

## **FAMILY AND PEACE CULTURE IN NIGERIA**

**BY**

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### ***Abstract***

The place of the family in the promotion of peace in any society can never be underestimated. Whatever a society will be whatever it reflects has much to do with what operates in the families that makes up the entire society. Hence, apart from defining the key concepts used in this paper, attempts have been made to expose some of the peace repellers emanating from homes by looking into the Husband wife - relationship and parent-child relationship. The aftermath, of the peace repellers (anti-peace postures) exhibited in homes were also discussed. The paper disc brought out the positive roles expected to be played at the family circle for the promotion of peace culture in Nigerian society.

### ***Introduction***

Since the beginning-of history, peace has been regarded as a blessing from God while chaotic and violent situations are perpetually seen as a scourge. Individuals and societies hates problematic and anxiety prone situations. But up till today peace in all ramification is yet being clamored for world-wide. The pertinent question being raised by people is "where can at least a modicum of peace and order be found? How and where can the effective and solid foundation for peace be laid? This pertinent question was raised by Erasmus in the 16th century and a host of other philosophers like Emmanuel Kant and Jean Jacques Rousseau in the 18th century.

Uptil today, the world and of course Nigerian society are still making frantic efforts for peace to reign in every segment of the society. Our nation is presently be devilled by high occurrences of cultism, prostitution, bribery, juvenile delinquency, armed robbery, divorce, drug addiction, corruption, abortion and several other severe socio vices. The whole picture is indeed a demonstration or wickedness of the highest order.

Undoubtedly, the family which has ever been regarded as the corner stone of any society and the earliest agent of socialization that a child is exposed to is being looked up to for a lasting solution to the problems of lack of peace in the society, the family and no other group is seen as the surest means by which the Nation can be salvaged from the chaotic and turbulent situations prevailing in our society. The foundation for the much desired peace culture can be fully entrenched in the home. When this is done, our families and nation will become chaotic and conflict free. No doubt peaceful home beget peaceful society.

Before we consider the present situation of most families in relation to peace culture, due consideration will be given to some concepts that have been used in the body of this paper. Such concepts are: (i) The Family (ii) Peace (iii) Culture.

### **The Family**

Murdock (2000) defined family as a social group characterised by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. The family he expressed includes adults of both sexes at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children own or adopted of the sexually cohabiting adults.

The smallest family unit is the nuclear family while the extended family is an extension of the basic nuclear unit. For examples the addition of the third generation such as the spouses' parents, the husband or wife's brothers and sisters etc.

The family is responsible for preparing the child for his or her social roles. As a social institution, the family provides the child with all that it takes to fit in

culturally into the society. It is at the family level that the child is taught how to get along with others at home and beyond. As he/she interacts with his parents, he masters the culture. His behaviour is also tailored in the direction desired and dictated by the parents and their society. Specifically the child through his interaction with the parents and others surrounding him is able to learn how to respect elder, how to tolerate others how to live peacefully with others in his environment. He is also exposed to all the norms and values that are upheld in the society.

### **Peace Defined**

According to Long man Dictionary of contemporary English (1995). Peace refers to a feeling of calmness and lack of worry; violence and all forms peaceful eroding problems,

Peace is a situation in which there is no quarreling between people who live or work together. Peace refers to a situation where fighting, anxiety, troubles, conflicts and all forms of pain and instability agents are absent.

### **Culture Defined**

Culture according to many sociologists refers to ideals, beliefs and customs that are shared and accepted by people in a society (Oltaway, 1980). For instance our culture in Nigeria teaches us to live in harmony with others, to be our brothers' keeper to respect and preserve other people's lives. Nigerian culture is anti-robbery and frowns against incessant termination of other people's lives. Our culture places high value on moral decency, dignity of labour, patriotism, loyalty to the nation and peaceful co-existence etc.

Culture amounts to the total way of life of a group of people living together in the same environment when a person is said to be well-cultured we are saying in essence that the individual exhibits behaviours that are in harmony with the beliefs, values, norms and ethics of the society where he lives.

Shipman (1973) also said culture as the "totality of material objects, values, knowledge and techniques which persists where waves of individuals pass through". He further said that to each individuals the culture presents a set of meanings to be learnt. And once this is done they will feel "at home", able to understand and respond in an appropriate way.

### **Peace Repellers Emanating from Husband-Wife Relationship in the Family**

Marriage according to Amaga (2002) is a legal union of a man and a woman who have individually entered into a covenant relationship for the purpose of companionship and procreation. The family being formed is supposed to be a centre of hilarity and a place of great happiness and peace. Unfortunately, many see marriage a necessary evil and a world of frustration. Peace has eluded many families. Some couples live together like cat and rat. Many are living together in hostility and children are left to struggle on their own within the unfavourable environment. All these are experienced in homes as a result of the following peace repellers.

- (1) *Lack of Submission to the man's leadership:* Crisis occurs in the family when the wife resists the husband's authority. In such a situation the husband can withdraw money or even desert the home, womanize or become alcoholic. The problem can sometimes lead to divorce and its unlimited consequences.
- (2) *Absence of Love:* Marriage that is solemnized in the absence of love will not be devoid of problems. Such marriages are full of frustrations. When the family is not built on the foundation of love, peace cannot be truly witnessed. In such homes, pretences, harshness, bitterness and avoidance of each other are heavily displayed. Moreover, intimacy will also be eroded record of wrongs are kept and bitter words are exchanged. Also when love is not demonstrated especially by the husband, for instance in the area of sharing what is suppose to be for all, lack of trust and suspicion will manifest

(3) *Lack of Appreciation:* Peace *is* swept under the carpet in the family when nothing good done by either of the party is appreciated. Where criticisms and complaints about almost all steps taken by the man or woman abound there will be problems. In such homes, failures are only seen while successes and progressive efforts are never recognized. When good steps are taken for granted it demoralises and breeds depression, withdrawal and intermittent outburst of anger. Love will definitely depart while hatred prevails.

**Promoting peace culture in the family- parents-child relationship**

Children who are the future successors of the parents and the future leaders of the society are to be-intimated with everything needed to propel peace in and outside the family. Peace-promoting steps mastered by the child will aid the proper development of the child's personality and allow for the development of peaceful coexistence in the society. If children will not develop thwartedly, and become torn in the flesh of the family and society then, the follow peace-propeller must be taken care of by parents.

- (i) Parents should meet the basic needs of their children, when there is not done they will feel insecure and go to wrong hands to meet the needs.
- (ii) Divorce to be averted. This leads to emotional depression and other abnormalities for children.
- (iii) Children should be given due attention. Parent should stop running after transient things and devote more time to listening to their children.
- (iv) They should lay down good examples for the children to copy by teaching from precept to precept.
- (v) Children should be disciplined:
  - Early enough to prevent rebellion.
  - In love not out of hatred.
  - Privately especially the adolescent. When done in the presence of friends resentment will be the result.Discipline should be with the absolute support of the two parents. None of the parents should be emotionally carried away and prevent the child from being disciplined.
- (vi) Parents should watch the company being kept by their children and bad ones should be disbanded.
- (vii) Command the children when they behave well. This will equally prevent rebellion.
- (viii) Give sex education parents should speak to their children about the goodness of virginity, morality, waiting until

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