

# **Culture and Religion: the Language of Responsible Citizen Raising**

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## **Abstract**

Every nation on this planet earth is unarguably built by the people living in it. Nation building obviously starts with the early socialization of a child. It is during this period of socialization that a child is moulded by its parents and community through the traditional language of the community. Thus, the child gradually acquires their customary ways of becoming a responsible citizen. This paper argues that culture and religion are the main building blocks through which a child is nurtured to become a responsible member of its community: culture, because it is where child-socialization begins in every nation; and religion, because it is the theme that inculcates good moral behaviour in a growing child. Where a nation builder lacks the substance of religion or culture the language of building ends up in fiasco. Hence, we consider religion and culture as the essential language of relevant education for raising a child in Africa and indeed in any part of the globe. This work claims 'eko' or education as the key moulding block for the growth of any child that will help to build a responsible nation. The Nigerian nation is taken as an example, a nation built from scratch through indigenous education which continues through the efforts of Arabic and Western education. These three cultures and the faiths that principally have shaped them, namely African traditional religion, Islam and Christianity, assert their continuous influence on the children who rise to build a virile nation under God.

## **Introduction**

Every nation in this planet earth builds itself through the coalition of religion and culture. While culture is basically where the enculturation of a child begins and takes its formal structure, religion denotes a

primary building block in the formation of the human person. Educational language helps to build the human person who in turn builds the nation. It is within the purview of this essay to articulate how African traditional education, Islamic traditional education and Christian traditional education, each in its own way, contribute to the building of the Nigerian nation. It also discusses how African children depend on the lineage tradition to mould a viable human character that facilitates the building of a virile nation. Finally, the work concludes by confirming the obvious invaluable contributions of African traditional culture and faith, Islamic culture and faith and Christian culture and faith in building a functional nation.

## **2. Conceptual clarifications**

### **2.1 Culture**

When we speak of culture in this context we mean the cultivation of the individual mind. This includes the cultivation and acquirement of the common social way of life, a way of life with a tradition behind it, which has embodied itself in institutions which involve moral standards and principles and which guide people's up-building and growth in the society. Dawson (1960) thinks that every historic society beginning from the so-called "lowest tribe to savages," in the evolutionary sense of Tylor (1871: 13) "to the most complex forms of civilized life," has emerged through this pattern of cultural development.

Perhaps that is why culture is defined as the system of shared beliefs, values, customs, behaviors and artifacts that the members of society use to cope with their world and with one another, and that are transmitted from generation to generation through learning (Orr, 2009). Hence culture can further be conceived as that complex way of living-in-the-world which is human production, but as a response to various challenges faced in interacting with the environment. It is a result of searching for and being awake to the depth of meaning undergirding existence and belonging to a group. It makes every member feel at home, but sometimes creates impediments for some members of the community. It nonetheless becomes for the group and individuals a key for dealing with living-in-the-world because, as an embodiment of the past, it transforms living into a knack of dealing with the known and mystifying principles of life (Uzukwu, 1988: 4-5).

For this reason the anthropologists consider culture as the entire human social heritage specifically in the areas of tradition that marks out a particular human group, that translates into their way of living learned from, and shared by, the members of that group. Understanding this concept of culture is key to understanding human behavior in general but particularly the behavior of the people emerging from a particular cultural circumscription (Kraft, 1999: 46).

## **2.2 Religion**

As an integral part of a shared system of beliefs, religion, as we can see from the foregoing definition, is embedded in the culture. However, for the purpose of this work it should be understood as a systematic pattern of beliefs, values, and behavior, acquired by a person as a member of a society. These patterns are systematic because their manifestations are regular in occurrence and expression. This expression is horizontally involved because it affects every member of the community and vertically tilted because it is of necessity focused on God. In other words, what is known as religion must be shared by every member of a circumscribed group and must articulate God. Although religions of all nations are basically religion in the sense that it expresses their way of relating to God and humanity, yet there are differences in structure and expression. This is why there are different interpretations of religious principles, which indeed enable diverse meanings to emerge from a single concept.

Religion can therefore be defined as a system of beliefs based on humanity's attempt to explain the universe and natural phenomena, often involving one or more deities or other supernatural forces and requiring or binding adherents to follow prescribed religious obligations. Religion has two essential identifying features which are (a) faith, meaning that faith is key to deep understanding of what religion is all about and (b) 'worldview' meaning that religion tends to organize and influence the thoughts and actions of the adherents to an organized prism of worldview.

Because of this, Groome (1980: 15) thinks that religion is political, since it is a deliberate intervention in people's lives that influences their way of life in society. But for Isizoh (2010), religion, and particularly African traditional religion, should never be one of the subjects of study in the schools of higher learning because, according to him, it is a fundamental

way of life for all Africans regardless of their other religious affiliations like Christianity or Islam. He argues convincingly that Africans do not really give their religion a separate name as Europeans do since it is just an integral part of the life they live. Both Mbiti (1969) and Magesa (1997) agree that religion is totally inseparable from the African way of existence. Hence, Isizoh (2010:1) insists that "religion is African way of life that pervades every aspect of human endeavor from cradle to grave. It is a way of living; way of eating, way of working, way of dancing, way of praying, way of offering sacrifices, etc. There is hardly any activity in life that is separated from its religious implications." This is why it is difficult to think of African culture without African religion or African religion without African culture.

Thus, from the above definitions we can see that religion and culture are so intertwined that it is impossible to separate one from the other. But since culture is where humans commence their behavioral socialization, we say that culture begins first in human life and eventually gives birth to religion while each religion reveals its birthing culture in liturgy or the way of expression. In this sense then, all African activities are understood as religious. In this essay then, we are going to explore how culture and religion combine to build a nation, using language as a medium of inculcation.

### **2.3 Language**

From Encarta English Dictionary, we understand that language is the speech of a country, region, or group of people, including its vocabulary, syntax and grammar. This definition tallies with the Heath's (2003) idea that language is formed by an existing community which needs it to communicate their needs. In this case then, language becomes the process of communicating responsible citizenship to the young of any nation. This is consistent with the dictionary's further explanation that language is a system of communication with its own set of conventions or special words. The special words or needs in this context appear to be the customary norms consistent with becoming a responsible citizen as encapsulated in the proper right order of behavior in the community. This mode of behavior is embedded in the people's customs which are talked out by the parents and significant others around a child while directing and nurturing it to maturity. Thus, as they communicate with the child through verbal or written expression, the child learns and gradually grows into a subsequent responsible citizen who builds a

virile nation.

### 3. The impact of traditional culture and faith in nation building

The fundamental socialization of the African child which is the beginning of imparting culture and religion begins from birth in Africa as in other parts of the world. The need for education brought about by the Nigerian culture, for instance, is comparable to that of Europe or anywhere in the world. In the Nigerian society, as in western societies, the need for education is unarguably predicated on the instances of maintaining a cultivated human person and sustaining social continuity. Fajana (1978: 20) argues that while nature provides biological continuity by means of reproduction, each society must discover means for orderly transmission of social experiences to ensure their ancestral social and cultural continuity in their progeny. This is why Nigerian culture developed a very strong system of transmitting her noble traditions to her progeny. Among the Yoruba of Southern Nigeria, for instance, the traditional education was so highly developed that Yoruba people were seen to conduct themselves in such a refined manner that many Europeans were spurred to label their behavior 'educated.' Fajana (1978) explains that the Yoruba word *eko*, translated to mean education, is so comprehensive in scope that it includes education in religion, politics, etiquette, character, training in agriculture, training in hand craft and many other things that mold a human person into a responsible citizen. By African philosophy, the essential purpose of human existence in this world is for everyone to fit into his/her society as a useful and responsible human person. The traditional education earnestly explores all the possible avenues to make the curriculum possible. Within this curriculum each member of the society is subjected to a good deal of discipline that caters for all the human faculties, so as to bring out in each person the best of human qualities. The target is to assist each member of the society to be useful to the society. Any member that falls short of the society's expectation in terms of under-acquiring the necessary image-making education is castigated in the words of Achebe (1994) as *efulefu* or good for nothing fellow, a situation Fajan (1978) indicts as a woeful failure in life. The person indeed turns out to be a curse to the community instead of a blessing. This is why the traditional educational system educates members to learn hard tasks that would be of great benefit to individuals and to the society at large.

Among the Bavenda people of North Transvaal, for instance, every boy of seven or eight usually attends a *thondo*, a warrior training school, where religious, moral, music and physical education take place. He continues to receive instruction there until he reaches the age of puberty. Among the Igbo people of Nigeria, boys of puberty age are subjected to the ikpuani rite where they learn all secrets of life including the management of the family. Since learning a life-trade like craft-making, farming, or trading, usually takes a long time to acquire, Igbo people expose their children to the process, teaching them the preceding and other hard tasks, quite early in life. It is in this way that the Igbo and indeed the entire African children are traditionally subjected to all types of disciplines - mental, physical and ideational - to prepare them for a life of solidarity and usefulness to the society. This is what Luzbetak (2000: 64-5) calls 'enculturation' or a way an individual acquires his/her own culture. It is through this process that an individual acquires the moral codes, etiquette, religion and religious principles of his/her community. It is the duty of the community to develop what people understand as honesty and progress and impart it to the children. Hence one learns from the community what is right and wrong, progressive and retrogressive and indeed all that makes a human person what s/he is.

#### **4. The importance of lineage in forming character that builds the nation**

African union is expressed by the individual's strong dependence on lineage. Lineage is politically organized in such a way that its head is the man who, because of his generation, is the closest to the ancestor. Isichei (1976) calls such a head "the oldest man of the oldest surviving generation, in the family, or in the quarter." Ogbukagu (1997) echoes the same thing when he says that the mantle of leadership in the village or town level falls on two privileged groups, namely: the ofo holder which happens to be the oldest person of each household. The eldest man (*diokpala*) of a particular pedigree (*umunna*) holds the common ofo of that genealogical lineage. The titled men in such an *umunna* organize themselves to form the association of titled men; among them, the highest in title is their spokesman. In a council made up of non-titled persons, the *isiokolo* (eldest untitled man) presides. But we must bear in mind that the eldest man does not reign as a despot. If there is any cause for any gathering, all important questions are discussed by the heads of

the families of the lineage before any ruling comes forth. It is not the question of the ruler imposing his will on others. Rather it is the question of every participating member having the democratic power of airing views in any gathering.

It is in this gathering that character formation and indeed the approved behaviors of the community are imparted on the young males. Since, our ancestors conceived the entire universe as religious phenomena they thus transmitted them to us. Even the laws of nature, conceived as being created and controlled by God directly or through his servants such as the divinities, the spirits and the ancestors (Mbiti, 1975), are transmitted to us like that. Again, since they believe that the universe was created by God, they interpret their life's experiences from that viewpoint and so passed them on to their progenies.

That is why the imparting of spiritual growth and particularly morality are frequently based on the life of the ancestral personages. Hence every member of the African community learns good morals, not only to behave well like his/her role model but also to fulfill the ancestral injunction to be upright in all human endeavors. African culture and indeed the religion is a heritage from the ancestors which was transmitted to posterity through mythical narratives. Perhaps that is why Oduyoye (1995: 21) explains that men and women of Africa are raised from birth, both in matrilineal and patriarchal domains, to be brave and all-sufficient providers through the mythical narratives. Thus "Okonkwo encouraged the boys to sit with him in his obi," [men's quarters] so that he would tell them "masculine stories of violence and bloodshed" (Achebe, 1994: 53). Achebe (1994: 54) goes further, asserting that Nwoye and Ikemefuna indeed listened to "Okonkwo's stories about tribal wars or how, years ago, he had stalked his victim, overpowered him and obtained his first human head." By listening to legendary stories such as these, African children develop skills of bravery which is one of the survival strategies in the community life.

To aid the learning of the proposed items, our forebears created enabling taboos that assisted them to observe the moral and religious order. Hence we have taboos over many aspects of life such as over brooks and streams. For instance, no one is allowed to fish in a village brook or stream where people draw their drinking water; if anyone dares to violate the taboo, the spirit guarding the stream will punish him/her

severely. Again, to have an unquestionable respect for husbands, no woman is allowed to throw her husband on the ground, in case of any fracas. There are other taboos that guard spoken words, food, dress, relations among people, marriage, burial, work, and so on. Breaking any of these taboos incurs punishment in the form of social ostracism, misfortune and even death. If people do not punish the offender, then the invisible world will punish him/her as mentioned earlier. This view is consistent with the belief in the religious order of the universe in which God and other invisible beings are believed to be actively engaged in the human world, guiding and protecting them and punishing offenses if need be (Mbiti, 1975; Anunobi, 1975). Children imbibe this knowledge within the family and during the said *umunna* meetings as well as other places of learning as they grow up.

Hence, among the Igbo, every member of the community aspires to be *di* or master of something so as to be assessed as somebody in the society. The people who turn out to be '*di*' or master in the words of Mbaefo (1996) are the role models of the community. They are often used as reference notes while guarding the children on good character, good morals or being responsible. They are placed before the children for imitation. Thus a strong farmer whose barns are full of yams all the time is known as *diji* or the master of yams. A clever wrestler is known as *dimgba* and an excellent wine-tapper is known as *diochi*. By these accolades the experts are introduced to children with the intention of inducing them to learn such a feat. Referring to the Igbo people of Nigeria, Fajana (1978) appraises the virtue among the Igbo by saying, "Among the Igbo, a man of energy whose barns was filled with yams, was considered a worthy man. A 'smart' man was also greatly respected and required from time to time, especially during funeral ceremonies to perform acrobatic feats to show that the reincarnated were light of body."

Girls are equally exposed to women of gentle character, those good wives who could prepare meals very well and treat their husbands with dignity. Since all girls would desire to have good husbands they must of necessity put interest in studying such mannerisms that would make them worthy future brides. Fajana (1978) puts it this way: "A girl was regarded a suitable prospective wife if she was industrious, and if she would fetch water and firewood without complaint. Other qualities included ability to cook, trade, and help the husband at work. A girl was

unpopular if she was known either to steal or to be extravagant.”

While this still forms the traditional curriculum for raising girls, it was much more relevant in days of yore, when the content of women's traditional education was only within the kitchen. Nowadays, men and women are equally groomed to be responsible members of the society by exposing them to all image-making possibilities. There is no more what is regarded as feminine or masculine jobs. Boys and girls are equally exposed to all possible areas that not only mold them to be desirable human beings but also introduce them to all kinds of jobs that would enable them put food on the table. Hence we have women mechanics, taxi drivers, and even footballers now. In the same vain we have men nurses, cooks and even cleaners now.

Even as children are exposed early in life in their families they are also exposed in the classroom, the church, and all other congregational places to learn to treat age-grades as equals, older ones as seniors and parents as mothers and fathers. Though such learning starts from nuclear homes, it is within *umunna* gatherings that they are expressed as the village tenet. In these gatherings other things regarded as moral behaviors within the village are also taught and learned as observed earlier. In this way powerful morals like honesty, truthfulness, integrity, compassion and indeed all community-uniting-principles together with peaceful coexistence are propounded. In this way, communities are built together to progress peacefully with one vision and one destiny. Speaking about the Yoruba community of Nigeria, Fajana (1978: 3) states: “under such an arrangement, behavior was molded on the basis of family attachment - all those of one's age group were treated as brothers and sisters and so as equals; those who were older were treated as parents or 'seniors', and those younger as children.”

Moreover, the Igbo people and indeed the generality of African people not only abhor lazy, stingy and mean members of the society but they despise them so much that he/she is neither wanted around the children nor does anyone pray for their reincarnation. Pregnant women in particular are warned never to have anything to do with such a good for nothing fellow so as to avoid any trace of resemblance or perpetuating its kind in the community. For, there is a belief among the people that children resemble or imitate what is around them particularly when they are in the womb. This is why pregnant women are never allowed to stay

near a monkey so that the child will not resemble or imitate the monkey. From the foregoing it is obvious that while different societies propound and pursue various good image-making-theories, the Nigerian traditional education propounds pragmatic and utilitarian ideals that mold human persons that actually build the nation and not just mere theories.

## **5. The impact of Christian culture and religion in nation building**

Ejizu (2010: 5) remembers that the early missionaries availed of the fruits from the traditional cultures to ensure success in their mission of evangelization in Igboland. According to him, while the missionaries systematically destroyed what they considered the pagan symbols of Igbo people, they harnessed the essential features earned from the people's religio-cultural training that was fundamental to their total personality cultivation. He names these features as self-reliance, competitive spirit, strong achievement motif, progressive outlook. Mbaefo (1996: 35) goes further to enumerate the same peculiar features of Igbo people but he describes them as "industrious, hardworking, highly competitive, arrogant, intelligent and so on." The missionaries exploited these features by massively building on them in all their missionary endeavors. Accordingly, various schools which developed their competitive spirit and aided their strong achievement motif and intelligence were erected all over Igboland.

Furthermore, one of the striking points of the missionary pre-government policy on education was their total agreement that literary education was an essential part of their work regardless of differences in approach. They unequivocally agreed that literary education was a powerful organ in the formation of sound moral and intellectual elevation of the people. Perhaps that is why they opened schools as soon as their missions were established. Consequently, the missionaries placed great premium on catechism classes or Sunday schools for teaching adult converts and catechumens who could not come to school daily during the week to learn to read the New Testament for themselves. It was especially for their sake that so much emphasis was placed on translating the Bible into the vernaculars; for their sake, too, that throughout the work on languages the emphasis was on simplicity of orthography rather than academic perfection (Ajayi, 1965). As well as

imparting literary education on the converts, the missionaries also agreed to impart secular knowledge that would qualify the converts to become useful members of the society (Ajayi, 1965).

As the missionaries built the schools, they literally took over the molding of the Nigerian people from the indigenous culture. However, the cultural socialization cannot be said to have left the people entirely since they are still being born and raised within their environment. Rather, we can say that with the incoming of the missionary education, the western educational ideas began to have an impact on them, shaping their dreams and future undertakings. People started thinking not just about how to be a good farmer or wrestler but how to develop farming, teaching, nursing, medicine, politicking and so on as a professional money-yielding-career. Women in particular discovered that their future was not more merely limited to the kitchen but extends to all works of human endeavor. Teaching ceased to be only what the parents and significant others did at home, but now included school teachers and the place of teaching ceased to be only in the home, in the farm, the market or place of worship, but now included regimented classrooms and recreational places. While the agents of education and places of education are now expanded, the aims and objectives of both traditional and western education still remain the same thing, that is, the formation of a useful and functional human person.

Furthermore, since the traditional training developed the indigenous people to be useful to their society, people quickly saw in the western education the enhancement of that usefulness. They discovered that while before then the herbalist was for the health and wellbeing of the community, those who had both a traditional training in herbalism and a western training as a physician concerned themselves not just with the wellbeing of their immediate communities but extended to the nation at large. Nursing, which was hitherto what local experts did for the local community, now changed to be a function that extended from the village concerns to the wellbeing of the whole nation. Politicking was no longer limited to what concerned the local chiefs and their cabinets, but now became what people study for the wellbeing of the nation. Morality which was formally learned for the upkeep of the village now became the bedrock of the peaceful nation building. To the extent that people worked hard previously to keep the family and the village orderly and peaceful, they expanded that noble effort to the building of the entire

nation. Thus what was learned as respect for the elders, respect of life, fear of God and good neighborliness for the wellbeing of the village, became very important for the building of our entire nation.

Further frontiers were created when the missionaries recognized the implicit sense of appreciation developed among the Igbo people by their traditional culture and religion; they quickly vested on this to convert them. In other words, they quickly noticed that this sense of appreciation contributed to the deep rooted religious faith and the dynamic religious sense of the Igbo people. Hence, they exploited it and invested on it in building not only the spiritual realm of the people in the new religion but also in the building of the wellbeing of the nation at large. According to Ejizu (2010), the missionaries, for the entrenchment and progress of the Christian faith among the Igbo, organized well choreographed liturgical celebrations in strategic towns like Aguleri, Ogboli and Onitsha during major Christian feasts like wedding ceremonies, feast days of parochial patron saints, Corpus Christi, confirmation celebrations, Christmas, and so on. He reinforces his point in the words of Nwosu (1985) as follows:

Another method Catholic missionaries used considerably to their advantage was making their acts of public worship (liturgy) as elaborate and colourful as possible. During religious feasts, especially the Mass and various devotions to the Blessed Eucharist and the saints, altars were beautifully decorated with flowers; lighted candles, incense and colourful vestments were used. Statues of saints as well as the crucifix were displayed at strategic places. Organ music would accompany the choir which sang hymns in Latin and Vernacular (Nwosu, 1985: 381)

This approach of drawing from the culturally developed sense of appreciation of the people assisted the missionaries to build not just the spiritual sphere of the Africans but their social, commercial and indeed political spheres as well. That this is currently seen in the Igbo socio-political cum commercial terrain, is not in doubt. Existential evidence shows clearly that not only the Christian faith is well rooted in Igboland, but that the impact of the western education is glaringly seen in their commerce, industry, politics, and indeed all human endeavour. One can say without mincing words that that strategy helped in no small way to build not just the Igboland but the entire nation of Nigeria.

## 6. The impact of Islamic culture and religion in building the nation

Osuntokun and Olukoju (1997) recorded that the North of Nigeria was actually built up through Islamic cultural influence. According to them, Kanem-Borno, Kano and Katsina, among other northern towns and cities, adopted Islamic culture through their traditional rulers to build up their domains. For instance, through the Islamic influence, the Hausa states, as well as Borno and even the Yoruba domains, were brought together under one single political system under the authority of a Caliph based in Sokoto. They cited many historians who adjudged this feat as one of the key step-forwards in the development of Nigeria.

Ikime (2004: 220) recorded the distinctive Islamic cultural characteristics as follows:

...separate quarters as soon as their number could sustain a separate community. In their quarters, they established mosques and soon acquired a distinctive character through some of their habits and customs associated with the practice of Islam such as the five times daily congregational prayers, the mode of dressing and the total abstention from alcohol by some pious Muslims.

These characteristics aided the Muslim ummah to forge new settlements that gave rise to the development of urban towns and villages. Moreover, the Sokoto Jihad of the 19th century, assisted tremendously in converting the villages into towns and the new towns developed into centres of commerce, industry and mundane activities (Osuntokun & Olukoju, 1997: 118). According to Barkow (1972) and Longhirst (1982), a vast majority of married Hausa women from such cities as Kano, Katsina and Zaria, together with their local environs, often earned a good chunk of income from petty or large scale trade, while residing in Purdah according to Islamic injunctions (cited by Catherine VerEecke). The trade not only keeps the women in Purdah busy but also provides them with some remuneration for their house keep. Purdah has been adjudged as one of the earliest Islamic traditional institutions that enhances the prestige and modesty of Islamic women. In this sense then, Purdah is seen not just as an agent of family modesty but one of the building blocks of national morality. Hence, Ikime (2004:220) notes that this distinctive Islamic quality sometimes appealed to some members of the indigenous population to the tune of conversion, especially the

traders who had close dealings with the alien Muslim traders.

Moreover, as the Wangara Muslim traders landed in the North of Nigeria for their business, they came along with the Muslim scholars who busied themselves with the education and conversion of the masses. To be properly effective the Mallams thoroughly prepared themselves. Since the training of the scholars was so important in the proper education of the Muslim Ummah, the Mallams set aside a good number of years in which they devoted their time to learning, teaching and preaching without a regular salary. But since they occupy an important position in the dissemination of Islamic culture and faith, the Muslim Ummah decided to mount a heavy support for them, to the extent that the mallams lacked nothing during their period of studies and even when they were teaching and preaching. Thus, their total attention was deeply devoted to religious activities while the community provided them with material comfort (Ikime, 2004: 221).

Some of the Muslim scholars who exhibited mystic powers identical to that of African rainmakers assisted in the dissemination of Islamic culture and faith. Besides rainmaking, the scholars possessed the mystic powers to solve other pressing needs like winning wars and thereby enhancing the prestige of the leaders; offering special prayers for protection against witchcraft or nullifying the evil effect of witchcraft if its spell had already been cast. Furthermore, they possessed the power of Arabic literacy with which they explained the Koran and indoctrinated the leaders and their attendants. Moreover, they served not only as teachers and preachers but also as advisers, administrators and sometimes as diplomats. Because of this they were very popular with the Muslim leaders (Ikime, 2004). The northern leaders not only ensured the security of their mentors but also provided them with material comfort. As a result we can comfortably claim that what facilitated the building of Islamic Ummah in the north of Nigeria was the hospitable disposition of the Africans to welcome their visitors and the susceptibility of the Africans to the type of business which the Wangara (Dyula) people brought along with them. Ikime (2004:220) added that warfare, emigration and intermarriages which aided population movements generally encouraged the dispersal of Muslims into new areas.

Thus, with the growing class of the '*ulama*,' learning, teaching and preaching could be advanced to various sections of the communities by

the itinerant scholars and preachers. As a result, the Muslim population continued to grow as many more of the masses began to accept Islam even if only nominally. In this way Islamic influence took over the formation and building up of the religion and indeed the culture of the Northern Nigerian population, to the extent that by the end of the eighteenth century the majority of Kastina population for instance, had become Muslim (Ikime, 2004:222). Today the Islamic culture is such that some historians refer to the North of Nigeria as Muslim North and to the South as Christian South because of main religious influence in that region.

## 7. Conclusion

The preceding has demonstrated how religion and culture coalesce to build a nation. Certainly, one can claim that eko or education is the key language to the building and the growth of any nation as it is obvious in the case of Nigeria. Unarguably, Nigeria was built from the scratch by indigenous education and continues its growth through the efforts of Arabic and Western education. As the traditional culture and religion have socialized the nation from birth, the Muslim culture and religion together with Christian culture and religion continue to nourish and consolidate the nation through verbal and written language as it grows responsibly. Today it appears very likely that the three faiths and cultures will continue to reinforce their influences in building and sustaining the nation through raising responsible citizens. We make bold to conclude that the cultural religious faiths will continue to bring out from their vaults all the ingredients that make for a virile, peaceful, coexistent and resourceful nation under God.

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