal process involved in adoption;

- Discuss the implications of adoption;

- Compare the demands of Islam and Christianity on divorce; and

- Discuss the demands of parenthood.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Marriage and the Family

Marriage can be defined as a union between a man and woman such that any child born within the union is regarded as legitimate offspring of the parents. In the Microsoft Encarta 2006 marriage is defined as a "social institution (usually legally ratified) uniting a man and a woman

in special forms of mutual dependence, often for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family". Marriage as a contract between a man and a woman has existed since ancient times. As a social practice, entered into through a public act, it reflects the purposes, character, and customs of the society in which it is found. It is important to note that in some cultures, the
community's interest in the children, in the bonds between families, and in the ownership of property established by a marriage are such that special devices and customs are created to protect these values. The following are some of such practices:

Child or Infant Marriage

Usually, when a child is about nine or ten years, she is sent to her prospective husband's house. He then looks after her until she is of marriageable age. This is usually as a result of concern for the child's safety and other issues. This practice is however dying out because most families cherish education and allow their children to go to school.

Levirate Marriage

This is the custom by which a man might marry the wife of his deceased brother for the purpose of raising a family for the deceased. This was practiced chiefly by the ancient Hebrews, and was designed to continue a family connection that had already been established.

Sororate Marriage

Sororate marriage is a form of marriage that permits a man to marry one or more of his wife's sisters, usually if she has died or cannot have children. It is actually the opposite of levirate marriage.

Monogamy

Monogamy is the union of one man and one woman. It is thought to be the prototype of human marriage and its most widely accepted form, predominating also in societies in which other forms of marriage are accepted. It has to be noted that most religions accept monogamy as the best form of marriage though polygamy is also deemed acceptable.

Polygamy

Polygamy is the general word for many spouses and it can be broken down to two different forms. The first is *polygny*, in which one man has several wives. This is widely practiced in Africa despite the influence of Christianity. The second form is *polyandry,* in which one woman has

several husbands. This type of marriage is known to exist among the Nayars of Malabar in India and the Lele of Kasai in Central Africa.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.1

Discuss the various types of marriage.

3.2   MATE SELECTION

In the traditional society, the choice of a spouse was largely the responsibility of the family. More than often, the spouses themselves have no hand in the decision of who they are to marry. However, today the influence of Christianity and Western civilization is changing this and the people are now mostly the ones deciding who they are to marry. This has now led to a major dilemma.

One of the greatest problems facing most youths today is the problem of mate selection. They want to know the process they had to take in deciding who God's choice is for them as spouse. In most cases they turn to their religious leaders for counselling and may in the end not be fully satisfied. It has to be stated that for Christians the followings facts are relevant in the process of making choices:

1. The spouse has to be someone from the same faith.
2. The process of choice has to be accompanied by prayer for guidance.
3. The spouse as to be someone of excellent character.

All these steps are important to avoid wrong choices and to prepare the ground for a solid marriage.
This process is not too different from that of Islam except for the introduction of parental influence. Mohammad Mazhar Hussain in his book "Marriage and Family in Islam that was quoted by SoundVisioin.com has the following to say on the guideline for mate selection in Islam:

> Normally the criteria for selecting matrimonial mates are many: wealth, beauty, rank, character, congeniality, compatibility, religion, etc. The Quran enjoins Muslims to select partners who are good and pure (*tayyib*). Prophet Muhammad recommended Muslims to select those partners who are best in religion (*din*) and character.

Islam according to him encourages the freedom of choice for the would-be-spouses under the consideration and the influence and consent of their parents or guardians.

118

Courtship

Courtship is normally understood as the period of romantic relationship that serves as a prelude to marriage. Most religions are concerned about how the would-be-spouses conduct themselves in this period so that they do not commit unwarranted sin. It has to be noted that some people confuse dating with courtship and use them synonymously. The truth however is that courtship indicates a more serious commitment than dating. Dating can lead to courtship but most importantly courtship is expected to lead to marriage.

For Christians, though this period of courtship is encouraged so that the would-be-spouses will be able to know each other better, it is always counselled that they do not do things that could lead to fornication or sexual immorality. It is to this end that some denominations would not allow courting people to spend time together all on their own. This also applies to Islam. M. M. Hussain also has this to say:

> The would-be-spouses are allowed to see each other for matrimonial purposes under the direct supervision of their mahram relatives. This provision is expected to be conceived and executed with piety and modesty. Prophet Muhammad instructed: "No man has the right to be in the privacy with a woman who is not lawful for him. Satan is their third party unless there is a mahram".

In the traditional African societies too, the period of courtship is one that is also guided so as to avoid sexual immorality. Most religions counsel that people get married as virgins and frown at pre-marital sex.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.2

What are the influences of religion on mate selection?

3.3   ADOPTION

After marriage, childlessness or barrenness is one of the common problems that face couples especially in the African society that places a high value on children. One of the ways by which couples have dealt with the problem is adoption. Adoption is the legal act of permanently placing a child with a parent or parents other than the birth parents. In other countries apart from barrenness, the following are other reasons for adoption:

Reasons for Adoption

Inability of the Biological Parents to Cater for their Children

There are times when parents for one reason or the other, for example, poverty may feel highly inadequate to cater for their children and so seek adoption for them within families that would be able to cater for them.

Single Parenthood

In some countries, where single motherhood may be considered scandalous and unacceptable, some women in this situation make an adoption plan for their infants. In some cases, they abandon their children at or near an orphanage, so that they can be adopted.

Gender Preference

In some cases and some cultures, a parent or parents prefer one gender over another and place any baby who is not the preferred gender for adoption.

Involuntary Loss of Parental Rights

Some biological parents involuntarily lose their parental rights. This usually occurs when the children are placed in foster care because they were abused, neglected or abandoned. Eventually, if the parents cannot resolve the problems that caused or contributed to the harm caused to their children (such as alcohol or drug abuse), a court may terminate their parental rights and the children may then be adopted. There are times also that parent loose their parental rights due to illness like poor mental health that can be considered dangerous to the upbringing of the child.

Death of Parents

Though not usually the case in Africa because of the extended family system, some children are adopted because of the death of their biological parents.

Types of Adoption

There are two types of adoption based on the assumption that the biological parents are still alive. These are open and closed adoption. Closed also known as confidential adoption is that type of adoption where further contact between the biological parents and the foster parents are foreclosed or prevented. Open adoption accepts varying

degrees of future contact between the parties, though such openness can be closed at any time.

Problems of Adoption

Though it is a good concept and serves as a safeguard to the future of the society through the protection of the young ones that may not have or suffer rough upbringing, adoption results in the severing of the parental responsibilities and rights of the biological parents and the placing of those responsibilities and rights onto the adoptive parents.

The severance of the parental responsibility from the biological parents usually leads to a kind of apathy from the foster parents. Though, after the finalization of adoption process, there ought to be no legal difference between biological and adopted children, it is usually psychologically traumatic to maintain equal love between adoptive and biological children.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.3

What are the factors that can lead to adoption?

3.4   DIVORCE

Though one of the most devastating and traumatic events of life is love turned sour, the reality of divorce has become more graphic than ever. Describing the dangerous trend of divorce in the West, John Stott quoting the Office of Population Censuses and Survey says that:

> In 1980 in Britain there were 409,000 marriages (35% of which were remarriages) and 159,000 divorces. The previous years it was calculated that a marriage took place every 85 seconds and a divorce every 180. The total number of divorced people is now over 2 million, and there is an alarming number of one-parent families. The British divorce rate, which has increased by 60% during the last twenty-five years, is now one of the highest in the Western world. In the UK one in every three marriages breaks up; in the USA it is more than one in every two.

Though this figure seems to picture the state of things in the UK and the USA, the African situation may not be any different but the absence of reliable statistics may not give us an accurate picture. Apart from this, many who wish to avoid the social stigma that divorce carries with it are contended to live as separated people or continue to live together in the pain of a broken home.

Causes of Divorce

Causes for divorce can be said to be under two broad categories: sociological and religious (spiritual). Sociological causes of divorce include the following: Extra-marital affairs, Family strains, Emotional/physical abuse, Mid-life crisis, Addictions, such as alcoholism and gambling as well as Workaholism. Religiously, the rise in divorce rate has to do with more disenchantment with the things of God and man's carefree attitude to the demands of his faith.

Divorce in Religion

The fact is that most religions actually forbid divorce. Let us have a brief overview of some religions:

Islam

In Islam, divorce is allowed, although discouraged. A commonly mentioned Islamic ruling is that divorce is the least liked of all permissible acts. Islam considers marriage to be a legal contract; and the act of obtaining a divorce is essentially the act of legally dissolving the contract. According to Shariah (Islamic Law), there is a required waiting period before a divorce is considered valid. After three divorces, the man and the women are not allowed to remarry, unless under specific circumstances. It is important to note that in Islam a woman may never sue for divorce on any ground except by the permission of her husband to do so.

Judaism

Judaism recognized the concept of "no-fault" divorce thousands of years ago. Judaism has always accepted divorce as a fact of life as reflected in the Mosaic injunctions of Deuteronomy chapters 22 and 24, albeit an unfortunate one. Judaism generally maintains that it is better for a couple to divorce than to remain together in a state of constant bitterness and strife.

Christianity

Within Christianity, divorce has become almost commonplace, and the interpretation of the Holy Scripture on divorce widely varies among Christian denominations. However, the first 400 years of the Early Church, the church maintained a unanimous voice opposing divorce.

Bible commentary on divorce comes primarily from the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Paul. Although Jesus touched on the subject of divorce in three of the Gospels, Paul gives a rather extensive treatment of the subject in his First Epistle to the Corinthians chapter 7: "Now, for those who are married I have a command that comes not from me, but from the Lord. A wife must not leave her husband. But if she does leave him, let her remain single or else go back to him. And the husband must not leave his wife." (1 Corinthians 7:10-11), but he also includes the Pauline privilege. He again alludes to his position on divorce in his Epistle to the Romans, albeit an allegory, when he states "Let me illustrate. When a woman marries, the law binds her to her husband as long as he is alive. But if he dies, the laws of marriage no longer apply to her. So while her husband is alive, she would be committing adultery if she married another man. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law and does not commit adultery when she remarries." (Romans 7:2-3).

Recent research, however, interprets the words of Jesus and Paul through the eyes of first century readers who knew about the 'Any Cause' divorce, which Jesus was asked about ("Is it lawful to divorce for 'Any Cause'" (Matthew 19:3). This suggests that Christians in the generations following Jesus forgot about the 'Any Cause' divorce and misunderstood Jesus.

 The 'Any Cause' divorce was invented by some Pharisees who divided up the phrase "a cause of indecency" (Deuteronomy 24.1) into two grounds for divorce: "indecency" (*porneia* which is usually interpreted as 'Adultery') and "a cause" (that is 'Any Cause'). Jesus said the phrase could not be split up and that it meant "nothing except *porneia*". Although almost everyone was using this new type of divorce, Jesus told them that it was invalid, so remarriage was adulterous because they were still married. The Old Testament allowed divorce for the breaking of marriage vows, including neglect and abuse, based on Exod.21.10f. Jesus was not asked about these Biblical grounds for divorce, though Paul alluded to them in 1 Corinthians 7 as the basis of marriage obligations.

This new research emphasizes that Jesus and Paul never repealed these Biblical grounds based on marriage vows. They were exemplified by Christ and they became the basis of Christian marriage vows (love, honor, and keep).

Dharmic religions do not have a concept of divorce. However, the Hindu Marriage Act, 1955 applicable to Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs and Jains in India do have provisions for divorce under some circumstances.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.4

Discuss the influence of religion on divorce

3.5   RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE ON MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

On the whole, the religion of a man does not only affect his concept of the family (that is whether his family will be polygamous or monogamous), but also affects his relationship with the other members of the family, that is the wife or husband and the children. In fact, most religions have duties prescribed for all the parties involved in the family. For example, Islam, Christianity, Judaism and other Oriental religions have duties prescribed for the husband, the wife and the children.

4.0   CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have studied how religion affects the family from the period the people involved begins the search for a mate. You have been exposed to the religious guidelines for the selection of a spouse, what the courtship period ought to be and how religions ensure that the would-be-couples remain chaste during the period of courtship. The case of adoption in case of barrenness was also discussed as well as divorce which is examined from various angles and the position of religions on divorce.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following are the major points that have been studied in this unit:

- Types of marriage include child/infant marriage, levirate marriage, sororate marriage, monogamy and polygamy.

- The three criteria for mate selection that can be identified are: faith, prayer for guidance and personality/character of the spouse.

- Sociological causes of divorce include the following: extra-marital affairs, family strains, emotional/physical abuse, mid-life crisis, addictions such as alcoholism, gambling and workaholism.

- Religious causes of divorce have to do with man's disenchantment with the things of God and carefree attitude to the demands of his faith.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. What are the religious views of divorce?

2. Discuss the legal and the psychological implications of adoption.

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER STUDIES

Schaefer R. T. (2001) *Sociology*, seventh edition. New York: McGraw Hill Companies.

Schaefer R. T & Lamm R. P. (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York: McGraw – Hill Companies.

Swatos Williams H. (1993) *Gender and Religion*, Brunkswick: N. J. Transaction.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The study of Society*, New York: CBS College Publishing

Peter Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double Day Publishers.

Emile Durkheim (1948) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.

Bryan Wilson (1969) *Religion in Secular-Society*, Baltimore: Penguin Books.

James W and Vander Z (1990). *The Social Experience: An introduction to Sociology*, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Zellner W. W. & Marc P. (1999) *Some Cults and Spiritual Communities: A Sociological Analysis*, Westport: C. T. Praeger.

Brown, A. (1995) *Organizational Culture*. London: Pitman.

T. O. Odetola and A. Ademola, (1985) *Sociology: An Introductory African Text*. London: Macmillan.

Stephen Jay Gould. (1999) *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the fullness of life*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Electronic Sources:

Microsoft Encarta Premium, DVD 2006.

UNIT 4   RELIGION AND HEALTH

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Main Content
      3.1   Religion and Medicine

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you studied marriage and family. The issues of mate selection, courtship, adoption of children as well as the issue of divorce were examined. Finally, it was stated that religion affects a people's concept of the family and consequently their relationship to the family. In this unit, you will also be studying another interesting concept: religion and health. Areas of concentration in this study will be the relationship between medicine and religion and the last section will be dealing with the relationship between religion and HIV/AIDS.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Define medicine;

- Discuss the history of medicine; and

- Evaluate the initial close relationship between medicine and religion.

3.0   MAIN CONTENT

3.1   Religion and Medicine

Across the ages there had been a very great relationship between religion and medicine as would be made glaring in the history of medicine. This might be because the early people see health as belonging intrinsically to the realm of the divine. P. J. Julius says that "In the beginning, religion and healing were inseparable. In some societies, the priest and physician was one and the same person, administering spiritual and physical healing with divine sanction". This association between religion and medicine dates back to the pre-biblical times. For example, in the African society the diviner who is the representative of the gods is also the one that is consulted with the healing of the sick.

Herbalism

The actual history of healing starts from the use of herbs. There is no actual record of when the use of plants for medicinal purposes first started, although the first generally accepted use of plants as healing agents were depicted in the cave paintings discovered in the Lascaux caves in France, which have been dated through the Radiocarbon method to between 13,000 - 25,000 BCE. Over time and with trial and error, a small base of knowledge was acquired within early tribal communities. As this knowledge base expanded over the generations, tribal culture developed into specialized areas. These 'specialized jobs' became what are now known as healers or shamans.

Egyptian medicine

Medical information was contained in the Edwin Smith Papyrus dated as early as 3000 BC. The earliest known surgery was performed in Egypt around 2750 BC). Imhotep in the 3rd dynasty is credited as the founder of ancient Egyptian medicine and as the original author of the Edwin Smith papyrus, detailing cures, ailments and anatomical observations. The Edwin Smith papyrus is regarded as a copy of several earlier works and was written circa 1600 BC. It is an ancient textbook on surgery and describes in exquisite detail the *examination, diagnosis, treatment,* and *prognosis* of numerous ailments. Additionally, the Ebers papyrus of around 1550 BC) is full of incantations and foul applications meant to turn away disease-causing demons and other superstition, in it there is evidence of a *long tradition of empirical practice and observation.* The Ebers papyrus also provides our earliest documentation of a prehistoric awareness of tumors.

Medical institutions are known to have been established in ancient Egypt since as early as the 1st Dynasty. The earliest known physician is also credited to ancient Egypt: Hesyre, "Chief of Dentists and Physicians" for King Djoser in the 27th century BC [4]. Also, the earliest known woman physician, Peseshet, practiced in Ancient Egypt at the time of the 4th dynasty. Her title was "Lady Overseer of the Lady Physicians." In addition to her supervisory role, Peseshet graduated midwives at an ancient Egyptian medical school in Sais.

Indian medicine

Ayurveda (the science of living), the Vedic system of medicine originating over 3000 years ago, views health as harmony between body, mind and spirit. Its two most famous texts belong to the schools of Charaka and Sushruta. According to Charaka, health and disease are not predetermined and life may be prolonged by human effort. Sushruta

defines the purpose of medicine to cure the diseases of the sick, protect the healthy, and to prolong life.

Āyurveda speaks of eight branches: kāyāchikitsā (internal medicine), shalyachikitsā (surgery including anatomy), shālākyachikitsā (eye, ear, nose, and throat diseases), kaumārabhritya (pediatrics), bhūtavidyā (psychiatry, or demonology), and agada tantra (toxicology), rasāyana (science of rejuvenation), and vājīkarana (the science of fertility).

Chinese medicine

China also developed a large body of traditional medicine. Much of the philosophy of traditional Chinese medicine derived from empirical observations of disease and illness by Taoist physicians and reflects the classical Chinese belief that individual human experiences express causative principles effective in the environment at all scales. These causative principles, whether material, essential, or mystical, correlate as the expression of the natural order of the universe.

During the golden age of his reign from 2696 to 2598 B.C, as a result of a dialogue with his minister Ch'i Pai, the Yellow Emperor is supposed by Chinese tradition to have composed his *Neijing, Suwen* or *Basic Questions of Internal Medicine*.

Hebrew medicine

Most of our knowledge of ancient Hebrew medicine during the 1st millennium BC comes from the Old Testament of the Bible which contain various health related laws and rituals, such as isolating infected people (Leviticus 13:45-46), washing after handling a dead body (Numbers 19:11-19) and burying excrement away from camp (Deuteronomy 23:12-13). Max Neuberger, writing in his "History of Medicine" says:

> The commands concern prophylaxis and suppression of epidemics, suppression of venereal disease and prostitution, care of the skin, baths , food, housing and clothing, regulation of labour , sexual life , discipline of the people , etc. Many of these commands, such as Sabbath rest, circumcision, laws concerning food (interdiction of blood and pork), measures concerning menstruating and lying-in women and those suffering from gonorrhoea, isolation of lepers, and hygiene of the camp, are, in view of the conditions of the climate, surprisingly rational.

Early European medicine

As societies developed in Europe and Asia, belief systems were replaced with a different natural system. The Greeks, from Hippocrates, developed a humoral medicine system where treatment was to restore the balance of humours within the body. *Ancient Medicine* is a treatise on medicine, written roughly 400 BC by Hippocrates. Similar views were espoused in China and in India. (See Medicine in Ancient Greece for more details.) In Greece, through Galen until the Renaissance the main thrust of medicine was the maintenance of health by control of diet and hygiene. Anatomical knowledge was limited and there were few surgical or other cures, doctors relied on a good relation with patients and dealt with minor ailments and soothing chronic conditions and could do little when epidemic diseases, growing out of urbanization and the domestication of animals, then raged across the world.

Medieval medicine was an evolving mixture of the scientific and the spiritual. In the early Middle Ages, following the fall of the Roman Empire, standard medical knowledge was based chiefly upon surviving Greek and Roman texts, preserved in monasteries and elsewhere. Ideas about the origin and cure of disease were not, however, purely secular, but were also based on a spiritual world view, in which factors such as destiny, sin, and astral influences played as great a part as any physical cause.

In this era, there was no clear tradition of scientific medicine, and accurate observations went hand-in-hand with spiritual beliefs as part of the practice of medicine.

Islamic medicine

The Islamic World rose to primacy in medical science with such thinkers as Ibn Sina, Ibn Nafis, and Rhazes. The first generation of Persian physicians was trained at the Academy of Gundishapur, where the teaching hospital was first invented. Rhazes, for example, became the first physician to systematically use alcohol in his practice as a physician.

The *Comprehensive Book of Medicine* was written by the Iranian chemist Rhazes. It was the most sought after of all his compositions. In it, Rhazes recorded clinical cases of his own experience and provided very useful recordings of various diseases. The "*Kitab fi al-jadari wa-al-hasbah*" by Rhazes, with its introduction on measles and smallpox was also very influential in Europe.

The Mutazilite philosopher and doctor Ibn Sina was another influential figure. His *The Canon of Medicine*, sometimes considered the most famous book in the history of medicine, remained a standard text in Europe up until its Age of Enlightenment and the renewal of the Islamic tradition of scientific medicine.

Maimonides, although a Jew himself, made various contributions to Arabic medicine in the 12th century. Ibn Nafis described human blood circulation. This discovery would be rediscovered, or perhaps merely demonstrated, by William Harvey in 1628, who generally receives the credit in Western history. There was a persistent pattern of Europeans repeating Arabian research in medicine and astronomy, and some say physics, and claiming credit for it.

European Renaissance and Enlightenment medicine

This idea of personalized medicine was challenged in Europe by the rise of experimental investigation, principally in dissection, examining bodies in a manner alien to other cultures. The work of individuals like Andreas Vesalius and William Harvey challenged accepted folklore with scientific evidence. Understanding and diagnosis improved but with little direct benefit to health. Few effective drugs existed, beyond opium and quinine, folklore cures and almost or actually poisonous metal-based compounds were popular, if useless, treatments.

Modern medicine

Medicine was revolutionized in the 18th century and beyond by advances in chemistry and laboratory techniques and equipment, old ideas of infectious disease epidemiology were replaced with bacteriology.

Ignaz Semmelweis (1818-1865) in 1847 dramatically reduced the death rate of new mothers from childbed fever by the simple experiment of requiring physicians to wash their hands before attending to women in childbirth. His discovery predated the germ theory of disease. However, his discoveries were not appreciated by his contemporaries and came into use only with discoveries of British surgeon Joseph Lister, who in 1865 proved the principles of antisepsis; However, medical conservatism on new breakthroughs in pre-existing science was most of the times taken with a dubious acknowledgement during the 19th century.

After Charles Darwin's 1859 publication of *The Origin of Species*, Gregor Mendel published in 1865 his books on pea plants, which would be later known as Mendel's laws. Re-discovered at the turn of the

century, they would form the basis of classical genetics. The 1953 discovery of the structure of DNA by Watson and Crick would open the door to molecular biology and modern genetics. During the late 19th century and the first part of the 20th century, several physicians, such as Nobel Alexis Carrel, supported eugenics, a theory first formulated in 1865 by Francis Galton. Eugenics were discredited after the Nazis' experiments; however, compulsory sterilization programs have been used in modern countries (including the US, Sweden or Peru) until much later.

Semmelweis work was based on the discoveries made by Louis Pasteur, who produced in 1880 the vaccine against rabies. Linking microorganisms with disease, Pasteur brought a revolution in medicine. He also invented with Claude Bernard the process of pasteurization still in use today. His experiments confirmed the germ theory. Claude Bernard aimed at establishing scientific method in medicine; he published *An Introduction to the Study of Experimental Medicine* in 1865. Beside this, Pasteur, along with Robert Koch (who was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1905), founded bacteriology. Koch was also famous for the discovery of the tubercle bacillus (1882) and the cholera bacillus (1883) and for his development of Koch's postulates.

The role of women, was increasingly founded by the likes of Elizabeth Blackwell, Elizabeth Garrett, and Florence Nightingale. They showed a previously male dominated profession the elemental role of nursing in order to lessen the aggravation of patient mortality, resulting from lack of hygiene and nutrition. Nightingale set up the St Thomas hospital, post-Crimea, in 1852.

For the first time actual cures were developed for certain endemic infectious diseases. However the decline in the most lethal diseases was more due to improvements in public health and nutrition than to medicine. It was not until the 20th century that there was a true breakthrough in medicine, with great advances in pharmacology and surgery.

During the First World War, Alexis Carrel and Henry Dakin developed the Carrel-Dakin method of treating wounds with sutures, which prior to the development of widespread antibiotics, was a major medical progress. The antibiotic prevented the deaths of thousands during the conquest of Vichy France in 1944. The great war spurred the usage of Rontgen's X-ray, and the electrocardiograph, for the monitoring of internal bodily problems, However, this was overshadowed by the remarkable mass production of penicillium antibiotic; Which was a result of government and public pressure.

Lunatic asylums began to appear in the Industrial Era. Emil Kraepelin (1856-1926) introduced new medical categories of mental illness, which eventually came into psychiatric usage despite their basis in behavior rather than pathology or etiology. In the 1920s surrealist opposition to psychiatry was expressed in a number of surrealist publications. In the 1930s several controversial medical practices were introduced including inducing seizures (by electroshock, insulin or other drugs) or cutting parts of the brain apart (leucotomy or lobotomy).

The 20th century witnessed a shift from a master-apprentice paradigm of teaching of clinical medicine to a more "democratic" system of medical schools. With the advent of the evidence-based medicine and great advances of information technology the process of change is likely to evolve further, the collation of ideas resulted in international global projects, such as the Human genome project.

Evidence-based medicine, the application of modern scientific method to ask and answer clinical questions, has had a great impact on practice of medicine throughout the world of modern medicine, for speculation of the unknown was elemental to progress. Modern, *western* medicine has proven uniquely effective and widespread compared with all other medical forms, but has fallen far short of what once seemed a realistic goal of conquering all disease and bringing health to even the poorest of nations. It is notably secular and material, indifferent to ideas of the supernatural or the spirit, and concentrating on the body to determine causes and cures - an emphasis that has provoked something of a backlash in recent years.

3.2   The Role of Religion in Medicine

Religion may help people cope with stress

Religion may act as an analgesic to reduce physical and mental pain. Religious commitment may protect against depression and suicide. Religion may promote health by adding social or psychological support (or both) to people's lives, by providing a perspective on stress that reduces its negative impact, or by encouraging people to avoid risky behaviours, such as drinking alcohol to excess.

Religion may help people cope with disabilities and rehabilitation

Religiosity and spirituality may also be beneficial in medical rehabilitation and in the lives of persons with disabilities.

Religion may help improve people's Quality of Life

Religion and spirituality can improve the quality of life by enhancing a patient's subjective well-being through social support and stress and coping strategies, promoting a salubrious personal lifestyle, by providing systems of meaning and existential coherence, by establishing personal relationships with one's deity, and by ensuring social support and integration within a community.

Current Trends in Religion and Medicine

Though there is the tendency for atheists and others without reverence for religion to want to separate religion from the medicine as it had occurred in the wake of scientific approach to healing, it is becoming more of a scientifically proved fact that religion has a great role to play in the healing of people. For example, A study by the National Institute for Healthcare Research in Maryland of more than 91,000 individuals documented a 50% reduction in coronary disease, 55% decrease in Chronic Pulmonary disease, 74% reduction in cirrhosis and 53% decrease in suicide risk among patients who attended a church or synagogue at least one or more times weekly compared with those who did not. As a result of the increasing awareness of the role of religion in healing, the following rules are being advocated:
Physician attention must be devoted to the spiritual and religious dimensions of patients' experiences of illness. Physicians must respect their patients' requests for pastoral care and religious services.

The priest and the physician are no longer one and the same person as they were in biblical times. However, the services each provides should complement and supplement each other for the benefit of the patient and the patient's total physical and mental well-being during health and illness and at the end of life. Note that in some major hospitals in the Western world, priests are becoming part of the medical team that does ward round in the morning.

It is also to be noted that today, major conferences on spirituality and healing in medicine are being held to bring "acknowledgement of patients' spirituality to the mainstream of medical education, research and clinical care, and to provide opportunities for students and physicians to learn how to assess, respect and incorporate patients' spiritual perspectives".

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.2

What is the role of religion in contemporary religion?

3.3   Religion and HIV/AIDS

The current reaction of religion and religious leaders to the HIV/AIDS pandemic is far from being realistic. Most religious leaders, especially Christians, view HIV/AIDS as God's punishment on man's sexual immorality and so treat the People Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA) as outcasts from the household of faith. This is more devastating to these people than the other stigmas that they have to pass through. As a result of this, most religions have no programme that incorporate the anti-HIV/ AIDS campaign or rehabilitation programme for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Self-Assessment Exercise 3.3

What is your church doing on HIV/AIDS problem?

4.0   CONCLUSION

This is the last unit of this module as well as of this course. In thus unit, you have studied about the history of medicine from the early period to the contemporary times. You have been made to see that from the earliest times there has been a very close relationship between religion and medicine. You would have seen that in the early period the priest of religion also doubles as the medicine man. By the time of renaissance and reformation, the separation between religion and medicine became sharp and acute. Today, however, there has arisen the clamour for a return to the close relationship between medicine and religion as it has become clearer that there are times religious dimensions to physical illnesses.

5.0   SUMMARY

The following are the major points you have learnt in this lesson:

- The history of medicine from the Egyptian times to the contemporary times.

- The fusion of religion and religion as the priest of religion doubling as the medicine man.

- The role that religion can play in healing as had been demonstrated in some modern researches.

- The current reaction of religion and religious leaders to People Living with HIV/AIDS is not wholesome.

6.0   TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENTS

1. What are the roles of religion in healing?
2. What do you think that the church can do to curtail the devastating effects of HIV/AIDS?

7.0   REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS

Schaefer R. T. (2001) *Sociology*, seventh edition. New York: McGraw Hill Companies.

Schaefer R. T & Lamm R. P. (1997) *Sociology: A Brief Introduction*, New York: McGraw – Hill Companies.

Swatos Williams H. (1993) *Gender and Religion*, Brunkswick: N. J. Transaction.

Mckee J. B. (1981) *The study of Society*, New York: CBS College Publishing

Peter Berger (1967) *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of Sociological Theory of Religion*, New York: Double Day Publishers.

Emile Durkheim (1948) *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. New York: The Free Press.

Bryan Wilson (1969) *Religion in Secular-Society*, Baltimore: Penguin Books.

James W and Vander Z (1990). *The Social Experience: An introduction to Sociology*, New York: McGraw-Hill Inc.

Zellner W. W. & Marc P. (1999) *Some Cults and Spiritual Communities: A Sociological Analysis*, Westport: C. T. Praeger.

Brown, A. (1995) *Organizational Culture*. London: Pitman.

T. O. Odetola and A. Ademola, (1985) *Sociology: An Introductory African Text*. London: Macmillan.

Stephen Jay Gould. (1999) *Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion in the fullness of life*. New York: Ballantine Books.

Preuss J.Julius Preuss (1993). *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine*, Rosner F, trans. Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson Inc.

Porter, R. (1997). *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind: A Medical History of Humanity from Antiquity to the Present*. New York: Harper Collins.

Rousseau, George S. (2003). *Framing and Imagining Disease in Cultural History,* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Walsh, James J. (2003). *The Popes and Science; the History of the Papal Relations to Science During the Middle Ages and Down to Our Own Time*. Kessinger Publishing.

Max Neuburger, (1910) *History of Medicine*, Vol. 1 London: Oxford University Press.

Electronic Sources:

Microsoft Encarta Premium, DVD 2006.