**ETYMOLOGY OF RELIGION**

Etymology (/ˌɛt.ɪˈmɒl.ə.dʒi/ ) is the study of the history of words , their origins, and how their form and meaning have changed over time. By extension, the term "the etymology (of a word)" means the origin of the particular word. For a language like Greek with a long written history, etymologists make use of texts in these languages and texts about the languages to gather knowledge about how words were used during earlier periods of their history and when they entered the languages in question.

Etymologists also apply the methods of comparative linguistics to reconstruct information about languages that are too old for any direct information to be available. By analysing related languages with a technique known as the comparative method, The word etymology is derived from the Greek word ἐτυμολογία (etumología ), itself from ἔτυμον (étumon), meaning "true sense,’’[[1]](#footnote-1) furthermore the Cambridge Advanced Leaner’s Dictionary define it as: the study of the origin and history of words, or a study of this type relating to one particular word.[[2]](#footnote-2)

**RELIGION**

Religion could be defined simply as a system of faith, belief and worship. It could be defined by its root meaning, etymology, connotation, origin and from many other points of view.  
Religion is a cultural system of behaviours and practices, world views, sacred texts, holy places, ethics, and societal organisation that relate humanity to what an anthropologist has called "an order of existence", Different religions may or may not contain various elements, ranging from the "divine ", "sacred things", "faith ", a "supernatural being or "some sort of ultimacy and transcendence that will provide norms and power for the rest of life.

Religious practices may include rituals, sermons, commemoration or veneration (of God or deities), sacrifices, festivals, feasts trances, initiations, funerary services matrimonial services, meditation, prayer, music, art, dance, public service, or other  
aspects of human culture. Furthermore religions have sacred histories and narratives, which may be preserved in sacred scriptures, and symbols and holy places that aim mostly to give a meaning to life. Religions may contain symbolic stories, which are sometimes said by followers to be true, that have the side purpose of explaining the origin of life, the Universe, and other things.

Traditionally, faith, in addition to reason, has been considered a source of religious beliefs, there are an estimated 10,000 distinct religions worldwide. About 84% of the world's population is affiliated with one of the five largest religions, namely Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism or forms of folk religion. With the onset of the modernisation of and the  
scientific revolution in the western world, some aspects of religion have cumulatively been criticized. The religiously unaffiliated include atheists (who reject belief in the existence of  
deities) and agnostics (who believe that the truth of certain claims – especially metaphysical and religious claims such as whether God, the divine or the supernatural exist – are unknown and perhaps unknowable). While the religiously unaffiliated have grown globally, many of the unaffiliated still have various religious beliefs. About 16% of the world's population is religiously unaffiliated.

The study of religion encompasses a wide variety of academic disciplines, including  
theology, comparative religion and social scientific studies. Theories of religion offer various explanations for the origins and workings of religion.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Religion according to K.Ayantayo and Dr, S.A.Fatokun ‘’ It is difficult to have an acceptable definition of religion because it is a sensitive phenomenon, which stands for different things among different people. Indeed, Religion is defined on the basis of individual conviction, which is the end product of religious experience precedes religious conviction and ultimately religious expression and belief: Religious experience is the practical encounter, which a person has with the ultimate being or God. This experience provides justification for people’s religious conviction……… what he expresses as the outcome of his experience, therefore would become the basis for his religious belief.

Religious belief informs religious practices, which are manifested in liturgical activities like singing, dancing jumping and bowing among others.in the same vein somebody else whose encounter is different from the first person would anchor his/her religious beliefs on the basis of his or her religious experience. On account of the above, it is not practicable to have a consensus definition of religions. However. For the purpose of this discussion, we can adopt a working one in this sense, Kenny’s definition is opposite. He defines religion as any system which relates man to the ultimate values, whether God or something else, and which embodies a creed, a code, a cult and a communion…….. Religion is a product of culture because it is an integral part of the way of life(like arts and literature) of the people……..

(Akonga, 2003:24-25) A systematic reflection and interpretation of what people see around them.[[4]](#footnote-4)

**Conclusion**

Religion especially in Africa, like all other religions of the world, have stories, myths, magic, beliefs, many performatives, lessons to learn, objects of worship, rewards for actions, be such actions good or bad and many other distinguishing properties.

So from this write up, that etymology of religion starts with man, religion will always have it origin in man, we can also concur to the fact that religion is stick to man right from birth, it cannot be separated from man, because there is always that longing of attachment to the ultimate, divine, supreme being in man, ‘’Haviland-2003 has it that religion is an organise beliefs in the supernatural that guide man in their attempts to make sense of the world,’’ so man will still find himself reverencing something, be it an Atheist he/she will always adore something be it a footballer, a musician a celebrity among others. So we can clearly see that Etymology of Religion will always have it abyss with man and within man.

1. ‘’Etymology,’’ Wikipedia.com, last modified 9 November 2016. https://llen.m.wikipedia.org/2016/ETYMOLOGY/11/09/wiki.etimology/. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Cambridge’s Advanced Learner’s Dictionary(2003,2005,2008), s.v. ‘’Cambridge Press.’’ [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. DR. T.F Jemiriye, “ Introduction to African Traditional Religion: Religion.’’ as posted by T.F. jemiriye , Department of Religious studies, university of Adoekiti-Ado-ekiti, 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Dr.I.K. Ayantayo and Dr.S.A Fatokun,’’African Religion and Culture’’,p8. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)