

## **The Challenge of Religion to Democracy as a Political Ideology**

**A. A. Akanni, PhD.**

Department of Religious Studies  
Olabisi Onabanjo University  
Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

### ***Introduction***

A study of human history reveals that most societies had at one stage existed without kings, chiefs/priest and so on. Quoting Adamolekun and Osuntokun, “at one point in time, most societies in the world were chiefless or were acephalous i.e. headless<sup>1</sup>. As they grew in number and sophistication, however, some of them found ways of maintaining law and order. “The monarchical system”, Ademolekun and Osuntokun contend, is perhaps the most well known and it is, in fact, the most widespread political system<sup>2</sup>.

This system of government was, however, distorted with imperialism. Upon colonization, the Portuguese, the Spaniard, the Britons and French people who colonized other peoples of the world not only gave their subjects their languages and their cultures but also their law and political system<sup>3</sup>. Today, democracy, which emanated from these peoples, is the favoured system of government across nations of the world. Though some countries are/yet to see or have decided to close their eyes to the alleged beauty of democratic governance, the developed industrialized countries of the world have done a great job in prescribing it to those countries that are less industrialized as the cure for all the ailments of their societies irrespective of their local and historical variations. Akao writes on the hotly prescription of democracy as the real political ideology as follows:

Democracy is today talked about with the highest degree of zeal and enthusiasm. It is promoted by the civilized west and hotly prescribed for the political embattled two-thirds world as cure for their administrative ailments and elusive peace as well as a prerequisite for their full integration into comity of nations. As a label for an administrative system, democracy enjoys an unparalleled and unequalled prominence among other alternative political theories of governance. There is a make – believe concept that once democracy is embraced all other blessings flow unhindered or fall into place. So the carrot is dangled before the developing nations by the West, “Seek ye first a democratic state and your blessing will be multiplied<sup>4</sup>.

This western democracy, however, not only has its own delimitations but is also bedeviled by a number of factors which render it ineffective, or at least, inapplicable to all societies as it were.

The focus of this paper, therefore, is to highlight some of the intricacies of democracy as a political ideology and demonstrate how religion can be used to supplement it in such a way that it will not only be completely effective but also practically applicable to all human societies.

### **Democracy as a Political Ideology**

Democracy as a political ideology has been intricately defined as

- A form of government where the right to make political decision is exercised directly by the whole body of citizens, *acting under procedures of majority rule*. This is called direct democracy.<sup>5</sup>
- A form of government where the citizens exercise the same right not in person but through representatives chosen by and responsible to them. This is known as representative democracy.<sup>6</sup>
- A form of government, usually a representative democracy, *where the power of the majority* are exercised within a framework of constitutional restraints designed to guarantee the majority in the enjoyment of certain individual or collective rights, such as freedom of speech and religion. This is called liberal or constitutional democracy.<sup>7</sup>
- Any political or social system, which *regardless of whether or not the form of government is democratic in any of the first three senses*, tends to minimize social and economical differences.<sup>8</sup>
- A political system in which the people of a country rule through any form of government they choose to establish.<sup>9</sup>

The above are few of the various definitions of democracy as a political ideology. The definitions have been so many and diverse that Balogun has to observe, “Views, frameworks and theories on democracy are as varied as the commentators on the subject”.<sup>10</sup>

Arendt Lyphart also writes: “Democracy is a concept that virtually defies definition”.<sup>11</sup> Akao concludes: “it is common knowledge that the way democracy has been used and talked about is giving it the status of an enigma”.<sup>12</sup>

Be that as it may, democracy as a political ideology has as its features justice, equality, freedom, rule of law and the prevalence of the view of the majority among others. It is described as a system of government capable of mid-wiving stability, prosperity, justice, fair-play and the general well being of all components of the community. As Abogunrin puts it “... no system of government is more just and humane than a truly democratic system”.<sup>13</sup> What is more or less the motto of democracy as a political ideology therefore is: “The minority will have its say and majority will have its way.” The minority, however, is expected to constitute itself into a strong opposition to the majority rule in the track of good governance for which it has been elected or preferred. Democracy, we are told, is a government of the people for the people and by the people. Most nations of the world have adopted it while it is being forced down the throats of many others like Afghanistan and Iraq. Of particular interest is its adoption in Saudi Arabia, which has a tradition of a kingdom as a political system. For the first time in her history, the country in 2007 conducted local government elections, thanks to the advocacy, campaign and pressure from the West. Democracy has indeed triumphed. Hence, Kenneth Auchincloss concludes:

The world has gone on an exultant binge of democracy in recent years. Repressive governments have fallen. Authoritarian regimes have opened up to political opposition. After enforced silence, people feel free to speak their minds. Virtually everyone has cheered.<sup>14</sup>

### ***The Bane of Democracy as a Political Ideology***

The above words of Kenneth Auchincloss presuppose that democracy is at present ruling the world. What this section of the paper is dedicated to, however, is an examination of the limits, weaknesses and shortcomings of the so-called democracy. This is with a view to giving the world a better political ideology. As Auchincloss further puts it, our “rebuilding world needs a clearer idea of its strengths, its weaknesses and its many variations”<sup>15</sup> because the battle is already won.<sup>6</sup>

The very features that the promoters of democracy consider its strengths are, however, those we see as its weaknesses and shortcomings – majority rule, rule of law, justice, the existence of opposition among others. These features, which are seen as the merits of democracy as a political ideology, are indeed its great demerits. The following vindicates this position.

The most commendable feature of democracy as a political ideology is the rule of the majority. It is in theory the exercise of the powers of the majority to guarantee free expression of their minds in matters such as social affinity, cultural persuasion and religious affiliation through votes. That is why it has more or less as its motto: “The minority will have its say; the majority will have its way”.

In practice, however, democracy has not proved to be so. Almost everywhere it is practised, the view of this majority is overruled either by the promoters of democracy themselves or by their allies. Various methods are used and various reasons are given for this. In Nigeria, for example, the June 12, 1993 election that is widely acclaimed to be the freest and fairest in the country was annulled. Results from more than half of the states where the elections were conducted had been officially announced before the ruling authorities annulled the whole process of elections.

That singular action brought untold hardship on the masses of the country from which they are yet to get out a decade and half after. Similarly, in January 1992, Algerians went to the polls to elect their representatives and leaders as democracy demands. The majority of the people had decided. The result? Kenneth Auchincloss has it:

... Muslim Fundamentalists were going to win a tremendous victory. Their majority might have been so big that they could have rewritten the democratic Constitution itself. The army stepped in, forced the president to quit and cancelled the vote.<sup>17</sup>

The two examples from Africa may suggest that the problem is with Africa. But, it is not. The same thing is happening in some other continents-Europe, North America, Asia. According to Tim Padgett, Carlos Salinas de Gortari who ruled Mexico between 1988 and 1992<sup>18</sup> might have won his job fair and square<sup>19</sup> but he did not because on election night, the government’s vote – counting computers mysteriously broke down, Salinas was declared the winner and the 20 million ballots were locked away from public scrutiny.<sup>20</sup> Led by the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), the Mexican Congress quietly voted to burn the evidence. There was little public outcry. Few Mexicans now seem to care whether Salina’s victory was legitimate or fraudulent. To them, the point is he’s doing his job.<sup>21</sup>

One more example will suffice here. In mid 2006, the Palestinians went to the polls to elect their leaders. A political group known as HAMAS won the election. The majority of the Palestinians had decided – they wanted HAMAS to direct the affairs of the country. Expectedly, America was the first to call on President Mahmud Abbas not to hand over powers to the HAMAS. Her reasons?

The HAMAS lacks democratic culture. Yet they won elections through a democratic process. The violent consequences of that decision linger on in the country years after.

Where in all these instances can one locate majority rule as a principle of democracy? None! The majority in all the countries mentioned wanted it one way, the minority within and or outside those countries wanted it the other way. It is for this reason that Dauda writes that political leaders in developing countries of Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America have been engaging in gross violation of their people's human rights, and are at the same time being supported openly or secretly by the so-called super-power.<sup>22</sup>

Thus, the wish of the minority at home and abroad prevails. Yet the system of government in those countries is still believed to be democratic, which has the rule of the majority as its principle. Auchincloss observes: "What is clear is that to call off an election because its turning badly for your side is very undemocratic indeed..."<sup>23</sup> Abounding adds: "it is for this reason that any system of government, which helps to promote selfish individualistic policies or programmes is opposed to democratic values."<sup>24</sup>

Considering what characterizes democracy across the nations of the world, one is constrained to call for a redefinition of democracy as a "form of government where the powers of the majority are suppressed within a framework of institutional structure designed to guarantee the minority's perpetual overlordship over the majority." That way, the actions of the minority at home or from abroad in overruling the views of the majority expressed at the polls will be justified and the result will be there for everybody to see. In fact, this position is not a novelty as it is already the practice in Israel, America's most valued 'nation'.

Theodore Stanger writes that in theory, Israel's political system seems quintessentially democratic but in practice, it is a recipe for chaos because Israel's political parties receive seats in the country's parliamentary body, the Knesset, in direct proportion to the number of votes cast for them in nationwide elections to suppress Arab majorities in the Galilee who are said to roughly 15 percent excluding the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Too much tinkering with reforms could give Israeli Arabs the balance of power.<sup>25</sup> The result is the chronic political paralysis no single party in the country's history has ever obtained a majority of the Knesset 120 seats. With power divided among a plethora of fraction little parties, hardly a month goes by without a cabinet crisis. For most Israelis, its business as usual.<sup>26</sup> Stanger further draws attention to the implication of such overturning of the majority in Israel's political system when he writes:

Since Knesset members are chosen from party "lists" rather than being directly elected, they are at least partially insulated from voters' displeasure.<sup>27</sup>

Of course, we agree with Abogunrin that for democracy to thrive in any nation, its formulation and development must be influenced by the peculiarities of each nation.<sup>28</sup> His position that the rule of majority as a major principle of democracy is the one that is grossly being undermined in the cases cited. Thus, from the above, one can see that it is difficult to accept the rule of the majority as a principle of democracy. This is because in the examples cited which cut across three continents of the world, the views of the majorities were overturned by the minorities. What is considered the strength of democracy is therefore, its greatest weakness, at least, if understood in the context of its promoters to ensure that the view of the majority does not prevail.

Another problem with democracy as the most widely favoured and practiced political ideology is with regards to its perception of the opposition. Through elections, majority of the people of a country are expected to choose their leaders on the strength of the political ideologies and values of their parties as well as their electoral promises. At the end, there will be winners and losers – winners being the choice of the majority of the people and losers the other. The losers then constitute themselves into the opposition group, which acts as watchdog for the people and an instrument of check and balance for the ruling party. Auchincloss draws attention to the significance of the opposition in a democracy when he observes that Westerners sometimes complain that Japan cannot be called a real democracy “because it has no credible opposition party”<sup>30</sup>. According to him, power simply shifts between rival factions of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party<sup>31</sup>. Hence, Japan is said to practice no real democracy.

Unfortunately, however, the existence of a credible opposition party or group, which is one beautiful feature of democracy, is today being eroded. Scenes from political practices across nations of the world show that the opposition groups are often co-opted into government.

Such a coalition government or a government of national unity is formed to pacify the opposition in order to legitimize an illegitimate government, which probably did not win an election but was favoured by the authorities that conducted the election. Lisa Adams gives the example of Mexico when he reports that Lopez Obrador, who contested the country’s presidential election with Felipe Calderon on July 2nd 2006 claimed that widespread fraud orchestrated by President Vicente Fox and his party’s candidate, Calderon, cost him the election which the latter was said to have won with a margin of less than 0.06 percentage points.<sup>32</sup> Obrador therefore demanded a full recount of the more than 41 million votes cast.

According to Adams, the nation’s top electoral court refused, instead ordering a partial recount of nine percent of the 130,000 polling stations where it said there appeared to be “evidence of problems”<sup>32</sup>. The federal Electoral Tribunal consequently declared Calderon, the president – elect, a day before its legal deadline<sup>33</sup>

Lopez Obrador refused to accept this judgment. He therefore instructed his supporters to protest the alleged widespread fraud. Obrador’s fans, with a massive show of hands, “elected” him as their “legitimate” president at an Independence Day rally led by the ex-candidate and pledged to refuse to recognize either Calderon’s victory or any government institution of the “false” republic, and vowed to carry out acts of civil resistance throughout the six-year term of “usurper” President Calderon.<sup>34</sup> Calderon consequently formed “a multiparty cabinet that takes all views into consideration.”<sup>35</sup> He pledged to implement policies aimed at shrinking those gaps, “seeking to rally support from the millions who did not vote for him in order to strengthen his mandate”.<sup>36</sup> Calderon himself is reported to have said that he wanted to have a relationship of deep respect and profound understanding with the governors and mayors of *all parties*, conscious not only of the political but also the social diversity of each state.<sup>37</sup>

Adams observes that “Calderon is smart to take such a position” and that Lopez Obrador warned lawmakers who joined a new political front on his behalf – to reject all contact with Calderon’s<sup>38</sup> but doubts to what extent they adhered to those instructions. He notes that some Democratic Revolution lawmakers and the party’s own founder, Cuauthemoc Cardenas, have publicly expressed doubts about Lopez Obrador’s course of action, saying it is counterproductive for the country and the party.<sup>39</sup>

Such is the fusing of the opposition parties into the government of the ruling party, which may not necessarily have truly won the election.

In Nigeria, the same thing happened. The government of former President Olusegun Obasanjo of 1999-2003 formed government of National Unity. Opposition parties of Alliance for Democracy (A.D) and All Peoples Party (APP) were given ministerial posts. In the same vein, the government of President Umar Musa Yar'adua also conceded ministerial posts to the rival All Nigeria Peoples Party (ANPP) and Democratic Peoples Party (DPP). Such fusing of the opposition parties into the government of the ruling party also exists in Belgium. It is called the "rainbow". Philippe Engel writes that the "rainbow" was the name given to the out gone executive, composed of socialists, liberals and environmentalists that represent vastly differing political movements which was a coalition government *that mixed oil and water*. It was replaced by a purple coalition formed of reds and blues.

In Israel, that is what politicians are said to be doing for a living.<sup>41</sup> The tiniest political parties, according to Stanger, can earn huge concessions by wisely offering – or threatening to withhold – support.<sup>42</sup> "Individuals Knesset members," Stanger concludes, sometimes form their own "breakaway factions" for just that purpose<sup>43</sup>. Recent happenings in Zimbabwe between President Robert Mugabe and opposition leader, Tshangarai also support this view. That is the extent to which the opposition is fusing into the government of the ruling party across nations of the world where democracy is practiced as the right political ideology. "Under such conditions", Engels remarks, "it is difficult to make any progress".<sup>44</sup>

The rule of law is another feature for which democracy is adjudged the best system of government. It is through it that there will be respect for the rights and interest of the minority and the poor. Reacting to a statement credited to a London- based Asian scholar, Gerald Segal is however quoted as having said that "if you have a government that produces the goods, then laws don't matter".<sup>45</sup>

But that is puzzling and sometimes exasperating to Westerners for whom written laws loom large. Democracy, according to Kenneth Auchincloss requires a set of institutions among them, *an impartial and independent system of courts...*<sup>46</sup> That is to show how important the rule of law is in a democracy.

Interestingly, however, this all – important rule of law in a democracy is often being undermined by the promoters of democracy themselves. Apart from the evidence of massive rigging and overruling of the view of the majority shown in the last few pages, there are also proofs of the purported democrats overruling rule of law in a democracy. Tim Padgett for example, writes that President Salina's word was virtually law in Mexico under the PRI system as he forced two state governors to resign following cries of fraud. His vast discretionary authority helped him enforce political reforms.<sup>47</sup> While one is not saying that those who won elections in controversial circumstances should be left unchallenged, one would have expected that President Salinas allowed the process for challenging electoral fraud in a democracy, which is though law prevailed rather than "forced" the governors to resign. Besides, Salinas lacked moral justification to force the governors to resign because, as noted earlier, he also came into office through the same fraudulent process. Padgett observes: "Using the same power of the political machine that brought him to office... he simply cooled protests..."<sup>48</sup>

Such undermining of the rule of law and forced resignation also characterize Nigeria's 'nascent' democracy. At least, three state governors – Peter Obi Anambra, Joshua Dariye of Pleatue and Rasheed Ladoja of Oyo were unlawfully impeached during the second term regime of powerful former President Olusegun Obasanjo. They were unlawfully impeached because all the three governors were reinstated by judgments of the courts of law.

Of course, the reinstatement is the beauty of the rule of law in a democracy but the impeachments could not have been possible were due process (of law) initially followed. In fact, one of the governors – Jousha Dariye – was impeached by votes of just five of the twenty members of the State Assembly falling short of the 2/3 requirements by the law. They indeed took and implemented their decision within minutes and under tight security of fierce looking law enforcement agents allegedly provided by the presidency. It looked like one of Hollywood movies to many spectators. Kenneth Auchincloss gives another instance of undermining the rule of law in a democracy when he writes:

The need to impose stringent economic cures has led to *another* kind of distortion of democracy: politicians like Carlos Saul Menem of Argentina and Alberto Fujimori of Peru, both of whom ran for election as populists, suddenly turned into rigorous free marketers once they had won. And in order to impose their programs, both have governed increasingly by decree; in Peru, people now joke about “Emperor Fujimori”<sup>49</sup>

What Emperor Fujimori is to the people of Peru is what Olusegun Obasanjo is to Nigerians – they also joke about “Eboras Owu” which means “The Spirit from Owu” (his home town). Because of his notoriety in governance, which extends through Africa, some have also graduated this to “Eboras of Africa”. Many of those reforms which in the process of being introduced and implemented, turned these supposed democrats into “Emperors”, “Lords” and “Eboras” are not only painful and unpopular but also geared towards impoverishing the masses as to continue to rule them.

Citing the example of Mexico, Padgett writes that Salinas has engineered an unprecedented series of reforms – and made them work by simply cooling protests...<sup>50</sup> Padgett, however, remarks: “Where economic pressure failed to sway the voters, there was nothing to stop the PRI from stealing an election”.<sup>51</sup>

Hence, economic measures such as the free-market policy must be employed to disenchant the poor masses. In fact, the so much desired booming economy is, according to Auchincloss, wrongly seen as the end result of democracy.<sup>52</sup> He observes further that in other parts of the world like Chile, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore the free –market system has been nurtured under political systems that are far from open.<sup>53</sup> Hence Auchincloss concludes that “free election...does not necessarily produce open governments, human rights or economic prosperity”.<sup>54</sup> He also adds that “if democracy does not breed prosperity, then perhaps prosperity can help breed democracy”.<sup>55</sup> Akinola also says: “Democracy in the end, is a function of how open and responsive the state and its structures are to the needs and wishes of the people”.<sup>56</sup> Auchincloss concludes:

During the cold war, “democracy” was a rhetorical banner, waved vigorously by its practitioners to distinguish it from them. The Manichaeian mind-set of those days did not allow for much sophisticated thought about the subject. The strength of democracy were blithely assumed, its frailties mostly ignored, its many variations simply glossed over... Democracy will not have “triumphed” until its lessons can be applied with imagination and realism.<sup>57</sup>

It is for this reason therefore that Winston Churchill sees democracy as “the worst system ever invented, except for all the rest,”<sup>58</sup> How then could the lessons of democracy be applied as a political ideology? That, of course, forms the subject of the next section of the paper.

### ***The Complementary Role of Religion to Democracy***

The rule of the minority rather than that of the majority, the rule of whims and caprices rather than that of law and the absence of the opposition rather than the presence of the opposition identified above are few of the bane of democracy as understood and practiced today. Others include violence, political assassination, fraud, corruption etc. All of these and others, however, bother on morality, which according to Fadahunsi “is the evaluation or means of evaluating human conduct right or wrong”<sup>59</sup>. Fadahunsi’s definition derived from Taylor’s which also believes that morality also helps people do their duties to society and enjoy certain rights from society..<sup>60</sup> It is this sense of morality that is absent in people’s perception, understanding and practice of democracy as a political ideology today. According to Momoh, morality is one word most people especially rulers are always uncomfortable with.<sup>61</sup> Awolowo also writes that there was no morality attached to funding parties as millionaires and corporations with common interests who believed the government must be run in a certain way to enhance such interests have always being the ones financing presidential elections. Such groups consequently sponsored somebody whom they considered would carry out policies that would be in their best interests.<sup>62</sup>

For democracy to be successful, applicable and acceptable to the generality of people as a political ideology, therefore, it has to be embellished with some form of morality.

Although moral codes are found in all human societies, such forms of morality are not adaptable to every society and situation because their existence are at the instance of certain communities or societies. To that extent, they will limit the applicability and acceptability of democracy across nations/cultures of the world. It is for this reason that religion is seen in this paper as the instrument of moralizing democracy. This is because moral concerns are not only fundamental to religion but because most forms of religion are practiced across cultures/boundaries. As Akanmidu puts it: “Religion has nothing to show to the society in practical terms when it has no power to produce moral characters in the society”.<sup>63</sup> He argues further that it is possible to say that persons can be moral in some respects without being adherents of some kind of religion. The accounts of human experience have, however, shown that the moral concern of human beings came, in part, from religious conceptions.<sup>64</sup>

To this extent, he, argues further, the forms of morality that take root from normative systems have special intimacy with the people’s culture and tradition and that morality that takes source from religion is not rooted in culture and tradition.<sup>65</sup> He then concludes:

The point could be put clearly by saying that morality that takes sources from religion retains some manifestations of *ultimacy* from which human morality takes instruction for improvement.<sup>66</sup>

Thus, the forms of morality that the practitioners of democracy need to make democracy as the ideal political ideology practicable acceptable, and applicable to all societies are contained in religion.

For example, the problem of political assassination/violence is addressed by Islam in Qur'an 2:178 -179, 5; 35, that of corruption in Qur'an 2:188, 83: 1 and 4 and 102 as well as that of justice in Qur'an 4:58, 65, 105, 135; 7:29; 16: 90; 57:25. Christianity addresses these political problems in Exodus 20:13 and Romans 1: 28-32 respectively. In African Traditional Religion, concepts vary from one deity to another and from culture to culture. Citing the example of the Yoruba, however, Bolaji Idowu also writes that, morality is certainly the fruit of religion, they do not attempt to separate the two and it is impossible for them to do so without disastrous consequences.<sup>67</sup>

Elechi Amadi also agrees when he also writes that in Yoruba belief, Esu, the god of discipline, punishes all those who refuse to carry out propriatory sacrifices for their misbehaviours. What is more sobering, punishment may continue in the afterlife.<sup>68</sup> Even Judaism also has its own moral content. Robertson Smith writes that the Law of Moses, in early Hebraic religion is a combination of rules of ritual, prescribed *beliefs, and moral requirements*. In this tradition... *a moral force*, the powers that men revered were on the side of social order and moral law, and the fear of the gods was a motive to enforce the laws of society, which were also the laws of morality.<sup>69</sup> Thus, religion and any form of it, has the kind of morality that is required to make democracy work better than it is now. Hence, Akanmidu concludes: "Religion that plays no role in human society is worthless".<sup>70</sup> How then should or can Religion play this role of moralizing democracy? That attracts our attention in the next section of the paper.

### ***The Modus Operandi***

Democracy as a political ideology is known for having three arms of government – the executive, the legislative and the judiciary. Each of these arms of government is independent of the other<sup>71</sup>.

This paper sees the role of religion at moralizing democracy in the addition of the fourth arm of government. The arm is to be known as "The Clerics" or "The Clergy" or "The Canon" or "*Majlis al-Ulama*" (in Arabic) or any other name deemed fit. Rather than consist of elected representatives of the people as with the executive and the legislature, "The Clergy" or "The Canon" will consist of religious leaders i.e. Pastors, Reverends, Imams and Leaders of other religions dictated by the religion(s) practiced in a given nation. Although, details of how members of this arm of government are to be chosen are left to the peculiarities of religious practice of each nation, its structure is to be of a dual nature, a little after the judiciary and a little after the legislature. It will take after the judiciary in that its members will be appointed from the various religious interest groups. The appointment will be made by the leadership of the religious groups based on whatever criteria they might have set for that purpose. The appointment process is preferred so as to accommodate the teachings of all religions, some of which are averse to *seeking* elective posts.<sup>72</sup>

"The Canon" on the other will take after the legislature in that it shall conduct its affairs in a similar way to that of the legislature. Members shall meet on a weekly basis to review political activities of a given nation and give the religious verdicts or positions on them. It is possible that the views of all the religions practiced in a particular country are not the same on an issue yet, it does not matter if the various views are expressed.

The legislature as well as the executive is only expected to be guided by a divine authority in that wise. They are not obliged to obey it. Thus the clergy plays an advisory role. For instance, if a nation is to take a loan, which attracts interests, the position of the proposed "Clergy" or "Canon" which comprises of adherents of Islam,

Christianity and other religions is expected to be varied. Reason is because why Islam abhors and indeed prohibits interest, however minimal (Qur'an 2:275 ff, 3: 130), Christianity does not, or at least, tolerates it. The views of other religions involved may also vary. The beauty of this fourth arm of government, therefore, is that the leaders of a nation are afforded the opportunity of knowing God's/gods position(s) on the issue and why. For example, Islam prohibits interest on loan in order to stop the special favour of the capital at the expense of the toiling class, and to establish equality among the members of the nation. According to Abu Sheriff, instead of running a useful job, the usurer turns into a parasite that lives on the labour of others.<sup>73</sup> If the attention of the leaders of a nation is drawn to these facts and yet they still believe they should take loan, so be it. That is the beauty of democracy – i.e. the minority has its say and the majority has its way. But the purpose of the proposed arm of government would have been achieved – providing divine guidance on matters affecting the state.

In a similar manner, if a nation is being considered for debt relief as was the case with Nigeria and her Paris Club creditor in 2005, an idea that would be welcome by any reasonable government, representatives of Islam at “the Canon” / “Clergy” who lost out in the previous example will have it this time because there is a direct Qur'anic injunction (Qur'an 2:180 – 183) on debt relief/forgiveness<sup>74</sup>. In the same token, if a nation is to take polygamy for any reason, the seemingly contradictory positions Islam and Christianity are not expected to cause any roar<sup>75</sup>. Each religion will state its position and the reason behind it. The choice is that of the executive and the legislature. Thus, one is not anticipating any problem or violence among members of the arm of government as a result of the divergence of religious views on issues to be considered. Besides, a position is not to be taken on any issue.

“The clergy” is just to make known the (various) religious views on issues affecting the issue. The state is only to be provided with divine guidance. No more, no less.

The most important advantage of the proposed fourth arm of government, however, is with regards to the conduct of the public office holders. Many, if not all, of these people profess one religion or the other. One is therefore unhappy when an Alhaji or a Reverend who holds a public office is found guilty of offences bothering on assassination, corruption, money laundering etc by a competent court of law. The cases of “Alhaji” Saminu Turaki and “Rev” Jolly Nyame, former governors of Jigawa and Taraba states of Nigeria respectively who are standing trials for allegedly illegally enriching themselves with public funds to the tune of several billions of naira are apposite here<sup>76</sup>. These are two of several others who profess one religion or other to the extent of using religious titles as prefixes to their names. Contrarily, however, their conducts do not reflect the teachings of these religions.

This, according to Akanmidu, is because people are less successful in allowing religion influence on their character<sup>77</sup>. He advances three reasons for this. (i) the unrepentant rigidity and inflexibility of high class religious morality which allegedly cannot fit into a changing society, (ii) the difficulty in controlling the numerous variables that point directly to the concrete secular processes of alleviating human sufferings occasioned by work out a fast formula and (iii) the growing complexity of world order and the increased contacts between people of different backgrounds which encourage attitudes that are built autonomous of religious morality.<sup>78</sup>

As much as these reasons are plausible, they are not sufficient to justify the betrayal of religious morality. As Titus properly puts it : “Religion at its best must be felt and thought.

It must be lived: it must translate itself into action.”<sup>79</sup> Latourette also says: “the quality of a religion is to be judged by its power to produce worthy character and a just order”<sup>80</sup>. Akanmidu adds: “the influence of character by religion is an index or measuring gauge of the quality of the religion in the societies.”<sup>81</sup>

Thus, it is this fact that religion, beyond holding religious titles is seen as capable of influencing human character that the role of the proposed fourth arm of government – The clergy – is seen. Comprised of men of God / gods, it is to constantly remind the people in government of the “dos” and “don’ts” of God/ the gods and their consequences. Attention of these public office holders is from time to time drawn to what the scripture-oral (as with the traditional religion) or written (as with the revealed religion)-says on issues relating to and bothering on holding positions of authority. For example, the idea that the leader is a vicegerent of God is preached by both Islam (Qur’an 2:30) and Christianity. In Yoruba Traditional Religion, this is represented in seeing the leader as the “Alase Ikeji Orisa”, the lawgiver, next to the god”. According to Idowu, Ibikeji Orisa carries the connotation that he derives this authority from the divinities and ultimately from the deity and that he is a visible concrete symbol of the theocratic government of the world.<sup>82</sup> When these are re-echoed into the ears of the public office holders, there is the tendency to lean towards righteousness. Similarly, when scriptural verses, Ifa corpus and other divine sources are read and explained to the hearings of these public office holders, their character will undoubtedly be influenced for better. The Bible, for example says:

For from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, *lasciviousness*, and evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all evil things come from within and defile the man. (Mark 7:21- 23)

Again the Bible says:

And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do these things which are not convenient: Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity, whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them” (Romans 1:28- 32).

And in the Glorious Qur'an, it is said:

O Ye who believe! Eat not your property among yourselves in vanities, but let there be among you traffic and trade by good will nor kill (or destroy) yourselves. For verily God hath been to you Most Merciful. If any do that in rancour and injustice – soon, shall We cast them into fire and easy it is for God. And do not consume your wealth among yourselves wrongly neither proffer it to the judges (as a bribe) so that you may (sinfully) consume a position of (other) people's wealth and that knowingly (2:188). The mutual rivalry for piling up wealth diverts you (from more serious things) until you visit the grave. But nay, you soon shall know (the reality). Again, you soon shall know! Nay were you to know with certainty of mind, (you would beware). You shall certainly see Hell fire! And you shall see it with certainty of sight! Then you shall be questioned that day about pleasure (102). Woe to those that deal in fraud... Do they not think that they will be called to account! (82: 1& 4).

We can go on and on quoting scriptural verses that are capable of influencing generally the characters of individuals and specially those of people in government. Thus, when such verses are continuously and continually sung into the ears of those at the corridors of power, right at their business tables, there is no doubt that their nefarious acts of rigging elections, political tyranny, gagging or cowering the opposition into submission, political assassination, embezzlement, fraud, corruption etc. which normally accompany (democratic) governance will abate. It will prove rewarding if public officers (i.e. elected politicians) swear to the oath of office at this arm of government i.e.

The Clergy. This could be done solely or in addition to that conducted by the judiciary. One, therefore could not but agree with Bergson when he says "it would be vain to raise the objection that religious prohibitions have not always dealt with things that strike us today as immoral or anti-social"<sup>83</sup>.

One other issue that must be addressed is the funding of the proposed fourth arm of Government and the remuneration of its officers. While its staff are to be treated as civil servants like their counterparts in other arms, its members (i.e. the pastors, the Imams, the priests etc.) are *not* to receive salaries directly from government. Rather, they shall receive their salaries and other sundry allowances from their various religious bodies, which they represent in the house. This is not to say that those people shall be paid from the purses of these religious bodies. What it really means is that government shall provide fund for these religious groups, which shall then conduct their affairs, including salaries of members of "the clergy", from the fund and of course those they are able to generate internally.

This arrangement which makes "the clergy" as the fourth arm of government less financially attractive is meant to prevent a situation whereby its members will be distracted from the focus for which its has been institution. That way, it will be able to play its role not as another legislative arm of government but as a check and balance mechanism for democratic governance. Also of importance is the process of appointing the leadership of the arm of government. In as much as members of the clergy are to be appointed rather than being elected, it also stands reason that its members appoint its leadership from among itself. The various religious groups in the house could also work out an arrangement for joint leadership.

## **Conclusion**

Democracy, as it were is a product of human reasoning. As Akao puts it, it is a child of circumstance, having evolved from political and revolutionary actions in the West against autocratic European governments.<sup>84</sup> As such, it is subject and indeed liable to reviews, modifications and amendments from time to time if its application to and adoption in all countries of the world as envisaged by its vanguards are to be meaningful and productive. For one thing, to suit local and historical conditions. For the other, to rid it of its weaknesses. The need for this has, however, also been felt by its promoters themselves.

For example, instances of its failings across the world given in this work are those observed by its advocates themselves. For this reason, some countries have established some agencies to address some of these weaknesses of democracy. Most of these agencies are, however, persecutory in nature, employing law as their instrument. In Nigeria, for example, there are the Code of Conduct Bureau, the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Independent Corrupt Practices and Other Related Offices Commission (ICPC). These agencies act as watchdogs on government functionaries and prosecute those found guilty of offences covered by the laws establishing them.<sup>85</sup> Even in Australia, a State Administrative Tribunal (STA) was also up. It is intended to improve administrative fairness and to simplify review of administrative decisions of the state and of local authorities in the state. Its creation is a practical example of how states in a federation can experiment with institutional development and reform with the aim to better serve the interest and protect the rights of their citizens.<sup>86</sup>

De Villiers who is a member of the tribunal writes that the tribunal has become the most recent laboratory in Australia aimed at exploring ways to simplify review of administrative decisions, introduce informal process of hearings, encourage aggrieved persons to represent themselves and expand the accessibility of the “judiciary”<sup>87</sup>. In terms of its review function, it may affirm a decision, vary a decision or set aside a decision and substitute its own. The tribunal may also refer a decision back to the decision makers and invite them to reconsider.<sup>88</sup> The tribunal is said to be bound by “the ruling of natural justice and seeks resolution of complaints according to equity, good conscience and the substantial merits of a case”.<sup>89</sup> These undoubtedly are the concerns of religion.

The establishment of the State Administrative Tribunal in Australia shows that experimentation with the structures of democratic governance is going, even in one of the older federal democracies of the world and that underscores our position in this paper. But rather than continuing to rely on human’s intellect through the establishment of tribunals and agencies, this paper advocates the prospects of religious values as methodology of social change which Qureshi believes is necessary consequent upon the failure of the efforts of western jurists and sociologists through the prescription, mobilization and disposition of law in society<sup>90</sup>. By that, we have carried out a task considered impossible by Amadi<sup>91</sup>.

Rather than outgrowing religion as the way out according to Amadi<sup>92</sup>, this paper has suggested a system that promises to give humanity a better system of government than it has in democracy at present. Though, the suggested system may not be perfect, the search for one is continuous. Besides, it is socially and politically speaking, much better to live with an imperfect system than without a system, which leads to chaos.

Also, it is a way of eliminating the gap between the secular minded people of the world and the religiously inclined ones. It will definitely remove the strains between the West and the East.

Conclusively, to raise these points is not to question the essential virtue of democracy. It is a system that has proved its worth in reflecting the dignity and equality of all human beings, in obliging government to acts on all citizens' behalf, in establishing a peaceful method of removing bad rulers and altering course<sup>93</sup>.

But as Akanmidu rightly puts it, "religion retains some manifestations of ultimacy from which human morality takes instruction for improvement"<sup>94</sup>. The Bible says: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" – (John 5:39). And in Qur'an 39:41, it is also said:

Verily We have revealed the Book to thee in truth, for (instructing) mankind". He, then that receives guidance benefits his own soul: But he that strays injures his own soul (see also Qur'an 80:11-12).

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