

## RELIGION OF OUR TIME AND CLAIM TO DIVINE PRESENCE: A PHILOSOPHICAL PURSUIT OF HER SILENCE IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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### **Abstract**

*This study sets out to investigate the myths and realities in the claim of the religions of our time to operate under the influence of divine over the years, alongside their actions and inactions in the Covid-19 pandemic. Some religions are revered and relied on for spiritual food as well as the growth of their practitioners. The leaders of these religions owe their followers moral obligation of telling them the truth of what happened to their claim to divine presence and influence now that they have lost their spiritual senses and voices concerning Covid-19. The objective of this study is to ask these religions and their leaders some philosophical questions concerning the presence of divine and its influence in the religions of our time. The area of study is on the religions' silence and their inability to tap from the divine she claims to have in order to unmask the mystery of Covid-19. The data for the study are sourced through observation, library as well as internet, using psychological theory for its analysis. At the end of the study the findings revealed as follows: The claim of the religious leaders of our generation to operate under the spiritual influence is questionable. They have opened doors for the political power to lord over the spiritual power. The silence of religious leaders concerning Covid-19 left some doubts in the hearts of their followers which led many away from their source faith. The true religious leaders have to develop new skill and spend more money in using modern technologies to propagate their faith to the distant audience on radio, on television and in zoom. The study would be of great value to the public, mostly to the students and researchers interested in the actions and inactions of the religious leaders of our time, irrespective of their claim to be the spiritual vessels during Covid-19 pandemic.*

### **Introduction**

Man's search for the great unseen force he conceives to be responsible for creation of the universe, populated with visible and invisible beings has been an ancient journey. This Supreme Being has been manifesting to some people in so many

ways and at different places in time and space from generation to generation since the foundation of the world. Political formations and parties are propagating the best ideologies and approaches in the science of human governance. Religion and what she stands for irrespective of its background should be an avenue on how best to approach things that concern divine presence and influence of the Supreme Being in the human affairs.

Religion has been the mouthpiece and embodiment of the divinity. However, the religions of our generation and their leaders have opened another window of enquiry into the myths and realities of the presence of divine amongst the religions. This critical probe into the myths and realities of the presence of divine amongst the religions is made possible from the silence of these religions and their leaders in the Covid-19 pandemic. If these religions and their leaders that claim to operate under the influence of spirit(s) are not find worthy of usage by the spirits at this critical period to tell their followers the truth about the divine position about Covid-19 which other time would it use them? These are the people that so much revered and relied upon these religious leaders for their spiritual food as well as their growth.

The religions selected and upon their shoulders the fundamental questions asked in this study fell on in search for answer are as follows: Indigenous/Traditional Religion, Christianity, Islamic, Hindus and Confucius. These selected major religions in the world have lost their spiritual senses and voices in the Covid-19 pandemic. It is worrisome that they have to stand the chance of losing their followers. The silence of these religions and their leaders is a deviation from the main teachings of religion that anchor on truth, love, charity and sacrifice. Amongst the Igbo-African Indigenous /Traditional Religion practitioners, they banked so much on the word truth-*eziokwu*, which they say is life (*eziokwu bù ndu*). This truth is also valued amongst Christians that is the reason Jesus stated that 'we should know the truth and it shall set us free.' Another major central teaching of these religions is love and it cannot on its own be functionally effective without truth. This is because any act of love and charity that is not anchored on truth has some socioeconomic and political undertones than moral and spiritual.

The objective of this study is to ask the philosophical questions concerning the religion of our time and the position of the divine presence in them. At this

juncture, these questions needed answers from these religions and their leaders are: "Are religions of the digital age and their leaders truly seeking the face of the Supreme Being or are they (seeking the face of money) under the influence of money? Is religion truly the opium of the poor and exploitation of many by few who cleverly institute it for their personal enrichment? On what ground do religions and their leaders have to claim that they are operating under divine mandate? The study is of the view that the leaders of these religions owe their followers that rely on them and these religious institutions as their spiritual power house the moral obligations of telling them the truth of what has happened to their claim to divine. This is because their silence in the Covid-19 pandemic is a pointer that they have fallen short of their followers' expectations.

Their actions have left a lot of doubt in the hearts of their followers. It is at this juncture that they have displayed questionable acts in their position as the mouth piece of the divine. Hence, they have opened doors to the political power to lord over the spiritual power. More people are led away from their faith, at the same time they have created room for the true religious leaders to go extra mile to develop new skill and spend more money to propagate their faith. They have to reach out to the distant audience with the help of advanced technologies, on radio, on television and in zoom without offerings and fund raising as usual. The religious leaders have to leave the comfort of the religious structures to look for the people wherever they are on the streets, markets, offices and at their individual houses. And that depends entirely if the political power permits them as well as if the people have the reason to listen to them again. Else such noble work of linking the people to their maker by the true religious leaders would be fruitless. The study would be of great value to the public, mostly the teachers, students and researchers interested in the actions and inactions of the religious leaders of our time irrespective of their claim to be the spiritual vessels in the trial time of Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Review of Related Literature**

Sigmund Freud's "Psychoanalytic Theory" is the literary theory adopted for analysis of this study. The theory explores the inner thought of the people that helps them to act and live the way they do. Dobie (2012:55) in line with the above says that psychoanalytic theory was propounded by Sigmund Freud in 9<sup>th</sup> century, with its central message on the role of unconscious in what we do, feel, and say

even when we are not aware of its presence or operation. The theory has it that some events in one's life which are repressed in the unconscious mind find their expression in form of dream which appears in some specific symbols for identification. Freud began to use the psychoanalytical theory in the dawn of 19<sup>th</sup> century to interpret works such as religion, mythology, art and literature with more emphasis in unconscious. The above exposition shows that human actions are as a result of forces we do not recognize and could not control. The fact about unconscious mind is that conscious mind is not aware of it, hence the mistake of the real cause of our behaviours.

Kennedy and Gioia (2007:1517) are of the view that Freud's greatest contribution to literary study is his elaborate demonstration of how much human mental process is unconscious. Also, Hall and Lindzey (1967:30) in their view of this theory say that in the vast domain of unconscious are to be found the urges, the passion, the repressed ideas and feeling, which they call 'the great underworld of vital unseen forces.' The unconscious mind has overwhelmed control of the conscious thoughts and deed of man. Following the above background information of Freud psychoanalytic theory, one could appreciate the depth of people's state of confusion, helplessness and disappointment to the religious leaders of today's world concerning Covid-19 pandemic.

## **Religion**

Religion primarily came into being from man's search for fulfilment and protection from a being he conceives to be higher than him. It is the acknowledgement of his weak nature which comes up in form of fear of unknown-the unseen forces. This is the reason for his tendency towards courting the relationship with the supernatural being. Hence the foundation of religion revolves around the belief in this supernatural being, who though may not be seen physically is believed to be in existence. It is man's expression of his weak, vulnerable and dependence to the supernatural being left him in the position of awe and reverence before the being he conceived to be in charge of the universe. Many scholars have contributed in the definition of the term religion one of them is Anih (1992:12-13) who says that religion like music is hard to define. He further quotes the authors like John Burckhardt, Edward Caird, Herbert Spencer and Lactantius where he comes up with the following definitions of religion:

For John Burckhardt, religions are the expression of the eternal and indestructible metaphysical craving of the human nature. Their grandeur is that they represent the whole supersensuous complement of man, all that he cannot provide. At the same time, they are the reflections upon a great and different plane, of whole peoples and cultural epochs.

Edward Caird sees religion as the expression of ultimate attitude to the universe, the summed up meaning and purport of his whole consciousness of things.'

Herbert Spencer who writes that, "Religion is the recognition that all things are manifestations of a power which transcends our knowledge.' Lactantius is of the view that religion is derived from Latin "religare' meaning to tie or the knowledge of being tied to a high power. Religion gives meaning to man's relationship with the Supreme Being and relationship with other men. Religion is essentially an arena where tradition meets tomorrow, where conservatism encounter ultra-progressives, where fundamentalists concelebrate with fool-hardy liberals and where orthodoxy must of necessity embrace with avanguardism, because religion is by it nature theandric, that is both divine and human. It is both time space bound and equally in eternity.

Ugwu & Ugwueye (2004:1) are of the view that religion itself deals with invisible and spiritual being that cannot be subjected to empirical observations. They further state that religion is all about man's relationship with God where man acknowledges his dependence on God which he expressed in the act of worship. In line with this Arinze (2008:14) opines that religion is the very consciousness of dependence on a transcendent being and the propensity or inclination to worship. Bringing the idea of the indigenous religion of the Igbo-Africa in the lime light, Orji (1999) says, "The original religion of the Igbo people was the worship of the mother-earth and the worship of juju-gods." He further says that the Igbo people also believe that there is another superior being that creates the world which is called Chukwu. It is in this regard that the essence of religion revolves around the belief in this supernatural being, who he believes to be in existence but cannot be seen physically. Hence men's expression towards Him is manifested an awe and reverence, which is articulated in form of religion. This is due to the man's acknowledgement of his weakness before the unseen force he believes is in charge of ruling the universe.

## Philosophy

Philosophy is referred to as mother of science and arts. It is traced to two Greek words "Philia and Sophia" which stand for "love of wisdom." It is the study of general and fundamental questions about existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, matter among others. Philosophy has gained attentions of so many scholars, one of them that contributed to its definition is Nwabuiro (2007:5) says:

The term philosophy had a long history, which preceded the civilization of the Western Europe. This of course, the European historians would like the world to accept as having first started in Greece about 600 B.C. But, there is nothing in the annals of human achievements, which shows man's endowment of capacity for a critical thinking more than philosophy. That being the case, the first human civilization of which all histories agree that took place in Africa was midwifed by nothing else other than philosophy.

For civilizations are not products of accidents or chance events but rational, critical, logical, methodic, consistent and purposive studies born out of sweats, hard work and perseverance of long years. But, why is this preamble? It is in order to disabuse the minds of those unwary readers who have been made to accept that philosophy is the handmaid of European civilization. Philosophy is a rational, critical thinking, which is a gift of nature and for that a universal phenomenon.

Oduah and Ogugua (2007:240) on the other hands say that any attempt to define philosophy is to do philosophy. It is to philosophize, for in philosophy, there is no definition of philosophy, but definitions of philosophy. One thing experience has taught us is that there is no definition of philosophy which every philosopher has accepted. Little wonder, Wiredu remarks the definition of philosophy is apt to be personal" it is not in doubt that one's outlook in life determines how one conceives philosophy. In line with the above, Ndianefoo (2014:473) opines:

There is no cut- and-dry answer to this question. This is because the term philosophy" is notorious for its polysemy. It has no one universal meaning philosophy does not suffer this "vice" alone. Indeed, all the humane discipline -Law, Sociology, Political Science, Economics, History etc. equally do not have unanimity of definition. This lack of unanimity in the ascription of meaning to

philosophy and these other disciplines is due to the profundities and complexities of man in society. What is more, the obvious peculiarities of a writer's spiritual, psychological, ideological and material backgrounds determine his construal and definition of Philosophy or these other humane disciplines.

Asiegbu, (1988:307) says that Nigerian philosopher,<sup>1</sup> Professor Sodipo, sees Philosophy as reflective and critical thinking about the concepts and principles we use to organize our experience in morals in religions, in social and political life, in Law, in Psychology, in History and in the natural sciences. It is the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality, and existence, especially when considered as an academic discipline.

The authors and their definitions reviewed above are all good in their respective contexts. However, none of the authors and their studies could replace this research work, because none of the studies concentrate on religions and religious leaders' silence in the Covid-19 pandemic. Hence, it pursues the reason behind the religions and their leaders' silence and urges them to explain to their followers why they are not in touch with the spirits they do everything for their sake and under their influence before Covid-19 pandemic. It urges them to live up to their religious creeds, beliefs and teachings which revolve around truth, love, charity and sacrifice. It is on this ground therefore the study is seeking for a space in the corpus of literature of this nature as well to bridge the knowledge gap in this aspect of Covid-19 studies.

### **Religion of Our Time and Claim to Divine Presence: A Philosophical Pursuit of Her Silence in the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Religions in all its forms have been the hope of the humanity in their pursuit of spirituality. The teachings of religions to their adherence to live a spiritual based life which revolves around truth, love, charity and sacrifice cannot be wished away in a wave of hands. She has been looked up to for spiritual solutions of the socio-economic and political problems of mankind over the years, through the instrumentality of their leaders: priest, imam among others whose shoulder it falls to dish out what the spirit is telling the people each according to their background. Chukwuka (2019: 53) has it that the religious tenets have served as the basis of morality in the society, a voice in times of dispute and a source of encouragement to different office holders provided by religious leaders and followers. However,

the spiritual service of religion sometimes is not restricted to the leaders alone. In some liberal religions where there is room for spiritual manifestation and possession on individual persons within the same religious background. This practice is common in the indigenous/traditional religions and Christianity. In Christianity mostly the Catholic Church spiritual manifestation and possession is common. The individual chrism is allowed to grow along with the mother church under the umbrella of Charismatic.

However, it is the paradigm shift from the status quo of the religion which is known as a place where divine will and power is obtained to a set of people who are receiving orders and instructions from the political power in our present generation is the crux of this study. It is in the light of this that Chukwuka (2019: 51) stresses, "Religious practitioners are expected to be true reflectors of what is expected in leadership. While the life of so many is pointing towards one direction, their moral lifestyle is pointing at another." This is one of the reasons the study wants to examine if the religious leaders of our time in all its forms conspire to betray the spirits they are worshipping or that they have fallen short of the glory the spirits. What it means is that the spirits they claim to worship have refused to use them, thereby denying them access to vision, dream, revelation and prophesy. In this respect, the religious leaders are gathering people in vain without the presence of the spirits they are worshipping. If in the actual fact that the glory of God is no longer with His people, what is the essence of religious gathering? At this juncture, it is of great important that some religions basic teachings and beliefs are briefly looked into in order to know what brings about the way they reacted in the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **The Beliefs and Teachings of Some Religions at a Glance:**

#### **Indigenous/Traditional Religion**

Indigenous/Traditional Religion often referred to as African Traditional Religion revolves around the age long desire to court the relationship of their creator and their departed ones-the ancestors. This faith in their ancestors has been practiced by many in Africa in order to preserve good relationship with their departed kin. This practice of involvement in the ancestral rituals is religiously motivated that it has become a form of worship. Mbiti (1969:178) is of the view that in the worship of God, in some cases, sacrifices and offerings are directed to one or more of the

following: God, spirits and the living dead (ancestors). It is not only offering and sacrifices that are directed to spirits and the living dead, but prayers and invocations are also made. Turaki (1999:162) comments that, due to the distance between the Supreme Being and Africans, those who follow African Traditional Religion turn to the 'lesser' beings, that is, African divinities and the ancestors. In the post-exilic period, the Jewish nation sensed a distance between them and God, and began to recognise other beings that were closer to God than themselves.

Mndende (2006:161) says that rituals are the means of reviving relationships within the community and between the living and the ancestors. It is also a way to revive the relationship between the physical world and the spiritual world. There had to be a diviner who in other African languages may be referred to as a sangoma or a 'traditional healer'. The person is a specialist expert in communicating with the ancestors and who may also be able to pass on a message to family members.'

### **Christianity**

Christianity is the most widely practiced religion in the world. The Christian faith centers on beliefs regarding the birth, life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Christianity throughout the world is adopted as one of the most successful spiritual missions in human history. She is a monotheistic religion i.e., they believe that there's only one God, and he created the heavens and the earth. This divine Godhead consists of three parts: the father (God himself), the son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit. Christians believe that God sent his son Jesus, the messiah, to save the world. They believe Jesus was crucified on a cross as an offer for the forgiveness of sins and was resurrected three days after his death before ascending to heaven.

Christians contend that Jesus will return to earth again in what's known as the Second Coming. The Holy Bible includes important scriptures that outline Jesus' teachings, the lives and teachings of Major Prophets and disciples, and offer instructions for how Christians should live. The cross is a symbol of Christianity. The most important Christian holidays are Christmas (which celebrates the birth of Jesus) and Easter (which commemorates the resurrection of Jesus). All those who have placed their faith in Christ are immediately and permanently indwelled by the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11). The Holy Spirit today works through Christians to sanctify the people of God and accomplish His will of saving the lost and

building up Christians in local churches. The power of the Holy Spirit convicts, teaches, equips, and empowers Christians to grow in grace and spread the gospel to the nations to the glory of God.

### **Islam**

Islamic Religion is operating under her six major beliefs which is as follows:  
Belief in the Oneness of God: Muslims believe that God is the creator of all things, and that God is all-powerful and all-knowing. God has no offspring, no race, no gender, no body, and is unaffected by the characteristics of human life.

Belief in the Angels of God: Muslims believe in angels, unseen beings who worship God and carry out God's orders throughout the universe.

Belief in the Books of God: Muslims believe that God revealed holy books or scriptures to a number of God's messengers. These include the Quran (given to Muhammad), the Torah (given to Moses), the Gospel (given to Jesus), the Psalms (given to David), and the Scrolls (given to Abraham). Muslims believe that these earlier scriptures in their original form were divinely revealed, but that only the Quran remains as it was first revealed to the prophet Muhammad.

Belief in the Prophets or Messengers of God: Muslims believe that God's guidance has been revealed to humankind through specially appointed messengers, or prophets, throughout history, beginning with the first man, Adam, who is considered the first prophet.

Belief in the Day of Judgment: Muslims believe that on the Day of Judgment, humans will be judged for their actions in this life; those who followed God's guidance will be rewarded with paradise; those who rejected God's guidance will be punished with hell.

Belief in the Divine Decree: This article of faith addresses the question of God's will. It can be expressed as the belief that everything is governed by divine decree, namely that whatever happens in one's life is preordained, and that believers should respond to the good or bad that befalls them with thankfulness or patience. This concept does not negate the concept of "free will;" since humans do not have prior knowledge of God's decree, they do have freedom of choice.

### **Hindus**

Hindus is the religion of an ancient people known as the Aryans ("noble people") whose philosophy, religion, and customs are recorded in their sacred texts known as the Vedas. These texts were initially handed down by word of mouth from

teacher to student. It was not until much later that they were actually written down. The fundamental teaching of Hinduism, is that a human being's basic nature is not confined to the body or the mind. Beyond both of these is the spirit or the spark of God within the soul. This spirit is within us and also within everything we see. All beings and all things are really, in their deepest essence, this pure or divine spirit, full of peace, full of joy and wisdom, ever united with God. This is not just theory, but it can actually be experienced. Anyone who takes the trouble to undergo the necessary training to purify and refine the mind and senses can begin to feel the truth of this. This training can take various forms and is known as yoga ("union"- union of the individual self with this inner spirit).

### **Confucius**

Confucius Religion is of the view that the master speaks to them in the Lunyu (Analects), which contains brief, disconnected sayings attributed to him. The conversations he had with disciples, and additional sayings or comments by some of those disciples. Confucius describes himself simply as one who loves to learn and as a transmitter of wisdom from the ancient past. That he also learns from his students demonstrates that learning, knowing, and holding to the truth were considered parts of a continuous process, which was at once intellectual, practical, and spiritual. Learning was essential to knowing, knowing was essential to doing, doing was essential to spiritual fulfillment, and spiritual fulfillment was essential to learning. This process was held up as a standard against which the corrupting influences of wealth and power could be measured.

The worlds of men and of spirits (gui or shen) were separate but communication between the two was possible, and so was mutual intervention.

Yao (2008) in line with this say, "Confucian universe, in which self-transformation is defined both as the starting point and as the necessary vehicle for one's spiritual journey." Shamans and oracles were the agents of communication, while the warriors' sacrificial rites (li) were intended to mollify the spirits and to prevent their capricious intervention in the affairs of men. At the apex of this ritual hierarchy was the head of the house of Zhou, who alone among men bore the title of king (wang), but who by the time of Confucius no longer had any real political power.

### **The Claim for Divine Presence in the Religions of Our Time before Covid-19 Pandemic**

Religion in all its forms have been waxing stronger in their different backgrounds, searching the face of the unseen in order to better equip her practitioners to live better here on earth and in the next world. They are doing these through the mediums such divination, prophesy, vision and preaching their belief to their practitioners. Agbo (2019:56) stresses, "Religion is a powerful influence in religious societies such that ideologies and tenets formulated in the religious sphere easily spill on to the political and socio-economic arena." However, the silence of religions and her leaders in the trial time of Covid-19 pandemic left a lingering question in the minds of the people.

The easily and likely questions in the minds of the people are: Where is God? Where is the claim for divine and spiritual possession/influence that some of the religious leader boast about? What is that so powerful that has come over the religion and her leaders to the extent of masking their power to divine, prophesy and vision, that no religion opens up to say anything even if it is not under the influence of the spirits with regards to Covid-19 pandemic? Such grave silence from the religious leaders left some cloud of doubts on their personalities, in line with what they are telling the people about the power of the spirits they are worshipping. It is in regards that Obielosi (2019:59) says, that the fact however is that leadership is not all about good will. Good will is necessary but not sufficient. That it is only a servant leader is a true leader. This is because every servant leader has good will. The religious leaders owe their followers the good will of leading them in accordance with the spirit of truth and love.

The people believe so much in you as their religious and or spiritual leaders deserve some level of truth in your relationship with them. Even at a point that the spirits you are worshipping have left their seat in the sanctuary, shrine, chamber and mosque to mention but few. This is because it is a sin against charity if the religious leaders should hide from the followers this simple truth about their place of worship. The message it sends across to the people from the religious leaders in the above thought is that the followers don't deserve to know what concerns their faith because the managers of their faith are not after their all-round wellbeing, rather they are using them for their personal enrichment. Umeanolue (2019:58) vividly captured this when he stresses that the problem of materialistic

religious leadership in Nigeria is getting out of hands that it is a fact today that many religious leaders are not in any way different from the politicians. Many use their positions to get as much as they can from the people who are systematically brutalized and impoverished. This economic and political benefits by the religious leaders is not far from the reason of their all-round silence concerning Covid-19 pandemic.

### **The Possibility of Spiritual/Divine Scammers amongst Some Religious Leaders of Our Time**

There are many stories of fake religious leaders in so many religions in the world. Many of them are caught in one scandalous act or the other, including sexual, human ritual, among others scandals that one wonders what religion of our time is all about. Irrespective of the fact that the above-mentioned cases of scandals are found among few in the midst of many religious leaders, the general atmosphere of silence from all the religions and their leaders appear to be a game of few-wise and many-fool in the outbreak of Covid-19 till its pronouncement as a pandemic. It is the spirit that controls the physical. Therefore, any spirit that losses its spiritual essence does not worth to be referred to as spirit again. The Igbo adage has it that impotent fortune god would be split for firewood-*ikenga adighị ire a waa ya nku*. What is the essence of gathering people to worship dead and in active spirits in the name of religion? What may be the reason for spirit's abandonment of the vessel it used to operate in and to communicate to the people?

Omosomuofa (2019:56) in an attempt to answer the above questions says, "It is believed that Christianity has in no small measure affected the polity through meaningful leadership at various capacities in Nigeria, however, it is regrettable to say that the church has goofed away from her assignment." There is possibility that the spiritual vessels-the leaders of the religions have seen the reason for not living out what they are preaching in their pursuit of material wealth. The spirit on the other hands may decide not to allow his mind to be known by these leaders that abandoned their duty. This is because instead of using their positions to effect positive changes in the lives of their followers the religious leaders use the people to enrich themselves. It is in this regards that Umeanalue (2019:58) emphases, "The present-day Nigeria religious leaders need to be properly equipped intellectually, morally and spiritually in order to address this corrupt materialistic religious leadership." The religious leaders have become the few wise people that use many

people for their economic advancement. Any person that sets up empty alter, temple, shrine chamber to deceive the people in the name of unseen forces-religion is a spiritual/divine scammer.

### **Harvest of Loss of Faith Due to Silence of the Religious Leaders of Our Time in the Covid-19 Pandemic**

There are so many people that cease from attending churches and their place of worship mostly amongst the Christians, even when the Covid-19 ban on church worship has been lifted. Some of them have never attended churches or services because they have learnt to worship by listening on radio, looking at the television screen and joining zoom worships or services. These people now find the radio, television screen and zoom worships more convenience than going to their places of worship. They have been used to it to the extent that they see no difference between community worship from the above-mentioned gadgets. These are the crop of people who are preoccupied by their means of surviving the economic challenges of Covid-19 pandemic. Some of them are yet to return to their rational state from the shock and confusion they encounter in the Covid-19 pandemic. However, most of them are not in the position to ask their leaders the fundamental questions such as, where are the spirits they gather them to worship? Where are the spirits they are offering sacrifices on his or her altar? Where are the spirits that influence their leaders and in some occasions their members to see visions and prophesy about so many things?

Omosomuofa (2019:56) in response to the above questions opines that religious leadership has a stronghold in the politics, that it poses serious problems on what measure the church should adopt in reclaiming her leadership mandate. If in the actual fact that the religions and their leaders in our generation have no use for spiritual manifestations and influences that nurture and enrich it, they would not bother to loss the people in the active religious practices. They would not even bother to loss the offerings and funds the people are contributing for the work of spirits, because they know that their game of brainwashing that they are playing on the people is over. On the other hands, if it is a mistake on the side of the religions and her leaders in our generation to keep silence, in such a critical situation as the Covid-19 pandemic. The religious leaders have committed sin against charity on to their followers, and courtesy demands that they should make

public apology to their followers each according to his or her religious background.

There would have been revolution amongst the followers and practitioners of these religions if not for the grace of God. There are so many people from various religious backgrounds that would have asked their leaders some questions, because these religious leaders have deviated from their teachings of truth, love, charity and sacrifice which are the foundation of religious spirituality and the centre of divine manifestation. One good thing that happened in the midst of the Covid-19 induced fear amongst the leaders of the religions is that when they abandoned their spiritual offices due to political directives. Their abandonment and closure of their places of worship has opened another door for people to exercise their faith. People who hold firmly to their faith are in their individual houses day and night practicing their religions according to their various religious backgrounds. They have succeeded in raising army of people who are growing their faith on their own. And directly or by implication the actions of the religious leaders is another way of telling the society to take their faith by their hands.

### **Conclusion**

It is the spirit that controls the physical. However, either the spirits in operation in various religion backgrounds of our generation or the leaders of these religions are not in possession of their seats. Hence no other principal elements of religion are in the position to act aright in the advent of Covid-19 pandemic. The religious institutions should have been the source of light and direction to the political institutions If the religions of our generation and their leaders are no longer operating under the forces of truth, love, charity and sacrifice, what is the reason for the people to gather in the name of religion anymore? The religious leaders have opened door for political institution to lord over religious institution, which is a reversal of the status quo. The silence of the religious leaders in the Covid-19 pandemic has doubled the task of the people truly in the work of spirits. They have to channel more energies and resources in the online preaching, with the loss of people in the active religious practices as well as the offerings and funds they are contributing for the work of spirits. The true religious leaders have to take the risk of propagating their religious teachings without knowing if there are people out there watching or listening to them. At this juncture it becomes the exclusives of the smart preachers, and for such preachers to draw more online audience they must have been exceptionally good in his or her religious call.

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