

Understanding Inter-Religious Dialogical Communication for Peaceful Coexistence among Kaduna Residents

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Abstract

This study samples the understanding of inter-religious dialogical communication among Christians and Muslims aimed at arriving at sustained reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. This is measured by identification and presentation of selected dialogical discourses in inter-religious traditions in comparisons with discourses of renowned philosophers like Barrett (1962), Passmore (1963) and Commins & Lenscott (1954). The study focuses on the following: 1) Philosophical discourses on the human, the human mind and the human spirit. 2). philosophical discourses on man and the universe, and 3). Philosophical discourses on man and the state. Passmore's treatise (1963) provides the scope for testing understanding of inter-religious dialogical communication for achieving peaceful coexistence, using range of topics from philosophical monotheism to materialism, naturalism and agnosticism, pragmatism, logic, objectivity, realism, metaphysics, positivism, semantics as well as existentialism and phenomenology. The study selects topics and themes from Barrett's (1962) discourse on Hebrew, Greek and Christian philosophies. Islam, not represented in the scholars' works cited, is accordingly the synthesizer because of its claims to being a universal religion. The Conclusion therefore is based on Islam's acknowledgement of the veracity of both Jesus representing Christianity and all Hebrew Prophets representing Judaism as Prophets of God sent to their people at their times.

1. Introduction

This presentation urges the usage of the Freirean perspective (1994) that advocates for dialogical communication and action based on group dialogue rather than the mass media. This does not mean however that the importance of the mass media is disregarded or the role it plays is discounted in mobilization, awareness, knowledge-sharing, unity and development. This presentation specifically pins motivations on using

dialogical communication in integrating plural religious traditions with philosophical monotheism for peaceful coexistence. This is in line with Servaes' (1995) warning that, if the purpose of dialogical communication is superficial, knowledge and perspective gained may consequently empower exploitative and authoritarian interests instead of integrating inter-religious dialogical communication with philosophical monotheism. This study accordingly unveils possibilities of the application of Freire's concept to the local, community and grass root settings in Kaduna State and Nigeria as a whole.

The first thing here therefore, will be the definitions of dialogical or participatory communication. According to Servaes' explanation, dialogical communication leads to dialogue, dialogue to awareness, awareness to knowledge, knowledge to action and action to peaceful coexistence and development. Dialogical communication is relevant to integrating pluralities with philosophical monotheism for peaceful coexistence in a sense related to processes of education, conscientisation, participatory action and empowerment. Freire's (1994) dialogical communication model is not based on an agenda defined by an academic elite or programs defined by bureaucratic elites for the benefits of an economic or political elite, but is rather defined by an agenda that involves people gaining an understanding of their situation, and having confidence and the ability to change that situation.

According to Servaes (1995) therefore, dialogical communication is egalitarian, which aims towards awareness of reality and self-awareness. This is what makes it an educational process in which a contending population, hitherto religiously and tribally divided can learn from each other through the process of dialogical communication which involves the following three interrelated parts: (1) collective definition and investigation of a problem by a group of people struggling to deal with it; (2) group analysis of the underlying causes of their problems, which is similar to conscientisation; (3) group action to attempt to solve the problem.

2. Conceptual Framework

This study identifies the plural religious traditions to work with. It also looks at the discourses in the plural religious traditions to work with; and the sources from the plural religious traditions being integrated with major philosophical contexts to be identified and synthesized into

philosophical monotheism. Philosophical monotheism would then be understood to be a commonly acceptable philosophical construct that has universal appeal, understandability, acceptance and applicability, being the convergence point where the plural religious traditions and multifarious philosophical forms become philosophical monotheism.

Integration (/Integrating) is used here to refer to putting together, the mixing, the amalgamation, joining together, incorporation and assimilation of many, not one, religious traditions, into a thinking process which offers holistic approach to reasoning, thesis formulation, verifiability and validation by recourse to a monolithic paradigm called philosophical monotheism. Integrating in this sense requires narrowing all plural religious traditions on record worldwide to only the plural religious traditions that are identified to be the major focus of attraction for substantial number of people in the world, not the plural religious traditions on the fringes of civilization. This requires reducing the number of considered plural religious traditions to the ones representative of the world's major races as follows: the Black Africans, with a majority of followers in Islam and Christianity; the Caucasian race, with followers in Islam and Christianity; the Arabs, with followers in Islam and Christianity; the Asians with followers in Islam, Christianity, Buddhism and its variants, and also Hinduism mostly. There are also the Jews, with the majority of followers in Judaism.

Defining the terms this study addresses, makes the work understandable in relations to the major research questions it takes its roots from. As such, Islam is to be understood from its theological, ideological, religious and scholarly definitions. This understanding should not be simply from the perception of others as a result of either the actions of a few of its proclaimers be they international Jihadists or sufi or any of the other fringe groups, or others who might have had a different view of Islam, including of course the Islamophobes and others opposed to it

This study is in conformity with the aims of peaceful coexistence, by making sense of religious plurality without either denying substantial differences between religions or falling into the superficial solution that all religions are equally valuable. Dialogical communication, therefore, is how the study plans to demonstrate that the plurality of religious traditions can be integrated with a philosophical monotheism for peaceful coexistence.

3. Statement of the Problem

The Problem of this study is the difficulty and sometimes impossibility of dialogical communication in times of inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts in a pluralistic society like Kaduna and Nigeria at large. How to use dialogical communication in integrating plural religious traditions with philosophical monotheism for peaceful coexistence is another problem. It could be a problem based on the warning by Servaes (1995) that, if the purpose of dialogical communication is superficial, knowledge and perspective gained may consequently empower exploitative and authoritarian interests instead of creating understanding and peace. Another problem is that Freira's (1994) dialogical communication model is not based on an agenda defined by an academic elite or programs defined by a bureaucratic elite for the benefit of an economic or political elite, but is rather defined by an agenda that involves people gaining an understanding of their situation, and having confidence and the ability to change that situation. Creating the understanding that leads to this confidence is another problem. The main problem of this study however relates to achieving the aims of peaceful coexistence, by making sense of religious plurality without either denying substantial differences between religions or falling into the superficial solution that all religions are equally valuable.

Research Question

1. Can philosophical monotheism be used in promoting understanding of inter-religious dialogical communication for peaceful coexistence among Kaduna residents?

Objective

1. To find if philosophical monotheism can be used in promoting understanding of inter-religious dialogical communication for peaceful coexistence among Kaduna residents.
2. Make sense of religious plurality without denying their inherent differences or conceding that all religions are equally valuable.

4. Theoretical Framework

The study is based on the Eclectic Theoretical Orientation (Santrock, 2005, p.53). An Eclectic Theoretical Orientation, according to Santrock (2005,

p.53), does not follow any one theoretical approach but instead selects and uses from each theory whatever is considered best in it. The eclectic theoretical orientation is useful to this study because instead of focusing on only one theoretical perspective, the study also selects from, and uses Phenomenology to contextualize philosophical monotheism; and from grounded theory, by exploring the structure of human religious experiences based on philosophical and plural religious approaches (Crestwell, 1998). The process of arriving at philosophical monotheism is to be based on provisions of grounded theory. Grounded theory is all about generating or discovering a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a phenomenon that relates to a particular situation in which individuals interact, take action or engage in a process in response to a phenomenon. (Doki, 2008)

5. Methodology

This study uses content analyses and survey to focus on identified contents of given religious and philosophical texts that are to be used for integrating plural religious traditions with philosophical monotheism. Content analysis according to Sobowole (1983), focuses on manifest content of given communication messages. These, in the case of this study, are different topics and themes from selected plural religious traditions and philosophical works.

6. Design of the Study

Design of this study includes population, area of the study, instruments, quantification technique, unit of observation, unit of analysis and the sample as explained below:

- **Population of the study** refers to the plural religious traditions and philosophical works chosen and the number of Kaduna residents surveyed.
- **Areas of the study** include 39 residential areas in Kaduna North and Kaduna South as shown in the table below.
- **The instruments** are the selected plural religious traditions and treatise on philosophical works chosen.
- **Quantification technique** is Sobowole's 5-point scale of Attention, Favourability, Neutrality, unfavourability and Intensity.
- **Unit of Analysis** is the number of topics from plural religious

traditions and philosophical works selected.

- **Unit of Observations** are the themes, issues and discourses from both the plural religious traditions and philosophical works selected.
- **Sample** refers to the given contents of the plural religious traditions and treatise of the philosophical works selected based on racial, regional, continental, ethnic and religious affiliations and convictions of the adherents.
- **Validity and Reliability** are based on Structural Corroboration, Consensual Validation and Referential Adequacy.

7. Areas of the Study in Kaduna and Number of People sampled. Total number of people sampled and the total number of valid samples used for data analysis.

| | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Sabon Gari : 2 | 11. TuduWada: 2 | 21. Express: 2 | 31 Sabo by Express: 2 |
| 2. New Kawo: 2 | 12. Makera: 2 | 22. Barnawa,; 2 | 32 Sabo Television : 2 |
| 3. Barnawa: 2 | 13. Kakuri: 2 | 23. Narayi Junct: 2 | 33 Barnawa G.R.A: 2 |
| 4. Rigasa: 2 | 14. Asikolaye: 2 | 24. Sabon Tasha 2 | 34 Ungwar Rimi GRA: 2 |
| 5. Sabon Tasha: 2 | 15. U.T.C: 2 | 25. Tudun Wada 2 | 35 Narayi High Cost: 2 |
| 6. Television: 2 | 16. Rigachikun: 2 | 26. Narayi Main: 2 | 36 Kamaro Byepass: 2 |
| 7. Unguwar Sanusi: 2 | 17. Badarawa: 2 | 27. Kabala West:2 | 37 NNPC Junction: 2 |
| 8. Malali: 2 | 18. Marafa: 2 | 28. Katuru Road:2 | 38 Unguwar Romi: 2 |
| 9. N.D.A Quarters: 2 | 19. Ungwa Rimi2 | 29. Barnawa: 2 | 39 Unguwar Muazu: 2 |
| 10. Marafa Estate 2 | 20. Ungwa Dosa 2 | 30. Hayin Banki:2 | 40. Magajin Gari: 2 |
| TOTAL NUMBER OF PEOPLE SAMPLED= 80 & TOTAL NUMBER OF VALID SAMPLES = 60 | | | |

Validity and Reliability.

This study uses the following from Lincoln/Guba and Eisner as cited in Crestwell (1998, p.198) to test the validity and reliability of the findings on understanding inter-religious dialogical communication for peaceful coexistence among residents in Kaduna:

1. Structural Corroboration
2. Consensual Validation

3. Referential Adequacy

In structural corroboration, the researcher relates multiple data to support or contradict the interpretations. Consensual validation seeks the opinion of others (e.g. Arrowhead for discussants) to confirm the accuracy of the descriptions, interpretations and evaluations, while referential adequacy suggests the importance of criticism.

8. Data Presentation, Analyses and Interpretation

Data in tables below represent summary of the understanding of inter-religious dialogical communication for peaceful coexistence among residents in Kaduna

Table 1: showing topics on philosophical monotheism used for understanding inter-religious dialogical communication for peaceful coexistence among Kaduna residents

| Philosophical monotheism topics identified | Frequencies of Understanding of Philosophical monotheism topics and the topics applicability rating among respondents | Percentages of the Ratings of the Understandings of Philosophical monotheism topics among the Respondents |
|---|--|--|
| Conscience | 3 | 5.00 |
| Humanism | 7 | 12.28 |
| Humaneness | 2 | 3.51 |
| Spirituality | 3 | 5.00 |
| Universalism | 2 | 3.33 |
| Nationalism | 3 | 5.26 |
| Patriotism | 2 | 3.51 |
| Brotherliness | 1 | 1.75 |
| Empathy | 4 | 7.02 |
| Materialism | 2 | 3.51 |
| Naturalism | 2 | 3.51 |
| Agnosticism | 1 | 1.75 |
| Atheism | 2 | 3.51 |
| Positivism | 2 | 3.51 |
| Pragmatism | 1 | 1.75 |
| Logic | 1 | 1.75 |
| Reasoning | 1 | 1.75 |
| Rationalism | 1 | 1.75 |
| Existentialism | 2 | 3.51 |
| Metaphysics | 1 | 1.75 |
| Traditionalism | 2 | 3.51 |
| Not indicated | 15 | 26.32 |
| Total | 60 | 100 |

Analysis and Interpretation

The number of responses in the table above indicate meaning, understanding, and applicability and status ratings of the relevance of philosophical monotheism in the understanding of inter-religious dialogical communication for peaceful coexistence among the respondents. This confirms that interreligious dialogical communication ascribes relevance to philosophical monotheism in stimulating agreement for consensus on framework for peaceful coexistence among multi-religious people. Higher number of responses on “Not indicated” reveals limitation of understanding of relevance of philosophical monotheism among the respondents, but also indicates areas to focus on in promoting inter-religious dialogical communication, this, by implication, is also a limitation of the study.

Table 2, showing 5-point Likert Scaling of Responses of Respondents on How the Relevance of Philosophical Monotheism Topics and their Contextualized Potentials are Reflected in Understanding Interreligious Dialogical Communication among Kaduna Residents

| Content Analysis On Contextualized Potentials, Meaning, Status and Understanding Ratings | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Attention on Contextualized Field | Favourable | Unfavourable | Neutral | Intensity |
| Conscience | 3 | 3 | 1 | 7 |
| Materialism | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Logic | 0 | 0 | 9 | - |
| Agnosticism | 0 | 20 | 0 | - |
| Patriotism | 10 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Nationalism | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Empathy | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Naturalism | 4 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Atheism | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Positivism | 4 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Pragmatism | 2 | 0 | 2 | - |
| Reasoning | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Rationalism | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Metaphysics | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |

| Content Analysis On Contextualized Potentials, Meaning, Status and Understanding Ratings | | | | |
|---|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Attention on Contextualized Field | Favourable | Unfavourable | Neutral | Intensity |
| Traditionalism | 1 | 1 | 0 | 2 |
| Humanism | 6 | 0 | 0 | 6 |
| Spirituality | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Universalism | 1 | 0 | 3 | 4 |
| Secularism | 4 | 4 | | - |
| Brotherliness | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Universalism | 2 | 1 | - | - |
| Existentialism | 0 | 4 | 0 | - |
| Total Number of Topics = 22 | Total = 59 | Total = 38 | Total = 23 | Total = 60 |

Analysis and Interpretation

The table above shows the general positive understanding of the role of Philosophical monotheism in understanding interreligious dialogical communication for peaceful coexistence because out of the 22 topics generated from understandings, 59 out of 60 valid responses are favourable, with an intensity rate of 60. The rating of 38 unfavourable responses indicates however, that there is need for understanding interreligious dialogical communication in promoting peaceful coexistence among residents of Kaduna. "Intensity" is measured by the total number of 'Attention Topics' respondents identified as the most of intense endorsement of the need for understanding interreligious dialogical communication in promoting peaceful coexistence among residents of Kaduna. This is structurally corroborated with the favourable responses of 59.

9. Conclusion

The research question raised to guide this study has been answered to the effect that, yes, understanding of inter-religious dialogical communication for promoting peaceful coexistence among residents of Kaduna can be enhanced by stimulating consensus among inter-religious/inter-ethnic groups using philosophical monotheism. Data in the table above and in the interpretation and analyses show that philosophical monotheism can be appreciated as basis of consensus from which the two major religions, Christianity and Islam, can find a common

ground of understanding and communicating acceptance, tolerance, brotherhood and unity among their followers to assist in promoting peaceful coexistence through dialogical communication.

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