

A model for christian  
interpersonal  
relationship theology  
religion essay



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- Conclusion/suggestions

There is no challenging that Christianity has a strong background in morality. What is non wholly obvious and to which much scholarly work is being done and go on to be done is the extent of moral premium that Christians place on moral values of other spiritual traditions. This paper intends to demo how such Christian claim inhibits profound interreligious duologue. It argues that Christianity is non the exclusive keeper of morality. It is the position here that such Christian moral claims need non be needfully placed as superior in duologue with other spiritual traditions. Other faiths have values from which Christianity could larn. Such temperament will make better land for interreligious duologue that enhances personal and interpersonal morality. The research shall be guided by the followers: inquiries what moral values could be learned from spiritual pluralism? How does this assist the Christian apprehension of love, human self-respect and Christian moralss? It is perceived that Christian moral interaction with other faiths would surely take to increased spiritual verve and would cut down sensed Christian haughtiness and ignorance of other spiritual traditions. Overall, it is from this background that this paper will seek to construe moral paradigm in spiritual pluralism.

## **Introduction**

The denial of spiritual pluralism is in a manner an avowal that there exist other spiritual traditions. Furthermore, the postmodern age has brought a batch of inventions into the universe. Among these inventions is the survey of humanity and faith. It affirms the place that a realistic apprehension of our <https://assignbuster.com/a-model-for-christian-interpersonal-relationship-theology-religion-essay/>

modern-day contexts implies that faith is non one, but there are faiths. Religion as a theological class must therefore unfastened up duologue with its environment and people. Reverend Marcus Braybrooke affirmed that, “ ‘ each religion has a cherished gift to portion with the universe, ‘ because each conveys a message that is both alone and cosmopolitan. ”[ 1 ]This duologue of theological experience must seek to turn to the people ‘ s moral yesteryear, nowadays, and their hereafter in such a manner that it will make plangency and significance. Religion as theological class is non a historical narration, it is a lived, life and yet to populate history that should be context driven and able to suit other subjects for its undertaking and end.

A realistic apprehension of our modern-day contexts so will imply a Reconstruction of spiritual moral rules as theological method and content, particularly the period from Vatican II to day of the month. These challenges will vouch a changeless displacement in place in order to suit the turning demand and longing of how these theological undertakings could and should be engaged today. Relationship is of import in faith ; this is what makes faith meaningful to us. God himself exists in relationship. The relationship of the three is the kernel of the God caput. For faith of the Christian Church to stay relevant in the face of these challenges, it must open up itself to suit the different experiences that are involved in the procedure of interreligious duologue.

Furthermore, spiritual traditions of Africa, Asia and elsewhere are in no manner inferior to the Abrahamic faiths of which Christianity stands out as the chief pillar. This is an avowal to the fact that these spiritual traditions by their dogmas have had digesting replies to the profound enigmas of the <https://assignbuster.com/a-model-for-christian-interpersonal-relationship-theology-religion-essay/>

human status. Furthermore, in the context of spiritual plurality, dialogue as affirmed by papal council for interreligious dialogue: dialogue and announcement entails, " all positive and constructive interreligious dealings with persons and communities of other religions which are directed at common apprehension and enrichment in obedience to the truth and regard for freedom. "[ 2 ]In line with this contemplation, it means therefore that " these spiritual traditions should be approached with greater sensitiveness on history of the religious and human moral values enshrined in them. They commend our regard because over the centuries they have borne informant to the attempt to happen replies to those profound enigmas of the human conditions. "[ 3 ]In avowal, Cantwell reasoned, " the consciousness of multiformity is going vivid and compelling. "[ 4 ]Furthermore he argued, " We ( Christians ) have marched around foreigners Jericos the needed figure of times. We have sounded the huntsman's horns. And the walls have non collapsed. "[ 5 ]It means that those foreigners excessively, have some values that have been strengthening their metropoliss. Therefore there is a demand for Christians to prosecute these other spiritual groups in a meaningful dialogue to squelch down the belligerencies that separates them in their apprehension of God. Wilfred Cantwell in his intervention of Religious pluralism outlined three jobs that boundary lines on comparative-religious survey as rational, moral and theological.

The purpose of this paper will be to handle the moral facet and show that Christianity is non the main keeper of morality. The statement will keep that other spiritual traditions excessively has some signifier of moral values of which Christianity could larn through the interpersonal relationship with such

faiths. The inquiry would be what moral values could be learned from spiritual pluralism? How does this assist the Christian apprehension of love, human self-respect ( Christian moralss ) ? Interestingly, Mark Chaves & A ; Philip S. Gorski asserts that “ although spiritual pluralism is non indistinguishable with spiritual competition, pluralism has normally been treated as an index of competition, and analyses of the relationship between spiritual pluralism and spiritual engagement have been the primary beginning of grounds in favor of the thought that spiritual competition leads to increased spiritual verve. ”[ 6 ]Christian interpersonal relationship with other faiths would surely take to increased spiritual verve and would besides cut down the Christian haughtiness and ignorance of other spiritual traditions. This would advance a pluralist temperament instead than the frequently sensed exclusivist Christian attitude. Martin Buber radius of the “ the basic motion of the life of duologue ” as “ turning towards the other. ”[ 7 ]Without run intoing face-to-face and come ining into a conversation with an antagonist on equal terms-subject to subject -the procedure of duologue would be impossible. Jesus himself in conversation with the Samaritan adult female insist that the clip come when worship will non be restricted to any peculiar topographic point, but when true believers will, “ worship the male parent in spirit and truth ” ( Jn. 4. 23 ) . By this he opened up the skylines and avenues to allow credibleness to all faiths. Pope John Paul II, besides give this express acknowledgment of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the members of other spiritual traditions when he spoke of their, “ steadfast belief ” as being “ an consequence of the spirit of truth runing outside the seeable confines of the mystical organic structure ”[ 8 ]A pneumatological positions and strong beliefs seem to be the manner <https://assignbuster.com/a-model-for-christian-interpersonal-relationship-theology-religion-essay/>

frontward in crafting a theoretical account for Christian interpersonal relationship with other faiths. John Paul II in *Redemptoris missio* insists that “ Spirit presence and activity are cosmopolitan, limited neither by infinite nor clip. ”[ 9 ]

Because of range and restriction, I will restrict my analysis on Islam and African Traditional Religion. Although, I am besides cognizant that even in ATR, there are several “ African functionalist attack ” to moral issues ; nevertheless, I will restrict my paper to Tiv spiritual patterns as paradigms for interreligious duologue.

The format shall be, Introduction, Overview of spiritual pluralism as Theological Enterprise ( Vatican II to Date ) , Issues of morality as a theological undertaking in today ‘ s universe, Exclusive Christian Morality, Moral paradigms in Islam, Moral paradigms in African Traditional Religion ( ATR ) , Barriers to ethical relation between Christianity and other faiths, and eventually, a Conclusion/suggestions.

### **Overview of spiritual pluralism as Theological Enterprise ( Vatican II to Date )**

The period between Vatican II to day of the month has brought a important displacement to the church ‘ s apprehension of herself to other spiritual traditions. This displacement has besides marked a turning point to issues of duologue and grasp of spiritual pluralism. Jacques Dupuis testify that, “ the council ‘ s position was pastoral instead than doctrinal. ”[ 10 ]He argued, “ the council rather intentionally had no purpose of doing such a pick.

”[ 11 ]The purpose, on the contrary, “ was to beat up the highest possible

bulk on the council floor in favour of a alteration of attitude of Christian, and the church toward the members of other faith. "[ 12 ]It was with this apprehension that the Roman Catholic traditions saw the demand to follow theological contemplation to local fortunes, began having official support with the Vatican II ; where in the edict on the churches ' missional activity ( Ad Gentes no. 22 ) ,[ 13 ]and besides pastoral fundamental law on the church in the modern universe ( Gaudium et Spes no. 2 ) .[ 14 ]All of these papers show that such version received expressed appropriation. In the subsequent old ages, the missional divinity of Pope Paul VI developed this idea, particularly in his reference to the Bishops of Africa in 1969 and in the apostolic exhortation, on evangelization in the modern universe in 1975 ( Evangelii Nuntiandi no. 2-3 )[ 15 ]. Here the Pope insists that the church must endeavor to proclaim the Gospel to all peoples, and to seek by every agency to analyze how the church could convey the Christian message to modern adult male. The Pope expressly stated that, " the split between the Gospel and civilization is without a uncertainty the play of our clip, merely as it was of other times. Therefore every attempt must be made to guarantee a full evangelization of civilization, or more right of civilizations. "[ 16 ]All these attempts by the church were geared to demo that morality as theological undertakings and its battle for today ' s universe demand a extremist displacement. Furthermore, this displacement that took topographic point in the Roman Catholic Church during the Vatican II which addressed the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the modern universe created a infinite for spiritual pluralism to boom. This was started with the avowal of the freedom of scruples and freedom of faiths of all people by Pope John XXIII ( Pacem in Terris )[ 17 ]and the credence of interreligious

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duologue as an avenue for evangelization by Pope Paul VI ( *ecclesiam suam* ) [ 18 ]which became the route map for duologue. *Nostra Aetate*[ 19 ]provided the displacement in relation of the Church to non-Christian religion. It opens with admitting the common foundation of all faiths ( No. 1 ) , and it besides affirms other faith as holding philosophy, moral and sacred rites ( No. 2 ) . In kernel, it affirms that no 1 faith has monopoly about human disclosure and God. Marinus Iwuchukwu attesting to this place said, “ *Nostra Aetate* presents a route map towards effectual interreligious duologue and a steadfast theological premise of a *de jure* spiritual pluralism for the church and all Christians. ”[ 20 ]Therefore in the words of the Holy Father, Pope John XXIII, “ it was clip to open the Windowss of the church to allow in some fresh air. ”[ 21 ]

Consequently, John Paul II who came after these old Catholic Popes took this advice really earnestly. In the papal council for Interreligious Dialogue: Dialogue and announcement[ 22 ], he reflected on orientation about interreligious duologue and the announcement of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In *Redemptoris mission*,[ 23 ]Pope John Paul II assures non-Christian of the love of God made manifest in Christ ( No. 3 ) ; raises inquiries and replies on the cosmopolitan redemption in Christ ( Inclusive pluralism ) ( No. 12-20 ) . He besides recognizes the Holy Spirit as the chief agent of mission ( Nos. 21-32 ) . Marinus in his congratulations of John Paul ‘ s II attempts argued that, “ John Paul II, in his papacy advocated better harmoniousness and affable battles among universe faiths in hunt of a more peace-loving universe and he steadfastly believed in progressing the extension of the Gospel by prosecuting other faiths of the universe in healthy interreligious duologue.



"[ 24 ]This displacement between Vatican I and II created a important growing and development largely in the Roman Catholic Church divinity. As could be seen above, express indicants of the church ' s willingness to dialogue with other non-Christian faiths became clear with station Vatican II. All these attempts are geared towards the church ' s willingness to dialogue and grasp of other spiritual moral values and traditions. Therefore, " Vatican II became foremost in the conciliar history of the church to talk positively, albeit conservatively, about other faiths. "[ 25 ]

On the contrary, this gap of the window seems merely to be allowing in small air into the church ' s apprehension of her religion in line with other civilizations. The fact of spiritual pluralism de jure is yet to derive credence in the Christian church rhythm. Their credence seems to be on the de facto degrees. In pattern, exclusivists and inclusivists attacks seem to be looming higher in the church than spiritual pluralism. Thus the modern-day theologians under the umbrella of post-colonial theologians are still strike harding for the doors to be unfastened as good. They insist that ' system divinity ' which was colored by Western political orientation and classes must be decolonized and pluralized so that systematic divinity will endeavor and boom. In African and Islamic contexts, this flourishing could merely be found through the theoretical account of inculturation ( contextualization ) and philosophies. It means that the footing for this displacement must be built on the lived experience of the people, and non on church ' s theological dictums. The church has done much in theory ; but much needs to be done at practical degree. Significant importance is the moral grasp and values of other spiritual traditions. The church in many respects still sees herself as

the exclusive keeper of morality, and other spiritual traditions have to learn from her. This sort of apprehension is unfriendly to the true spirit of dialogue and spiritual pluralism. The church must open herself to learn from these other traditional moral values.

## **Issues of morality as a theological undertaking in today 's universe**

In the visible radiation of the above, morality as a theological undertaking has made it imperative that divinity must develop big ears and open her eyes to the worlds around. Worlds that are born out of lived experience of a peculiar cultural context, and that divinity must be decolonized in order to suit the pluralist undertaking. Robert Young observes, “ deconstruction ‘ is a deconstruction of the construct, the authorization, and assumed primacy of, the class of ‘ the West. ”[ 26 ]Morality as Monolithic and monoculture context of the West which dominated the universalized attack to divinity has become unproductive and meaningless to other cultural contexts. The modern-day theologians have become really critical of the ready-made divinity of the West that was imported and transported to many civilizations of the universe. In topographic point of the above, and the hereafter of Christian morality, they propose two places: “ pluriversality and Identity ”[ 27 ]. In congratulations of this place, Mignolo who is considered one of the taking figures of postcolonial idea said,

[ T ] he jubilation of bi-languaging is exactly the jubilation of the crake in the planetary procedure between local histories and planetary designs, between ‘ mundialization ‘ and ‘ globalization, from linguistic communications to

societal motions, and a review of the thought that civilisation is linked to the 'purity' of colonial monolingualism.[ 28 ]

Here he explores further the colonial epistemological difference through the possibility of a bilingual or bi-lingual epistemology as the manner forward in the survey of divinity in modern-day contexts. This undertaking is critical because it will make location which is the production of moral cognition, civilization and faith. Thus for Mignolo, it means we have to talk from the colonial difference in order to give voice to the margins-subaltern voices through the procedure of bilanguaging ( plurality ) . All his attempts were to make location and individuality for local histories to go avenues for making divinity in contrast to planetary designs of the West. Closely related to the postcolonial idea are the liberation theologians. They understood divinity not as self-transcendent, but as being in solidarity with the hapless and the laden. In fact Liberation divinity attributes a hermeneutical significance to the experience of the oppressed. This experience of subjugation affects how morality is read, interpreted, and applied. The African theologian besides is faced with the undertaking of recovering moral cultural values and construing them in the visible radiation of lived experience. Fiorenza maintained that this experience serves as "retroductive warrant.

"[ 29 ] Harmonizing to Fiorenza and Galvin, a "warrant is retroductive to the extent that it offers the most executable and comprehensive account of the phenomenon, histories for unexpected and unforeseen phenomena, and enables the scientific enterprise to travel on in pattern. "[ 30 ] It was exactly from this background that Gustavo Gutierrez who is widely regarded as the male parent of Liberation divinity kick-started the agitation to dispute

divinity on the predicament of the hapless and the laden. He rejects the thought that divinity is a systematic aggregation of timeless and cultural exceeding truths that remains for all coevals. He concludes by stating that, " the effort of Liberation divinity to reflect on the experience and significance of religion based on the committedness to get rid of unfairness and construct a new society must be verified by the pattern of that committedness itself. "[ 31 ]Therefore he warns that " release theologians must be careful non to fall into an academic complacency of getting ' new ' vision of Christianity.

"[ 32 ]Segundo who came after him, became more systematic in handling this affair. He took off to liberate the topic affair through the instrument of " Hermeneutical rhythm. "[ 33 ]In his words, " Hermeneutical rhythm is a manner of showing in divinity that would take their cue from flesh-and-blood of human existences to manner the land of God out of the human stuffs of our great but laden continent. "[ 34 ]He inquiries the absolutist place of religion, he contends that the whole concrete content of religion and all the attitudes and beliefs in which it is embodied are dependent on the comparative context in which they occur. For him, " the job of Catholic divinity begins when one tries to specify the precise content of these indicative procedures. "[ 35 ]He maintains that Christian option does non absolutize a value or a philosophy but instead it is an educational procedure covering with values. All these attempts are to advance cosmopolitan redemption in Christ as against there is no redemption outside the church " excess ecclesiam nulla Salus " that was antecedently held by the church. This made the church to switch her place about human redemption. All these attempts are non to advance ' religious indifferentism ' or ' syncretism ' but to advance inclusivist pluralist apprehension of faiths.

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## **Exclusive Christian Morality**

The fact that all worlds are created in the image and similitude of God, makes all worlds morally good. Exclusive Christian base on morality therefore does not do her place supreme. It means that Christian morality by itself can not specify adequately the moral position of a pluralistic universe. Right of being of other faiths, morality and spiritual values must to a really big extent have to lend and compliment Christian lesson values in a manner of interpersonal relationships. Peter phan in his famed book affirms this when he said, " being monoreligious is traveling to go of all time rarer in postmodern age. "[ 36 ]He insists that, " Alternatively, migration, globalisation, and postmodern thought have created a state of affairs where boundaries are porous and most people will be truly spiritual merely if they live interreligiously. "[ 37 ]Basic to postmodernist epistemology, Phan insist " is regard for and jubilation of specialness and " distinctness " in all dimensions of human life, from race and ethnicity to gender to religion to civilization. Diversity and plurality, which otherness implies, are seen not as expletives to human flourishing to be exorcised or as menaces to human integrity to be suppressed. "[ 38 ]Therefore he opined that culturally, socially and sacredly, " church must not merely regard but besides integrate into its ain life and idolize the instructions and patterns of other faiths in order to be enriched and transformed by them. "[ 39 ]Edward Schillebeeckx, a Dutch theologian, in his apprehension of spiritual pluralism and dialogue asserts that,

Because modernness has given rise to multiplicity of world-views and establishments, and it is no longer the instance that one, specifically

Christian, position of the universe is given societal indorsement, the universe has become a sort of market topographic point in which different and divergent positions of the universe and world are on sale, from which one can take.[ 40 ]

For him, “ the job is no longer the one formulated at the degree of the earlier consciousness of the job: Is Christianity the one true faith, or is it a better faith than all the remainder? ... The job instead is how can Christianity keep its ain individuality and uniqueness and at the same clip attach a positive value to the difference of faiths in a non-discriminatory sense?

”[ 41 ]Therefore he argued that it was non possible that any one spiritual tradition or religion could thoroughly suit all that is good and valuable from God. His spiritual pluralism seems to be theocentric. God is the centre and all other faiths take part in his being with equal proportion for their being and end. No spiritual tradition can claim monopoly of God ‘ s cognition and engagement. He concludes that “ multiplicity of faiths is non an immorality which needs to be removed, but instead a wealth which is to be welcomed and enjoyed by all. ”[ 42 ]He affirmed “ [ T ] here is more spiritual truths in all the faiths together than in one peculiar faith. ”[ 43 ]Therefore he affirms the demand for duologue and even incultulation.

## **Moral paradigms in Islam**

The citation of Aliosa Inyumba, former caput of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, Kigali, September, 2006, competently describe the importance of duologue. This has addressed the struggle between Christianity and other faiths. He said, “ [ I ] it is a really hard thing to come in into duologue with person who has no regard for you as a individual, being <https://assignbuster.com/a-model-for-christian-interpersonal-relationship-theology-religion-essay/>

rather happy to see you dead. And yet without renewed dialogue, you cannot set an example to the intuition that perpetrates the struggle.

"[ 44 ]Christian religion has over the old ages occupied the place that it is the lone faith that has all replies on issues of morality. African Traditional faith and Islam have been branded as spiritual groups that have merely to learn about morality of Christian tradition. This is an erroneous and ill-informed construct. That fact remains a closer survey of these two spiritual traditions besides revealed that Christianity besides has a batch to learn from them on moral affairs. John B. Cobbs and Ward M. McAfee attests that " it is possible for Christians to learn from other spiritual traditions and their wisdom. And that it is besides possible to explicate the Christian religion in the visible radiation of what they learnt from other faiths. "[ 45 ]Christians are called to rethink their religion in the visible radiation of the challenges posed to them by other traditions. In the visible radiation of these, dialogue becomes inevitable. The accent is non to reject what is typical in the Christian message but to " enrich one another through our differences. "[ 46 ]

In his intervention of Christianity and Islam McAfee argues that both Christianity and Islam have much in common. To him, both traditions proclaim one God and portion penetrations on communal values ( life of supplication and pattern ) . Both " Teach common humanity and regard for it. "[ 47 ]To this he affirms that " traditions no longer hold the luxury to decline invitation to dialogue. "[ 48 ]He insists that " we must develop the wisdom to see both what Christianity and Islam portion in common and countries where we must hold to differ. "[ 49 ]McAfee is of the sentiment

that “ we need a better divinity capable of both encouraging peaceable dialogue and defying our own premises that we should rule. ”[ 50 ]He advised for the removal of log in one ‘ s eyes before seen the splinter in the other. He cautioned that force should not be associated with Islam entirely, historically, “ ‘ each of these three religion traditions ‘ was birthed in a clip of great societal turbulence. ”[ 51 ]Christianity is not immune to history of force ; it has its just portion of spiritual and societal turbulences of its clip. Overall, McAfee concludes that the Christian self-righteousness and disdain for Islam is deeply inappropriate.

Moral lessons that could be shared between these faiths are based on the fact that “ [ T ] he message of Muhammad ‘ s disclosures was one of both godly authorization and societal justness. ”[ 52 ]The societal justness issues dominated the instruction of Islam as propounded by Muhammad. Islam classless is underwritten by the hadj, the one-year pilgrim’s journey of Muslims to Mecca. McAfee explained, “ on this pilgrim’s journey, each Muslim is to be clothed in a simple white garment so as to eliminate any and all differentiations during this holy congregation of the Muslim community. ”[ 53 ]Furthermore, the message of Jesus was one of extremist equality and so was the inclination of Muhammad ‘ s reform in his clip and topographic point.

Another great moral lesson Christian could learn from their Muslim brethren is the moral character of the jihad. Jihad is the most misunderstood word in the Muslim religion, nevertheless, it has a moral lesson if decently understood. John W. DE Gruchy contests that “ [ T ] he origin of jihad is the demand to set up an classless and merely political order on Earth

harmonizing the shar’iah. ”[ 54 ]Jihad is not merely a ‘ holy war ‘ as <https://assignbuster.com/a-model-for-christian-interpersonal-relationship-theology-religion-essay/>



perceived by many, but the battle to make justness in society. Jihad is therefore synonymous with the release battle from a Muslim position. Even when the Qur'an is most expressed in its encouragement of Muslim to move resolutely against idolizers, even by taking up weaponries, it speaks against perpetrating surplus ( Sura 2. 190-91 ) .[ 55 ]Jihad is therefore besides as the Sufis Teachs, the interior battle to get the better of the passion and non to transgress. To cite from the Quo'ran: " [ T ] he good action and the bad are non likewise. Repel the evil one by one which is better! And behold! He between whom and you there hostility, shall be as if he were a ardent friend ( Sura 41. 34 ) ; "[ 56 ]Therefore the demand to fight ( jehad ) against the power of Satan, the agent of wickedness.

Closely followed are the five ( 5 ) pillars of Islam. These are the basic spiritual responsibilities of Muslims. Harmonizing to Daniel Ali and Robert Spencer, " The five pillars of Islam sum up these cardinal patterns of Islam ; they are the five most of import elements of the Islamic religion. "[ 57 ]These include:

Shahada: declaration of religion harmonizing to the expression: there is no God but God, Muhammad is the courier of God.

Salat: worship, sometimes translated as ' prayer ' . This is done five times a twenty-four hours. Malise Ruthven, contend that " believers must be in the province of ritual pureness achieved by executing major or minor ablutions depending on the grade of pollution. "[ 58 ]

Zakats: alms-giving/compulsory charity. Malise farther argued that " this revenue enhancement is collectible one time a twelvemonth by all grownup  
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Muslims, and is assessed at 2.5 per centum of capital assets over and above a minimal known as the nishab. "[ 59 ]

Shawm: fasting during Ramadan. This fasting " applies to imbibing, eating, smoke, and sexual activity. It begins at morning and ends at sundown. "[ 60 ]

Hajj: pilgrim's journey to Mecca.[ 61 ]This intense and demanding spiritual " duty is required of every grownup Muslim at least one time in his or her lifetime. "[ 62 ]

As could be seen above, in contrast to Christianity, Islam is characterized more by patterns than by beliefs. In other words, " Christianity topographic point great accent on orthodoxy, while Moslems are by and large more concerned with orthopraxis, the integrity of spiritual pattern. "[ 63 ]The five pillars of Islam provide strong bases for moral and religious ordinances for the pattern of Muslim religion. Christians could make good to learn the art of strong spiritual pattern of the Islamic faith. Christians could learn through dialogue the orthopraxis, the integrity of spiritual religion pattern. By keeping to these patterns that are bound by moral injunctions, the moral life of the Muslims is therefore enhanced.

### **Moral paradigms in African Traditional Religion ( ATR )**

African traditional faith has suffered more favoritism among universe faiths. It is non numbered among the faith of the books. ATR has been named negatively, as: Paganism, Heathenism, Fetishism, Animism, crude and native etc. Despite the fact that African traditional faith has suffered other

unfairness particularly in the manner it has been named, issues of morality  
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can non be disputed within ATR. With all these intensions, Morality and ATR are still seen as one entity. It is a faith that is built on life experience that incorporates most moral properties. It is based on human interrelatedness and interconnection. Its renters are geared towards advancing inclusiveness, unity, regard and openness towards others. Above all, it is anchored on the rule of cordial reception and communitarian life.

Harmonizing to Mbiti, “ the function and topographic point of the person within the community is shaped by a cardinal African Philosophical construct: “ I am, because we are ; and since we are, hence I am. ”[ 64 ]It means that the person does non be entirely except corporately. The person is portion and package of the community, and is shaped by the community. Mbiti sums up the assorted web of interconnection in this mode:

When one suffers, he does non endure entirely but with the corporate group ; when he rejoices, he rejoices non entirely but with his kinsmen, his neighbors and his relations whether dead or life. When he gets married, he is non entirely ; neither does he the married woman ‘ belong ‘ to him entirely ( figuratively, So besides the kids belong to the corporate organic structure of kinsmen, even I they bear merely heir male parent ‘ s name. Whatever happens to the single happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the person.[ 65 ]

This polar point in the apprehension of the African position of human individual provides a cardinal footing for the acknowledgment of how the societal, moral and political apparatuss in Africa are organized.

Giving the spiritual coloring of this African philosophical construct, Emeritus Bishop Sarpong of Kumasi said,

For Africa, the function of traditional faith in finding the *modus vivendi* has been critical. African civilizations are known for their spiritual orientation. In fact, African civilizations are spiritual civilizations. It is non possible to analyze African civilization in isolation from faith. Religion permeates the ideal African from cradle to sculpt. African traditional faith, hence, comes into drama in the defining of the African ' s hereafter.[ 66 ]

Therefore, African Traditional faith is portion of the African ' s ethos and an apprehension of it should travel manus in manus with Christian evangelization. Bishop Sarpong farther argues,

Without seeking to sound excessively simplistic, it can be argued that all faiths are built on three major pillars: religion, morality and worship. Religion trades with belief in some higher power or being who is accepted as holding some influence on fans This strong belief enables or even oblige the disciples to behave themselves in their socio-cultural life in a mode they believe will delight the object of their worship. Here we have moral or ethical behavior. [ 67 ]

This moral behavior among ATR disciples were more enshrined in words and rites. In the words of Sarpong, “ In the flower of traditional faith in Africa, the word of oral cavity was considered much more sacred than the written word is now. ”[ 68 ]That is what faith is approximately. Religion is about fidelity and strong belief, non about reading and analysis of thoughts. African

traditional faith has a message for us here. Its deficiency of Bible has non, in <https://assignbuster.com/a-model-for-christian-interpersonal-relationship-theology-religion-essay/>

any manner, meant deficiency of effectivity. Religion is to be practiced non merely to be talked about. African Traditional Religion, as said earlier, is a faith of experience and pattern. The instance survey of some Tiv spiritual patterns shall be set as the base and considered as paradigms for interreligious duologue. The Tiv has absolute regard for human life, and series of Taboos regulates their moral actions.

Tiv preponderantly fall within Benue State but there are fragments of the people in a few envioning provinces like Nasarawa, Plateau, Cross River, and Taraba. Tiv are among the over 250 cultural nationalities in Nigeria. They inhabit rather a significant part of the Middle Belt Region of Nigeria. Widening on both sides of the River Benue in Central Nigeria, Edward Terkula Atel argues, " Tiv covers an country of about 30, 000 square kilometres and stretches from about 6Es 30I? to 8Es 10I? north latitude and from 8Es to 10Es east longitude. "[ 69 ]One of the physical features of Tivland is the being of rivers Benue, Katsina-Ala, and Buruku which are beginnings of H2O supply and fishing activities.

Most of Tivland is 2440 metres above sea degree. Shagbaor F Wegh opines, " [ T ] he land prevarications within the guinea savannah part with distinguishable belts of flora. Soils become less flaxen by and large and more fertile nearer the Benue and Katsina-Ala rivers. "[ 70 ]He farther contends, " the country has Temperature mean between 80EsF and 90EsF, "[ 71 ]bespeaking a really high temperature level. He asserts, " Tiv country has a tropical clime with two clearly pronounced seasons. Wet season begins from April and extends to early October, and dry season begins from October to Match. "[ 72 ]

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The Benue vale which Tiv occupy is fertile land for agribusiness which explains why the people are both commercial and subsistence husbandmans who grow different types of harvests like cereals, citrous fruits, and tuber bring forthing workss therefore gaining them the denomination, “ nutrient basket of the state. ” Cropping is normally done during the moisture season but Tiv are fortunate to hold different types of harvests bring forthing all twelvemonth unit of ammunition. In other words, while some harvests produce during the moisture season, others produce in the dry season. While the harvest home of one harvest is coming to an terminal, reaping season of another is emerging.

Joe Holland justly pointed out that, “ Tiv get abundant approval from the land which makes them to reason that their land is a gift from God. Many ancient human civilizations had a deep sense of the presence of the Divine enigma in the natural universe. ”[ 73 ]In similar mode, the Tiv has a similar position. Apart from being agriculturists, they have a positive position of the land pitch. Land, which they equate with the natural environment is a belongings of great value. As belongings, it is non spoken of in the same manner one speaks of other belongingsss. Atel who Cites Wegh recapitulates the importance of land to the Tiv therefore:

The Tiv a^! do non gestate their land merely as a path of the Earth on which they live. It is the land of their male parents. It is sacred land. When one considers what it took them to get the land - the treks, the onslaughts from their neighbors, so it is apprehensible that the Tiv are so serious about their land a^! and take every step to protect the land against evil forces.[ 74 ]

Since the land is held as sacred, Tiv have a strong moral value that is closely connected to it. Thus Atel maintains, " If the moral order in Tivland was good and people were happy, they would state pitch doo ( the land is good ) . On the other manus, if the moral order was disturbed and there was deficiency of harmoniousness in Tivland, the Tiv would state pitch vihi ( the land has spoiled ) . "[ 75 ]In this sense, morality is by and large connected to the land pitch and unwholesome behaviour is an onslaught on pitch.

One of the fables about Tiv has it that when God Aondo created the universe, He immanently dwelled in it with human existences but something happened which necessitated God to go transcendent, and wholly removed from the universe. A adult female was thumping yam, and in the procedure the stamp hit the sky where Tiv believe is the residence of God. God became angry and moved the sky farther off from the Earth. But Tiv believe that even though God is surpassing, He is immanently connected with Earth. They have a belief that in former times, seniors with proved path of unity communicated with God. Wegh insists, " [ degree Fahrenheit ] or, case, when there was intense rainfall with storm, boom ( idyuran ) and buoy uping ( inyiagh ) , such an senior would come out of his hut to beg God for composure, and God would instantly mind. "[ 76 ]Again, " if it was raining to a great extent in a peculiar vicinity, an senior would direct the youngest male kid who was guiltless and pure because he had ne'er slept with a adult female to throw a combustion wood coal into the rain to halt it, and so the rain stopped. "[ 77 ]In sing how God responded to their predicament, " Tiv are speedy to reason that Aondo is non distant from them. "[ 78 ]The Tiv ' s apprehension

of God ' s propinquity connects with the Catholic impression of sacramentality which teaches that God dwells in and through nature.

Tiv have a strong value of life in harmoniousness among themselves and their neighbours. The orya, caput of the place has the duty to guarantee that there is peace and order in the compound and other adjacent compounds. When Tiv seniors today look at western instruction and modernisation and the negative impact they bring on Tiv traditional imposts and values, they lament that pitch vihi, the land has spoilt. The look, " to sor pitch fix the land is used when Tiv elders administer justness to their people followed by a spiritual rite. "[ 79 ]Most Tiv anthropologists refer to this construct as moral regeneration, but suffice to advert here that it besides refers to physical fix of broken substructure.

Tiv had a corporate sense of agriculture and hunting every bit good as roofing of their thatch houses. When people went runing, those who were luckless and caught nil got a portion from those whose luck shone. Wegh argues, " [ T ] he pattern of ihyumbe, exchange labour whereby members who enrolled in the group, supplied their labour in bends was a common pattern in Tivland that was really helpful in helping weak members of the community. "[ 80 ]If this pattern is given a Christian baptism, it correlates with what Kelly says that, " in infinity the gifts of the Spirit, which are here distributed otherwise to different persons, will be the common belongings of all, and each of the saints will happen his ain lacks made up by the virtuousness of others. "[ 81 ]In this manner, those who would normally non hold had the chance of geting a big farm, became privileged proprietors as a consequence of this communal pattern. This is one of the traditional patterns  
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that need to be reinvented in Tivland, and most particularly in Ecclesia communities.

Tiv society had really high moral criterion. For, case, criminal conversation was a serious offense that was handled with earnestness. Tiv understand criminal conversation as sexual intercourse between a married adult male and a married adult female who is non his ain married woman. On the other manus, criminal conversation is a sexual intercourse between a married adult female and a adult male who is non her ain hubby. When a instance of criminal conversation was known and was taken to the Council of Elders in Tiv society, the fornicator was compelled to the seniors for transgressing an hereditary jurisprudence on matrimony and sexual behavior. In add-on, the fornicator had to symbolically dress up the adult female whose nudity he had seen during the extramarital sexual intercourse. Akpenpuun Dzurgba contends, as a punitory step, “ He brought the fabric called ityoakpem which was handed to the oldest senior, and the adult female was dressed in public position of those present at the tribunal Ate jir.[ 82 ]

The mulct of a female fornicator was a female poulet. Second, the hubby personally took his married woman to her parents whose duty it was to train their girl for gross misconduct. The parents, their kids, the son-in-law sat together and held a meeting under closed door. The male parent was the president who directed and facilitated the treatment. At this posing, “ [ T ] he son-in-law presented his instance by narrating the narrative of his married woman ‘ s unfaithfulness saying the events or the times or periods the married woman committed criminal conversation after which the married woman was called upon to react to the hubby ‘ s accusals. ”[ 83 ]This <https://assignbuster.com/a-model-for-christian-interpersonal-relationship-theology-religion-essay/>

besides shows even before the coming of Christianity, Tiv society already knew and practiced forgiveness. This is because if the married woman was found guilty, “ she would show compunction before her parents and the full household by apologising to the parents and her hubby with a promise that she would halt misbehaviour. The household job was peacefully resolved and rapprochement achieved. ”[ 84 ]In some instances, “ when an fornicator was unable to pay the mulct, s/he was sent to prison. ”[ 85 ]

Tiv had really high respect for virginity. In classical Tiv society, the unity of the household in general and of the miss was measured by the virginity of the freshly married adult female. Tiv did non anticipate their girl to hold sex before matrimony. In every matrimony, the hubby expected his married woman to be a virgin, that is, person who had non had sex earlier. On the first dark of the matrimony, “ it was expected that the hubby was traveling to be the first individual to hold sex with the new married woman. The undermentioned forenoon, the hubby ‘ s parents were normally funny to happen out if the adult female was a virgin or non. The parents of the hubby would really happy if the new married woman was found to hold been a virgin, but they would go cold if she was non. ”[ 86 ]

The first dark ‘ s experience was of import besides to the parents of the adult female who had merely got married. The joy of her matrimony would be complete if the intelligence was received on the testimony of her hubby that she was a virgin. They waited uneasily for this intelligence that was sent in a symbolic manner. After a few yearss, the parents would have a fabric from their son-in-law. They would inspect the fabric uneasily. If they saw a hole made at the centre of the fabric, the message was that their girl was non a  
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virgin, and the female parent would cry abundantly. She expressed deep heartache because people in the community would see her as holding failed in her responsibility as a good female parent. She had failed to protect her girl from being spoiled by bad work forces. On the other manus, the fabric without a hole implied that the female parent had been successful in protecting her girl ' s virginity. Akpenpuun Dzurgba affirms, “ [ T ] his female parent would split into laughter and would get down to dance and sing merrily. This shows that virginity and virgins were of import facets of the establishment of matrimony in Tiv society. ”[ 87 ]

It was believed that virginity had positive influence on integrity, harmoniousness, stableness and peaceableness of the matrimony. Virginity increased common good will, apprehension, tolerance, trust, and cooperation. It sustained common love and lovingness. It facilitated integrating and blending in organic structure and spirit. The twosome becomes emotionally attached to each other. All these were attributed mostly to the fact the adult female got married a virgin. Therefore, “ Virginity was seen as the footing for matrimonial fidelity and obeisance on the portion of the adult female. These benefits doubled if the hubby besides was person who had non had sex before matrimony. ”[ 88 ]

Tiv besides frowned at immoral Acts of the Apostless like incest. Incest is an illegal sex between close dealingss. All blood dealingss within the drawn-out household are non allowed by cultural ideals and spiritual Torahs to prosecute in sexual activity and childbirth. When two close dealingss engage in sexual relationships, “ the guilt is cleansed by offering a burnt forfeit

which signifies that the act of incest has been burnt and the self-respect of their sexual position is restored legitimately and morally. "[ 89 ]

## **Barriers to ethical relation between Christianity and other faiths**

Christian moral claims need not be needfully placed as superior in dialogue with other spiritual traditions. The greatest hostility of dialogue between Christian and non-Christian spiritual tradition is the thought of monotheism and fundamentalism. As a monotheistic faith, Christianity tends to except other spiritual belief systems as idolatrous and animistic. Inclusive spiritual pluralism becomes a diminished thought in the face of this apprehension. This impression is all encompassing and screens most facets of spiritual traditions on issues of rational, doctrinal, and moral. For dialogue to boom with inclusive spiritual pluralism, it must be freed from the Christian clasp of monotheistic impression and exclusivist attitude towards other spiritual traditions. An inclusive spiritual pluralism is to be preferred out of these two places.

Furthermore, spiritual beliefs that respects polytheism does not needfully profess religion in many Gods. In most autochthonal faiths, it is merely an avowal of holding diverse ways of making out to the supreme being-God. The experiences of the native Indian in North America, and ATR-Tiv, are clear illustrations of those whose spirituality is steadfastly rooted in ecology. The theoretical account of ' reality-centeredness '[ 90 ]as proposed by J. Hick must be pursued ; a state of affairs where " all faiths are oriented in different ways toward that which they view as the cardinal world or divine absolute. "[

91 ]Furthermore, Ward M. McAfee attests, " Indian theologian relates that  
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reliable faith capable of fostering a respectful attitude toward the on-going originative procedure of the Earth must be rooted in definite location.

"[ 92 ]For him, " Autochthonal people tells us that their ascendants considered human existences as co-inhabitants with the other animals sharing their sacred locations instead than as maestro species commissioned to reshape the natural order. "[ 93 ]They had great regard for the ecosystem-being earthly friendly in a peculiar location. For him, " Christian anthropocentricity has proved highly dysfunctional. "[ 94 ]Their place criticizes the Christian human-centeredness. They are more at place " with the thought of God as a ' great spirit ' ( divine absolute ) that is non monopolized by any group. "[ 95 ]Indigenous individual ' s faith is non sole in orientation. They recognized that each group has contact with this ' great spirit ' in their several location/sacred topographic points. Their faith is earthy, keeping what some refer to " cosmic consciousness. "[ 96 ]Their faith is more experiential instead than word-oriented and rational.

In order to decently construe moral paradigm in spiritual pluralism, there is a greater demand to do some necessary displacement in theological places. It is these displacements in theological places that will vouch meaningful, fruitful battle in interreligious duologue. Of great importance, these displacements must be based on entire openness and trust among the dialoguing parties. This will supply the base for true Love, human self-respect and other ethical considerations that will heighten humanity, and surrogate integrity and unity among the different spiritual groups.

## Conclusion/suggestions

In Religious pluralism, all spiritual participants have equal rights. It discourages any sense of ain high quality or negative attitudes towards others. It encourages regard for others ; and it ' s willing to join forces with others in the command of advancing human good. It is willing to promote diverseness, thereby making a sense of regard for all spiritual associations. This sort of regard cuts across all facets of spiritual values: rational, doctrinal, and moral. Therefore all spiritual traditions must be seen in the visible radiation of carry throughing God ' s program for redemption among worlds.

For true interreligious duologue to boom in a pluralistic universe there is a demand for all parties to absorb the spirit of unfastened head and a welcoming spirit. Fundamentalist inclinations must be avoided in all signifiers and forms. Fundamentalism, particularly of Christianity, harmonizing to Michael Fitzgerald, insists, " on uniformity of belief within the ranks and separation from others whose beliefs and lives are suspects. "[ 97 ]This ' close outlook ' must be dislodged in order to pave manner for true interreligious duologue. Their outlook of " showing that their truth is absolute, self-contained, immune from mistake, "[ 98 ]is unfriendly to the spirit of interreligious duologue in a pluralistic universe. Elochukwu Eugene Uzukwu, noticing on this negative inclination, uses Igbo apothegm to buttress his point that nil is absolute. He concludes, " Whenever something stands, something Else will stand beside it. Nothing is absolute. I am the truth, the manner and the life would be called profane or merely absurd for is it non good known that a adult male may idolize Ogwwugwu to

flawlessness and yet be killed by Udo. "[ 99 ]It is here that the ' cultural lingual attack ' of Lindback becomes appropriate. He argues, " that a cultural-linguistic attack is compatible with strong and non merely weak places on unsurpassability, interreligious duologue, the redemption of non-Christians, and the propositional truths of spiritual avowal. "[ 100 ]Lindbeck work hard to " warrant the theory of cultural-linguistic method in the context of relative and experiential-expressive method to explicate the nature of philosophy. "[ 101 ]That the thought of tyranny in faith is no longer executable in our modern universe. Religious truths must based on peculiar cultural relativity.

Furthermore, seting spirit of tyranny aside, will let each other to larn and appreciate one another spiritual traditions and values. Commenting on this, Fitzgerald & A ; Borelli one time once more attests, " there is ever a demand to larn from others, to have from them, to profit from their values and everything that is good in their traditions. "[ 102 ]They insist, " Dialogue in this spirit helps to get the better of biass and to revise stereotypes.

"[ 103 ]The inquiry is, how can this come about in pattern among spiritual traditions that cherishes their sole places?

Religious pluralism can go meaningful when it ' s engages in true duologue with each other ' s spiritual traditions-this will supply unity of acquisition and learning each other